



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON

Committee Members Present:

Provost J McMillan (Convener)	Councillor J Henderson
Councillor S Akhtar	Councillor C Hoy
Councillor L Bruce	Councillor G Mackett
Councillor S Currie	Councillor K Mackie
Councillor F Dugdale	Councillor C McGinn
Councillor J Findlay	Councillor P McLennan
Councillor A Forrest	Councillor K McLeod
Councillor N Gilbert	Councillor T Trotter
Councillor J Goodfellow	Councillor J Williamson
Councillor N Hampshire	

Council Officials Present:

Mr A McCrorie, Chief Executive
Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
Mr I Gorman, Head of Operations (Health and Social Care)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Ms F Robertson, Head of Education and Children's Services
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr S Cooper, Team Manager – Communications
Ms J Dickson, Lead Officer – Early Years
Mr K Dingwall, Service Manager – Planning
Mr R Edgar, Team Manager – Policy and Strategy (Planning)
Ms S Fortune, Chief Operating Officer – Finance
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Mr S Kennedy, Emergency Planning, Risk and Resilience Officer
Ms K MacNeill, Service Manager – People & Governance
Ms J Tait, Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Operating Officer – Children's Services
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement

Visitors Present:

None

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor W Innes
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor F O'Donnell

Declarations of Interest:

Councillor Forrest: Item 12, in relation to his involvement in discussions with the applicant
Councillor McLennan: Item 7, in relation to his employment status

Prior to the commencement of business, the Provost thanked Jim Lamond, Returning Officer, his staff and the external agencies involved in the management and administration of the General Election on 12 December. His comments were shared by Councillors Currie and Henderson. Councillor Currie also paid tribute to the former MP for East Lothian, Martin Whitfield, and his staff, for their service to East Lothian.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the meeting of East Lothian Council held on 29 October 2019 were approved.

2. MINUTES FOR NOTING

The minutes of the meetings of the East Lothian Local Review Body (Planning) held on 22 August 2019 and 24 October 2019 were noted.

3. 2019-20 PERIOD 7 FINANCIAL REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Head of Council Resources informing the Council of the financial position at the end of October 2019.

The Chief Operating Officer – Finance, Sarah Fortune, presented the report. She drew Members' attention to a number of matters outlined in the report, including: the General Services budget position, which was showing an overspend of £2.515m; the service areas at high risk of overspending; progress as regards achieving efficiency savings; the projected overspend at the year-end, anticipated to be in the region of £5m; the current position with the capital programme (set out in detail at Appendix 4); and the HRA budget position, anticipating that the HRA revenue budget was likely to be delivered in line with approved budget plans. She advised of the financial pressures for the current financial year, stressing that the Council would need to operate on a sustainable recurring cost base going forward and that this would need to be taken into account during the budget development process.

Councillor McLennan asked a number of questions in relation to the financial position as regards Education and Children's Services. Judith Tait, Chief Operating Officer – Children's Services, reported that the Children's Services Board had approved an action plan, with a number of actions now being implemented. She advised that seven children who had been in external placements had now been returned to East Lothian. She cautioned that their return had not been cost neutral, but over time bringing children back to East Lothian would reduce the overspend in that area. She also stressed the importance of acting in the best interests of the children affected. On the £914,000 of efficiency savings for Education that had not been realised, Ms Fortune explained that this was now being managed at a corporate level. She accepted that achieving these savings through staffing had been challenging, but that across the Council, savings to staffing budgets were being achieved.

She added that all efficiency targets were monitored on a monthly basis and that she believed the overall targets would be met, but not solely from the Education budget. Jim Lamond, Head of Council Resources, indicated that similar situations could occur in future, but reassured Members that the Council's flexible approach and close monitoring of budgets would allow for such situations to be managed.

Councillor Currie asked if the 2019/20 budget should be re-cast, given the current position and likely overspend at the end of the financial year. Ms Fortune felt that this would not be necessary, given that the Council was now moving into the budget development process for 2020/21. She reminded Members of the controls in place as regards managing the 2019/20 budget, and that the situation remained dynamic. Having reviewed the budget position as at the end of November, she still predicted an overspend of £5m by the end of the financial year. Councillor Currie expressed concern that the indicative savings for Year 2 of the approved budget could not be met. Ms Fortune recognised the challenges facing the Council, noting that the use of £3.5m from the Loans Fund to mitigate the overspend in 2019/20 would not be a recurring saving.

In response to a question from Councillor Gilbert on 'enhanced' financial controls, Ms Fortune pointed out that such controls may take the form of closer monitoring of vacancies, reviewing all elements of expenditure and a moratorium on purchase cards. She noted that there were signs that these controls were having a positive effect, but that there would be little impact on the overspend position.

Councillor McLeod asked if the budget approved by the Council in February 2019 would be exceeded. Ms Fortune anticipated that there would be an overall overspend of c. £1.5m, but that officers were working hard towards achieving a balanced position by the end of the financial year.

Opening the debate, Councillor McLennan suggested that the Audit & Governance Committee should be looking at the financial position in more detail, and that Group Leaders should also be advised of the position on a monthly basis. The Provost noted this point and suggested that it could be raised at the budget briefing taking place at the conclusion of the Council meeting.

Councillor Akhtar suggested that the increase in demand in Children's Services could be attributed to the growth in population. She made reference to Audit Scotland's Annual Report to Members, which had concluded that the Council was managing its finances effectively in the context of the growth in East Lothian. She believed that bringing Education and Children's Services together would provide better support and outcomes for children and young people, but believed that an increase in funding was required to meet the growing demand for services.

Councillor Hampshire stressed that officers were working hard to reduce the costs of providing services and that significant savings had already been achieved. However, there had been an increase in children requiring external placements and additional support, which had had an impact on the approved budget. He reiterated that setting the budget for coming years would be difficult, and called on Group Leaders to be realistic about what the Council could deliver. He reminded Members that they could contact officers to ask questions or request information on the budget at any time.

Councillor Currie warned that, with the projected overspend at the end of the financial year, the Council would need to make difficult decisions about services in some areas. He referred to savings which could have been achieved had the Council continued with its shared services work with Midlothian on Education, had the Administration not reversed that decision. He asserted that the budget could not be sustained and should be re-cast.

Councillor Goodfellow expressed concern that Councillor Currie had challenged Audit Scotland's opinion on the Council's finances. He highlighted a number of positive aspects of the report, particularly in relation to the delivery of new and modernised Council housing.

In response to comments made by Councillor Hoy, Councillor Currie raised a point of order, arguing that Councillor Hoy had alleged that SNP Members had criticised Council staff. Councillor Hoy re-worded his comment, claiming that the management of the Council's finances had been criticised, which was at odds with Audit Scotland's view on financial management. He was concerned that local authorities were being asked to do more with less money, and he called on the Scottish Government to ensure that the funding settlement for local authorities was fair.

On external placements for children, Councillor McGinn advised that such decisions were not made lightly, and that the reasons for children requiring external placements were complex. He paid tribute to the staff working in this area.

The Provost concluded the debate by noting that controls were in place and that the Council's financial strategy had been commended by Audit Scotland. He thanked staff for their work during challenging financial circumstances.

Decision

The Council to note the financial performance at the end of October 2019.

4. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-25

A report was submitted by the Head of Council Resources setting out an updated Financial and Capital Strategy for the Council, covering the five-year period 2020-2025.

The Chief Operating Officer – Finance, Sarah Fortune, presented the report. She advised that the Financial and Capital Strategies set the direction for the Council's financial management over a five-year period, including capital investment and borrowing. She informed Members that the General Election had had an impact on the UK and Scottish Governments' budget process, noting that it was now likely that the Scottish Government would only be able to provide a one-year financial settlement for Local Government. She highlighted the key sections of the report, including: the medium-term outlook for General Services; financial pressures facing the Council, including the delivery of the Local Development Plan and City Region Deal; the Council's reserves strategy; and the delivery and modernisation of Council housing. She explained that close monitoring of the budget would continue and that the Council would continue to receive regular reports on the financial position. She concluded her presentation by reiterating that there were many challenges facing the Council and that it was imperative that, through the Financial and Capital Strategies, the Council continues to manage the consequences of reduced funding.

In response to questions from Councillor Henderson in relation to the Transformation Programme, Ms Fortune reported that the programme had been successful in a number of initiatives and had led to a number of programmes of change. However, she accepted that it had to progress in order to meet the challenges facing the Council as regards the sustainable delivery of services within limited resources. She advised that new ideas and options would be considered, noting that some of the financial benefits may not be realised for a number of years.

As regards the level of uncommitted reserves available to the Council, Councillor Currie observed that this was likely to fall below £5m in the current financial year, and asked if funds would have to be taken out of running costs to restore it to that level. Ms Fortune

confirmed that this was the case, adding that the Council would be required to bring the reserves level back to that figure within three years. Councillor Currie also questioned the assumed level of Council Tax increase in 2020/21 and 2021/22, and which parts of the Strategy provided flexibility. Ms Fortune directed Members to Section 6 of the Financial Strategy which set out approved elements of the Strategy. She stressed that this did not bind the Council to a 3% Council Tax rise in 2020/21.

Councillor Henderson asked if Members could be kept up to date on capital projects within their wards in order that accurate information could be provided to constituents. Ms Fortune agreed to this request.

On housing subsidies from the Scottish Government, Douglas Proudfoot, Head of Development, confirmed that there was one year of this programme remaining, and that the Council was awaiting clarification on the position for 2021 and beyond. Councillor Goodfellow expressed concern that this situation would impact on the Council's longer-term financial planning. Ms Fortune reminded Members that the Council had only received one-year settlement figures from the Scottish Government in recent years. She accepted that this made it difficult to plan for the longer term, but emphasised the need for the Council to plan ahead in order to provide services in a sustainable way. Jim Lamond, Head of Council Resources, added that Audit Scotland had advised the Council to prepare longer-term financial plans in order that there was more certainty around funding streams. He reminded Members that the Scottish Government had committed to providing a three-year budget; however, the change in the national political situation had resulted in there being no UK budget and, in those circumstances, only a one-year settlement would be provided, and this would be announced following receipt of financial information from the UK Government.

Opening the debate, Councillor McLennan declared that the SNP Group would be abstaining from the vote on the report recommendations on the basis that the financial situation at national level was uncertain. He recommended that the report be brought back to Council following the setting of the UK Government budget.

Councillor Hampshire urged the Council to proceed to approve the Financial Strategy, based on the information currently available to the Council. He anticipated that there would be no increase in the Revenue Support Grant, and that difficult decisions would need to be made in the forthcoming Council budget in order to protect vital services.

Councillor Currie made reference to the UK Government's comprehensive spending review, which had been postponed. This had resulted in the Scottish Government being unable to provide detailed settlement figures to local authorities. He was also sceptical that the Council could provide three years of accurate budget figures if the Scottish Government could only provide figures for one year, noting that the Scottish Government figures had to be underpinned by the comprehensive spending review.

Councillor Henderson stated that she was comfortable with the proposed Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy, noting that the Council could revise them if required.

A number of Members expressed concern at the Council's ability to plan for general services and house-building without having confirmation of funding levels for future years.

The Provost then moved to the vote on the recommendations, as set out in the report:

For:	13
Against:	0
Abstentions:	6

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the overarching Financial Strategy, set out at Appendix 1 to the report, together with the Capital Strategy, set out at Appendix 2 of the report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting the Council with the Risk Management Strategy for approval.

The Head of Communities and Partnerships, Sharon Saunders, presented the report, advising of the requirement to renew the Risk Management Strategy every three years. She drew Members' attention to the key aspects of the Strategy, noting that the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed annually and that the Audit & Governance Committee reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's risk management processes.

In response to a question from Councillor Findlay in relation to the RAG (red, amber, green) ratings for the Risk Rating Matrix, particularly as regards the rating attached to 'major and likely' risks, Ms Saunders advised that the matrix used was recognised as the international risk management standard and had been endorsed by external advisers. However, she indicated that the Corporate Risk Management Group could consider Councillor Findlay's comments.

The Strategy and the Council's risk management processes were commended by a number of Members.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the Risk Management Strategy, noting that it was a live document which would be reviewed by the Corporate Risk Management Group.

6. NAMING OF EAST LoTHIAN'S NEW SETTLEMENT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) reminding Council of the naming process for East Lothian's new settlement and setting the context for a verbal update from the Head of Development on the recommendation from the cross-party panel of the name of the new settlement.

The Head of Development, Douglas Proudfoot, presented the report, advising Members of the results of the recent consultation on the naming of the new settlement, as follows:

Blindwells	2278
Charlestoun	217
Hattonfield	118
Hopetoun	290
Muirdale	181
Nethermuir	134

He advised that with 71% of the responses in favour of the name Blindwells, the cross-party panel had recommended Blindwells as the name of the new settlement. Mr Proudfoot thanked all those who had been involved in and participated in the consultation process.

A number of Members welcomed the consultation process, and called on the Council to approve the name chosen by the majority of those who had responded to the consultation.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the naming process and approach, as set out within the report;
- ii. to note the names that were approved by Council in October 2019 for the new settlement to move forward for public consultation: Blindwells; Charlestoun; Hattonfield; Hopetoun; Muirdale and Nethermuir;
- iii. to note the update from the Head of Development in respect of the recommendation from the cross-party panel as regards the name of the new settlement; and
- iv. to approve the name of the new settlement as Blindwells.

7. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4/REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGIES AND SESPLAN BUDGET

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) seeking Council approval for East Lothian to work with the SESplan authorities to prepare an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy. The report also sought ratification of the decision of the SESplan Joint Committee to approve the SESplan operating budget, and the payment of a financial contribution to assist with the preparation of the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

Declaration of Interest: having declared an interest, Councillor McLennan left the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Team Manager – Policy and Strategy (Planning), Robin Edgar, presented the report, advising of the requirement under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 for each local authority to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy, which would be taken into account through the development of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). He noted that East Lothian would work in collaboration with the other SESplan authorities to develop the Regional Spatial Strategy. He also sought approval for the SESplan operating budget for 2020/21, and for a contribution of £5,000 to assist with the development of an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

Councillor Hampshire emphasised the importance of the Regional Spatial Strategy, as it would influence NPF4 and future development in East Lothian.

Councillor Goodfellow added that the Regional Spatial Strategy would include projections for housing, previously provided by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. that East Lothian Council should work collectively with the other SESplan authorities to prepare an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region;
- ii. to ratify the decision of the SESplan Joint Committee of 25 November 2019 to approve the SESplan operating budget for the financial year 2020/21, including a rebate to each of the constituent authorities; and

- iii. to contribute £5,000 to the development of an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

Sederunt: Councillor McLennan returned to the meeting.

8. UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO 1140 HOURS

A report was submitted by the Head of Education providing an update on progress towards implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare by August 2020.

The Head of Education and Children's Services, Fiona Robertson, presented the report, reminding Members of the progress made in the implementation of the 1140 hours initiative. She advised that the Council's plans were subject to regular scrutiny to ensure that supply would meet demand and do so in accordance with the funding provided by the Scottish Government. She drew particular attention to trials which had been taking place, positive feedback from parents as regards the extended hours, recruitment initiatives, and new career pathways.

Councillor Findlay asked if there would be an opportunity to change the model for specific schools. Mrs Robertson pointed out that nurseries did not operate on a catchment basis, and that there would be a choice of 38-week or 48-week models within each school cluster. She advised that uptake of places would be monitored and reviewed, but that there was no guarantee that changes would be made. She added that it was important to let the new arrangements settle in. Members were also advised that parents could access partner nurseries operated by private providers.

Councillor Mackie asked about the arrangements for local children attending nursery outwith East Lothian. Mrs Robertson reported that there were approximately 100 such children at present, and that the Council was working with those families and neighbouring authorities to ensure they were supported.

In response to a question from Councillor Akhtar on preparing children for their early years' education, Mrs Robertson made reference to collaborative working within Education and Children's Services to provide additional support to families where required, noting that the impact of this work could not be properly evaluated until the 1140 hours initiative was fully implemented.

Councillor Hoy asked a question in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff. Janice Dickson, Lead Officer for Early Years, advised that the Council had a very positive relationship with its private partner providers and that a joint recruitment event had been held in March 2019, with another planned for March 2020. She confirmed that private partner providers had been fully involved in the discussions and rollout of the 1140 hours initiative. She did highlight concerns in relation to retaining staff within the sector, and anticipated that the introduction of a career path would help with staff retention.

The Provost announced that this would be Mrs Robertson's last Council meeting before leaving to take up a new post outside East Lothian. He thanked her for work in delivering education services and for her professionalism, and he wished her well in her new post.

Councillor Currie welcomed the progress made in delivering the expansion of early learning and childcare, which he believed would make a significant difference to many families. He accepted that there may be challenges in delivering the policy, but that the Council should focus on the positive outcomes for families and communities. He also welcomed the introduction of a new career pathway.

Councillor Akhtar paid tribute to Mrs Robertson, thanking her for her contribution to the work of the Council, and for her commitment, knowledge and expertise. She noted that Mrs Robertson would be a great loss to the Council and its school community, and wished her well for the future. Her comments were shared by Councillor Findlay, on behalf of the Conservative Group, who also thanked all the staff involved in delivering the new early learning arrangements.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the progress made towards full implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare by August 2020; and
- ii. to note the plans and models in place to ensure the delivery of 1140 hours for all eligible children within the 1140 of Early Learning and Childcare budget.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION: FIREWORKS – ACTIONS AND CONSULTATION

A motion was submitted to the Council by Councillors Henderson and Bruce, as set out below:

Fireworks, responsibly used, are a well-established part of community events. However, East Lothian Council recognises the distress they can cause to vulnerable people, pets and wildlife; the debris left by their widespread use; and the greater risk of dangerous or anti-social behaviour where misused.

This motion seeks that East Lothian Council resolves to:

- Encourage all public firework displays within East Lothian to be advertised widely locally, in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for animals and vulnerable people, which would mitigate some of the negative impacts;
- Encourage all suppliers of fireworks in East Lothian to stock 'quieter' fireworks;
- Remind retailers who stock fireworks about their legal obligations regarding who they can sell fireworks to;
- Actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
- Run an online consultation on whether there should be a total ban on the sale of fireworks to members of the public and have fireworks only for sale for the purposes of a public display; and whether the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public for private displays should be limited to 90dbs; and
- Request that the Chief Executive writes to both the Scottish and UK Governments with the views of those who have taken part in the consultation to assist with the ongoing policy development process in this area.

Councillor Henderson proposed the motion, highlighting the distress that fireworks could cause for vulnerable people, animals and livestock. She believed that a public consultation on this issue would help gauge public opinion, and would inform the Council on any actions to be taken in order to prevent danger and distress.

Councillor Bruce seconded the motion, advising that this issue had been raised at a recent Cockenzie and Port Seton Community Council meeting. He also noted that the motion could feed into the work of the recently formed Scottish Government Fireworks Review Group.

Councillor Hampshire remarked that this issue was a common complaint at councillor surgeries. With powerful fireworks, which had the potential to cause serious injury as well as being harmful to the environment, being readily available and cheap to buy, he declared that he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Currie voiced his support for the motion, in particular the consultation. He also advised of his support for organised firework events.

A number of Members commented that, in their view, the public mood about fireworks had changed, and they welcomed the proposed consultation and the interest at national level on this issue.

Councillor Henderson thanked Members for their support for the motion.

The Provost then moved to the vote on the motion, which was supported unanimously.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the motion on Fireworks – Actions and Consultation.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION: BANK CLOSURES

A motion was submitted to the Council by Councillors McLennan and Gilbert, as set out below:

This Council notes the decision by TSB to close its branch in Dunbar in May 2020.

Council is aware that this action will leave Dunbar with only one bank and result in the local community planning area of Dunbar having very limited banking facilities.

Council believes the decision by the TSB takes no account of the fact that East Lothian is one of the fastest-growing areas in Scotland.

Council is disappointed that the TSB has chosen to put profits before the needs of communities, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, who will suffer disproportionately.

Council therefore agrees to instruct:

- the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to seek an urgent meeting with the Chief Executive and Chairman of the TSB to express this Council's extreme concern at their decision; and
- the Chief Executive to seek to establish all facilities available to the Council and the local community of Dunbar to have access to banking (such as through libraries, etc.) and to then report back to a cross-party group set up by Council in relation to this motion.

Councillor McLennan proposed the motion, advising that the closure of the TSB would result in there being only one bank remaining in Dunbar. He believed that the closure of the bank

would impact on elderly and vulnerable people, as well as those with no access to online banking. He stressed the importance of banks to communities, but feared that there would be further bank closures in the future. He therefore asked officers to identify opportunities to provide banking facilities within the Dunbar community, and proposed the establishment of a cross-party group to look at this issue.

Councillor Gilbert seconded the motion, reminding Members that there were now no banks within the Preston, Seton and Gosford ward, and expressing his concern that c. 20% of people did not have access to digital banking.

Councillor Hampshire voiced his support for the motion, but proposed an amendment to the motion, which sought to amend the second bullet point, as follows:

- the Chief Executive to seek to establish all facilities available to the Council and the local communities to allow all communities to have access to banking across East Lothian (such as through libraries, etc.), and then report back to Council.

It was noted that the amendment had not been submitted in accordance with the timescales set out in Standing Orders. However, in light of Member involvement in the General Election and Chief Executive recruitment process, the Provost agreed to accept the amendment.

Councillor Hampshire reiterated that he was supportive of the motion. However, he sought to extend the terms of the motion to cover the whole of East Lothian.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor McGinn.

Councillor McLennan indicated that he would be prepared to support the amendment. However, he requested the inclusion of the establishment of the cross-party group to consider any proposals prior to the matter coming back to Council.

Councillor Currie remarked that it would have been helpful to have the amendment issued to Members earlier. He expressed concern at the impact of bank closures on older and vulnerable people, as well as the impact on the local economy and the loss of banking jobs. He highlighted concerns in relation to online fraud, believing that this may lead to people keeping cash in their homes, and also noted that many cash machines now charged for withdrawals.

Councillor Bruce also spoke in support of the motion and amendment, advising that a number of small businesses had closed due to the absence of local banking facilities. He believed that no community should be left without a bank and called on the Council to do what it could to ensure that every community has a bank.

Councillor Forrest pointed out that following the closure of the last bank in Prestonpans, the Council had worked with the Capital Credit Union to establish banking facilities in that community.

Councillor Goodfellow remarked that the closure of banks put pressure on the remaining banks in East Lothian. He also observed that, without transport, it was difficult for many people to access those branches.

Councillor McGinn commented that this was a national problem, which had had a significant impact on community and voluntary groups.

Summing up, Councillor McLennan confirmed that he would be happy to support the amendment, but maintained that there was a need to set up a cross-party group. Following a brief discussion, it was proposed that, rather than establish a cross-party group, officers

would take forward the motion, as amended, and then discuss the outcome with political groups before bringing a report back to Council. A revised wording for the second bullet point of the motion was proposed:

- the Chief Executive to seek to establish all facilities available to the Council and the local communities to allow all communities to have access to banking across East Lothian (such as through libraries, etc.), and following discussion with the political groups, to report back to Council.

The Provost then moved to the vote on the motion, as amended. There was unanimous support for the motion.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the motion, as amended, on Bank Closures.

11. SUBMISSIONS TO THE MEMBERS' LIBRARY SERVICE, 11 OCTOBER 2019 – 29 NOVEMBER 2019

A report was submitted by the Head of Council Resources advising Members of the reports submitted to the Members' Library since the last meeting of the Council.

With reference to Item 133/19 – Voids Management Policy Review 2019, Councillor Goodfellow noted the high response rate to the consultation. He thanked tenants' and residents' groups and officers for their work on the review.

Decision

The Council agreed to note the reports submitted to the Members' Library Services between 11 October and 29 November 2019, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS – EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Council unanimously agreed to exclude the public from the following business containing exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 6 (information concerning the financial or business affairs of any particular person other than the Authority) of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Application to Musselburgh Common Good Committee

A private report by the Head of Council Resources seeking determination of an application for funding received by the Musselburgh Common Good Committee was approved, with grant funding of £40,000 being awarded to Musselburgh Tennis Club, subject to full agreement that all of the other funding sources have been secured and all relevant legal issues clarified.