



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

**TUESDAY 30 APRIL 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor D Berry (Convener)
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor J Williamson

Council Officials Present:

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive
Mr A McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services)
Ms M Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr R Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure
Dr R Jennings, Head of Housing and Environment
Mr I Patterson, Homelessness Manager
Ms E Wilson, Housing Strategy and Development Service Manager
Ms S Bogunovic, Customer Feedback Manager
Mr I Dagleish, Transport Services Manager
Mr P Vestri, Corporate Policy and Improvement Manager
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor J Caldwell

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. TRANSPORT

The Executive Director (Services for Communities) had submitted a report to provide the Committee with an opportunity to assess the cost and utilisation of the Council fleet of vehicles. There was also a summary of previous work completed on both Supported Services and Community bus service by external providers.

Ray Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure, explained that this was a preliminary report setting out details of all the services provided by the Transportation department and the associated costs. This information was presented to give an overview of the Council's transport operations as a basis for discussion by Members. A more detailed report on any specific line of enquiry requested by Members would be brought to a future meeting.

The Chair stated that he was interested to know if minibuses were being deployed on other operations between pick-ups and drop-offs at Care Centres. Ian Dalgleish, the Transport Services Manager, advised that additional use of these vehicles would be dependent upon the destination of the minibus and the viability of other transfers.

Councillor Goodfellow requested further details on the Annual Charge for each vehicle shown in Appendix 1 and was advised by Mr Dalgleish that this charge included the lease cost for the 5 remaining leased vehicles and Capital Interest cost on the purchased vehicles. It also covered the maintenance charge, road fund licence and transport services overheads. Mr Dalgleish also explained the financial benefits of purchasing vehicles over leasing in the present economic climate, as well as the cost of operating electric vehicles.

Councillor Goodfellow also noted that a number of day centres and groups had funding from the Council which appeared not to be uniform across the board and the Chair advised that this matter would be monitored.

Mr Montgomery gave an overview of the Transport operations and, in particular, the minibus services provided to Day Care Centres. He outlined budget matters and stated that, in future, services might have to be delivered differently. He expected that the overall size of the fleet would be reviewed, especially the vehicles which were most expensive to run. An early debate would centre on the Council's internal bus fleet which was nearing the end of its 10 year life. The cost of replacing them, spreading the cost over another 10 years, would be a considerable financial commitment.

Monica Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities), advised that savings on transport costs had already been identified as part of the budget process and officers were working on options to achieve these savings.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of this report and to accept a report in November on the operations and efficiency of the Council's Transport Services.

2. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

The Executive Director had submitted a report on the use of the Council's complaints handling procedure for a six month period: 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012 (Q2) and 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2012 (Q3).

Sarah Bogunovic, Customer Feedback Manager, presented the report. She advised that, on 1 September 2012, the Council had adopted the complaints handling procedure for local authorities introduced by the SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman). This model reduced the procedure from three stages to two, Stage 1 being a frontline resolution and Stage 2 being an investigation. She reported that the total number of complaints received for Quarter 2, (July - Sept 2012) was 260, a 14% increase on the same period last year. The total number of complaints received for Quarter 3 (October - December 2012) had fallen to 226, lower than for the same period last year. No cases had progressed to the SPSO or Social Work Complaints Review Committee in either Quarter 2 or Quarter 3. Ms Bogunovic advised that one benefit of the new procedure was that already there were a higher number of complaints being resolved at the frontline. This trend was to be encouraged as it was the best outcome for both the complainant and the Council. The service area with the highest number of complaints continued to be Property Maintenance, due to the nature of the service. Other notable issues complained about included maintenance of parks and play areas and the processing of planning applications. Ms Bogunovic was pleased to report that the Council had received a total of 96 compliments over the 2 Quarters.

Councillor Goodfellow stated that this was an excellent report and was particularly pleased to note that Adult Social Care had received more compliments than complaints.

Councillor McAllister was surprised to see no complaints of anti-social behaviour in the breakdown at Appendix 1a and Ms Bogunovic pointed out that the statistics related to the Council's handling of complaints and not to the number of incidents.

Councillor Goodfellow noted that the number of complaints relating to Property Maintenance had decreased in Quarter 3 but suggested it would still be helpful to have a finer breakdown showing the issues which attracted most complaints. Such a breakdown would also highlight any emerging trends. To redress the balance, Councillor Williamson pointed out that Property Maintenance had, in fact, also received the highest number of compliments in both Quarters. The Chair stated that, in general, the Property Maintenance Team worked in a very professional way, but there were occasions when communication difficulties had resulted in delays. Ms Bogunovic replied that this issue had been identified and was included in the service improvements over the past 6 months.

The Chair also commended the Homelessness Unit on their record of complaints, zero in Quarter 2 and four in Quarter 3.

Ms Bogunovic advised that the majority of Transport complaints related to road maintenance and Mr Montgomery replied that road maintenance projects would soon be underway after a prolonged period of adverse weather.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report on the results of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives [SOLACE] benchmarking indicators). The report included a full list of results for 2011-12 and showed the performance of East Lothian's upper and lower quartile results relative to the other Scottish Local Authorities.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, stated that this Benchmarking Framework had been developed to help Councils compare their performance using a standard set of indicators, replacing the specified Statutory Performance Indicators, from 2013/14 onwards. However, he pointed out that differences in population sizes or levels of deprivation can lead to very different results.

Mr Strickland highlighted the results of a number of Indicators. Firstly, the percentage of pupils gaining 5+Awards at Level 5 for Standard Grade and Level 6 for Higher Grade by pupils in the most deprived 20%. Mr Strickland advised that one result was very low and the other high and this could be explained by the small number of pupils in this category, where any fluctuation can make a marked difference. Another indicator showed that 90% of adults in East Lothian were satisfied with parks and open spaces, placing it third in the table of all Local Authorities. However, a scatter chart demonstrated that satisfaction did not necessarily correlate to the amount of money spent on the service. Mr Strickland also put the results for waste collection into context.

The Chair suggested that Appendix A showing Framework results in full could be adapted to exclude the Island Councils and a number of other Scottish Councils which were too dissimilar in profile to East Lothian to have any benchmarking value. He also pointed out that areas considered to be deprived in East Lothian did not at all equate to some inner city areas of deprivation. Alex McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services), advised that the figures in Appendix A were raw figures. The Council would learn from this information and improve services as a result, and Members could select any of the indicators for further investigation. Angela Leitch, Chief Executive, advised that this was the first phase of an exercise to achieve more meaningful Indicators for Councils. The next phase was to determine benchmarking groups of 8 Councils. Meanwhile, she suggested that the Framework was linked to the Council's Risk Register and that the Council's performance was assessed in relation to the other Authorities.

Councillor MacKenzie commented that it would be useful to have figures relating to the performance of Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) in Standard and Higher grades. The Chair welcomed this proposal as the Council took its Corporate Parenting role very seriously. Ms Leitch added that there was also a very detailed Action Plan for LAAC.

Decision

The Committee agreed to use the information provided in this report to consider whether there were any aspects of the Council's performance about which it would like further information.

4. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report to provide Members of the Policy and Performance Review Committee (PPRC) with the opportunity to review the appropriateness of the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, presented the report. He stated that feedback from Members present at the January PPRC meeting, along with guidance provided by Audit Scotland, had been taken into account when defining the draft KPIs for 2013/14. Further revisions to the list were likely to be made to reflect the final Single Outcome Agreement and targets for each KPI. Mr Strickland advised that the final report on the KPIs would be brought to the June meeting and informed Members of the Council's new performance website which could be accessed at <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/performance/>.

Decision

The Committee agreed to review the draft Key Performance Indicators for 2013/14 outlined in Appendix A to the report.

5. SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Executive Director (Services for Communities) had submitted a report to provide members of the Policy and Performance Review Committee (PPRC) with an overview of the main areas for improvement which had been put in place to respond to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Final Inquiry Report.

Ian Patterson, Homelessness Manager, advised that the Scottish Housing Regulator had initiated the Shared Risk Assessment process in 2009 which produced an Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) for each local authority in Scotland. East Lothian Council's AIP had highlighted two specific potential risks and an Inquiry was carried out in 2012. The Final Inquiry Report was attached to the report as Appendix 1 and the Council's Improvement Plan was attached as Appendix 2. Esther Wilson, Housing Strategy and Development Service Manager, advised that an end of year report would also be brought to the Committee.

The Chair stated that this paper had been considered at Full Council.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Final Inquiry Report (Appendix 1) and the Council's Improvement Plan (Appendix 2).

6. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

Paolo Vestri, Corporate Policy and Performance Manager, stated that a report on Transportation's passenger carrying vehicles would come to the November meeting, as agreed earlier and a report on electric transportation vehicles would be added to the annual work plan.

The Chair noted that there were already a number of reports due to come to the June meeting and an agenda setting meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 16 May at 10 am.

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee