

Guide to Scrutiny & Review

3

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Introduction

Scrutiny is the term used to describe the way in which the performance, decisions and plans of the Council are examined by the Elected Members who are not part of the Cabinet. Scrutiny in its widest sense might also include audit, inspection and regulation. Although there is no set definition for what is meant by scrutiny, this Guide will provide some guidance on how it will be approached at East Lothian Council.

Numerous bodies perform some kind of scrutiny of local government, including Audit Scotland, Education Scotland, and the Care Inspectorate. These bodies provide 'external scrutiny'; equally important, if not more so, is the way that the Council scrutinises itself. Internal scrutiny by Elected Members took on much greater significance following publication of the Crerar Review in 2007. The Review recommended that rather than rely on the results of external scrutiny exercises 'The primary responsibility for demonstrating compliance and performance should rest with service providers.'

Rigorous scrutiny of the Council's achievement of Best Value by Elected Members is an essential part of the Council's governance arrangements, although it should not be conducted in a partisan manner. Audit, scrutiny, review of performance and policy review need not be done in a confrontational and oppositional way. As far as possible scrutiny should be a non-partisan, non-party political process. However, it is important to be aware, and accept that there remains a place for straightforward political opposition in the political arena of local government.

Four principles that were developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny¹ underpin the Council's approach to scrutiny:

1. Scrutiny provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
2. Scrutiny enables the voice and concerns of the public
3. Scrutiny is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
4. Scrutiny drives improvement in public services

The Council's scrutiny arrangements were developed taking into account the criteria for good practice in scrutiny as set out by Audit Scotland in its Best Value Toolkit for Governance and Accountability (see Appendix 1).

¹ 'Overview and scrutiny in local government', Centre for Public Scrutiny

Scrutiny is a critical element of the Council's Improvement Framework, **Improvement to Excellence**. The framework is designed to ensure the Council meets its legal requirement to provide Best Value. It helps the Council address the four key questions:

- ➔ Are we doing the right things?
 - ➔ Are we doing them right?
 - ➔ How do we know how well we are doing?
 - ➔ Could we do things differently to be better?

Improvement to Excellence consists of five inter-related elements, which form the basis of continuous improvement.

1. **Setting clear outcomes and priorities** – what we need to do to achieve our vision and ambitions
2. **Service and improvement planning** – setting out how are we going to deliver and manage services, resources and improvement
3. **Performance management, monitoring and reporting** – monitoring how we are doing so we know what we need to improve
4. **Self-evaluation** – measuring how are we doing and what do we need to improve
5. **External assessment and accreditation** – how others see us and gaining external validation.

The scrutiny committees support the delivery of elements 3, 4 and 5.


1. Scrutiny in East Lothian Council

East Lothian Council has three committees that perform the 'scrutiny' function: the Audit and Governance Committee, the Policy and Performance Review Committee and the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee. Appendix 2 provides details of the remits of these committees.

The Audit and Governance Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the Council's approach to risk and corporate governance. It also considers reports on the work of the Council's Internal Audit service and reports from the external auditors and Audit Scotland.

The Policy and Performance Review Committee covers all matters relating to the performance of the Council's services. The work of the Committee focuses on the review of performance and considering reports on matters of concern to the Committee seeking assurance that under-performance is being addressed. Members of the Committees will determine what items are included in the work plan with the help of the '*Selecting topics for scrutiny*' section of this guide.

The Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the performance of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services and other services that perform a community safety function in East Lothian. The Committee receives reports focussing on the performance of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services but will also consider reports on issues such as anti-social behaviour.



Critical Success Factors:

- Respect and positive relations between elected members
- Mutual trust and respect with officers
- Respect for roles and boundaries

Mark McAteer (Improvement Service),
presentation to Elected Members'
Workshop, 6th Sept. 2010

Responsibilities for decision making and for scrutiny are separated under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and executive decision making arrangements. Decisions are taken by the Council and by Cabinet, while decisions on certain matters relating to education are taken by the Council Committee for Education. Recommendations from any of the scrutiny committees may be referred to the Council, Cabinet or Education Committee for a decision to be made if necessary. The roles and responsibilities of elected members and council officers involved in scrutiny are detailed in Appendix 3.

Recommendations made by the scrutiny committees will be reported to the Cabinet or Council as appropriate if a formal decision is required to amend policy or practice. Alternatively recommendations will be made to the appropriate Head of Service if a decision falls within their delegated powers.

2. The Work Programme

The work of the scrutiny committees will be set-out in annual work plans. The Audit and Governance Committee's work plan will largely be governed by the Audit Plan and the annual cycle of audit reports. The Policy and Performance Review Committee's work programme contains a mix of on-going, regular items and items that have been selected for review by members.

The work programme of the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee mainly consists of the performance reports presented by Police Scotland and the Fire and Rescue Service and reports requested by members on community safety issues.

On-going regular items

Some items will be reviewed on a regular annual or quarterly basis (e.g. external and internal audit plans, the annual accounts and quarterly performance monitoring reports); these will need to be factored into the programme at the appropriate intervals.

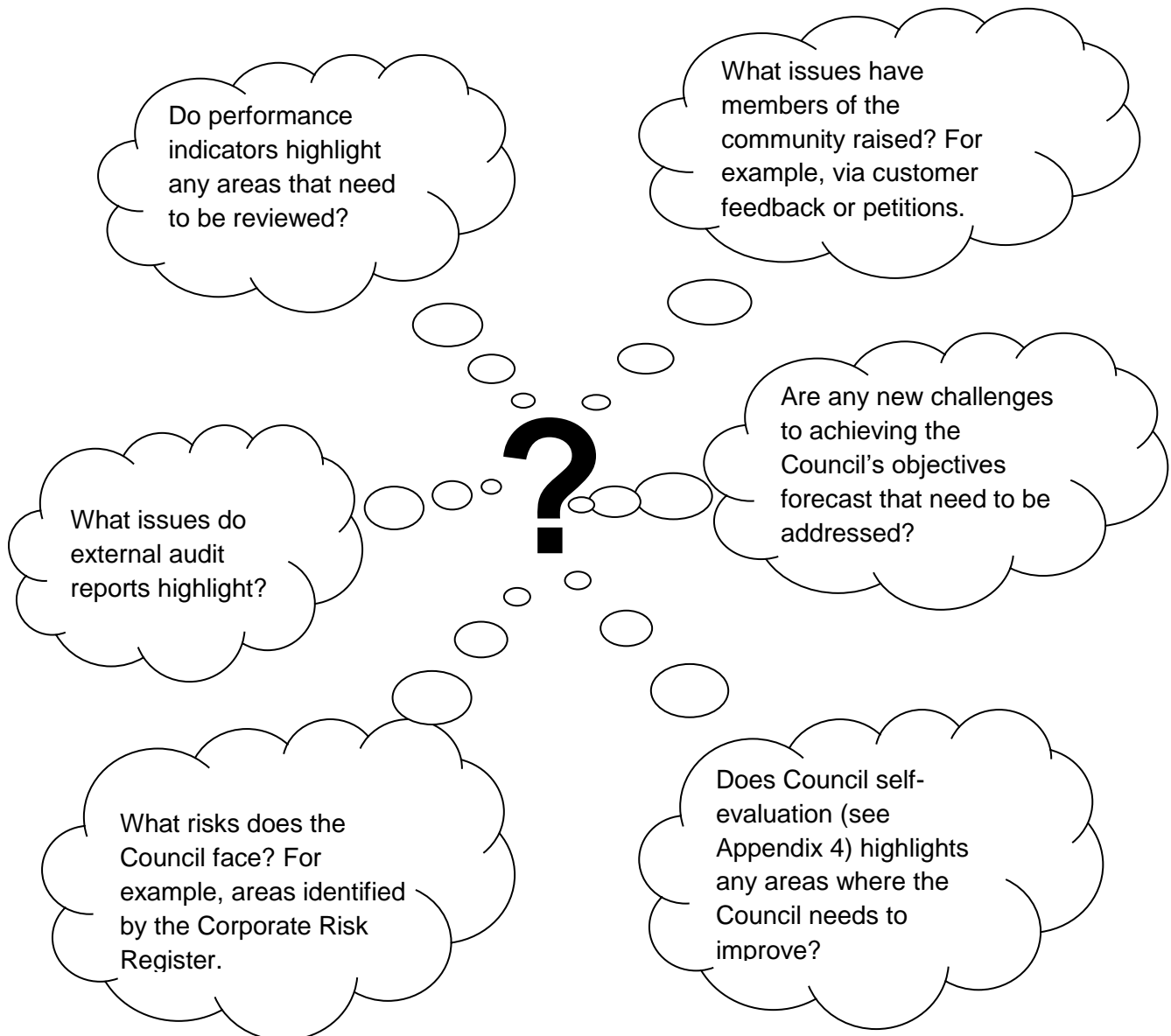
Regular items for scrutiny follow the annual planning and performance cycle with quarterly performance reports early in the second, third and fourth quarters and annual reports, if possible, at the end of the first quarter. Members will need to ensure that time is set aside in the work programme to allow for proper scrutiny of these regular items alongside other items.

Items that have met the topic selection criteria for policy review

Some items for inclusion in the work programme will have passed through the topic selection criteria outlined previously. Topics that are identified as possible items for scrutiny through the selection criteria should be placed on to a reserve list to be periodically reviewed for priority and workload capacity.

3. Selecting Topics for Scrutiny and Review

Selecting topics to include in the work plan is an ongoing process. Some topics will be regular items, for example performance reports, while others will deal with a particular issue of particular interest to members. The following questions might help Members to identify potential topics for inclusion on the work plan.



Members may request reports from officers on the subjects chosen for scrutiny using a range of criteria including requiring further information on areas of concern or follow up reports updating members on progress with improvement actions to address poor performance.

Using a structured approach to determine subjects for scrutiny reports or review helps to avoid poor topic selection. Each potential topic for scrutiny should be subject to the same initial selection and rejection criteria.

Selection criteria	Rejection criteria
Improvements to services would be likely	The topic is already being addressed
High public concern shown through consultation	Scrutiny is unlikely to result in service improvements
Poor performing service	Matter is sub-judice or prejudicial to the Council's interests
Enhances the Council's priorities	The issue is more appropriately addressed by a body other than the scrutiny committees
High budgetary commitment	The objective cannot be achieved within given timescales
New guidance or legislation has recently been introduced	The subject is too broad to make a review realistic

The following subjects are examples of topics that have been the subject of reports or reviews carried out East Lothian's and other local authority's scrutiny committees:

- The role of the Council in tourism
- Attainment in 5th and 6th years
- Early intervention
- Asset management arrangements
- Management of Council house voids
- Carbon management
- The implications of demographic changes
- Delayed discharges
- Child protection services

Members need to be realistic in regard to the number of reports the Committee can consider within its work programme or structured reviews that the Committee will be able to undertake in any given year.

4. Conducting a Policy Review

Policy Review is the process of evaluating the effectiveness of a particular area of Council policy or service provision. These reviews are likely to hear evidence from key stakeholders and commission research or reports to understand how well policy is being implemented or how well services are being delivered.

Policy Reviews are generally conducted within a set timescale, often two or three meetings. Conducting a review over the course of more than one meeting allows lines of enquiry to develop and additional information to be provided if required.

Advanced planning is essential to the success of any policy review. Officers will require time to prepare any evidence or reports and stakeholders will need prior notice if Members would like them to attend a meeting. Policy Review exercises need to be well planned and should be included as part of the work programme.

When planning a policy review exercise members might like to consider the following:

1. Identifying the objectives and key issues

What do we want to achieve and what are the main issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve the objective?

2. Establishing the timeframe of the review

The overall timeframe of the review will need to be established and added to the work programme.

3. Outlining the stakeholders and evidence required

What evidence is required to achieve the outcomes, and who needs to be called as a witness?

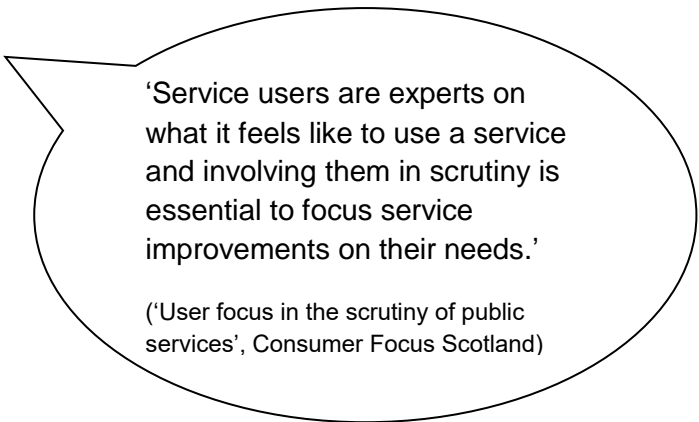
4. Considering the lines of enquiry

Once the objectives and the key issues have been decided, lines of enquiry should be determined to help focus the review and enable a consistent approach to a topic across meetings. Are you clear about the issue or problem and why it is the subject of the review and what are the terms of reference of the review?

Appendix 5 includes some specific key questions identified by Audit Scotland in the 'Overview of Local Government in Scotland, 2009'. The questions reflect areas of concern that are common across Local Government in Scotland. Members are encouraged to consider the relevance of these questions to any scrutiny work they undertake.

Scrutiny committees are encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders in policy reviews. Stakeholders can provide useful expertise and knowledge, while hearing directly about the experience of service users can provide a helpful reality check.

The needs of different stakeholders should be considered when planning their involvement in a review. Not all stakeholders will be comfortable, or able, to attend a meeting, therefore consideration should be given to whether their evidence can be provided by other means if necessary.



Which stakeholders might we involve?

Group	Examples
Service Users	East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) Parent's Councils
Community Groups	Area Partnerships Community Councils Local business associations
Partners	Police Fire & Rescue Service NHS Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL) Skills Development Scotland Edinburgh College
'Experts'	Academics Improvement Service SOLACE COSLA Professional associations

Before concluding a Policy Review the Committee should invite the relevant Head of Service, portfolio holder and/ or Council Leader to discuss the draft findings and recommendations.

5. Scrutiny Techniques

Members might find some of the following techniques and tips useful when conducting policy reviews or scrutinising performance information.

Questioning styles – good practice

Open questions

Open questions encourage respondents to talk and expand upon the issue. Open questions allow respondents to describe a situation in their own words. The key prefixes for an open question are 'What?', 'How?' and 'Why?' Examples include:

- What do you consider the service does well?
- How did you establish x as a priority for the service?

Open Questions can also be formed through phrases such as:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Explain to me how you...

Using open questions can form a basis for asking further probing questions based on the answer to the initial question. For example:

- You say that you did... can you give me an example of how you carried that out?
- I was interested to hear you say... can you tell me more about that?

Hypothetical questions

Asking hypothetical questions can help to test out ideas for recommendations and can also be useful in obtaining evidence. For example:

- If x were possible how would this change your strategy?

Behavioural questions

Behavioural questions can help to get evidence of how an organisation might carry out a task in future by using examples of past behaviour. For example:

- What process has the organisation used in the past to achieve the outcome?

Questioning styles – try to avoid

Closed questions

Closed questions are those that can be answered in a single word. While closed questions can be useful in clearing up points of fact, they are unlikely to yield much further information.

- Does your organisation do x?

Leading questions

Leading questions make it clear to the respondent what answer is expected and are unlikely to yield genuine answers. For example:

- We know from experience that x works, what is your experience of x?

Asking a question in this format makes it very difficult for the respondent to give an honest answer.

Double-headed questions

Double-headed questions ask more than one question at a time. Double-headed questions can either confuse the respondent, or ensure that the respondent answers only the part of the question that they are comfortable with. Both questions might be valid lines of enquiry, but it would be more productive to ask them separately:

- If your organisation has the responsibility to do x how is this measured, and how does x fit into the national strategy?

Multiple choice questions

Multiple choice questions offer a number of possible answers, but do not ask for any real explanation. For example:

- Do you believe that x, y, or z is the best way forward?

6. Making Sense of Performance Data

A key role of the Policy and Performance Review and the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committees is to monitor, comment on and make recommendations based on quarterly and annual reports of performance.

East Lothian Council's performance reports contain the following features (Police and Fire and Rescue services performance reports will be presented in different ways):

Trend arrows

Trend arrows show whether performance has improved, worsened, or stayed the same in comparison to the previous period (i.e. the previous quarter, month or year depending on how frequently the indicator is reported).

Key to symbols

no change	↔ Little or no change (less than 4% variation)
red down	↓ Worsening performance (Indicator aim: HIGH)
red up	↑ Worsening performance (Indicator aim: LOW)
green down	↓ Improving performance (Indicator aim: LOW)
green up	↑ Improving performance (Indicator aim: HIGH)

RAG (Red, Amber or Green) status

The RAG status is designed to show whether an indicator is exceeding its target for the period timeframe. RAG status can also be used by performance managers to flag measures that have suddenly improved or dropped performance. RAG settings can be set to variable to reduce false alerts for measures that have a greater range of change, but not necessary a change in performance trends. It is important to note that a measure can be outwith target in the quarter, but the Year to Date (YtD) figure can be within target.

Key to Icons

RAG status

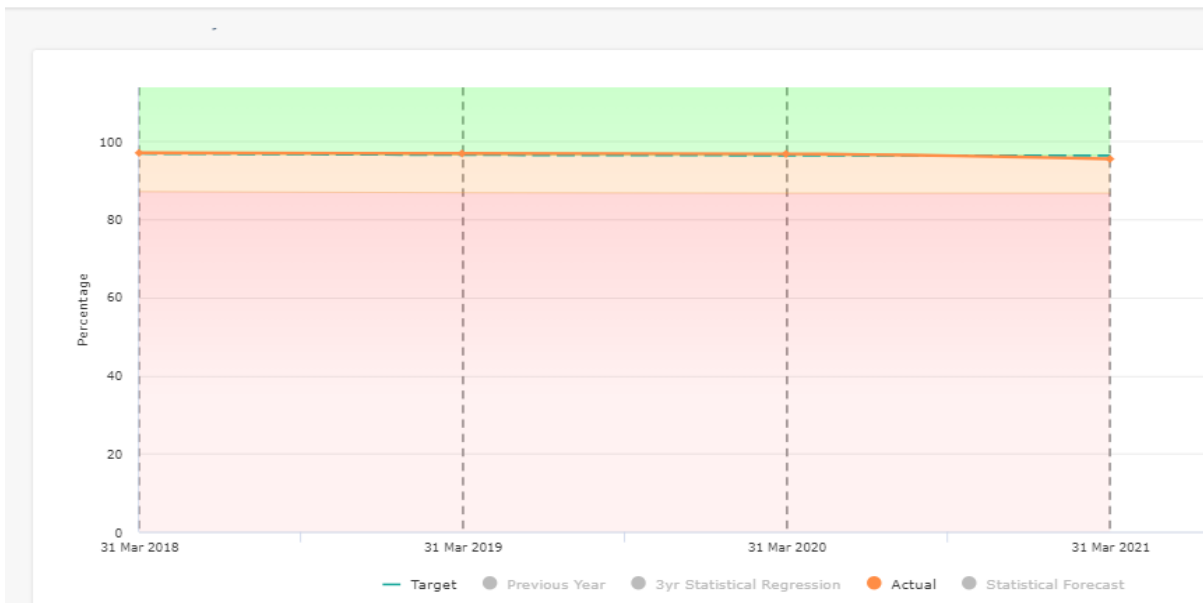
- ★ Performance within target
- Performance within tolerance levels
- ▲ Performance outwith target / tolerance levels
- ? Missing data
- ! No target
- ?! No data or target

Graphs

Graphs are used to show the long-term trend for an indicator. While the trend arrows show whether an indicator has improved or worsened since the last period, graphs can provide further context to help understand performance such as seasonal impacts. Graphs show whether any changes in performance are a short-term blip, or are the result of a long-term trend.

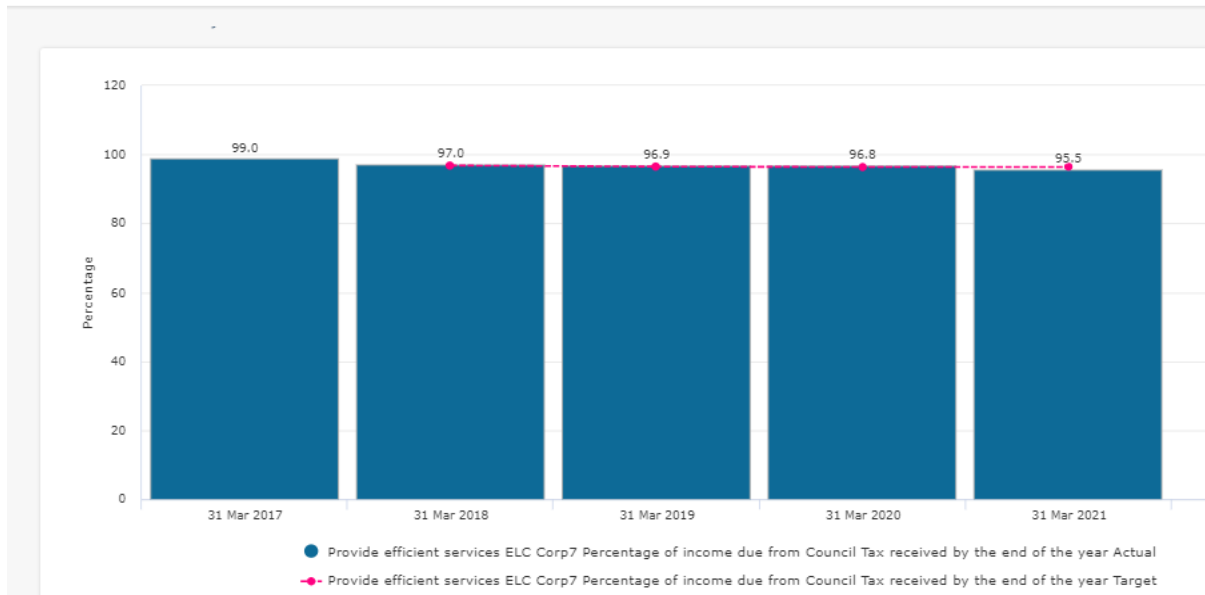
Line chart with RAG and Target

Measure: ELC Corp7 Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year
Objective: Provide efficient services



Bar chart with Target

Measure: ELC Corp7 Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year
Objective: Provide efficient services



Comments

Each indicator can include explanatory comments that are provided by the Service. The comments section should explain the reasons why the indicator has improved or worsened.

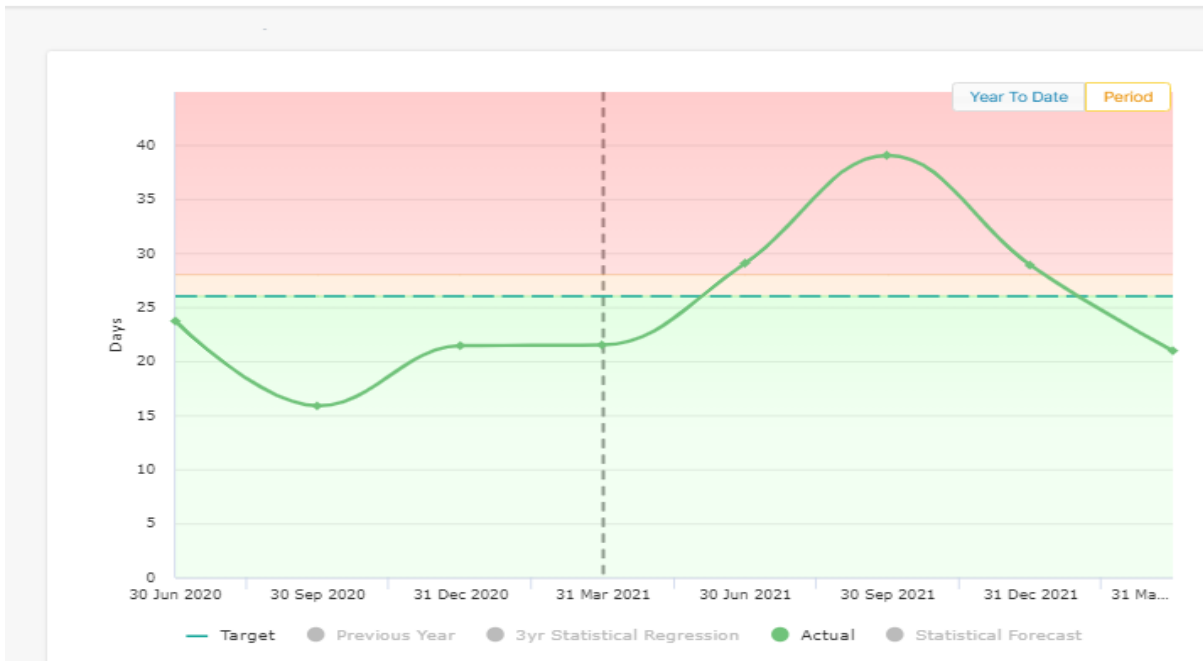
These comments can cover 4 areas:

- Change in performance and performance against target
- Policy & resource impacts on performance
- Progress towards Objectives / Outcomes
- Details of improvement activity

What to look for in a performance report

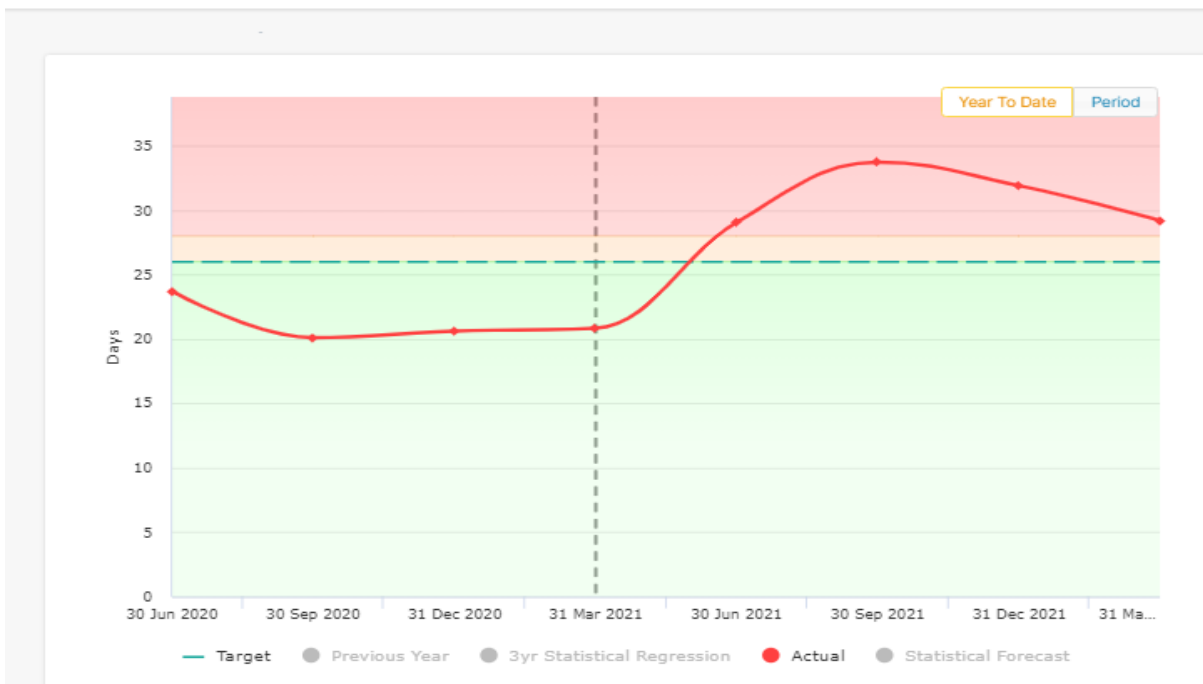
For the measure below (BEN01 - Benefits, Average time in days to process new Housing Benefits claims) we can see the profile for this measures is lower is better. The quarter performance has been consistent until June 2021 when quarter performance is outwith the threshold / target. RAG is in the red until the end of the financial year, where quarter performance improves and is now within target.

Measure: BEN01 Average time in days to process new claims in housing benefit
 Objective: Provide efficient services



For the same measure, the line chart below is showing Year to Date rather than period performance. Performance is still outwith target at the end of the financial year despite an improvement in the last period quarter performance. The trend is looking downwards (lower is better) towards the green RAG area.

Measure: BEN01 Average time in days to process new claims in housing benefit
 Objective: Provide efficient services



Questions to ask when considering performance data:

These are some questions you should think of asking when considering performance data:

- What information could I do without?
- Is the information easy to understand?
- Can I interpret what the key messages are?
- Would a different method or presenting help me interpret the information?
- Do I challenge officers to explain the information?
- Do I challenge officers to provide missing information?

Using performance indicators

Performance indicators should be used to identify areas for further investigation and review. There are many different type of indicators that can help to determine progress against objectives and performance improvement.

Process – Similar to the example measure used earlier, this type of indicator can help to measure the efficiency or productivity of a business process that might impact on customer satisfaction

Input / Output - Measures costs and resources needed to provide services and the output or results of operational activities

Outcome – measures the benefits of performance as an outcome of operational activity. Eg employee satisfaction measures. This type of measure is usually found in corporate plans and strategies with more detailed measures in action plans.

Individual performance indicators should be considered in conjunction with other related or different types of indicators and contextual information. Rarely will an individual indicator adequately describe performance on its own. Other sources of information that could be used in conjunction with an indicator might include other performance indicators, source data, previous committee reports and customer feedback. Most measures will have a mix of performance that may indicate the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of a service is being provided.

Appendix 1: Best Value Toolkit – Governance and Accountability

Audit Scotland has outlined what constitutes good practice in scrutiny as part of their Best Value Toolkit on Governance and Accountability. The Toolkit forms one part of a set of documents that clarify the criteria against which Councils will be judged as part of Best Value Audits.

BEST VALUE TOOLKIT: ASSESSMENT MATRIX – GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

	Basic practice	Better practice	Advanced practice
5. How well do challenge, scrutiny and review processes ensure a range of informed views are sought and actively considered to aid decision making and improvement?			
5.1 How effective, objective and transparent is the scrutiny and challenge of decisions and policies?	<p>There is sufficient opportunity for objective challenge and questioning of decisions by members before they are taken or confirmed, built into policy development and decision making processes. There is a process to challenge and rethink decisions in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Some member challenge to policy or decisions takes place. It incorporates a dispassionate exploration of issues, alongside any challenge to decisions on grounds of politics or principle.</p> <p>The nature and extent of the scrutiny and challenge that has taken place is transparent.</p>	<p>The organisation regularly reviews how effectively it scrutinises decisions, making continuing improvements to processes and support for members.</p> <p>Independent members actively challenge key decisions before they are taken or confirmed in an, objective and constructive manner. This scrutiny is treated seriously by decision makers, with time taken to explore the issues raised.</p> <p>Scrutiny processes are structured and well managed as part of a systematic approach. Challenge is focussed on significant issues and does not unduly delay decisions.</p>	<p>Effective, objective and transparent scrutiny and challenge of policy development and decision making is embedded in the organisation’s culture and ways of working.</p> <p>Members and senior officials that are responsible for decision making actively seek informed and constructive challenge, value and respond positively to this.</p> <p>Members and senior officials routinely challenge each other in an objective, effective and open manner – achieving an appropriate balance between challenge and timeliness of decision making.</p>

BEST VALUE TOOLKIT: ASSESSMENT MATRIX – GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

	Basic practice	Better practice	Advanced practice
<p>5.2 How effective, objective and transparent is scrutiny of the organisation’s performance and the effectiveness of its policies and procedures?</p>	<p>There is sufficient opportunity for members to review and objectively challenge the performance of the organisation and the implementation of policies and decisions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing monitoring of quality, performance, implementation and management processes • post implementation reviews of policies and improvements. <p>Time is set aside on agendas for this purpose and members are provided with appropriate and objective reports.</p> <p>Some challenge takes place, including questioning of responsible senior officials about important aspects of performance and management effectiveness.</p> <p>The nature and extent of the scrutiny and challenge that has taken place is transparent.</p>	<p>The organisation regularly reviews how effectively it scrutinises performance, making continuing improvements to processes and support for members.</p> <p>Scrutiny is led by independent members who take a constructive and objective approach. Senior officials are held to account in a meaningful way, and are open and helpful in their response to questioning.</p> <p>Challenge is based on objective sources of evidence and effort is targeted at significant issues related to the priorities and the overall objectives of the organisation.</p> <p>Scrutiny leads to the identification of areas for improvement. Members responsible for scrutiny follow-through to make sure appropriate action is being taken and whether it has been effective. They report their activity and significant exceptions to all members.</p>	<p>Effective, objective and transparent scrutiny of performance is embedded in the organisation’s culture and ways of working.</p> <p>Members and committees that lead and undertake performance scrutiny functions are well supported and respected. They have a clear understanding of the issues and aspects of performance that are important to the success of the organisation, and robustly challenge and hold to account in these areas.</p>

BEST VALUE TOOLKIT: ASSESSMENT MATRIX – GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

	Basic practice	Better practice	Advanced practice
5.3 How effective is the Audit committee?	<p>An audit committee has been established and meets regularly. Its remit and operation meets the minimum applicable standards for the organisation. It has the right to report to and be heard by all members.</p> <p>An appropriate focus is given to the risk management, internal control and financial management & reporting.</p> <p>Internal and external auditors attend meetings and submit reports summarising their plans and the results of their work.</p>	<p>The audit committee regularly reviews its own performance against best practice and takes action to continuously improve its effectiveness. It reports annually to all members and can demonstrate good performance.</p> <p>The committee specialises in scrutiny of risk management, including the effectiveness of financial management and reporting. Wider scrutiny of performance is dealt with elsewhere.</p> <p>At least one member of the committee has recent financial experience.</p>	<p>The audit committee's role is well understood and valued across the organisation. It is seen as apolitical and authoritative.</p> <p>Members of the committee are well informed, and skilled in effective challenge and open discussion. They are able to confirm to other members that the right processes are in place to give confidence that financial stewardship and overall governance arrangements can be relied upon.</p>
5.4 How well does the Internal audit function provide assurance to management on the integrity of the organisation's corporate governance framework and identify areas for improvement?	<p>The organisation has established an internal audit function with sufficient status and resources to review and report on key aspects of the system of internal control.</p> <p>The Internal Audit function complies with relevant minimum standards and the head of internal audit has unfettered rights of access to members and senior officials.</p>	<p>The Internal Audit function maintains a recognised quality accreditation, actively reviews its own effectiveness, and continuously improves.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit respected and authoritative, and is consulted on governance and internal control arrangements for new and existing business initiatives during the development phase.</p>	<p>The internal audit function can demonstrate the highest standards of performance. The value and impact of its work is recognised by all members and senior officials.</p>

BEST VALUE TOOLKIT: ASSESSMENT MATRIX – GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

	Basic practice	Better practice	Advanced practice
5.5 How effective is the organisation's annual review of its overall corporate governance arrangements?	<p>The organisation completes an annual review of its corporate governance arrangements that meets the relevant minimum standard. It publishes details of this review in line with requirements placed on it.</p> <p>The review is informed by the work of internal audit, the audit committee and reports from external auditors and the conclusions are consistent with this.</p> <p>The review is effective in identifying significant concerns and action is taken to address these.</p>	<p>An annual governance statement is published, summarising the extent of and conclusions from a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.</p> <p>It is underpinned by a robust approach to review and is signed by the most senior member and most senior official on behalf of the organisation.</p> <p>No significant control weakness exist. The review process is itself reviewed regularly.</p>	<p>The overall review of governance is underpinned by ongoing review of control frameworks operated across the organisation and any subsidiaries.</p> <p>Senior officials are committed to an effective review of internal control in their own areas of responsibility. They show an understanding of the nature and value of the control framework and act promptly to address any areas of concern.</p>
5.6 How well does the organisation respond to external review and scrutiny?	<p>Relevant staff engage constructively and professionally with external auditors and other scrutiny bodies, making genuine attempts to answer questions and provide evidence that is requested.</p> <p>Reports by external auditors and other scrutiny bodies are considered by relevant members and senior officials, and action is taken to address any significant issues that are raised.</p> <p>Where external scrutiny identifies any significant areas of concern or weakness, members and senior officials engage with the relevant scrutiny body to better understand how to address the issues raised.</p>	<p>The organisation engages meaningfully with external audit and other relevant scrutiny bodies about their plans, providing views on where external reviews would add most value alongside internal review and improvement activity.</p> <p>The views and support of external auditors and inspectors are sought in relevant circumstances, and members and senior officials display a real understanding of their role and remit.</p> <p>The organisation systematically considers the wider implications of significant issues raised in external reports (for example whether similar concerns exist in other areas of the organisation).</p>	<p>The organisation systematically reviews the findings and conclusions of reports about other organisations and any national or cross-cutting reports, to considering potential implications for it and opportunities to apply best practice.</p> <p>Members and senior officials value the independent challenge and assurance provided by proportionate and risk based scrutiny activity. They respond to this in a manner that strengthens the organisation's own review and improvement activity.</p>

Appendix 2: What do the scrutiny committees do?

Audit and Governance Committee

Audit responsibilities

1. Risk and Internal Controls

- (a) Promote Council policy on risk management by reviewing the delivery of the Risk Management Strategy, reviewing the business and strategic risk assessment arrangements and procedures and the Corporate risk Register;
- (b) Promote, review and monitor internal controls, financial and otherwise, within the Council in order to provide reasonable assurance of the effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with relevant statutes, directions, guidelines and policies;
- (c) Develop an anti-fraud culture within the Council to ensure the highest standards of probity and public accountability;
- (d) Approve the annual Internal Audit assurance report and the statement of internal controls for inclusion in the annual accounts.

2. Review of Audit Functions

- (a) Determine the scope of the annual audit plan and ensure it is directed in accordance with the approved business risk assessment;
- (b) Examine and review the External Audit Planning Memorandum and review the overall performance with regard to quality, productivity and the fees charged;
- (c) Review the activities of the Internal Audit function and monitor overall performance in terms of quality, productivity and effectiveness;
- (d) Ensure that the Internal Audit function is sufficiently resourced to provide a systematic review of internal controls and a full assessment of significant investigations;
- (e) Examine Internal and External Audit reports, and ensure weaknesses identified are adequately addressed by management and recommendations are actioned;
- (f) Ensure that there are effective relationships between Internal and External Audit and inspection agencies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.

3. Financial Matters

- (a) Review the Council's financial performance as contained in the annual statement of accounts;
- (b) Review the audit certificate/wording of any matters reported;
- (c) Review the annual report to Members from the External Auditor;
- (d) Review the implementation of audit recommendations;
- (e) Ensure that issues raised in previous financial years have been addressed.
- (f) Review and monitor treasury management arrangements

Governance responsibilities

4. All matters relating to the performance of the Departments and Council as a whole, including, but not limited to:

Community

- Strategic vision and direction setting by Members
- Integration of strategic vision, direction and Community Planning priorities and actions into internal planning mechanisms
- Public performance reporting and public accountability
- Transparency of decision-making processes
- Consultation and communication with communities

Service Delivery Arrangements

- Corporate planning approach and performance against corporate actions and targets, including financial position and performance and asset management
- Performance management system and corporate performance information monitoring
- External scrutiny/assessment recommendations and resulting action planning
- Management of joint working
- Best Value reviews and option appraisal
- Contracting issues

Structures and Processes

- Monitoring of decision-making structures and mechanisms
- Monitoring of policy development and implementation
- Clarity of key roles and responsibilities

Governance

- Corporate Governance
- Annual Governance Statement

Policy and Performance Review Committee

Remit and Powers

All matters relating to the performance of all the Council's services including, but not limited to:

- Vision and direction setting by members
- Integration of vision, direction and Community Planning priorities and actions into internal planning mechanisms (including Service Plans)
- Mechanisms and Initiatives for Improvement (e.g. Benchmarking)
- Public Performance Reporting and public accountability
- Consultation and communication with communities
- Planning and performance against actions and targets including financial position and performance, priority/risk based resource management and asset management
- Mainstreaming of equality issues and sustainable development
- External scrutiny/assessment recommendations and resulting action planning
- Management of joint working
- Best Value reviews and option appraisal
- Contracting issues
- Scrutiny of policies identified through an annual work plan or other aspect of its work

Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

Remit and Powers

The following business and functions are delegated by the Council to the Community Safety Committee:

- To carry out scrutiny of the performance of the Police and Fire & Rescue services in East Lothian with specific reference to each organisations' Local Plan.
- To receive and comment on local quarterly performance reports from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
- To engage in the development of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Local Plans.
- To consider and respond to national level strategy and policy discussions of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
- To scrutinise and monitor the Service Level Agreement between the Council and Police Scotland
- To receive and comment on reports on the performance of any other services performing a community safety function in East Lothian.

Appendix 3: Roles and responsibilities

Conveners of Scrutiny Committees

- Chairing the Committee, co-ordinating its activities and taking a lead role in its work
- Providing leadership in relation to monitoring the Council's strategies, performance and service delivery and contribute to the effective governance of the Council
- Giving direction to senior officers of the Council in respect of matters within the remit and powers of the Committee
- Contributing effectively to the Council's scrutiny, policy and performance review processes by ensuring the questioning of relevant officers on the strategies, policies and performance of the Council and its service
- Encouraging and supporting participation and debate by all other committee members and ensuring that they contribute effectively to the work of the Committee
- Ensuring adequate scrutiny of reports from the Council's auditors and Audit Scotland on Council performance
- Identifying cross-cutting issues and ensuring a corporate approach to scrutiny in these areas
- Ensuring that effective working relationships with all councillors, officers and relevant partner organisations are developed and maintained
- Leading on the selection of witnesses to policy and performance reviews and determining whether evidence is to be given orally or in writing
- Leading on determining a timetable for the Committee's work

Members of the Committees

- Selecting topics for scrutiny and policy review
- Participating constructively in the activities of the Committee
- Determining which stakeholders they would like to attend the meetings
- Examining the basis on which major decisions are taken and ensure that they are consistent with Council policy
- Monitoring the effect of national legislation on the Council
- Holding councillors and officers to account in respect of their implementation of Council policy
- Investigating the quality and performance of services provided by the Council
- Engaging with members of the public and key stakeholders to inform areas of scrutiny work
- Making recommendations for improvement to Council / Cabinet

Committees Section

- Preparing and arranging meeting rooms and facilitate meetings
- Determining dates and deadlines for meetings

- Producing minutes and notes of meetings and meeting agendas

Service Manager/ Performance Officer

- Preparing performance reports
- Providing reports and advice on corporate planning
- Reporting upon the Council Improvement Plan

Services

- Providing reports as requested by the Committees
- Attending Committees to assist with their enquiries when requested
- Accounting for relevant performance indicators

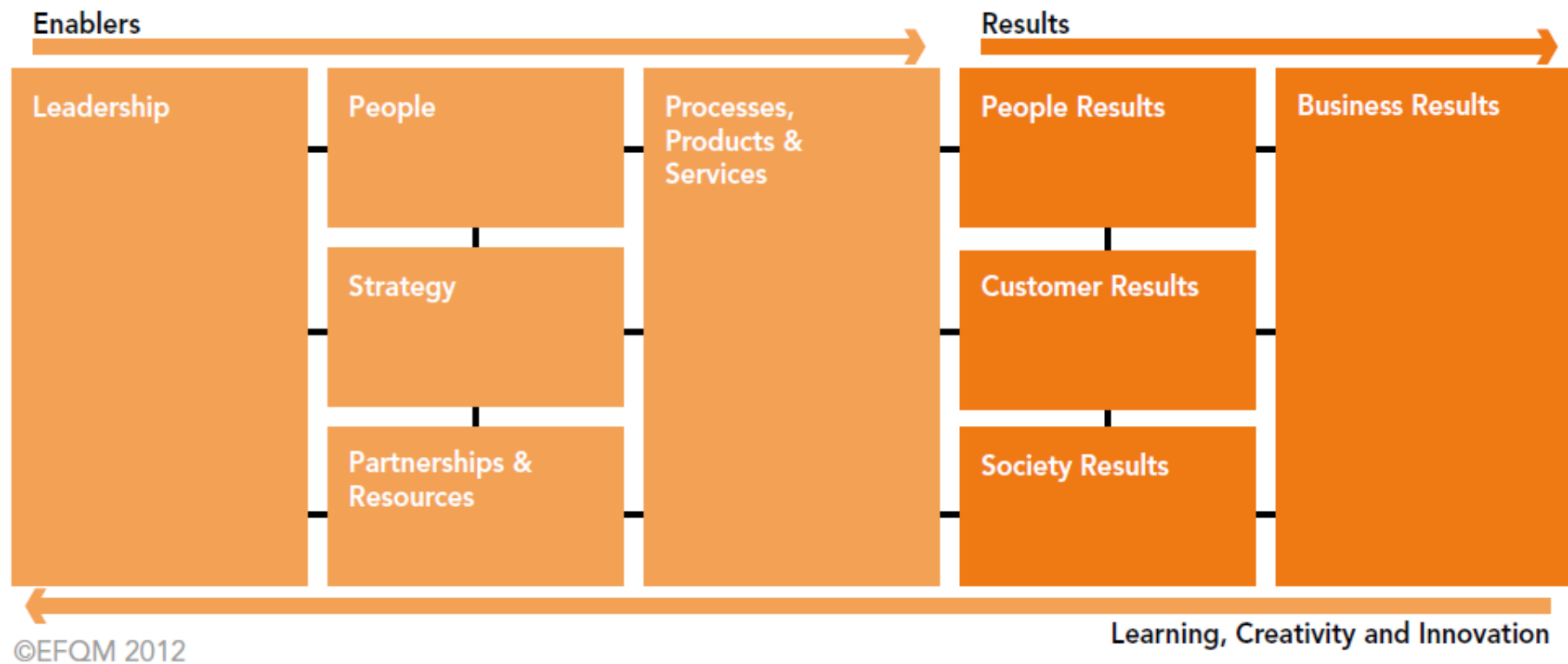
Stakeholders

- Members of the public, including service users, and representatives of partner organisations can be invited to attend the scrutiny committees to assist members in their work by giving evidence and taking part in the discussion and consideration of topics

Appendix 4: Self-Evaluation

The Council's self-evaluation process which helps the council and services assess how we are doing and what we need to improve is based on the principles of the **European Foundation For Quality Management (EFQM)**. This framework enables us to understand the cause and effect relationships between what we do ('enablers') and the results we achieve.

The EFQM model comprises five 'Enabler' criteria and four 'Results' criteria:



Appendix 5: Key Questions for Elected Members²

Longer-term planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are we planning for beyond the current year taking into account financial projections and other intelligence? • How robust are plans to achieve the savings required to meet our priorities? • To what extent do we have a clear plan for achieving the most appropriate size of workforce and skills needed to deliver our goals? • To what extent do we have a clear plan for ensuring that expenditure and investment in our asset base achieves value for money and most appropriately supports the delivery of our goals
Decision-making and prioritisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clear are we about the priorities of local people? • How good is our information on performance and the costs of providing different levels and quality of services to assist us in setting priorities and taking decisions? • What action are we taking to prioritise spending? • How aware are we of the relative risks and rewards associated with our decisions, and how well placed are we to manage identified risks?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are we considering the impact of the recession on our service outcomes and our commitments in our Single Outcome Agreement? • How are we comparing our service outcomes with others, for example by benchmarking? • What evidence do we have that our service outcomes represent best value?
Keeping informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well are we kept informed of the impact of the recession on our finances and service performance? • How effectively are we monitoring and planning for changes in demand for services? • Are our training and development needs fully addressed?
Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well are we working with our partners and/or neighbours to deal with pressures caused by the recession? • Are we exploring all possible options for the delivery of local services? • What quantifiable efficiencies or improvements are resulting from working with others?

² An Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2009; Accounts Commission, 2009

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 9 June 2022

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: Legacy Report

4

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Policy and Performance Committee with a report on Committee 'legacy' matters and the Standards of Performance Direction issued by the Accounts Commission.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Comment on, request further information or reports on Committee legacy matters and otherwise note the report on legacy matters
- 2.2 Note that the key performance indicators reported to Committee are being revised and will be presented for approval to Committee in the autumn.
- 2.3 Note that the performance management framework, Improvement to Excellence is being revised and will be presented to the Committee in the autumn.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Policy and Performance Review Committee (PPRC) considers two types of reports:
- regular reports on performance including Performance Indicators quarterly reports and an annual report on the Council's key performance indicators, an annual report on the Improvement Service's Local Government Benchmarking Framework (which includes over 80 indicators), and annual updates on the Council Plan Top 50 indicators

- reports requested by members of the committee seeking further information on issues of interest that have arisen out of the performance reports or are otherwise of particular interest to one or more elected member.
- 3.2 Over and above the performance reports over the last five years the Committee has received reports on a wide range of subjects, including:
- Customer Feedback Reporting
 - Customer Contact Centre
 - Coastal Car Parking Scheme
 - Library Service Performance
 - Roads Asset Management – Annual Status and Options Report
 - Non-Residential Social Care Charging and Charging Appeals
 - Progress with the Business Recovery Investment Fund
 - Review of Performance of the Planning Service
 - Records Management Plan Progress
 - Public Protection Annual Report
- 3.3 In scrutinising the quarterly performance reports members have asked for explanations and further information on a wide range of indicators including:
- Universal Credit
 - Street lighting fault repairs
 - Ward breakdown of Council Tax collection data and information around legislative changes that have impacted on collection rates
 - Community Payback Orders
 - Comparator figures regarding pupil attendance.
- 3.4 The Committee has an annual work programme, which is updated following each Committee meeting. The work programme lists the regular performance reports to be received by Committee and any other reports that have been requested by members.
- 3.5 The latest Direction on Standards of Performance issued by the Accounts Commission in December 2021 (Appendix 1) details two Statutory Performance Indicators each council should report on.

Statutory Performance Indicator 1 (SPI1): Improving local services and local outcomes

- *Its performance in improving local public services, both provided by itself and in conjunction with its partners and communities.*
- *Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.*

The Commission expects the council to report such information to allow comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies (thus drawing upon information published by the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and from other benchmarking activities).

Statutory Performance Indicator 2 (SPI2): Demonstrating Best Value

- *Its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, including self-assessments and service review activity, and how it has responded to this assessment.*
- *Audit assessments (including those in the annual audit) of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.*
- *Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.*

3.6 The council meets the requirements of SPI1 through the reporting of quarterly and annual key performance indicators, the annual Local Government Benchmarking Framework, and the Top 50 Council Plan Indicators. The key performance indicators and the Top 50 Council Plan indicators are due to be reviewed, refreshed and revised following adoption of the new Council Plan. The revised indicators will be presented for approval to Committee in the autumn.

3.7 The council meets the requirements of SPI2 mainly through undertaking council and service based self-assessments and reports to the Audit & Governance Committee, including the Corporate Governance Self-Evaluation, monitoring reports on the Council Improvement Plan, which incorporates corporate improvement actions arising from the self-evaluation, audit assessments and assessments carried out by scrutiny and inspection bodies.

3.8 The council's overall approach to performance management and meetings its legal requirement to provide, and show how it is providing, Best Value is set out in the Improvement to Excellence, the council's Performance Management Framework, which was last updated in March 2019. The framework is being updated, and the revised framework, which will take account of the 2021 Standards of Performance Direction will be presented to the Committee later this year.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reporting performance helps the Council demonstrate that it is achieving Best Value in regard to 'Commitment and Leadership', 'Sound Governance at a strategic, financial and operational level' and 'Accountability'.

4.2 The scrutiny of performance by Elected Members is part of 'Commitment and Leadership'. The Best Value Guidance explains that the scrutiny of performance means 'That members are involved in setting the strategic direction for Best Value and there is a mechanism for internal scrutiny by members of performance and service outcomes.' Reporting the performance indicators for each service every quarter is intended to aid this process.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – none.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1: Local Government Act 1992: The Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2021 Statutory Performance Indicators; Accounts Commission, December 2021

AUTHOR'S NAME	Paolo Vestri / Gary Stewart
DESIGNATION	Service Manager Policy, Improvement & Partnerships / Policy Officer (Performance)
CONTACT INFO	pvestr@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	25 th May 2022

Appendix 1: Local Government Act 1992: The Publication of Information (Standards of Performance) Direction 2021 Statutory Performance Indicators; Accounts Commission, December 2021

FOREWORD

Our Strategy 2021-26 recognises that the next five years will, amongst other priorities, see Scotland build on its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and work towards addressing the climate emergency. We want our work to amplify these important areas in our role of reporting on the performance of local government and supporting it to improve.

Accordingly, we have revised our Statutory Performance Information Direction which sets out our requirements on councils to report their performance to their citizens and communities.

The Accounts Commission has a statutory power to define the performance information that councils must publish for performance comparison and benchmarking purposes. While this power pre-dates our responsibilities in relation to Best Value, we use the Direction to complement and add value to our powers of auditing Best Value, particularly in relation to public performance reporting.

Rather than prescribing in detail the information that councils should publish, we use this power to encourage councils themselves to improve such reporting in a way that reflects their local context. In recognising the benefits of councils reporting benchmarking information to the public, we also continue our interest in the further development of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) project.

In publishing this 2021 Direction, we have reviewed councils' response to the previous Direction which we published in 2018. In summary, we found that councils have responded well to the Direction (albeit with variation between councils), thereby presenting a strong case for maintaining the Commission's strategy of encouraging council-led improvement. This Direction has a similar overall shape to its predecessor, but includes the following revisions:

- Underlining the importance of service reviews and self-assessments of performance.
- Reflecting the Commission's ambitions with coordinated scrutiny of local government, including reference to the assessments of other scrutiny and inspection bodies.
- Underlining the importance of empowering communities and ensuring accessibility to the performance information reported publicly.
- Reflecting the Commission's ambitions with the integrated audit, including reference to the annual audit's role in assessing performance against the Best Value duty.

While we do not use the revised Direction to require reporting in specific areas, we expect that issues such as recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate emergency will feature in the local outcomes agreed between councils, their partners and their communities.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission applies this Direction only to councils, and not to joint committees, joint boards or health and social care integration joint boards.

The Commission hopes our new approach will be welcomed and responded to positively by councils and their partners.

Tim McKay
Interim Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland
December 2021

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1992
THE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION
(STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE) DIRECTION 2021**

1. This Direction is given by the Accounts Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”) under section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992, which requires the Commission to direct relevant bodies to publish such information relating to their activities in any financial year or other specified period as will, in the Commission’s opinion:

“facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons (by reference to the criteria of cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and of securing best value in accordance with section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) between –

- i. the standards of performance achieved by different relevant bodies in that financial year or other period; and
- ii. the standards of performance achieved by such bodies in different financial years or, as the case may be, other periods”

Such information is also to facilitate the drawing of conclusions about the discharge of those bodies’ functions under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (in essence, carrying out community planning for the “improvement in the achievement of outcomes”).

2. This Direction is given to all local authorities, as defined by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and amended by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.

3. Each of the bodies referred to in paragraph 2 shall, in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and associated regulations and guidance from Scottish Ministers, publish the information specified in the schedule to this Direction for all those activities which are carried out by the body.

4. The periods for which the information in the schedule must be published are the financial years ending 31st March 2023, 2024 and 2025.

5. In the schedule, the term ' Best Value' shall be interpreted in accordance with the definition and requirements of Part 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This includes reference to the Best Value: revised statutory guidance 2020 and the Best Value themes of:

1. Vision and leadership
2. Governance and accountability
3. Effective use of resources
4. Partnerships and collaborative working
5. Working with communities
6. Sustainability
7. Fairness and equality

Schedule

Each council will report a range of information covered by the following two indicators (including in combination if desired):

Statutory Performance Indicator 1: Improving local services and local outcomes

- Its performance in improving local public services, both provided by itself and in conjunction with its partners and communities.
- Progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.

The Commission expects the council to report such information to allow comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies (thus drawing upon information published by the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and from other benchmarking activities).

The Commission expects the council to, in agreeing its outcomes with its partners and communities, report on how it has engaged with, responded to and helped to empower its communities, including those who require greater support.

Statutory Performance Indicator 2: Demonstrating Best Value

- Its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, including self-assessments and service review activity, and how it has responded to this assessment.
- Audit assessments (including those in the annual audit) of its performance against its Best Value duty, and how it has responded to these assessments.
- Assessments from other scrutiny and inspection bodies, and how it has responded to these assessments.

In satisfying the requirements set out in this schedule, the Commission expects the council to take cognisance of current statutory guidance on Best Value requirements, and in particular to ensure:

- Balance in reporting areas of improvement that have been achieved and not achieved.
- This is undertaken in a timely manner.
- Easy access to its performance information for all of its citizens and communities, with such information presented in an accessible style.

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 9 June 2022

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: 2021/22 Q4 Performance Indicators

5

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide elected members with information regarding the performance of Council services during Q4 2021/22 (Jan – Mar 2022).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to note the report and otherwise use the information provided in this report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance is in need of further analysis.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council has an established set of Key Performance Indicators to help monitor progress towards the outcomes contained in the Council Plan and East Lothian Plan. The indicators are updated on a quarterly basis and the results are reported to the Policy & Performance Review Committee. Appendix 1 provides the results of the Key Performance Indicators for Q4 2021/22.

3.2 The following are some of the Q4 performance measures from Appendix 1 that may be of particular interest to members:

- **Homelessness** (CH01, CH02) – The number of homelessness cases increased from 141 in Q3 to 175 in Q4, but only marginally up from 169 in the same quarter in the previous year. The average number of days to re-housing has decreased from 505 days to 466. The figure is outwith target due to the focus on accommodating longstanding cases from temporary to permanent accommodation. % of homelessness assessments completed in under 28 days improved during the quarter from 80% to 92% (target 80%).

- Three of the five **Planning indicators** (DM11, DM13 and DM18) have shown an improvement on the previous year's performance; whilst two (DM12 and DM14) have shown a reduction in performance.
- **Waste Recycling / Fly-tipping** (T&WS11 & SCL_AS03) – the number of vehicles accessing centres reduced during the quarter from 134,047 to 127,308 although this is still above the target of 125,000. The number of fly-tipping incidents has increased sharply in Q4 from 83 to 182. Previous reporting of fly-tipping incidents has been much lower than average over the last couple of years. This delay in reporting is now showing in performance figures.
- **Out of Work Allowance (JSA / Universal Credit)** (EDSI_ELW02) - The claimant count for East Lothian has continued to fall from 3.2% in the previous quarter to 2.8% (1875 claimants). This is against a Scottish average of 3.7%. The April rate has fallen further to 2.6%. The claimant count for age 18 to 21 is 3.9%.
- **Sport & Pool Attendance** (SCL_SD01 & SCL_SD02) – There has been an increase in the number of sport centre attendances from 103,290 to 131,287 in Q4 and now within the quarter target of 130,000. Visits to pools also increased from 71,250 to 106,731, just below the target of 110,000. Both measures remain below pre-pandemic levels of attendance but are on an upward trend.
- **Housing Benefit Process Times** (BEN01 & BEN02) – There has been a significant improvement in time taken to process new claims for housing benefit in this quarter from 28.8 days to 20.9 days and within the quarter target of 26. The recently recruited additional staff are currently working mainly on Scottish Welfare Fund claims and Self-isolation Support Grant Claims. The time taken to process changes in circumstances has improved over Q4 to 2.56 days.
- **Council Tax & Business Rates Collection** (REV06 & REV07) - Both Council Tax and Business Rates have exceeded collection rate targets set for 2021/22. Business Rates collection (99.1%) has also exceeded pre-Covid collection position. Significant efforts have been made by the team to ensure that all local business owners received any financial advice or support needed, including identifying any entitlement to reliefs to help maximise Business Rates income. Council Tax collection (97.7%) almost matched the pre-Covid collection levels. 2021/22 has proved to be another challenging year with 969 new properties being added to our Council Tax property base in-year.
- **Rent Arrears** (REV08) - Rent collection performance has been excellent in 2021/22 and can report a significant reduction in rent arrears in-year at just over £1M when compared to the previous quarter (£1.26M) and annual figures (£1.3M). Over the last 5 years, rent arrears have gradually reduced from a high £1.74M in 2017. Many tenants have continued to face challenges and financial pressures over the last couple of years and significant efforts have been made by Rent Income staff to ensure rent payments can be sustained, whether that be through tailored one-to-one support via flexible repayment options and managing debt effectively and sensitively, or via the financial support schemes designed to help tenants in financial difficulty, for example Discretionary Housing Payments and the Tenant Grant Fund.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reporting performance helps the Council demonstrate that it is achieving Best Value in regard to 'Commitment and Leadership', 'Sound Governance at a strategic, financial and operational level' and 'Accountability'.

4.2 The scrutiny of performance by Elected Members is part of 'Commitment and Leadership'. The Best Value Guidance explains that the scrutiny of performance means 'That members are involved in setting the strategic direction for Best Value and there is a mechanism for internal scrutiny by members of performance and service outcomes.' Reporting the performance indicators for each service every quarter is intended to aid this process.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – none.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Appendix 1: 2021/22 Q4 Performance Indicators Report

AUTHOR'S NAME	Paolo Vestri / Gary Stewart
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DATE	27/5/2022







Appendix 1 - Council Plan Quarter Performance Report - Quarter 4

Dates

31/03/2022







Key to Icons

RAG status

-  Performance within target
-  Performance within tolerance levels
-  Performance outwith target / tolerance levels
-  Missing data
-  No target
-  No data or target

Growing Our Communities

No slicers

Measure	Objective	Previous Year	Previous Qrt	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
CH01 Number of homelessness cases	Increase community and individual resilience	169	141	175	200			This figure is in line with previous quarters (notwithstanding fluctuations during the pandemic) and a slight increase on the previous quarter which was notably low. It is considered likely that a slow steady increase in presentations will be maintained going forward, and this will be closely monitored.
CH02 Average number of days to re-housing from temporary (homeless) to permanent accommodation	Increase community and individual resilience	321	505	466	300			This figure is a decrease from the previous quarter, which was notably high, and in line with figures for previous quarters.
CH03 % homelessness assessments completed in under 28 days	Increase community and individual resilience	90.0	80.0	92.0	80.0			A new framework was put in place February 2021 to ensure more efficient and effective working practices and with new staff fully trained in systems and processes, it is anticipated this figure will continue to be well in excess of 80% going forward.

