



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor D Berry (Convener)
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor J Williamson
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Caldwell

Council Officials Present:

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive
Mr A McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services)
Mr D Ledingham, Executive Director (Services for People)
Ms M Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities)
Mr M Leys, Head of Adult Wellbeing
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing
Mr P Vestri, Corporate Policy Manager
Mr B Cooper, Senior Transportation Manager
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer
Mr P Forsyth, Senior Area Officer East, Transportation
Ms C Dora, Administration Research Assistant

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor F McAllister

The Convener welcomed all present to the first meeting of the Policy and Performance Review Committee (PPRC) following the local elections in May 2012.

For practical purposes, he announced that Item 2 on the agenda would be heard last.

1. THE GUIDE TO SCRUTINY AND REVIEW

The Corporate Policy Manager, Paolo Vestri, gave a verbal report on the Guide to Scrutiny and Review which had been approved by Members of the previous Policy and Performance Review Committee. He highlighted Section 4, Conducting a Policy Review, and advised that the previous Committee had not conducted a formal review of policy. However, it was open to Members to request a review if they considered it appropriate while carrying out the scrutiny function of the Committee. Should the Committee decide to conduct a Policy Review, he encouraged Members to involve relevant stakeholders in their enquiries.

The Convener, Councillor Berry, thanked Mr Vestri for his report and suggested that Members retain the Guide for future reference.

The Chief Executive, Angela Leitch, welcomed debate on how the Council could improve its performance and advised that the Corporate Improvement Plan, which the Committee could use to inform their enquiries, would go to Council in June before coming to the September meeting of the PPRC.

Councillor McLennan enquired if the scrutiny role of the Committee could extend to analysing the potential impact on East Lothian of the integration of health services and the reform of the Police and Fire services into national bodies. Mr Vestri replied that it had been the custom and practice of the Committee to scrutinise existing policies and not to help formulate policy.

Councillor McKenzie gave an example of the benefits of having information which provided a national and local context on Children's Services matters. The large quantity of information available on Child Protection and Looked After Children had helped to inform Council policy. The Executive Director (Services for People), Don Ledingham, exercised a note of caution, however, stating that the Support from the Start initiative had demonstrated statistics did not always indicate the 'direction of travel' of trends and developments. It was important to drill down into more specific areas to reveal the true context of data. The Convener stated that the Committee would be guided by Officers on how to evaluate the information before them.

Mrs Leitch stated that the work of the Committee should be guided by risk assessment and agreed with Mr Ledingham that there was a danger in looking at statistics in isolation. She suggested that she could bring a summary of the Corporate Risk Register to the next meeting of the PPRC. This would indicate areas the Council intended to scrutinise. Mr Vestri also offered to bring the Shared Risk Assessment to the September meeting.

Councillor McLennan enquired how the Committee could involve stakeholders in the work of the Committee and the Convener suggested that Members might find it helpful to attend the Joint Awareness Seminar of Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Groups which was due to take place on 20 June.

2. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE 2011/12 AND Q4 2011/12

The Executive Director (Support Services) submitted a report to provide the Committee with an overview of performance during the year 2011/12 and Quarter 4 (January – March) 2011/12.

Policy Officer, Andrew Strickland, advised that the report presented a summary of all indicators for the benefit of new Members. Normally the report highlighted specific lines of enquiry identified by Members. He expected that, in future, it was likely that there would be a return to holding a pre-meet to define lines of enquiry and refer them to the relevant Council Officers. Mr Strickland gave an overview of indicators highlighted in red which included new business start ups, current tenant rent arrears and the number of fly-tipping incidents, all of which had been the subject of reports to the Committee in the recent past.

Mr Strickland advised that further details were available to view on the Performance website which was automatically updated from Aspireview. He could also illustrate any indicator in more depth on the overhead screens.

Councillor Caldwell enquired if there had been any adjustment to targets set in relation to fly-tipping since 2009 when charges for special uplifts were introduced. Mr Strickland was not aware that there had been a change to this target and suggested that this could be reviewed by Officers. Councillor Caldwell also enquired what action was being taken to address the issue of fly-tipping and the Convener proposed that Members could meet with Officers before deciding if it was necessary to look at this matter in more depth. Mrs Leitch emphasised that the context of the fly-tipping figures was important, as was bench marking. She therefore suggested that Officers could be invited to attend a future meeting to explain any mitigating factors, not only concerning domestic waste, but also trade waste.

Decision

The Committee agreed to use the information provided in this report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance was in need of improvement or further investigation.

3. CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION REPORTING TO ELECTED MEMBERS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Executive Director (Services for People) submitted a report to give an update on Child Protection and Adult Protection activity in East Lothian, offering an opportunity to both gain an understanding of the issues and challenges for these services, and to raise any issues regarding performance.

The Chief Social Work Officer, Murray Leys, highlighted the challenges and risks to the people of East Lothian. The report also outlined the Council's commitment to corporate parenting and its responsibility to the most vulnerable in the community.

Councillor MacKenzie enquired if some children on the Child Protection Register were at times, in and out of the system. The Head of Children's Wellbeing, Sharon Saunders, replied that it was the case that some children were de-registered and later re-registered due to a change in circumstances, despite the efforts of her team to secure a safe environment for the children with their families. Mr Leys advised that the Child Protection Register was a risk management procedure which was constantly under review. Councillor McKenzie asked if it could be ascertained if the

Council was making progress in helping these families and Mr Leys replied that it was. By working closely with these families, some children were taken off the Register and successfully returned to their families. The Executive Director (Services to People), Don Ledingham, stressed the value of all the support services working in a cohesive way to provide a connected approach to the service these families receive. Councillor McLennan endorsed this approach and cited a recent Violence against Women event which demonstrated how a large number of agencies can work together towards successful outcomes.

Councillor Goodfellow noted from the report that the number of children and young people in residential care had increased and a high percentage of those were accommodated outside East Lothian. Mr Leys confirmed there had been a significant increase in the number of Looked After and Accommodated children which cannot be accommodated in East Lothian, especially those requiring secure accommodation. He confirmed that the cost of accommodating young people outside the authority was higher and, as rising numbers reflected a national trend, there was concern around future costs. Mr Ledingham added that the Council was losing some of its most experienced foster carers, those who were entrusted with the most challenging children. Without them, those children would require residential care. It was therefore imperative that the Council succeeded in recruiting good foster carers.

The Convener requested a further report on Looked After Children and Looked After and Accommodated Children for the December meeting of the PPRC.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of this report.

4. ROADS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012 – CARRIAGEWAY ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT

The Executive Director (Services for Communities) had submitted a report to update the Committee on the current condition of the Council's adopted public road network carriageway asset group as at April 2012. The report described the current condition of the carriageway asset; detail of the level of service that the asset currently received; the range of activities being employed; and present spend options available for the future.

The Senior Transportation Officer, Peter Forsyth, summarised the report, advising that it examined 20-year forecasts to ensure that decisions were taken with an understanding of the long term implications. He outlined the Council's investment in maintenance and renewals of the carriageway asset and advised how the annual depreciation was calculated. The report also illustrated a number of budget projections. Based on the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey, East Lothian was rated 5th out of the 32 Councils in Scotland, a significant Improvement from 13th place 3 years ago. An Action Plan for Improvement was tabled for Members.

Councillor McLennan welcomed the report, noting that the Council's investment had achieved positive results. He also enquired if the PPRC could have a useful input in budget decisions concerning the Roads Asset Management Plan.

Mrs Leitch advised that the scrutiny function of the PPRC was to focus on the Council's performance. However, discussing how funds could be spent differently and analysing benchmarking data would be helpful and determine how transportation feeds into the budget process. The Committee could also consult the Council's Capital Programme.

The Convener requested a further report in December 2012.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the condition of the carriageway asset; the predicted impact of current spending levels; the long term cost in maintaining the asset; and the options available going forward.

5. THE MONITORING OF ROADWORKS - OCTOBER 2010 to MARCH 2012

The Executive Director (Services for Communities) had submitted a report to provide details of the performance of Public Utilities/Statutory Undertakers (SU) and their contractors working within East Lothian during Quarters 3 and 4 of 2010/11, and to monitor trends/progress by comparing performance against Quarters 3 & 4 for 2011/12.

The report also presented the results of the ongoing Customer Satisfaction Feedback for road works sites and other projects carried out by in-house and external contractors. The most recent Annual Performance Review for East Lothian Council as issued by the Scottish Road Works Commissioner (SRWC) on 26 January 2012 was also appended.

The Senior Transportation Manager, Brian Cooper, reported that the performance of internal and external Contractors continues to be monitored. As part of this process, householders affected by planned works were invited to complete a feedback questionnaire. During 2011/12, responses received indicated that 95% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the standard of work undertaken.

Mr Cooper also summarised the results of the 2010 National Coring Programme for Road Reinstatements by Statutory Undertakers undertaken by all 32 Councils in Scotland in collaboration with the Scottish Road Works Commissioner (SRWC). For checks on re-instatement of roads by utility companies in 2010, East Lothian achieved an overall pass rate of 88% compared to 68% in 2008; the overall pass rate for Scotland was 74%. The Commissioner suggested that the Council writes to any company failing to achieve a pass rate of 80% and ask them to provide an improvement action plan. The next coring programme will be carried out this year and the results announced in the summer of 2013.

The Convener referred to flooding in Law Road, North Berwick as a direct result of actions by utility companies and enquired what recourse the Council had in such situations. Mr Cooper replied that the SRWC was keen to eliminate such incidents. This particular incident had been recorded on the road works register and reported to the Commissioner, who had the power to fine any company not performing to the required standard up to £50,000.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and the action points in response to the Scottish Road Works Commissioner’s Performance Review.

6. REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Executive Director (Services to the Community) submitted a report to provide the Committee with an opportunity to determine its Annual Work Programme.

During the course of today’s meeting it was agreed that a further report on Child Protection and the Roads Asset Management Plan would be added to the annual work programme. The Corporate Risk Register would also be brought to the Committee in order to prioritise the work of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the Annual Work Programme (Appendix 1) and provide guidance on Policy Reviews or other additional reports to be included in the Work Programme.

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee

