**East Lothian Partnership Governance Group**

**Monday 20th February 2023**

**3.15pm – 5.15pm**

**Teams Meeting**

**MEETING NOTES**

**Present:**

Douglas Proudfoot, East Lothian Council Katie Dee, NHS Lothian

Maureen Allan, VCEL Jocelyn O'Connor, Police Scotland

Girrity, David; Scottish Fire & Rescue Lawrence Wyper, Scottish Enterprise

**In Attendance**

Sharon Saunders, East Lothian Council Bettina Sizeland, Transport Scotland

Neil Mcinroy, Scottish Government Jamie Baker, East Lothian Council

Neil Craik-Collins, East Lothian Council Toby Renouf, East Lothian Council

Paolo Vestri, East Lothian Council Judith Tait, East Lothian Council

**Apologies:**

Mark McMullen, Scottish Enterprise Audrey Cumberford, Edinburgh College

Iain Gorman, Health & Social Care Partnership

Coyle, Michelle (Procurement)

Sangster, Hilary, Scottish Fire & Rescue

1. **Welcome and apologies**
2. **Note of 15th December Governance Group meeting**

Approved as a correct record.

There were not matters arising that were not on the agenda

1. **Community Wealth Building presentation from Neil McInroy, Scottish Government Community Wealth Building Advisor**

Neil McInroy presented an outline of the Community Wealth Building (CWB) programme as it is being implemented in Scotland as well as examples of successful projects from other parts of the world and summarised the Scottish Government’s consultation.

A Q&A session followed this presentation.

Maureen Allan asked whether Third Sector Interfaces had been involved in the example projects discussed. Neil confirmed that they had been heavily involved and have been very strong in terms of community ownership, asset transfer etc. TSIs have been considered fundamental anchor organisations and it is important that they are closely involved in CWB plans and planning.

Maureen also asked how closely will communities be involved in CWB? Neil underlined that CWB is not community economic development as it has worked in the past. It is about the whole economy – making sure that citizens benefit directly. In this way it becomes about changing the fortunes of citizens: rather than just handouts, it gives communities a proper stake in the economy.

Maureen wanted to know when CWB would be put into a user-friendly format. Neil pointed out that EDAC has produced a guide on CWB which is an accessible source of information and a simple explanation of what CWB is and how it can be implemented.

Jamie Baker asked Neil to explain some of the policy context and specifically the questions within the consultation paper. Neil noted that there is a range of potential legislative changes around all five pillars. Perhaps the biggest is the CWB duty, there are three options including one that sees all public agencies, including all anchors, to adopt CWB as part of their activity. Although it’s another duty, it’s being seen as something that would clear away a lot of additional clutter for agencies/organisations like those in the Governance Group.

Douglas Proudfoot noted that he is currently working with huge budgetary challenges and capacity issues (problems that extend across the partnership. He questioned whether, with the current severe challenges in place, CWB can really be delivered: does it need more resourcing from government to make it possible? Neil noted that some aspects of CWB make it more feasible, including the shared economies of scale in procurement. Also, it is clear that western liberal democracies are struggling with cost of living crisis, climate change etc. it is going to be necessary to re-write how economies are structured, where wealth is situated etc and this is something that CWB can play a part in.

Sharon Saunders pointed out that many plans and strategies that overlap with CWB are either already in place, or are in the process of being developed and that there may be some duplication of intent and effort: maybe this legislation is already in place and is there a benefit to having another duty requiring another action plan and another set of collaborative arrangements. Neil suggested that CWB is really a scaling up of the positive actions already in place; the five pillars can help to create a cross link. Neil also suggested that one overarching CWB criteria for funding received could streamline things (compared with current varied criteria across different funding streams).

**Action: Paolo Vestri to setup a short-life Community Wealth Building Working Group to look at how the partnership takes forward the CWB agenda. This Working Group will report to the June Governance Group meeting with a draft response to the Scottish Government consultation**

**Paolo Vestri to ask Scottish Government for short extension to the deadline for consultation submissions (25th April) to allow the Governance Group to consider its response at its 26th April meeting.**

**4. Recovery and Renewal Plan Updates**

Updates on the following actions were presented, discussed and noted.

1.5 Joint approach Domestic Abuse

1.6 Increasing Confidence in Community Justice

Judith Tait noted in relation to 1.5 and 1.6 the creation of the Equally Safe subgroup as part of the Community Safety and Justice Partnership. The group will be looking at the data being gathered through the Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group and East Lothian Equally Safe subgroup to ensure they have the best approach to understanding needs and to ensure services are adequately lined up. Judith feels action is being taken to strengthen a joint approach.

In terms of offering better support, some of that will depend on Scottish Government and the review of funding for domestic abuse services. There is a need to take account of increased need and have that reflected in funding where possible.

4.2 Enhance support for those children who have gaps in their learning and need additional interventions

4.3 Maximise the use of digital technology to enhance learning and support curriculum delivery

Paolo Vestri noted that a great deal of work had been done during COVID to provide digital learning for children when schools were closed. A new digital learning strategy is to be taken to the Education Committee in March 2023.

4.4 Ensure a clear focus on improving attendance and reducing exclusions in schools

Paolo Vestri highlighted the appointment by the council of a new quality improvement officer focusing on equity, taking a focussed approach to improving attendance and reducing exclusions.

Neil Craik-Collins pointed out that a lot of the interventions taking place are part of the transforming services for children group. There are individual projects including the Aspire programme.

8.2 Accelerate the delivery of affordable housing to return to planned levels

Wendy McGuire noted that over the last five years, the Council has delivered 966 units. This is higher than in the previous five years. It also exceeds the LHS target. Over the next five years, there are likely to be significant challenges. The Strategic Investment Plan sets out the possibility of delivering just under 1500 units; however that relies on £74million Scottish Government subsidy (currently only around £60million secured). The ability to deliver will also be very contingent on a number of other factors including a reliance on land use planning policy – largely dependent on the private sector. The council will work closely with the private sector to maximise opportunities as the market appears to be slowing. The current economic context, including rising interest rates presents challenges, as do new building regulations, energy efficiency standards etc.

**Action: the remaining actions in the RRP action plan will be updated at the April Governance Group meeting and a complete update will including Indicators will be provided at the June meeting.**

1. **Update on Community Safety and Justice Partnership meeting**

Paolo Vestri reported on the first meeting of the Community Safety and Justice Partnership. The meeting reviewed and suggested some amendments to the Terms of Reference that had been approved in principle at the previous Governance Group meeting.

The Governance Group unanimously approved the amended Terms of reference for the Community Safety and Justice Partnership.

1. **Update on Strategic Needs Assessment**

Paolo Vestri provided a brief update on the development of the new Strategic Needs Assessment and the outcome of the Workshop that had been held on 20th January. It was noted that a follow up workshop is being planned to progress the development of the new SNA.

1. **Updates from partners on financial pressures and budgets 2023/2024** and **8. By exception updates from Partnerships and Partners**

Lawrence Wyper reported noted that Scottish Enterprise does not yet have a finalised funding allocation from Scottish Government. However, it is expected that it will have reduced allocation and will have a very challenging budget. Scottish Enterprise’s focus will be on innovation, international trade, fair work. A detailed plan will hopefully be ready by April. Post COVID, a permanent hybrid-working model has been adopted, that has had an impact on estates and offices – significant reduction in office space and permanent office presence.

Monica Patterson reported on the council budget that will go to the Council meeting at the end of February. Beyond this year there is an enormous recurring gap for which provision will need to be made. This adds particular challenges – short term solutions can be found, but finding ongoing recurring savings is hugely challenging with potential for a disproportionate impact on all the areas not deemed to be “essential”.

Monica stressed that the challenge is unprecedented in terms of scale. East Lothian is a growing county, this brings additional challenge especially since capita and revenue resource allocation from Scottish Government has not kept pace with growing population. The Council will need to think about how we join up with partners to show the Government that the growing population has significant financial implications.

Katie Dee outlined NHS Lothian’s financial position – possible £94m gap in its 2023/24 budget – a recurring situation that will have ongoing implications for probably the next five years. The NHS is also facing the challenge of allocation not matching the size and growth of the population.

David Girrity outlined the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service financial position. The Scottish Government have set an indicative flat cash budget between 2023/24 and 2026/27 and the service is considering the short and long term implications of this. A strike action had been approved by firefighters, however a new pay proposal has been recommended to be accepted by the Fire Brigade Union. Contingency plans are in place, in the event that a strike goes ahead.

Maureen Allan reported that VCEL have not seen an increase in funding since 2011. VCEL have agreed a 5% pay increase for staff. Funding this has been achieved through streamlining processes, and investment in new software systems and processes. VCEL is developing a new five-year strategic plan.

Jocelyn O’Connor reported that Police Scotland is also looking at a flat budget which in real terms means a reduction in overall staffing numbers since 80% of the budget goes on staff. There are growing priority areas for the police such as safeguarding but more resources in one area of the service will mean reductions in resources on other areas.