



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EAST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD**

**THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2025
VIA DIGITAL MEETINGS SYSTEM**

Voting Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Chair)
Mr J Blazeby
Mr A Cogan
Councillor J Findlay
Ms E Gordon
Mr G Gordon (*substitute)
Councillor L Jardine
Councillor C McFarlane

Non-voting Members Present:

Ms M Allan	Mr D Binnie
Ms L Byrne	Dr J Hardman
Mr D Hood	Dr K Kasengele
Mr L Kerr	Dr C Mackintosh
Ms M McNeill	Ms F Wilson

Officers Present from NHS Lothian/East Lothian Council:

Ms L Berry	Ms C Goodwin
Ms L Kerr	Mr N Munro
Ms I Nisbet	Mr G Whitehead

Clerk:

Ms F Currie

Apologies:

Dr P Cantley*
Mr D Bradley
Ms C MacDonald
Mr T Miller

Declarations of Interest:

None

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She advised that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available as a webcast in order to allow the public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian were the data controllers under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council and Health Board's policies on record retention. The webcast of this meeting would be publicly available for six months.

1. MINUTES OF THE EAST LoTHIAN IJB MEETING ON 20 FEBRUARY 2025 (FOR APPROVAL)

The minutes of the IJB meeting on 20 February were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 20 FEBRUARY 2025

The following matters arising from the minutes on 20 February were discussed:

Item 2 – The Chair asked when the update on unscheduled care would be presented to the IJB. Fiona Wilson said that she would discuss this with her out with the meeting.

Item 3 – The Chair asked when the IJB would receive an update on the proposal for a Musselburgh, Wallyford & Whitecraig Day Centre. Laura Kerr advised that discussions were ongoing, and she hoped to provide an update to the IJB in May.

Jonathan Blazeby asked if his request at the last meeting to create an action note had been given further consideration. Members agreed that it would be helpful to have a rolling action note similar to those used by Edinburgh and West Lothian IJBs, which could be attached to the minutes. The Chair agreed to take this forward.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

A report was presented on the activities undertaken by the Chair of East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) and any relevant updates.

The Chair presented her report drawing attention to some of the activities and events summarised including the recently published Audit Scotland report on IJB finances, a meeting of the IJB Chairs & Vice Chairs and her visit to Dunbar Day Centre with some other IJB members.

Councillor Carol McFarlane encouraged members who had not already done so to visit day centres in the county. She commended their work in supporting clients and carers as well as helping to tackle loneliness. She said that her visit to Dunbar Day Centre had left her feeling very positive.

Responding to a question from Mr Blazeby, the Chair advised that the National Care Service proposals had been pared back but that the introduction of a National Advisory Board was new. She said that Chairs and Vice Chairs had made clear at the meeting that they did not want to see any unnecessary duplication as a result of these revised proposals. Andrew Cogan suggested that it was too soon to be concerned as there was nothing official yet. He would ask officers to bring forward a paper to the IJB in due course when the proposals were clearer.

Maureen Allan referred to the Audit Scotland report and asked for more engagement with the third sector in the decision-making process and said she would be happy to discuss this further with the Chair and Mr Cogan. The Chair agreed that it was important to work in partnership and that perhaps the details of engagement with the voluntary sector needed to be made clearer in reports presented to the IJB.

The Chair concluded by highlighting her recent discussions with both Staff Representatives on the IJB and the two presentations from VCEL and Enjoy which had been shared with members and which might be worth covering in a future development session.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Note the activities and updates that had taken place since the last meeting.
- ii. Note that the report was to help raise awareness of the wide range of work carried out across East Lothian that contributed to the strategic directions of the IJB.

4. IJB MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIR/VICE CHAIR ROLES

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer advising the IJB of the reappointment of three voting members; and to seek agreement for the appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair for a period of two years from 1 April 2025.

Ms Wilson presented the report outlining the background and recommendations.

She responded to a question from Mr Blazeby providing clarification of the term of office for the reappointment of the voting members.

In reply to questions from Ms Allan, Mr Cogan said his view was that the role of Chair was defined by the IJB's Standing Orders. He was content for issues to come forward to the IJB in the usual way – via reports from officers – and he encouraged members to work with officers on any issues that they may wish to raise. He added that the direction of the IJB was for the IJB to determine and not the Chair.

Ms Kerr added that the IJB had statutory duties which required engagement with the third sector at particular times, and that there may also be a role for Strategic Planning Group (SPG) in improving engagement levels.

Councillor Akhtar thanked officers for their support during her tenure as Chair and offered her thanks to all Partnership staff. She said that she would continue to be mindful of the role of the IJB and the Partnership and she wished Mr Cogan success in his new role.

On behalf of the community, Marilyn McNeill thanked Councillor Akhtar for her work as Chair over the past two years.

Mr Blazeby asked about quarterly reporting to the IJB by the Clinical Care & Governance Committee and whether there could be a standing item on IJB agendas providing an update, verbal or written, from the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Ms Kerr confirmed that the Clinical Care & Governance Committee met within the Partnership and that its terms of reference and function were currently being revised. She hoped to start bringing reports forward to the IJB from the middle of the year.

Councillor Lyn Jardine agreed that there needed to be further consideration of how information was reported and how meetings were structured. She also felt that there was a similar issue with the SPG. She said she would welcome arrangements to ensure a regular flow through of information.

Ms Kerr suggested that it might be possible to share with members the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee and the SPG meetings.

George Gordon suggested looking at best practice elsewhere and said that West Lothian IJB included the minutes of their Audit & Risk Committee as part of the IJB meetings and gave the committee Chair the opportunity to comment.

The Chair moved to a roll call vote and the recommendations were approved unanimously.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- (i) note the reappointment of Councillors Shamin Akhtar, Lyn Jardine and Carol McFarlane, East Lothian Council voting members, for a further term of office
- (ii) approve the appointment of Andrew Cogan as Chair of the IJB from 1 April 2025
- (iii) approve the appointment of Councillor Shamin Akhtar as the Vice Chair of the IJB from 1 April 2025.

5. 2025/26 BUDGET OFFERS TO THE IJB

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer setting out the budget offers from East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to East Lothian IJB for 2025/26.

Mike Porteous presented the report giving a detailed summary of the formal budget offer from East Lothian Council and the indicative offer from NHS Lothian. In assessing the offers against Scottish Government guidelines, he noted that the Council's offer passed on all uplifts it had received and had provided additional monies to fully fund pay rises for directly employed staff, and to address historical growth and financial pressures. Mr Porteous felt that this was a fair offer, and he recommended its acceptance. The NHS Lothian indicative offer included a commitment that any uplift for delegated budgets would be passed on in full to the IJB which complied with Scottish Government guidelines. He advised that NHS Lothian would set their own budget in April and a formal offer to the IJB would follow shortly thereafter. He concluded by saying that while the offers allowed the IJB to address baseline funding, they did not offer headroom to invest in any way.

Mr Cogan welcomed the offers from both partners. He said he was more than happy with them and the IJB could now move on to setting its own budget for 2025/26.

Mr Blazeby agreed saying that the IJB needed to look at transformational change and what these offers meant for service delivery and how the public might be feeling about

what the IJB intended to deliver this year. He queried the difference between the two offers and why NHS Lothian's offer would not be confirmed until two months into the new financial year.

Mr Porteous explained the criteria for assessing the offers and whether they were fair. He said that as the Scottish Government only provided single year settlements for the NHS and local authorities it was difficult to plan ahead on that basis. In terms of the disparity between the offers, he said that the IJB would need to wait until it received the final offer from NHS Lothian to see what it would mean for additionality. He confirmed that the Council had given the IJB additional funding for 2025/26.

Mr Blazeby commented that it was a distraction to be talking about finances and efficiencies at every meeting and he hoped that next year would be different.

Councillor Jardine said that the public sector in general was in a moderately better position this year due in part to the UK government's financial decisions. She said that while there was a desire to move to multi-year settlements it was dependent on the result of the UK government's spending review. She hoped that the Council's offer would provide breathing space for the and she asked if officers could provide an idea of what transformational change might look like and the IJB's role in that.

Mr Porteous said that while these offers would hopefully provide breathing space for the IJB to consider the challenges ahead, pressures would inevitably come along during the financial year and would require the IJB to review what was happening on the ground. However, he hoped the offers would give the IJB the chance to take stock and to put plans in place to better manage the financial challenges ahead.

Ms Wilson agreed but acknowledged that the IJB did now need to consider transformational change, how that would work within the new Strategic Plan and how to ensure that the IJB's vision aligned with what was on offer. She said that to have these budget offers was quite remarkable compared to where they expected to be and was partly due to the relationships and conversations with the IJB's partners. She added that transformational change was harder when getting 1-year settlements, and that these conversations would continue throughout the year.

Kalonde Kasengele commented that unless the IJB somehow found a way of moving towards transformational change, meetings would always include discussions around efficiencies and finances.

Mr Blazeby said that the link to the Strategic Plan would be key and would be where he would expect to see some of that transformational change. He reiterated his views expressed at the last meeting on the need to speed up that work.

Ms Wilson reflected that sometimes the IJB could influence things and sometimes things developed as a result of external factors.

Ms Allan asked about the role of communities in decision-making and said that some of the transformational change needed to be community-led. Ms Wilson said she would pick this up with Ms Allan out with the meeting.

The Chair summarised the comments and concerns expressed during the debate. She also welcomed the offer from East Lothian Council and said she looked forward to seeing the final offer from NHS Lothian.

The Chair moved to a roll call vote and the recommendations were approved unanimously.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Accept the 2025/26 Budget Offer from East Lothian Council.
- ii. Note the NHS Lothian indicative budget offer and its principles, with a formal offer to follow in due course.

6. BUDGET SETTING 2025/26

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer setting out: the work undertaken to date on the budget setting process; the proposal that the IJB sets a balanced budget for 2025/26 based on the delivery of identified savings plans; and an updated 5 Year Financial Plan for the IJB.

Mr Porteous presented the report and began by reflecting on 2024/25 where despite the delivery of significant efficiencies, the year-end position was a forecast overspend of £3.5M. He said that the IJB needed to continue to plan ahead to meet its challenges and part of that would be to set a balanced budget at the start of the year. Following the budget offers, the IJB was in a good starting position for 2025/26 and would look to close the projected funding gap of £4.1M with further efficiencies. He advised that when applied, the Council offer presented a balanced position for social care, but the NHS Lothian indicative offer showed a small gap for health which was completely within set aside services. He said that, as in the past, he would work collaboratively with finance colleagues to deliver a balanced position at year end. He drew attention to the efficiencies listed in the report indicating that these were expected to deliver in full and would have no impact on the current Strategic Plan.

Lastly, Mr Porteous highlighted the section of the report on the IJB's 5-year financial plan. He referred to some of the key risks and confirmed that he would bring updates to future meetings of the IJB. He concluded that the situation would remain challenging and that there may be difficult decisions ahead.

Mr Porteous responded to questions from Ms Allan. He said he was aware that a number of efficiency schemes had not delivered during the year, and some had not been taken forward. He would reflect on those schemes, why they had not delivered and whether they could be delivered going forward. This work would provide a starting point for future efficiencies and financial planning. He agreed that the current year budget gap could have been somewhat reduced if these efficiencies had been delivered by the year end.

Ms Wilson reminded members about some of the context and discussions on why some schemes did not deliver, for example where they may have caused harm, adding that that these were difficult decisions to take.

The Chair suggested that further information on the efficiencies could be circulated to members.

Replying to Mr Cogan, Mr Porteous confirmed that they intended to maintain the current level of service through a combination of the budget offers and delivery of agreed efficiencies.

Mr Cogan said that the IJB needed to take this year to consider how to manage the concept of transformational change through the Integration Scheme, and to consider

what that would look like for the next 3-5 years. He said he would welcome this being to focus of the next couple of development sessions.

Elizabeth Gordon stated that at its recent meeting the Audit & Risk Committee had received an internal audit report on recovery plan monitoring which had recommended that the IJB receive updates on the progress of efficiencies as part of its regular financial reporting. She said that she would welcome this as well as regular reporting to the Committee.

Councillor Jardine said that she was increasingly anxious of the impacts on communities, with some more vulnerable than others. Given that the IJB was going to be looking at much more transformational change in future, she would expect officers to provide comprehensive evidence-based Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) as part of their reports.

Ms Kerr agreed advising members that all completed IIAs had risks and mitigations highlighted were reviewed within 6-12 months. She assured members that these were active documents which were available online and open to challenge from the IJB. She added that the mainstreaming equalities report would be coming back to the IJB soon and it might be helpful to have this as the focus of the development session in April.

David Binnie shared with members the situation which Carers of East Lothian had found themselves in when re-tendering for a new contract. The challenges of rising costs, such as employer NICs, and reduced tendering budgets has led to the organisation starting to lose staff and there would be further challenges ahead. He said that this was an illustration of the on just one of the county's third sector organisations who were delivering key services.

Ms Kerr agreed that it was a very difficult situation as organisations had year on year increases to meet but the IJB didn't have increased year on year funding to offer. Although the IJB was not cutting these services, organisations would end up delivering less with what they were given.

Ms Allan suggested that, if not already available, there needed to be an IIA specific to impact on community organisations. She said that the IJB needed to be mindful that if community services and support were reduced the impact on statutory services would rise significantly.

The Chair highlighted the importance of further integration and seeing progress on the work on set aside and shifting the balance of care. The IJB needed to fully utilise transformation work done by all its partners and take full advantage of opportunities to participate in this work. She agreed that it would be helpful to delve a bit deeper into these issues during a development session.

The Chair moved to a roll call vote and the recommendations were approved unanimously.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. approve a balanced budget on the basis of the approach highlighted in paragraph 3.10 of the report.
- ii. approve the Efficiency plans highlighted in Table 2 and detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

- iii. note the scale of the projected financial challenges set out in the updated IJB 5 Year Financial Plan.

7. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION – STAFF AND CLAIMS PROTOCOLS - EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL AND NHS LoTHIAN

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer formalising Staff and Claims Protocols for East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian which set out HR and contractual matters for East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian employed staff of East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

Ms Kerr presented the report outlining the background and advising members that these protocols should have been in place earlier but for various reasons had not come to fruition. Their purpose was to support the HSCP and partner's employees and would sit alongside other protocols as set out in the report.

In response to questions from Mr Blazeby, Ms Kerr confirmed that the IJB did have authority to approve these documents, and it was part of its role within the terms of the Integration Scheme. The partners had been very involved in the development of the protocols and had given their agreement to the drafts now being presented to the IJB. She explained that the protocols were designed to address process issues and ease the provision of services for staff.

Ms Gordon said that she was reassured by the knowledge that both the Council and NHS Lothian's HR departments had reviewed the documents. She felt that they were useful documents which provided clarity for employees.

Replying to questions from Liam Kerr and the Chair, Ms Kerr confirmed that the IJB's Staff Representatives had both previously had sight of the protocols.

The Chair comments that the protocols offered a practical way to deal with issues. She moved to a roll call vote and the recommendations were approved unanimously.

Decision

The IJB agreed the Staff and Claims Protocols for ratification.

8. APPOINTMENT OF IJB STANDARDS OFFICER

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer nominating a replacement Standards Officer, as required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life (Scotland) Act 2000. This nomination was subject to approval by the Standards Commission for Scotland.

Ms Wilson presented the report outlining the background to the requirement for a Standards Officer in recognition of the IJB as a devolved public body. It had been acknowledged that there needed to be a more independent officer in this role rather than the Chief Officer of the IJB and the recommendation was to nominate the Council's Head of Corporate Support, subject to approval by the Standards Commission.

Mr Blazeby agreed that this was a sensible approach and asked about Ms Barnett's experience. Ms Wilson advised that Ms Barnett had recently supported an information and engagement session for councillors on standards and their Code of Conduct and both the Council and NHS Lothian were supportive of the proposal.

Councillor Jardine said that Ms Barnett had taken over as the Council’s Monitoring Officer last year and had made a very positive impression. Councillor Jardine was supportive of this nomination.

The Chair said that Ms Barnett had also worked in the City of Edinburgh Council. She also suggested that it might be useful to have a future session for members with Ms Barnett.

The Chair moved to a roll call vote and the recommendations were approved unanimously.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Nominate East Lothian Council’s Head of Corporate Support, Hayley Barnett, as a replacement to the IJB Chief Officer, as Standards Officer to East Lothian’s IJB.
- ii. Note the appointment was subject to approval by the Standards Commission Scotland.

Signed

Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Chair of the East Lothian Integration Joint Board