

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 16 December 2021

BY: Executive Director of Place

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Performance Indicators

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Policy & Performance Review Committee on the COVID-19 performance indicators that reflect on the council's performance in respect of COVID-19.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the summary of the Council's performance across the 25 indicators included in the Improvement Service's COVID-19 Dashboard
- 2.2 Use the information provided in this report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance in respect of the pandemic is in need of further analysis.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 From late April 2020 the council has been supplying the Scottish Government with weekly data on COVID related activities. At one point this included over 20 indicators covering areas such as support for Shielded People, numbers of teachers, children and young people attending children's hubs, number of free school meals being provided in hubs or at home, Business Support Grants and adult and child protection cases.
- 3.2 With the easing of lockdown, the return of schools and the ending of the Business Grant scheme in August 2020 the amount of weekly data provided by the Council to the Scottish Government reduced significantly. However, the Improvement Service developed a weekly COVID-19 dashboard using national and publicly available data sources as well as council provided data on some key input, output and outcome indicators of the impact of the pandemic. This weekly dashboard

includes 25 indicators for which various comparisons are available – Scottish average, Family Group (Deprivation), Family Group (Geography), and Family Group (Vulnerability).

3.3 The 25 indicators reported via the Improvement Service dashboard are:

- Number of Test and Protect inbound and proactive outbound calls
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice and Enforcement Activity
- Unemployment Claimant Count
- Business Start Ups
- Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant Applications
- Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant Spend
- Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Applications
- Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Spend
- Discretionary Housing Payment Applications
- Discretionary housing Payment Spend
- Projected Additional Health & Social Care Partnership Spend
- Delayed Discharges
- Homelessness Applications
- Rent Arrears
- Child Protection Registrations
- Face-to-face contact with Social Work
- Adult Protection Investigations
- Adults at Risk Referrals
- Adult Wellbeing Referrals
- Domestic Abuse Incidents
- Retail and Recreation Activity
- Workplace Activity
- Local Authority Staff Absence
- Pupil Attendance during lockdown
- COVID related deaths

3.4 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the Council's performance across these indicators, based on weekly dashboard 79 (week ending 29th October 2021).

3.5 This shows that East Lothian and East Lothian Council are 'performing' better than the Scottish average on several key indicators including:

- Unemployment claimant count
- Rent arrears
- Delayed discharge
- Staff absence
- Child and adult protection registrations/ referrals

3.6 We have been following the national trend and 'performing' are at or around the Scottish average on most other indicators including:

- Retail and recreational activity
- Scottish Welfare Fund grant applications

- Pupil attendance
- Domestic abuse incidents

3.7 The small number indicators that show East Lothian below the Scottish average include:

- Test and Protect inbound calls
- Business start ups

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reporting performance helps the Council demonstrate that it is achieving Best Value in regard to ‘Commitment and Leadership’, ‘Sound Governance at a strategic, financial and operational level’ and ‘Accountability’.

4.2 The scrutiny of performance by Elected Members is part of ‘Commitment and Leadership’. The Best Value Guidance explains that the scrutiny of performance means ‘That members are involved in setting the strategic direction for Best Value and there is a mechanism for internal scrutiny by members of performance and service outcomes.’

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – none.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1: Summary of the Council’s Performance Across the 25 Indicators reported via the Improvement Service COVID-19 Dashboard

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| AUTHOR’S NAME | Paolo Vestri |
| DESIGNATION | Service Manager, Corporate Policy & Improvement |
| CONTACT INFO | pvestri@eastlothian.gov.uk |
| DATE | 3 rd December 2021 |

Appendix 1: Summary of the Council's Performance Across the 25 Indicators Reported via the Improvement Service COVID-19 Dashboard – Week 79 (week ending, 29th October 2021)

| Indicator | Summary of Council's Performance |
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| Number of Test and Protect calls | <p>East Lothian has had lower than the Scottish average number of calls from people who have been asked to self-isolate through Test and Protect and very few requests for support. Inbound calls have averaged only 1 per week</p> <p>The number of outbound calls and texts to people peaked at around 160 in early September 2021, when COVID cases spiked in East Lothian, but has since fallen back to around 60 per week.</p> <p>Very few calls, much lower than the Scottish average, have resulted in requests for support.</p> |
| Environmental Health & Trading Standards Business Advice and Enforcement Activity | <p>The significant impact on EH&TS services in the first period of lockdown is shown clearly by the fact that from May 2020 through to the end of the year the service had carried out a total of 2219 business advice and enforcement activities (247 per month) compared to 637 from January through to October 2021 (64 per month)</p> <p>Whilst the number of interventions per 1000 population in East Lothian was at or above the Scottish average for most of 2020 and early 2021 it has been slightly below the Scottish average since February 2021.</p> |
| Business Start Ups | <p>The number of business start-ups has been affected by the pandemic and economic downturn. The total number of business start ups fell from 179 in 2019/20 to 62 in 2021/22 and only 13 in the first six months of 2021/22.</p> <p>The number of business start ups per 1,000 population in East Lothian was around the Scottish average through 2019 and through 2020 until around October. However, it has remained below the Scottish and Family Group averages over the last year.</p> |
| Retail and recreation activity | <p>East Lothian has followed the national trend – a massive fall in activity in March and April 2020 followed by some recovery through to November, before another significant fall in December and a slow recovery from January</p> |

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| | <p>2021 to just above pre-pandemic levels in June, July and August before falling slightly in September 2021.</p> |
| Unemployment Claimant Count | <p>The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work more than doubled in the first few months of the pandemic from 1720 (2.6% of working age population) in March 2020 to 3680 (5.6%) in May 2020. The claimant count varied slightly from that level to 3425 (5.2%) until April 2021 and then fell down to 2435 (3.7%) by September 2021 (with a further fall to 2261 - 3.5% - in October 2021).</p> <p>East Lothian's claimant count has stayed below the Scottish average throughout this period. The Scottish average per working age population increased from 3.2% in March 2020 to a high of 6.2% in August 2020 before falling back to 4.7% in September 2021.</p> |
| Scottish Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants | <p>The monthly average number of applications for Community Care Grants increased from 110 in 2019/20 to 131 in 2020/21, and in the first six months of 2021/22 averaged 164 per month.</p> <p>Total spend in 2019/20 was £387,228 and rose to £582,506 in 2020/21. In the first six months of 2021/22 total spend was £284,957. This is an average of £47,492 per month and £289 per applicant, compared to £48,542 per month and £370 per applicant in 2020/21 and £32,269 per month and £292 per applicant in 2019/20.</p> <p>Spend on Community Care Grants per head of population has been at or just above the Scottish average but below the average of councils in the deprivation family group.</p> |
| Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants | <p>The monthly average number of applications for Crisis Grants has remained fairly constant rising slightly from 316 per month in 2019/20 to 318 in 2020/21 and 322 per month in the first six months of 2021/22</p> <p>However, spend increased from £196,155 (£16,263 per month) in 2019/2020, to £269,961 (£22,497 per month) in 2020/2. In the first six months of 2021/22 total spend has been £105,173 which equates to £17,629 per month.</p> |

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| | <p>The average Crisis Grant was £51.52 in 2019/20, £70.76 in 2020/21 and £54.43 in the first six months of 2021/22.</p> <p>Spend on Crisis Grants per head of population has been below the Scottish average but above the average of councils in the deprivation family group.</p> |
| Discretionary Housing Payments | <p>The number of DHP applications rose from 1240 in 2019/20 to 1384 in 2020/21 and was at 1296 in the first six months of 2021/22. However, annual spend increased from £754,377 in 2019/20 to £882,155 in 2020/21 and is projected at £884,447 at the end of June 2021. DHP payment per applicant has also increased from £608 in 2019/20 to £634 in 2020/21 and £682 in the first six months of 2021/22.</p> <p>Both applications for, and spend on, Discretionary Housing Payments has been lower than the Scottish and Family Group averages. The majority of claims for DHP is for under occupancy costs and the figure reflects the lower rents charged by East Lothian Council.</p> |
| Rent arrears | <p>Rent arrears increased from £1.467m in May 2020 (4.6% of rent due) to £1.575m (4.95%) in June 2020 and stayed roughly at that level until January 2021 before falling to a low of £1.117m (3.5%) in July 2021 before rising slightly to £1.334m (4.1%) in October 2021.</p> <p>This compares very favourably with the Scottish average rent arrears as % of rent due which has risen from 5.9% to 6.7%.</p> |
| Homelessness applications | <p>The number of homelessness applications per month rose from 41 in May 2020 to a high of 69 in August 2020. The average per month in the 18 months from May 2020 to October 2021 was 52.5 per month – 0.48 per 1000 population.</p> |
| Delayed Discharges | <p>In the 85 weeks for which the IS dashboard has provided delayed discharge data since May 2020, East Lothian has had 0 delayed discharge in 30 weeks, 1 delayed discharge in 33 weeks, 2 delayed discharges in 20 weeks and 4 in 1 week. So apart from that one week the proportion of population aged 65+ (per</p> |

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| | <p>1000) never rose above 0.1%.</p> <p>In comparison the number of delayed discharges across Scotland doubled between May and October 2020 and increased by over 50% from October 2020 to October 2021. So the average delayed discharges per 1000 population aged 65+ tripled from 0.45% to around 1.5%.</p> |
| Local Authority staff absence | <p>East Lothian Council's staff absence (% of days staff absent on sick or special leave) fell below 5% in September 2020 and fell to as low as 3.3% in August 2021. It has risen since then partly as a result of the increase in COVID cases and rose above 5% in September before falling back slightly to just under 5% at the end of October.</p> <p>The council's staff absence rate has been below the Scottish average since September 2020. At October 2021 the Scottish average was 6.0%.</p> |
| Pupil Attendance | <p>Pupil attendance has been at around (just below or just above) the Scottish average for most of the pandemic.</p> <p>The percentage pupil attendance was above 90% on 100 days, between 80% and 85% on 53 days and only fell below 85% on 14 days – on three of these days in late June 2021 attendance was below 80%.</p> |
| Domestic abuse incidents | <p>The number of reported domestic abuse incidents reported to the police averaged 87 per month between June and December 2019. There was a slight fall in reported incidents in 2020 to 81 and a further fall in the first 10 months of 2021 to 77.</p> <p>The number of incidents reported per 1,000 population in East Lothian is fairly similar to the average across Scotland.</p> |
| Child protection registrations and face to face contact with Social Worker | <p>The number of new registrations of children in the Child Protection Register has been below the Scottish average for most of the pandemic. An average of around 35 children on the Child Protection Register have face-to-face contact with a social worker each week</p> |
| Adult protection investigations | <p>The number of adult support and protection investigations started each week per 1000</p> |

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| | people aged 65+ (which averaged about 2 per week) has been below the Scottish and family group averages through most of the pandemic |
| Adults at risk and adult wellbeing referrals | Adults at risk referrals has been above the Scottish and family group averages whereas Adult wellbeing referrals have been below the Scottish and family group averages |
| COVID related deaths | Apart from brief periods in April 2020, April 2021 and late summer 2021 the number of COVID related deaths in East Lothian per head of population has been slightly lower than the Scottish average. |