



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

**TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2016  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

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**Committee Members Present:**

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

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor J McMillan

**Council Officials Present:**

Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)  
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships  
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development  
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing  
Ms F Duncan, Acting Chief Social Work Officer  
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager - Corporate Policy and Improvement  
Ms E Wilson, Service Manager - Economic Development and Strategic Investment  
Ms C McCorry, Service Manager - Community Housing  
Mr J Coutts, Service Development and Support Manager  
Ms S Smith, Team Manager, Economic Development  
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer

**Clerk:**

Ms A Smith

**Apologies:**

None

**Declarations of Interest:**

The Convener declared an interest in item 4 as the operator of a tourist business but felt there was no conflict between this and the report before the Committee.

**1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – PPRC, 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Review Committee of 24 November 2015 were approved. There were no matters arising.

**2. 2015/16 QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT – CHILD PROTECTION, ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION, OFFENDER MANAGEMENT, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

A report was submitted by the Chief Social Work Officer providing an overview of the statistical information for Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Offender Management and Violence against Women and Girls in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2015/16.

Fiona Duncan, the Acting Chief Social Work Officer, presented the report. She took Members through each of the performance categories, except Offender Management, as information was not available, but would be included in future reports. With regard to Child Protection she reported that the number of children on the register had continued to reduce. This coincided with the consolidation of stage 3 interventions which provided a multi-agency framework and assessment without necessarily holding a Child Protection Case Conference. In relation to Adult Support and Protection she gave details of a pilot scheme involving Police, Health and Social Work, which had proved beneficial. Regarding Violence against Women and Girls, an early response service at the weekend had been introduced at the request of the Police; this was being monitored and reviewed. Reporting performance was currently being fine-tuned.

Councillor Williamson requested further details regarding Signs of Safety. Sharon Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing, explained that this approach was a more collaborative way of working with families, engaging at an early stage and involved identifying safety measures to keep the child safe and in a more productive environment.

Responding to Councillor MacKenzie, Ms Saunders replied that collation of chronological information related to an area of improvement regarding multi-agency integrated chronologies, a move identified nationally. She advised that this practice was not well embedded across Scotland, only one local authority had been identified to this Council by the Care Inspectorate that operated this; officers had been learning from this authority. The Council had introduced multi-agency chronologies in child protection cases from April 2015; the practice was still to be consolidated.

Ms Duncan responded to questions from Councillor Goodfellow about SMILE, advising that this was funded by the Scottish Government and a new group had been formed, based in Brunton Hall and work took place with referred women and girls.

Clarifying queries raised by Councillor Caldwell about child referrals, Ms Duncan made reference to thresholds and the need to ensure that processes were robust, procedures were being followed and informed decisions made. Ms Saunders gave further reassurance, stressing that all referrals went through an assessment process which determined the level of support and intervention required in each case. In relation to additional measures to reduce the number of repeat referrals following an Adult Support and Protection Case Conference, Ms Duncan advised that looking at the issues behind a repeat referral was important; sometimes referrals were inappropriate. Ms Saunders stated that the numbers concerned were very small; the work done initially was key to removing the need for repeat referrals. She gave further details of what was involved.

In response to Councillor McAllister's query, Ms Duncan provided more details on Caledonian orders. She explained this was a programme within the Criminal Justice system

which operated through the court process, which was applicable to male domestic violence offenders on a Community Payback Order.

Ms Duncan responded to several points raised by the Convener about the difficulty in making relevant comparisons and gaining a perspective from raw statistics. She made reference to the numerous legislative changes, advising that officers were working in such different ways now that made data comparisons quite difficult. The points made about report format and context would be taken on board.

Councillor Goodfellow welcomed the report, which reflected the excellent work being done by officers in this service area.

Councillor MacKenzie welcomed the emphasis on the Signs of Safety approach. He expressed concern at the large volume of Police referrals; the co-operation of the core agencies of Police, Health and Social Work was however encouraging and welcomed.

Councillor McAllister commented that domestic violence came in many different forms; quite often victims were older people, which needed highlighted.

The Convener appreciated this was a difficult and crucial report. He would like to see an evaluation of the statistics and lessons learned. He noted that the annual report would be brought to Committee in due course.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

### **3. LANDLORD PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) updating the Committee on a) the Council's progress in meeting the Social Housing Charter outcomes and b) in regard to performance on key measures as per the 2014/15 Landlord Performance Report.

