



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

**TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor N Hampshire
Councillor W Innes (Convener)
Councillor J McMillan

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor J Findlay
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor K Mackie

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive – Resources and People Services
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement
Mr J Coutts, Service Manager – Community Housing and Homelessness
Ms S Irvine, Service Development and Support Officer (Community Housing)
Ms P Bristow, Communications Adviser

Clerk:

Ms A Smith

Apologies:

Councillor F O'Donnell
Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – CABINET 22 JANUARY 2019

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of 22 January 2019 were approved.

Matters Arising Item 3 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)

Councillor Goodfellow requested an update. James Coutts, the Community Housing and Homelessness Service Manager, advised that initial positive feedback had been received from the Scottish Government, although more details had been requested. He indicated that almost half of all local authorities had failed to submit costed plans, which would therefore delay the assessment process and subsequent resource allocation. The Scottish Government stated they would not now meet the capital element of the plans; this had not been specified previously and would provide a further delay. He advised that officers were trying to move capital costs to revenue costs where possible. Responding to Councillor Hampshire's query Mr Coutts indicated that officers remained hopeful for a good revenue allocation and that capital elements might also be separately met through SHIP resource allocation.

2. NEW HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking approval for the new Housing Allocations Policy prior to implementation and presenting Cabinet with further supporting information in respect of the policy review process and key elements of the new policy.

Mr Coutts presented the report, outlining the main objective of the Allocations Policy. He drew attention to the consultation, which had involved tenants, housing applicants and stakeholders, reporting there had been overwhelming support for the changes proposed. He took Members through the key changes of the revised policy, highlighting a number of aspects. He informed Cabinet that the Health and Housing Framework had been reviewed as part of this project. He drew attention to the new policy, attached as an appendix.

Councillor Akhtar, referring to the Wellwynd Hub, asked how this was used to help tenants. Mr Coutts said that they were moving to a clinic system for Health and Housing cases, which should speed up the assessment process.

Responding to Councillor Findlay's query about overcrowding points, Mr Coutts clarified that individual circumstances would be taken into account, on a social or medical basis, even if both children were under ten years of age. He further clarified that assistance with form completion would be provided if required.

Councillor Henderson asked about the impact and unintended consequences arising from the RRTP. Mr Coutts stated that the Homeless Team had been involved in the policy review; an impact analysis had been carried out and he was confident that the new policy would give high priority to those people classed as homeless and would deliver for all the reasonable preference groups.

The Convener stated that Local Lettings Plans ((LLP) were an important part of the sustainable communities' agenda, noting there had not been any new LLPs recently and asked if criteria was too strict. Mr Coutts recognised this, stating that officers were looking to achieve the 5% target commitment, adding that he had given instruction to area Housing Teams to prepare LLPs.

Councillor Goodfellow thanked the housing staff for this huge piece of work. The policy followed best practice and was in line with Scottish Government legislation. Referring to the

consultation, he stated that concerns had been listened to and adjustments made accordingly. This policy would bring many benefits to tenants.

Councillor Mackie supported the introduction of a flat rate of points for all applicants. She remarked that this new policy brought about better transparency.

Councillors Hampshire and McMillan both welcomed the paper. This policy would help many families find better accommodation. New affordable homes, 2,500, were being provided across the county through the Local Development Plan, which would also make a difference.

Councillor Henderson echoed earlier comments. This Council policy was dynamic, being pro-active as well as re-active was key; she welcomed this paper.

The Convener also thanked Mr Coutts and his staff for the enormous amount of work carried out on this policy. East Lothian was recognised as a progressive council as regards housing in Scotland and was leading the way in many of its policies. He referred to the cross party group that had been convened and to the stakeholder consultation.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. to approve the new Housing Allocations Policy prior to implementation;
- ii. to the implementation date of 01 May 2019; and
- iii. to note that the consultation process approach met the Council's legal requirements under the Housing (Scotland) Acts 2001 and 2014 and also reflected good practice. Details of the consultation process and outcomes can be found in the Members Library paper referenced in this report.

3. COUNCIL HOUSE ALLOCATIONS TARGETS FOR 2019/20

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking approval for Council House Allocation Targets for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and explaining the context, legal position and rationale for the proposed targets.

Mr Coutts presented the report. He took Members through the detail of the report, drawing attention to the legal obligations and target principles. He outlined how the Council would make best use of its stock and how this linked into sustainable communities. He highlighted the targets for 2019/20 advising that these targets should be seen in the context of a range of measures required by the Council and its partners to increase the supply of affordable housing, reduce waiting times in temporary accommodation and address homelessness.

Councillor Goodfellow stated that the housing allocations targets over the year had been met; he was pleased that officers were proposing to continue with a system that was working and welcomed the paper.

The Convener expressed support for the continuation of the 70% general needs target. It was important to monitor this closely to check that targets were meeting the needs for the people of East Lothian. He felt that Local Lettings Plans could play a significant role and looked forward to these being developed across the Council areas. He thanked all staff.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. to approve the recommended targets detailed in Section 3.22 of the report;
- ii. to note that performance against these targets was reviewed on a weekly basis and that such review formed part of the analysis in setting future targets in 2019/20 and beyond; and
- iii. to note that ongoing regular monitoring of performance had been embedded within the Community Housing Performance Management Framework.

4. IMPROVEMENT TO EXCELLENCE: EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval for the Improvement to Excellence Framework and the Strategic Performance Framework.

Paolo Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement, presented the report. He outlined the background to these frameworks. The Council's continuous improvement framework was based on five inter-related elements. These had been reviewed and a revised Improvement to Excellence Framework prepared (Appendix 1). He referred to the main alterations. He drew attention to the Strategic Performance Framework (Appendix 2), explaining the pyramid system and the data captured. The performance indicators review outcome would be reported to the Policy and Performance Review Committee in June.

Councillor Hampshire, looking at Appendix 2, indicator 38 (*% of total household waste recycled*) asked if the 2020 target of 60% was achievable. Tom Reid, Head of Infrastructure, indicated that the target was now outwith the Council's control. He reported that the kerbside contract was on hold, referring to the Scottish Government's paper on a deposit return scheme for single use drinks containers, outlining the implications of this for the Council. He stated that further clarification was awaited from the Scottish Government.

Councillor Findlay, referring to Appendix 2, indicator 11 (*% of properties with superfast broadband*) asked if the target for rural broadband was feasible. Mr Vestri indicated it may not be; this was a national target, officers were in discussions with providers as this was a key priority in the Economic Development Strategy. Councillor McMillan remarked that this was possibly the most frustrating area of the local economy. He provided details about the funding initially promised by the Scottish Government and subsequent changes. Officers were engaging and trying to exert influence; it was hoped that the Council's aspirational goal would be met.

Responding to a query from Councillor Henderson about Appendix 2, indicator 3 (*% of school leavers attaining 3 or more SCQF level six*) Mr Vestri said this was looked at in detail by the Education Committee. The Education service felt that this indicator was a suitable high-level indicator as regards raising attainment for children and young people. The service currently said that the target was to reach the Scottish average, but this would be reviewed regularly.

Councillor Mackie referring to Appendix 2, indicator 13 (*raising the attainment of children and young people*), noted that this figure was below the Scottish average, remarking that a lot of work was still needed to be done in this area. Mr Vestri reiterated that the target was to meet the Scottish average.

Councillor McMillan welcomed this paper; it was a real driver going forward and set out important frameworks. He highlighted some key areas within Appendix 1. The Council was constantly looking at the way it operated, was being creative and had adopted a good structured approach.

Councillor Akhtar stated that East Lothian was a good operating local authority, aspiring to constant improvement. It had ambitious outcomes for children and young people. The Head of Education was working closely with all head teachers and East Lothian Works provided support; there were ambitious targets as regards employability, positive destinations and reducing the attainment gap.

Councillor Mackie expressed concern that the aspiration was to reach the Scottish average percentage figure for reducing the attainment gap. She hoped that the Administration would focus as much attention as possible on this and try to get higher than the average figure. Councillor Akhtar confirmed that the Education Committee was looking at this.

The Convener remarked that these frameworks were important tools for the Council. Meeting targets was important but equally important was having data that evidenced the journey towards these targets and identifying where further work was required. He noted the point put forward by Councillor Mackie.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. to approve Improvement to Excellence: East Lothian Council’s Improvement Framework (Appendix 1);
- ii. to approve the Strategic Performance Framework (Appendix 2); and
- iii. to note that the Policy Performance and Review Committee would review the Strategic Performance Indicators that were reported quarterly and annually.

Signed

Councillor Willie Innes
Council Leader and Convener of the Cabinet