



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

**TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

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

Council Officials Present:

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive
Ms M Patterson Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr R Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Mr D Nightingale, Head of Education
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager - Corporate Policy and Improvement
Mr P Grant, Service Manager – Property Maintenance
Ms S Cormack, Service Manager – HR and Payroll
Mr K Christie, Service Manager – Revenues
Mr J Cunningham, Service Manager – Benefits
Ms T Leddy, Area Manager (Adult Wellbeing)
Ms S Bogunovic, Team Manager – Communications and Customer Relations
Mr W McNeish, Performance and Business Support Manager (HR)
Mrs A Stewart, Rent Income Team Leader
Ms A McIntyre, Performance and Business Development Officer (Revenues)
Mr A Strickland, Policy Officer

Clerk:

Ms A Smith

Apologies:

None

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Review Committee of 16 June 2015 were approved.

Matters Arising

Adult Public Protection Update (item 4) – the Depute Chief Executive to progress with the Head of Service

Major Roadworks (item 5) – the Head of Infrastructure to follow up requested actions

2. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, Q1 2015/16

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing the Committee with information regarding the performance of Council services during Q1 (April to June) 2015/16.

Andrew Strickland, Policy Officer, presented the report. He referred to the recent performance briefing for Members, indicating that responses to questions raised at that briefing were provided in this report. He took Members through the report in detail, providing further information in respect of those performance indicators queried. Appendix 1 contained the quarterly and monthly KPIs.

Councillor MacKenzie noted that the Council's way of reporting rent arrears and rent collection was a model for best practice and praised officers. He queried staffing levels and the associated impact on these performance indicators. The Service Manager for Revenues, Kenny Christie, gave details of restructuring carried out in this service area, the revised focus on the key arrears areas in East Lothian and targets set for future. Ashley McIntyre, Performance and Business Development Officer, provided further information in relation to staffing levels, previously and currently. She also gave details of the process for recovery of garage rent collection in response to further questions.

Mr Christie provided detailed information in response to questions from the Convener regarding rent arrears performance figures, targets and staffing. He outlined the potential further investment in staff. Following further questions he advised that an evaluation report had been drafted. The Depute Chief Executive, Monica Patterson, added that this would be reviewed and brought forward in due course.

In relation to Universal Credit, Mr Christie reported that migration from all Job Seeker's Allowance claimants would take place in 2016/17. John Cunningham, Service Manager for Benefits, added that in the first year of the early roll out of Universal Credit 70/80 people had been affected as regards housing costs; 1140 was the projection for 2016/17. The Convener asked the Depute Chief Executive to consider staffing implications/requirements and report back in due course. The Head of Council Resources, Jim Lamond, advised that the staffing situation was being monitored very closely; he reassured Members that this matter would be brought forward to Committee if a pressure was identified.

Councillor McLennan raised questions regarding new business starts and job density. He remarked that the Economic Development Strategy was now in its third year, and key information needed brought to Committee. Douglas Proudfoot, the Head of Development, indicated that a more detailed report on the Strategy was due

to the next meeting. He advised that officers were currently working on a range of issues in relation to job density; work had also been carried out within the Sustainable Economy Partnership. He suggested taking this offline for further discussion to help shape the report to be brought forward to the next meeting.

Responding to questions from Councillor Caldwell regarding Enjoy Leisure's targets and income generation, the Head of Infrastructure, Ray Montgomery, replied that Enjoy Leisure had not raised any concerns with the Council. In response to further questions he gave details of pool maintenance carried out by the Council. The Convener expressed concerns and questioned the validity of KPIs that did not measure meaningful data. Mr Montgomery stated that Enjoy Leisure reported annually to the Audit and Governance Committee but could report to this Committee as regards performance, if desired. Members agreed this would be beneficial.

In reply to questions about fly tipping, Mr Montgomery agreed to ascertain the figures for residential and business waste. Paolo Vestri, the Service Manager for Corporate Policy and Improvement, added that a report on fly tipping was due to Committee in June 2016.

Councillor Williamson asked, in relation to re-letting properties, if local Members could be informed if properties within their ward were likely to be empty for a long period; this would be helpful in responding to constituents' queries. Tom Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships, confirmed that this would be done.

Responding to questions from the Convener regarding the proportion of housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, Mr Shearer outlined the process for reporting on this indicator. He stated that the aim was to achieve 100% compliance. In response to questions regarding further reporting to Committee he informed Members that a new management system (Keystone) had been implemented and suggested a presentation on this system at a future meeting. This was agreed.

Councillor MacKenzie, referring to the performance figures for new businesses starts supported by the Council, specifically within the food and drink industry, queried the impact of staffing issues on this sector. The Chief Executive, Angela Leitch, advised that the Economic Development Team worked closely with this industry and their intervention had proved successful to several companies. Councillor McLennan suggested asking a business in this sector to make a presentation to a future meeting; Members agreed this would of interest.

Decision

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

3. DRAFT COUNCIL ANNUAL PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing the Committee with the draft Annual Performance Report 2014/15.

Mr Strickland presented the report. The Annual Performance Report summarised the Council's performance in respect of commitments in the Council Plan and the Single

Outcome Agreement. Audit Scotland had evaluated Council Annual Performance Reports; this Council had performed well, meeting 24 out of 26 criteria. He took Members through the draft Annual Performance Report, drawing attention to a number of aspects of performance across several service areas. He indicated that feedback from Members was welcomed; the draft Annual Performance Report would go to Council in October for approval.

Councillor McLennan reiterated his earlier points regarding the Economic Development Strategy, specifically in relation to job density. Mr Proudfoot confirmed that this would be discussed in more detail outwith this meeting.

Councillor MacKenzie raised several issues regarding the reporting of educational performance to the Education Committee. He stated that the Council had been given a new framework by Audit Scotland, as outlined in their Schools Report to the June Education Committee, but this new style had not been implemented, despite assurances. The Head of Education, Darrin Nightingale, referred to the Education Committee held on 22 September, and stated that reports to this meeting had encompassed these new recommendations, providing more detailed and transparent performance information. In response to further points raised by Councillor MacKenzie, Mrs Leitch stressed that this Annual Performance Report provided Members with high level performance information; if there were issues regarding detailed educational performance and how this was reported then these were matters for the Education Committee. The Convener noted Councillor MacKenzie's points but reiterated that this was not the appropriate forum.

Mr Nightingale responded to further questions from other Members, providing details in relation to attainment and achievement, cost per secondary school pupil, services provided to schools from other service areas, average tariff scores and additional support needs. He stated that attainment and post school participation had improved over the past 5 years.

Officers responded to several other questions regarding various aspects of the Annual Performance Report including the Fisherrow Harbour feasibility study, the uptake of dog waste bags following the charge introduction, air quality in Musselburgh, rent arrears, lack of targets against some Children's Wellbeing indicators and comparator authorities.

The Convener, referring to the volume of data within the Annual Performance Report, remarked that a synopsis of the main points would be helpful for Members.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the draft Annual Performance Report 2014/15 which would be considered by Council on 25 October 2015.

4. COUNCIL HOUSE REPAIRS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) updating the Committee on a) the regulatory changes to housing repairs and b) on the Council's performance in relation to the delivery of Council housing repairs.

The Service Manager for Property Maintenance, Paul Grant, presented the report. He informed Members about regulatory changes regarding housing repairs

performance, referring to the Scottish Housing Charter (SHC) and 2 charter measures directly related to repairs turnaround times. The latest SHC performance returns in respect of these 2 measures were detailed in the appendices. He advised that the average time taken to complete both emergency and non-emergency repairs had improved. Housing repairs was a cross service function, between Property Maintenance and Community Housing. He gave details of recent and ongoing initiatives, including pre-inspection appointments, the establishment of a cross service Housing Repairs Working Group and the introduction of a functional trade-based supervisory structure in Property Maintenance.

Councillor Caldwell asked if there was a mechanism for Members to receive feedback, following a repairs enquiry made on behalf of a constituent. Mr Grant replied that this would vary on a case by case basis, depending on the nature and stage of the repair. He would expect any officer across the service areas to investigate and respond to a Member query, regardless of the repair in question. Councillor Caldwell added that constituents also needed to be kept informed. The Convener remarked that the structure, involving two service areas, may be confusing for the public; he asked Mr Shearer to take action as regards this issue. Mr Shearer noted the points made; he stated that officers in the relevant service areas would review the situation.

The Convener queried the selection of comparator authorities. Mr Grant advised that these were set out by the Scottish Housing Best Value network and represented peer organisations in terms of housing stock size and geographical profile. Mr Vestri added that comparators varied, depending on the service area being considered.

Responding to questions from the Convener regarding void statistics, Mr Grant advised that the Council had honed its process in respect of voids, adding that the additional time associated with any kitchen, bathroom, rewire works or other major improvement during the void period would be removed from the void turnaround figure.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

5. SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) regarding use of the Council's Social Work complaints procedure for 2014/15.

The Team Manager for Communications and Customer Relations, Sarah Bogunovic, presented the report. She informed Members that 81 complaints had been received during 2014/15 about social work services; 24 stage 1 complaints, dealt with directly at point of service and 57 stage 2 complaints. The number of stage 2 complaints had increased by 16% from the previous year. Appendices 1a and 1b contained a breakdown by service area. She drew attention to acknowledgement and response times and provided details of the outcomes of all complaints. She advised that 2 complaints had progressed to a Complaints Review Committee (CRC); 1 complaint had been upheld, 1 not upheld. On both occasions observations had been made to help improve current practices. Ms Bogunovic added that 109 compliments had been received in 2014/15, a significant increase on the previous year.

In response to questions from Councillor MacKenzie regarding associated concerns about vexatious complainers, Ms Bogunovic advised that the Council had in place an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and social work colleagues, the anti-social behaviour team and the Police were contacted, if required.

Responding to the Convener, Ms Bogunovic advised that some social work complaints, due to their complexity, may go straight to stage 2; there was not necessarily a progression from stage 1 as the complaint may not be able to be dealt with at point of service.

In relation to equalities assessment, Ms Bogunovic advised that equalities monitoring could be carried out but these questions were not included in current complaint forms due to the public's reluctance to provide this information. If a members of the public raised concerns about discrimination when making a complaint, then this information was recorded

Councillor Goodfellow, referring to the compliments received about social work services, congratulated staff. The Convener echoed those comments.

The Convener also raised points about the format of data within reports.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

6. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK 2014/15

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) regarding use of the Council's complaints handling procedure for 2014/15.

Ms Bogunovic presented the report. The Council had received 1205 complaints during the year 2014/15, an increase on the 961 complaints received during the previous year. She advised that 421 complaints related to a single issue, the proposal for a marine energy park at Cockenzie Power Station, stating that if this was counted as a single issue, 785 complaints had been received, an 18% decrease from the previous year. She drew attention to the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each quarter. Acknowledgement and response times per quarter were highlighted. Ms Bogunovic referred to service areas with the highest number of complaints over the year, providing further detail of the main complaint issues. She also drew attention to service areas where there had been a drop in the number of complaints. Appendix 1 contained the annual performance report, Appendix 2 the breakdown of customer feedback by service area.

Members discussed the preferred format of reports.

Responding to questions from Councillor MacKenzie regarding the Cockenzie Power Station complaints, Ms Bogunovic gave details of how complaint campaigns were dealt with, in line with best practice. She advised that each of these complainants had received an individual response, adding that no-one had taken their complaint forward to the SPSO.

The Convener stated this was a pivotal report for this Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

7. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK Q1 2015/16

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing a brief analysis on the use of the Council's complaints handling procedure for Q1 (April to June) 2015/16.

Ms Bogunovic presented the report informing Members that 221 complaints had been received during this quarter, 148 stage 1 complaints and 73 stage 2 complaints. She reported that there had been an increase in the proportion of complaints resolved at the frontline within 5 working days in this quarter. A breakdown by service area was detailed in Appendix 1. She drew attention to complaint response times and outcomes for Q1. She made reference to the service areas with the highest number of complaints and gave examples of issues raised by complainants.

The Convener queried the need for a quarterly report. Mr Vestri advised that the next report due to Committee would be a 6 month monitoring report, brought forward in March 2016.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

8. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2015/16

An updated Annual Work Programme detailed the reports already scheduled for session 2015/16. It was noted that the Economic Development Strategy update was already scheduled for the next meeting in November.

Additional reports requested:

- Housing Landlords report (November 2015 meeting)
- Enjoy Leisure report/presentation (date tbc)
- Keystone (Housing management system) presentation/report (May 2016 meeting)
- Universal Credit update (June 2016 meeting)
- Food and drink presentation (from an external company) (date tbc)

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee