

**Governance Group**

**Thursday, 22nd October 2024**

**2.00pm – 4.00pm**

**TEAMS Meeting**

**Meeting note**

1. Welcome and apologies.

Apologies were received from: Ashley Goodfellow, Audrey Cumberford, Betina Sizeland, Rhona Burgess, Jamie Bell, David Hood, Fiona Wilson

1. Note of last meeting, 20th June 2024

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed

2a. Matters arising

**Public Protection and Community Planning, including update on Equally Safe**

1. **Poverty Plan**

Lucy Higginson provided an update on governance arrangements and the action plan.

* **Governance:** The Poverty Working Group has been reconvened to oversee activities and is co-chaired by NHS Lothian and East Lothian Council members. This arrangement ensures streamlined communication with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).
* **Structure:** The group will meet twice a year, with five subgroups working on objectives such as jobs, opportunities, quality of life, climate readiness, and trauma-informed practices. These subgroups are co-chaired by council service leads and partner organisations.
* **Action Plan:** Outcome one, focusing on improving access to good, fairly paid jobs, will be integrated into the Local Employability Network's existing framework.
* **Data Improvements:** A key project supported by the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund will aim to enhance the use of qualitative and partnership data to inform service design and evaluation. This follows recommendations from the Children’s Services Inspection.
* **Interim Updates:** Initiatives underway include a national campaign promoting pension credits linked to winter fuel payments, exploring community hub models, and improving data-sharing mechanisms for better service monitoring.
* **Governance:** The Poverty Working Group has been reconvened and will be co-chaired by NHS Lothian and East Lothian Council. This aims to ensure effective communication with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).
* **Structure:** The main Poverty Working Group will meet biannually, supported by five subgroups focused on objectives such as jobs and opportunity, quality of life, and climate change readiness. These subgroups are co-chaired by council service leads and partner representatives.
* **Action Plan:** Actions under outcome one, including improving access to good jobs, will be integrated with the Local Employability Network’s existing work.
* **Data Improvements:** A partnership approach to data collection and analysis will be strengthened using funding from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund. This project will aim to incorporate qualitative data and lived experiences to enhance service design and evaluation.
* **Key Updates:** Current initiatives include promoting pension credits linked to winter fuel payments, exploring community hub models, and addressing data gaps identified in children’s services inspections.

Angela Lamont emphasised the integration of community wealth building principles into the action plan, particularly ensuring the inclusion of local economic development opportunities. Lesley Brown supported this, highlighting the critical role of robust data integration to measure the plan's impact and effectiveness. Angela will liaise with Lucy to ensure these are incorporated.

**Action:** **Subgroups to present progress to the main group in March 2025.**

1. **CLD Partnership Plan and CLD Progress Visit Improvement Plan**

Simon Davie presented the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership Plan.

* **Legal Requirement:** Simon highlighted that the Scottish Government mandates local authorities to lead on a three-year CLD plan.
* **Current Focus:** Due to tight timelines, the current plan reflects only council-based priorities. A refreshed CLD partnership will address this gap through enhanced partner and community engagement.
* **Recommendations:** The Governance Group approved the establishment of a refreshed CLD partnership chaired by Lesley Brown and endorsed the CLD Progress Visit Improvement Plan.
* **Inspection Feedback:** Lesley Brown acknowledged past challenges noted by Education Scotland and committed to revitalising the CLD approach with stronger partnerships and measurable progress.
* **Capacity Building:** Simon outlined plans to support partners in understanding and contributing to CLD objectives through capacity-building efforts.

Due to time constraints, the current plan focuses on council-led priorities. Partner engagement will be a key focus for the next iteration.

* **Recommendations:** The Governance Group approved the establishment of a refreshed CLD partnership led by Lesley Brown, alongside the CLD Progress Visit Improvement Plan.
* **Inspection Feedback:** Lesley Brown acknowledged past challenges and committed to revitalising the CLD offer in East Lothian. Inspectors will return in less than a year, necessitating rapid progress.
* **Community Engagement:** Maureen Allan emphasised the importance of a partnership approach and community-led initiatives.

**Action: Simon Davie and Maureen Allan to collaborate on integrating partnership principles and key demographic insights into future iterations of the plan and discuss equal value in partnerships and the inclusion of key demographic data.**

1. **Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)**

Toby Renouf provided an overview of the SNA:

* **Demographic Trends:** East Lothian has experienced the highest population growth in Scotland over the last 20 years, driven primarily by migration rather than births. Projections show significant increases in the over-65 population, creating pressures on housing and healthcare services.
* **Economic Activity:** Employment and self-employment rates are above the national average, but income disparities persist, particularly between different wards. Key sectors include retail, education, and tourism.
* **Child Poverty:** While East Lothian performs better than the Scottish average for child poverty, significant disparities exist between affluent and deprived areas, with Musselburgh and Tranent showing higher poverty levels.
* **Housing and Health:** Rising housing costs have exacerbated income disparities, with East Lothian having higher-than-average usage of temporary accommodation. Health data revealed high adult obesity rates and growing concerns around access to services.

Discussion centred on the potential for integrating qualitative data and lived experiences to complement statistical trends, exploring real-time data dashboards for iterative updates, and fostering stronger partnership collaboration to provide context and actionable insights.

* **Demographic Trends:** Significant growth in the over-65 population and increasing housing and healthcare demands.
* **Economic Activity:** Employment and self-employment rates exceed national levels, though income disparities persist between different areas.
* **Child Poverty:** While child poverty levels in East Lothian are below the national average, disparities remain across wards.
* **Housing and Health:** Rising housing costs and a higher-than-average usage of temporary accommodation were noted, along with disparities in health outcomes such as obesity rates and access to services.

**Action:** **Toby Renouf to convene a working group with key partners, including Maureen Allan, to enhance the SNA and explore ongoing data integration methods.**

1. **Update on ELP Review and Refresh**

Caroline Rodgers sought approval to commence work on a new East Lothian Plan (ELP), highlighting that the current plan, last reviewed in 2019, no longer aligns with emerging priorities such as climate change, poverty reduction, and enhanced partnership working. She proposed an inclusive process emphasising meaningful community engagement and co-production, with the aim of producing a draft by the end of 2025. Highlights included:

* **Rationale:** The current plan, last reviewed in 2019, requires significant updates to reflect evolving priorities such as climate change, poverty, and partnership working.
* **Engagement:** The process will prioritise meaningful community engagement and Co-production.

The group approved the proposal, with Maureen Allan emphasising the need for authentic community engagement and avoiding reliance on traditional consultation mechanisms.

**Action:** **Caroline Rodgers and Maureen Allan to outline a community engagement strategy.**

1. **Overview of Self-Assessment**

Emma Brown updated the group on the self-assessment process facilitated by the Improvement Service, outlining a structured approach designed to evaluate six critical areas of partnership performance. The process includes a 42-question checklist, awareness sessions for governance and strategic subgroups, and tailored surveys for committee groups to reflect their roles. A facilitated session will be conducted in March 2025 to prioritise improvement actions based on survey findings.

* **Timeline:** Awareness sessions have been conducted, with surveys opening on 30th November 2024. A facilitated session will follow in March 2025.
* **Focus Areas:** Six areas will be evaluated using a 42-question checklist.
* **Next Steps:** Reports will inform the development of the new ELP.

**Action:** **Emma Brown to circulate the final self-assessment report in early 2025.**

1. **Report on the Resident’s Survey**

Toby Renouf presented key findings:

* **Neighbourhood Satisfaction:** 89% of respondents rated their neighbourhood as good or very good, although disparities by geography and deprivation levels were noted.
* **Financial Challenges:** 60% of respondents reported making adjustments due to rising living costs. Notably, 22% of those in deprived areas skipped meals, compared to 8% in non-deprived areas, and 10% in deprived areas relied on food banks, compared to 2% elsewhere.
* **Council Budget Priorities:** Respondents supported early intervention strategies (48%) and targeting resources to those in greatest need (30%). There was notable opposition to increasing charges for services (26%) and mixed views on staffing reductions (21%).
* **Neighbourhood Satisfaction:** 89% of respondents rated their neighbourhood as good or very good.
* **Financial Challenges:** 60% reported adjustments due to rising living costs, with higher impacts in deprived areas.
* **Council Budget:** Respondents prioritised early intervention, targeting those in greatest need, and opposed increasing charges or staffing reductions.

Maureen Allan raised concerns about the survey’s low response rate, noting that it represented only 1.7% of the population. She emphasised the need to engage directly with communities through trusted third-sector networks to gather more meaningful and representative insights, particularly from harder-to-reach demographics.

1. **Updates by Exception**

Updates were provided by:

* **Fire Service:** David Girrity shared updates on new initiatives to enhance community safety.
* **NHS Lothian:** Kalonde Kasengele highlighted ongoing work in prevention and collaboration on strategic needs assessments.

1. **Any Other Business**

* **Emergency Exercise:** Lesley Brown reported on a recent simulation of a Torness nuclear outage, emphasising multi-agency collaboration.
* **Staffing Changes:** Caroline Rodgers and Simon Davie were welcomed in their new roles.

Date of Next Meeting: TBC