



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

**TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

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

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing
Mr D Nightingale, Head of Education
Mr R Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development (Interim)
Ms F Duncan, Service Manager, Criminal Justice
Mr R McGill, Contact Centre Manager
Ms A Wishart, Quality Improvement Officer
Mr A Stubbs, Service Manager for Roads
Mr W Laird, Senior Roads Officer
Ms A Thompson, Public Protection Team Manager
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart, Committee Assistant

Apologies:

Councillor F McAllister

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTE OF PPRC MEETING ON 23 APRIL 2015

The Minute of the PPRC meeting on 23 April 2015 was agreed to be a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

2. LITERACY LEVELS IN EAST LoTHIAN SCHOOLS

The Depute Chief Executive, Resources and People Services, had submitted a report to inform the Committee of current levels in East Lothian schools based on the most recent PIPs, InCAS and Insight National Benchmarking.

Darrin Nightingale, Head of Education, introduced Alison Wishart, Quality Improvement Officer. Following the report and Action Plan brought before the Committee in September 2014, he advised that literacy levels in East Lothian Schools were improving. Mr Nightingale summarised the report and highlighted key points. He advised that InCAS assessments were carried out for the first time in East Lothian Schools during the 2014/15 session and technical issues may have resulted in the first results for Primary 7 not being fully reflective of the actual ability of the Primary 7 cohort. He advised that a Scottish Survey of Literacy Levels had shown that girls outperformed boys in reading at P4 and S2 stages and, in writing, girls had outperformed boys at all stages. The report also showed Averaging Reading Performance for P3-7, boys and girls, for the most deprived 30%, middle 40% and least deprived 30% areas. While boys in P3 in the most deprived areas had performed above the national average, Mr Nightingale still wanted to see performance improve further. In respect of the Senior phase, a table showing literacy achievement for all pupils leaving school from 2009/10, showed that boys in East Lothian had left last year with a performance lower than comparators. Mr Nightingale also informed Members of the Reading from Day One initiative, which provided children with additional support pre Primary 1.

Councillor Caldwell stated that girls outperforming boys had been a feature of previous reports and enquired if there was likely to be an answer to this problem. Ms Wishart advised that East Lothian staff had attended a meeting in Edinburgh, (part of collaboration with Edinburgh City Council), on raising attainment in boys. The speaker at that meeting had now been invited to come to East Lothian and it was hoped that at least one representative from every school would attend a meeting in October. The speaker had a substantial record in raising attainment and the talk would explore strategies and techniques. Ms Wishart advised that her team also worked closely with child psychologists, adding that East Lothian was not alone in the disparity of performance between boys and girls.

In relation to the child psychologists, Mr Nightingale advised that the number of referrals from GPs, or as a result of assessments, had increased significantly. There was currently 600 hours of additional support available in early learning and this was likely to increase to 1114 hours in the next few years. Mr Nightingale advised that additional funding would be needed to meet the present demands for this service.

Councillor MacKenzie referred to the progress of P1 pupils in reading which was typically below the norm since 2009/10. He asked if removing EDI (Early Development Instrument) or adapting it in some way, would provide a greater insight into any problems there may be. Mr Nightingale replied that one round of EDI had been completed and it had been agreed to do the next round to ascertain if any trend had become evident. Ms Wishart advised that data is available and one major issue

was lack of sleep due to young people spending prolonged periods on electronic devices. The Chair stated that the effects of young people using devices and the impact of the media would show up in every Local Authority. He therefore recommended that the Committee focussed on the action being taken to address the problem. Mr Nightingale stated that it was very difficult to influence the behaviour of pupils between 3pm and 9 am, but schools could stress to parents how important it is for their children to have good sleeping patterns and encourage them to spend less time on their devices. Councillor Currie stated that there was also a wider Community Planning context; EDI data had led to Book Bugs, parenting groups, Learning from the Start and Guidance to Parents.

Councillor McLennan noted that the report related to the performance pupils in P1-7. He suggested that perhaps more focus could be placed upon how prepared pupils are to begin learning in P1.

Action Point: The Chair to meet with Darrin Nightingale to agree the criteria for a report on pre-school children and their transition to P1.

Councillor Goodfellow noted that the focus of the Scottish Literary Levels Survey (SSLN) focussed on reading and he requested more information on listening/talking. Mr Nightingale replied that teachers do carry out assessments in listening/talking but this information was not required for the survey. However, this information would be included in next year's report.

The Chair thanked Mr Nightingale and Ms Wishart for their valuable report.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of this report.

3. EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report to advise the Committee on the performance of the Council's Contact Centre.

Raymond McGill, Contact Centre Manager, presented the report. He advised that the Contact Centre had been established in 2005 when there were 2 teams within the Centre. There were now 4 teams, each with a dedicated staffing establishment: the Contact Team, where staff answered calls regarding Council Services; the Community Access Team where staff answered calls relating to adult and children wellbeing services; the Community Response Team which provided a 24/7/365 service to East and Midlothian residents and the Systems Development Team which provided IT and development support. Mr McGill stated that there were slightly fewer calls coming through the Centre now compared to 2009, but the change in the nature of the calls since then had been significant. Since 2013, over 72% of all calls are now dealt with through the automated switchboard. Mr McGill reported that, in the last 3 years, Adult Social Care calls had increased by 48% to 29,995. Community Housing calls had also increased and the Contact Centre now makes appointments for customers at the first point of contact. This increased the lengths of the calls, although there had been no additional staffing resource. Mr McGill advised that 97.5% of switchboard calls had been answered last year and the response rate to answering all calls was just below the 70% target. An annual survey of the service had also returned very good results. The Centre had invested in staff training and 17 had qualified with a Customer Service

Professional Qualification. The Contact Centre was now recruiting to two vacant positions.

The Chair stated that the recent visit made by PPRC Members to the Contact Centre had been very valuable.

Councillor Caldwell asked about the performance of voice recognition using the automated switchboard and Mr McGill replied that, at the time of purchase of the system, the company advised that 70% of calls could be recognised. The Centre was currently at 72%. He explained that the system worked on phonetics and accents could pose a problem but adjustments to the system were being made.

Councillor Williamson referred to the ELC Residents' Survey 2014 which showed that a low percentage of residents had used the automated call system, and enquired if the reasons for this were known. Mr McGill replied that some improvements had been made to the system following discussions with the East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP).

Councillor Goodfellow considered that the Contact Centre did an excellent job despite a vastly increased workload. The Chair echoed this comment and stated that it was likely that many people within the Council did not recognise the extent of the work they carried out.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the performance of the Council's Contact Centre.

4. ADULT PROTECTION AND CHILD PROTECTION ANNUAL MONITORING REPORTING TO ELECTED MEMBERS – APRIL 2014 to MARCH 2015

The Acting Chief Social Work Officer (ACSWO) had submitted a report giving an overview of the statistical performance information from the Public Protection Committee for Child and Adult Protection for the year 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Fiona Duncan, (ACSWO), presented the report. In relation to Child Protection, Ms Duncan advised that the number of children on the register had remained fairly constant and there had been a reduction in the number of children returning to the register. An inspection of the service had been carried out towards the end of 2013 and Improvement Plans had arisen from that. Ms Duncan advised that the Performance and Equality Improvement Group monitored the service to ensure that there were positive outcomes for adults and children. On Adult Protection, Ms Duncan advised that the number of referrals had remained much the same over the past two years and of those referrals, approximately a third progressed to investigation. The majority of investigations related to females, particularly those aged below 46 years and those aged above 85 years. For many of those women, the place of harm was in the home but now financial harm was one of the most common in relation to adult support and protection. Relevant staff training had now been introduced to address this development. Ms Duncan advised that the Police had now moved into the Public Protection Office and the Fire Brigade also offered support, particularly in respect of early interventions. Finally, Ms Duncan advised that the Performance Framework was in the process of being drafted and she would report back on this in September. The Public Protection Office had, in her view, been a

positive development for East and Midlothian, the only joint public protection unit in Scotland.

Councillor MacKenzie asked what progress there was with establishing a local Child Protection Disability Forum and Sharon Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing, replied that the Forum was in the early stages of development and its progress would become clearer over the next few months. Councillor MacKenzie also stated that he had heard it reported that child protection figures were declining and asked if Ms Duncan agreed that successful partnership working could help reduce these figures. Ms Duncan replied that there was confidence that these figures could come down. Sharon Saunders advised that, as a result of multi-agency working, there were now common approaches to assessments, practices and processes. In East Lothian, there had traditionally been a low number of Looked After Children compared to other Local authorities and the numbers remained almost static. Numbers did fluctuate from time to time but the number itself was not the most important indicator, as, for example, on any one day, a large sibling group could be added to the register having significant impact on the register. She therefore stressed the need to concentrate on the professionalism of the workers within the service.

Councillor Goodfellow referred to the report on Violence Against Women and Girls and pointed out that it can also be the reverse, violence against men by women, or, looking forward, men against men and women against women. Ms Duncan agreed but advised that as the majority of violence currently was men against women, the service was set up accordingly. She added that the most important aspect was that everyone should feel able to come forward, regardless of the circumstances. Any agency which could not help would refer callers to another agency. The service was also monitored and if the profile of victims changed the service would change to meet the need.

The Chair suggested that the Midlothian figures offered a good comparison for East Lothian data and considered that the figures showed a generally positive trend although this had not been highlighted in the report. Ms Saunders advised that Ms Duncan was also responsible for the Annual Public Protection report which would be brought forward in September and this would provide more detail. The Chair, in response, stated that he would like to see an evaluation and a more critical analysis of the public reports. Ms Duncan offered to include this in her next report.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the East and Midlothian Public Protection Annual Report 2014/15.

5. MONITORING OF ROADWORKS – JANUARY 2013 to MARCH 2015

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, submitted a report to provide details of the performance of Public Utilities/Statutory Undertakers (SU) and their contractors working within East Lothian during Quarter 4 of 2012/13 to Quarter 4 of 2014/15 and to monitor trends/progress by comparing performance throughout this period. The report also included the results of the ongoing Customer Satisfaction Feedback for road works sites and other projects carried out by in-house and external contractors, and comment on the content of the 2013 and 2014 Annual Performance Review for East Lothian Council as issued by the Scottish Roadworks Commissioner.

Mr Laird, Senior Roads Officer, presented the report. He advised that, as part of their monitoring of internal/external road contractors, letters were sent to householders and others directly affected by planned works. This notification process advises of the nature and anticipated duration of the works and includes the contact details of the engineer responsible for the works. During January 2013 to January 2015, feedback had been received on some 208 diverse projects including carriageway resurfacing, installation of new traffic signals and road safety improvements. The analysis of the responses received indicated that 93% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of works undertaken. The Roads Service had also achieved 2 star awards for recent projects.

Mr Laird reported the results of the 2013 National Coring Programme, road reinstatements by Statutory Undertakers. Of 24 cores extracted and checked at random locations, 17 complied with the required standards for material types used and layer thickness. All the re-instatement locations where failed cores were identified had been replaced and now conform to the required specification. Mr Laird also advised that the Scottish Road Works Commissioner had issued two reviews in the period of this report which outlined areas where the service had performed well and areas for improvement.

Mr Laird outlined a number of major roads projects which had been completed in the last 12 months and stated that he was confident the measures outlined in the report would improve the overall performance of Road Services.

Councillor Goodfellow noted that the Scottish Roadworks Commissioner had issued penalties to some utilities for failing to comply with legal requirements on road re-instatements. He enquired if utilities had a duty to return and do the re-instatement to the required standard and Mr Laird replied that they did, and if the work still failed to meet the required standard, the Commissioner could order the work to be done by another company and recover the cost from them.

Councillor MacKenzie referred to the extensive roadworks carried out in his ward which had caused disruption to local people and asked if Councillors could be briefed on large scale projects in advance of them taking place. The Chair also suggested that, for certain large projects, a press release in a local newspaper would ensure that the public were informed.

In response to other questions by Members, Mr Laird advised that charges for cores were recharged to the utility companies, open holes in the road surface were monitored and risk assessed, and income was generated from inspections carried out by the Council.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and the action points in response to the Scottish Road Works Commissioner's Performance reviews.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT, Q4 2014-15

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 Q4 (January-March) 2014/15.

Andrew Strickland presented the report. He advised that Members of the Committee had attended the performance briefing for Q4 2014/15 on 25 May 2015 to review the performance of the Council. At that time, questions had been raised on the percentage of Trading Standards consumer complaints responded to within 14 days. Members noted that performance on this Indicator had declined compared to previous quarters in which performance had typically reached 94 or 95%. Trading Standards had responded that dealing with complaints of a more complex nature had impacted upon performance.

The Chair welcomed the improvement in rent collected as a percentage of total rent due and also the improving trend in relation to the percentage of calls within the Contact Centre (excluding the switchboard) answered within 20 seconds.

Mr Strickland responded to a number of enquiries from Members. Councillor Caldwell noted that there was no Q4 figure for the number of fly tipping incidents and Mr Strickland advised that he understood that the performance of this indicator had improved. The Q3 indicator was shown in red as the number of incidents was higher than the target figure.

Decision

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

7. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2015/16

An updated Annual Work Programme showed the reports already scheduled for 2015/16. One additional report on Pre-school education was added to the schedule.

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee