



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

**WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor L Bruce (Convener)
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor G Mackett
Councillor C McGinn
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor T Trotter

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor J McMillan

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Ms F Robertson, Head of Education and Children's Services
Mr A Stubbs, Service Manager – Roads
Mr P Forsyth, Team Manager – Assets and Regulatory (Roads)
Ms J Mackay, Senior Communications Adviser
Ms S Smith, Acting Service Manager – Economic Development
Mr J Coutts, Service Manager – Community Housing and Partnerships
Ms E Morrison, Service Manager – Customer Services
Ms T Gavan, Area Librarian – Customer Services Officer

Clerk:

Ms A Smith
Ms B Crichton

Apologies:

None

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – PPRC, 12 JUNE 2019

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Review Committee of 12 June 2019 were approved.

2. 2019/20 Q1 PERFORMANCE AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REVIEW UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) to provide information regarding the performance of Council services during Quarter 1 2019/20 (April to June 2019) and an update of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The Head of Communities and Partnerships, Sharon Saunders, presented the report. She took Members through the report and gave information on new indicators and the KPIs these replaced; KPIs subject to significant variations outwith the control of the service; and alternative indicators being developed for future reporting. The quarterly KPIs were contained in Appendix 1.

Officers responded to questions from Members. Councillor Findlay queried whether the two temporary staff required to assist with KPI BEN02 (Average number of days taken to process a change of circumstances (Housing Benefit)) had now been recruited, and whether officers were confident normal service would resume. Jim Lamond, Head of Council Resources, confirmed later in the meeting that the two positions had been filled.

The Convener questioned whether the Council reported on Scottish Power street light failures and their response under KPI RS01 (Street lighting repairs – average time in days). Alan Stubbs, Service Manager for Roads, advised that it could take Scottish Power up to 21 days to respond; the Council would not report on this as it was outwith their control. Mr Stubbs would provide Members with Scottish Power's KPIs/Targets.

Councillor Hoy sought information on the effect of Universal Credit (UC) roll-out on the integrity and comparability of data under EDSI_B11 (Number of jobs created by start-ups assisted by Business Gateway). He looked to determine whether improvement within this indicator was down to improvements in the local economy or as a result of the introduction of UC and the modernisation of the benefits system. Douglas Proudfoot intimated that a buoyant and growing economy was a significant factor but the calculation of UC roll-out had made interpreting this indicator less straightforward; he would take the question to Paolo Vestri to provide a fuller response to Members.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note that the indicators detailed in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 were being monitored to track whether the negative trends continue and would require further improvement action;
- ii. note that several new indicators had been reported in this quarterly report and work was ongoing to complete the review of indicators as detailed in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7; and
- iii. use the information provided 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.

Sederunt: *Councillors Goodfellow and McMillan entered the meeting.*

3. TOP 50 COUNCIL PLAN INDICATORS – FIRST ANNUAL REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2019

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) to provide the Committee with the first annual report on the Top 50 Council Plan Indicators.

Ms Saunders presented the first annual report of the Top 50 Council Plan Indicators. She highlighted the way in which indicators had been grouped into each of the four Council Plan themes (Growing our Economy, Growing our People, Growing our Communities, and Growing our Capacity). She drew attention to the progression of various indicators and five indicators where data, hitherto unavailable, would follow.

Councillor Gilbert queried whether the target of 91% of East Lothian properties with Superfast Broadband (Indicator 11) related solely to homes connected to fibre optic broadband. Susan Smith clarified that this target was to cover access to Superfast Broadband by any means; she would supply the fibre optic figure separately.

Referring to Indicator 23 (Enable provision of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3 & 4 year olds), Councillor Findlay enquired what the Council was doing to refrain from lowering recruitment standards to fulfil targets. Fiona Robertson, Head of Education & Children's Services, advised the Council was working closely with professional recruitment, and partner providers were working closely in relation to the national standard; new career pathways had been developed following the introduction of 1140 hours.

Councillor McGinn raised Indicator 17 (The % of young people receiving After Care, for whom a destination is known, who are in a Positive Destination (i.e. Employment, Training, or Education)), and enquired about the figures for the young people who are in Bed & Breakfast accommodation. Ms Saunders explained that East Lothian Council enjoyed better contact and relationship with care-experienced young people than many other local authorities; due to being in contact with many of its care-experienced young people, the data could be somewhat skewed compared to other councils. She acknowledged that housing was a key factor in a young person being able to achieve a positive destination. She advised that young people in East Lothian had been supported in the last year to move out of unsuitable temporary accommodation, and anticipated that this figure would improve as the year went on.

Councillor Mackett referred to Indicator 35 (Average number of days taken to re-let properties) and asked about common themes between properties causing re-letting to take longer than expected, and whether this process could be speeded up. James Coutts, Service Manager for Community Housing & Partnerships advised that the condition of the property was a significant factor, whether properties were returned in a state that would require minor repairs or capital work (such as the replacement of bathrooms and/or kitchens).

The Convener questioned the 1.37% budget underspend referred to in Indicator 50. Mr Lamond replied that the council encouraged services to spend on plan; it was agreed that spending of 1% over- or under-budget was within an acceptable tolerance. He advised that once significant end-of-year adjustments had been made, services had spent just above their planned expenditure.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note the first annual report of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators; and
- ii. use the information provided to consider whether any other aspect of the Council's performance was in need of further analysis.

4. ROADS ASSET MANAGEMENT – ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) presenting a summary of the Council's road assets, including: the status of the asset, its current condition and performance; the value of the assets; the service that the asset and current budgets were able to provide; and options available for the future.

The Service Manager for Roads, Alan Stubbs, presented the report, drawing attention to the Electric Vehicle infrastructure information added to the report for the first time. He highlighted each section of the report and officers' recommendations for future investment options.

Councillor Hoy enquired about the adoption of streetlights by East Lothian Council; he raised the concerns of residents in Gateside and Arthur's Way and asked whether the Council had a statutory obligation to provide street lighting. Mr Stubbs advised that there was no statutory obligation to provide street lighting, but highlighted the necessity to maintain Council street lighting provided/adopted. He advised that street lighting would only be adopted when the developer was ready to offer it up to the Council, provided it met the Council's standard; as the street lighting had to pass a safety inspection, there were many areas within developments where the Council had not adopted the street lighting.

Councillor Hoy queried whether anything could be done to the Council's planning system to help with this issue. Peter Forsyth, Team Manager for Assets & Regulatory (Roads), remarked that recommendations were not always taken forward into conditions in Planning. Mr Proudfoot noted the challenges raised by adopting street lighting from developers, whose aims were different from those of the Council; developers looked to make profit, whereas the Council looked to deliver a product. He commented that East Lothian Council would establish a Developers' Forum to set out expectations for reasonable action and to ensure this had been completed before developers could move on.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and operational recommendations.

Sederunt: Peter Forsyth and Alan Stubbs left the meeting.

5. EAST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2012-2022, UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) to provide Committee with an update on the implementation of the refresh of the East Lothian Community Planning Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2012-2022.

The Acting Service Manager for Economic Development, Susan Smith, presented the report, drawing attention to: the major strategic opportunities reflected in the refreshed Economic Development Strategy (EDS); the strategic goals; the work of the East Lothian Partnership Connected Economy Group (CEG); the impact of Brexit on local businesses; and opportunities afforded by upcoming projects, such as the new settlement at Blindwells, development of the Cockenzie Power Station site, and the Innovation Park adjacent to Queen Margaret University.

Councillor Findlay asked officers for assurance on the work being done to ensure economic development was being progressed in light of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Ms Smith advised that the impact of this City Region Deal was still to be realised; the Council would work closely with East Lothian Works to continue to improve the employability prospects of East Lothian's young people. Mr Proudfoot advised that jobs within East Lothian were a primary objective. He referred to technical work being carried out on the site at Blindwells, and stated that the Council was focused on the benefits the former Cockenzie Power Station site and the new settlement at Blindwells would provide to the area. He indicated that economic land would not be conceded for housing; the Council hoped to bring the right business to the County.

Councillor Findlay asked how cuts to the Economic Development budget had affected the Council's relationship with external bodies. Susan Smith stressed that the Council's support to businesses extended further than financial support, and pointed out that the Council also helped businesses by signposting and making introductions; this support would continue even with reduced funding.

Councillor Trotter asked whether officers agreed that few companies involved in housing development were from the East Lothian area. Mr Proudfoot acknowledged Councillor Trotter's point. He assured Members that the Council were looking at procurement trends and would continue to encourage more spending locally. He advised that the Council also worked closely with employability, and noted a change in regional skill profiles in recent years.

Councillor Trotter commented that the focus should not be only on Queen Margaret University; not all go to university. Ms Robertson advised of developments in vocational pathways, including qualifications in multi-skills, so improving employability. Mr Proudfoot raised that economic land would be adjacent to the University, which would employ a broad section of the workforce.

Councillor McLennan questioned the resilience of East Lothian's businesses and Council Development Policy to external threats, including the effect of a no-deal Brexit; he commented that sensitivity analyses should be undertaken. Ms Smith advised that officers had alerted local businesses to the government website to prepare for Brexit, and had been helping them work through challenges associated with Brexit. Mr Proudfoot would go into further detail with Councillor McLennan after the meeting.

The Convener enquired about discussions that had taken place with Scotrail regarding trains to new economic land, raising the Head of Development for Scotrail's indication that there would be an increase in trains in West Edinburgh. Mr Proudfoot advised of the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board; the new settlement was embedded within the City Region Deal. Mr Reid advised that the Convener's point was contrary to previous discussions held with Scotrail and would be taken back to them.

Councillor McLennan asked about plans for how East Lothian would differentiate themselves and develop a brand. Ms Smith advised that actions from the Connected Economy Group related to highlighting the strengths of East Lothian in all they did.

Referring to Project 3 (Improve the economic performance of East Lothian's key sectors) and the identified gaps in the tourism offer, Councillor Findlay queried whether a lack of accommodation available in East Lothian constituted a gap. Ms Smith advised that the Council was trying to promote East Lothian's outdoor offering, including exhibiting at the Scottish Cycling, Running, and Outdoor Pursuits Show. She indicated that a lack of accommodation was not necessarily a gap, but that the Council would work to attract tourists through the shoulder months (October – February) especially.

In response to a question from Councillor Findlay, Ms Smith advised that tourism figures were obtained from the Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM), with whom East Lothian Council would continue to contract to provide trend analysis.

Councillor Findlay questioned why the Council did not use OFCOM indicators for broadband data use. Ms Smith advised that Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) indicators were used; she would follow up with further information.

In response to a question from Councillor Findlay, Ms Smith assured Members that officers were confident that the target of 700 under Indicator EDSI – Bus 06 (Number of businesses attendees at business events delivered by EDSI (Economic Development and Strategic Investment Service)) would be reached.

Councillor Findlay complimented officers on their comprehensive report. He recommended that the Administration refrain from cutting the Economic Development budget any further.

Councillor McMillan, Cabinet Spokesperson for Economic Development and Tourism expressed his pride in projects in East Lothian, citing: the purchase of the Belhaven Brewery; the future of Vividor; and the modernisation of the Tarmac site. He felt that the risks and threats raised by Councillor McLennan had been covered in the EKOSgen work. He remarked that the Construction Academy would help to keep jobs for East Lothian in East Lothian. He commended the 'summer of success' East Lothian just had, highlighting various events and sporting tournaments, concluding that they were testament to the enabling work of East Lothian Council.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

6. LIBRARY SERVICE PERFORMANCE

A report was submitted by the Head of Communities and Partnerships to advise Committee on the performance of the Public Library Service in 2018/19.

The Service Manager for Customer Services, Eileen Morrison, introduced Trina Gavan, Area Librarian. Ms Morrison presented the report, drawing attention to: customer satisfaction rates; other services provided by libraries; staff involvement in the promotion of Book Week programmes; Lego therapy programmes for P7-S1 transition; the establishment of a library onto the new Wallyford Primary School; and the relocation of the Musselburgh Library into the Brunton Hall.

Ms Morrison responded to questions from Members. In response to a question from the Convener, Ms Morrison advised that visitor numbers were obtained from counters at entrances to libraries.

Replying to Councillor Gilbert, Ms Morrison advised that there was some concern about dwindling visits to smaller libraries open part-time, and there was likely to be some small changes made to library opening hours due to current staffing issues.

Councillors asked questions about the use of library PCs. Ms Morrison advised that PCs were well-used by job clubs for those in receipt of Universal Credit, and therefore it had not been necessary to market the use of library PCs. Ms Saunders advised that staff in Social Work and in Revenues & Benefits signposted their clients who needed the help. Ms Morrison advised that Social Security Scotland had staff in John Muir House; staff from that service would come to the Brunton Hall in the spring, where they would work closely with Customer Services staff to provide a support service to those who would be applying for the new benefits. She intimated that the new service would consider sending staff to any community where there was demand.

Councillor McLennan thanked officers for the massive transformation in the Library Service. Whereas in other local authority areas library visits had been dropping, he asserted that East Lothian's Library Service was still well respected.

Councillor McGinn echoed these sentiments and congratulated officers for work on the Margaret Oliphant Centre. The Convener observed that Port Seton and Longniddry Libraries were always busy when he visited.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the performance of the Public Library Service in 2018/19.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

An updated Work Programme detailed the reports already scheduled for the Committee for the remaining meetings in session 2019/20.

Reports added to the work programme requested by Members:

- Review of Policy for Community Group Charging (*June 2020*)
- Review of Tourism Strategy (*June 2020*)

The Convener requested that the Economic Development Strategy become an annual report to Committee.

Councillor McLennan, in relation to the Update on Social Care Charging on the work programme for the next meeting, voiced his displeasure that the report had not come to Committee once again. He suggested that carers be invited to the next meeting to obtain their views; this was agreed.

Councillor Gilbert requested a report on the Council's plans for Preston Tower and Dovecot. Officers would explore various channels to provide a response to Councillor Gilbert's enquiry.

Signed

Councillor Lachlan Bruce
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee