



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

**TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor D Berry (Convener)
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor J Williamson
Councillor P McLennan

Council Officials Present:

Mr A McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services)
Ms M Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities)
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing
Mr D Nightingale, Head of Education
Ms G McMillan, Children's Services Development Manager
Mr T Shearer, Head of Policy and Partnerships
Mr P Vestri, Corporate Policy & Improvement Manager
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor J Gillies
Councillor P Mackenzie

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. OVERVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report to provide Members of the Committee with the opportunity to review the appropriateness of the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Council's current KPIs, aligned to the Single Outcome Agreement and the Council Plan, were outlined in Appendix A to the report.

Paolo Vestri, Corporate Policy & Improvement Manager, stated that the KPIs were currently under review and invited Committee Members to comment on the suitability of the indicators currently reported. He advised that Services were currently developing revised indicators and an updated version of the KPIs would be brought back to the Committee. The draft indicators in today's report reflected points raised at a briefing session for Members on 12 December 2012.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, summarised the report. He advised that several performance frameworks had been developed by professional bodies or Government agencies to help fulfil Audit Scotland's criteria. He highlighted two in particular; SOLACE (The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) benchmarking indicators and the Social Housing Charter. Following their meeting last month to review the current KPIs, Members had made a number of suggestions for changes or further investigation. The report detailed each suggestion and provided a response.

The Chair cautioned that, if statutory KPIs should change, the Council would need to adapt and change its KPIs accordingly.

Darrin Nightingale, Head of Education, suggested that expressing school exclusions as a percentage could be a better indicator than showing individual figures. Councillor Goodfellow pointed out that there were two measures for exclusions; the total number of exclusions and the total number of pupils excluded. Ms Saunders advised that many of the KPIs were already reflected in the Integrated Children's Services Plan and Andrew Strickland undertook to liaise with Gill McMillan to review and finalise the Children's Wellbeing related indicators.

Councillor Caldwell enquired how often the KPIs would be reported to the Committee and Mr Strickland replied that the KPI Review report would be presented annually and a more detailed report on KPI results requested by Members would be brought to the Committee quarterly.

The Chair stressed it was important that indicators should clearly demonstrate whether performance was improving or deteriorating. Mr Vestri replied that the Council's Performance website showed the performance of indicators over time with information provided to assist comprehension of the results. The Chair also stated that, to be effective, comparisons should be limited to similar Scottish Councils and indicators should be on the same basis

Alex McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services), stated that the purpose of the Policy and Performance Review Committee (PPRC) was to analyse performance and to target specific KPIs. It was necessary to prioritise, identify key areas where there was any concern and then put recommendations to Council or Cabinet.

Councillor Caldwell failed to see the relevance of an indicator which showed the cost per visit to a library or museum and Tom Shearer, Head of Policy and Partnerships, replied that it was sometimes necessary to consider figures in a wider context. For example, it was of interest if another Council was providing the same service at a

lower cost. The Chair commented that it then became material to consider whether the service provided by the other Authority was more efficient or of a lower standard.

Darrin Nightingale suggested that it could be helpful to break down the percentage of complaints to Stage 1 (dealt with at point of service) and Stage 2 (formal complaint made and investigated) and Mr Vestri advised that this information was included in the Customer Feedback report provided on a six monthly basis.

Decision

The Committee agreed to review the Key Performance Indicators outlined in Appendix A, noting the responses that are included in the report.

2. REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report providing the Committee with an opportunity to review and determine its Annual Work Programme.

Paolo Vestri, Corporate Policy and Improvement Manager, advised that the Programme had been drafted at an agenda setting meeting with Members and would be updated following this meeting. He reported that two additional reports which would be coming to the Committee were the Scottish Housing Quality to the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Planning Performance Framework.

Councillor McLennan requested two reports; one on the performance of the Council's transportation services and the other on the impact of the Government's welfare changes. Paolo Vestri stated that a report on the impact of welfare changes would be going to both Council and the Audit and Governance Committee and stressed that a report to the PPRC would need to be performance related. The Chair suggested that this proposal could be considered at the next agenda-setting meeting.

Monica Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities), stated that transport was a major area of expenditure for the Council and critical to the services it delivered. She advised that the provision was reviewed on an ongoing basis and that a report could be prepared and brought to Committee later in the year.

Sharon Saunders, Head of Children's Services, advised that a working group, including colleagues from Finance, had commenced a review of the current provision of transport over three services; Children's Services, Adult Protection and Education.

Decision

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

3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report on performance in relation to Looked After Children and children on the cusp of care as at 31 December 2012.

Sharon Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing, presented the report, expanding on the key points highlighted following the overview report brought before the Committee in November 2012. She advised that, by the end of the financial year ending 31 March 2013, it was anticipated the service will have received almost 3000 referrals, an increase of over 80% on 10 years ago. During the same 10 year period, the number of Looked After Children had increased by 15% to 208. Ms Saunders advised that these figures reflected the national trend and outlined how the service was responding to the increased demands in terms of staffing. She also reported that the number of Looked after Children in East Lothian was below the national average and that three inspections carried out in 2012 had rated the Adoption Service, the Fostering Service and the Pathway Resource Centre highly. A 4th inspection of Lothian Villa Residential Unit had taken place just before Xmas and the early notification indicated a very good outcome at Level 5s. As at 31 December 2012, over 73% of East Lothian's Looked After Children were accommodated (i.e. with foster carers, in Formal Kin Care or in Residential Care, including secure accommodation) and it was pointed out that the cost of caring for accommodated children was significantly more than Looked After Children who were not accommodated (i.e. on Home Supervision).

Ms Saunders stated that the Early Years Framework highlighted the importance of all national and local agencies, the third sector and independent sector working together to deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children. She also summarised the financial resource implications.

Councillor Goodfellow sought clarification around the financial figures and further information was provided by Sharon Saunders and Alex McCrorie, the Executive Director (Support Services). Councillor Goodfellow also suggested that it would be helpful to have a figure showing the total number of children referred, as the total number of referrals can include one or more referrals per child.

Councillor McLennan reported that Formal Kinship carers were coming to his surgeries saying that, as a result of the support they received from the Council, they found themselves in a worse financial position due to benefits being withdrawn. Ms Saunders indicated that she was aware of this situation and the Service had engaged with the Benefits Manager and other agencies to address the impact on families. She understood that Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Spokesperson for Education and Children's Services, had also made representations. The Chair stated that he shared everyone's concern and was willing to provide further support, if necessary.

Councillor McLennan also proposed that the Support from the Start initiative could be expanded and further preventative measures explored. The Chair enquired if there was evidence that early intervention was having a positive impact and Ms Saunders advised that there was evidence that some children were being removed from the statutory systems. She also advised that her team had established six local groups, chaired and led by local communities, to develop their own intervention policies and priorities in early years.

Councillor Williamson requested an update on the recruitment of foster carers and Ms Saunders believed that five had been recruited last year. She also outlined the strategy for recruiting further foster carers. The Chair enquired if the new foster carers were adequately replacing the foster carers who had recently retired and Gill McMillan stated that the greatest need was for foster carers who could take teenagers and this required experience. Placement stability was also important for young people.

The Chair referred to the figures for Home Supervision and Ms Saunders commented that Looked After Children at Home might not be so well equipped for education as children looked after away from home as a significant proportion of them did not have a computer or quiet place in which to do their school work.

Finally, the Chair observed that, while in the past the Council had had surplus places in Residential and Secure Accommodation, there were currently 15 young people accommodated out-with East Lothian. Ms Saunders explained the reasons behind the current level of children in residential care and advised that numbers were expected to decline after next year, although this could never be guaranteed.

Action Point: Sharon Saunders advised she would circulate copies of the Support from the Start Project Board 2012 Activity Report and action plan to Members through the clerk to the Committee. Councillor McLennan also requested that findings from the NHS Health Scotland Review (June 2012) was circulated to Members.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

- i. to note the content of the report; and
- ii. to use the information provided in the report to assess and query performance where appropriate.

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee