



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

**TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2014  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor D Berry (Convener)  
Councillor J Caldwell  
Councillor F McAllister  
Councillor J Gillies  
Councillor J Williamson

**Council Officials Present:**

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services  
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive – Resources and People Services  
Mr R Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure  
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children’s Wellbeing  
Mr D Heaney, Acting Head of Adult Wellbeing  
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement  
Mr D Proudfoot, Service Manager – Property Maintenance  
Ms A Thompson, Public Protection Team Manager  
Ms F Duncan, Service Manager – Criminal Justice  
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer  
Mr S Pryde, Principal Amenity Officer

**Clerk:**

Mrs F Stewart

**Apologies:**

Councillor P McLennan  
Councillor P MacKenzie  
Councillor J Goodfellow

**Declarations of Interest:**

None

## **1. MINUTE OF PPRC MEETING ON 17 JUNE 2014**

The Minute of the PPRC meeting on 17 June 2014 was agreed to be a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

## **2. FLY TIPPING UPDATE**

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report to provide the Committee with a briefing on Fly Tipping.

Mr Stuart Pryde, Principal Amenity Officer, presented the report. He advised that the Council had kept records of reported fly tipping incidents for 4 years but the figures gathered could not be relied upon to give an accurate pattern of trends for a number of reasons; changes in policy on Special Uplifts, lack of clarity on what constitutes fly tipped material and cases of material wrongly presented or disturbed by youths. However, the recording of fly tipping had remained settled for the year 2013-14 and this approach would remain in place, providing more meaningful figures in the future. This data would accurately record what was recognised as fly tipping and the localities where the problems were greatest, with sources being broken down between commercial and domestic waste. This information could then be jointly analysed by the teams responsible for investigation, uplifts of the dumped material, and management of the recycling centres. Mr Pryde reported that the highest incidences of fly tipping (77%), originated from domestic premises and the remainder was primarily vehicle tyres, white goods or construction waste. The report included a summary of the actual reports logged by the Contact Centre over the previous 16 months and showed the percentage of reports for each ward, Musselburgh cluster having the highest number at 33%. The Safer Communities Team had now added investigation and issue of fixed penalty tickets to offenders responsible for fly tipping. Mr Pryde advised that, at the end of 2014/15, the Council would be better placed to identify any wider trends with regard to fly tipping and review if resources required better direction towards managing fly tipping materials at source and the deployment of enforcement activities.

Councillor Williamson noted from the summary of fly tipping reports that the figures for fly tipping in June/July 2014 were double the figure for April/May 2014 and enquired what the cause of this might be. Mr Pryde replied that late spring and early summer generally saw an increase in house cleaning and DIY. The reports were likely to reflect this, in combination with an increase in garden waste.

Councillor Caldwell stated that he had received reports of companies clearing houses and dumping items rather than paying to dispose of the articles responsibly. He enquired if there was evidence that the waiting times for special uplifts, which can be several months, had contributed to an increase in fly tipping. Mr Pryde advised that the Council had had some success in tracing companies responsible for fly tipping and had recovered costs. In respect of the special uplifts, he stated that there did not appear to be any relation between the incidents of fly tipping reported and the waiting times for special uplifts. He considered that the Council appeared to be a victim of its own success, at present, with the service it provides. He was also confident that better information for residents on the community re-cycling centres would help to ease the pressure on the service.

The Chair considered that involving the Safer Communities Team in the investigation of fly tipping incidents and the prosecution of offenders, was a good example of partnership working. He also commended the fly tipping team for their excellent response when they are contacted and proposed that a follow up report could be brought before the Committee at a later date.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the content of this report.

### **3. AUDIT AND CHILD PROTECTION. REPORTING TO ELECTED MEMBERS APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014**

The Acting Chief Social Work Officer and the Heads of Adult and Children's Wellbeing had submitted a report to give an overview of the statistical performance information for Child and Adult Protection for Quarter 4, 2013/14 and a summary report for the full year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Sharon Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing introduced David Heaney, Acting Head of Adult Wellbeing and Fiona Duncan, Service Manager for Criminal Justice, currently also Acting chief Social Work Officer. She also introduced Anne Thompson who was the Public Protection Team Manager for both East and Midlothian.

Ms Thompson reported on the East Lothian Child Protection trends and patterns for 2013-14. She advised that the number of children on the Child Protection Register had remained stable until Quarter 4 when there appeared to be a sudden increase. However, she pointed out that, as there were only a relatively small number of children on the register, percentages can change quickly. The number of children on the Register in Quarter 4 was 59, an increase of 15 on Quarter 3. An audit of these figures indicated that nothing remarkable had caused the increase, but there was positive evidence that some cases had been managed at a lower level. The analysis had also highlighted themes around different assessment of risk thresholds and a number of workforce and practice development actions had been taken as a result of this evaluation work. Ms Thompson also reported that draft National Guidance on GIRFEC (Getting it Right For Every Child) had been updated this year.

Ms Thompson advised that the number of referrals in Adult Protection had steadily increased since new legislation had been introduced in 2008, although the figures for 2013-14 had remained relatively static. She reported that activity in Adult Protection had decreased and there was evidence that practitioners were more confident and less risk averse. In 2013-14, the Scottish Government had identified five National Priorities within Adult Support and Protection, one of which was to develop and implement a National Data Set. Ms Thompson also reported that, in March 2013, an independent person had been commissioned to carry out a self evaluation exercise of adult protection services. The outcomes had been largely positive but a number of recommendations had been included in the Adult and Support Protection and Improvement Plan. Overall, Ms Thompson stated that the aim was to look at the service in a more holistic way. To advance this aim, the East and Midlothian Public Protection Committee (EMPPC) was formally established in July 2014 and covered all the functions and responsibilities of a number of previous committees. The Public Protection Team was also now co-located in the Brunton Hall with MELDAP (Mid and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership) and would shortly be joined by the Police Protection Team.

The Chair, noting that the number of children on the Child Protection Register had increased, looked for clarification on whether the increase was a good or bad trend. Ms Saunders replied that there was no definitive answer. The figures simply reflected the Service's response to concerns raised. However, the figures reflected that multi-agency procedures and officers were working closely with families to keep children and young people safe. A few families with sibling groups requiring support had also moved in to the area which may account for the sudden rise.

The Chair observed that, understandably, there was a different structure in East Lothian for Adult Protection and Child Protection. Mr Heaney, Acting Head of Adult Wellbeing, stated that, where children were at risk, it was important to recognise key connection points (i.e. drugs, complex needs) in order to respond in the most effective way. In each case, the support provided was not just for the child, but for the family, and appropriate to the circumstances.

Ms Saunders outlined the different levels of staged intervention which was being embedded across all partner agencies and services, and stated that Housing, Police and Children's and Adult's Wellbeing teams were all working together to keep children from harm. She also advised that, following the community planning services for children inspection which reported in April 2014, recommendations had been incorporated into a new East Lothian Child Protection Improvement Plan which was endorsed by the Joint Public Protection Committee in June 2014.

The Chair welcomed the inter-agency strategy to protect children who were least able to look after themselves.

The Committee had been receiving reports on a quarterly basis and discussed at what intervals they wished to receive future reports.

**Decision:**

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note the contents of this report; and to
- ii. accept bi-annual reports in January and June

**4. SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report on the use of the Council's Social Work complaints procedure for the year 2013/14.

Ms Sarah Bogunovic, the Customer Feedback Manager, presented the report. She advised that a total of 77 complaints had been received for the year 2013-14; 29 at Stage 1 (dealt with at point of Service) and 48 at Stage 2 (investigation). These figures showed a significant decrease from last year (Stage 1 complaints had decreased by 17% and Stage 2 by 29.5%). Examples of Stage 1 complaints included messages not being returned, requested information not being provided and delays/failure in providing an agreed service. Examples of Stage 2 complaints included the conduct/attitude of a social worker (co-relation found between complaints and social worker advising unwelcome decision), dissatisfaction with changes to contribution levels towards the cost of care packages and child protection issues (e.g. handling of referrals and implementation of decisions).

In respect of complaint handling performance, 89% had been acknowledged within 3 working days and 79% had been responded to or an update given within the statutory timescale of 28 days. Ms Bogunovic advised that there was increasingly more face to face meetings and telephone contact to try to resolve complaints at an earlier stage.

Of the Stage 2 complaints received in 2013/14, 21% had been upheld, 21% partially upheld and 58% not upheld. Three complainants had asked for their complaints to be referred to the Complaints Review Committee (CRC). The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman had received 6 complaints about East Lothian Council's Social Work Services, one less than last year. Ms Bogunovic was also pleased to report that the Council had also received 60 compliments relating to social work services.

The Chair stated that it would be interesting to see a breakdown of the Council's social work complaints compared to other comparable local authorities and Ms Bogunovic advised that performance indicators were about to be adopted nationally to enable benchmarking analysis to be carried out. A report on benchmarking could be brought to the Committee after one year of results were available.

Councillor Caldwell referred to the level of complaints acknowledged and responded to and enquired if these complaints were resolved. Ms Bogunovic replied that there was evidence that solutions were being found (only 3 complaints had progressed to the CRC). Officers also took care to signpost clients to sources of additional support.

The Chair commented that, at a time when demand for social services was increasing, the cohesion of communities in East Lothian was a great strength. He also praised the staff for their professionalism and commitment recalling that, during a recent severe winter, not one social work visit was missed. He had found the willingness of staff to go the extra mile impressive.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the report.

## **5. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK**

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report on the use of the Council's complaints handling procedure for the year 2013/2014 and provide analysis on customer feedback received for Q1 of 2014/2015: 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014.

Sarah Bogunovic, Customer Feedback Manager, presented the report. She advised that the Council complied with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) procedures which helped local authorities to monitor complaints handling performance. She reported that, in 2013/14, the Council had received 961 complaints, 507 at Stage 1 (dealt with at service level) and 454 at Stage 2 (investigation). This represented a 10% increase on the number of complaints received last year.

Ms Bogunovic advised that 52.7% of the overall number of complaints had been closed at Stage 1 and 47.3% had been closed at Stage 2. A Quarterly Comparison graph in the report showed that the number of complaints had increased in 2013/14, peaking in Quarter 4. Ms Bogunovic stated that there was no single identifiable cause for the rise in the number of complaints but it could be as a result of changes being made to how some services were delivered in light of the financial challenges faced by local authorities. The complaints process had also been more widely publicised.

Ms Bogunovic advised that the average time taken to respond to Stage 1 complaints was 4 working days and for Stage 2 complaints it was 12 working days (target times were 5 days and 20 days respectively). The Service areas with the highest number of complaints over the year were property maintenance (32% of total), transportation (10% of total) and Community Housing (8% of total). Ms Bogunovic explained that Property Maintenance consistently received the highest number of complaints due to the nature of the service and the high level of interaction with tenants.

Ms Bogunovic also summarised customer feedback for Quarter 1 (April to June 2014). She advised that 214 complaints had been received (110 at Stage 1 and 104 at Stage 2). In addition, 74 compliments and 25 comments had been received, both figures significantly higher than Quarter 1 last year.

Ms Bogunovic stated that it was important for the Council to learn from any failures in service. Customers were now being surveyed on their experience of making a complaint and case studies would be developed for service areas. Briefing reports would be provided to the Council Management team in addition to the PPRC reports.

Councillor Williamson noted from the report that a number of complaints had been received about staff attitude and he enquired if these complaints related to a particular service in the Council or if they suggested that staff were working under increased pressure. Ms Bogunovic replied that the complaints were spread across the service and there was a co-relation with circumstances where staff had to deliver unwelcome news. There were, however, examples where customer concerns could have been handled better.

Councillor Caldwell asked if complaints had to be made in writing and Ms Bogunovic replied that complaints could also be made by telephone.

The Chair referred to the practicalities of processing and carrying out property maintenance repairs and Douglas Proudfoot, the Service Manager for Property Maintenance, stated that his team carried out a survey of all repairs undertaken. Results showed that 90.4% of customers were satisfied with the quality of their repairs. However, the aim was to improve the service further and to benchmark their performance with comparable local authorities. Recent developments included rolling out mobile working, making scheduled appointments available to book online and engaging with the trades union on being able to offer evening appointments for residents. Ms Bogunovic added that the property maintenance service area also featured in the top 5 of the teams receiving compliments.

The Chair requested an update on road repairs and Ray Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure, advised that performance had improved slightly following an increase in investment by the Council. He also reported that some working practices had changed to meet current demands, although some issues still needed to be addressed.

Responding to the Chair's observations on the report format, Paolo Vestri suggested that, for clarification, an annual report and a quarterly report could be brought to the Committee.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the report.

## **6. DRAFT COUNCIL ANNUAL PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013-14**

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report to provide the Committee with the draft Annual Performance Report 2013/14.

Paolo Vestri, Service Manager for Corporate Policy and Improvement, stated that the Annual Performance report was a summary of the Council's performance in relation to its commitments in the Council Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement. The report also highlighted what the Council had done and what still needed to be done. Audit Scotland, having carried out an evaluation of Council Annual Public Performance Reports, cited East Lothian Council's 2013/14 Annual Performance Report as an example of good practice in 4 areas; the structured approach to public performance reporting, effective use of customer satisfaction information, responsiveness to its communities and the reporting of revenues and service costs.

The Chair stated that economic development in East Lothian depended on tourism and it was very disappointing that Visit Scotland had largely closed down all of the Tourist Information Centres in East Lothian.

Councillor Williamson requested clarification on the detail given for Communities in the report (page 73) and Paolo Vestri confirmed that devolved decision making and budgets would begin with a £100,000 budget for each secondary school cluster. He also advised that the Council's 3-year budget approved in April 2014 had committed to allocating £650,000 in 2016 for the six new Area Partnerships.

The Chair stated that that the report could have highlighted that East Lothian schools had performed better than the Scottish average.

*Action Point:* Douglas Proudfoot to look into the closure of Tourist Information Offices in East Lothian.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the draft Annual Performance Report 2013/14 and that no further reports on any aspect of the Council's performance were required at this time.

## **7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report to provide the Committee with information regarding the performance of Council services during Q1 (1 April – 30 June) 2014/15 and to consult the Committee on the proposed annual performance indicators for 2014/15.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, presented the report. He advised that each service had been asked to review their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to how well they measured the impact of actions from the Council Plan, and the extent to which they reflected the outcomes of the Single Outcome Agreement and Audit Scotland's criteria. Many of the indicators had therefore been reported in the past, but some were new. The Council also benchmarked performance against other comparable local authorities. Appendix 1 to the report showed the full list of KPIs broken down by service and Appendix 2 displayed the quarterly and monthly results for the KPIs for Quarter 1 2014/15.

Councillor Williamson requested further information on the use of civic amenity sites for waste disposal. He noted that an acceptable use policy was being developed but wished to know what that policy was going to address. He noted that customers from outside East Lothian were increasingly using East Lothian sites but equally, it was potentially more convenient for residents living in the west of Musselburgh to visit the recycling centre in Seafield. He considered that it was difficult to restrict people from travelling from one county to another to recycle their goods. There was also the issue of what exactly constituted trade waste. A lack of clarification on this point could lead to disputes. Ray Montgomery explained the procedures followed by the attendants at the East Lothian centres to ensure that only domestic waste is deposited.

Councillor Caldwell commented that the arrows which indicated the upward or downward trend of indicators did not necessarily make it clear whether the trend was good or bad. Paolo Vestri agreed to re-examine the colour scheme for the arrows.

The Chair stated that it would be helpful to show more Indicators as a percentage of population figure i.e. visits to the Council's website or visits to museums. The Chair also highlighted the high number of attendances at A & E for residents aged 75+ and the considerable costs associated with this. David Heaney responded that this statistic had driven policy changes in health and social care and advised that there was a national drive towards reducing hospital admissions as part of the aim of health and social care integration.

The Chair noted that data for a number of key KPIs had not been reported and he hoped to see data for all KPIs included in future reports. The Chair also asked the Principal Amenity Officer to convey his appreciation to all of the volunteers who had generously given their time and talents to the Scotland in Bloom project in North Berwick.

**Decision**

The Committee agreed:

- i. to review and approve the Key Performance Indicators detailed in Appendix 1 and 2; and
- ii. to use the Q1 2014/15 performance results provided in Appendix 2 to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance is in need of improvement or further investigation.

**8. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Depute Chief Executive for Partnerships and Community Services stated that, from today's meeting, a report on the closure of tourist offices in East Lothian and a follow up report on fly tipping would be added to the Annual Work Programme. She added that a report was due on delayed discharges, but, as the November meeting already had a substantial agenda, this report would be scheduled for the January 2015 meeting. A report on East Lothian Works and an Overview of HGIOC would also be scheduled for early in 2015.

Signed .....

Councillor David Berry  
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee



**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee  
**MEETING DATE:** 25 November 2014  
**BY:** Depute Chief Executive – Resources and People Services  
**SUBJECT:** Rent Arrears

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**2**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee about the significant work which has been undertaken by the Revenues service since the last Policy and Performance Review Committee report was submitted on 19 March 2013.
- 1.2 To inform the Committee about improvements in current year rent collection performance and how recent collection performance compares to other Scottish Councils.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the change in approach to managing rent collection and to recognise that the service enhancements which have been introduced are producing improvements in current year performance compared to previous years.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note that, although as a social landlord the Council's focus continues to be around sustaining tenancies and ensuring that tenants receive the help and support they need to stay in their home, the new service improvements ensure that tenants themselves are more accountable for paying their rent and know what is expected of them, as well as being clear about the consequences of non payment.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to recognise the commitment and dedication shown by all staff involved in rent collection and to support the Revenues service during this transitional period.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

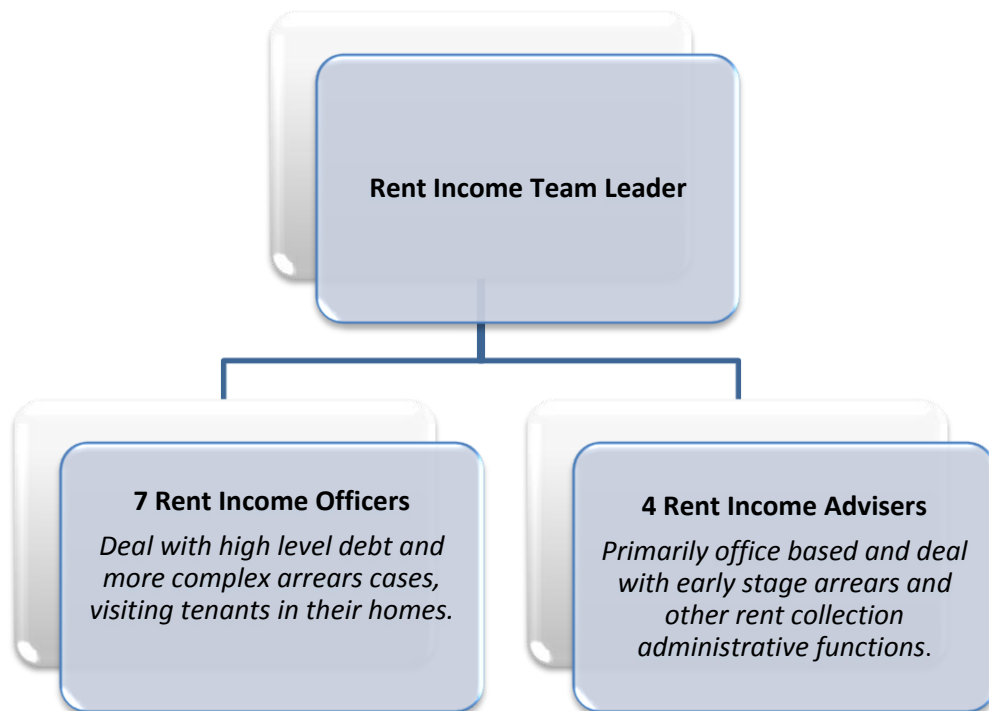
#### **3.1 Rent Income staffing & budget**

- 3.1.1 Managing rent arrears during a time of economic downturn and welfare cuts gives rise to substantial challenges for the Council. A reduction in staffing levels within the Rent Income team in recent years has affected the Council's ability to respond to this changing environment. These challenges have been recognised and temporary funding of £100k was awarded to the Revenues service in 2012/13 to assist with rent collection. This temporary funding was extended into 2013/14 and was subsequently made permanent in 2014/15.
- 3.1.2 Although the additional, 2 year, temporary funding allowed the Revenues service to recruit temporary staff to assist with rent collection, staff retention became a significant concern for the service with high staff turnover due to the nature of the short term, temporary contracts in 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- 3.1.3 Since the funding became permanent in 2014/15, the Revenues service has recruited one additional permanent Rent Income Officer and three permanent Rent Income Advisers. It is pleasing to report that these members of staff remain within the Rent Income team, giving stability within the staffing establishment and as their knowledge and experience has increased, their contribution has become invaluable to the Revenues service over recent months.
- 3.1.4 Following the departure of the then Rent Income Team Leader under VERS in August 2013, the Rent Income and Fraud Investigations Teams were merged under one line manager and the then Investigations Team Leader was transferred from the Benefits Service to the Revenues Service to take up a new role as Rent Income & Investigations Team Leader.
- 3.1.5 The Department for Work and Pensions has created a new, national Single Fraud Investigations Service (also known as Fraud & Error Service) and all Local Authority staff with a role in investigating Benefit Fraud will transfer into this new team. 1.6 FTE posts from East Lothian Council transferred at 1 November 2014 under the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice (COSOP) – similar to TUPE provisions.
- 3.1.6 The services of the current Rent Income & Investigation Team Leader were retained by the Council as the post did not meet the criteria for transfer to the DWP i.e. the post is not solely or primarily dealing with Welfare Fraud so was therefore not in scope. It was also agreed that a full time Team Leader was once again required to manage rent collection. The re-established, dedicated Rent Income Team Leader role is essential with significant challenges ahead. The new team structure is shown at Figure 1.
- 3.1.7 The additional staffing resource and formation of the new team has helped to provide a more proactive and preventative/early intervention

approach to rent collection, with more face-to-face contact with tenants. Having a strong presence in the community is ensuring that tenants get the help they need quickly to manage their rent payments. Prompt referrals to the Citizens Advice Bureau, Welfare Rights and for tenancy support can also be made if a need is identified.

3.1.8 The additional permanent staffing within the Rent Income service has seen this staffing group transform into a highly motivated, dynamic team who are committed to implementing change and achieving success. The strengthened team shows a real desire and passion to turn around the decline in performance of recent years.

**Figure 1**



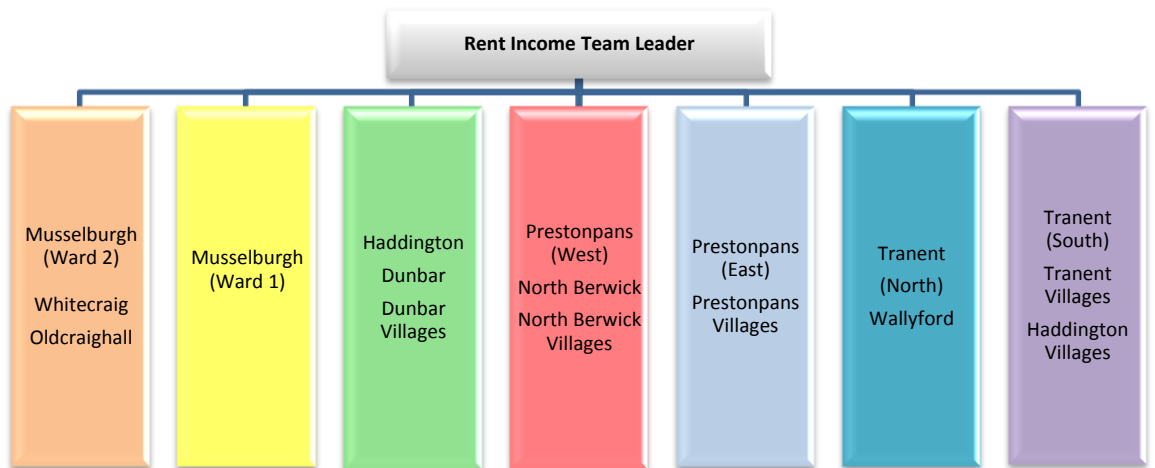
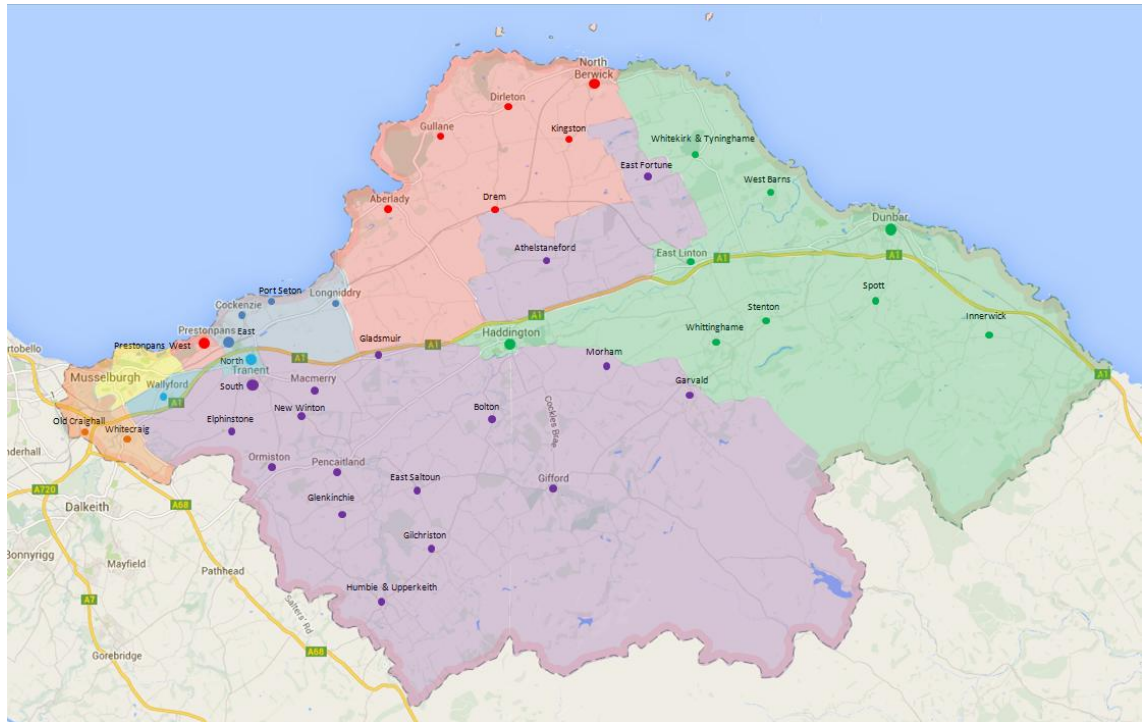
### **3.2 Management of rent arrears within geographical areas**

3.2.1 Although the management of rent arrears in East Lothian has historically been split by geographical area, the additional, permanent staffing resource has allowed realignment of geographical areas so that the workload is managed more effectively and the caseload for each member of staff is now consistent and manageable.

3.2.2 Sub teams within the Rent Income team have been set up so that Officers and Advisers can work together in smaller, more focused area teams to manage both early stage arrears and serious arrears for their designated geographical patches.

3.2.3 This new approach to caseload management is proving to be popular with the Rent Income Officers and Advisers and is more conducive to the focused monitoring work carried out by the team leader. The new geographical area split is shown at Figure 2.

**Figure 2**



### 3.3 Previous Year Trends

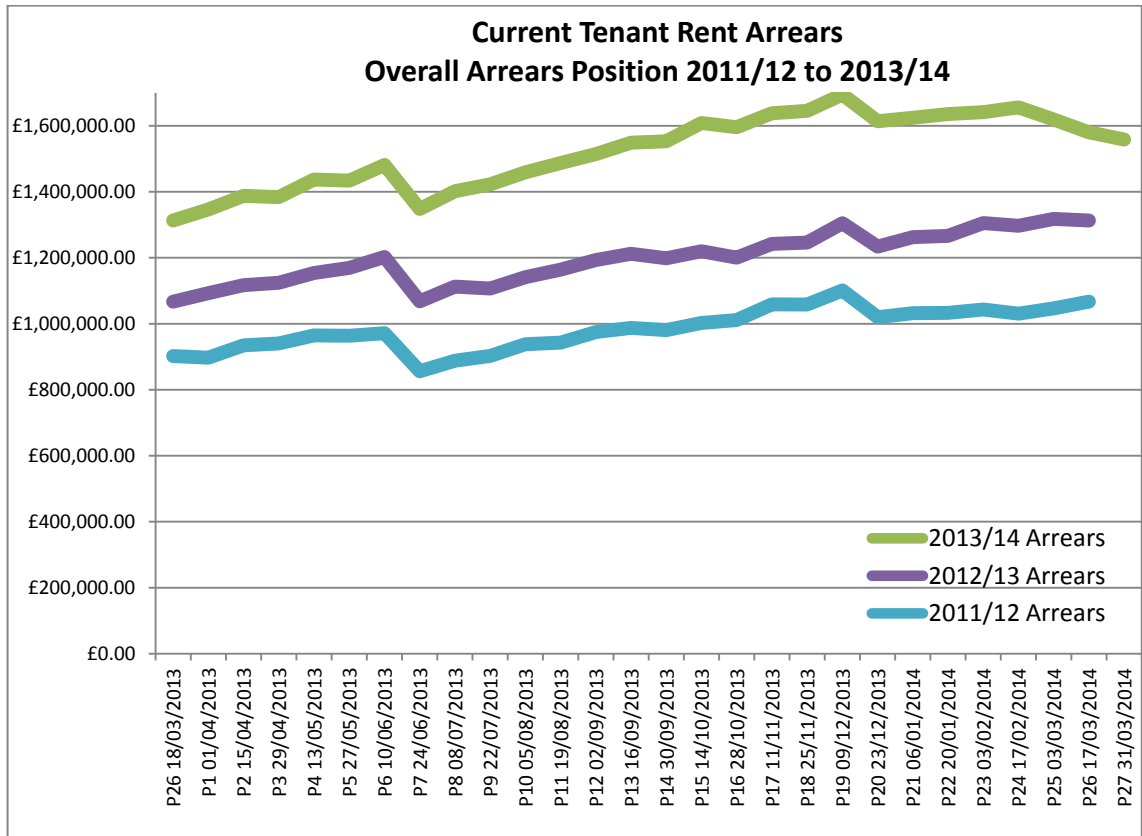
3.3.1 Figure 3 shows rent arrears trends in East Lothian between 2011/12 and 2013/14.

- 3.3.2 In order to demonstrate performance improvements in 2014/15, it is important to compare to previous year trends. A similar pattern with increasing arrears can be seen in each of the previous 3 financial years.
- 3.3.3 As previously reported to the Committee, staffing levels within the Rent Income team have changed significantly in recent years. In 2000, a team of 15 reduced rent arrears from £1.1m to £550k. In 2006, the team was reduced to 9 following a staffing review within local offices. The team absorbed the work of those who transferred to Customer Services but rent arrears started to increase steadily. A further 2 posts were lost to efficiency savings in the following years and prior to the additional investment in staffing made in 2012, the team consisted of 7 staff (six officers and one team leader).
- 3.3.4 As reported at 3.1.2, the temporary nature of the additional funding, allocated in 2012, then presented problems in terms of staff retention. Additional, permanent staffing resource, introduced in 2014, is now providing the stability which has been lacking in recent years is the platform upon which improved performance is being built.
- 3.3.5 The Council's reported rent collection performance had been below the Scottish average in recent years and this was in part due to the way Councils interpreted legislation in relation to the ending tenancies upon granting of decree. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 was amended in August 2012 and now addresses the termination of a tenancy where an order for eviction (decree) has been granted on the grounds of rent arrears. The decree no longer terminates the tenancy at the date on which it becomes effective. Instead, the tenancy will only be terminated when the landlord recovers possession. This aims to resolve the uncertainty where a tenant is allowed to remain in a property if suitable payments are being made following the grant of decree.
- 3.3.6 As previously reported to the Committee, prior to this new legislation being introduced, around three quarters of Scottish Councils ended tenancies when the Sheriff Court granted decree for eviction, thus keeping current tenant debt low although increasing former tenant debt. Upon legal advice, East Lothian did not end tenancies in these circumstances. This made any form of performance benchmarking in recent years very difficult, with no true like for like comparison. In August 2012, legislation changed to mirror East Lothian's working practice.
- 3.3.7 As reported at 3.25, the most significant welfare reform introduced so far has seen reductions in benefit payment due to under occupation - commonly referred to as the 'bedroom tax'. This reform has had a direct impact on rent arrears from April 2013. The Rent Income team assists tenants with their applications for Discretionary Housing Payment, which can cover the additional rent due and also works to collect unpaid rent from those who decline this assistance.
- 3.3.8 As reported at 3.26, wherever possible, East Lothian Council aims to recover all public sector housing benefit overpayments from ongoing benefit entitlement, effectively giving rise to an increase in rent due for

tenants affected. This working practice was adopted in 2010 and has had an impact on rent arrears. The Rent Income team works closely with the Benefits team and tenants to set manageable recovery rates.

3.3.9 Arrears levels have historically reduced significantly during the two rent charge breaks each financial year (July and December) as the Rent Income team ensure that tenants with rent arrears continue to repay any debt owed to the Council during these periods.

**Figure 3**



The financial increase in current tenant rent arrears over the last three years was reported as follows:

Financial Year	Start of Year	End of Year	£	Increase
2011/12	£902,083.25	£1,067,096.11	£165,012.86	
2012/13	£1,067,096.11	£1,312,757.44	£245,661.33	
2013/14 (excl. HBOP)	£1,312,757.44	£1,475,010.66	£162,253.22	
2013/14 (incl. HBOP)	£1,312,757.44	£1,558,401.26	£245,643.82	

NB. Refer to Section 3.24 in relation to the reporting of housing benefit overpayments.

### 3.4 Rent Arrears & Targets 2014/15

- 3.4.1 In an effort to make substantial impact upon the increasing levels of rent debt, additional permanent funding was allocated to the Revenues service. This has helped stabilise and improve staffing and the the Revenues service has now established targets to reduce Council house rent debt to £1m by the end of 2015/16. In order to achieve this, a debt reduction target of £250,010.66 has been set for 2014/15 and the end of 2014/15 target is £1,225,000.00.
- 3.4.2 The overall four weekly reduction required in 2014/15 was originally set at £19,231.59 in April 2014 and this was further split by geographical area to ensure that members of the Rent Income team had devolved responsibility for meeting target in their own geographical patch.
- 3.4.3 At the end of rent period 9 on 10th August 2014, an overall increase in current tenant rent debt of £145,611.55 was reported. There were two reasons for this increase:
- £83,299.60 was added back into the overall arrears total as the guidelines for the accounting of housing benefit overpayment debt at the end of 2013/14 was unclear and was misinterpreted.

#### ***Definition from Regulator:***

##### ***Do not include:***

##### ***(i) as arrears:***

*the value of overpayments of housing costs (housing benefit/universal credit) debited to tenants' rent accounts;*

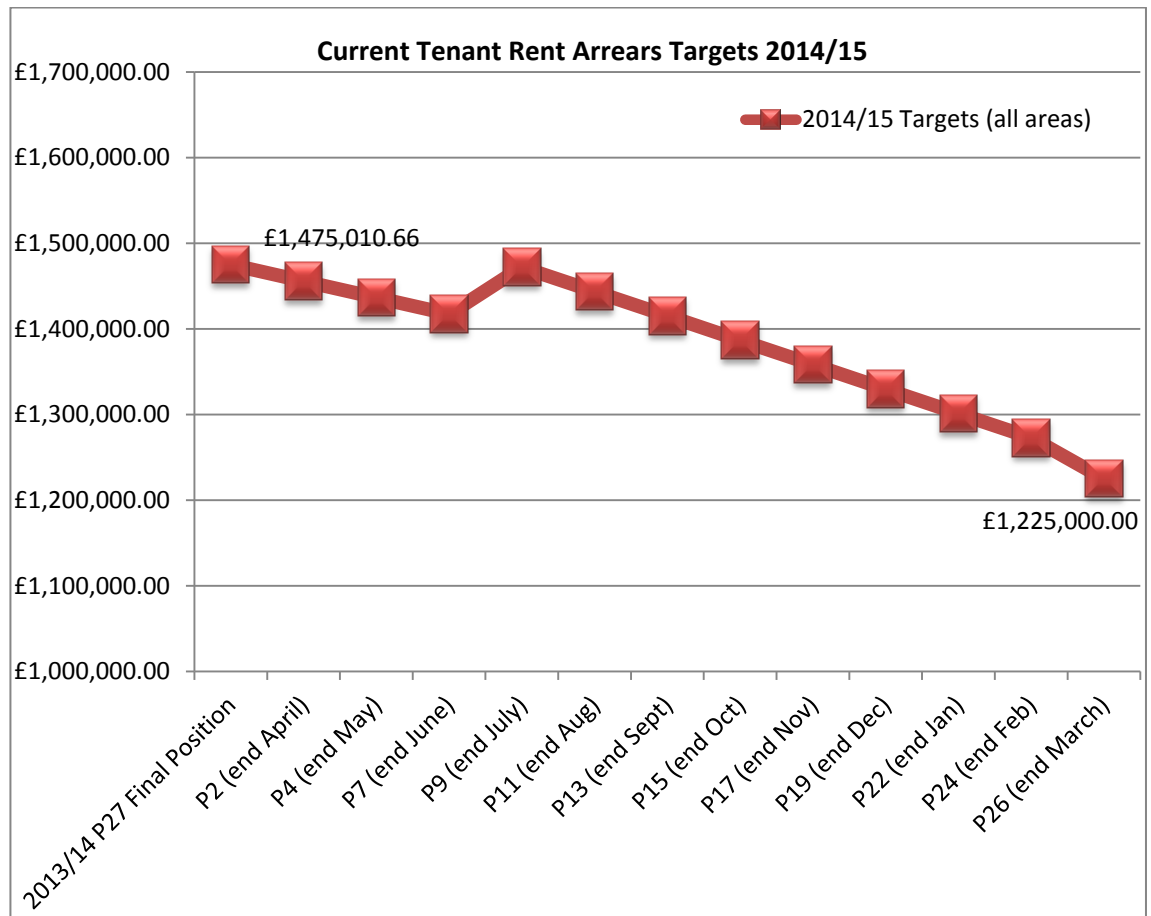
As a result of retrospective clarification, it was established that housing benefit overpayment debt **should be included** and was therefore added back into the arrears figures. This appears to be in contradiction to the definition; however the team targets from rent period 9 onwards were adjusted to reflect this additional £83,299.60.

The Revenues service still aims to achieve the end of 2014/15 target of £1,225,000.00; however the four weekly reduction target has increased from £19,231.59, which was set in April 2014, to £28,487.10 from August 2014 onwards.

- The second reason for the increase at the end of rent period 9 was due to the arrears position increasing by £62,311.95 between 13<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

Rent arrears targets for 2014/15 are shown in Figure 4 below and full details of targets are available on request.

**Figure 4**



**3.4.4 Position at end Q1 2014/15**

- Collection target for the end of Q1 2014/15 was £1,417,315.89.
- Actual achieved at the end of Q1 2014/15 was £1,406,854.88
- The team achieved £10,461.01 under the target set.



**3.4.5 Position at end Q2 2014/15**

- Revised collection target for the end of Q2 2014/15 was £1,415,154.19.
- Actual achieved at the end of Q2 2014/15 was £1,551,142.39
- The team reported arrears of £135,988.20 over the target set.



The increase in current tenant rent debt during Q2 includes £83,299.60 in housing benefit overpayment debt which was added to the rent arrears at the end of July 2014.

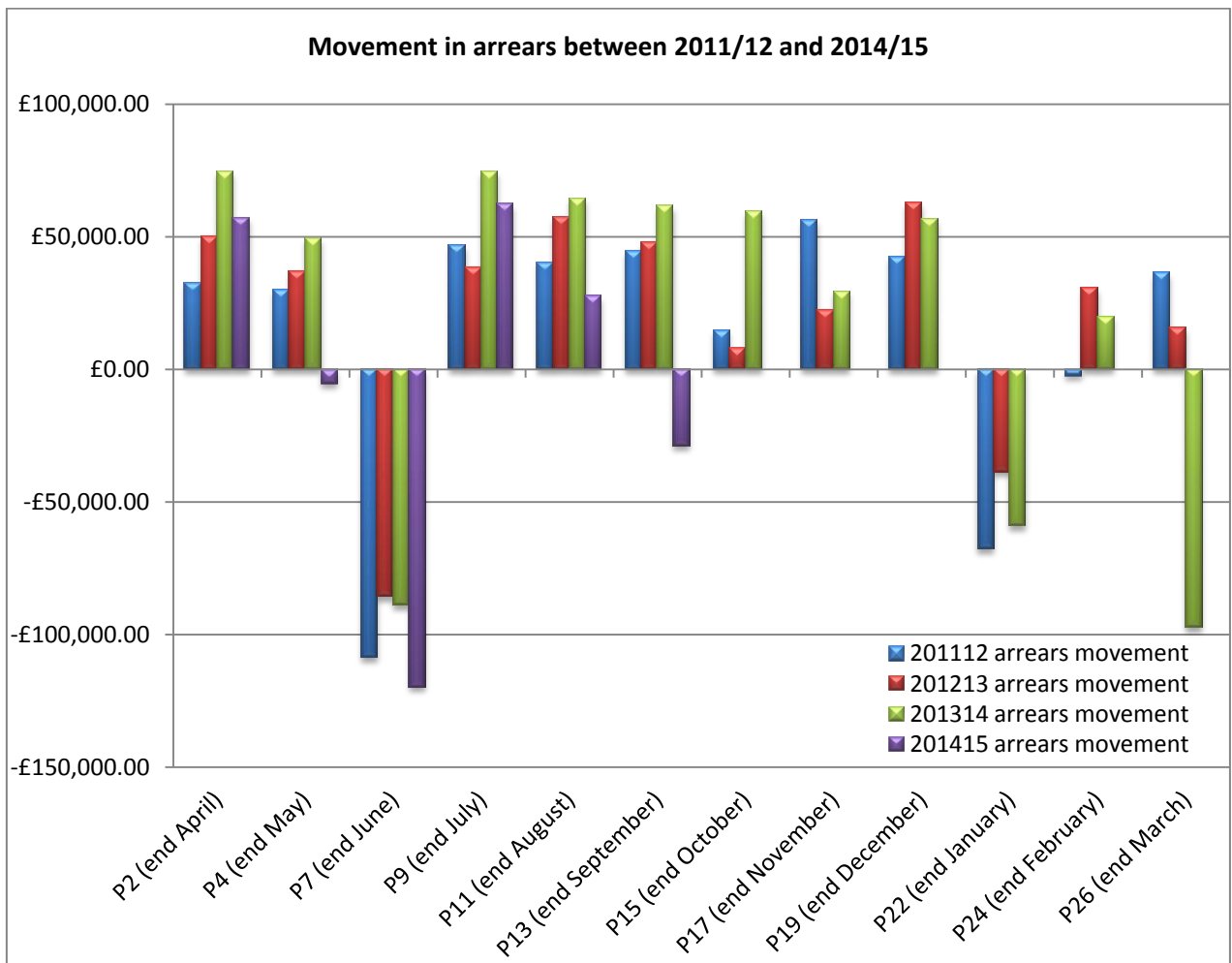


3.4.6 Although the Revenues service did not achieve the target set for the end of Q2, there are signs of improved performance this financial year when compared to previous years' performance. To demonstrate this by month:

- In April 2014 the team reported an increase of £57,061.12. In April 2013, an increase of £74,698.30 was reported.
- In May 2014 the team reported a reduction of £5,327.16. No reduction was reported at this point during 2011/12, 2012/13 or 2013/14.
- In June 2014 (the summer rent charge break) the team reported a reduction of £119,889.74. Although there has been, historically, a reduction reported each year after the summer rent charge break, the reduction in 2014/15 was higher than it has been between 2011/12 and 2013/14.
- In July 2014 the team reported an increase of £62,311.95. In July 2013, an increase of £74,717.07 was reported.
- In August 2014 the team reported an increase of £27,457.45. This is the lowest increase reported at this point in the year since 2011/12.
- In September 2014 the team reported a reduction of £28,781.49. No reduction has been reported at this point in any of the last three years. It is also worth noting that rent arrears increased by £61,516.23 during the same reporting period in 2013/14.
- Looking at the movement of current tenant rent debt since April 2014, leaving aside the £83,299.60 housing benefit overpayment debt which was added in Q2, the net effect of the arrears position to the end of September 2014 was an overall reduction of £7,167.87. To put this into context, between April and September 2013, current tenant rent debt increased by £235,939.69. This is clear evidence of improving collection performance.

Figure 5 shows the movement on a four weekly basis from 2011/12 to the end of September 2014.

**Figure 5**



3.4.7 By comparing rent arrears trends from 2011/12 to date, there is strong evidence to show signs of improved performance this financial year. There is a significant amount of work to do to achieve agreed collection targets, however recent results are very encouraging and are demonstrating that the measures put in place to manage rent collection more effectively and to achieve targets are proving successful. Whilst it may take some time to reverse the trends of recent years, the service improvements and collaborative working arrangements being developed give confidence that aspirations can be met.

### **3.5 Service improvements and collaborative working initiatives to reduce rent arrears**

The following sections outline some of the work going on in East Lothian Council to manage rent arrears more effectively and to reduce the outstanding debt.

The key service improvements and joint working initiatives outlined in the following sections demonstrate the changing ethos and give an indication of the energy that the Rent Income team is showing in their desire to *initiate* solutions and continuously improve the service.

The team is committed to *delivering* a responsive and customer *focused* service and proactively *exploring* opportunities for better ways of working.

The team works closely as a unit and is building strong working relationships with internal colleagues to *share* knowledge of good practice within the team, within the Council and with peer groups.

### **3.6 The Council's Rent Arrears Scrutiny Group**

A Rent Arrears Scrutiny Group was formed in East Lothian in December 2013. This Group consists of Chief Officials, Senior Management and staff from Revenues, Housing and Benefit teams.

The Scrutiny Group meetings are held on a monthly basis and Monica Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships & Community Services, chairs these meetings.

Revenues staff have welcomed the support from senior colleagues and this forum has provided an opportunity to discuss potential developments and initiatives and has also provided a platform to explore joint working opportunities between Revenues, Housing and Benefits staff.

### **3.7 Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)**

The Scottish Housing Regulator expressed concern around rent arrears in East Lothian Council and highlighted the possible risk of the Council being exposed to a performance review process or sanction. Members of the Rent Arrears Scrutiny Group, including representatives from the Revenues team, met with the Regulator in June 2014 to review improvement actions in relation to rent arrears.

Representatives from the SHR have expressed satisfaction with the measures which have been put in place to manage arrears. SHR representatives will be attending the Scrutiny Group meeting in December 2014 to review progress against plans.

A copy of the improvement plan produced for the SHR is available on request.

### 3.8 Housing Quality Network (HQN) Training

Since October 2013, Revenues staff have been working with a Housing Quality Network Associate, Tony Newman, to help improve the Council's rent collection service based on his experience in working with top performers in the sector.

An experienced housing practitioner, with a particular interest in income management and financial inclusion, Tony is lead associate for Housing Quality Network's specialist Rent Income Excellence Network (RIEN) and developed HQN's Income Management and Financial Inclusion Toolkits, as well as the HQN accreditation service for income management.

Tony has carried out many housing service reviews and mock inspections. He has extensive experience in improvement planning in income management, in both a local government and social housing context. He has worked with and provided training for many top performers in social housing and has practical experience of managing departments that have delivered improved collection performance and customer focus.

Tony has delivered two training courses for Revenues staff. The first session was held in October 2013 and a follow up session held in May 2014, which Housing and Benefits representatives attended also. These sessions were aimed at improving individual and team effectiveness and providing tools and techniques to:

- Understand the causes and impact of rent arrears and the emerging challenges
- Promote the importance of rent payment and the value of the service
- Prioritise cases to prevent rent arrears and reduce cost
- Drive collection rates upwards through dynamic case management and powerful negotiation
- Deal effectively with blockages, objections and excuses
- Work effectively with the Courts and other agencies
- Implement excellent practice throughout the arrears process

The training session in October, along with the appointment of a new Team Leader in the Rent Income team, signalled a change of direction and approach for the Revenues service. A number of initiatives raised at the training session were taken forward as service improvements and a new way of working and approach to managing rent arrears was implemented.

### **3.9 New Rent Arrears Recovery Procedures**

One key element of the HQN training course focused around rent arrears recovery procedures. The traditional core recovery process was considered to be too weak and inconsistent and has since been redesigned by the Rent Income team, enabling working methods to become more streamlined and transparent for both internal and external stakeholders. The focus of the new process is primarily to collect money owed to the Council and to reduce the recovery timescales, with joint working and communication with other Council service areas featuring significantly.

Although the new core recovery process was implemented at the start of 2014/15, the process is constantly being reviewed and refined.

The new rent arrears recovery procedures are available on request.

### **3.10 Repayment Arrangement Process**

In order to assist tenants to repay rent arrears, the Rent Income team allows tenants the option to clear their account in affordable instalments. In September 2014, the repayment arrangement process was redesigned to ensure fairness and consistency of approach and also to formalise working methods.

If a tenant has rent arrears and requests a repayment arrangement, the tenant is now asked to sign a repayment agreement. The agreement outlines the terms and conditions of the repayment arrangement so that the tenant fully understands their obligation to pay their rent arrears on time and in full. The agreement is signed by the tenant, the relevant Rent Income Officer and is ultimately authorised by the Rent Income Team Leader.

Since implementing the new process, of 265 agreements made, only one repayment arrangement has been broken.

The new repayment agreement process and repayment agreement are available on request.

### **3.11 Civica Case Management**

Although Revenues staff use the core Housing system, Orchard, to manage rent collection and rent arrears, in order to underpin the new rent arrears recovery process, a need was identified to develop and implement a case management system.

Revenues, Housing and Benefits staff already use the Council's Workflow & Document Management system, Civica EDRMS, and it was agreed that this system would lend itself well to managing rent arrears cases and sharing information electronically across internal teams. A system specification was agreed, processes developed and this new way of working was adopted in June 2014.

### 3.12 Introduction of Traffic Light Letters

In addition to developing rent arrears recovery processes and procedures, tenant communications have also been redesigned and a traffic light system has been introduced for all rent letters for maximum visual effect.

Arrears letters are often ignored or the severity of the situation can be misunderstood by tenants, which can lead to avoidable arrears recovery action being carried out.

A need to differentiate between communication types was identified e.g. general information letters and statements and arrears recovery notices. By using graphical representation on rent letters, an opportunity now exists to communicate to our tenants in a more inclusive manner.

The Revenues service has introduced a traffic light system for rent letters, as this represents internationally and cross-culturally recognised symbols. Each colour and position on the traffic light represents different levels of importance or urgency. For example:

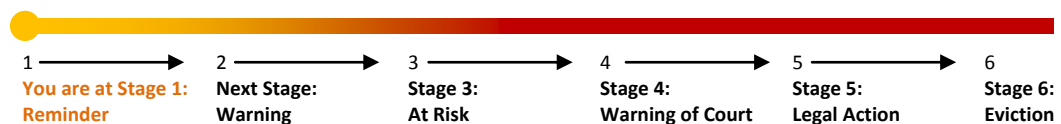
- **Statements or information letters are green**
- **Early stage arrears letters and pre court letters are amber**
- **Legal action letters are red**

See Figure 7.

In addition to using the traffic light symbol on our letters, a Tracker Bar is also displayed to show the tenant which stage of the arrears recovery process they have reached and what will happen next if they fail to respond.

See Figure 6.

**Figure 6**



Examples of the new rent arrears letters are available on request.

**Figure 7**



Green letters are used to provide a tenant with information and indicate that the tenant is paying their rent as agreed - no action is needed.

The green letters are typically used for statements or other general communications.

There is an invitation to contact the Rent Income team in the event of an enquiry, but no formal request to do so.



Amber letters are used to signify a warning or that a problem has been identified.

This letter is used when contact is required to avoid further escalation. The purpose of using this letter is to encourage the tenant to engage.

Payment options are clearly displayed in amber coloured boxes and information about help and support available is clearly shown.



Red letters are used to signify serious recovery or legal action, or possible eviction.

This letter is used when urgent contact is required and legal action is imminent.

Advice and payment options are clearly displayed.

### **3.13 Joint Working with Internal & External Stakeholders**

A number of Council services have an interest in the rent arrears recovery process and can become involved with tenants in arrears. The Revenues team works closely with teams from:

#### **3.13.1 Community Housing**

The Rent Income team works closely with Housing colleagues on a day to day basis. The team leader and team members have regular liaison meetings and the new rent arrears recovery process has been communicated to all Housing teams. Work is ongoing to strengthen the links between both service areas, with a particular focus on new tenancies and tenancy support.

#### **3.13.2 Homelessness**

Following the introduction of the new traffic light letters in the Rent Income team, it has been agreed that this style of communication will be set up for communications from the Homelessness team. Approximately 40% of new tenants come into mainstream tenancies from homelessness accommodation, therefore it is felt that this service improvement will help tenants to understand what is expected of them from the start of the process and will be a good preventative measure in the long term.

#### **3.13.3 Benefits**

A close working relationship exists between the Rent Income team and the Benefits team. If a priority need is identified by the Rent Income team, both service areas work together to make a prompt assessment so that benefit can be awarded if the circumstances allow. Joint working has taken place around the application process for Discretionary Housing Payment over the last 12 months.

#### **3.13.4 Legal Services**

An excellent relationship exists between the Rent Income team and Legal Services. The Legal Services team has been involved in developing the new rent arrears recovery procedures and continue to work closely with the Revenues team to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

#### **3.13.5 Adult Wellbeing & Children's Wellbeing**

The Rent Income Team Leader has held meetings with both Adult & Children's Services. Liaison Officers have been established within both service areas and work continues to strengthen the links to support vulnerable tenants. It has been agreed that a Liaison Officer will spend one afternoon each month in the Rent Income team to work with Rent Income Officers on cases, where tenants are most vulnerable, to agree the most appropriate course of action.



### 3.13.6 East Lothian Works

Members of staff from Revenues have been working with East Lothian Works to establish a referral mechanism for tenants who need help and advice on jobs, training or skills development and also where a literacy or numeracy vulnerability is identified.

### 3.13.7 Corporate Communications

The Revenues team is currently working with the Council's Corporate Communications team to develop a three year rent communications and publicity strategy. More information about this can be found in Section 3.16.

### 3.13.8 East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel (ELTRP)

The Revenues team meets with ELTRP executive members regularly and has received a great deal of support from Panel members. The importance of paying rent is mentioned on the ELTRP slot on East Coast FM every four weeks. It has been discussed that the Panel may carry out a scrutiny review of the rent collection services. This is viewed as a positive development by the Revenues team and is likely to take place in 2015/16.

### 3.13.9 Scottish Rent Forum

Revenues staff continue to work with other Scottish Councils via the Scottish Rent Forum. Regular benchmarking exercises are carried out and good practice is shared between forum members.

### 3.13.10 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The Rent Income team works closely with the CAB, in particular, signposting tenants in need of financial and debt advice.

### 3.13.11 Shelter

The Rent Income team works closely with Shelter Scotland and has referral mechanisms in place to support tenants most at risk of losing their home.

### 3.14 **Rent Arrears Management Team (RAMT)**

The Revenues team works closely with other Council services to help prevent homelessness and ensure that tenancies are sustained, wherever possible.

In order to ensure that tenants are supported fully and are equipped to manage their tenancy on a long term basis, the Council's Rent Arrears Management Team (RAMT) meets monthly to review any tenancy which is being recommended for court action or eviction.

The RAMT consists of the following members:

- Service Manager - Revenues
- Rent Income Team Leader
- Service Manager - Community Housing
- Preventions Team Leader
- Solicitor from Legal Services

If there are children or vulnerable adults residing in the property, representatives from the following areas also attend the meeting:

- Children's Wellbeing
- Adult Wellbeing

Each case is presented, discussed and a collective agreement reached over the course of action to be taken. By making a collaborative decision, based on the expertise of all those concerned with the household, the most appropriate course of action for the tenant and their family can be taken and all service areas affected by this are fully informed of the situation.

### 3.15 **Multi Agency Screening Group (MASG)**

If a decision is made to issue a pre legal action letter for rent arrears, tenants who have children under the age of 16 living at home will be advised that information about their potential eviction will be shared with the Multi Agency Screening Group (MASG).

The Council has a responsibility under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to promote the welfare of children in East Lothian and the purpose of the MASG is to help children, young people and their families get the help and support they need as quickly as possible.

The MASG always includes representatives from Children's Wellbeing, the Police and the Health Service. The purpose of sharing this information is to ensure that if there is any vulnerability in a family then the MASG is aware of this and can offer the appropriate help and support.

### 3.16 Communications & Publicity Strategy

Although East Lothian Council has adopted the 'Rent First' message over the last few years, it was felt that brand identity could be much stronger.

At the October 2013 HQN training session, the Pay to Stay logo was suggested by the team as being an appropriate and catchy brand and it was agreed that we would base our communications and publicity material around this.

The design of this new logo has been based on the traffic light theme used on the new suite of letters so that the rent arrears branding is consistent.



**Make paying your rent a priority.  
You could lose your home if you don't.**

In addition to using the Pay to Stay logo on Revenues documentation and email signatures, this has been added to Housing repairs letters and it is planned that all relevant Housing and Homelessness documentation will also carry the logo.

The Revenues team makes good use of Council publications, in particular the *Homefront* magazine for Council tenants and also the East Lothian Tenant & Residents *Panel News* publication, to remind tenants of the importance of paying rent and to let tenants know what help is available for those in need of assistance. More general articles are often published to make tenants aware of developments around the rent collection service.

A three year communications and publicity strategy for rent collection, promoting a positive payment culture, is being developed in conjunction with Corporate Communications colleagues.

All documents/publications will be rebranded and the focus of the message to tenants will be aligned with new approach. In addition to this, the following will be developed:

- Potential to use property maintenance vans to promote payment of rent using the Pay to Stay logo. These vans are out in the community daily and should help tenants to recognise the link between what they pay for and the service they receive.

- Posters for bus stops, local offices and community locations.
- Banners which can be used in local offices, show homes, public events etc.
- ELTRP currently has a four weekly slot on East Coast FM and regularly advise listeners of the importance of paying rent and who to contact if they are experiencing difficulties. The team is planning to work with ELTRP to broadcast a Q&A session for listeners around paying rent and what help is available for any tenant who is having difficulty paying.
- It is planned that all new publicity material will be launched when the annual rent charge letters are issued in February 2015.

### **3.17 Housing Quality Network Health Check**

The Housing Quality Network (HQN) has been commissioned to carry out an income management health check to help the Revenues identify and address any issues which may be affecting performance. The main objective is to ensure that optimum performance is achieved and that the Council and its residents are prepared for the challenges and risks ahead, particularly welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit.

HQN will measure the features of the Council's rent collection service against those of top performing organisations to help provide focus on operational factors which will help to maximise income collection, minimise arrears and provide effective support to tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable.

A report on the findings and recommendations from the health check will give specialist opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the Council's approach to income management and financial inclusion.

### **3.18 Text Messaging Service for Tenants**

In order to reduce costs, increase efficiency and improve customer service, our next service improvement for rent will be to implement a text messaging service for tenants.

An automated prompt will be sent to cash paying tenants before their rent payment is due reminding them to make their payment on time and in full. This proactive approach should reduce the number of first stage reminder letters that we need to issue, or phone call reminders from members of the Rent Income team.

An automated reminder will also be sent to tenants who miss a payment.

Longer term, when the Council offers a responsive web service to customers, it is hoped that payment functionality will be included within the message to allow tenants to connect to the Council website using a mobile device and make a payment immediately.

### **3.19 Telephony Self Service for Tenants**

Tenants are now looking for a 24/7 service and a greater choice in how they engage with the Council.

As a recent UK Local Authority satisfaction survey on automated self service shows, 80% of customers prefer self service as a quick and convenient method of communicating with their local Council.

Telephony self service is a sophisticated method of customer contact management, benefiting both the customer and the Council. It is hoped that tenants will shortly be offered 24/7 access to rent collection and rent arrears advice and information over the telephone using this new service. This will provide tenants with an additional service provision which has the added benefit of helping the Council to meet efficiency savings.

The new telephony self service will allow more general enquiries to be managed 24/7, for example tenants phoning for balance enquiries. This will free up Rent Income Advisers from responding to repetitive or simple enquiries and will allow the Rent Income team to deal with more complex enquiries from tenants.

### **3.20 Web Self Service for Tenants**

The Revenues service is looking at the feasibility of introducing a self service portal to enable tenants to access rent collection and rent arrears services via the Council website.

The service would interact with the Orchard Housing system so that customer's actions are logged in their case and contact history and any requests or updates they make can be actioned or messaged to Rent Income staff immediately.

One of the major advantages of self service is the low-cost, always available access channel. Tenants can make simple enquiries about their rent account or personal details etc. without needing a member of staff to speak to them.

The following functionality would be available:

- Personalised, easy to use web service
- Full rent account shown for selected tenancy (current or former)
- Drill down into the rent period to see individual transactions

- Request a new payment card
- Printer friendly rent statements

### 3.21 **The Impact of Welfare Reform on East Lothian Council and East Lothian residents**

The UK Government is currently introducing a range of measures to reform the welfare system and reduce the budget for welfare benefits by at least £11 billion annually. It has been estimated by the Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty in 2010 that these changes could result in the loss of £8m - £9.5m annually from welfare benefits paid to East Lothian residents.

There is a high risk that that these changes could lead to:

- loss of income which the Council currently receives for administering Housing Benefit
- increased rent arrears from reduced Housing Benefit and possible increase in evictions
- increased pressures on rent collection teams
- increase in Council Tax arrears
- increase in Business Rates arrears as businesses suffer as a consequence of the people of East Lothian having less disposable income

The Council has an established Welfare Reform Task Group which is managing the current impact of reforms and planning for the changes still to come. The Task Group has a detailed action plan to ensure that the Council takes the necessary measures to manage the impact of the changes to the welfare system.

### 3.22 **The Impact of Welfare Reform on Rent Arrears in East Lothian**

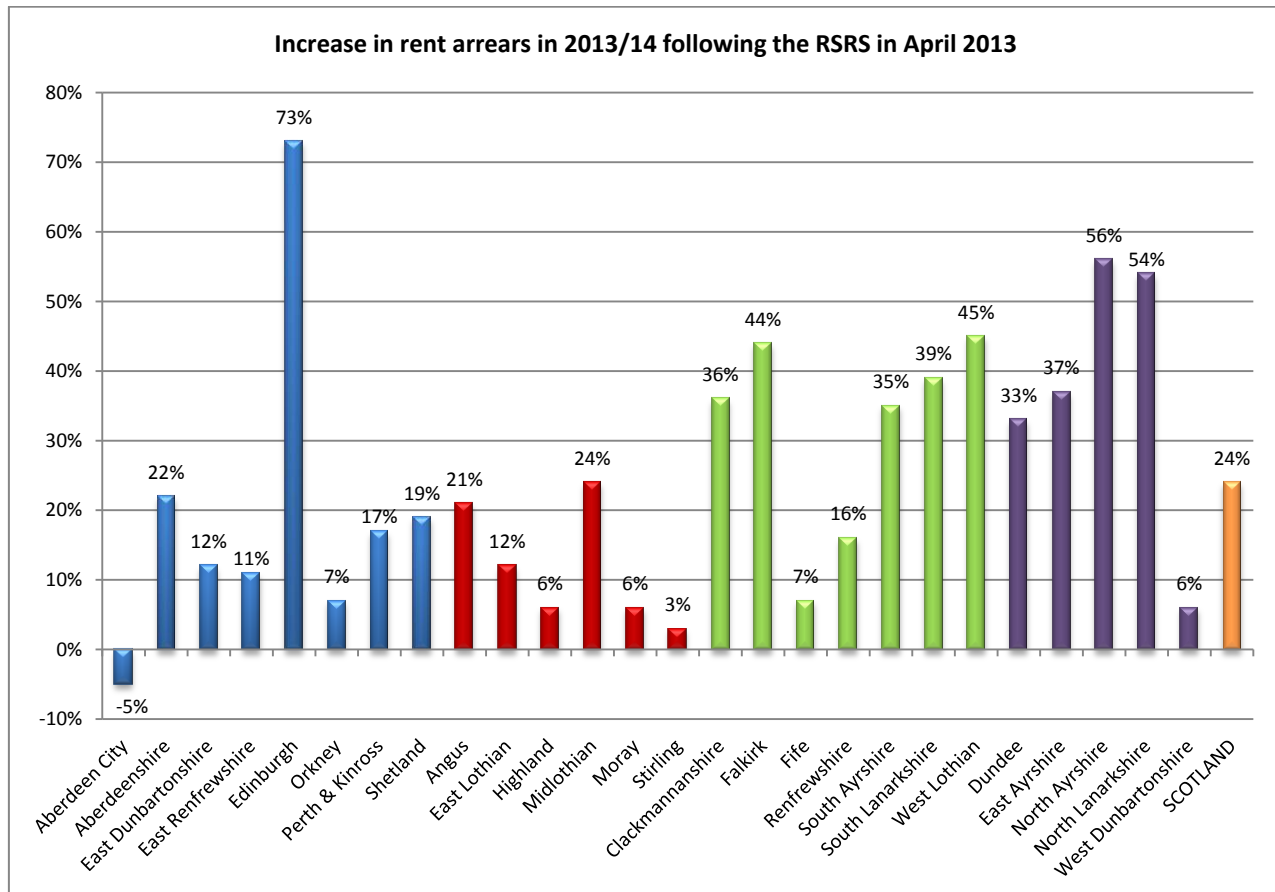
Audit Scotland has recently published a report entitled 'The Impact of Welfare Reform on Council Rent Arrears in Scotland' (found at Appendix 1). The main purpose of the study was to analyse and compare rent arrears data and assess how Councils are responding to the changes to the welfare system.

The report findings include data showing the percentage change in rent arrears from April 2013 – March 2014 i.e. from the introduction of current reforms, particularly the introduction of benefit reductions due to Under Occupancy.

Figure 8 shows how East Lothian compares to other Scottish Councils, particularly those within their family group (as shown in the different colours) and it is encouraging to note that, whilst an increase in arrears

was reported during 2013/14, this amounted to half of the Scottish average increase and compares favourably to many other Councils.

**Figure 8**



Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

### 3.23 Under Occupancy and mitigation via Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

The most significant reform introduced to date which has a direct impact on rent arrears is the removal of the spare room subsidy from those claiming housing benefit and under occupying their homes. This reform is also known as the 'bedroom tax'.

From April 2013, all working age tenants renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord have received any housing benefit entitlement based on the number of people in their household and the size of their accommodation. This means that those tenants whose accommodation is larger than they are deemed to need might lose part of their benefit. Those with one spare bedroom could lose 14% of their eligible rent and those with two or more spare bedrooms could lose 25%.

The impact of Under Occupancy on rent arrears in East Lothian is very difficult to measure with accuracy but some analysis has been carried out and estimates are shown below:

- 583 tenancies are affected by a 14% under occupancy reduction
- 261 tenancies are in arrears, with a total arrears value of £148,913.88
- 322 tenancies have a clear rent account
  
- 77 tenancies are affected by a 25% under occupancy reduction
- 34 tenancies are in arrears, with a total arrears value of £22,298.91
- 43 tenancies have a clear rent account

It is estimated that around £40k of the £170k owed by those affected by Under Occupancy is as a direct result of non payment of this element of the rent charge from April 2014.

DHPs are governed by The Discretionary Housing Payment (Grants) Order 2001 and may be awarded when a Council considers that a housing benefit claimant requires further financial assistance towards their housing costs. DHP is available to council tenants and non-council tenants and can help prevent rent arrears from rising. Traditionally, DHP has been considered to be a temporary solution to a difficulty in meeting housing costs and not a means of partially funding rent on an on-going basis.

In May 2014, the UK government began the process of transferring the power to set the DHP cash limit to the Scottish Government.

By devolving the setting of the cash limit, this has allowed the Scottish Government to increase the funding for DHP. For 2014/15, the UK Government announced DHP funding of £15.2 million for Scottish Councils. In addition, the Scottish Government has agreed £35 million of DHP funding and has indicated that this additional funding should fully mitigate the impact of Under Occupancy for all affected tenants.

The Council is making the most of the funding received, however full mitigation will still only be achieved in 2014/15 by first incurring an overspend which will have to be claimed back from the Scottish Government after year end.

East Lothian Council's DHP funding for 2014/15 from all sources is as follows:

<b>DWP</b>	<b>SG (Initial Award)</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>SG (Further Award)</b>	<b>Total</b>
£122,558	£183,837	£306,395	£121,086	£427,481



The Council's Rent Income and Benefits teams are working together to identify those affected and award payment, including a retrospective element, where appropriate.

It should be noted that DHP funding is of a temporary nature and DHP funding could revert back to levels similar to those in 2012/13. Therefore uncertainty remains for those tenants and Councils currently relying on DHP assistance to help meet rent charges.

Reductions in DHP funding could have a significant impact on rental income, rent arrears and strategic housing plans for both Council and other landlords.

### **3.24 Housing Benefit Overpayments**

Wherever possible, East Lothian Council aims to recover all public sector housing benefit overpayments from ongoing benefit entitlement, which effectively increases the rent due by tenants affected and therefore has an impact on rent arrears.

Deduction from ongoing benefit is a legitimate method of housing benefit overpayment recovery but it should be borne in mind that this practice can result in individual rent accounts building arrears levels unless tenants can afford to make up the continuing shortfall in benefit. The Rent Income team works closely with the Benefits team and tenants to set manageable recovery rates.

### **3.26 Accelerated Implementation of Universal Credit**

In September 2014, the UK Government announced that Universal Credit will be rolled out across the whole of the UK to all Job centres and Local Authorities from early next year, commencing with single claimants previously eligible for Jobseekers Allowance.

New claims to legacy benefits will be closed from 2016, with migration to Universal Credit to follow thereafter.

This announcement represents a considerable acceleration in implementing one of the biggest reforms and will present all social sector landlords with considerable rent collection challenges.

Following full implementation of Universal Credit, it is estimated that the Council's Rent Income team would have to collect an additional £425k per fortnight direct from claimants whose rent is currently paid direct to their rent account by housing benefit.

Following the Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014, the Smith Commission on Devolution of Powers to Scotland has been tasked with arriving at a set of proposals to devolve powers, one of which will be Welfare.

There is an appetite within various parts of the housing profession for Scotland to be granted more powers over aspects of Welfare which directly impact upon the sound operation of Scotland's housing system. However, the issue of precisely which parts of Welfare should be devolved is complex and requires careful consideration by the Commission.

East Lothian Council must plan for the imminent implementation of Universal Credit for the time being but there remains the possibility that new devolved powers may see a change to the current direction of travel.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications.

#### **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 There is no direct impact on equalities, therefore an equalities impact assessment has not been carried out.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial – none

6.2 Personnel - none

6.3 Other – none.

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Report to PPRC titled Rent Arrears, dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Kenny Christie
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Service Manager - Revenues
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	<a href="mailto:kchristie@eastlothian.gov.uk">kchristie@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2014

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Audit Scotland: The Impact of Welfare Reform on Council Rent Arrears in Scotland'

# The impact of welfare reforms on council rent arrears in Scotland



Prepared for the Accounts Commission  
25 September 2014

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. We help the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission check that organisations spending public money use it properly, efficiently and effectively.

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# Introduction

1. The UK Government has introduced a number of welfare reforms since 2010. Many of these reforms impact upon household income and housing benefit (HB). The most significant reform introduced to date with a potential direct impact on social housing rents is the removal of the spare room subsidy (RSRS), also known as the 'bedroom tax', which was introduced in April 2013.
2. From April 2013 all working age tenants renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord receive HB based on the number of people in their household and the size of their accommodation. This means those tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need might lose part of their HB. Those with one spare bedroom could lose 14% of their eligible rent and those with two or more spare bedrooms could lose 25%.
3. For the purpose of this study, Audit Scotland looked at local authority rent arrears to determine the extent to which the RSRS and other welfare reforms have impacted on rent arrears in Scotland. We reviewed the published housing statutory performance indicators (SPIs) for all Scottish councils with housing stock for the period 2011/12 to 2012/13. In order to compare these SPIs before and after the introduction of the RSRS, a questionnaire was devised and issued to each council in March 2014 requesting the same information for 2013/14.
4. This report details the findings of our analysis of this data and includes a review of the underlying factors impacting on rent arrears, highlights council initiatives to help mitigate the effect of welfare reforms on rent arrears, and details revisions that councils have made to their housing policies in response to welfare reforms. Finally, the report highlights where current welfare reforms as well as those still to be introduced, may impact on rent arrears in the future.

# Key messages

5. In 2012/13 the value of rent arrears for all Scottish councils was £28.2 million which was an increase of approximately 16% on 2011/12 levels. Following the introduction of the RSRS in April 2013, rent arrears increased further to £35.1 million by 31 March 2014, which represents an increase of approximately 24% on 2012/13 levels. A number of reasons for the increase in 2013/14 have been suggested by councils. These include:
  - the combination of welfare reforms such as the reduction in HB due to the RSRS, a restriction on the amount of benefit that can be received (the benefit cap), the increase in non-dependent deduction charges, benefit sanctions, changes to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and tax credits
  - councils announcing 'no eviction' policies appearing to have removed the ultimate sanction for non-payment of rent
  - additional pre-action requirements introduced in August 2012 that landlords must satisfy before serving a legal notice on a tenant
  - the downturn in the economy and a high unemployment rate in some areas
  - tenants not engaging with councils or prioritising their rent payments.
6. Discretionary housing payments (DHPs) provide financial assistance towards housing costs and are available to benefit claimants of both council and other landlords. DHP funding has risen significantly from £4.2 million in 2012/13 to £38.2 million in 2013/14. Despite a significant amount of effort and resources employed by councils, only £29.4 million of this funding was spent. Without the additional DHP funding, rent arrears for council tenants could have potentially been up to £49 million at the end of 2013/14.
7. Councils have revised internal policies and introduced a wide range of initiatives to help support tenants to pay rent and with welfare reform in general. Initiatives have been introduced around money advice, digital inclusion and helping people gain skills to increase job opportunities.
8. Looking forward, future reforms such as Universal Credit (UC), direct payments to claimants, and the fact that many households are, or might be affected by more than one welfare reform change, are likely to make rent collection even more challenging.

# Background

9. The UK Government's Emergency Budget in June 2010 and the October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review introduced a number of reforms with the aim to fight poverty, support the most vulnerable in society, and help people break the cycle of benefit dependency.
10. This is the biggest reform of the UK welfare system for 60 years and has resulted in a number of significant changes to how councils deliver services. Part of this agenda included reductions in welfare spending spread across different areas of benefits with only pensioners being exempt from the changes. The Scottish Government estimates that the impact of the changes over the six year period 2010/11 to 2015/16 could reduce the Scottish welfare bill by around £6 billion. The Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee's statistical update in respect of the RSRS showed that, at the end of November 2013, there were 71,694 households in Scotland with more bedrooms than deemed necessary (under-occupation). This equates to one in eight of all households in the social rented sector.
11. The various welfare reforms can lead to tenants experiencing severe financial difficulties and in respect of council tenants, this can lead to increased rent arrears and additional costs to councils seeking to recover these arrears.
12. Of the thirty two Scottish councils, twenty six have housing stock and the income derived from these properties is used to maintain and improve current properties, build new properties, and service debt. Councils prepare long term housing strategies and these plans, and the decisions emerging from them, are based on financial assumptions such as inflation, borrowing costs and significantly, rental income. Any reduction in rental income could seriously impact housing strategies to improve and maintain housing stock.
13. In order to help mitigate the impact of the RSRS in 2013/14, £18.2 million was provided by the UK Government in the form of additional DHP funding for Scotland. The Scottish Government also provided £20 million to help mitigate the impact of the RSRS.



# Impact of welfare reforms

## Rent Arrears

14. Rent arrears are the amount of rent due but not paid to the landlord on time. It includes current tenants arrears which is money owed by existing tenants, and former tenant arrears which is money owed by people who are no longer tenants, for example where the tenant has been evicted, has abandoned the property, or had their tenancy terminated.
15. The introduction of the RSRS in April 2013 means that where a tenant has more bedrooms than is deemed necessary they are considered to be under-occupying the property. Tenants in receipt of HB would therefore receive a reduction in the amount of rent eligible for HB of 14% for one extra bedroom, and 25% for two or more extra bedrooms.
16. Although there are some exceptions, the UK Government estimated that the average council tenant would need to find an extra £14 per week to meet their rent commitment. As there is a national shortage of one-bedroom council properties to allow tenants to downsize, it was anticipated that the implementation of this welfare reform would result in an increase in the value of rent arrears as tenants found it difficult to meet the additional rental charge.
17. In order to determine to what extent welfare reforms have impacted on rent arrears, Audit Scotland analysed current and former rent arrears data for the period 2011/12 to 2013/14, in respect of the 26 councils that have council housing stock.

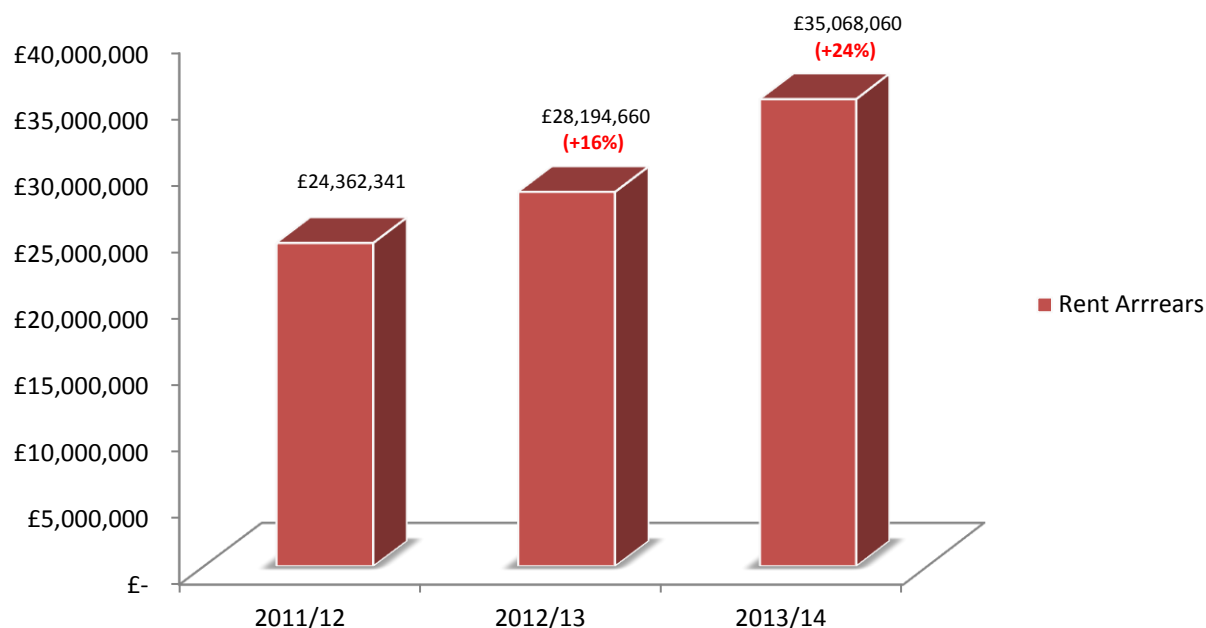
## Former Tenant Arrears

18. Our review identified that the value of former tenant arrears remained relatively static between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2014 at between £22.1 million and £22.2 million. £6.5 million of former tenant arrears were written off in 2013/14, which was largely in line with the £6.6 million of former tenant arrears written off in 2012/13. In view of this, we have excluded former tenant arrears from our analysis as there does not appear to have been any significant impact in this area as a result of welfare reforms.

## Current Tenant Arrears

19. Exhibit 1 below shows the change in the value of current tenant rent arrears in Scotland during the period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

**Exhibit 1: Change in the value of rent arrears in Scotland after RSRS introduced in April 2013**



Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

20. This exhibit shows an increase in current tenant rent arrears of approximately £3.8 million from 2011/12 to 2012/13 and, following the RSRS in April 2013, a further increase of approximately £7 million, which represents a 24% increase on 2012/13.
21. In order to establish the possible reasons for the change in the value of current rent arrears and to determine the impact of the government's welfare reforms we looked at the gross annual rent charge in the housing revenue account for all Scottish councils. This is the value of the total rental income available to councils as revenue from its housing stock.
22. The gross annual rent charge may change due to factors such as rent charges being increased in council budgets, or an increase or decrease in the number of council houses. It could be expected that if rent arrears remained at a constant percentage of the gross rent charged then actual arrears could rise as the gross rent charged rises.
23. However, when we compared the increase in the gross annual rent charge for 2013/14 of 4.4%, to the increase in rent arrears of 24%, we concluded that the increase in rent arrears is not solely due to an increase in rental charges. The 4.4% increase in the gross annual rent charge was broadly similar to the 3.8% increase in 2012/13.
24. Exhibit 2 below shows the increase in the value of current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the gross rent charge.

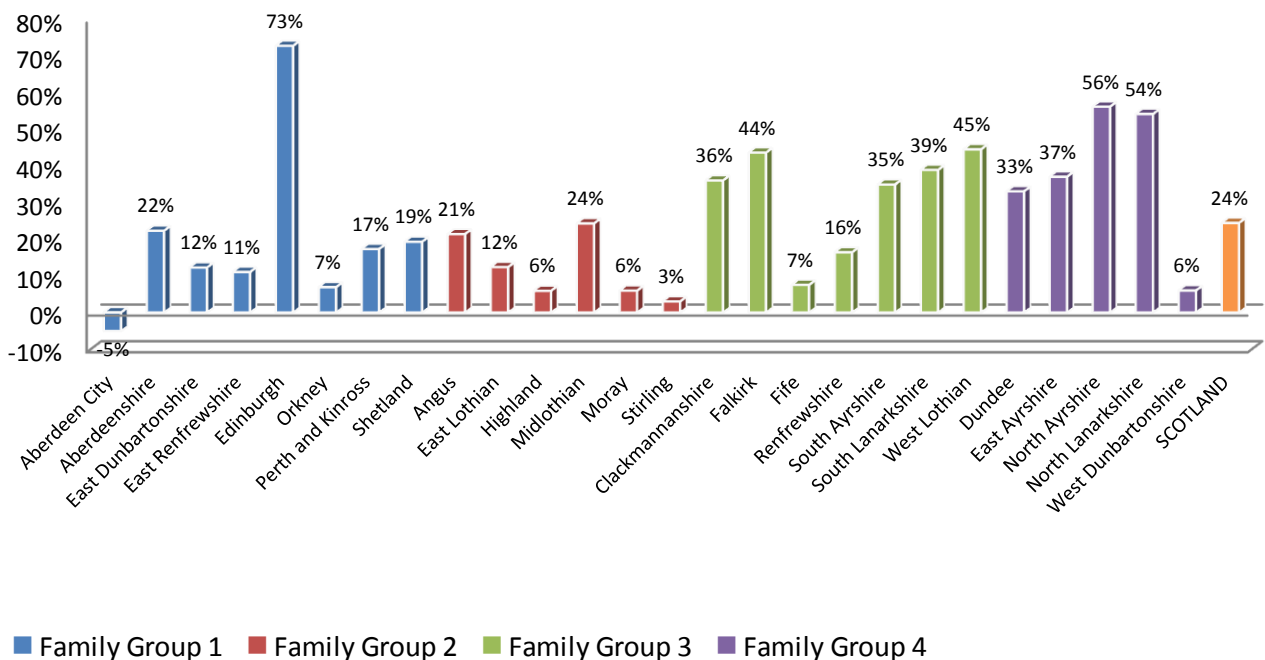
**Exhibit 2: Rent arrears as a percentage of gross rent charged**

	Gross rent charged	Rent arrears	%
2011/12	£952,637,415	£24,362,341	2.6%
2012/13	£988,667,716	£28,194,660	2.9%
2013/14	£1,032,336,268	£35,068,060	3.4%

Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

25. The table above illustrates an increasing trend in the percentage of rent charged that has not been paid.
26. Exhibit 3 below shows the increase in current tenant rent arrears for each council in Scotland in 2013/14. Councils have been grouped in accordance with the family groups established by the local government benchmarking framework for housing services.

**Exhibit 3: Increase in rent arrears in 2013/14 following the RSRS in April 2013**



Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

27. The exhibit above shows a wide variance in the percentage change of rent arrears across Scotland ranging from Aberdeen City Council, where rent arrears dropped by 5%, to the City of Edinburgh Council where rent arrears increased by 73%, which equates to approximately £1.5 million. This variance may be explained in part by local economic factors and various different initiatives introduced by councils to ensure rent arrears levels remained as low as possible. The distribution methodology used to allocate the increased DHP funding and the additional Scottish Government funding to each council appears to also have had a varying impact across councils as some councils appear to have had more funding than was required.

The increased DHP funding provided during 2013/14 is discussed later in this report under *Discretionary Housing Payments*.

28. There were a number of factors that councils stated contributed to the increase in rent arrears. These included:
- the combination of welfare reforms such as the reduction in HB due to the RSRS, the benefit cap, the increase in non-dependent deduction charges, benefit sanctions, changes to Employment Support Allowance and tax credits
  - additional pre-action requirements introduced in August 2012 that landlords must satisfy before serving a legal notice on a tenant
  - where it was known that a council had announced a 'no eviction' policy the ultimate sanction of evicting the tenant for non-payment of rent appeared to have been removed
  - the downturn in the economy and a high unemployment rate in some areas
  - tenants that were not engaging with the council or prioritising their rent payments
  - resource pressures due to the additional amounts to be collected as a result of the impact of the RSRS, as well as reallocation of resources to engage with tenants affected by the RSRS
  - a DHP budget that did not allow full mitigation of the RSRS in some areas. The percentage of tenants qualifying for HB and DHP varies across councils.

## Write-Offs

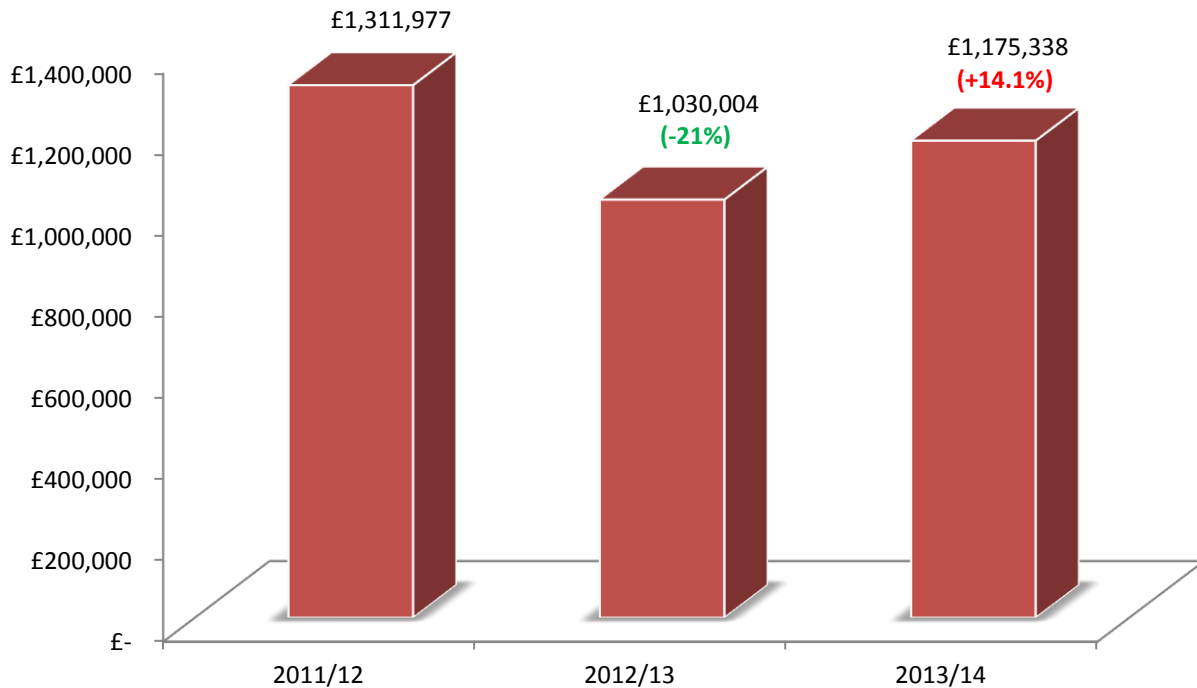
29. A write-off of council house rent would normally be considered when a tenant has failed to pay their rent, accrued a debt and, despite the council's best efforts, the full amount due has not been paid.
30. All councils endeavour to recover all debts however councils have different, locally agreed, write-off policies. There are a number of valid reasons why rental debt could be deemed irrecoverable and subsequently written off. These include:
- the tenant has died and there is no next of kin
  - the council's external debt recovery agents deem the debt irrecoverable
  - the tenant has been declared bankrupt.
31. Writing off debt reduces the amount of rent arrears outstanding. Therefore not writing off irrecoverable debt on a regular basis can cause rent arrears to rise. We reviewed the level of debt written off to try to establish if welfare reforms have had an impact on write-offs or, if the level of write-offs have had any impact on the increased rent arrears levels.

## Current tenants

32. Current tenant rent arrears are normally pursued by councils and only written off in exceptional circumstances, for example, where the tenant has been sequestered. Of the 26 Scottish councils with housing stock, seven had not written off any current tenant rent arrears in 2011/12, 2012/13 or 2013/14. Of the remaining 19 councils, only one (Renfrewshire) stated that the increase in the amount of current tenant arrears written off was a result of the RSRS.

33. Exhibit 4 below shows the change in the value of current tenant rent arrears written off in Scotland from 2011/12 to 2013/14. As this exhibit shows, following a reduction in the value of rent arrears written off in 2012/13, there has not been a significant increase in write offs in 2013/14 and we conclude therefore that welfare reforms have had no discernible impact in this area, and that the increase in rent arrears in 2013/14 is not directly linked to a reduction in the write-off level of current tenant arrears during the year.

**Exhibit 4: Amount of current tenant rent arrears written off (Scotland)**



Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

## Bad Debt Impairment

34. The amount of housing rent debt on council balance sheets is the total amount expected to be collected from tenants. In order to recognise that some of this debt will not be recovered and will have to be written off during the course of the year, councils estimate the debt that is unlikely to be recovered as 'bad debt'. In order to be prudent, councils need to show a realistic figure for the value of debts that are unlikely to be recovered during the year and recognise a bad debt impairment for those debts.
35. In order to establish what action councils were taking to mitigate the impact of the welfare reforms, we asked if any changes had been made to the bad debt impairment calculation for 2013/14 on the basis that councils had concerns that the RSRs would affect rental income. However, of the 26 councils with council properties, only five (19%) stated that they had increased their bad debt impairment in mitigation of an expected increase in rent arrears arising from the welfare reforms.

36. Therefore, based on the remaining 21 councils (81%) that told us that they had not increased their bad debt impairment, or changed their methodology, we conclude that the RSRS has not adversely affected councils bad debt impairment planning or estimation decisions so far.
37. However, we consider that, going forward, this is an area that councils should be proactively looking at in more detail as additional welfare reforms are implemented, and councils become more aware of the impact of these changes.

## Voids

38. A 'void' is a property that does not have a current tenancy. As no rental income is received for void properties, it is in the best interests of councils to minimise the number of void properties in order to maximise rental income.
39. Before the RSRS was introduced, councils were concerned that there was a lack of suitable and available one bedroom housing stock to enable customers to downsize. Concerns were raised that this would result in difficulties in letting properties with more than one bedroom, and that this would result in lost rental income from these 'voids'.
40. In order to determine what impact the RSRS has had on the value of rent lost to 'voids' in 2013/14 we analysed data for the periods 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 provided to Audit Scotland by the 26 councils that had council housing stock. We also asked these councils to provide an explanation, where appropriate, if the increase in rent lost to voids was a direct result of the RSRS introduced in April 2013.
41. Exhibit 5 below details the total value of rent lost to voids for the 26 councils.

### Exhibit 5: Value of rent lost to voids 2011/12 - 2013/14

Year	Value of rent lost to voids (£)	% of gross annual rent charged	Change over previous year (£)
2011/12	£12,368,686	1.3%	N/A
2012/13	£12,309,222	1.2%	-£59,464
2013/14	£13,097,700	1.3%	£788,478

Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

42. Of the 26 councils, 17 (65%) reported an increase in the value of rent lost to voids between 2012/13 and 2013/14 in the range of 1.6% to 70.7%. However, only three of the 17 councils (18%) reported that this increase was directly related to the RSRS with increased rent lost to voids of 1.6% in Renfrewshire (£21,200), 11.8% in North Ayrshire (£16,608), and 34.9%, in Falkirk (£165,094). All of these councils stated that the letting of larger properties, particularly three bedroom properties, was becoming harder.

43. One council (North Ayrshire) stated that there had been a 75% increase in the turnover of three bedroomed properties in 2013/14, and that there was low demand from applicants on the housing register for some of these houses. The council also stated that it would have concerns should this trend continue. Renfrewshire Council stated that there had been no significant impact in respect of voids, but that some larger properties were becoming less popular and requiring more offers before being let, while Falkirk Council advised that there had been a movement in demand which had resulted in a number of three bedroom properties becoming harder to let and that this had been reinforced by the growth in the value of rent lost to voids in 2013/14.
44. In conclusion, based on the 23 (88%) councils that reported no significant impact on rental income as a result of the RSRS we consider that this aspect of the government's welfare reforms has had no discernible effect on the loss of rental income so far. However, we consider that this is an area that councils will need to continue to monitor going forward.

## Discretionary Housing Payments

45. DHPs are governed by The Discretionary Housing Payment (Grants) Order 2001 and may be awarded when a council considers that a HB claimant requires further financial assistance towards their housing costs. DHP is available to council tenants and non-council tenants and can therefore help prevent rent arrears from rising. Traditionally, DHP has been considered to be a temporary solution to a difficulty in meeting housing costs and not a means of partially funding rent on an on-going basis.
46. Councils receive UK Government funding for DHP each year from the DWP. This funding may be topped up from council resources to an overall DHP cash limit. The Discretionary Housing Payment (Grants) Order 2001 stated that the overall cash limit for DHP was two and a half times the UK Government contribution at the beginning of the financial year.
47. In March 2014, the DWP amended the Grants Order to increase the cash limits for Scottish councils by just over £7 million to £40.7 million.
48. As a result of welfare reforms, the UK Government significantly increased funding for DHP for Scottish councils from £4.2 million in 2012/13 to £18.2 million in 2013/14, an increase of 333%. This includes £1.1 million of transitional funding which councils could decide to use to pay additional DHPs or for other initiatives, for example preventing homelessness. During 2013/14 the Scottish Government also provided Scottish councils with an additional £20 million of funding to help mitigate the impact of welfare reforms.

49. Total funding for DHP in 2013/14 was £38.2 million as shown in exhibit 6 below.

#### Exhibit 6: DHP Funding for 2013/14

UK Government funding (A)	Rural Funding (B)	Reserve Fund Award (C)	Honouring Official Error	Transitional Funding	Scottish Government funding	Total	Overall cash limit (2.5xA+B+C)
£10.1m	£3.4m	£2.8m	£0.8m	£1.1m	£20m	£38.2m	£40.7m

Source: Audit Scotland, Scottish Government, DWP & Scottish Councils

50. The total value of DHP awards made to claimants was £29.4 million in 2013/14. Therefore, despite a significant amount of effort and resources employed by councils, £8.8 million (23%) of DHP funding was not spent. If the assumption is made that all transitional funding was used for purposes other than DHP payments, the underspend would be £7.7 million. Appendix A shows the percentage of underspent funding across all councils. The percentage of funding not spent varies across councils with some councils spending all funding received with others spending less than 30%.
51. Similarly when comparing DHP spend against cash limits, £29.4 million was awarded in DHP payments against an overall revised cash limit of £40.7 million.
52. It may appear surprising that DHP funding has not been fully used to support tenants requiring financial assistance to make rent payments and keep rent arrears to a minimum. However, reasons provided by councils for the underspend included:
- difficulty in planning and devising DHP policies and guidance as a result of the sporadic nature of the additional funding provided at various points during the year
  - the DWP increasing the cash limit one week before the end of the financial year
  - some of the funding, for example the bid funding, was announced late in the financial year
  - not all tenants in arrears qualify for DHP, and some were unwilling or unable to engage
  - funding that was more than required in some areas.
53. It is interesting to note that all of the twelve councils that received additional funding due to being the least densely populated areas in Scotland had underspends ranging from £91,000 in Shetland to £1.03 million in Aberdeenshire. The total DHP underspend compared to total funding was £6.4 million (51%) in respect of these twelve councils.
54. This would indicate that the amount of funding provided to these rural councils was significantly more than required and compared to other councils, where DHP spend has met or exceeded 100% of the funding, it would suggest a review of the funding distribution methodology is required.



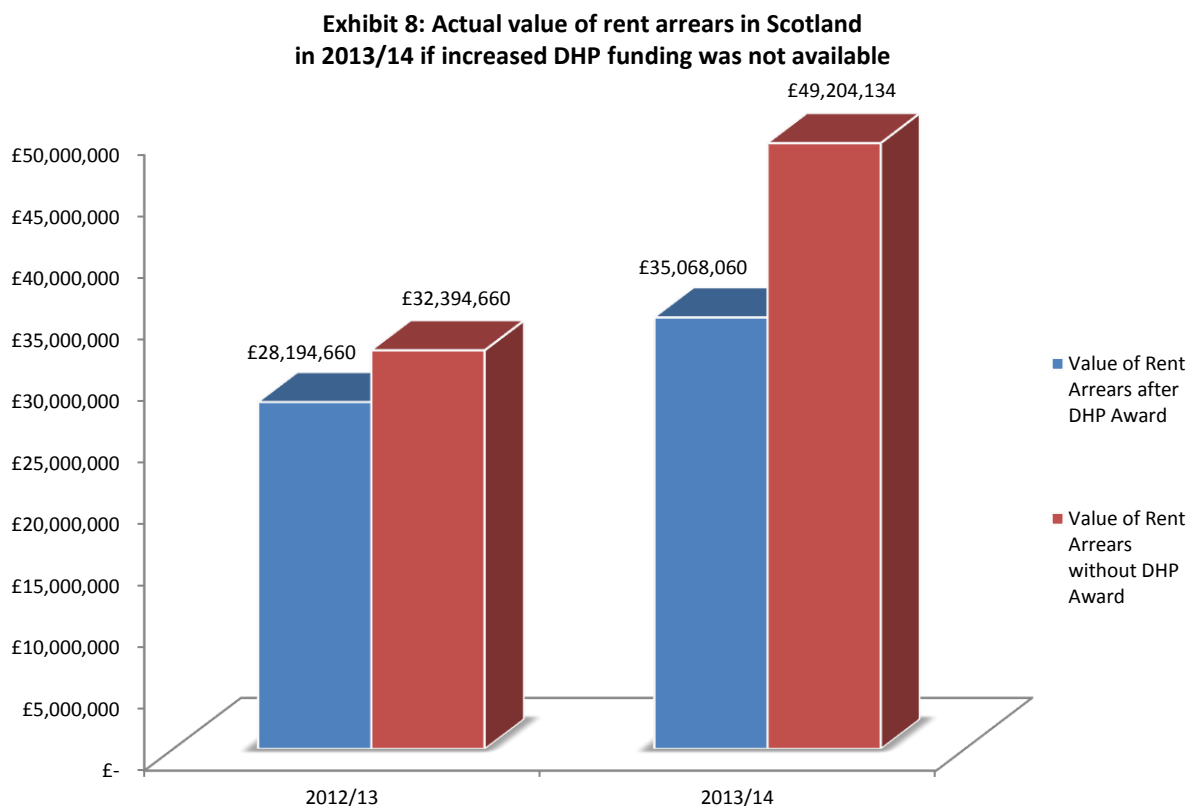
55. Exhibit 7 below shows the amount of DHP underspend for the twelve councils in receipt of rural funding along with the percentage change in rent arrears, where applicable, for these councils.

Exhibit 7: DHP Funding for 2013/14				
Council	Total DWP & Scottish Government funding	DHP underspend	% of funding not spent	% increase in current tenant arrears
Aberdeenshire	£1.50 m	£1.03m	69%	22%
Angus	£1.04m	£0.59m	57%	21%
Argyll & Bute	£0.97m	£0.57m	59%	N/A - no housing stock
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£0.28m	£0.19m	40%	N/A - no housing stock
Dumfries & Galloway	£1.72m	£0.71m	41%	N/A - no housing stock
Highland	£2.58m	£0.49m	19%	6%
Moray	£0.63m	£0.45m	71%	6%
Orkney	£0.17m	£0.09m	53%	7%
Perth & Kinross	£1.32m	£0.91m	69%	17%
Scottish Borders	£1.18m	£0.69m	58%	N/A - no housing stock
Shetland Islands	£0.18m	£0.09m	50%	19%
Stirling	£1.11m	£0.63m	57%	3%
	£12.5m	£6.4m	51%	

Source: Audit Scotland, Scottish Government, DWP & Scottish Councils

56. As previously mentioned, the total value of DHP awards made to claimants was £29.4 million in 2013/14. Looking specifically at the DHP awarded to council tenants, of the 26 councils with council housing stock, 24 were able to split their DHP awards between council tenants and other tenants. The total DHP awarded to council tenants for the councils able to provide a split was £12 million.
57. Although the increase in rent arrears shown in exhibit 2 is significant, the true arrears figures if DHP payments had not been made to council tenants during the year is much higher. Exhibit

8 below shows the potential impact on rent arrears had the DWP and Scottish Government not provided additional funding. We have assumed that for the two councils unable to split their DHP payments, half of the payments were paid to council tenants.



Source: Audit Scotland & Scottish Councils

58. Notwithstanding this, assuming the same increase in rent arrears of 16% that was reported in 2012/13, and taking account of the DHP payments made, Scottish councils rent arrears were still approximately £2.4 million higher in 2013/14 after the introduction of the RSRS.
59. Appendix B looks specifically at the arrears in the 24 councils able to split their DHP awards between council tenants and other tenants. The appendix shows the amount of rent paid by DHP and the current tenant arrears after DHP has been awarded.
60. In May 2014, the UK government offered to transfer the power to set the DHP cash limit to the Scottish Government. The legal and parliamentary process to transfer this power is likely to take until autumn 2014 to be complete.
61. By devolving the setting of the cash limit to the Scottish Government, this will allow the Scottish Government to increase their funding for DHP. For 2014/15, the UK government has announced DHP funding of £15.2 million for Scottish councils. In addition, the Scottish Government has agreed £35 million of DHP funding and has indicated that this additional funding should mitigate the impact of the RSRS for all affected tenants.
62. It should be remembered that DHP funding is of a temporary nature and DHP funding could revert back to levels similar to those in 2012/13. Therefore uncertainty remains for those tenants and councils currently relying on DHP assistance to help meet rent charges.

Reductions in DHP funding could have a significant impact on rental income, rent arrears and strategic housing plans for both council and other landlords.

## Policies

63. Councils have kept elected members up to date with the welfare reform agenda as well as the impact in their local areas and the actions taken to mitigate any adverse impact on local residents. As a result, changes have been made to council policies that cover the award of DHP, collecting rent arrears, and the allocation of social housing. Policy revision proposals have been developed by officers and presented to elected members through relevant committees for approval.
64. A number of councils have reviewed their rent arrears policies and made announcements to clearly articulate that there will be no evictions where rent arrears have accrued as a result of under occupancy or the benefit cap, and the tenant is engaging with the council and taking reasonable steps to meet their rent commitment. However, it is extremely difficult for councils to identify the cause of rent arrears in many cases as the RSRS might only be one of a range of financial challenges being faced by a tenant. In setting such policies, councillors and officials need to be mindful of their responsibilities to safeguard council finances.
65. Although this has been reported by the media as a significant policy change by councils, and may appear in some cases to have removed the ultimate sanction for non-payment, it is not a fundamental change from previous debt management activity. Councils have always tried to engage with tenants who are in arrears and will avoid taking eviction proceedings wherever possible. In most cases, eviction proceedings are the last resort and only taken after all reasonable efforts to help the tenant have failed.
66. Although councils retain the right to evict tenants in arrears who do not engage with them, they are very aware of their legal duty to provide, often costly, housing support to those residents assessed as unintentionally homeless.
67. DHP policies now include more generous and extended awards following the receipt of additional funding with priority for those affected by under occupancy or the benefit cap. Some councils rolled 2013/14 awards over to June 2014 until 2014/15 funding was clarified.
68. Some councils have also included the requirement to provide welfare reform information to all new tenants.
69. In addition, some housing allocation policies now include incentives to encourage downsizing, additional points being awarded to those on the housing waiting list that are under-occupying, and amended size criteria to mirror that of DWP.

## Initiatives

70. To help mitigate the impact of the welfare reforms, councils and other stakeholder organisations have implemented a number of initiatives. The more widespread ones are:
  - offering money advice and maximising household income

- working with credit unions - as an example North Ayrshire Council and five other Ayrshire landlords have created a partnership with a credit union to help tenants set up bank accounts and manage household budgets. Angus and Clackmannanshire councils have undertaken similar work
- employment initiatives and helping to build skills - such as:
  - The Highland Council supporting its residents to gain digital skills
  - West Dumbarton Council's Working4U services which helps people to gain skills and education to increase job opportunities
  - Angus Council reviewing arrangements at its libraries to promote digital inclusion
  - South Lanarkshire Council referring its Tenant Liaison Team's customers to specialist training and employability services
- facilitating mutual exchanges via a national direct home swap service for social housing tenants who want to swap or exchange their property.

## Long term plans

71. At this point in time welfare reform changes have had no significant impact on council's long term housing plans and strategies. Consideration is been given as to how the shortage of one bedroom properties will be addressed and similarly how stocks of family sized houses where currently demand is generally low will be managed.
72. A key concern for most councils is the combined impact of the introduction of UC and restrictions on rent levels, and how they will deliver their statutory duty to homeless households. North Ayrshire Council has undertaken an options appraisal to determine how services could continue to be delivered beyond 2015/16 while others prefer to wait for clear guidance from DWP as to how temporary accommodation will be treated under UC arrangements.

# Looking forward

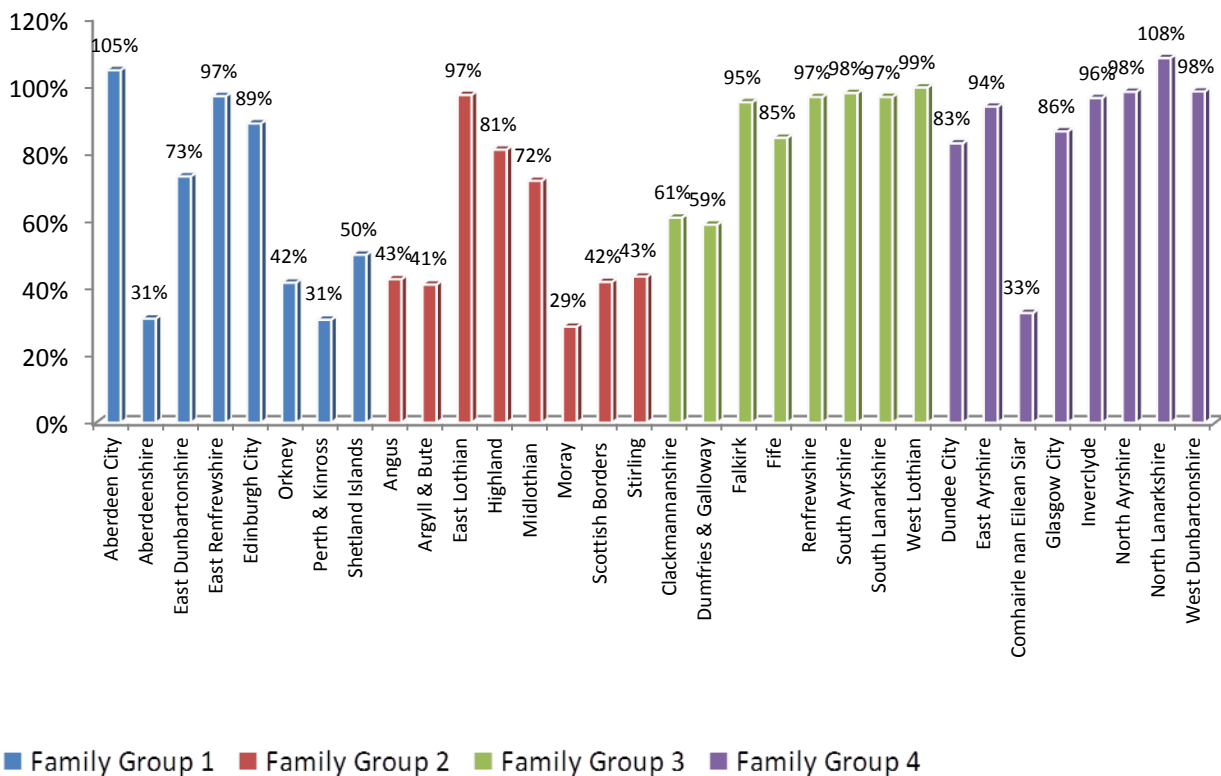
73. Looking forward there are other areas of welfare reform that cause concern. Not least the fact that many households are or, are likely to be, affected by more than one change which will make rent collection more difficult as these changes are implemented.
74. The movement of customers from Disabled Living Allowance to Personal Independent Payments and Incapacity Benefit to ESA, benefit sanctions, and importantly the introduction of UC and direct payments to claimants are likely to make rent collection more challenging.
75. Acknowledging the huge and adverse impact welfare reform will have on communities, action to mitigate this has been coordinated at Community Planning level in Scottish Borders and Orkney Islands councils while Fife Council is developing arrangements to integrate Welfare Reform within local Community Planning.

76. The uncertainty around UC migration makes workforce and resource planning extremely difficult for all councils and their services.
77. In East Ayrshire Council elected members have requested a targeted study on Jobseeker's Allowance and ESA sanctions, to understand the impact of this locally.
78. Scottish Borders Council raised several concerns around the continued reliance on DHP in terms of:
  - uncertain future funding
  - added administration burden
  - tenant expectation.
79. South Ayrshire Council is engaged in ongoing dialogue with colleagues from DWP regarding the proposed Local Support Services Framework and work is underway to map the current provision of advice and information services, the role of partners and the capacity across the council area to support digital inclusion in the future.

# Appendix A

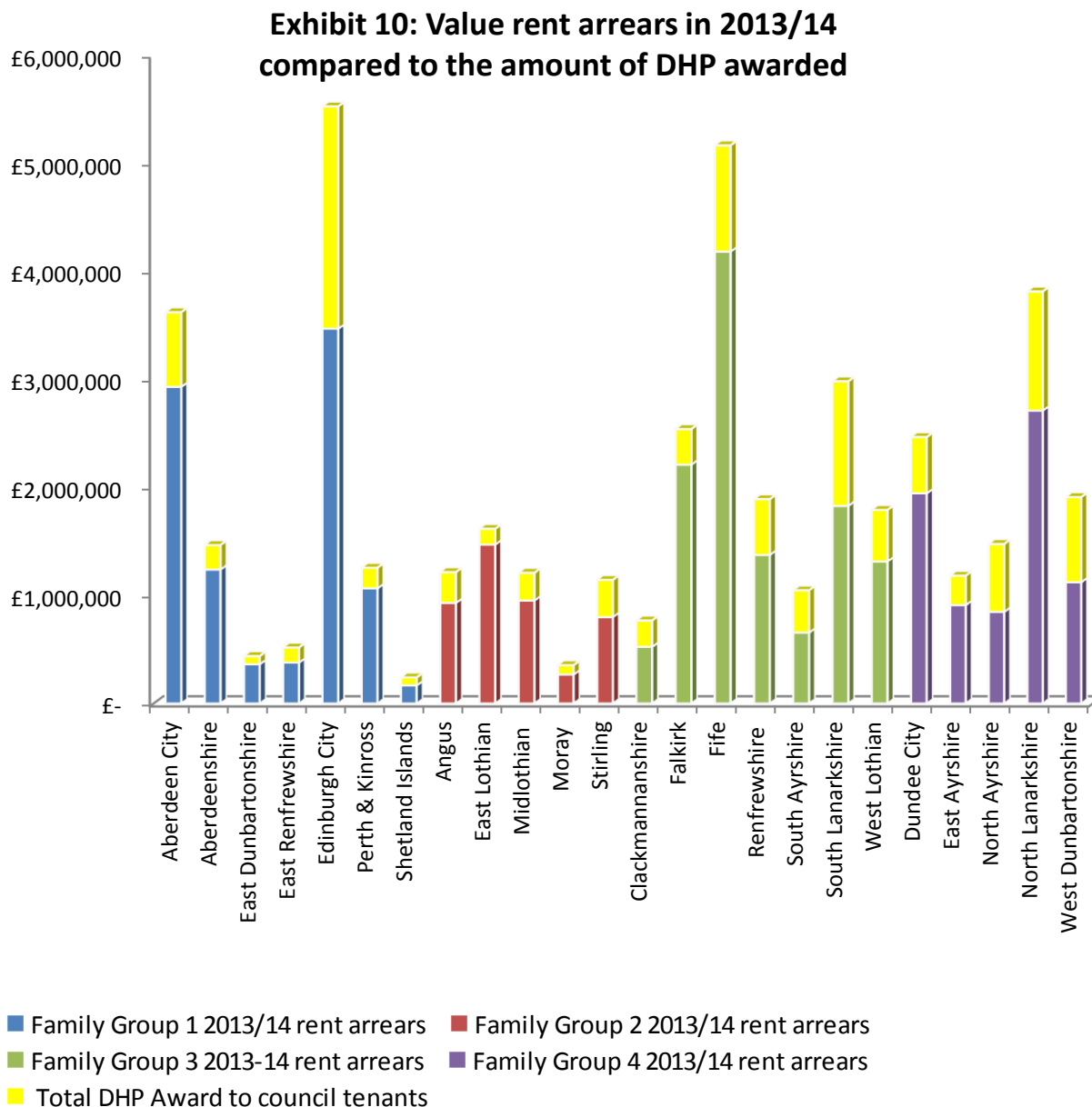
- 80. Exhibit 9 below details individual Scottish councils DHP spend as a percentage of the total funding available and illustrates the significant variance across Scotland. DHP spend ranging from 29% to 108% might be considered indicative of local economic circumstances and in the distribution formula with some councils apparently receiving significantly more funding than was required. Councils in receipt of rural funding are shown in blue.
- 81. Only 13 of the 32 councils spent in excess of 90% of their DHP budget with ten councils unable to spend more than 50% of their allocation.
- 82. Councils have been grouped in accordance with the family groups established by the local government benchmarking framework for housing services.

**Exhibit 9: Percentage of council DHP spend to total funding**



# Appendix B

83. Exhibit 10 below shows rent arrears and DHP awarded to council tenants in 2013/14 for the 24 councils able to split DHP awards between council tenants and other tenants. Again, councils have been grouped in accordance with the family groups established by the local government benchmarking framework for housing services where appropriate.







**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 25 November 2014

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive - Partnerships and Community Services

**SUBJECT:** Use of Council Bus Fleet

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**3**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to assess current and proposed use of the existing fleet of buses within Transport Services

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of this report which forms a basis for discussion with regard to current and future utilisation of the Council passenger carrying fleet within Transport Services.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the PPRC meeting in January 2014 a request for further information was requested with regard to the utilisation both current and in the future of the existing council fleet of vehicles.
- 3.2 At this previous meeting the current utilisation was around 70% which is a high value compared to local operators. There are periods within this that the vehicles are stationary as a result of clients/passengers visiting pool, attraction, day centre etc and therefore may appear not to be operational.
- 3.3 Transport Services have recently reduced the fleet by three vehicles and the work carried out by these transferred to the local taxi operators and in most cases this has been a success.
- 3.4 The current fleet carries out transport requirements for Adult Wellbeing, Education and externally run day centres and lunch clubs. All externally run day centres and lunch clubs are partially funded by East Lothian Council through Adult Wellbeing. (See Appendix A)

- 3.5 A trial was recently carried out where a supported services route (Service 110 operated by Prentice Coaches), was to be utilised by the clients using Ormiston Primrose lunch club but this was unsuccessful due to opening times of the lunch club.
- 3.6 All six secondary schools have pupils attending South East Scotland Academies Partnership and Transport Services vehicles collect pupils from all schools to a central meeting point then re-distribute these pupils to attend Queen Margaret University and three campuses of Edinburgh College. Currently there are 94 pupils attending and the cost per head is 86p per person per journey. Local taxi companies also assist in this transport where numbers are not viable for Transport Services vehicles.
- 3.7 Recently held meetings with the Association of Day Centres in East Lothian have shown that there are possible collaboration options to allow better utilisation of both fleets of vehicles.
- 3.8 Further investigation is to be done to see if it is possible to utilise the Council fleet to provide services during school and day centre holidays when vehicle utilisation is at its' lowest i.e. over the festive period. Currently the fleet is used for East Lothian Special Needs Playschemes over the summer, Easter and October school breaks.
- 3.9 A further report will be brought to the PPRC with information regarding the Supported Services routes within East Lothian. The current contract for these services is due to go to tender in December 14 to commence on 1 April 2015.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

#### **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 Appendix A Bus time graph

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Financial - None

7.2 Personnel - None

7.3 Other - None

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Ian Dalgleish
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Transport Services Manager
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Ext 7932
<b>DATE</b>	14 November 2014



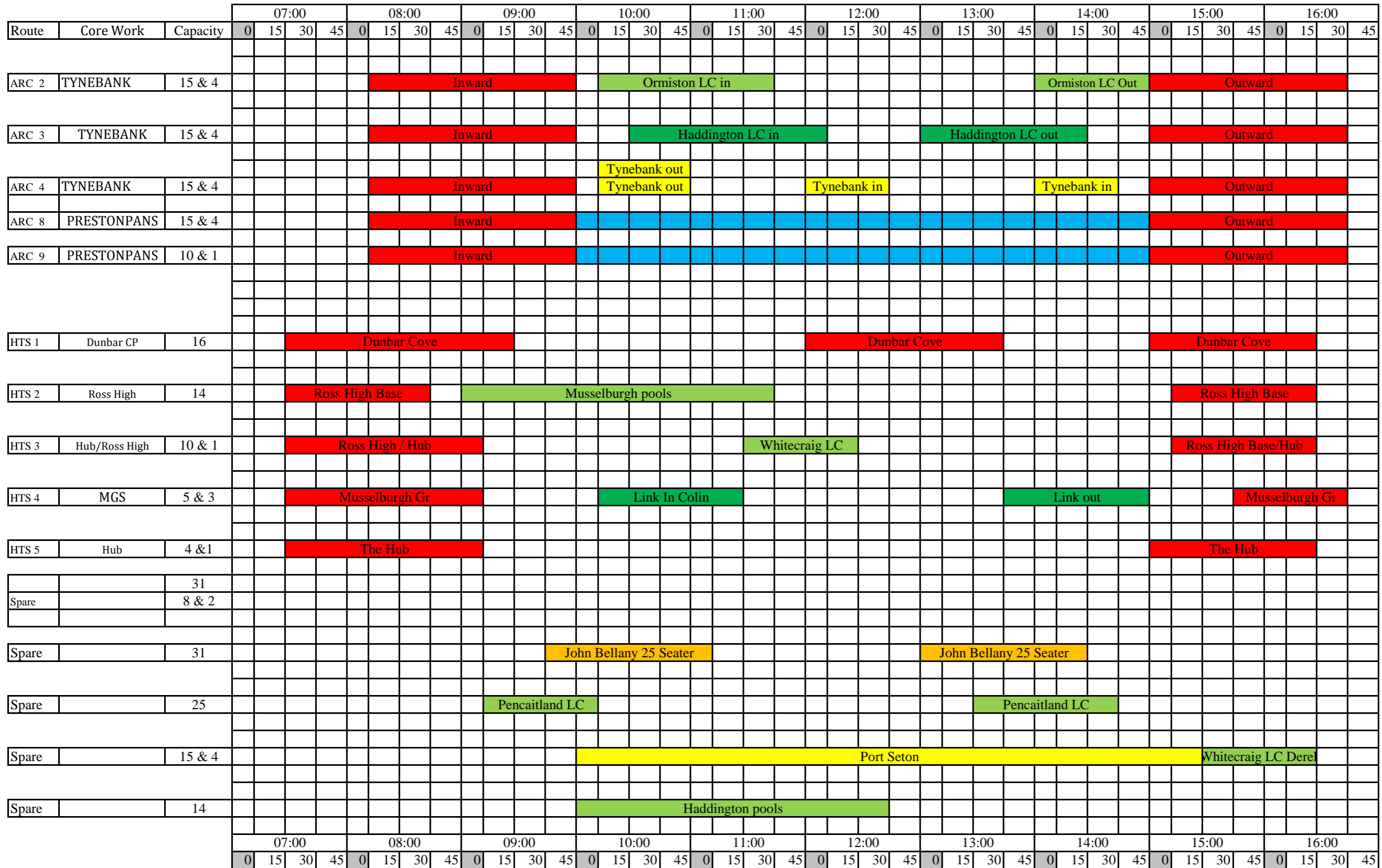
# Monday

Route	Core Work	Capacity	07:00				08:00				09:00				10:00				11:00				12:00				13:00				14:00				15:00				16:00			
			0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45
ARC 2	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Tynebank out				Tynebank in												Outward															
ARC 3	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Haddington LC in				Haddington LC out								Outward																			
ARC 4	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Tynebank out				Tynebank out								Tynebank in				Outward															
ARC 8	PRESTONPANS	15 & 4					Port Seton																																			
ARC 9	PRESTONPANS	10 & 1																																								
HTS 1	Dunbar CP	5					Dunbar Cove												Dunbar Cove :- Dougie / Kel								Dunbar Cove															
HTS 2	Ross High	16					Ross High Base																				Ross High Base															
HTS 3	Hub/Ross High	4 & 1					hub / Ross High				Hub Pool								Hub Pool								Ross High Base/Hub															
HTS 4	MGS	5 & 3					Musselburgh Gr								Link In								Link Out								Musselburgh Gr											
HTS 5	Hub	8 & 2					The Hub				Hub Pool								Hub Pool								The Hub															
Spare		8 & 2													Macmerry In				Macmerry Out																							
Spare		31																					Academies																			
Spare		25									John Bellany 25 Seater								John Bellany 25 Seater																							
		31									Ormiston LC in								Ormiston LCOut																							
Spare		14																																								

# Tuesday

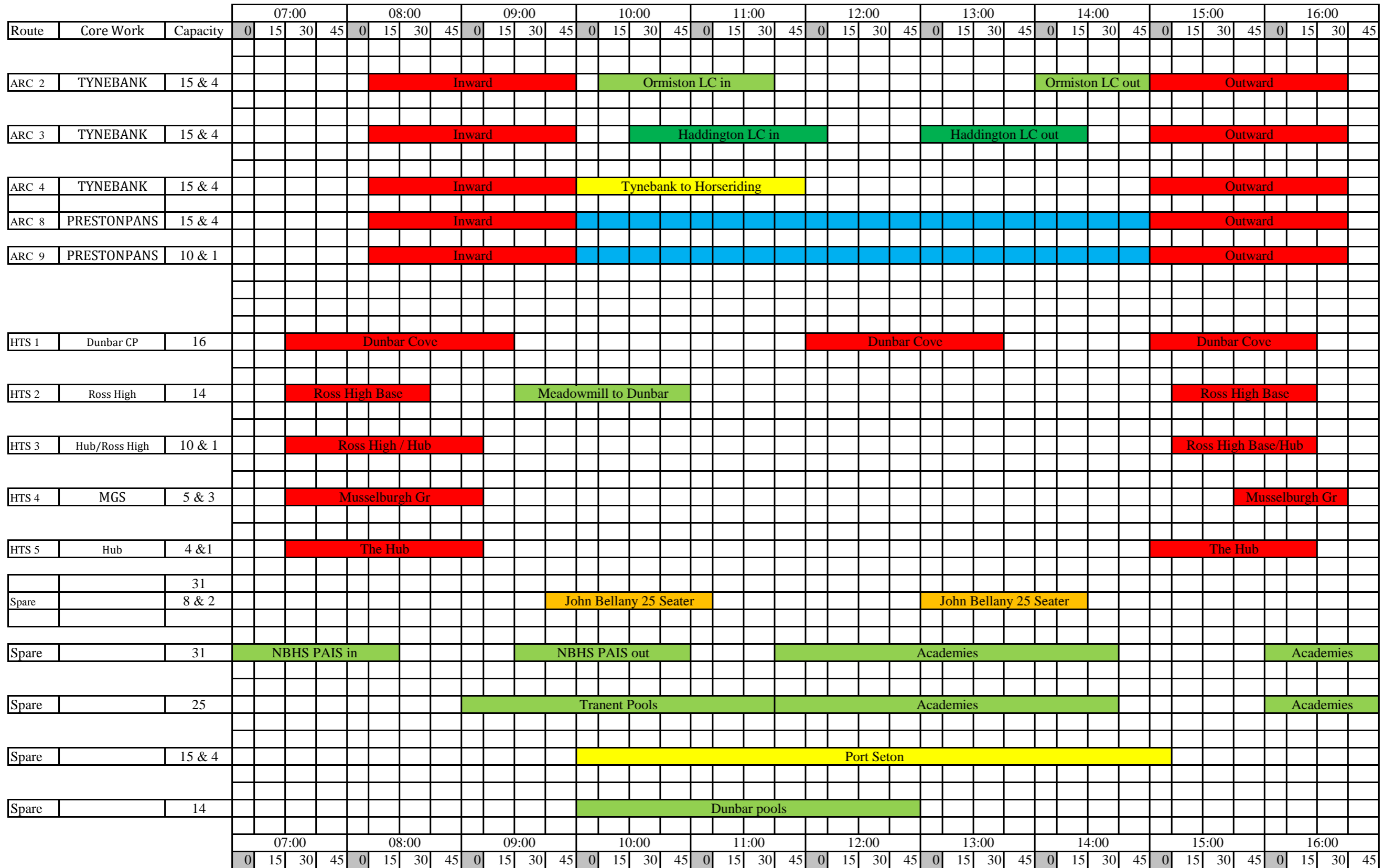
Route	Core Work	Capacity	07:00				08:00				09:00				10:00				11:00				12:00				13:00				14:00				15:00				16:00			
			0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45
ARC 2	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Tynebank 25 seater								Tynebank				Outward																			
ARC 3	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Haddington LC in 25 seater								Haddington LC out				Outward																			
ARC 4	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Tynebank 25 seater								Tynebank				Outward																			
ARC 8	PRESTONPANS	15 & 4					Inward				25 seater																Outward															
ARC 9	PRESTONPANS	10 & 1					Inward				25 seater																Outward															
HTS 1	Dunbar CP	14					Dunbar Cove								Dunbar Cove :- Gordon/Colin								Dunbar Cove																			
HTS 2	Ross High	16					Ross High Base				Meadowmill to Dunbar								Ross High Base																							
HTS 3	Hub/Ross High	4 & 1					Ross High / Hub								Ross High Base/Hub																											
HTS 4	MGS	5 & 3					Musselburgh Gr				Prestonpans Pool								Musselburgh Gr																							
HTS 5	Hub	8 & 2					The Hub				NBHS PIAS								The Hub																							
Spare		8 & 2																																								
Spare		31	NBHS PAIS in								Musselburgh Pools				Academies								Academies																			
Spare		25					John Bellany 25 Seater								John Bellany 25 Seater																											
Spare		25					North Berwick Pools				Academies								Academies																							
Spare		10 & 1									Ormiston LC in 25 seater								Ormiston LCOut																							

# Wednesday



**Bus Time Graph 10-11-14**

# Thursday



**Bus Time Graph 10-11-14**



# Friday

Route	Core Work	Capacity	07:00				08:00				09:00				10:00				11:00				12:00				13:00				14:00				15:00				16:00			
			0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45	0	15	30	45
ARC 2	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Ormiston LC in								Ormiston LC out				Outward																			
ARC 3	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward								Academies								Outward																			
ARC 4	TYNEBANK	15 & 4					Inward				Tynebank												Outward																			
ARC 8	PRESTONPANS	23 & 1																																								
ARC 9	PRESTONPANS	10 & 1									Off								Off																							
HTS 1	Dunbar CP	16					Dunbar Cove												Dunbar Cove																							
HTS 2	Ross High	14					Ross High Base												Ross High Base				Academies																			
HTS 3	Hub/Ross High	10 & 1					Ross high / Hub												Ross High Base/Hub																							
HTS 4	MGS	5 & 3					Musselburgh Gr												Musselburgh Gr																							
HTS 5	Hub	4 & 1					The Hub												The Hub																							
Spare		31																																								
Spare		8 & 2																																								
Spare		14																																								
Spare		31									Headway to livingston 31 Seater																															
Spare		25									John Bellany 25 Seater								John Bellany 25 Seater																							
Spare		25													Academies								Academies																			
Spare		14																																								



**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 25 November 2014

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive - Resources and People Services

**SUBJECT:** Provision of Outdoor Learning to Schools

4

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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Provision of Outdoor Learning to schools in East Lothian, both past and present. The background papers include a link to the Outdoor Learning Service website which contains information regarding many of our teaching sessions and a copy of the HSE report.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and in particular the successful HSE Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection Report.

## 3 BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Overview of the Service

- 3.1.1 **“The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences”** - quote from Education Scotland

- 3.1.2 The Outdoor Learning Service uses the outdoor environment and adventurous activities as a vehicle for delivering the Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning. The service Vision is:

- **To enable** every East Lothian Council school to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence using the outdoor environment.
- **To assist** schools in delivering *regular* and *frequent* outdoor learning which is sustainable, high quality, progressive and linked directly to the relevant experiences and outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence.
- **To be regarded** nationally as high quality educators of Outdoor Learning providing valued input to national organisations and best practice initiatives.

### 3.1.3 Staffing of the Outdoor Learning Service is made up of:

- Principal Teacher - 0.6 FTE
- Teachers – 1.6 FTE, up until June 2013 we had 2.6 FTE Teachers
- Technician - 1 FTE
- Associate Staff/ Freelance Instructors (when needed)

All teaching staff are fully qualified, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered teachers who have qualified with a subject based teaching qualification and in addition to this hold a number of high level National Governing Body awards.

### 3.1.4 There are a number of ways the service delivers its vision

3.1.4.1 **‘Specialist Outdoor Learning Teacher Provision’** The service provides all schools with a set number of days allocated to them. All teaching sessions delivered are; planned with direct reference to the Curriculum for Excellence relevant key ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ and the ‘Learning for Sustainability’ agenda, tailored to individual school/ class/ learner requirements, progressive and high quality.

- These days are free to participants.
- The days are planned and delivered by Outdoor Learning Service Teachers.

#### 3.1.4.2 Number of **‘Specialist Outdoor Learning Teacher Provision’** days delivered

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
178	262	295	336	296	330	223	130

3.1.4.3 **‘Adventure Award Days’** This is an opportunity for young people to gain the skills needed to progress in a range of adventurous activities. Young people have the opportunity to gain local and national certification. All awards meet a range of CfE experiences and outcomes.

- A nominal charge is made to participants.
- The days are planned by Outdoor Learning Service Teachers and delivered by Associate/ Freelance staff.

#### 3.1.4.4 Number of **‘Adventure Award Days’** days delivered

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90

3.1.4.5 **‘Extra Curricular/ Extra Requests...’** The service supports the demands on schools and community such as Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE), John Muir Award (JMA) & Residential experiences.

- A subsidised rate is charge to participants.
- The days are planned and delivered by Associate/ Freelance staff.

3.1.4.6 Number of **‘Extra Curricular/ Extra Requests’** days delivered

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
56	96	57	65	115	87	27.5	130

3.1.4.7 **‘Outdoor Learning Events/Festivals’** These days have traditionally bought together teams from schools to compete in outdoor challenges, competitions and adventure races. These challenges build upon teamwork, resilience, fitness, leadership skills, communication skills etc.

3.1.4.8 Number of **‘Outdoor Learning Events/Festivals’** days delivered. Participation numbers at these events (depending on the nature of the event) range from 30 to 300.

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
6	7	8	9	9	9	2	3

3.1.4.9 **‘Other Outdoor Learning Projects’** The service provides support, staffing, equipment etc where appropriate, to enable outdoor learning projects related to the curriculum for excellence to take place. One of the key objectives for these projects is that they can become sustainable over an agreed period of time to be run without the need for outdoor learning staff or secure funding to cover the cost of outdoor learning staff. Projects the service is involved with at the moment include:

- Ross High Climbing in the curriculum
  - 2hrs PE across all schools
  - Bikability level 1 & 2 provision in all primary schools
  - Christmas Leavers
  - Additional Support Needs (ASN) adventures in the outdoors
- These days are free to participants.
  - The days are planned and delivered by a combination of Outdoor Learning Service Teachers and Associate/ Freelance staff.

3.1.4.10 Number of **‘Other Outdoor Learning Projects’** days delivered. The statistics for these projects are combined in the previous delivery day categories.

3.1.4.11 **‘Summer Activity Programme’** The service provides a programme of adventurous activities for young people run through the school summer holidays. Inspiring young people to appreciate the outdoors and encourage them to lead healthy active lives.

- A subsidised rate is charge to participants.
- The days are planned and delivered by Associate/ Freelance staff.

3.1.4.12 Number of **‘Summer Activity Programme’** days delivered

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
40	19	24	32	29	15	17	17

▪

3.1.4.13 **‘Staff Development’** The service provides CPD/ CLPL opportunities including National Governing Body awards enabling staff to build confidence and pass on skills and knowledge to young people in an outdoor learning environment. This includes courses specifically designed to help staff overcome barriers (perceived and actual) to allow young people to learn safely and enjoyably in the outdoor environment.

- These days are free to participants where possible a subsidised rate is charged for first aid.
- The days are planned by Outdoor Learning Service Teachers and delivered by a combination of Outdoor Learning Service Teachers and Associate/ Freelance staff.

3.1.4.14 Number of **‘Staff Development’** days delivered and number of participants gaining experience and awards

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
Days	79	97	87	85	101	88	61	85
Participants	199	268	147	316	388	355	467	400

▪

3.1.4.15 **‘Advice & Resources’** The service provides advice and resources to all enabling outdoor learning to take place throughout the council. This includes equipment hire and the management of Innerwick Residential Centre.

3.1.4.16 **‘Volunteers/Support’** Volunteers come from a number of areas including: School Work Experience Placements, University Student Placements, Volunteer Network, Partnership Working.

3.1.4.17 Number of **‘Volunteers’** with experience and relevant qualifications.

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
1	1	1	1	1	1	5	12

3.1.4.18 **‘External (to ELC) work’** Any external requests for delivery of adventurous activities/ outdoor learning/ first aid are considered and charged at a commercial rate if associate/ freelance staff are available. All our staff development courses are accessible to external clients who are charged a commercial rate for attendance.

3.1.4.19 **‘HSE Adventure Activity Licence (AALA)’** East Lothian Council holds a HSE Adventure Activity Licence, managed by the Outdoor Learning Service. The licensing scheme is the mechanism for the inspection and regulation for certain aspects of the delivery of adventure activities to young people as set out in the Activity Centres (Young Persons’ Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. East Lothian Council have held a HSE AALA licence since 1996 when licencing was first introduced and have been inspected on an annual basis since that date. A recent inspection was very successful, with the conclusion ‘no required action’.

3.1.4.20 Certain aspects of the Outdoor Learning Service that play a key role in the delivery of Outdoor Learning are scrutinised by the inspection, these include:

- Management of the council wide visit approval database, EVOLVE, with regard to Outdoor Learning experiences. The number of ‘Adventurous Visits’ approved / processed can be seen in the table below.

07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15 projection
232	335	395	306	Introduction of EVOLVE from paper system	528	606	7-800 (at 450 ½ way through year)

- The ELC ‘Safety and Good Practice in Managing off Site Visits Guidelines’ alongside safety management documentation including risk assessments. These are reviewed on an annual basis.
- Ensuring staff (throughout the council) are trained to appropriate standards to ensure off site visits involving young people are of high quality and take place safely. Providing access to appropriate technical advice where necessary.
- Appropriate maintenance of safety equipment throughout the council, relating to adventurous activities.

- Management of the monitoring of off site visits taking place involving young people

### 3.2 How does the Outdoor Learning Service help deliver the SOA? ...in brief

#### 3.2.1 Sustainable Economy

- *1. East Lothian has a growing sustainable economy* – The service utilises a number of small businesses in East Lothian to deliver on its behalf.
- *3. Communities in East Lothian are able to adapt to climate change and reduced finite natural resources* – Encourage/ educate young people to lead active healthy lives promoting walking and cycling. Promote cycling awards for both staff and pupils. Encourage school and community groups to walk pupils to venues and/ or use public transport.

#### 3.2.2 Resilient People

- *4. All of East Lothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens* – Deliver the curriculum for excellence alongside both local and national awards.
- *6. In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives* – Educate both staff and young people about the importance of active healthy lives. Promote the outdoors as part of healthy living. Introduce new outdoor sports/ interests to staff and pupils encouraging them to progress by offering development programmes and access to local clubs.

#### 3.2.3 Safe and Vibrant Communities

- *8. East Lothian has high quality natural environments* – Use adventurous activities as a vehicle to educate young people about the importance of their local natural environment and how they can play a role in protecting and enhancing it.
- *10. East Lothian has stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities* – Encourage, support and build up our volunteer network. Continue to work across all sectors of the East Lothian community both in schools and with community groups. Continue to deliver outdoor learning across the learning communities of East Lothian.

## 4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The ELC Guidelines Safety and Good Practice in Managing Off Site Visits needs to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis in accordance with HSE AALA guidance and Scottish Government Guidance in the form of the Going Out There (GOT) document.
- 4.2 The Outdoor Learning Service is making a key contribution to The East Lothian Plan: Single Outcome Agreement 2013-23 as noted above.



## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the wellbeing of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 HSE AALA Inspection Report  
7.2 [www.edubuzz.org/outdoorlearning](http://www.edubuzz.org/outdoorlearning)

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Liz Brookes
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Principal Teacher Outdoor Education
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	lbrookes@elcschool.org.uk
<b>DATE</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2014



# Adventure Activities Licensing Service

44 Lambourne Crescent, Cardiff Business Park, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5GG  
Telephone (029) 20755715 Fax (029) 20755757 e-mail : info@aals.org.uk website : www.aals.org.uk

## INSPECTION REPORT

### Name of Licence Applicant

East Lothian Council

### Inspected establishment / company / person

**Name** East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service

**Address** Musselburgh Racecourse Complex  
Balcarres Road  
MUSSELBURGH  
East Lothian

EH21 7SR

**Reference Number** R0176

**Operational Base** Unit 3, Musselburgh Racecourse Complex, Musselburgh.

**Type of Provider** Large Multi Activity Local Authority Peripatetic Provider

**Normal Capacity** 50 - 100

**Contact person during inspection** Liz Brooks Martyn Pegg Keith Christie

**Contact's position** Principal Teacher Outdoor Education Technician  
Outdoor Education  
Education Teacher

**Enforcement Authority** HSE Edinburgh

### Inspector

Steve Spalding

### Date of inspection

12.06.14

### Time on Site

6 hour(s)

## **About this Report**

- In making this report the Licensing Service has considered a report(s) made to it by an Inspector authorised in accordance with the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (updated 2004).
- You should act on the requirements of this report which supersede any previous discussions or verbal instructions.
- The report does not constitute a final decision by the Licensing Authority. The final decision will generally be in the form of a licence document, where applicable, or a refusal notice where not. A licence will be forwarded to the provider when all required information has been received and full payment has been made.
- In some cases you may be instructed to make changes to the way you operate and you should note any required time scale. In other cases you may be offered advice. In these cases you should use your own expertise to decide if it is applicable or necessary.
- In cases where there are no apparent seasonal or activity restrictions in respect of activities in the activity matrix of this report (or any subsequent licence document), the standard conditions attached to all licence documents will apply.
- In all cases the continued management of safety remains the responsibility of the provider and not the Licensing Authority nor the Licensing Service.
- Your licence, where one is applicable, will show the licence holder as **East Lothian Council** and the operational base as **East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service**.

*Please advise us as a matter of some urgency if these details are not correct.*

- Similarly, you should check that the “Activities offered by the provider” section, if shown, is accurate. The matrix may contain activities which are not licensable. These will not appear on any subsequent licence document.
- **You should be aware that you have the right to make a representation to the Licensing Authority on any decisions made by them. In the first instance representations should be to the Head of Inspection of the Adventure Activities Licensing Service.**

**Marcus Bailie**  
**Head of Inspection**

Activity	Activity Restrictions	Seasonal Restrictions	In Scope
Kayaking		None	Yes
Open Canoeing		None	Yes
Improvised Rafting		None	Yes
Sailing		None	Yes
Stand Up Paddleboarding		None	Yes
Rock Climbing		None	Yes
Abseiling		None	Yes
Gorge Scrambling		None	Yes
Coasteering		None	Yes
Hill Walking & Mountaineering		None	Yes
Ski Touring		None	Yes
Off-Road Cycling		None	Yes
Orienteering			No
Pony Trekking	sub-contracted activity		N/A
Team building			No
Archery			No
Bushcraft			

**During an inspection on 12.06.14 the following aspects of the organisation were considered.**

**Part A : About this provider.**

A1. East Lothian Council's Department of Partnership and Services for Community operate the Outdoor Learning Service from their operating base at Musselburgh Racecourse Complex. All adventure activity provided by the Council is either delivered by the Service, or is subject to a notification and authorisation system operated by the Service. All excursions within East Lothian are managed through the Evolve software programme. A major part of the Service's operation is providing activities to the Council's schools and community groups. Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award provision is mainly school based, but there are currently six community groups actively involved in DofE work.

A2. The operation is managed by Principal Teacher Liz Brookes. The operation is staffed by two full time and one part time permanent instructors, supplemented where required from a pool of six Associate Instructors (occasional/freelance).

A3. Activities are undertaken mainly within the East Lothian area, but facilities and venues further afield are occasionally used.

A4. A past Council reorganisation has resulted in the transfer of management responsibility for the Outdoor Education Service from the Education section, to the Partnership and Services for Community section. This is understood to be an administrative arrangement, with no material effect on the operation.

A5. East Lothian Council has 6 secondary schools, 35 primary schools, and 2 special needs bases.

A6. The Service is a Provider for the Lowland Leader Award, the Basic Expedition Leader scheme, a Regional Centre for the British Stand up Paddle Association and are Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited First Aid Trainers.

**Part B : About this inspection.**

B1. This visit was undertaken following an application from East Lothian Council for a renewal of their adventure activities licence. It consisted of :-

- a. observation of a Coasteering session at Milsey Bay, North Berwick;
- b. observation of a staff morning planning meeting;

- c. viewing a sample of safety management documentation;
- d. viewing of the range of equipment in the stores and provided for the session;
- e. discussions with staff delivering the session, the group and accompanying staff, checking a range of safety management arrangements.

B2. Prior to the visit, the inspector reviewed the report following the last visit, viewed the licence application, and also checked the provider's website, [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk), for content.

B3. In the course of the inspection visit, the inspector:-

- a. observed the morning staff meeting confirming aspects of safety management including the outcome of a recent DofE meeting with school staff where Liz clarified staffing ratios and qualification requirements;
- b. discussed training and competence of staff to run coasteering activity with reference to developments in more relevant courses such as the Surf Lifesaving GB (SLGB) Coasteering Safety and Rescue Qualification;
- c. joined a coasteering group and observed the practical application of safety management;
- d. checked staff records and operating procedures relating to the observed coasteering session and for several freelance staff;
- e. checked the range and scope of current Council provision with reference to the current programme and future plans. Was informed of the creation of an East Lothian young persons awards for various activities provided as an encouragement and achievement award within the schools;
- f. was informed by Liz that Bill Stephen who was the Depute has now take a new post with Midlothian Council's outdoor education provision and that the post has not been filled resulting in a higher work load for all the staff;
- g. enquired about the additional work load of checking Evolve and was informed by Liz that notifications through Evolve have risen from approximately 300 to 700/800 per year. Liz also explained that she works closely with Judith Wood in the Education Health and Safety (H&S) department in advising the signing off of school excursions through Evolve;
- h. viewed a recent quality assurance monitoring report for a school visit by Chris Lawson from the Council's H&S department. Chris audited the provision of an offsite visit which had approval through Evolve by meeting the staff during the visit. Liz explained that Chris planned to make one such check per month to ensure that schools were complying with the Council's stated policies which in turn supported her role in signing off more adventurous visits and DofE award activity;
- i. checked on accident and incidents and the subsequent reviewing, noting that there had not been any major events. Liz explained that there was a monthly staff meeting to review any accidents. The inspector suggested adding checking the Info Log to the monthly agenda for updates on current issues;
- j. checked on implementation of recommendations made in the previous licence renewal report, and discussed responses to advice previously offered;
- k. checked the current status of Council DofE provision, and was informed that the provider will be using the Lowland Leader Award to support staff delivering the Bronze level. Also that the Service will be offering Gold level expeditions as many of the schools do not have that capability mainly due to a lack of staff experience and qualifications;
- l. checked on access to technical advice as and when required noting that a number of experienced and highly qualified technical advisors are involved with the Service;
- m. checked arrangements for ensuring all equipment is fit for use and viewed recent equipment check records noting that equipment appeared to be in really good condition. Was informed that all freelance instructor personal technical equipment is now checked as fit for purpose prior to use or centre equipment provided;
- n. discussed several issues currently impacting the outdoor sector including auto belays, the Info Log, kill cords, Kelly Kettles and the latest position on the future of Licensing and several items from the Licensing

Service's Top Tips and Handy Hints;

- o. provided feedback on the inspection visit and the issues raised.

**Part C : Activity Observation**

C1. The inspector joined a group of P6 primary children from Prestonpans Primary School on a coastering activity session at Milsey Bay near North Berwick. This was the first part of a Sea to Summit day when the children had the opportunity to coasteer and then climb to the summit of North Berwick Law. The day was led by Martyn Pegg assisted by Keith Christie.

C2. The eight children were well equipped for the session and were accompanied by a member of teaching staff. Martyn and Keith made the experience child centred and carefully helped them to set realistic goals, consider each other and the environment, develop confidence and learn about the shore environment while having a lot of fun. The session was safely and competently delivered.

C3. The session observed seemed to confirm that the risk management and analysis systems claimed by the provider and seen in various documents continue to be implemented in practice.

**Part D : Issues arising from this inspection.**

There are no required actions as a result of this inspection visit.

**Part E : Review of the recommendations made in the report following inspection on 4.6.13**

All requirements and recommendations in the previous report had been considered and acted on.

**Recommendations and conditions regarding the granting of a licence**

The inspector recommended that the licence should continue

**Duration** 1 year

**Additional Conditions**

**Notes**

**Report prepared by**

Steve Spalding

**Date report prepared**

13.06.14

**Further action to be taken by the Licensing Service**

**Further action taken**

**Endorsement by The Adventure Activities Licensing Service**

**Date received** 16.06.14

**Reviewed by** Bob Telfer, Deputy Head of Inspection

**Date** 16.06.14

**Comments**

**Licence decision** Minded to Continue

**Date of Decision** 17.06.14

Marcus Bailie, Head of Inspection

**Duration of licence** 1 year **to run from** 28.06.14 to 28.06.15

=====  
Is there an audit with this report?    Yes    No




**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 25 November 2014

**BY:** Director of Health & Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Domiciliary Care Report - Homecare Service

---

**5**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To present an update report on the performance of the Homecare Service April 2014 – November 2014 following the Care Inspection visit and resulting Domiciliary Care Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the report

## **3 BACKGROUND**

The Home Care Service provides support for people in East Lothian to live at home. The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate.

- 3.1 The Care Inspectorate completed a second Short Notice Announced visits in April 2013 and awarded weak grades for the standards assessed in specific aspects of Care and Support, Quality of staffing and management and Leadership. A further Announced Short Notice visit by the Care Inspection in July acknowledged the considerable investment in the service through the detailed action plan and increased the grades awarded.

	Type	Gradings	
21 July 2014	Announced (Short Notice)	Quality of Care and Support	3 – Adequate
		Quality of Staffing	3 – Adequate
		Quality of Management and Leadership	3 – Adequate
1 April 2014	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and Support	2 – Weak
		Staffing	2 – Weak
		Management and Leadership	2 - Weak
10 December 2013	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and Support	2 – Weak
		Staffing	2 – Weak
		Management and Leadership	2 – Weak
27 February 2013	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and Support	4 – Good
		Staffing	4 – Good
		Management and Leadership	3 – Adequate

3.2 Members should note that whilst the assessment from the Care Inspection was weak a survey they conducted gathering feedback from service users praised the delivery of care and support from frontline staff.

3.3 Following the April report a detailed action plan was agreed and progressed to address the areas of concern.

3.4 The outcomes from the action plan included;

- Improved quality of support plan for all service users, with a robust review system in place.
- Revised Medication policy implemented including the training of all homecare staff.
- East Lothian Participation Policy developed, including Service User Easy Read Leaflet.
- Implementation of Quality Assurance Framework, visits to a random sample of service users on a monthly basis.
- Evidence for the Quality Assurance visits informs the ongoing action plan.

3.5 Evidence to date concludes;

- The results from 43 Quality Assurance Visits conducted by Managers of the Homecare service have been considered to provide the data. The homecare clients were selected random from across East Lothian.

- The majority of service users rate their experience as excellent.
- Areas for improvement from a service user perspective include consistency of cares and time of provision.

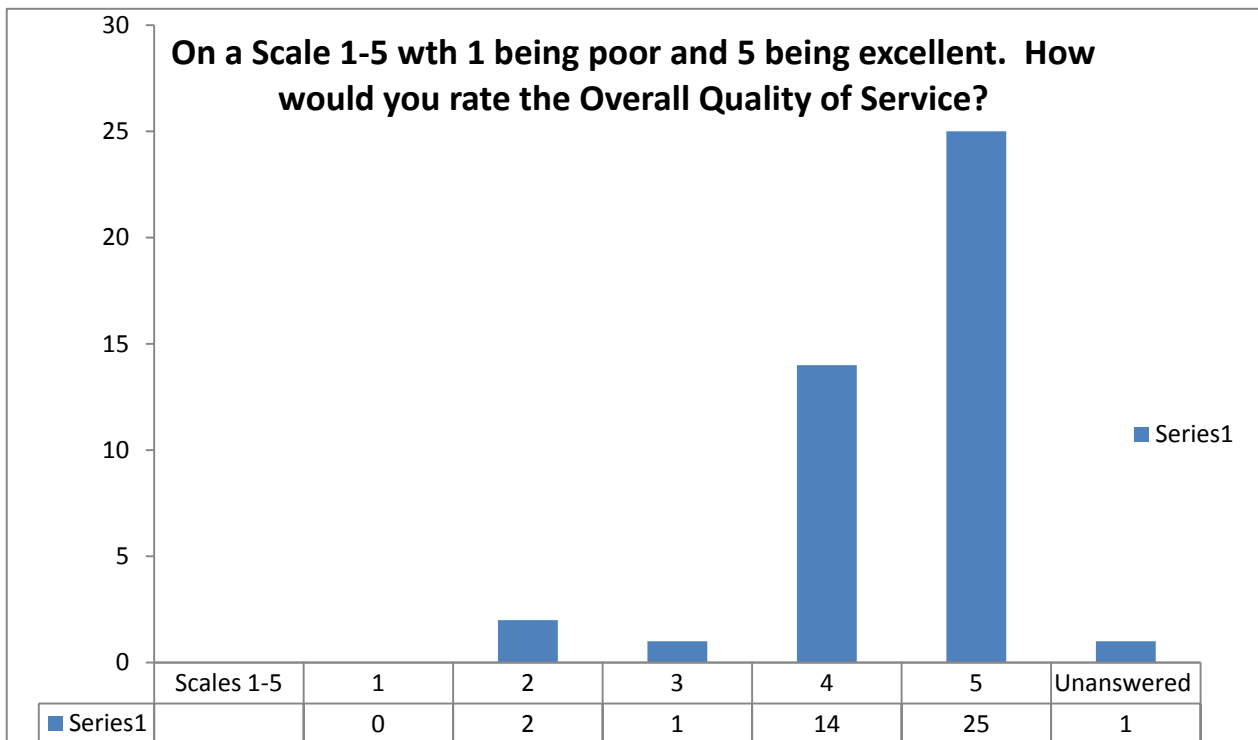


Table 1: The table illustrates the responses of the 43 participants in relation being asked to rate the service from 1 -5, 5 being excellent.

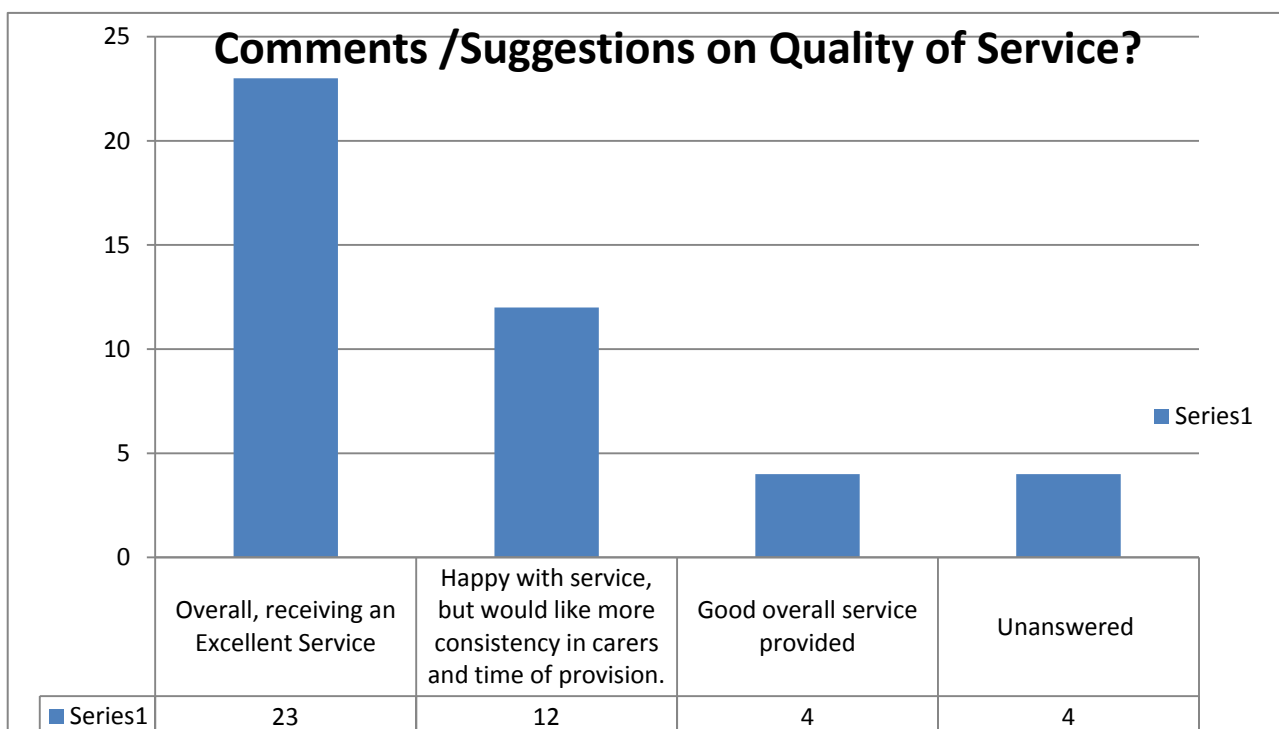


Table 2: The table illustrates the main themes identified from the question inviting comments/suggestions on the quality of service.

- 3.6 Revised Working Agreement and New Rota Pattern were implemented within the Home Care Service on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None applicable at present

#### **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – Financial implications have been considered in the Adult Wellbeing Budget.
- 6.2 Personnel - Personnel implications have been addressed in consultation with the Union resulting in a revised working agreement. A members Library report has been completed in relation to the implementation of the revised working agreement and new rota pattern as of 13<sup>th</sup> October 14.

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Reports from the Care Inspectorate can be found on [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)
- 7.2 Domiciliary Care Inspection Members' Library Report 122/14 – June 2014
- 7.3 Domiciliary Care Inspection Members' Library Report 169/14 – August 2014
- 7.4 Home Care Revised working agreement Members' Library Report 228/14 – November 2014

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Trish Leddy
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Acting Service Manager - Adult Wellbeing
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	X8859
<b>DATE</b>	12th November 2014



**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 25 November 2014

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Partnership and Services for Communities)

**SUBJECT:** Performance Report, Q2 2014/15

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**6**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information regarding the performance of Council services during Q2 (July – September) 2014/15

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council has established a set of Key Performance Indicators to help monitor progress towards the outcomes contained in the Council Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. The indicators are updated on a quarterly basis and the results are reported to the Policy & Performance Review Committee. Members of the Committee also attend a briefing prior to the Committee meeting itself. Members use the briefing to develop lines of enquiry, which enable officers to provide more detailed reports explaining performance issues to the Committee meeting.
- 3.2 Members of the Committee attended the performance briefing for Q2 2014/15 on 6 November 2014. Appendix A displays the results of the quarterly Key Performance Indicators for Q2 2014/15.
- 3.3 Members reviewed the performance of the Council and raised questions regarding the indicators. Responses to the questions are provided in the following paragraphs.

### **Presentation of the report**

- 3.4 Members asked for graphs to be provided in the performance report to demonstrate the long-term trend for indicators that are below target. Graphs have been added to the indicators highlighted as 'Red' in Appendix A.

### **Additional context and explanation**

- 3.5 Members asked for further contextual information to be provided for certain indicators. Additional comments have been incorporated within Appendix A for the following indicators:

- Indicators relating to Children's Wellbeing
- % of calls to the contact centre answered – further information has been provided regarding the number of calls received via the Council's telephony system that are routed via the Contact Centre
- % of food hygiene inspections achieved – an explanation has been provided regarding the criteria for categorising food premises as either high or medium risk

### **Targets for the planning indicators**

- 3.6 Members asked whether targets had been set for the planning performance indicators. Targets are not currently set for these indicators, although a comparison with the Scottish average is available to help provide context. The Planning Service Manager has responded that he would be happy to discuss the setting of targets with members.

## **4 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Financial – none.
- 5.2 Personnel - none.
- 5.3 Other – none.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 Appendix A: Quarterly and monthly KPIs – Q2 2014/15



<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Andrew Strickland
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Policy Officer
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	astrickland@eastlothian.gov.uk
<b>DATE</b>	12/11/2014



Appendix A

Quarterly and monthly KPIs – Q2 2014/15

↑	Improving (high is good)	↑	Worsening (low is good)
↓	Improving (low is good)	↓	Worsening (high is good)
↔	No change or little change		

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment																
Adult Wellbeing	% of care at home clients (aged 65+) receiving personal care	Quarterly	<b>95.5%</b> (Q2 14/15)		94.5 – 97.1%	↓																	
	% of care at home clients (aged 65+) receiving evening / overnight service	Quarterly	<b>51.1%</b> (Q2 14/15)		49.6 – 51.1%	↑																	
	% of care at home clients (aged 65+) receiving a service at weekends	Quarterly	<b>87.0%</b> (Q2 14/15)		86.6 – 88.6%	↑																	
	Number of delayed discharge patients waiting over 4 weeks	Quarterly	<b>18</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>0</b>	<table border="1"> <caption>Number of delayed discharge patients waiting over 4 weeks</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Q3 12/13</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 12/13</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 13/14</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 13/14</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3 13/14</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 13/14</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 14/15</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 14/15</td><td>18</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Number	Q3 12/13	5	Q4 12/13	4	Q1 13/14	8	Q2 13/14	3	Q3 13/14	4	Q4 13/14	6	Q1 14/15	18	Q2 14/15	18
Quarter	Number																						
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Q1 14/15	18																						
Q2 14/15	18																						

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment
Adult Wellbeing	% of new clients aged 65+ for whom target for service delivery was met	Quarterly	<b>96.6%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>100</b>	96 – 97.7%	↑	Clients either awaiting suitable service provider or have been admitted to hospital between assessment and service start.
	Proportion of Community Payback Orders starting placement within 7 days	Quarterly	<b>79.6%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>67</b>	78 – 81%	↓	
	Proportion of Criminal Justice Social Work Reports submitted to court by the due date	Quarterly	<b>96.3%</b> (Q2 14/15)		95.7 – 97.1%	↑	
Benefits	Average time to process New Claims	Monthly	<b>25.1 days</b> (Sep 14)	<b>26</b>	19.6 – 25.3 days	↑	
	Average time to process changes in circumstances	Monthly	<b>7.4 days</b> (Sep 14)	<b>6</b>	5.9 – 10.3 days	↑	

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment
Children's Wellbeing	Percentage of children who are re-registered within a 12 month period	Monthly	<b>1.6%</b> (Sep 14)		1.5 – 1.6%	↑	This measure provides a good indication of the success of a child's care plan. Last year the figure was 0 and this year there was only one child.
	Percentage of children on CP Register for more than 6 Months	Monthly	<b>28%</b> (Sep 14)		18 – 28%	↑	
	Average number of placement moves for looked after and accommodated children	Monthly	<b>2.2</b> (Sep 14)		2.1 – 2.2	↑	
	Number of Formal Kin Carers	Monthly	<b>33</b> (Sep 14)		31 - 34	↑	<p>Since September 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Supervision has fallen by 20%</li> <li>• Foster Care has increased by 35%</li> <li>• Formal Kin Care has fallen by 25%</li> <li>• Residential Care has increased by 32%</li> </ul> <p>The fall in numbers has occurred in the less expensive forms of care (Home Supervision / Kin Care) whilst the large increases have occurred in the most expensive forms of care (Foster Care / Residential).</p> <p>In East Lothian there are now more children and young people in Informal Kin Care (possibly drawn from those who would otherwise have been on Home Supervision or Formal Kin Care) and whilst Foster Care and Residential have increased, perhaps 'early intervention', 'focus on families' and maintaining support for them has kept the expensive spend to a minimum.</p>
	Number of Informal Kin Carers	Monthly	<b>53</b> (Sep 14)		53 - 53	↔	
	Rate per 1,000 children on Home Supervision	Monthly	<b>2.5</b> (Sep 14)	Scottish av. 4.6	2.5 – 2.6	↔	
	Rate per 1,000 children in Foster Care	Monthly	<b>4.1</b> (Sep 14)	Scottish av. 5.0	4.1 – 4.6	↓	
	Rate per 1,000 children in Formal Kin Care	Monthly	<b>1.6</b> (Sep 14)	Scottish av. 4.0	1.4 – 1.6	↑	
	Rate per 1,000 children in Residential Care	Monthly	<b>1.1</b> (Sep 14)	Scottish av. 1.4	1.1 – 1.2	-	

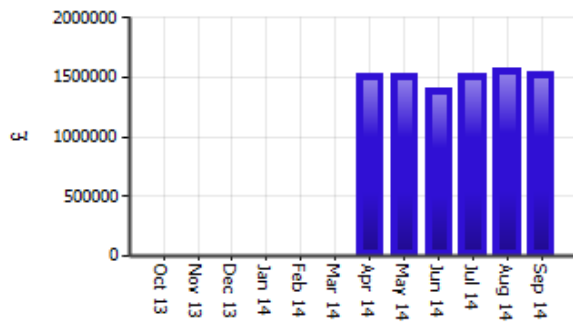
Service	Indicator	Frequency	Result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment																		
Community Housing	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	Quarterly	<b>5.1 hours</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>24</b>	-	↑	The Committee is due to receive a report regarding property maintenance in September 2015.																		
	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	Quarterly	<b>23 days</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>23</b>	-	↑																			
	Average length of time to re-let properties	Quarterly	<b>17.7 days</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>24</b>	-	↓																			
	Percentage of houses meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	Quarterly	<b>86.3%</b> (Q2 14/15)		-	-	This indicator is reported quarterly from Q2 onwards.																		
Corporate Policy & Improvement	% of stage 2 complaints completed within 20 working days	Quarterly	<b>53%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>80</b>		<table border="1"> <caption>% of stage 2 complaints completed within 20 working days</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Q3 12/13</td><td>76</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 12/13</td><td>68</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 13/14</td><td>67</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 13/14</td><td>93.9</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3 13/14</td><td>86.4</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 13/14</td><td>84.6</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 14/15</td><td>74</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 14/15</td><td>53</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Percentage	Q3 12/13	76	Q4 12/13	68	Q1 13/14	67	Q2 13/14	93.9	Q3 13/14	86.4	Q4 13/14	84.6	Q1 14/15	74	Q2 14/15	53	A further 47% received an update and extended timescale within the 20 working day period.
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Q2 14/15	53																								
	Reports of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDORS) per 1,000 employees	Quarterly	<b>9</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>5</b>		<table border="1"> <caption>Reports of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDORS) per 1,000 employees</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Q3 12/13</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 12/13</td><td>5.6</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 13/14</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 13/14</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3 13/14</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 13/14</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 14/15</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 14/15</td><td>9</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Number	Q3 12/13	0	Q4 12/13	5.6	Q1 13/14	7	Q2 13/14	19	Q3 13/14	4	Q4 13/14	0	Q1 14/15	1	Q2 14/15	9	
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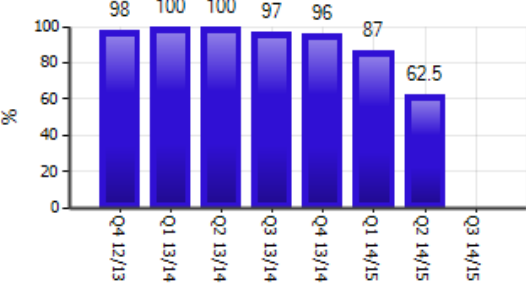
Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment								
Customer Services	% of calls to the contact centre answered	Quarterly	90.6% (Q2 14/15)	90	83 – 90.6%	↑	<p>This indicator relates to calls dealt with via the Contact Centre. Calls are also received via direct dials and the Auto-attendant, which are not routed through the Contact Centre.</p> <p>During September 2014 approximately 58% of calls were dealt with via the Contact Centre. The total number of calls is provided below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>No. of calls handled</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Contact Centre</td> <td>21,561</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not routed via Contact Centre (excluding direct dials)</td> <td>15,536</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>37,097</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		No. of calls handled	Contact Centre	21,561	Not routed via Contact Centre (excluding direct dials)	15,536	<b>Total</b>	<b>37,097</b>
		No. of calls handled													
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<b>Total</b>	<b>37,097</b>														
	% of abandoned vehicles uplifted within 14 days	Quarterly	100% (Q2 14/15)	100	100 – 100%	↔									

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment																		
Economic Development & Strategic Investment	Overall % of the population claiming Job Seekers Allowance	Quarterly	<b>2.0%</b> (Sep 14)	<b>2.5</b>	2.0 – 2.2%	↓	The target is to be lower than the Scottish average.																		
	Proportion of 16- 24 yr olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance	Quarterly	<b>4.2%</b> (Sep 14)	<b>4.0</b>	4.2 – 4.8%	↓	The target is to be lower than the Scottish average. The Scottish average fell sharply in September.																		
	Number of new business starts supported by East Lothian Council	Quarterly	<b>45</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>50</b>		<table border="1"> <caption>Number of new business starts supported by East Lothian Council</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Q3 12/13</td><td>33</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 12/13</td><td>57</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 13/14</td><td>44</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 13/14</td><td>42</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3 13/14</td><td>61</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4 13/14</td><td>59</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1 14/15</td><td>56</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2 14/15</td><td>45</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Number	Q3 12/13	33	Q4 12/13	57	Q1 13/14	44	Q2 13/14	42	Q3 13/14	61	Q4 13/14	59	Q1 14/15	56	Q2 14/15	45	Although Q2 is below target the annual target of 200 on course to be achieved. The referendum led to a slow down in enquiries and starts.
	Quarter	Number																							
Q3 12/13	33																								
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Percentage of new businesses supported by East Lothian Council surviving after 24 months	Quarterly	<b>77.2%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>85</b>	71.1 – 77.2%	↑	Sample of 115 - 14.9% no response which needs to be chased, 2.6% ceased trading and 5.3% found work																			



Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment
Finance	Percentage of invoices paid with 30 days of receipt	Quarterly, Annual	<b>90.0%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>90</b>	89.6 – 92.4%	↓	
HR	Cost of HR function per employee	Quarterly	<b>£84.40</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>125</b>	-	↑	Revised methodology used from Q1 onwards as the HR service now includes Payroll.
Planning	Local business and industry developments: average number of weeks to decision	Quarterly	<b>11.5 weeks</b> (Q1 14/15)	Scottish av. 10.3	9.1 – 49.2 weeks	↑	The planning indicators lag by one quarter.
	Local Developments (non-householder): average number of weeks to decision	Quarterly	<b>13.1 weeks</b> (Q1 14/15)	Scottish av. 10.2	10.1 – 15.0 weeks	↑	
	Householder developments: average number of weeks to decision	Quarterly	<b>7.0 weeks</b> (Q1 14/15)	Scottish av. 7.5	6.8 – 7.7 weeks	↓	
	Major developments: average number of weeks to decision	Quarterly	<b>33.1 weeks</b> (Q1 14/15)	Scottish av. 28.9	16 – 53.4 weeks	N/A	There were no major developments in East Lothian in Q4 13/14.
	Planning application approval rate	Quarterly	<b>96.1%</b> (Q1 14/15)	Scottish av. 94.4	96.1 – 97.9%	↓	

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment
Procurement	Spend with contracted suppliers (on contract)	Quarterly	<b>83.9%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>80</b>	76.1 – 83.9%	↑	
Revenues	Non-domestic rates collection rate	Monthly	<b>68.6%</b> (Sep 14)	<b>64.26</b>	-	↑	Trend in comparison with figure for Q2 2013/14.
	% of Council Tax collected	Monthly	<b>55.0%</b> (Sep 14)	<b>54.6</b>		↑	Trend in comparison with figure for Q2 2013/14.
	Total amount of money owed in rent arrears	Monthly	<b>£1,551,142</b> (Sep 14)	<b>1,415,154</b>			Rent arrears are an agenda item for this meeting of the Committee.
Roads	Traffic lights average time to repair failure	Quarterly	<b>7.26 hours</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>48</b>	7.26 – 15.23 hours	↓	
Trading Standards	% of trading standards inspections achieved	Quarterly	<b>96%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>95</b>	-	↑	New measure – reported from Q1 onwards.
	% of consumer enquiries responded to on the same day	Quarterly	<b>100%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>100</b>	100 – 100%	↔	
	% of consumer complaints responded to within 14 days	Quarterly	<b>95%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>100</b>	91 – 94%	↑	
	% of business advice requests responded to within 14 days	Quarterly	<b>98%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>100</b>	96 – 100%	↑	

Service	Indicator	Frequency	Result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment																	
Environmental Health	% of food hygiene inspections achieved – high risk	Quarterly	100% (Q2 14/15)	100	100 – 100%	↔	<p>Risk is assessed on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the nature of the food handled by the business,</li> <li>the quantities and area of distribution,</li> <li>likely customers and whether some are more vulnerable than others</li> <li>the controls in place to deal with high risk microbes,</li> <li>the state of the structure and facilities of the premises,</li> <li>the knowledge and competence of the management and their previous compliance history</li> </ul>																	
	% of food hygiene inspections achieved – medium risk	Quarterly	62.5% (Q2 14/15)	90		 <table border="1"> <caption>Food Hygiene Inspection Results (Medium Risk)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q4 12/13</td> <td>98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q1 13/14</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2 13/14</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3 13/14</td> <td>97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q4 13/14</td> <td>96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q1 14/15</td> <td>87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q2 14/15</td> <td>62.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q3 14/15</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Percentage	Q4 12/13	98	Q1 13/14	100	Q2 13/14	100	Q3 13/14	97	Q4 13/14	96	Q1 14/15	87	Q2 14/15	62.5	Q3 14/15	-
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Service	Indicator	Frequency	Most recent result	Target	Range (over previous 4 periods)	Trend	Comment
Sport, Countryside & Leisure	Number of attendances at indoor sports and leisure facilities	Quarterly	<b>150,686</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>130,000</b>	130,411 – 180,461	↓	
	Number of attendances at pools	Quarterly	<b>120,519</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>110,000</b>	83,246 – 120,519	↑	
	Number of fly-tipping incidents	Quarterly	<b>148</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>88</b>	-	-	The process for collecting the indicator has been revised.
	% of 'other' waste recycled	Quarterly	<b>79%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>74</b>	70 – 79%	↔	
	% of green waste recycled	Quarterly	<b>100%</b> (Q2 14/15)	<b>100</b>	100 – 100%	↔	

**Policy and Performance Review Committee: Annual Work Programme 2014/15 Update (November 2014)**

Date	Performance Monitoring/ Inspection Reports	Reports requested by members/ Other Reports
25 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2014	Q2 Performance Indicators	Rent Arrears Use of Council Bus Fleet Provision of outdoor learning to schools Domiciliary Care Services
27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2015	SOLACE / Improvement Service Performance Indicators Adult and Child Protection Six-month Monitoring Report	Delayed Discharge Overview of How Good is Our Council self evaluation
24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Q3 Performance Indicators Customer Feedback – six monthly report	East Lothian Works
28 <sup>th</sup> April 2015		
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Q4 Performance Indicators Adult and Child Protection Annual Monitoring Report	Report on Literacy Levels in East Lothian schools Tourism Information Services
Sept 2015	Q1 Performance Indicators Draft Annual Performance Report Social Work Complaints and Feedback Annual Report Customer Feedback Annual Report Customer Feedback Q1 report	Property Maintenance

Follow up report on Fly-tipping (June or September 2016)