



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE CABINET**

**TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2014  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor S Akhtar  
Councillor T Day  
Councillor D Grant  
Councillor N Hampshire  
Councillor W Innes (Convener)  
Councillor J McMillan  
Councillor M Veitch

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor D Berry  
Councillor S Brown  
Councillor J Caldwell  
Councillor S Currie  
Councillor J Gillies  
Councillor M Libberton  
Councillor P MacKenzie  
Councillor F McAllister  
Councillor K McLeod  
Councillor J Williamson

**Council Officials Present:**

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive  
Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services  
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive – Resources and People Services  
Mr D Small, Director of East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership  
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources  
Mr M Leys, Head of Adult Wellbeing  
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships  
Dr R Jennings, Head of Development  
Mrs M Ferguson, Service Manager – Legal Services  
Mr I Dalgleish, Transport Services Manager  
Mr C Forbes, Principal Officer (Employability)

**Clerk:**

Ms A Smith

**Apologies:**

None

**Declarations of Interest:**

None

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET OF 10 DECEMBER 2013**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of 10 December 2013 were approved.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTRACTS AWARDED BY EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL, 1 NOVEMBER 2013 TO 6 JANUARY 2014**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) advising Members of all contracts awarded by the Council from 1 November 2013 to 6 January 2014, with a value of over £150,000.

In response to questions from Councillor Currie regarding previous comments by Members of the Administration, Morag Ferguson, Service Manager-Legal Services, clarified that it would not be legally permissible to award the contract to the second placed tenderer under the Council's existing Framework Arrangements. Under these Frameworks an assessment on quality had already taken place at the initial stage. At this stage only an assessment on price was appropriate – there was no opportunity to consider anything else. In response to further questions, Monica Patterson, Depute Chief Executive, advised that officers were currently reviewing the use of Frameworks for future tendering processes.

Councillor Innes indicated that it was the intention to move to a procurement regime that would afford greater opportunity for East Lothian companies; the current Framework, put in place by the previous Administration, only included 2 East Lothian companies.

**Decision**

The Cabinet agreed to note the award of contracts with a value of over £150,000, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

**3. CHARGING FOR HOMELESS SERVICES**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking approval to implement revised charges for the provision of homeless services.

The Head of Communities and Partnerships, Tom Shearer, presented the report. He outlined the background and highlighted the factors that had altered in relation to the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation. He gave details of the proposed charges for this type of accommodation. He drew Members' attention to the table at section 3.12 of the report which showed the impact of the proposed changes for applicants depending on their circumstances. He also gave details of the recommended charges for furniture storage.

In response to questions from Councillor Brown regarding consultation, Mr Shearer advised that the East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel had been consulted; homeless organisations may also have been consulted, he would clarify, post meeting. Councillor Brown asked about the effect of the charges on women/children in a homeless situation due to domestic abuse. Mr Shearer advised that current arrangements would exist; they would be exempt on initial assessment of circumstances and then reviewed. In response to a query from Councillor Berry, he indicated that a relatively small percentage of people presenting as homeless were actually homeless and on the street, without any kind of accommodation.

Councillor Currie hoped that homeless organisations, particularly Shelter, had been consulted; if not, he asked that the Council consult with Shelter now as a courtesy.

Councillor Hampshire stated that legislative changes introduced in 2012 had resulted in significant increased costs to the homeless service and also an increase in demand for accommodation. The proposed charges had been carefully considered and would bring the Council into line with other local authorities.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommended charges for the provision of Bed and Breakfast accommodation and furniture storage detailed in sections 3.7, 3.11 and 3.15 of the report.

## **4. CONCESSIONARY RAIL TRAVEL**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking approval to change the current Concessionary Rail Travel Scheme to operate only during off-peak times for National Entitlement Card holders.

The Transport Services Manager, Ian Dalgleish, presented the report, providing Members with background information and outlining the proposed changes.

In response to a question from Councillor Currie, Mr Dalgleish advised that Scotrail provided data on the number of National Entitlement Card holders travelling at peak times but could not specify the reason for the journey.

Councillor Berry welcomed the report. The proposal was sensible and the money saved could be better used. He would be suggesting to the Scottish Government that concessionary entitlement as regards bus travel be reviewed.

Councillor Veitch stated that given the current economic climate anything that could be done to save money was helpful; this was a sensible measure. The £76,000 saved could now be used to support the local supported bus network.

Councillor Currie stated that the SNP Group did not consider this proposal to be the right way forward and did not support what was in effect a reduction of the service currently provided to the people of East Lothian.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. that the current Concessionary Rail Travel Scheme be changed to operate only during off-peak times for National Entitlement Card holders; and
- ii. that the resultant savings (approx £76.5k) be used to offset the annual overspend of £169k on supported bus routes.

## **5. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCOTLAND (YES) FUND**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) updating Cabinet on new employment opportunities provided across East Lothian as a consequence of the Scottish Government Youth Employment Scotland (YES) fund.

Colin Forbes, Principal Officer (Employability) presented the report. He outlined progress made since the implementation of East Lothian Works. He informed Members that last July the Council had been awarded a combined Scottish Government/European Social fund grant to manage the delivery of the YES Fund, a wage subsidy scheme to support the creation of sustainable job opportunities within the private sector for unemployed 16-24 year olds. The scope of eligibility activity as regards the fund had been extended in November to include 3 new categories, including a local authority jobs training programme. He gave details of specific types of placement that could be made available across Council departments. He advised that the work experience opportunities would be for vulnerable young people furthest from the labour market and facing significant barriers to work.

In response to a question from Councillor MacKenzie about extending the scheme to the third sector, Mr Forbes advised that there had been some discussion with this group; the criteria for funding had to be checked as strict conditions applied, he would clarify post meeting. In response to a question from Councillor Berry, Mr Forbes confirmed that there was a vocational opportunities programme in place, run in conjunction with school guidance staff, which identified those young people that were maybe not going on to a positive destination and provided support and paid work experience. He also responded to questions in relation to timescales and uptake.

Councillor McMillan acknowledged the significant work carried out by East Lothian Works. This scheme gave these young people improved confidence and the effort made to target the most vulnerable and take them forward was recognised. The scheme was empowering local authorities to work closely with employers; this could only be a marker for the future, to make all of East Lothian flourish. He commended this paper to colleagues.

Councillor MacKenzie agreed that East Lothian Works was an excellent initiative. He welcomed the establishment by the Scottish Government of the YES fund. This scheme should be extended to the third sector; he referred to his discussions with a representative of this sector. He drew attention to statistics quoted in the report. He stressed the need to find a solution for the most vulnerable young people; there were significant barriers facing this group, it was a challenge for this Council, but it was solvable using the resources available, including the third sector.

Councillor McMillan responded that over the past year dialogue had taken place and there continued to be consideration about the involvement of the third sector.

The Chief Executive, Angela Leitch, reiterated that discussion with the third sector would continue. She indicated that for a variety of reasons there had been limited take up of the scheme by local businesses but if East Lothian was to achieve the objectives set out in the Economic Strategy, growth in the private sector had to be the focus as it was through this sector that progress would be made. She stressed the need to better promote the scheme and opportunities and engage with local businesses.

Councillor Berry indicated that there should be more consideration of how people could be employed in East Lothian's key sectors of tourism and food and drink. He echoed the praise for East Lothian Works. He remarked however that it was retroactive acknowledgement that young people were leaving school not properly prepared for work so the education system, good as it was, could be improved; early intervention was key.

Councillor Hampshire stated that one of the biggest tragedies across communities was the number of young people who were not in education, employment or training; the longer they were in that position the more difficult it was for them. This had to be addressed. He emphasised that the Council had to maximise employment opportunities for East Lothian.

Councillor Currie remarked that employers had to be encouraged to discuss their concerns and how to deal with these had to be addressed. He stated that for jobs outwith East Lothian

travel, accessibility and cost, was a factor. He agreed that the third sector should be involved but added that if this sector was encouraged to engage then administration support for these voluntary organisations had to be seriously considered.

Councillor Innes welcomed the paper. This scheme would help a significant number of young people. He stated that discussions with the private sector to encourage uptake would continue. In relation to comments about the third sector, he indicated this was for the Scottish Government to determine.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. to note the progress as outlined in implementing the Scottish Government YES fund across East Lothian;
- ii. to acknowledge and support the commitment and effort from all Council Services in developing employment and training opportunities across the Council and Community Planning Partners; and
- iii. to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the YES fund with targets to be achieved as follows:
  - Create 30 new grant funded 6 month paid work training experience opportunities throughout the Council for vulnerable young people.
  - Create an additional 12 grant funded Modern Apprenticeship/graduate placement opportunities throughout the Council.

## **6. SERVICE USER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ADULT WELLBEING SERVICES**

A report was submitted by the Head of Adult Wellbeing detailing the arrangements for financial assessment of Adult Wellbeing service users for 2014/2015 and the revised rates for client contributions within Adult Wellbeing for 2014/2015.

The Head of Adult Wellbeing, Murray Leys, presented the report, drawing Members' attention to Tables 1 and 2 within the report, which detailed the recommended charges and the introduction of charges, respectively, by service area. He made particular reference to the proposed change in relation to transport, and to the related guidelines for approval, attached at Appendix 1. He gave details on Self Directed Support (SDS) and referred to the update at Appendix 2. He informed Cabinet that protection for service users would be built into the newly introduced charges, so that existing service users would see any increase in their contribution limited to £25 per week per year; this protection would run for 1 year.

Mr Leys responded to questions, providing clarification regarding the potential increase in income as a result of the report recommendations and the limit on the protection period.

Councillor Grant indicated that as mentioned in the report, local authorities had, for some time, had the ability to generate income by charging for some services. However, given the financial pressures facing Adult Wellbeing, it was now proposed to introduce charges to other service areas. Comparisons had been carried out with other councils which showed scope to introduce charges to these new areas and still have lower charges than many other Scottish councils. With regard to transport changes, he referred to the guidelines at Appendix 1, stating that the present arrangements lacked clarity and were unsustainable in this financial climate. The new legislation as regards SDS placed new duties on Adult Wellbeing to provide choices to support service users. This was an important paper; it

pointed the way forward in service user contributions, clarified and updated transport policy and detailed progress on SDS.

Councillor Currie voiced the SNP's opposition to the recommendations. He referred to Table 1 in the report stating that the percentage increases in the charges were significantly higher than the rate of inflation. He responded to comments made by Councillor Grant regarding financial pressures on this service. With regard to transport charges, he drew attention to Appendix 1, section 8.5 (recreational outings), stating this would result in day centres/lunch clubs, etc., having to absorb this extra cost. The SNP Group felt that the rise in charges should not be above the rate of inflation; the recommendations were not acceptable.

Several Cabinet Members responded to Councillor Currie's comments, remarking that the SNP's view was contrary in Opposition to when they had been in Administration. Funding from the Scottish Government did not meet service delivery requirements; the Council was trying to address the situation by proposing these, very fair, policies. In relation to the recommended changes there would be a financial assessment, so only those able to pay would have to make a contribution to the cost of services. This Administration had made significant investment into the Adult Wellbeing service.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed:

- i. to approve the recommended charges for 2014/2015, as summarised in Table 1, and agreed the introduction of charges as noted in Table 2;
- ii. to approve Guidelines on Assistance with Transport for Users of Adult Wellbeing Services (Appendix 1);
- iii. to note the progress of the information on Self Directed Support (Appendix 2); and
- iv. to note that all charges would be effective from 1 April 2014.

### **SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS – EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The Cabinet unanimously agreed to exclude the public from the following business containing exempt information by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 6 (information relating to any particular applicant for, recipient or former recipient of a service provided by the Authority; information concerning the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Authority) of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

### **Sub-Committee Minutes**

The private minute of the meeting of the Homelessness Appeals Sub-Committee held on 19 December 2013 was approved.

### **Property Matters**

A private report submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) concerning Affordable Housing in Dunbar was approved.