



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EAST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD**

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**THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2026
VIA DIGITAL MEETINGS SYSTEM**

Voting Members Present:

Mr A Cogan (Chair)
Mr J Blazeby
Dr P Cantley
Ms E Gordon
Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor C McFarlane

Non-voting Members Present:

Mr D Binnie	Ms L Byrne
Ms S Gossner	Dr K Kasengele
Mr M Porteous	Ms F Wilson
Ms M Allan	Mr L Kerr

Officers Present from NHS Lothian/East Lothian Council:

Ms L Kerr
Ms K Thornback
Ms J Jarvis
Ms L Berry
Ms A Stuart
Mr G Whitehead

Observers Present:

Mr D McGee
Ms L Murphy
Mr P Maguiness
Mr B Elliot
Ms L Forrest
Mr A Rideout
Ms J Bell

Clerk:

Ms B Crichton

Apologies:

Councillor L Allan
Dr Claire McIntosh

Declarations of Interest:

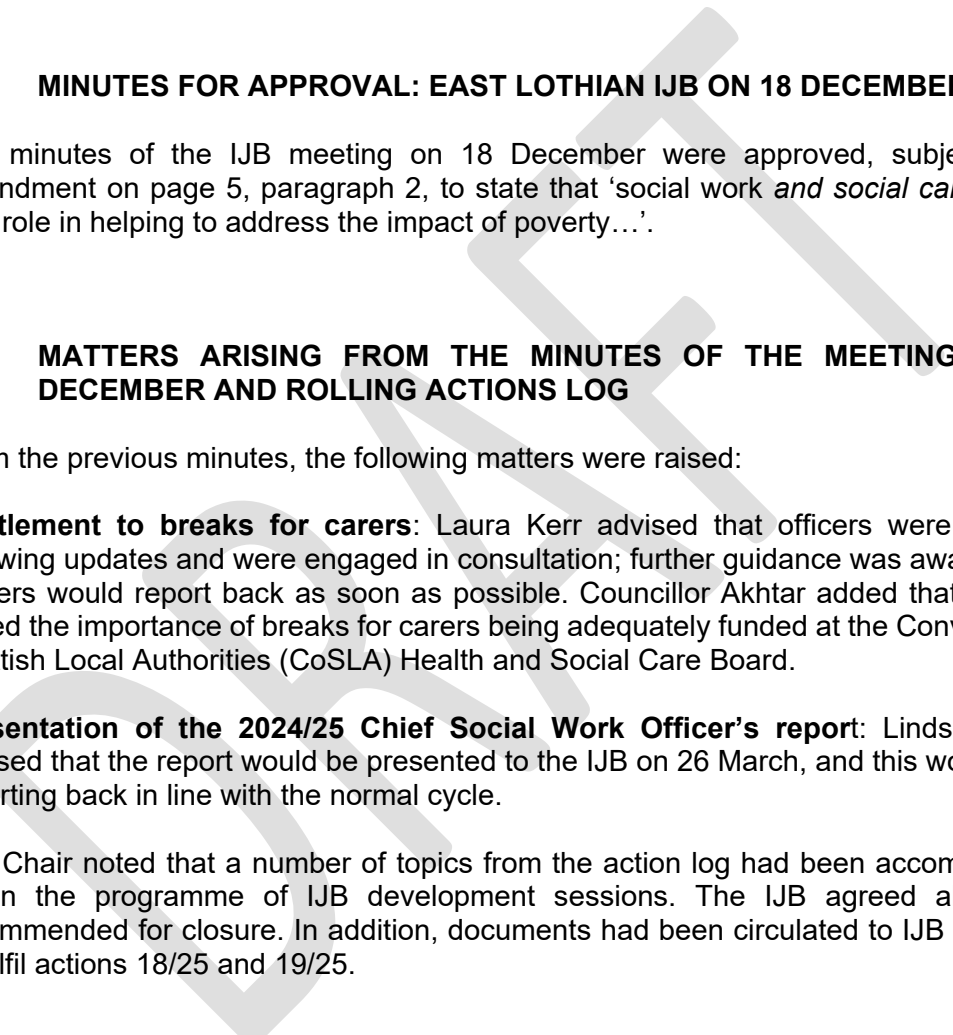
None

The clerk read the data protection statement. The meeting was being held remotely and would be made available as a webcast via the Council's website in order to allow the public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian were data controllers under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council's and NHS Lothian's policies on record retention, and the webcast of the meeting would be publicly available for up to five years.