Measure	Objective	Previous Year	Previous Qrt	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
EH01 % Food Hygiene high risk Inspections achieved	Increase community and individual resilience		100.0	0.0		!	↘	No inspections scheduled in Q4
EH02 % of Food Standards high risk Inspections achieved	Increase community and individual resilience	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	★	↘	No inspections scheduled in Q4
EH04 % food businesses broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Increase community and individual resilience		99.0	99.0		!	→	
HSCP_CJ01 Percentage of Community Payback Orders successfully completed	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	78.8	78.0	81.8		!	✓	18 successful out of 22 ended
HSCP_CJ01b Number of Community Payback Orders	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	29	36	33				
RS01 Street lighting - repairs - average time in days	Better public transport and active travel		4.29	3.37	7	★	✓	
RS02 Traffic lights - average time to repair failure (hours:mins)	Better public transport and active travel	9.59	28.08	25.25	48	★	✓	
SCL_AS01 Percentage of Other Waste Recycled	Increase waste recycling	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	★	→	
SCL_AS02 Percentage of Green Waste & Beach Waste Recycled	Increase waste recycling	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	★	→	
SCL_AS03 Number of Flytipping incidences	Increase waste recycling	120	83	182	88	▲	↘	
T&WS11 Number of vehicles accessing recycling centres	Increase waste recycling	136196	134047	127308	125000	★	↘	

Growing Our Economy

Measure	Objective	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
DM11 Major developments: average number of weeks to decision	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	10.9	16.1	5.7		■	↓✓	
DM12 Local developments: average time in weeks	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	9.2	8.4	9.0		■	↓✗	
DM13 All Local developments: % determined within 2 months	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	82.8	78.2	81.0		■	↓✓	
DM14 Householder developments: average time (weeks)	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	7.5	7.5	8.4		■	↓✗	
DM18 Approval Rates: Percentage of all applications granted in period	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	96.3	99.4	99.6		■	↓✓	
EDSI_B01 Number of Business Gateway-Start ups	Support the growth of East Lothians economy			76		!		Actual is the total figure for 2021/22
EDSI_B02 Percentage of Business Gateway-Start ups that are trading after 12 months	Support the growth of East Lothians economy			80.0		!		Actual is the total figure for 2021/22
EDSI_B11 Number of jobs created by start ups assisted by Business Gateway	Reduce unemployment			104		!		Actual is the total figure for 2021/22
EDSI_ELW02 Percentage of the population claiming Out of Work Allowance (JSA / Universal Credit)	Reduce unemployment	5.4%	3.2%	2.8%	3.7%	★	↓✓	<p>Figures at the end of March indicate there were 1875 claimants, with a Scottish average of 3.7%</p> <p>By April the rate has fallen further to 2.6% for East Lothian. For 18 to 21 age group - latest figures show 160 claimants at a rate of 3.9%</p>

Measure	Objective	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
LPS01 % spend with contracted suppliers	Support the growth of East Lothians economy	78.4	86.0	83.4	80.0	★	↘	

Growing Our People

Measure	Objective	Previous Yrs	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
HSCP_CS01 Average number of Placements for looked after children	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	1.8	1.8	1.7		□	↕	Placement stability is a key factor in positive outcomes for young people. The average number of placement moves continues to fall slightly. The rate is now returning to pre covid levels.
HSCP_CS02 Percentage of children on Child Protection Register for more than 6 Months	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	10.8	18.8	29.0		□	↘	35 children on the child protection register, with 10 on the register for more than 6 months at the end of March 2022. Ongoing consequences of the impact of covid meaning families are struggling with mental health, substance misuse and the effects of poverty.
HSCP_CS03 Percentage of children who are re-registered within a 12 month period	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	0.0	0.3	0.0		!	□	

Measure	Objective	Previous Yrs	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
HSCP_CS04 Rate per 1,000 children in Formal Kin Care	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	2.4	2.1	2		■	■	Formal Kinship care is when a child or young person is looked after by family or friends under a looked after statute negating the need for Foster Care or Residential Care. The total in formal kin care of 43 children/young people, continues to remain below the Scottish national average of 4.0. However we have a further 80 children and young people who we support under an informal kin care arrangement. Of those 80, there are 57 children and young people whose families have been supported to take on a residence order (section 11) to remove the need for statutory measures. If these children were combined with those in formal kin care the rate per 1,000 would be more in line with the Scottish average. We are investing more resources in kinship care in line with The Promise.
HSCP_CS05 Rate per 1,000 children in Foster Care	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	3.8	3.6	3.5		■	■	The number of children in foster care remained roughly the same during the last 2 quarters and stands at 75. However the challenge to recruit and retain sufficient foster carers is ongoing as the service is now reliant on 16 external foster placements which are significantly more expensive. There is a significant shortage of foster care placements nationally. The East Lothian rate is below the Scottish average of 5.3.

Measure	Objective	Previous Yrs	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
HSCP_CS06 Rate per 1,000 children in Residential Care	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	1.7	1.6	1.8		■	■	There are 39 East Lothian young people in Residential Care. East Lothian has 12 places within two 6 bedded units. External placements are subject to regular review and scrutiny under the Prevent and Return project which is having a positive impact on the numbers and the life chances of young people. The rate of 1.8 per 1,000 remains above the Scottish average of 1.5. The prevent and return project has been set up to return young people to East Lothian wherever possible. Reducing the number of children, whose needs cannot be met within East Lothian, requires a multi agency response within universal, additional and targeted services.
HSCP_CS07 Rate per 1,000 children on Home Supervision	Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society	2.9	2.8	2.8		■	■	There are 59 children/young people on a Home Supervision Order. Reviewing Officers continue to ensure plans are in place for these children at an early stage with a view to ensuring they are spending less time within the Children's Hearing system. During the early part of the pandemic the response was to extend home supervision orders for a period of 6 months. The Scottish Children's Reporters Association (SCRA) is continuing the process to resume hearings at pre COVID levels however this is taking longer than expected. The rate of 2.8 per 1,000 is below the Scottish average of 3.7. This picture is reflected nationally.
HSCP AS01b Percentage of people aged 65+ with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	Reduce hospital admissions and delayed discharge of older people	58.6	57.6	58.7		!	✓	

Measure	Objective	Previous Yrs	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
HSCP_01 Number of delayed discharge patients waiting over 2 weeks	Reduce hospital admissions and delayed discharge of older people	0	0	0		★	➡	
SCL_SD01 Number of attendances at indoor sports and leisure facilities	Tackle obesity in children	4620	103290	131287	130000	★	✔	There has been an increase in the number of sport centre attendances from 103,290 to 131,287 in Q4 and now within the quarter target of 130,000. The total number of visits for the year are 357,532 against a target of 520,000. Attendances still remain below pre-pandemic levels of attendance, but are on an upward trend.
SCL_SD02 Number of attendances at pools	Tackle obesity in children	0	71250	106731	110000	●	✔	The total number of pool visit for the year are 291,685 against a target of 440,000. Attendances still remain below pre-pandemic levels of attendance, but are on an upward trend.

Growing the Capacity of the Council

Measure	Object Name	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
BEN01 Average time in days to process new claims in housing benefit	Provide efficient services	21.50	28.88	20.97	26.00	★	✔	Number of days has improved over Q4. The YtD remains outwith target at 29.2 days. There has been a significant improvement in benefit performance in this quarter with targets being met. The recently recruited additional staff are currently working mainly on Scottish Welfare Claims and SISG Claims. This has had a positive impact on other staff contributing to the improvement in performance in this quarter.

Measure	Object Name	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
BEN02 Average number of days to process a change of circumstances (Housing Benefit)	Provide efficient services	4.10	11.67	2.56	6.00	★	↕	Number of days for changes in circumstances has improved over Q4 to 2.56 days. The YtD is also within target (6 days) at 5.89.
CF001 Percentage of invoices paid on time	Provide efficient services	81.3	83.2	77.4	90.0	▲	✖	Number of invoices paid on time is outwith target (90%) at 77.4% for Q4 and the YtD at 82.8%. Total invoices paid on time is 68,956 and total invoices paid is 83,257 for 2021/22.
EBS01 Percentage of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days	Provide efficient services	93.8	90.0	95.0	95.0	★	↕	
EBS02 % of building warrants issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information	Provide efficient services	87.00	91.25	92.00	90.00	★	↕	
REV06 Business Rates in-year collection	Provide efficient services	98.2	83.0	99.1	98.6	★	↕	The final Business Rates collection position at end 2021/22 is excellent and has exceeded our pre-Covid collection position which is a credit to the hard work of the team. Significant efforts have been made by the team to ensure that all local business owners received any financial advice or support needed, including identifying any entitlement to reliefs to help maximise Business Rates income.

Measure	Object Name	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
REV07 Council Tax in-year collection	Provide efficient services	95.5	82.6	97.7	96.2	★	📈	Council Tax collection has been strong in 2021/22, exceeding the collection target set. Collection at end 2021/22 has almost matched the pre-Covid collection level which we did not expect to see so quickly. This has not happened without considerable efforts from the team. 2021/22 has proved to be another challenging year with 969 new properties being added to our Council Tax property base in-year, the volume of incoming work to the team has remained significantly high in 2021/22 and we have continued to support households in need of help who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. When all of these factors are taken into consideration, the strong collection performance is even more impressive. 2022/23 will prove to be another challenging year for all Revenues collections and debt recovery teams as the cost of living crisis starts to impact on local residents.

