



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

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

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