



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

**TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2015  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

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**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor D Berry (Convener)  
Councillor J Gillies  
Councillor J Goodfellow  
Councillor P McLennan  
Councillor J Williamson

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor S Currie

**Council Officials Present:**

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services  
Mr R Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure  
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships  
Mr C Forbes, Principal Officer, East Lothian Works  
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer  
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement

**Clerk:**

Mrs L Gillingwater, Team Manager – Democratic Services

**Apologies:**

Councillor J Caldwell  
Councillor P MacKenzie  
Councillor F McAllister

**Declarations of Interest:**

None

## **1. MINUTE OF PPRC MEETING ON 27 JANUARY 2015**

The Minute of the PPRC meeting on 27 January 2015 was agreed to be a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minute.

## **2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing the Committee with an overview of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) results for 2013/14, and informing the Committee of current and forthcoming benchmarking exercises.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, presented the report, advising that the report provided comparable information for Scottish local authorities and that East Lothian Council had performed comparatively well, with 22 indicators in the top quartile and only 10 indicators in the lowest quartile. He drew attention to the detailed information in the appendices to the report, and highlighted a number of areas for further investigation, as outlined in Sections 3.11 – 3.15 of the report. Mr Strickland advised that the LGBF results were reported annually, whereas the information in Item 3 on the agenda was reported quarterly.

Councillor Berry commented that as there was a large amount of information contained within the report, the Committee may need a further opportunity to consider the detail and raise questions.

Councillor Williamson asked if a new system had been introduced as regards repair work, as mobile working had been in place for a number of years. Ray Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure, explained that there was no new system, but that the mobile working system in place was being extended to cover other aspects of work. He commented that the figures for 2014/15 would show an improvement in performance.

Councillor Goodfellow asked if the Committee could see the benchmarking comparator figures for the 'family group' of councils that included East Lothian Council. Mr Strickland undertook to provide this information.

Referring to the indicator on non-emergency repairs, Councillor Currie asked why the Council was performing so poorly when the mobile working system had been in place for some years. Mr Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement, explained that the figures in the report were for 2013/14, and that Item 3 on the agenda showed that as a result of a review of procedures, there had been an improvement in that service's performance for 2014/15. Mr Montgomery added that not all councils were reporting information on a like-for-like basis. On mobile working, he added that this system had been introduced on a staged basis, and that he was confident that future figures would continue to improve.

Councillor Currie asked for confirmation of the number of dwellings meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Tom Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships, explained that as of March 2015, the figure was 93%, and that the service was focusing on improving the remaining 7% of properties.

Questions were also asked in relation to the cost per primary school pupil. Members were advised that the budget for primary schools had remained static for 2012/13 and 2013/14, and that the change in this indicator was as a result of how repairs and

maintenance expenditure had been accounted for in the local government financial return.

Councillor Berry voiced his concern that changes to some of the indicators had made it difficult for comparisons to be made. Mr Vestri explained that these figures had been produced by the Improvement Service, who had offered further support with benchmarking.

Councillor McLennan asked how the Council was performing in relation to the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work. Colin Forbes of East Lothian Works advised that the data for the Council was incomplete as that information had not been collected as early as 2013/14. However, East Lothian Works was now managing and scrutinising the throughput of young people and adults into employment, using an upgraded management information system. He added that work was underway to achieve consistency across local authorities and he felt confident that this would result in improvements.

On the cost of maintaining roads, Mr Montgomery noted that the Council was spending more in this area, but that the figure in the report required further examination in order to ascertain what information should be included for this indicator.

Councillor Currie commented that it was important to investigate performance issues in relation to indicators where the Council was performing below the Scottish average, and to report back on action being taken. He highlighted his concerns as regards the costs per pupil at both primary and secondary schools, pupil attainment, and use of libraries and leisure facilities. He also welcomed the improvement in sickness absence figures.

Councillor Berry indicated that he would like to receive further details on school leaver destinations.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to use the information contained in the report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance required improvement or further investigation.

### **3. PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 3, 2014/15**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing the Committee with information regarding the performance of Council services during Quarter 3, 2014/15.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, presented the report, drawing attention to areas where Members had requested further information, and in particular noting that the improvement in the level of rent arrears was as a result of funding for additional permanent staff, a new case management system and new working procedures.

In response to a question from Councillor Currie in relation to delayed discharge figures, Mr Strickland advised that he would ask officers in that service to provide more detailed, contextual information.

Councillor Currie also asked why attendance at swimming pools was lower than the target and, as regards fly tipping, was there any way of differentiating between domestic and trade waste. Mr Strickland advised that officers from those services would be asked to provide further details.

Councillor Williamson asked for an explanation as to why the contact centre was not achieving its target for answering telephone calls. Mr Shearer reported that the contact centre had experienced an increase in the number of issues dealt with by contact centre staff, rather than service area staff, and that call handlers were spending more time dealing with these calls; this had resulted in delays in answering other incoming calls. He pointed out that the call responses were good overall as staff became more proficient in dealing with a wider range of queries. He invited the Committee to visit the contact centre and meet the staff there. On the voice recognition system, he advised that feedback had been mixed.

On repairs, Councillor Goodfellow suggested that it was difficult to benchmark when councils used different methods of differentiating between emergency and non-emergency work. Mr Shearer agreed, adding that the results of the tenants' survey had shown that views on the repairs service was positive overall, but that there were some concerns about response times. He added that a task group was currently looking at repairs activity with a view to making improvements.

Councillor Currie voiced his concern about the delayed discharge figures, and asked that information be provided on a fortnightly and four-weekly basis in order that trends could be identified. Councillor McLennan agreed that regular updates would be useful, even if provided by email. Councillor Goodfellow noted that members of the Shadow Board for Health and Social Care were provided with updates on a fortnightly basis and suggested that this information could be shared with all Councillors. Councillor Berry also proposed that David Small should be asked to provide a report to the next meeting of the Committee. Advising that the issue of delayed discharge was the most common concern raised by constituents at his surgeries, Councillor McLennan asked if delayed discharge could be a standing item on the PPRC agenda.

Responding to concerns raised by Councillor Currie as regards swimming pool attendance, Mr Vestri noted that there was always a reduction in attendance during the winter months, and that the figures should be compared with the same period last year. He advised that he could provide figures for the previous 3 or 4 years. Councillor Currie remarked that, given the economic climate, he would have expected the number of public swimming pool users to increase.

Councillor Gillies mentioned that there had been an operational issue with domiciliary carers, in that many Council staff had left and the private sector providers had struggled to cope with the demand on that service.

On economic development issues, Councillor Berry was concerned at the lower than expected number of business start-ups and also the survivability of new businesses.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed:

- i. to use the information contained in the report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance required improvement or further investigation; and

- ii. that a report on delayed discharge figures should be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **4. EAST LoTHIAN WORKS**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) highlighting the range of employability support, interventions and activities provided by East Lothian Works, together with a summary of outcomes and progress achieved. The report also provided a specific update on progress made regarding the implementation of the Scottish Government Youth Employment Scotland Fund, in particular the exceeding of agreed targets for Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate Placements, and for work training experience for vulnerable young people across the Council.

Colin Forbes, Principal Officer at East Lothian Works, presented the report in detail, drawing particular attention to the Strategic Skills Pipeline, employment placements for young people, support provided to people with physical and learning disabilities and key performance indicators.

Councillor Currie requested information as regards partnership working with organisations associated with the Council. Mr Forbes referred him to Section 3.16 of the report, and advised that there had been an increase in partnership working. He provided an example of a group of young people who had been given work experience and lifeguard training with Enjoy Leisure.

Responding to a question from Councillor Goodfellow as regards ongoing funding, Mr Forbes explained that the Council had been awarded £238,191 by the Scottish Government and European Social Fund to subsidise and support the creation of jobs, and following the cessation of that scheme, the Council had been working with the Scottish Government on a co-investment basis (which would end on 31 March 2015). He advised that discussions as regards continued funding were ongoing.

On mentoring, Mr Forbes reported that there were a range of activities in place through vocational work experience and supported by East Lothian Works, business coaches and secondary schools. There was also some cross-boundary working in place with the City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council and Scottish Borders Council, and the establishment of a regional 'Investment in Youth' group was under consideration.

Councillor McLennan asked how the work of East Lothian Works was contributing to the Council's Economic Strategy targets, in particular job density creation within the county. Mr Forbes conceded that the ambitious targets to increase job density were not currently being met and that further work was required to achieve this. He noted, however, that there was positive engagement with local businesses, strong relationships with schools and an increasing involvement of the voluntary sector with increasing numbers of young people and adults moving into regular employment. He added that it was hoped that further opportunities would be created through the Community Benefits in Procurement scheme to support this further.

In response to questions from Councillor Berry on the possibility of accessing European funding and securing permanent posts for young people, Mr Forbes advised that an application had been submitted for funding in early March, which had not been successful. However, there would be a further opportunity to apply in May. Mr Forbes recognised the challenges of getting young people into permanent employment, but

anticipated that the efforts and activities in place and planned would increase opportunities. The new management information system would also help inform the Council to identify trends and provide more accurate information.

Councillor Gillies welcomed the report and the positive activities in place to help young people find employment. He praised the work of Mr Forbes and his staff.

The report was also welcomed by Councillors McLennan and Currie, who emphasised the importance of partnership working and sustainable employment.

Councillor Berry concluded the debate by commending the staff of East Lothian Works and requesting that a further report be presented to the Committee in a year's time, to focus on outcomes.

**Decision**

The Committee agreed:

- i. to note the contents of the report and acknowledge the wide range of interventions available generally to improve employability outcomes for individuals and communities across East Lothian;
- ii. to note specifically the progress made on the implementation of the Scottish Government Youth Employment Scotland Fund, in particular the exceeding of agreed targets for Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate Placements; and for work training experience for vulnerable young people across the Council area;
- iii. to acknowledge the work being undertaken to improve arrangements for future monitoring and tracking of individual participant journeys utilising the Strategic Skills Pipeline Approach and Caselink MIS;
- iv. to receive a further report on East Lothian Works activity, focusing on outcomes, in spring 2016.

**5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2015**

Councillor McLennan requested that delayed discharge be included as a standing item on PPRC agendas. Councillor Berry undertook to discuss this with the Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Councillor McLennan also requested a progress report on the Economic Development Strategy. Councillor Berry proposed that this item be added to the agenda for the November 2015 meeting.

Councillor Currie asked if information on the scrutiny process for the Integrated Joint Board could be reported to the Committee. Councillor Berry agreed to take this forward with the Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Signed .....

Councillor David Berry  
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee