

Minute of Meeting

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday, 11 June 2024
Item No 4.1



Performance, Review and Scrutiny

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 19 March 2024	11.00 am	Hybrid meeting held in the Council Chamber at Midlothian House and virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Councillor Milligan (Chair)	
Councillor Curran	Councillor Drummond (Virtual)
Councillor Imrie	Councillor McCall
Councillor McEwan	Councillor Pottinger
Councillor Russell	Councillor Smaill
Councillor Virgo	Councillor Winchester

In attendance:

Grace Vickers, Chief Executive
Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Morag Barrow, Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer
Joan Tranent, Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Worker
Nick Clater, Head of Adult and Social Care Services
Janet Ritchie, Democratic Services Officer
Hannah Forbes, Democratic Services Assistant

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Elected Members and Officers to the meeting of the Performance, Review and Scrutiny (PRS) Committee.

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Bowen

2 Order of Business

The Order of Business was as detailed in the agenda.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 4.1 The Minute of the Meeting of the PRS Committee held on 12 December 2023 was submitted and approved as correct record.
- 4.2 The Action Log was noted. The Chair noted that a paper was circulated by the Executive Director Place regarding Housing which was in response to an action on the Action Log.

5. Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Adult Health and Social Care Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Head of Adult Health and Social Care presented the Q3 report highlighting that this quarterly update is aligned across four key themes of Prevention, Duty Social Work, Understanding Changing Needs and Best Value, and provided a brief update on some of the main achievements, challenges and risks, as outlined in the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Adult Services for the report and opened it up to questions.</p> <p>In responding to a question raised with regards to the National Care Service, the content of the Bill and what resource we may require, the Head of Adult Services updated that the detail is still unknown, and preparatory work is ongoing. The Chief Officer Children's Services/Chief Social Work Officer added that there is no update on plans for Children's Services and Justice Services therefore no update at this time.</p> <p>A question was posed on the digital agenda and whether with the challenges there was risk that needed to be considered. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB responded that this was part of the broader</p>		

transformational plan around how digital technology is used to support traditional models of care. Further work is required on how to run services differently by utilising different types of technology and work with business partners. Some good progress has been made in utilising data through dashboard development and planning tools and use of apps.

The Welfare Rights Service was commended for the incredible work it delivers with a small team in terms of gains for communities.

In terms of Social Care assessment, there was a query on the criteria used in Midlothian and how this compares with other authorities. The Head of Adult Services responded that everyone has a legal right to assessment, and anyone can request these, however accessing services is based on national eligibility criteria which Midlothian apply the top two tiers - substantial and critical. This is similar to other Local Authorities. Work is ongoing to improve the application of that criteria as substantial and critical is not the same in individual services, however the key aim is to ensure people get the service they need when they need it. Following this, the Head of Adult Services was asked whether there were any additional challenges or opportunities as a result of decisions made in neighbouring authorities, such as Care Home closures. The Head of Adult Services advised that there is a wide recruitment campaign about to launch across Children Services and Adult Services. The Head of Adult Services also advised that there are challenges around care home closures in regards to risk to out of authority placements which adds pressure to Midlothian services as there is a low number of places in Midlothian and this is being monitored. In terms of commissioning and contract management this is also an area that is being looked at in more detail as some contracts are pan Lothian and changes may impact Midlothian service provision.

A question was asked about the beds within the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that Midlothian had 8 acute beds, 1 acute bed and 6 rehabs which are full, from a 16 bedded shared bed ward between Midlothian and East Lothian. Edin or East Lothian use the unfilled beds. The Head of Adult Services explained that there are discussions ongoing around financial compensation when not being used in Midlothian. It was highlighted that when there are no beds available then Midlothian service users are placed in St Johns which is a significant distance to Midlothian, which poses issues for Midlothian communities, and is being regularly reviewed. It was suggested that overall, it balances out but still is a changing picture.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Head of Adult Services

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Children Services, Partnerships and Communities Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Worker
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer presented the Q3 report, highlighting the priorities, progress, achievements, challenges and risks as contained within the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer for the report and opened it up to questions.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). A question was raised on the wait list for programmes after a CAMHS referral was made and the Chief Officer Children's Services stated that detail on this will be provided to this Committee after the meeting. There was a query on funding for part time worker referenced in the report. The Chief Officer Children's Services confirmed this will assist with the mental health work and look at earlier forms of intervention, and the advertisement of the post was being progressed now funding is secured. The Committee noted that families rely on this diagnosis to access other supports/services and queried if there was better way to support families to access these without a diagnosis due to the wait times for diagnosis. The Chief Officer Children's Services responded that this was very complex, and there was a need to put support in place to train staff for earlier intervention and this work needs to be looked at holistically.</p>		
Decision		
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.		
Action		
Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Corporate Solutions Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the Q3 report highlighting the transformation objectives, the key achievements and the challenges and risks covering the period October to December 2023 as contained within the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions for the report and opened it up to questions.</p> <p>Questions were received on the Customer Service Platform and its potential to integrate with other Council systems. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that some systems are integrated and work is ongoing to integrate new processes like reporting housing repairs online, and in other services such as</p>		

Housing, new systems have been adopted and are being scoped for further development i.e. online Housing applications.

Committee queried why the One Stop Shop model was a medium term aim and asked that this be implemented sooner. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions highlighted the rollout to date in communities and the increased service offer from partners and Council but explained that it is medium term to fully achieve the aspirations of the approach.

The Chief Officer also confirmed that the rollout of vehicle trackers did not include hire vehicles and this forms part of the Fleet Replacement Programme.

A discussion took place around sickness absence. It was noted that the Occupational Health referrals had tripled this quarter and it was queried whether any interrogation of the data took place to identify trends, particularly linked to hybrid working. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that sickness absence is reviewed regularly across all Directorates and there are no identifiable trends from the data but this will be kept under review. Occupational Health referrals can be made for different reasons and do not all relate to absence. Alongside this, it was commented that the number of attendees at wellbeing events was low in comparison to the number of events delivered and is there intentions to understand why this is. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions acknowledged the low attendance figures and stated that the focus of those events had been in depots where it was likely front-line staff would have been deployed to respond to winter service and that the timing of the programme would be reviewed, as well as more promotion of the events held.

A question was raised on Freedom of Information requests and whether data that was being held by the Council could be more publicly available. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that was the intention of the launch of the online portal however this had not yet been achieved and was an area for improvement this year.

The number of people completing mandatory e-learning was queried as this seemed to be lower than expected. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions explained that through the improved induction processes the e-learning platform and also other e-learning resources will be better signposted to staff.

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions was asked how the library membership numbers in Midlothian compared to other Local Authorities and committed to providing that data after the meeting.

Exit interviews and data analysis was discussed and the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions explained that exit interviews are offered but are not mandatory, however for those that are received these are reviewed by HR for trends and improvement actions where appropriate.

The Executive Director Place responded to a question around the 25% affordable homes in the report and asked for more information on what these were, for both Midlothian, Registered Social Landlords and private developers. The Executive

Director Place referenced the upcoming report to Council on affordable homes where more information was included.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.4	Education Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Education Chief Operating Officer

The Education Chief Operating Officer presented the Q3 report highlighting the key achievements, challenges and risks for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 Decembers 2024 as contained within the report. Also highlighted was that Q3 of the reporting year aligns to Q2 for the academic year.

The Chair thanked the Education Chief Operating Officer for the report and opened it up to questions.

A question was posed on the figures regarding home schooling. The Education Chief Operating Officer explained that the process was that parents needed to make a request to the Local Authority detailing the provision of the home education. The Local Authority reviews all applications and the proposed provision and makes a decision. There is a database which holds the figures on all children that are home educated and there is a statutory obligation to engage with all families annually and review this approach with them and agreed to provide the figures after the meeting.

It was raised that the reported was children focussed and did not include details on teaching staff activity. The Education Chief Operating Officer assured Committee that significant work took place with teaching and non-teaching staff who support learners including bringing teaching staff together to share with them the vision for the service. The Education Chief Operating Officer also described the work undertaken to support the staff such as training and upskilling sessions, visiting schools to engage and listen to staff and reviewing the feedback regularly from these visits. The Education Chief Operating Officer also referenced the engagement with Trade Unions and the work carried out to support the health and wellbeing of the staffing establishment across Education settings.

Committee requested that a report on class sizes of primary schools, including numbers on each primary school and class sizes be presented to a future Committee.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Education Chief Operating Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.5	Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Place

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the Q3 report highlighting the transformation objectives, the key achievements and the challenges and risks covering 1 October 2023 – 31 December 2023 as contained within the report.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and opened it up to questions.

The Committee reminded the Chief Officer Place of a future report expected to Committee on road consents around housing developments. It was commented that the future report should include actions on how this work is to be regulated and utility companies are being monitored to complete on time and the coordination of Council works and utility company works, in particular around newly surfaced roads and re-digging of these.

A question was raised about homelessness and what data is available about homelessness and classes delivered to schools. The Chief Officer Place confirmed further information would be provided after the meeting.

A question was raised about memberships and reimbursements when leisure facilities are unable to be used in particular an instance at Newbattle Leisure Centre where there is a repair issue due to storm damage. The Chief Officer Place explained the PPP contract arrangements in place and an analysis is taking place around loss adjustment. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that other facilities are able to be utilised during this time and options around local promotions are being explored for those particular members.

The Committee raised a query on street lighting when not a Midlothian Council fault and whether there was data on these instances and the contractual arrangements with the suppliers. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that statistics could be provided on faults, issues raised and remediation actions. It was confirmed that there is a financial compensation process in place that will be included in this update to Committee.

There was a query on the District Heating Scheme and government policy. It was questioned whether this was a risk as an unregulated market and what action officers were taking. The Chief Officer Place explained that the legislation was being reviewed by Building Standards and Planning and measures are in place for the District Heating Scheme. It was requested that this was highlighted to Scottish Government in particular around mine water concerns and the Chief Officer Place confirmed that this could be fed back through the ongoing dialogue around the grant funding.

The Committee queried the revenue monitoring KPI on the dashboard and whether this was correct. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that this was retrospective, and members should refer to the financial monitoring quarterly outturn reports.

There was a question on the progress of Vogrie Country Park and the Executive Director Place confirmed this is under the remit of the Head of Development and progress will be reported to BTSG and would need to be considered as part of the Capital Plan Prioritisation.

Committee congratulated the Chief Officer Place and their team on the downward trend around homelessness cases.

The Chief Officer Place was asked if there was a target for net zero in particular recycling levels. The Chief Officer Place confirmed there were requirements around heating housing replacement schemes and the retrofit programme. There has been a previous trial of materials recycling aggregate and this raised concerns following the trial assessment. This will be included in the Climate Action Plan to be presented to members at a future meeting.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Chief Officer Place

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.6	Midlothian Council Q3 Performance Report and Balanced Scorecard	Chief Executive

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Executive presented the Q3 report which provides a summary of actions outlined in the individual performance reports presented by Officers and that the Balanced Scorecard provides an overview of performance in line with the Single Midlothian Plan.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report and opened it up to questions. No questions were raised.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

The Chief Executive

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.7	Inspection of Midlothian Council/HSCP Care at Home Service by the Care Inspectorate	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Head of Adult Services presented the report and highlighted the 4 areas of focus of the inspection. The Head of Adult Services thanked all staff in the service.</p> <p>Committee recognised the positive points within the inspection report and stated it looked forward to an action plan in due course.</p> <p>It was queried what the action tracker was and the Head of Adult Services explained that a spreadsheet is used but work is ongoing to record, track and monitor through Mosaic. The Head of Adult Services that the care and support audit template care plan was reviewed every six months but this is fluid.</p>		
Decision		
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.		
Action		
Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.8	Joint Inspection of Adult Services, Physical Disabilities, Long Term Conditions and Carers	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Head of Adult Services explained that this is a strategic inspection that took place from April – December 2023. The Head of Adult Services outlined main sections contained within the report.</p> <p>The Head of Adult Services thanked all staff involved in facilitating the in depth inspection.</p> <p>The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB updated Committee that 8 inspections have taken place across Health and Social Care this year and thanked all staff involved.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the officers for positive inspection reports and thanked them for their hard work.</p>		
Decision		
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.		
Action		
Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.9	Sacred Heart Primary School Post Inspection Progress Update	Education Chief Operating Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Education Chief Operating Officer provided an updated report with regards to the previous Inspection Report on Sacred Heart Primary School Inspection Report.</p> <p>No comments or questions raised.</p>		
Decision		
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.		
Action		
Education Chief Operating Officer		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.10	Inspection of Midlothian's Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption Services	Chief Officer Childrens' Services / Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Chief Officer Childrens' Services presented a suite of reports on Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption Services. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services informed Committee that this is the same team delivering all three services and was an unannounced inspection.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Childrens' Services thanked all staff and carers for the excellent work they undertake on a daily basis.</p> <p>The Committee recognised a good report.</p> <p>A question was raised on the launch of the recruitment campaign. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services confirmed that filming is almost complete and will be launched soon.</p> <p>A question was asked whether the Care Inspectorate take into budgetary constraints when undertaking inspections. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services confirmed that officers do raise this when inspections take place, however did highlight that inspections are regular and there is no additional resource to support these and provide the evidence required.</p> <p>It was commented that this report did not reflect the service as known by members and that there are significant pressures on the service. The ratings are accepted reluctantly and members look forward to seeing the next report in light of the new staffing measures introduced.</p>		
Decision		

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Chief Officer Childrens' Services / Chief Social Work Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.11	Update on Newbyres Care Village	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Head of Adult Services presented the update report following two previous inspections of Newbyres. The Head of Adult Services explained the enhanced governance measures in place through the newly established Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG) in response to the inspection findings, as outlined in the report.

A question was raised on the end date for temporary arrangements. More information was requested about the admissions criteria. It was queried if considerations were being given to other uses for Newbyres such as inclusion of respite. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that all aspects were being considered and included in the SWAG assurance and ongoing reviews. The Head of Adult Services is awaiting the outcome of the ongoing reviews to then plan next steps.

With regards to the financial challenge, the Head of Adult Services was asked how much was lost annually and how does the Council balance agency and permanent staff. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB responded that the use of agency staff was not an active choice but required from a safety perspective and there are workforce challenges when trying to recruit permanent staffing. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB talked about the work that is ongoing this year to improve the financial position, and how this is part of a wider strategic review. Committee requested more financial detail when further reports are presented about Newbyres.

A question was asked about what the Care Inspectorate requires around staffing levels. The Head of Adult Services explained there is a sickness absence challenge, and a focussed piece of work is underway to deal with this.

The Committee commented on the positive changes contained with the report and actions detailed in comparison to previous reports and congratulated the Head of Adult Services on progress to date.

The Committee commented that the cycle of improvements and issues continues to change and there is no sustained positive impact.

The Chair commented on the timeline since the previous reports and clarity is required on some of the detail within and a sustainable operating model is required. The Chair asked if a peer review had taken place. The Head of Adult Services said

that issues are being addressed and accepted that there is work to be done.

Committee requested a follow up report in six months.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

6 Private Reports

No items for discussion.

7 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at 11:00am.

The meeting terminated at 13:28.