The clerk confirmed the attendance of Committee members by roll call.

The Chair formally welcomed observers from the NHS' Talent Management Programme, as well as members of the public joining the meeting.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: EAST Lothian IJB ON 18 DECEMBER 2025

The minutes of the IJB meeting on 18 December were approved, subject to an amendment on page 5, paragraph 2, to state that 'social work *and social care* have a vital role in helping to address the impact of poverty...'.


2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 18 DECEMBER AND ROLLING ACTIONS LOG

From the previous minutes, the following matters were raised:

Entitlement to breaks for carers: Laura Kerr advised that officers were carefully following updates and were engaged in consultation; further guidance was awaited, and officers would report back as soon as possible. Councillor Akhtar added that she had raised the importance of breaks for carers being adequately funded at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) Health and Social Care Board.

Presentation of the 2024/25 Chief Social Work Officer's report: Lindsey Byrne advised that the report would be presented to the IJB on 26 March, and this would bring reporting back in line with the normal cycle.

The Chair noted that a number of topics from the action log had been accommodated within the programme of IJB development sessions. The IJB agreed all actions recommended for closure. In addition, documents had been circulated to IJB Members to fulfil actions 18/25 and 19/25.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair advised that the position of Service User Representative had been advertised, but with limited success so far. He advised that Kate Thornback was assisting from an engagement perspective, and it was hoped that this would lead to interest. Councillor Akhtar suggested that feedback be sought from Marilyn McNeill to assist with advertising the role.

The Chair provided an update on IJB voting rights being extended to third sector, service user, and carer representatives. He advised that it had now been agreed through the parliamentary process. It would come into effect from September 2026, and the Board Secretary kept abreast of developments. He reported that a working group had been

convened by the Scottish Government, with representation from the IJB Chair and Vice Chairs Network and CoSLA. He suggested that the East Lothian IJB amend its Terms of Reference and processes following the Scottish Parliament election period. In response to a comment from David Binnie, the Chair expressed that the development was welcomed, but questions remained over how it would be implemented in the best interests of all involved.

4. FINAL DRAFT OF THE EAST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer to present the final version of the East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 ('the Plan') to the IJB for approval.

Ms Kerr presented the report. She noted that development of the Annual Delivery Plan would come in May, and the Annual Performance Report would come in September. She highlighted the robust process for consultation on the Plan, with the advanced draft having been taken to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and partner organisations. She reported that the Plan had been welcomed by partners in terms of layout, clarity, and engagement with communities.

Maureen Allan asked about costings behind the Plan. She questioned how the IJB knew it would achieve what was needed, and how the budget, if ringfenced, could be used in the community. She also asked about workforce planning across the partnership, and about further action planning. Ms Kerr pointed out that the Plan was the overarching document above many strategies and work plans which addressed matters including workforce and carers. She acknowledged that some matters were discussed for a long time, and it could feel as though progress was slow; she felt the IJB should recognise what it had achieved, whilst acknowledging that some aspects were difficult to work through within constant financial challenge and savings programmes. The Annual Delivery Plan would be developed and stuck to, performance reporting would be undertaken, and there would be a reactive approach and changes in direction taken as needed. She advised that costings were not presented as part of the Plan. Fiona Wilson added that East Lothian had moved into a space where it could proactively take action, in terms of population health and prevention, to save money later. She summarised that the IJB would be monitored by its performance on the Plan, but she acknowledged that the world changed around the Plan.

Councillor Akhtar acknowledged Claire Goodwin's work on the Plan. She highlighted examples of strong partnership. She also found the engagement statement very helpful, and thought it would be useful to account for changes made as a result of that feedback.

Jonathan Blazeby supported the Plan, and felt it was thoughtful, comprehensive, and had clear objectives and priorities. He discussed the importance of mid-year reviews; he felt that a mechanism and governance cycle had to be built in for the IJB, whose members were collectively responsible for the Plan. The Chair agreed that the IJB should use the following period to ensure it fulfilled actions in the Annual Delivery Plan's metrics and performance. He also agreed that it must be more visible, particularly to voting members.

Ms Kerr acknowledged that performance reporting, although in place, did not appear to be adequate for IJB members. She discussed the sharing of information between the SPG and IJB, and suggested that IJB performance meetings could cover key performance indicators (KPIs) and analysis, questions from the IJB, and risk. Councillor

Akhtar suggested that consideration of performance against the Plan be added to the action log.

Sederunt: *Kalonde Kasengele joined the meeting.*

After obtaining approval from voting members for the report's recommendations, the Chair commented positively on the Plan. He acknowledged the work undertaken to produce the Plan, and thanked those who had responded to consultations.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Approve the final version of the East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan, as presented at Appendix 1; and
- ii. Note that an Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) for 2026/27 was currently under development and would be presented to the May meeting of the IJB. Progress on the delivery of the ADP would be reported to subsequent meetings of the IJB.

5. IJB COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026-2030

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer to present the East Lothian Integration Joint Board Communications Strategy 2026-2030 ('the Strategy') to the IJB for information and approval to progress to sign off.

Kate Thornback, Equalities and Engagement Officer, spoke to the report, and provided background information on the Strategy. She advised that the Strategy showed how the IJB would communicate and engage with people, the values behind it, and commitments for the future. She highlighted key aspects, such as co-producing with the community, accessibility, taking a trauma-informed approach, and avoidance of digital exclusion. She advised that a database of open text responses was being created, so that new engagement could access existing responses. She also advised that a majority of suggested amendments had been incorporated into the Strategy.

Committee members asked questions about additional costs associated with the Strategy, ownership of the Strategy, and avoidance of crossover and consultation fatigue. Ms Thornback explained that resourcing was roughly the same, but the approach taken to engage with pre-existing groups of service users would avoid any financial burden being passed onto the community and would mean communicating in environments where people already felt comfortable. IJB members agreed that branding should be updated to reflect the IJB's ownership of the document. Ms Thornback also discussed collaboration and alignment with East Lothian Council, and efforts to avoid confusion by ensuring the same processes were not named differently.

IJB members asked further questions about the IJB's legal responsibility around engagement, and what success would look like. Ms Thornback explained that the IJB had to be assured that the community had been consulted each time a report was heard, and that those priorities had been integrated into the work; she offered to pull together a proposal for how the IJB could measure its performance against those requirements. Mr Blazeby felt that external evidence could be helpful in reassuring the IJB, and the Chair invited Ms Thornback and Jen Jarvis to return with their thoughts on this at a later date.

In response to questions about enhancing the community's capacity and capability to respond to consultation, Ms Thornback and Ms Jarvis revisited some of the values of the Strategy. Councillor Akhtar recounted that she spent much of her time explaining the bigger picture to people, and felt resources, including a guide to the IJB, might be of use. Ms Thornback acknowledged that engagement with the community always led to wider questions, and people had to be prepared to provide further context. Ms Jarvis and Ms Thornback offered to send engagement packs to IJB members, and advised that alternative methods to explain these concepts, such as a videos or graphics, were also being explored.

The Chair sought agreement from voting members to approve the report's recommendations, and the IJB agreed to approve the IJB Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-2030 for implementation.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Read and reflect on the Communications and Engagement Strategy and its suitability as a strategy on which all communications and engagement for the IJB and HSCP will be based for the next four years;
- ii. Consider the content of the Integrated Impact Assessment; and
- iii. Approve the Communications and Engagement Strategy for implementation.

6. IJB RECORDS MANAGEMENT PLAN BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer to provide the IJB with a progress update on the IJB Records Management Plan (RMP) bi-annual review.

Ms Kerr spoke to the report, which fulfilled the statutory requirement to ensure the IJB was up to date with records management processes. She noted that some of the actions from the assessment were held by East Lothian Council, but she was comfortable that the IJB was working in line with its RMP.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Note the National Records of Scotland Annual Update Review report;
- ii. Note the positive conclusion of the Record Management Plan review;
- iii. Note actions required by East Lothian Council as governing body of the Integration Joint Board's Record Management Plan; and
- iv. Note the next review in 2027.

7. Q3 FINANCE UPDATE AND FORECAST FOR 2025/26

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer to provide the IJB with an update on the year-to-date Q3 and forecast financial position for 2025/26, and set out the next steps in the budget setting process for 2026/27.

Mr Porteous presented the report. He highlighted underspend and overspend figures, and highlighted the main drivers as noted within the report. He expanded on the prescribing position and reminded members of challenges associated with that pressure, particularly information being received two months behind the date being reported, fluctuating prices, and changes in drug availability; he gave reassurance about ongoing work to try to understand and manage this. He had received reassurance that NHS Lothian would break even at the end of the financial year, and as such, NHS Lothian would support East Lothian IJB to deliver a balanced financial position for its health delegated services at the year end. He also highlighted sections in the report relating to efficiency delivery, and work underway to set a balanced budget for 2026-27. He discussed actions following receipt of the final funding offer letter from East Lothian Council, and advised that NHS Lothian's final financial plan would be reported in early March, which would inform any gaps on health delegated functions.

IJB members asked questions about how the IJB would manage priorities over the coming months in the context of tight financial constraints. Mr Porteous highlighted the efficiencies presented at the development days, invest to save schemes, pharmacy work, and prevention approach relating to weight management work. He acknowledged the point about putting in place larger schemes and monitoring and measuring benefits. He discussed questions around making the transformation from being a hospital-based service to a more community-based service, and how this would align with the Strategic Plan. Kalonde Kasengele added that he appreciated the danger of taking money away from preventive interventions, and noted that investment in prevention saw a return; it was important that a balance be achieved, and he noted that prevention and intervention featured significantly in the Strategic Plan.

Sederunt: *Liam Kerr left the meeting.*

Responding to a further question, Mr Porteous and Ms Wilson discussed progress against set aside funding, and confirmed all avenues and opportunities across the sector were being explored.

Councillor Akhtar welcomed earmarked reserves supporting adult social care and the learning disabilities team; she felt that this was in line with work being done to support early intervention and prevention.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Note the updated Q3 financial position and forecast for 2025/26; and
- ii. Note the programme of work underway to deliver a balanced budget for 2026/27.

8. BEST VALUE – ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REVIEW 2024/25

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer to present the IJB's compliance with its best value duty under S106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Mr Porteous spoke to the report. He highlighted a theme across the public sector of a statutory duty to use resources economically, efficiently, and effectively to deliver value for money. He highlighted the appendices, which contained seven broad themes under which the IJB's compliance with the duty of best value could be assessed. He also discussed timing of the 2025/26 Best Value – Annual Compliance Review, which he intended to be heard as early as possible in session 2026/27.

Committee members asked about key messages and any areas where the IJB had been less compliant. Mr Stainbank advised that, as the following year's report would be heard earlier, there could be greater discussion about areas for improvement in compliance.

Councillor Akhtar commented that the report referenced significant partnership and collaborative working, and Mr Porteous agreed to consider how there could be greater positive recognition for some of this work.

Members noted and agreed the report's recommendations.

Decision

The IJB:

- i. Noted the Best Value compliance guidance at Appendix 1;
- ii. Considered if there were any other matters that impacted the delivery of best value; and
- iii. Agreed that the Best Value Compliance Review for 2024/25 provided assurance to the IJB that its duty of Best Value was being met.

9. OBESITY MEDICINES SPECIALIST PATHWAY

A report was submitted by the Chief Finance Officer to provide the East Lothian IJB with an update on the development of a specialist initiation pathway for obesity medicines, and highlight the resource implications of the proposed implementation.

Mr Porteous spoke to the report initially. He highlighted the arrangements for service development and hosting, and advised that the drugs being prescribed had been approved by the Scottish Medicines Consortium. He advised that a short-life working group had also been set up in Lothian to develop the pathway and related processes for safe and effective use of the drugs.

Laurie Eyles, Lothian Weight Management Service Lead, provided detailed background information on the clinical pathway. She advised that the importance of taking a measured and safe approach had led to the development of a pilot pathway sitting within the Weight Management Service. The IJB was being asked to approve a modest increase in the Weight Management Service clinical team to provide dietary and nutritional support for this specific cohort of patients. Independent pharmacy prescribers would provide monthly monitoring until the patients had reached a long-term maintenance dose, following which, patients would continue their ongoing prescription via their GP through a shared care agreement. She discussed support measures for any escalation of clinical concerns. She advised that the pilot would be open only to existing patients, focusing on those who had waited longest for specialist input, and decisions

would be made for scaling up following the pilot. She pointed out benefits of the medicine in terms of prevention and treatment of long-term conditions.

Mr Porteous discussed the resource implications of the pathway, and noted that the cost of the drugs would fall to the individual IJB where the patient resided. Offsetting the cost was being considered, and a bid had been made to Innovate UK to pay for the staffing costs for the first three years, but the costs had been contained within NHS Lothian's financial plan. He then highlighted sections of the report setting out staff and prescribing costs, pointing out that specialist input would not be required after the first year, and that drug costs were based on the worst-case scenario. The IJB would hear a full evaluation of the clinical input, demand trajectory, and affordability, before any decision was made on wider implementation.

IJB members commented on the potential benefits to disadvantaged people, population health, and prevention, and were very supportive of the proposals. Others commented on the high demand and the very small proportion of the population eligible for treatment.

Officers responded to questions on: resourcing to allow for the project to scaled up; the implementation of shared care agreements; whether the costs could put the IJB at financial risk; the purpose of the pilot; and costs of the project against buying in the medication, when a significant number of people were already using it and had access to a professional helpline. Ms Eyles provided detailed answers around: obesity as a condition of deprivation; the private sector driving inequality in terms of access to the medication; GP prescribing at six months, and the need to create safe pathways around that; and the careful approach being taken to avoid being irresponsible with funding, rather than concerns over safety of the medicines. She also touched on: why it would not be more cost effective just to buy in the medication, and the need to avoid fragmenting care, but instead manage conditions holistically. She advised that the Innovate UK bid was only for staffing costs, so medication spend still had to be carefully controlled. Mr Porteous added comments about options for GPs to have a local enhanced service, which would incur a cost and involve the Scottish Government. He also referenced the need to explore potential benefits in terms of reduction in treatment for conditions exacerbated by obesity to understand the full impact of the proposals.

Some IJB members raised concerns about the costs of the service, while others were concerned about: the relatively low number of people who would benefit from the medication on the NHS; the two-tier health system created; and people accessing medicine privately that they perhaps could not afford. Comments were also made about why more was not being done and faster, particularly when there were also wider benefits to mental as well as physical health.

Concerns were also raised about the lack of funding for these medicines, and money being spent on this preventive work being taken away from other important work. The Chair pointed out that a pan-Lothian approach to this messaging would make for a stronger response to the Scottish Government on this matter. Ms Eyles offered to take these concerns back to the Diet and Healthy Weight Team within the Scottish Government; although she noted other complexities around the matter, she said that feedback would be useful from IJBs and Health Boards.

Mr Binnie commented, from personal experience, on the transformational effects of the drug.

Members agreed the report's recommendations.

Decision

The IJB:

- i. Approved the development of the Obesity Medicines Specialist Pathway service via the Midlothian HSCP-hosted Dietetics Weight Management service;
- ii. Agreed the East Lothian contribution to the staffing investment to support the new service set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report; and
- iii. Acknowledged the potential impact the introduction of the new pathway would have on the prescribing spend.

10. REAPPOINTMENT OF IJB LEAD VOTING MEMBER

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer to inform the IJB of the reappointment of the lead voting member representing NHS Lothian.

Decision

The IJB agreed to note the reappointment of Andrew Cogan as lead voting member of the IJB for the maximum term of office.

11. EAST Lothian IJB AND AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETINGS DATES 2026-27

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer to set the dates of East Lothian IJB business meetings, development sessions, and IJB Audit & Risk Committee meetings during session 2026-27.

Decision

The IJB agreed to:

- i. Approve the dates for IJB business meetings during session 2026-27, as set out in report Appendix 1;
- ii. Approve the dates for IJB development sessions during sessions 2026-27, as set out in report Appendix 2; and
- iii. Approve the dates for IJB Audit & Risk Committee meetings during sessions 2026, as set out in report Appendix 3.

Signed

Andrew Cogan
Chair of the East Lothian Integration Joint Board

