

**Governance Group**

**Wednesday 29th April 2024**

**3.00pm – 5.00pm**

**Teams Meeting**

**Present:**

Monica Patterson, East Lothian Council Maureen Allan, VCEL Steven Bosworth, Scottish Fire & Rescue Benjamin Leathes, Police Scotland Kat Burke, NHS Lothian Lesley Brown, East Lothian Council

**In Attendance:**

Toby Renouf, East Lothian Council Paolo Vestri, East Lothian Council

**Apologies:**

Douglas Proudfoot, East Lothian Council Audrey Cumberford, Edinburgh College

Caitlin McCorry, East Lothian Council Alan Carson, Police Scotland

Hilary Sangster, Scottish Fire and Rescue Fiona Wilson, NHS Lothian

Betina Sizeland, Transport Scotland

1. **Welcome and apologies**
2. **Note of 1st May Governance Group meeting**

**3a. Matters Arising:**

* **Community Wealth Building** - Paolo noted that we approved the CWB action plan and charter, that has now gone to council. Paolo to write to other potential partner organisations. Council has now appointed CWB Officer (Angela Lamont). Paolo, Angela and Jamie Baker to meet to discuss establishing new CWBWG and immediate work for that group.
* **Local Economic Strategy** – had hoped to issue this to members prior to meeting but unable to get this out in time. Been through CEG and approved at council unanimously. This will be circulated to members – Jamie Baker will respond to any questions. Assume that Governance Group will approve if no objections heard. CWB is a key part of this strategy.
* **ELP Forum** – Paolo noted that 20th April date had to be postponed to 15th June at QM. Agenda has been circulated to members.
1. **Strategic Needs Assesment**

Hoped to have a draft of this to circulate but this has been delayed slightly as new information is constantly coming in. Economic strategy data will be embedded into SNA, so this has held up paper slightly. 2024 Poverty Profile is due to be completed and that will be useful within SNA.

**Action: Paolo to bring draft SNA to next governance group meeting.**

1. **VCEL Role of TSI and Paper (Maureen Allan)**
* Organizational Overview: VCEL’s Mission: Bridging the gap between the voluntary and community sectors and statutory bodies in Scotland.
* Key Partnerships: Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Volunteer Scotland, and Third Sector Interface Network.
* Focus Areas: Supporting community organisations, fostering collaboration, and advocating for third sector interests.

Challenges and Responses:
* Challenges Faced: Increased demand for services, rising operational costs, and insecure funding sources.
* Adaptive Strategies: Implemented hybrid service models, leveraged technology, and optimised resource allocation.
* Financial Management: Secured funding from Scottish Government and other partners to sustain operations.

Community Engagement and Support:
* Impact and Engagement: Facilitated over 340 key interactions, created 416 new volunteering roles, and engaged with 639 organizations.
* Strategic Initiatives: Implemented trustee training, policy development, and aligned activities with national and local frameworks.

Recent Achievements and Initiatives:
* New Initiatives: Launched a podcast series and expanded digital engagement through social media.
* Financial Support: Distributed £280,000 to grassroots organizations, totalling over £1 million in the past three years.

Upcoming Events and Initiatives:
* Engagement Events: Scheduled mental health events, volunteer awards, poverty planning, children and young people's event, and annual conferences.
* Forums and Panels: Established forums for mental health, employability, and children & young people.

Maureen noted the extent of the work done by Paolo Vestri in recognition of his upcoming retirement. Paolo also raised the importance of closer working with VCEL and the transformation carried out by Maureen.

Monica asked to what extent younger people have been engaged as volunteers and also whether there has been a positive experience working with schools. Maureen recognised the need for younger engagement as there are many volunteers who are very old and their capacity is likely reduced.

Lesley Brown echoed Monica’s thoughts around engagement of younger people and the offer was made to continue conversations with Maureen around how best to offer volunteering options to younger people.

**6.Community Safety and Justice Partnership – Proposed Revised Role and Remit**

Organisational Overview:

* Formation and Structure: About a year ago, the Community Safety and Justice Partnership was established, comprising three subgroups: Community Safety Group, Community Justice Group, and Equally Safe Group. As of August 2022, the Community Justice Group has been functioning effectively, while the Community Safety Group has recently found its stride. However, the Equally Safe Group has yet to convene formally due to ongoing deliberations about its scope and membership.

Proposed Changes and Rationale:
* Current Status Review: The partnership has met infrequently, largely due to logistical challenges. Recently, a review involving Ben Leathes and Sharon Saunders, and Lindsey Byrne (tasked with setting up the Equally Safe Group) concluded that adjustments are needed.
* Proposal: The paper proposes disbanding the Community Safety Group and the Equally Safe Group. Instead, it suggests restructuring the Community Safety and Justice Partnership with revised membership and expanded responsibilities, integrating the functions of both disbanded groups.

Key Changes and Continuations:
* Revised Remit: The revised partnership will encompass the previous mandates of both the Community Safety Group and the broader Community Safety and Justice Partnership, streamlining oversight and operational functions.
* Continuation: The Community Justice Group will continue unchanged, overseeing the development and implementation of the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan, reporting directly to the restructured Community Safety and Justice Partnership.

Next Steps and Implementation:
* Implementation Timeline: The proposal outlines a phased approach, with the existing Community Safety Group meeting scheduled for May 22nd. Subsequently, the group will transition its role and remit to align with the restructured Community Safety and Justice Partnership.
* Meeting Schedules: Plans include establishing regular meeting schedules for both the restructured partnership and the Community Justice Group to ensure ongoing operational effectiveness.

Discussion and Feedback:
* Feedback Solicitation: Participants, including Lindsey Byrne and Ben Leathes, expressed interest in further discussions to ensure adequate coverage of Equally Safe and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agendas across the partnership.
* Concerns: There are concerns about maintaining momentum and partnership-focused work amid the restructuring, with a call to clarify communication and responsibilities regarding Equally Safe.
1. **East Lothian Plan Outcome Indicators Update**

Overview of the East Lothian Plan:

* Themes and Outcomes: The current 2017-27 East Lothian Plan centers around three themes: prosperous, community-minded, and fair. These themes encompass a total of eight outcomes, each supported by a set of indicators.
* Indicator Progress Update: Appendix 1 of the report provides the latest update on the 33 indicators established to measure progress towards the outcomes.

As of the latest data, all 33 indicators are up-to-date:

* Improvement Status: 21 indicators (70%) have shown improvement and are progressing towards their targets.
* Decline Status: 8 indicators have declined.
* Stability: 1 indicator has remained unchanged.
* Below Target: Overall, 10 out of 33 indicators are below their target levels.

Theme-specific Progress:
* Prosperous Theme: Under this theme, 7 indicators have shown improvement, while 2 have worsened. Issues highlighted include the percentage of people earning less than a living wage and town center vacancy rates.
* Community-minded Theme: This theme has seen 8 indicators improve, with 3 indicators showing a decline. Concerns include citizen perceptions of neighborhood quality and an increase in deliberate fires and missing person reports.
* Fair Theme: Within this theme, 6 indicators have improved, while indicators such as child poverty rates and primary 1 children's body mass index have shown decline.

Challenges and Considerations:
* External Influences: The report acknowledges significant external factors impacting progress, including COVID-19, Brexit, and the cost-of-living crisis, which have implications for economic, societal, and health-related indicators.
* Future Planning: To address these challenges, the proposal suggests reviewing the current outcome improvement plan and developing new priorities and outcomes. This process will likely involve establishing new indicators aligned with revised goals for the East Lothian Plan.

Proposal and Next Steps:
* Approval Proposal: The report recommends noting the current update on indicators and approving the establishment of a new set of indicators in the autumn. These new indicators will reflect updated priorities and outcomes based on the revised East Lothian Plan.
* Discussion and Feedback: Participants expressed interest in understanding specific indicators better, particularly those showing decline, and highlighted the importance of ongoing monitoring and strategic planning to address emerging challenges.

**8. East Lothian Partnership Governance Group self-evaluation**

Context and Need for Evaluation:

* Purpose: Paolo highlighted the need for a partnership self-evaluation, noting it has been several years since the last one. Given recent developments like the plan revision and the new strategic needs assessment, he emphasized the timeliness of assessing the group's effectiveness.
* Current Challenges: Attendance issues at recent meetings and the busyness of members were acknowledged. There's a desire to streamline operations, possibly reducing the number of meetings while maintaining focus on key priorities.

Review Focus Areas:
* Strategic Partnerships: Paolo emphasized evaluating the focus and membership adequacy across strategic partnerships, including the Connected Economy Group, Community Safety and Justice Partnership, and the Children's Strategic Partnership.

Proposal for Self-Evaluation:

* Timing and Methodology: Paolo proposed conducting a self-evaluation in June, preferably after the forum on June 15th, to maximize attendance. This evaluation would use established questions from previous partnership evaluations to assess current effectiveness and future directions.
* Facilitation and Follow-up: Paolo offered to facilitate the evaluation session, ensuring all strategic partnerships are represented. The outcomes from this session would inform subsequent actions and adjustments, with plans to implement decisions over the summer.

Feedback and Input:
* Community Engagement: Participants discussed the need to improve engagement with the community, particularly reconnecting with tenants' residence associations, community councils, and other local groups post-COVID.
* External Insights: There was a call to gather insights from the Community Planning Improvement Board and other community planning groups nationwide to adopt best practices and enhance collaborative efforts.

Additional Insights and Actions:
* Partnership Inspection: Lesley shared insights from a recent partnership inspection report on services for at-risk children, highlighting its relevance to the self-evaluation process as evidence of governance effectiveness.
* Name Change Proposal: Maureen suggested renaming the governance group to better reflect its function as a community planning entity, aiming for clearer communication and understanding among stakeholders.

**9. Updates by Exception**

**Police Scotland (Ben Leathes)**:

Ben addressed the impact of funding cuts affecting three officer positions, necessitating a reorganization of community resources. Despite this challenge, an additional school link officer will be retained, reflecting ongoing positive partnership working. Ben acknowledged potential impacts on response times due to reduced resources but emphasized maintaining effective partnerships.

**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Steven Bosworth):**

Stephen noted upcoming strategic service reviews starting with a pre-consultation phase aimed at modernization amidst budgetary constraints. This initiative includes online questionnaires and community events to gather public input on service improvements over the next three months. Additionally, he announced the impending retirement of Area Commander Hilary Sangster, encouraging ongoing engagement with her successor once appointed.

**NHS Lothian (Kat Burke):**
Kat provided updates from NHS Lothian, highlighting financial challenges with an initial projected deficit mitigated by additional government funding and financial recovery plans. She outlined initiatives focused on inequalities impact assessments and prevention strategies targeting cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and falls prevention. Kat welcomed questions and feedback on these updates.

**East Lothian Council (Lesley Brown):**

Lesley noted the retirement of Sharon Saunders, emphasizing her significant contribution to the council's community efforts. She mentioned Caroline Rogers would take up the Acting Head of Communities role following Sharon's departure. Lesley also discussed the council's financial challenges and the necessity of drawing down reserves, reflecting the broader fiscal pressures impacting local services.

1. **AOB**

There was no other business

1. **Date of next meeting**

**Toby to arrange for most suitable date for next meeting.**