Caitlin McCorry, Service Manager-Community Housing, introduced the Landlord Performance Report and explained the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the requirements this placed on social landlords. James Coutts, Service Development and Support Manager, then gave a detailed presentation on the results from the last tenant satisfaction survey, carried out in November 2013, advising that the next survey would be completed by November 2016, with field work carried out during the summer months. He also covered landlord performance for 2014/15 with reference to previous year's performance as well as peer and national group performance. Ms McCorry informed Members that the landlord report demonstrated strong performance and highlighted that tenants' satisfaction was generally high; there were some areas that need improved and these were being addressed through a targeted programme of improvement work, namely repairs, void satisfaction rates (condition of new tenancies), Scottish Housing Quality Standard compliance and rent arrears performance.

The officers responded to questions from Councillor Goodfellow. As regards new build properties, Mr Coutts clarified that this meant new houses built post 2002. In relation to lets to homeless applicants, Ms McCorry advised that action was being taken to increase the number of allocations to homeless applicants, citing a report approved by Cabinet last October on allocations targets. Referring to the average weekly rent, Councillor Goodfellow noted that the Scottish average figure increased more according to house size compared with the Council figure. Mr Coutts replied that the figures were based on the current rent

model, which worked on a points system. Ms McCorry added that this model had been in place for some time and did need reviewed.

Councillor Williamson raised several queries. Regarding abeyances, specifically where owners refused to pay their share, Ms McCorry advised that the new housing legislation which would soon come into force would give social landlords more powers in this regard, which the Council would be enforcing. In respect of the number of empty properties she advised that there would always be some standard voids being repaired as part of the re-let process but there were also some properties that required major works such as structural repairs, treatment for dampness or work to recover from fire damage. Councillor Williamson stated it would be helpful if councillors could be kept informed of empty properties within their ward and reasons for delay in re-letting. Regarding action taken as a result of properties handed back in poor condition, Ms McCorry replied that in the case of abandonment it was problematic as some of the people were hard to reach. She confirmed that if damage was caused by the outgoing tenant and a forwarding address was known, a re-charge would be issued.

The Convener remarked that a further report, involving the Adult Wellbeing Service, investigating and focusing on specific issues may be useful. Ms McCorry stated that considerable joint working and information sharing with social work colleagues already took place. Ms Saunders, referring to the previous report, indicated that there were often common factors between Children's and Adult Wellbeing service areas and housing, which impacted on lifestyles. The Convener indicated that a further report would be considered at the next agenda setting meeting.

Responding to questions from Councillor McAllister about deposits, Ms McCorry stated that this was not possible under existing legislation; rent payments were however asked for in advance. Regarding possible punitive measures, she advised that the Council could, and did, issue re-charges for repairs. A serious tenancy breach policy was also in place under which the ultimate sanction was eviction if tenants did not engage with support offered to help improve the condition of their tenancy.

Councillor MacKenzie, stressing the importance of mobility of tenancies through transfers, asked about mechanisms for this. Ms McCorry replied that downsizing incentives were offered and promoted on a regular basis, for example in the tenant newsletter and on the Council's website. Considerable success had been achieved in this area. Mr Coutts added that there was also a mutual exchange scheme in operation, which was also very popular.

The officers also responded to questions about transfers and limitations placed on transfers.

Councillor Goodfellow welcomed the report, which demonstrated the high level of satisfaction from tenants. He also welcomed that the Council had improved its performance in rent arrears collection. He had some concerns; charging higher rents for larger house types should be considered and limiting transfers to 20% of new builds should be reviewed.

Councillor McAllister echoed those points. Regarding the issue of a deposit, raised earlier, he suggested this could be pursued with the Scottish Government.

Councillor MacKenzie remarked that this report and appendix provided valuable information which helped to inform community planning and general community wellbeing issues; this information should be used more.

The Convener agreed. The presentation had also been informative and highlighted the Council's excellent housing stock. The only weak point was the repairs service but he noted that Housing and Property Maintenance services were working together to tackle these issues. He asked when the next report would be brought forward. Mr Coutts clarified it would

be towards the end of the year; the comparable performance report would be brought forward next summer. He added that a position statement regarding certain aspects could be brought forward to Committee if desired. The Convener indicated this would be discussed at the next agenda setting meeting.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and the actions being taken to address performance where this needed to be improved.

## **4. EAST LOTHIAN TOURISM PERFORMANCE**

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) outlining the recent performance of the East Lothian visitor economy.

Susan Smith, Team Manager, Economic Development, presented the report. She drew attention to the context, the Economic Development Strategy and strategic objectives. She made reference to Visit Scotland's role and agreement with the Council. In relation to tourism project delivery she reported that economic development and business development officers led on industry engagement across a number of sectors, particularly tourism. She gave further details of several aspects, including visitor numbers to the county's key attractions, visitor survey results, use of social media, print publications and the economic impact of other key events. She also drew attention to EXPO, Visit Scotland's flagship event, and the approach for 2016. She informed Members that priority was given to those events that would provide the greatest economic benefits to the county.

Councillor MacKenzie, referring to the City Region Deal, asked about the tourism element. Ms Smith advised that discussions were taking place regarding a number of potential initiatives; officers would be seeking to ensure benefits for the county. Douglas Proudfoot, Head of Development, added that there was good collaborative working between the six local authorities; he hoped formalisation of a deal would be complete by spring/summer. In response to questions about Visit Scotland's Quality Assurance and Welcome schemes, Ms Smith stated that the Quality Assurance Scheme was recognised around the world as one of the best; having this status was beneficial for businesses and membership could be added to promotional literature, etc. The Welcome Scheme was similar; businesses could apply to be part of this scheme and again there were marketing benefits.

Councillor Caldwell noted the drop in attendance figures for the Lammermuir Festival and asked about the 2015 figures. Ms Smith replied that some data was still awaited so the final figures were not available yet. It was disappointing when events were not well attended; contributions and attendance figures would be looked at. Councillor McMillan, Cabinet Spokesperson for Economic Development and Tourism, informed the Committee that this festival's aim was to promote beautiful music in beautiful places. It attracted a cohort of visitors and was now being mentioned in national publications, which should be beneficial. The Council's investment was to support this festival and make it sustainable.

Responding to Councillor McAllister's questions, Ms Smith advised that funding had been allocated to support this year's Airshow. She added that officers were looking to maximise the impact of the number of visitors to this Airshow and market East Lothian as an area to revisit; work was ongoing with the National Museums of Scotland in this regard.

The Convener raised a number of points. In relation to the East Lothian tourism leaflet, Ms Smith stated that free leaflet racks, branded East Lothian, were being provided, along with key leaflets, to tourism businesses. With regard to attendance numbers at different events and subsequent analysis, Ms Smith reported that the analysis looked at events in the

different locations across East Lothian, at different times of the year, which targeted different groups. She also responded to questions about website hits.

Councillor Goodfellow stated that the importance of tourism to East Lothian could not be overestimated. The report demonstrated that the county was on its way to being Scotland's leading coastal, leisure and food & drink destination. He remarked that in terms of funding provided to events, Fringe by the Sea returned the best economic impact.

Councillor MacKenzie echoed comments expressed by Councillor McMillan regarding the Lammermuir Festival; he added that small venues hosting first class musicians should be welcomed, irrespective of attendance numbers.

Councillor McMillan praised the work carried out by this small team. He made particular reference to *wish you were there*; an officer led marketing initiative that had been used to promote East Lothian, most recently at last year's Royal Highland Show.

The Convener stated that a key issue in terms of tourism project delivery was consideration of how best to provide strategic guidance given the numerous events and projects taking place in the county. Regarding transport, he remarked that a single swipe ticketing system for use on trains and buses would be beneficial. Further consideration should be given to removing barriers for people coming to East Lothian. He raised other aspects, including the need to increase overnight stays, working more with self-catering businesses and Visit Scotland membership schemes. The food and drink sector continued to grow; this was an excellent initiative. He also referred to lack of business land. He appreciated officers' efforts.

Responding to comments, Ms Smith advised that joint ticketing was currently being looked at by Transport Scotland. Regarding Visit Scotland membership she clarified that it included all signed up to the Quality Assurance Scheme. Esther Wilson, Service Manager for Economic Development and Strategic Investment, added that one of the key aspects of business growth was to ensure adequate land, and supply of land, to meet business need. Discussions were taking place with the Planning service in relation to the draft Local Development Plan; this issue had also been discussed at the Sustainable Economy Partnership. Mr Proudfoot informed Members that the facilitation of an effective economic land supply was not a statutory obligation, unlike housing land, but reiterated that land, and availability of land from an economic perspective, was a key focus.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

## **5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

An updated Annual Work Programme detailed the reports already scheduled for the Committee for session 2015/16. It was noted that the reports on Supported Bus Services and School Bus Operation would be brought to the March meeting.

Signed .....

Councillor David Berry  
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee