

**MINUTES of SPECIAL MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council
Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith on Wednesday 2
September 2015 at 11.00 am.

Present: **Councillors Milligan (Chair), Baxter, Muirhead, Wallace and Young.**

Apologies for Absence: **Councillor Pottinger.**

1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of Meetings of 3 June 2015 (2 No.) were submitted and approved.

3 HMICS – Independent Review of Police Call Handling

There was submitted report by the Joint Director, Health and Social Care, advising of the consultation by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) on the review of police call handling, and to consider a collective submission from Midlothian Council.

The report highlighted that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland had been directed by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to undertake a review and HMICS was seeking elected representatives' views and experience in police contact, in terms of the objectives which were attached as an appendix to the report.

All Midlothian Councillors had received prior notification of the online questionnaire from HMICS, and this had also been publicised to the wider public through the Council's social media site.

Whilst the timescale for the online option closed on 23 August, 2015, HMICS had advised separately that they would accept submissions from local authorities into September. The Head of Customer and Housing Services was heard in amplification of the report after which various Members commented on the questionnaire and sought clarification on the recommended approach to providing a response.

The report also noted that the approach taken by the Council had provided a point of reference for future reporting formats.

Decision

The Committee agreed that Elected Members provide individual responses to the questionnaire and that any Group also submit a collective submission if deemed appropriate to HMICS, by 30 September 2015.

4 Elected Members Scrutiny Activity in the Audit Scotland Risk Assessment Report 2014

There was submitted report by the Joint Director, Health and Social Care, advising that following the audit of Housing Benefits in Midlothian Revenues Services in September, 2014, an Improvement Plan was developed in response to the Risk Assessment Report published by Audit Scotland, which was reported in 2014 separately to the Cabinet, Audit Committee and the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee.

The Head of Customer and Housing Services was heard in amplification of the report after which various Members commented on the Risk Assessment Report.

Decision

- (a) To note the reported scrutiny activity; and
- (b) To endorse the updated current Improvement Plan.

(Action: Joint Director, Health and Social Care)

5 2014/15 Performance Reports

There were submitted Performance Reports for 2014/15 in respect of Adult Social Care; Customer and Housing Services; Children's Services; Communities and Economy; and Education. Each report contained a summary of the progress in delivering Strategic Outcomes and a summary of emerging challenges and risks. Thereafter, the Committee received verbal updates in respect of each of the reports.

Decision

- (a) To note that all families had been relocated from the Newbyres development at Gorebridge;
- (b) To note that Phase 2 of the Social Housing Programme planned to deliver 420 Council houses by 2017. Three developments in Penicuik were on schedule for delivery and housing allocation over the Summer 2015;
- (c) To note that in respect of the refurbishment work being missed was due to the problem of not being able to gain access to those properties;
- (d) To note that a breakdown of the reasons why there had been 8 cases where patients had been delayed within hospitals for more than 72 hours would be provided to elected Members;

- (e) To note that local experience showed that there was no apparent decline in the number of dementia sufferers or the complexity of the care required within this area;
- (f) To note that the Council's foster campaign was ongoing and that an initiative to try and reduce the age of foster carers was an integral part of this ;
- (g) To note that the need to address the recent increase in sickness absence levels was a priority;
- (h) To note that it was not possible at this stage to predict the level of support in terms of financial or staffing required as a result of the National Inquiry into Historical Child Abuse;
- (i) To note that the Edinburgh Region City Deal was going to be a major area of work over the forthcoming months;
- (j) To note concerns raised by various Members with regard to the Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Poltonhall Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in relation to Transport, Doctors Surgeries and Parking facilities:
- (k) To note the current position in relation to the Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration, particularly with regard to retail opportunities;
- (l) To note that the two areas of Food Control which were off target due to staff numbers being below the establishment figure were due to staff turnover and was being addressed;
- (m) To note that the attendance levels of pupils would be a key priority moving forward and that the current attendance procedures were being reviewed;
- (n) To note that Positive Destinations would continue to be a priority and that more information on the Children's University would be obtained prior to providing an update to elected Members on this issue;
- (o) To note the anticipated introduction of the named Persons Act in 2016; the possible consequences for the Council; and the fact that there remained a campaign of opposition to the introduction of this legislation;

To otherwise note the reports.

(Action: (d) Head of Adult Social Care and (n) Head of Education)

The meeting terminated at 12.55pm.