Measure	Object Name	Previous Year	Previous Value	Actual	Target	RAG	Trend	Comments
REV08 Value of current tenants rent arrears	Provide efficient services	1,308,294.8	1,267,474.4	1,070,965.5	1,200,000.0	★	↓	Rent collection performance has been excellent in 2021/22 and we are reporting a significant reduction in rent arrears in-year. Many tenants have continued to face challenges and financial pressures over the last couple of years and significant efforts have been made by Rent Income staff to ensure rent payments can be sustained, whether that be through tailored one-to-one support via flexible repayment options and managing debt effectively and sensitively, or via the financial support schemes designed to help tenants in financial difficulty, for example Discretionary Housing Payments and the Tenant Grant Fund. 2022/23 will see further challenges for many households as the cost of living crisis starts to impact.

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 9 June 2022

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Performance Indicators

6

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Policy & Performance Review Committee on the COVID-19 performance indicators that reflect on the council's performance in respect of COVID-19.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the summary of the Council's performance across the 25 indicators included in the Improvement Service's COVID-19 Dashboard
- 2.2 Use the information provided in this report to consider whether any aspect of the Council's performance in respect of the pandemic is in need of further analysis.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 From late April 2020 the council has been supplying the Scottish Government with weekly data on COVID related activities. At one point this included over 20 indicators covering areas such as support for Shielded People, numbers of teachers, children and young people attending children's hubs, number of free school meals being provided in hubs or at home, Business Support Grants and adult and child protection cases.
- 3.2 With the easing of lockdown, the return of schools and the ending of the Business Grant scheme in August 2020 the amount of weekly data provided by the Council to the Scottish Government reduced significantly. However, the Improvement Service developed a weekly COVID-19 dashboard using national and publicly available data sources as well as council provided data on some key input, output and outcome indicators of the impact of the pandemic. This weekly dashboard,

includes 25 indicators for which various comparisons are provided – Scottish average, Family Group (Deprivation), Family Group (Geography), and Family Group (Vulnerability).

3.3 The 25 indicators reported via the Improvement Service dashboard are:

- Number of Test and Protect inbound and proactive outbound calls
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards Business Advice and Enforcement Activity
- Unemployment Claimant Count
- Business Start Ups
- Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant Applications and Spend
- Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Applications and Spend
- Discretionary Housing Payment Applications and Spend
- Projected Additional Health & Social Care Partnership Spend
- Delayed Discharges
- Homelessness Applications
- Rent Arrears
- Child Protection Registrations and Face-to-face Contact with Social Work
- Adult Protection Investigations
- Adults at Risk Referrals and Adult Wellbeing Referrals
- Domestic Abuse Incidents
- Retail and Recreation Activity and Workplace Activity
- Local Authority Staff Absence
- Pupil Attendance during lockdown
- COVID related deaths

3.4 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the Council's performance across these indicators, based on weekly dashboard 107 (week ending 13th May 2022).

3.5 This shows that East Lothian and East Lothian Council are 'performing' better than the Scottish average on several key indicators including:

- Unemployment claimant count
- Rent arrears
- Delayed discharge
- Staff absence
- Child and adult protection registrations/ referrals.

3.6 We have been following the national trend and 'performing' at or around the Scottish average on most other indicators including:

- Retail and recreational activity
- Pupil attendance
- Domestic abuse incidents

3.7 The small number indicators that show East Lothian below the Scottish average include:

- Test and Protect inbound calls
- Discretionary Housing Payments.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Reporting performance helps the Council demonstrate that it is achieving Best Value in regard to ‘Commitment and Leadership’, ‘Sound Governance at a strategic, financial and operational level’ and ‘Accountability’.
- 4.2 The scrutiny of performance by Elected Members is part of ‘Commitment and Leadership’. The Best Value Guidance explains that the scrutiny of performance means ‘That members are involved in setting the strategic direction for Best Value and there is a mechanism for internal scrutiny by members of performance and service outcomes.’

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – none.
- 6.2 Personnel – none.
- 6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Appendix 1: Summary of the Council’s Performance Across the 25 Indicators reported via the Improvement Service COVID-19 Dashboard

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DATE	25 th May 2022

Appendix 1: Summary of the Council's Performance Across the 25 Indicators Reported via the Improvement Service COVID-19 Dashboard – week 107, week ending 13th May 2022)

Indicator	Summary of Council's Performance
Number of Test and Protect calls	<p>East Lothian had lower than the Scottish average number of calls from people who were asked to self-isolate through Test and Protect and very few requests for support. Inbound calls have averaged only 1 per week</p> <p>The number of outbound calls and texts to people peaked at around 160 in early September 2021 and then again at around 250 in March 2022, when COVID cases spiked in East Lothian.</p> <p>However, even at peak times, very few calls, and much lower than the Scottish average, have resulted in requests for support.</p>
Environmental Health & Trading Standards Business Advice and Enforcement Activity	<p>The significant impact on EH&TS services in the first period of lockdown is shown clearly by the fact that from May 2020 through to the end of the year the service had carried out a total of 2219 business advice and enforcement activities (247 per month) compared to 637 from January through to October 2021 (64 per month).</p> <p>Whilst the number of interventions per 1000 population in East Lothian was at or above the Scottish average for most of 2020 and early 2021 it fell slightly below the Scottish average from February 2021.</p>
Business Start Ups	<p>The number of business start-ups was affected by the pandemic and economic downturn. The total number of business start-ups fell from 179 in 2019/20 to 62 in 2021/22 and only 13 in the first six months of 2021/22.</p> <p>The number of business start-ups per 1,000 population in East Lothian was around the Scottish average through 2019 and through 2020 until around October, although it remained below the Scottish and Family Group averages over the last year. However, there has been a rise in start-ups since the start of 2022.</p>
Retail and recreation activity	<p>East Lothian has followed the national trend – a massive fall in activity in March and April</p>

	<p>2020 followed by some recovery through to November, before another significant fall in December and a slow recovery from January 2021 to just above pre-pandemic levels in June, July and August before falling slightly in September 2021. However, the activity figures have shown a steady increase since early 2022.</p>
Unemployment Claimant Count	<p>The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work more than doubled in the first few months of the pandemic from 1,720 (2.6% of working age population) in March 2020 to 3,680 (5.6%) in May 2020. The claimant count varied slightly from that level to 3,425 (5.2%) until April 2021 but has fallen consistently since then to 1,686 (2.5%) by April 2022 – below the pre-pandemic level.</p> <p>East Lothian's claimant count has stayed below the Scottish average throughout this period.</p>
Scottish Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants	<p>The monthly average number of applications for Community Care Grants increased from 110 in 2019/20 to 131 in 2020/21, and in the first six months of 2021/22 averaged 164 per month before rising to over 200 per month in late 2021 and early 2022.</p> <p>Spend on Community Care Grants per head of population has been at or just above the Scottish average but below the average of councils in the deprivation family group.</p>
Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants	<p>The monthly average number of applications for Crisis Grants has remained fairly constant; rising slightly from 316 per month in 2019/20 to 318 in 2020/21 and 322 per month in the first six months of 2021/22. However there was a significant rise in applications at the end of 2021, up to c.600 in January 2022.</p> <p>Spend on Crisis Grants per head of population has been below the Scottish average but above the average of councils in the deprivation family group.</p>
Discretionary Housing Payments	<p>The number of DHP applications has risen through 2020 and 2021 and again in early 2022. However, both applications for, and spend on, Discretionary Housing Payments has been lower than the Scottish and Family</p>

	<p>Group averages. The majority of claims for DHP is for under occupancy costs and the figure reflects the lower rents charged by East Lothian Council.</p>
Rent arrears	<p>Rent arrears increased from £1.467m in May 2020 (4.6% of rent due) to £1.575m (4.95%) in June 2020 and stayed roughly at that level until January 2021 before falling to a low of £1.117m (3.5%) in July 2021 before rising slightly to £1.334m (4.1%) in October 2021 but fell again to £1.267m (3.8%) in February 2022.</p> <p>This compares very favourably with the Scottish average rent arrears as % of rent due which has risen consistently during this period from c.6% to c.9%.</p>
Homelessness applications	<p>The number of homelessness applications per quarter in 2019 was around 200 – above the Scottish average per population. There was a significant fall at the start of the pandemic lockdown in 2020, then a steep rise in the 3rd quarter of 2021 to pre-pandemic levels before falling again to around 150 per quarter – below the Scottish average per population.</p>
Delayed Discharges	<p>In the 103 weeks for which the IS dashboard has provided delayed discharge data since May 2020, East Lothian has had 0 delayed discharge in 30 weeks, 1 delayed discharge in 33 weeks, 2 in 24 weeks, 3 in 11 weeks, 4 in 3 weeks and 5 in 1 week.</p> <p>Apart from that five weeks the proportion of population aged 65+ (per 1000) never rose above 0.15%.</p> <p>In comparison the number of delayed discharges across Scotland doubled between May and October 2020 and increased by over 50% from October 2020 to October 2021. So the average delayed discharges per 1000 population aged 65+ tripled from 0.45% to around 1.5%.</p>
Local Authority staff absence	<p>East Lothian Council's staff absence (% of days staff absent on sick or special leave) fell below 5% in September 2020 and fell to as low as 3.3% in August 2021. It has risen since then partly as a result of the increase in COVID cases and rose above 5% in September before falling back slightly to just under 6% at the end of December 2021.</p>

	The council's staff absence rate has been below the Scottish average since September 2020.
Pupil Attendance	<p>Pupil attendance has been at around (just below or just above) the Scottish average for most of the pandemic.</p> <p>The percentage pupil attendance was above 90% on 120 days, between 88.9% and 85% on 123 days and only fell below 85% on 28 days,</p>
Domestic abuse incidents	<p>The number of reported domestic abuse incidents reported to the police averaged 87 per month between June and December 2019. There was a slight falls in reported incidents in 2020 and 2021 to c.80 per month.</p> <p>The number of incidents reported per 1,000 population in East Lothian is fairly similar to the average across Scotland.</p>
Child protection registrations and face to face contact with Social Worker	The number of new registrations of children in the Child Protection Register has been below the Scottish average for most of the pandemic. An average of around 35 children on the Child Protection Register have face-to-face contact with a social worker each week
Adult protection investigations	The number of adult support and protection investigations started each week per 1000 people aged 65+ (which averaged about 2 per week) has been below the Scottish and family group averages through most of the pandemic
Adults as risk and adult wellbeing referrals	Adults at risk referrals has been above the Scottish and family group averages whereas Adult wellbeing referrals have been below the Scottish and family group averages
COVID related deaths	Apart from brief periods in April 2020, April 2021 and late summer 2021 the number of COVID related deaths in East Lothian per head of population has been slightly lower than the Scottish average.