

# Minute of Meeting



## Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee

Date	Time	Venue
21 September 2021	11.00 am	Held via Microsoft Teams

### Present:

Councillor Johnstone (Chair)	
Councillor Alexander	Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Hardie	Councillor McKenzie
Councillor Parry	Councillor Lay Douglas
Councillor Smail	Councillor Wallace
Councillor Winchester	Councillor McCall

### Also in Attendance:

Grace Vickers	Chief Executive
Kevin Anderson	Executive Director Place
Morag Barrow	Joint Director Health and Social Care
Gary Fairley	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Derek Oliver	Chief Officer Place
Joan Tranent	Chief Officer Children's Services
Myra Forsyth	Continuous Improvement Manager
Grace Cowan	Head of Primary Care and Older Peoples Services
Jill Stacey	Chief Internal Auditor
Saty Kaur	Executive Business Manager
Elaine Johnstone	Policy and Scrutiny Officer
William Venters	Principal Solicitor
Ross Neill	Democratic Services Team Leader
Andrew Henderson	Democratic Services Officer

## 1 Apologies

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Apologies for absence had been received on behalf of Councillor Russell and Fiona Robertson

## 2 Order of Business

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The Order of Business was as detailed within the Agenda.

## 3 Declarations of interest

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No declarations of interest were received.

## 4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

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The Minute of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 08 June 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

### **Matters arising:**

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of detail about actions resulting from the previous meeting. It was agreed that an action log would be formulated in addition to the minute for the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee going forward.

## 5. Reports

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Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Adult Social Care Q1 Performance Report	Joint Director Health and Social Care
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
<p>The Adult Health and Social Care Q1 Performance report was submitted. The Head of Primary Care and Older Peoples Services highlighted the progress in the delivery of strategic outcomes and summary of the emerging challenges as detailed within the report and thereafter answered questions raised by Elected Members.</p> <p>Following questions from members, Morag Barrow clarified that options were being assessed for the future of Gorebridge Leisure centre's role as a vaccination centre and acknowledged that Sport and Leisure were exploring options regarding how to handle public members of leisure centre's members who had been affected by limited service as a result of facilities being reprioritised for other uses. Morag also advised that she was working with Midlothian Integrated Joint Board (MIJB) and NHS Lothian with regards to future cancer treatments. Morag agreed to feedback to the respective councillors regarding the back log of hours for unpaid work service users and the success rates of Police reducing the supply of illicit substances.</p>		
<b>Decision</b>		
Noted the content of the report		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Children's Service, Partnerships and Communities Q1 Performance Report	Chief Officer, Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
<p>The Children's Service, Partnerships and Communities Q1 Performance Report. The Chief Officer Children, Young People and Partnerships highlighted the progress in the delivery of strategic outcomes and summary of the emerging challenges as detailed within the report and thereafter answered questions raised by Elected Members.</p> <p>Following questions from members, Joan Tranent clarified that the GIRFEC group was in place to mitigate the risk of child poverty. In addition plans regarding Domestic violence prevention were being discussed at the Public Protection Committee as part of a multi-agency forum. Joan noted that options were being explored to mitigate the impact of rising heating and food costs and that there are currently income maximisation officers who can assist members of the public. Joan acknowledged that work is being undertaken regarding unpaid carer support in partnership with Adult Service and that schools had an obligation to identify children who could be unpaid carers and create a plan.</p>		
<b>Decision</b>		
Noted the content of the report		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Corporate Solutions Q1 Performance Report	Executive Director: Place
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
<p>The Corporate Solutions Q1 Performance Report was submitted. The Chief Officer: Corporate Solutions highlighted the progress in the delivery of strategic outcomes and summary of the emerging challenges as detailed within the report and thereafter answered questions raised by Elected Members.</p> <p>Following questions from members, it was noted that regarding the decentralisation of rent payment centres, council rent could be paid for via the same mechanism as council tax and that the latter had been sustained throughout the pandemic. Card payments were also to be rolled out. Regarding procurement, it was noted that the local award of contracts had been limited despite efforts made to encourage local suppliers. There has been limited success in the context of delivering a joint procurement strategy with other local authorities and Midlothian Council has proceeded to recruit a chief procurement officer. It was noted that problems with the 'customer service platform' resulted from issues surrounding remote working and software has since been implemented to ensure that voicemails are transcribed to email if left unopened. Regarding specific issues with the 'Tell us once' service, Kevin advised that there had been difficulties with the National Registers of Scotland difficulties working with National Registers of Scotland and that Midlothian had also been receiving calls from outwith the local authority however this has since been redirected.</p> <p>Gary Fairley noted that he intended to bring a report to the next Council Meeting to cover financial reserves and highlighted that the cabinet secretary had explained to the Scottish Government public finance committee that the aim was to publish the budget in December and that decisions would then be made based on local</p>		

government settlement in February. Gary noted that the future capital program wasn't funded from reserves but via section 75 contributions from housing developers and government grants. Gary advised that PPP type assets were still a matter in discussion with COSLA and the Scottish Government. Kevin highlighted that there was a diminishing customer base for housing benefit following universal credit. Housing benefits remained for homeless clients and income maximisation was assessed. Gary agreed to seek further clarification regarding the increase of corporate complaints during quarter 1. It was noted that benefit collection rates had remained buoyant following the end of the furlough scheme and that collection levels were continuing to be monitored. Joan Tranent advised that the methods to access the essential food fund had been advertised at schools and social work centres. Derek Oliver agreed to feedback with regards to specific businesses that had been approached as part of the business gateway.

**Decision**

Noted the content of the report

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.4	Education Q1 Performance Report	Executive Director: Children, Young People and Partnerships

**Outline of report and summary of discussion**

The Education Q1 Performance Report was submitted. The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Partnerships highlighted the progress in the delivery of strategic outcomes and summary of the emerging challenges as detailed within the report no questions were raised by elected members.

**Decision**

Noted the content of the report

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.5	Place Q1 Performance Report	Executive Director: Place

**Outline of report and summary of discussion**

The Place Q1 Performance Report 1 was submitted. The Executive Director: Place highlighted the progress in the delivery of strategic outcomes and summary of the emerging challenges as detailed within the report and answered questions raised by Elected Members.

With regard to the receipt of hot meals for students above Primary 4, it was confirmed that Primary 1 to Primary 4 continued to be catered and that plans to reintroduce this after the October half term break were being considered where possible. Food supply and security are dependant on local suppliers and the impact of Brexit to the supply chain is being monitored via the Brexit oversight group. Regarding whether the costings of future homes and construction projects had been completed and if these were reflective of market inflation, increased material costs and supply chain difficulties. Kevin noted that the costings did not take this into account but that council could push back on contracts that were already in place. It was also highlighted that the treasuries and bank of England's estimate was that inflation would be reduced by the end of the calendar year but that short term measures that could be considered. It was noted that energy prices would also have an impact. Regarding the perceived need for labour, Kevin

advised that Midlothian council had not been much of an impact noting that career pathway was being developed and that terms and conditions were more beneficial. When asked as to why £20 Million had been spent on housing in 2020, Kevin noted that this figure also included acquisitions and land bank investments and confirmed that a full breakdown would be brought to the next audit committee.

It was noted that the lack of movement to the average homeless time had to be referenced alongside the fact that people staying in tenancies for longer and that other housing options were available, including shared accommodation. It was also noted that some applicants were being selective of properties and areas which resulted in longer waits. Regarding property turnaround times following a change of tenant, full house clearances are undertaken based on the new tenant's wishes and the condition of items. When items have been left a disclaimer is used. It was also highlighted that Midlothian council used the turnaround period to complete essential work's to minimise the impact on new tenants. It was noted that there was a limited stock of wheelchair adapted housing and that matching was dependent on the area of choice.

**Post meeting note from Executive Director Place**

Further to question submitted by Councillor McCall at PRS Committee in respect of the support being provided through the Housing First initiative.

Kevin advised that it's provided in a way that ensures the principles of Housing First are met; which meets the needs and wishes of the individual, consequently the number of hours provided may reduce or increase over through the duration of the tenancy. In addition to support to set up/establish the tenancy and get it off to a positive start, the support provided by the Housing First support provider (WithYou) is intended to compliment other support provided by other specialist providers across a range of services i.e. substance misuse, and mental health, with a view improving individual outcomes.

For example in August, almost 120 hours of support was provided to 21 Housing First tenants. 58 hours provided as pre-tenancy or settling in support to 8 people. 48 hours was provided as on-going support to 13 people who are more established in their tenancy. This ongoing support ranged from 25 minutes for one person to 435 minutes for another (the remaining hours are allocated to admin tasks such as attending selection meetings and the SMS huddle meeting).

**Decision**

Noted the content of the report.

Councillor Ley Douglas left the meeting at 12:45

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.6	Midlothian Council Report Q1	Chief Executive

**Outline of report and summary of discussion**

The Midlothian Council Report Q1 was submitted. The Chief Executive was heard in amplification of the report after which she answered questions raised by Elected Members. With regard to the £3.3 million attached to bus partnership it was advised that an update had been provided to the citadel partnership and that this would be forwarded to democratic services for circulation.

Thereafter, Cllr McKenzie, seconded by Cllr Parry moved for approval of the creation of a subcommittee aimed at (a) managing the risks and concerns to local

authorities (b) monitoring the regulatory impacts of Brexit (c) the of Brexit impact on number of EU migrants (d) the increase of costs to buy goods. As an amendment, Councillor Smaill, seconded by Councillor Winchester, moved defer this to standing order working group. On a vote being taken by way of a roll call vote, 7 votes were cast for the Motion and 2 for the amendment with 1 abstention.

*13:06 William Venters entered the meeting.*

William advised that further guidance from the monitoring officer should be sought due to concerns that (a) the establishment of a subcommittee was ultra vires and (b) that the issues highlighted were not already covered by the relevant working group.

#### Decision

- a) Clarification to be sought from the monitoring officer with regards to the creation of subcommittee.
- b) To note the contents of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1.12pm.