MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EAST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2025
VIA DIGITAL MEETINGS SYSTEM

Voting Members Present:
Councillor S Akhtar
Dr P Cantley
Mr A Cogan (Chair)
Ms E Gordon
Councillor C McFarlane

Non-voting Members Present:
Mr D Binnie
Ms S Gossner
Dr C Mackintosh
Ms F Wilson
Ms L Byrne
Dr K Kasengele
Mr M Porteous

Officers Present from NHS Lothian/East Lothian Council:
Ms L Berry
Mr J Forrester
Ms J Jarvis
Mr N Munro
Mr L Rockey
Ms R Crichton
Ms C Goodwin
Ms L Kerr
Ms I Nisbet
Mr G Whitehead

Clerk:
Ms F Currie

Apologies:
Councillor L Allan
Mr J Blazeby
Councillor J Findlay
Ms M Allan
Mr L Kerr

Declarations of Interest:
None

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was being held remotely.

He 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 will be publicly available for up to 5 years.

The clerk announced a change of agenda order: Item 7 would be brought forward and heard after Item 3.

The Chair welcomed Laurence Rockey, Chief Executive of East Lothian Council, to the meeting.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: EAST LOTHIAN IJB ON 26 JUNE 2025

The minutes of the IJB meeting on 26 June were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 26 JUNE AND ROLLING ACTIONS LOG

The following matters arising from the minutes on 26 June were discussed:

Page 2 (Item 2) – Councillor Akhtar said she was keen to keep track of any additional funding coming through, as lack of resources remained an issue for the IJB. The Chair reiterated the commitment made by officers at the previous meeting that they would continue to ensure that the IJB received its share of any additional funding and that they would update the IJB when allocations were received.

Rolling Actions Log:
The Convener noted that all of the actions had been completed or had plans in place to address the issues. He sought approval from members to all actions in the log. The IJB agreed to the closure of the items highlighted in the Action Note.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported on his attendance at a recent meeting with the IJB's partners, at which Mr Rockey had been present, and noted that the development session for IJB members held in August had been very successful. He drew attention to the development session scheduled for 1 October which he encouraged members to attend.

Councillor Akhtar reported on her attendance at a recent IJB Chairs/Vice Chairs network meeting where some powerful examples of work had been provided by JBs. She agreed to share with members copies of presentations and a recording of the meeting.

7. CARE AT HOME – A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer presenting a new Care at Home strategy aimed at improving delivery of both community based and funded care services, while supporting system change, to enhance outcomes for individuals and unpaid carers.

Jamie Forrester provided a detailed summary of his report drawing attention to the clustering of care localities, co-ordination of capacity across provision and examples for investment to deliver longer term savings.

The Chair commented that this strategy had been considered by the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and had been subject to significant consultation. It was now coming forward for approval by the IJB.

Mr Forrester, Laura Kerr and Isobel Nisbet responded to questions from members providing feedback on the 12-week pilot project and the direct or indirect impacts on associated services. It was noted that further follow up work was required to see if the benefits displayed during the pilot were maintained, and to consider how this approach might be rolled out more widely. They said that the staffing levels for services would be determined once an implementation plan was in place.

Fiona Wilson said that this work would provide the opportunity for a wider conversation on staffing more generally and how to use existing resource more efficiently, as well as conversations on how to shift models of care.

The Chair acknowledged that the need for service transformation had come across clearly in the report.

In response to final questions, Ms Kerr said the IJB would continue to receive updates on these initiatives and confirmed that carer reps were involved in the work. She also took on board the suggestion of contacting the Council's Connected Communities Team.

Decision

The IJB agreed:

i. Approve the Care at Home Strategy (Appendix)

ii. Note that the SPG has agreed to the development of an Implementation Plan to be led by General Managers.

4. EAST LOTHIAN IJB ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024-25

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer presenting the draft East Lothian Integration Joint Board Annual Performance Report for 2024/25.

Claire Goodwin presented the report reminding members that IJBs were required to report annually on performance against national integration indicators. She said that East Lothian IJB had improved in 8 of the 10 indicators and, overall, was doing as well or better than last year.

Ms Gordon welcomed the report and found the case studies to be a helpful illustration of how initiatives work in practice.

Ms Goodwin, Ms Wilson and and Jennifer Jarvis replied to questions from members on plans for a press release and promotion of the report and its positive findings. Ms Wilson and Sarah Gossner also replied to question on the expansion of initiatives to upskill staff and the challenges of maintaining the services while also releasing staff to undertake enhanced competencies.

The Chair congratulated staff for the level of performance outlined in the report, and for demonstrating that, in 8 out of 10 national indicators, East Lothian was well ahead of the curve in delivering services.

Councillor Akhtar echoed the Chair's remarks and paid tribute to staff across all services who, despite continuing challenges and pressures, were working to improve services.

Decision

The IJB agreed:

i. Review the draft IJB Annual Performance Report for 2024/25 and provide feedback as appropriate.
ii. Approve the draft Annual Performance Report for publication subject to any changes required to reflect IJB feedback.

5. REVIEW OF THE IJB STRATEGIC PLAN – CONSULTATION DRAFT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer providing the IJB with an update on progress in relation to the review of the East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan; and presenting a Strategic Plan Consultation Draft to the IJB for information.

Ms Goodwin presented the report summarising progress since the IJB's June meeting. She confirmed that the consultation draft had been presented to the SPG where it had been approved for use in consultation with partners. She reported that work had also begun on an initial draft of the annual delivery plan, and she drew attention to the timeline for the next stages of the work.

Ms Goodwin, Ms Kerr and Ms Jarvis responded to questions from members on the level of contextual detail in the draft and whether this was necessary. They said that there was still time to look at this and reminded members that there would also be a summary version of the plan. They suggested the possibility of a joint development session for IJB and SPG members, and the Chair indicated that all members would support this proposal. Officers also provided additional detail on the timelines for further work and engagement within the Council's community planning team and with the wider community.

Mr Rockey commented that, to a new reader, the level of detail might be a little discouraging.

Councillor Akhtar welcomed the co-production approach as a really positive aspect as this work.

Decision

The IJB agreed:

i. Note progress to date in relation to the review of the current IJB Strategic Plan and development of a Consultation Draft (Appendix 1 of this report).
ii. Note the next steps in the review process, including in relation to consultation and engagement being carried out to inform further development of the Strategic Plan.

6. MIDLOTHIAN AND EAST LOTHIAN DRUGS AND ALCOHOL PARTNERSHIP (MELDAP) ANNUAL REPORTING SURVEY REPORT 2024/25

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer briefing the IJB on the MELDAP Annual Reporting Survey for 2024/25 submitted to the Scottish Government in June this year.

Martin Bonnar provided a detailed summary of the key points in his report and drew attention to various pilot projects taking place in community settings. He also sought the support of the IJB in MELDAP's community work, particularly through its Low Threshold Cafes and drop-in clinic, and with its anti-stigma work. He updated members on his discussions with Scottish Ministers on funding and, depending on progress, he may come back to seek the IJB's support in making the case for increased resources.

The Chair noted that the report had been submitted to the Scottish Government, but this was an opportunity for IJB members to consider these issues.

Councillor Akhtar suggested a further development session with MELDAP to look at the longer-term sustainability of services, and what the IJB could do to highlight funding concerns and other issues. The Chair supported this proposal.

Mr Bonnar also drew attention to a newly developed charter of rights for people with drug and alcohol issues and agreed to provide further information on this to members. He also offered to provide a link to a piece of work by the Anti-Stigma Network on language and moving away from pejorative terms.

He highlighted that the harms related to drug and alcohol issues were often linked to poverty and deprivation, and he encouraged IJB members to consider whether there were any levers for action within their individual areas of interest.

Claire Mackintosh asked to be linked into the work that MELDP was doing as it would be helpful for her own area of work. She acknowledged Mr Bonnar's comments on the use of language in anti-stigma work, around the need for action on deprivation and she stated that acute hospital admission was of very little benefit in many cases. She offered to share some of her work with Mr Bonnar.

Kalonde Kasengele welcomed the paper and echoed Dr Mackintosh's remarks, particularly around the underlying factors of poverty and deprivation and on reducing stigma.

In response to these comments, Mr Bonnar provided further detail on some of the projects to support access to treatment, to show a positive picture of recovery and encourage the concept within communities that people could get better. He also accepted Dr Mackintosh's suggestion of information sharing.

Councillor Akhtar thanked Mr Bonnar for his report and suggested that the IJB might consider what further work might be done with partners to tackle some of the underlying factors.

The Chair thanked members for a constructive and positive discussion.

Decision

The IJB agreed to note the content of the report.

8. IJB AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2024/25

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer presenting the IJB's audited Annual Accounts for 2024/25.

Mike Porteous presented report noting that the IJB had received an unqualified audit opinion from the external auditors, and he thanked colleagues within both partner bodies for their support in putting together the accounts. The auditors had made one recommendation which he had accepted and hoped to complete by the end of the year.

The Chair noted that the audited accounts had been presented to the Audit & Risk Committee earlier in the week and, if approved today by the IJB, would be signed by all relevant parties.

Councillor Akhtar thanked Mr Porteous for his work on the accounts. She commented that the IJB still faced financial challenges in delivering health and social care priorities for the people of East Lothian.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

i. Note the IJB's Audited Annual Accounts for 2024/25.

ii. Note the Draft Annual External Audit Report for East Lothian IJB for 2024/25.

iii. Note the anticipated recommendation of the IJB's Audit and Risk Committee

iv. Approve the IJB's Annual Accounts for 2024/25 for sign off and publication.

9. IJB FINANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer setting out the Quarter 1 (Q1) Financial review position for the IJB; providing an update on the monitoring and delivery of efficiencies; laying out the current reserves position for the IJB; and providing an update on the Financial Planning process.

Mr Porteous presented the report highlighting the outcome of the Q1 review, the forecast overspend for the year, progress with efficiency measures, the position with reserves and work on the 5-year financial plan.

Mr Porteous responded to questions from Councillor Akhtar on the collaborative approach to address Set Aside budget pressures and the timescale for an update of the IJB's reserves policy. He also replied to a question from the Chair on the impact of the delayed Scottish Government budget announcement. He acknowledged that delaying the announcement to January 2026 would place additional pressure on both partners to prepare and agree their own budgets and funding offers to the IJB. However, with collaborative working he was confident that he would have enough information to bring a paper to the IJB's meeting in March 2026.

Mr Rockey said that whether the announcement was delayed to December or January it would still be really challenging for the Council. However, he had ongoing dialogue with Ms Wilson to ensure there would be clarity of process and the ability to deliver what was required.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

i. Note the financial position reported as part of the Quarter 1 Review.

ii. Note the year-to-date delivery of efficiencies.

iii. Note the current Reserves position for the IJB.

iv. Note the ongoing Financial Planning process work.

Signed ....

Mr Andrew Cogan
Chair of the East Lothian Integration Joint Board