

Minute of Meeting

Cabinet
Tuesday 5 November 2024
Item No 4.1



Cabinet

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 17 September 2024	11:00 am	Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith and MS Teams

Present:

Councillor Parry (Chair)	Councillor Alexander
Councillor Bowen	Councillor Cassidy
Councillor McKenzie	Councillor Scott
Councillor McManus	

In attendance:

Grace Vickers, Chief Executive
Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Joan Tranent, Head of Children's Services
Nick Clater, Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Hannah Forbes, Democratic Services Officer
Fiona Kennedy, Service Manager - Health and Social Care

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed those in attendance to the meeting of Cabinet.

2 Order of Business

The Order of Business was as detailed within the agenda with the additional Education Appointment Committee minute to be noted under item 4.3.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 4.1 The Minute of the Meeting of Cabinet held on the 28 May 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record.
- 4.2 The Action Log of Cabinet was noted.

5. Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	A Summary of the Care Inspectorate Inspections of Day Care of Children, August 2023 - June 2024	Education Chief Operating Officer
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The Education Chief Operating Officer spoke to the report that outlines inspection activity by the Care Inspectorate in 17 Early Learning and Childcare settings across Midlothian. According to the report, 22 inspections of Early Years settings had taken place. The national standard is to achieve “Good” or “Better”, and Midlothian has 90% of settings currently sitting at that level. The settings that do not meet the national standard are supported by the Council to improve within a fixed time frame. The report references Mount Esk Family Learning Centre being upgraded and having 2 Excellents as part of their overall judgement. It was stated that only 10 settings in Scotland have such high settings.</p>		
Recommendations		
<p>Cabinet is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Note the content of the summary of the inspection reports.(ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with these reports.(iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes.		
<p>The Chair thanked the Education Chief Operating Officer for the report and passed on thanks and congratulations.</p>		
<p>There was a question regarding the weak grade for play and learning, and how we can raise the standard in these situations.</p>		
<p>The Education Chief Operating Officer advised that a weak grade is not something we want for any of our settings. The Council has a duty as a guarantor of quality, meaning our</p>		

role is very clear in terms of working with the individual setting through an improvement period, which entails a well-defined and time limited plan.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	A Summary of the HMIE inspection of Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare, June 2024	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Education Chief Operating Officer spoke to the report and detailed that the report outlines the inspection of Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare centre. It was stated that Scots Corner is a standalone provision. The inspection took place in June 2024, and inspectors identified many strengths, including leadership, relationships, professional growth of staff, and how these strengths are having a positive impact on the children. The inspection was graded “Good” and “Very Good” and there will be no further visits.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Note the content of the summary of the inspection report.
- (ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with this report.
- (iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes.

It was stated that it was pleasing to see this report and the gradings that have been given. It was highlighted that there is a lot of army children and service personnel who use the setting and that is testament to their good work there.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Progress Report for Sacred Heart Primary School and Nursery class	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Education Chief Operating Officer spoke to the report and advised that the report outlines the progress made at Sacred Heart Primary School and Nursery class since the Education Scotland inspection report of May 2023. Sacred Heart was inspected in March 2023 and the Council was disappointed with that outcome. Support has been previously provided and we were confident the school was improving.

HMI made a return visit in April 2024, with the focus being previous recommendations. HMI advised there was strong evidence of progress against the areas, and they identified further work to be taken regarding outdoor learning, reporting progress to parent and carers, use of data and observations. Work is already underway to address these activities.

Education Scotland is confident that the school will continue to improve and have disengaged from the school and have no plans to make any further visits.

The Education Chief Operating Officer passed thanks to the Interim Head Teacher for their drive, determination and resilience for getting the school to a stronger place.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Note the content of this progress report.
- (ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with this report.
- (iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes.

It was highlighted that this is a great success story, the Deputy Head has done a lot of work to bring this up to a great standard. Congratulations was passed to everyone that has worked hard to get Sacred Heart to this standard.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.4	A summary of the HMIE inspection of Woodburn Primary School and Nursery class	Education Chief Operating Officer
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The Education Chief Operating Officer spoke to the report which outlines the inspection of Woodburn Primary School and Nursery class. Inspectors highlighted key strengths such as very positive relationships across the school, the effective use of data and the development of staff to help meet our learners' needs. The next steps included for the school to continue to share good practise, learn in new and unfamiliar context and to continue to develop observations in the nursery. The</p>		

inspectors were very impressed by the work of Woodburn Nursery and Primary School and there will be no further inspections.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Note the content of the summary of the inspection report.
- (ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with this report.
- (iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes.

The attendees highlighted the fantastic work at Woodburn by staff, parents and carers, especially given the size of the school and the SIMD ranking.

The Chair also stated that the school is a credit to the area and the Council.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.5	A Summary of the HMIE inspection of Beeslack Community High School	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Education Chief Operating Officer spoke to the report which outlines the inspection of Beeslack Community High School. The inspection took place in January 2024. The key strengths included strong leadership of the Head Teacher, trusting and caring relationships between staff and children, and the support and strategies to promote wellbeing in children. The report noted areas of improvement, including continuing to develop the approaches to strategic planning, a review of the curriculum, and to raise the attainment of children with additional support needs. The inspector had confidence in the leadership of the school and the capacity for further improvement. There will be no further visits.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Note the content of the summary of the inspection report.
- (ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with this report.
- (iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes.

Concerns were raised regarding the large volume of children with mental health issues in secondary schools. Schools should put further focus on the mental wellbeing of children. A question was asked regarding the raising the attainment and how they would go about that.

The Education Chief Operating Officer advised the annex is a Midlothian provision for children with identified additional support needs who may not be able to access mainstream education. The staff were praised for their incredible holistic development of these children. Inspectors have asked the Council to look at crediting some of the experiences for the young people within that provision.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.6	Education Q1 2024/25 Performance	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Education Chief Operating Officer detailed that this report covers the performance and progress of both education and community lifelong learning and education between April to June 2024. They are proud of the work achieved in raising attainment and we are confident that we have strengthened the universal and targeted approaches through the development of teaching and assessment framework. The Education Chief Operating Officer highlighted the details of the progress in the raising attainment data.

In Curriculum of Excellence levels, 6 measures are marginally up and 3 are marginally down by less than 1%. The inside data from the education data is published tomorrow and will be reported in the next quarter. An increased offer for senior faced learners has been put forward in the introduction of the Midlothian aligned curriculum. A lot of work is taking place in anti-bullying, mental health and neurodiversity for priority 2.

Tutors, capital funding for buildings and accessible services for Community Learning and Development work were raised as a cause for concern. The Education Chief Operating Officer summarised the good progress in targets and priorities across Education and Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability between April to June. Thanks was passed to all staff and partners for all the hard work and commitment to those that we serve.

The Education Chief Operating Officer mentioned some teething issues with the new Midlothian aligned curriculum. The alignment of the 6 secondary schools is the first part of a very ambitious programme, more will follow. A further report on Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework with updated information is to follow. Additional Support Needs supports are needed for all our schools, as we have a legal obligation to ensure we get it right for every classroom each day. It was mentioned that there is a need to report back to Scottish Government at Primary 1,4 and S3 Curriculum of Excellence levels. Exclusions are currently higher than what we would like which is a national concern in terms of the level of distress and behaviour that we are seeing in some of our learners.

Members present highlighted a visit to the new Easthouses Primary School and thanked the Education department for all their work at the school. The school has incredible facilities and all reports coming from the school are excellent.

The Chair thanked the Education Chief Operating Officer for the report. The Chair suggested that a detailed one page briefing should come back regarding Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and provided to councillors.

Decision

The Education Chief Operating Officer

Action

One page briefing to come back on Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and provided to councillors.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.7	Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities Q1 2024/25 Performance	Chief Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities and Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The report by the Head of Children's Services details that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child continue to drive forward all of Children's Services and improvements. The plan for 2024-30 was launched on 20 June 2024. The partners are currently reviewing the report, and it is expected to receive feedback from the Promise Team on its accessibility. This should be ready to go live at the end of 2024. The Chief Officer Children's Services was happy to report that referrals over the past year have reduced by 50%, however child protection work remains extremely high. This proves to be a challenge as child protection work cannot be given to newly qualified workers. The Family Wellbeing Service is now located in the Easthouses Primary School, currently working to get a framework to record referrals. Domestic abuse is still the main reason why children's names go on to the children protection register, more work to be done on this. A huge thank you was passed to the settlement team who work with people from Ukraine, Afghanistan and asylum-seeking children, as their work has a huge impact on the people that move into Midlothian.

The challenges and risks include unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as the volume is continually growing. The Council has been pressured significantly by the Home Office to take unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. At this stage it was highlighted that Midlothian is currently full, which is why the Council is in negotiation on how that can be taken forward.

The Chair congratulated the Chief Officer Children's Services and the team for the 'Who Cares' Scotland rewards. The council won 2 awards - Stable Foundation and Outstanding Corporate Parent, thanks to be passed for the commitment and progress on the Promise.

Members of the committee highlighted the disability service and the redirected support, and the importance of families being aware of it. The fantastic work of the Chief Officer Children's Services and the team was commended.

The Chief Officer Children's Services advised that recruitment has been very challenging since the pandemic. There has been a couple of recruitment campaigns and unfortunately there were not very many social workers at the college. There is a lot of movement within the business, so it is hoped that the Council will gain these new recruits to let them gain experience.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.8	Corporate Solutions Q1 2024/25 Performance	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions detailed that this report presents the performance for Corporate Solutions for Quarter 1 and introduced the following key achievements.

Continued increase in library visits, a 2% increase in virtual visits, which demonstrates the success of communications promoting E-resources and the upgrade of the library management system. The library service secured more external funding from the Scottish Government's climate engagement fund which was used to launch a new seed library in Dalkeith and establish a gardening group building on last year's successful external funding to develop the outdoor garden space.

In the theme of promoting climate activities, the two brand new Lend and Mend hubs that are now located at Loanhead and Danderhall. It was highlighted that Midlothian Council is the first library service in Scotland to have further rolled out the Lend and Mend hubs.

The forestry tree surveying app on the customer service platform also went live in Quarter 1 which allows land service to monitor trees across the county. There was the launch of the new school menu for the 2024-2025 school year and the increased uptake supports the Councils commitment to supporting households with cost of living pressures and ensures that all children and young people have a hot meal every day of the term.

Another key piece of work was the publication of the employee and equality monitoring report which details the composition and characters of the workforce and information on pay gap and occupational segregation. This will be used to inform the development of the workforce strategy.

In terms of local procurement, 25 new Midlothian suppliers have been registered on Public Contracts Scotland.

The committee thanked the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions for the report. Attendees were especially happy to hear of the new Midlothian suppliers. A question was asked about whether the donation of books to local libraries should be encouraged. Attendees also mentioned positive feedback regarding school lunches.

The age of the workforce was mentioned, stating that there is not a lot of younger people working in the Council and the age gap is very large. It was also asked if the equality and diversity calendar could be shared, to which Chief Officer Corporate Solutions responded that it will be going on the Intranet shortly. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions also agreed with the concerns regarding the age of population which is partly the reason for looking at a new workforce strategy.

The committee also discussed the winter fuel payment. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions mentioned that the topic was discussed at the previous Cost of Living Task Force meeting, and that this would be picked up by Council communications and promoted to increase take up of Pension Credit and associated benefits for residents.

Decision

Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Action

The winter fuel payment to be picked up in communications.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.9	Place Q1 2024/25 Performance	Chief Officer Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Place presented the report. Key achievements in the report included the work on road services, resurfacing and potholes and the installation of 24 new speed message signs and 19 school zone signs. The activities of the Neighbourhood Environment Team, launched in Quarter 1, have received positive feedback from communities. The regulatory services have been granted a Modern Apprentice by the Council and they are currently looking at extending this into a second position. In terms of inward investment, we have seen 10 businesses from out with Midlothian make enquires.

The committee noted that more information on how food waste is dealt with would be beneficial. The committee also acknowledged the amazing work of the Environmental Team, and the reduction in complaints regarding the quality of roads thanks to ongoing work. A member of the committee asked if the Council could change to doing both on market and off market sales in housing.

The Chair asked if the Chief Officer Place can investigate AI as a potential solution to the communication of the ongoing road works. A member of the committee asked what kind of notice we receive of road works and road closures.

