



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

**TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor D Berry (Convener)
Councillor J Gillies
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 & Community Services
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Ms F Robertson, Head of Education
Ms E Morrison, Service Manager, Customer Service
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager, Corporate Policy and Improvement
Ms C Dora, Executive Officer
Mr S Pryde, Principal Amenity Officer
Mr I Patterson, Homelessness Manager
Ms C McCorry, Service Manager, Community Housing

Visitor

Ms A Turpie, Head of Resilience, Scottish Government

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

Councillor J Goodfellow

Declarations of Interest:

None

The Chair welcomed Ms Annabel Turpie, Head of Resilience at the Scottish Government, to today's meeting.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – PPRC, 10 MAY 2016

After receiving clarification on one point, the minutes of the meeting on 10 May 2016 were approved.

2. PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4, 2015-16

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had submitted a report to provide the Committee with information regarding the performance of Council services during Q4 (January - March) 2015/16.

Paolo Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement, presented the report and advised Members that Gary Stewart would be in post at the next meeting as the new Policy Officer replacing Andrew Strickland who had left the Council. For today's meeting, Christine Dora, Executive Officer, had assisted with the report.

Councillor MacKenzie noted that the percentage of S2 children agreeing that they take part in physical activities outside the school day was slightly below target. He stressed the need for there to be a broad range of activities open to young people and enquired if there was a shortage of adults willing to support extra-curricular activities. Mr Vestri replied that he was unaware of a shortage of willing adults and stated that there was a very active voluntary sector supported by STRiVE. Fiona Robertson, Head of Education, advised that Head Teachers would be meeting Pupil Council members to discuss extra-curricular activities. However, she urged caution on how the figures were interpreted as some children considered afterschool activities part of their school day. Ms Robertson also advised that a report on actions taken in relation to the school improvement plans would be going to a future Education Committee.

Councillor MacKenzie enquired if there was a strategy to reduce rent arrears and Mr Vestri replied that, overall, arrears were falling, against trend. Mr Vestri also advised that the Revenues Team had been given additional members of staff, but it was likely that the introduction of Universal Credit was now having an impact. On the matter of debt being written off, the Chief Executive stated that the Council did not write-off debt, unlike other Local Authorities. Mr Vestri also highlighted that 99.81% of rent due in the reporting year had been collected.

Noting the higher than average figures for the number of days to re-house homeless people, Councillor MacKenzie asked what measures were being put in place to improve this figure. Ian Patterson, Homelessness Manager, advised that he had reported to Cabinet on 10 May 2016 on how the Council was keeping within statutory requirements. He stated that the key issue was a lack of supply of housing and temporary accommodation. The Council had an active new build programme but it would take time before the new homes would become available. The Chair stated that, as there had been a shortage of available housing for many years, the Council needed a strategy to cope with demand. Mr Patterson provided a context for the homeless figures and advised that, since 2012, the Homelessness team had seen a significant reduction in the number of homeless applications. The Chair stated that he appreciated all the work carried out by the Homelessness Team and commended their prevention policy which he described as crucial. Douglas Proudfoot, Head of Development, stated that the housing demographic was a significant pressure which would continue. The housing need was likely to grow and the Council would work with partners to reduce the

need. The Council would also do all it could to maximise the supply of affordable homes and continue to liaise with the Scottish Government. Mr Patterson stated that there needed to be a range of options available, particularly for young people. Councillor McAllister enquired how many new homes had been completed and how many were in development and Ms McCorry, Service Manager for Community Housing, advised that a report on the Council's building programme would be brought to a future meeting.

Councillor Williamson stated that it was good to see a downward trend on the number of delayed discharge patients waiting over two weeks. Mr Vestri stated that the Council was also trying to increase the care at home services for older people. A report on Delayed Discharges was due to come to the September meeting.

Councillor Williamson enquired when the Queuebuster call system was to be implemented by the Contact Centre. Eileen Morrison, Service Manager, advised that the new system was expected to go live in August and explained the benefits of the system. The Chair asked what was being done to increase the percentage of calls answered by the Contact Centre within 20 seconds. Ms Morrison replied that the Contact Centre now handled calls for a number of additional services including Social Work, Property Maintenance and special uplifts. Many calls were also taking longer to service and there had been significant long term staff sickness. However, Ms Morrison advised that the new Queuebuster programme would assist with calls. It was also expected that, over time, more Services would be accessed on-line. In respect of available resources, the Chief Executive stated that, due to the reduction in the Council's budget over the past 5-6 years, some services had had to be prioritised over others. However, she advised that a new Web and Channel Shift Manager was due to be appointed and the Council would soon have a website enabling people to self-serve.

Councillor MacKenzie stated that the report underlined how the work of the Council impacted on the quality of life for people in East Lothian. He welcomed the decrease in numbers for delayed discharges and highlighted the increase in the number of unemployed people participating in East Lothian Works programmes progressing into work. He was also pleased to learn of the latest initiatives introduced by the Homelessness Team.

Councillor Gillies congratulated the Council Officers on their performance often in difficult circumstances.

Councillor McAllister stated that it was a good report but did highlight some issues, particularly the shortage of homes in East Lothian. He stated the Council had to be proactive in this field with its programme of house building and ensure that developers provided adequate affordable homes.

The Chair highlighted a number of good performance indicators and thanked Council Officers for the work they do.

Decision

The Committee used the information provided in the report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance was in need of further analysis.

3. FLY TIPPING ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, had provided Members with an update on the volume of Fly Tipping levels in the county and to advise of joint working between stakeholders to manage emerging issues.

Stuart Pryde, Principal Amenity Officer, presented the report. He stated that the Service now maintained in-house records listing volume, type of waste and locus of incidents and these were used to assist benchmarking. Mr Pryde advised that fly tipping incidents remained fairly constant at 50-60 per month and the figures did not suggest that the move to fortnightly collections had had any real impact on fly tipping levels. In terms of the investigation of fly tipping incidents, work had been done in this area by Safer Communities and, in certain cases, appropriate action had been taken to fine and recover clearance costs from offenders. Mr Pryde stated that the Service was responding well to the demands made upon it but they needed to be aware of potential impacts, discuss with partners and mitigate where possible.

Councillor Williamson enquired if fly tipping was expected to increase since access to recycling centres had been restricted for vans, trailers and commercial vehicles. Mr Pryde replied that the recent changes would enable the centres to be managed more effectively. He did not anticipate any significant impact on fly tipping figures as a result, but the situation would be monitored.

The Chair noted a higher than average number of fly tipping incidents in the Musselburgh area and asked if this could be as a result of sharing a boundary with Edinburgh. Mr Pryde replied that the Council did, when necessary, make efforts to trace people from outside East Lothian using the recycling centres, but figures suggested that this was not a significant problem. He also outlined a number of initiatives to help reduce the volume of waste the Council had to deal with, including special clearances and upcycling.

The Chair suggested that if there was a particular issue with fly tipping in an area, the local Community and Police Partnerships (CAPPS) and Community Councils could consider taking a pro-active role in addressing these.

Councillor Williamson thanked Mr Pryde for bringing the report and stated that he had always received excellent service from the Waste Services Team. He also commented on the high level of service provided by the Kinwegar Recycling Centre and the presentation of the site there.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

- i) to note the content of the report
- ii) that internal stakeholders continue to monitor any emerging trends with regard to Fly Tipping and reference these to future re-design and alterations to the Special Uplift service and general management of the recycling centres.

4. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2016/17

Members reviewed the Work Programme for 2016/17. The Chair considered that, as there was a substantial agenda for September, one report could perhaps be deferred until the November meeting.

The Customer Service report was removed from the November meeting and a report on Coastal Car parking was added to the agenda for March 2017.

Signed

Councillor David Berry
Convener of the Policy and Performance Review Committee