

MINUTES of SPECIAL MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL CABINET held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Tuesday, 3 March 2015 at 9.00 am.

Present:- Councillors Thompson(Convener), Bryant, Johnstone and Rosie.

Apologies:- Councillor Constable, Mr Bourne, and Mr Hayes.

1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

2 2013/14 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

There was submitted report, dated February 2015, by the Chief Executive, updating the Cabinet on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and presenting an overview of the Council's performance against the indicators for 2013/14.

The report explained that all 32 Scottish Councils had been working with the Improvement Service to develop a common approach to benchmarking, which was grounded in reporting standard information on the council services provided to local communities across Scotland. This work had resulted in a national dataset comprising of 60 indicators,(five of which would be removed from 2014/15 onwards).The key principle of the indicators was that they were comparable across all 32 councils. Only 51 of the indicators were relevant to Midlothian. The indicators were grouped under seven service groupings consisting of Social Work Services; Children's Services; Corporate Services; Culture and Leisure; Economic Development; Environmental Services and Housing Services.

The results of the Benchmarking Framework analysis had shown that the Council's performance had been rated as follows:-

Scottish Ranking	Percentage of indicators falling within each quartile 2013/14
Top quartile (ranked 1-8)	24% (12/51)
2nd quartile (ranked 9-16)	31% (16/51)
3rd quartile (ranked 17-24)	25% (13/51)
Bottom quartile (ranked 25 and below)	20% (10/51)

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The report incorporated Summary tables showing the indicators in the top and bottom quartiles along with a full breakdown of the Midlothian 2013/14 results with Scottish averages. Within the Council, performance against the indicators would be monitored as part of the revised performance management arrangements which included quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

- (a) To note the significant number of indicators relating to operational performance in the top 50% of indicators;
- (b) To note the differences in opinion between the general public on the quality of Council services and the users/clients of those services;
- (c) To note that the energy efficiency rating was related to Council Housing and was largely a result of the Council's investment in installing Central Heating; insulation; and reducing Carbon Emissions;
- (d) To note the 2013/14 LGBF comparison results and note that further benchmarking would be undertaken to provide more effective services .

3 2014/2015 Performance Reports – Quarter 3

There were submitted Performance Reports for 2014/15 in respect of Midlothian Council and the Plans for Customer and Housing Services; Adult Social Care; Children's Services; Communities and Economy; Education; Commercial Operations; Finance and Integrated Service Support; and Property and Facilities Management. Each report contained a summary of the progress in delivering Strategic Outcomes and a summary of emerging challenges and risks. Thereafter, the Cabinet received verbal updates in respect of each of the reports.

Decision

- (a) To note the increased level of attainment and achievement in schools;
- (b) To note the continued financial challenges facing the Council;
- (c) To note the preventative steps taken to prevent a recurrence of a chemical spillage at Stobhill Depot;
- (d) To note that the reduced performance in relation to the re-let timescale for housing had resulted from the need to prioritise re-housing of existing tenants from Newbyres Crescent, Gorebridge;
- (e) To note that the "Spring Service" for women offenders had been established and would continue to function, notwithstanding the withdrawal of East Lothian Council from the project;

- (f) To note in respect of support of clients discharged from hospital, that assessments were now undertaken in the home thus providing a more apt support for the client;
- (g) To note that the number of Midlothian children on the Child Protection Register, had reduced from 93 to 33;
- (h) To note the national initiative introduced by Police Scotland in respect of Child Exploitation;
- (i) To note that as a result of recent staff appointments, resources were now available to revise the Child Poverty Action Plan;
- (j) To note that a number of initiatives were in place to assist parents in supporting school pupils; and
- (k) To note the intention to introduce a Committee Management system during the course of 2015/16;

The meeting terminated at 10.20 am.