The Chief Officer Place advised that the rural food waste begins in October, and that a programme for the Neighbourhood Environment Team can be brought back to Cabinet for members to see. The Chief Officer Place hopes additional road signage will encourage drivers to take alternative routes. The Chief Officer Place

also mentioned that we have impressive sustainment from the Housing team and the housing register is increasing. The Chief Officer Place would be keen to pursue off and on market purchasing. The committee members expressed their appreciation of signage on roundabouts in Midlothian and the revenue it is now bringing in.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

The Chief Officer Place to bring a programme for the Neighbourhood Environment Team back to Cabinet for members.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.10	Adult Health and Social Care Q1 2024/25 Performance	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer presented the report including the following highlights.

Anyone referred to treatment for substance use have accessed treatment within 3 weeks. Work in relation to medication assisted treatment continues, and we should meet the remaining 5 treatment standards by end of March 2025. This will also assist the work around drug deaths.

The work on suicide prevention was highlighted, continuing to work with Chief Officers on the public protection outlook to align suicide prevention with that agenda.

The Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer mentioned that services for old people and those with learning disabilities is experiencing the least pressure. 2 new housing developments were highlighted and estimated for the end of year completion, one in Loanhead and the other in Bonnyrigg. The latter is specifically for vulnerable people who may not meet other thresholds for learning disabilities services.

The Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer also mentioned the Your Chance to Change project and the Spring Service. They stated that the Council is short of target for some of the Performance Indicators, especially around risk and resilience. Stage 1 complaints are poorly responded to, and complex complaints should be triggered to Stage 2 quicker.

The Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer thanked all staff within health and social care and acknowledged their hard work over the last few months.

A member of the committee noted the good news in the report regarding the 100% referrals in 21 days. A question was asked regarding the one to two people who transition with complex needs and what work we are doing around that.

The Chair thanked Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer for the report.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.11	Midlothian Council Q1 2024/25 Performance	Chief Executive

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Executive spoke to the report detailing the summary of actions in line with Single Midlothian Plan. The report compliments the individual service reports that have already been presented today. In Quarter 1 we had 5 indicators that are off target, one measure relating to performance against revenue budget which was covered in the recent monitoring report to August Council. One relating to invoices and 3 relating to complaints.

The Chief Executive thanked all officers for their hard work over the course of Quarter 1 and the significant outcomes that have been achieved.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report and noted that they are happy to reiterate thanks on behalf of the Cabinet committee to officers as well.

Decision

The report was noted

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.12	Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection – Midlothian Partnership	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer detailed that this was the second of the main strategic inspections that we have had in 12 months, and the Service Manager - Health and Social Care was to present the outcome of that inspection.

The Service Manager - Health and Social Care detailed the key points. The inspection activity commenced in January 2024 and concluded in July. The focus

of the inspection was to determine if adults in risk of harm were safe, protected and supported. The report notes strengths, such as strong strategic vision, our commendable management, high standards of risk assessments and our timely use of advocacy. The improvement areas were discussed, including health attendance, police governance records and the engagement with individuals with lived experience.

There was no grade awarded but Midlothian were deemed to have clear strengths supporting positive experience outcomes for adults that are at risk of harm which collectively outweighed the areas for improvement.

The Service Manager - Health and Social Care extended thanks to all staff that were involved in this strategic inspection. The Chair thanked the Service Manager - Health and Social Care for the report and opened to any questions. None were asked.

Decision

The report was noted.

Action

5.13	Imrie Place, Penicuik - Proposed Double Yellow Line Waiting Restriction	The Chief Officer Place
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Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Place spoke to the report and detailed the recommendations.

It is recommended that Cabinet;

- 1.1 Note the safety considerations requiring the introduction of measures to improve access and safety concerns at Imrie Place, Penicuik; and
- 1.2 Note that an objection was received regarding the proposed double yellow line waiting restriction and that officers have considered this objection but consider that this scheme should be implemented as advertised, to
- 1.3 Approve the proposal (R5.3.108) and implement a 23 metres long section of Double Yellow Line (all day) waiting restrictions along one side of Imrie Place in Penicuik, as advertised on 14 March,2024.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report.

The report was moved by Councillor McManus who noted that this road provides access to the doctor surgery and expressed keeping this road clear for ambulances. Councillor Alexander seconded the report.

The Chair highlighted the upcoming retirement of Joan Tranent and thanked her for all her hard work on behalf of Cabinet.

Decision
The report was noted.
Action

6 Private Reports

None were presented.

7 Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 5th November at 11:00am.

The meeting terminated at 12:38 pm.