

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 24 June 2025

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: Short-life Cross-party Group for Housing

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To note the role and remit of the Short-life Cross-party Group for Housing.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To establish a Short-life Cross-party Group for Housing to monitor, review and have oversight of the affordable housing emergency over the next eighteen months.
- 2.2 To approve the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix A.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2025, Council agreed to a review of the governance and scrutiny of housing with an ask to consider the establishment of a Housing Committee. A thorough analysis was undertaken, and Council were assured that good governance and scrutiny was in place. However, it was noted that the current housing emergency would merit the creation of a short-life cross-party group to maintain oversight.
- 3.2 The short-life working group will have no specific decision-making powers and is not part of the Council's formal Scheme of Administration; however, this group will help to support political oversight on the delivery of the Housing Emergency Action Plan.
- 3.3 The proposed membership of the group is detailed below and will be supported by members of the Council Management Team and the Housing Services Management Team:
- Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing & Property Maintenance (Chair)
 - Council Leader

- Depute Leader
- Leader of the Opposition
- Leader of the Conservative Group
- Green Party Member
- Independent Member

3.4 The remit of the group is set out below:

It is intended that the role and objectives of the group will be:

- Supporting the development and implementation of a Housing Emergency Action Plan which also align to the Council's budget.
- Providing political oversight and monitor progress against the delivery of the Housing Emergency Action Plan
- Providing political oversight of the delivery of the Homelessness Action plan with consideration to the overall impact on budgets
- Promoting greater awareness and understanding of key stakeholder engagement.
- Communicating delivery challenges and opportunities to respective political groups and acting as a conduit to represent the priorities of wider political groups in relation to the Housing Emergency.

3.5 The suggested agenda items for the meetings are set out below:

- Oversight of the Housing Emergency Action Plan
- Progress against the delivery of the Housing Emergency Action Plan
- Progress against the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan

3.6 Council is recommended to approve the Terms of Reference attached at appendix A.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
6.2 Personnel – None
6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Appendix A – Short-life Cross-party Group for Housing Draft Terms of Reference
7.2 Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025
7.3 Local Housing Strategy
7.4 Homelessness Action Plan
7.5 Housing Emergency Action Plan

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DATE	June 2025

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference – Short-life Cross-party Housing Group

Purpose & Overview

The purpose of the group will be to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of the Housing Emergency Action Plan. The creation of the group should help support political oversight of the delivery on the actions identified to mitigate the housing emergency by facilitating opportunities for cross-party working and ensuring that the inputs which contribute throughout this process are politically balanced and represent the wider priorities of East Lothian Council.

This group will be a short-life informal working group and meetings will not be held in public or formally minuted. The group will act as a sounding board and will not hold any decision-making powers; however, the content of discussions may be used to steer and inform the recommendations which are put forward through formal governance arrangements.

Remit

The role and objectives of the group will be:

- ▶ Supporting the development and implementation of a Housing Emergency Action Plan which also align to the Council's budget
- ▶ Providing political oversight and monitor progress against the delivery of the Housing Emergency Action Plan
- ▶ Providing political oversight of the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan with consideration to the overall impact on budgets
- ▶ Promoting greater awareness and understanding of key stakeholder engagement
- ▶ Communicating delivery challenges and opportunities to respective political groups and acting as a conduit to represent the priorities of wider political groups in relation to the Housing Emergency.

This will be kept under regular review and modified as appropriate.

The working group will not:

- ▶ Replace formal governance arrangements for setting housing policy
- ▶ Act as a barrier to transparency in the delivery of the Housing Emergency Action Plan.

- ▶ Supersede arrangements for delegated officer decision making on operational matters.
- ▶ Replace current arrangements through which officers work to support political groups on an individual basis.

Membership

Political representation: All political group leaders and Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing and Property Maintenance. Members are asked to send a substitute representative where they are unable to attend.

Chair / Vice Chair: Housing Spokesperson / Council Leader

- Leader of the Opposition
- Leader of the Conservative Group
- Green Party Member
- Independent Member

The Group will be supported by members of the Council Management Team and the Housing Services Management Team.

Transparency and Accountability

To aid transparency, relevant updates on the work of the group will be reported to Cabinet or Council through regular financial update reports.

Quorum

4-member representation.

Frequency of Meetings

The group will meet quarterly over the course of the next 18 months.

At certain times of the year it may be necessary to arrange additional meetings for specific areas of focus relating to the budget.