

Minute of Meeting

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
Monday 13 December 2021
Item no: 4.1



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

Apologies for absence had been received on behalf of Councillor Russell

2 Order of Business

The Order of Business was as detailed within the Agenda.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Minute of the Meeting of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee held on 08 June 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

Matters arising:

Concern was expressed by members regarding the lack of detail on actions resulting from the previous meeting contained within the minute. 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

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Adult Social Care Q1 Performance Report	Joint Director Health and Social Care
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<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>In response to the question regarding support for people with long term conditions and the encouragement of volunteers and family carers to ease the burden on formal statutory services, Morag Barrow advised that work was being conducted with carers and third sector organisations to encourage the improvement of physical activity and general support. A Wellbeing Lead and Voluntary Services Co-Ordinator have been recruited to improve the capacity of driving this forward.</p> <p>Following further questions from Members, Morag Barrow clarified that options were being assessed for the future of Gorebridge Leisure centre's role as a mass vaccination centres and that options about the use of Gorebridge after March 2022 were being explored. Morag Barrow acknowledged that Sport and Leisure are exploring options of how to offer services to leisure centre members as a result of facilities being prioritised for other uses, however stressed that the booster program would take priority.</p> <p>In response to the question submitted about the improvement, availability and expansion of the Cancer Journey Service and the need to secure future funding. Morag Barrow acknowledged the importance of the service and highlighted that</p>		

she was working with colleagues within the Midlothian Integrated Joint Board, NHS Lothian and the Western General Site to help develop cancer services.

Morag Barrow 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.

Decision

- Ms Barrow would provide feedback on the back log of hours for unpaid work service users
- Ms Barrow would provide feedback on the success rates of Police reducing supply of illicit substances
- To otherwise note 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
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>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 (Getting It Right For Every Child) 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.</p> <p>Joan Tranent advised that options were being explored to mitigate the impact of rising heating and food costs and that income maximisation officers to assist members of the public.</p> <p>Joan Tranent further advised that work was in progress regarding unpaid carer support in partnership with Adult Services and that schools would identify children who could be unpaid carers.</p>		
Decision		
Noted the content of the report		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Corporate Solutions Q1 Performance Report	Executive Director: Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<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>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</p>		

thereafter answered questions raised by Elected Members.

Following questions from members, Gary Fairly advised that with regard to 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 and that the option for Card payments was to be rolled out.

In answer to the question regarding the local procurement of goods, Gary Fairley advised that the local award of contracts had been limited despite efforts made to encourage local suppliers and that there had been limited success in the context of delivering a joint procurement service with neighbouring local authorities. Gary Fairly advised that following this 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 voicemail's are transcribed to email if left un opened.

In response to a question regarding the 'Tell us once' service, Kevin Anderson advised that there had been difficulties with the National Registers of Scotland during the pandemic and that Midlothian Council had also been receiving calls from other the local authority areas however these calls have since been redirected and that there was recruitment being conducted to improve call capacity.

Gary Fairley advised 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 a Scottish Government budget in December and that decisions would then be made based on the Local Government Settlement at February council through the Business Transformation Steering Group. Gary Fairley noted that the Future Capital Program was funded via Section 75 contributions from housing developers, government grants and potential borrowing.

Kevin Anderson highlighted that there was a diminishing customer base for housing benefit following the implementation of universal credit but that housing benefits remained for homeless clients. Gary Fairley 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

- Mr Fairley would provide further clarification regarding the increase of corporate complaints during Quarter 1.
- Mr Oliver would feedback with regards to specific businesses that had been approached as part of the Business Gateway.
- To otherwise note 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.		
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		
<p>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.</p> <p>With regard to the receipt of hot meals for students above Primary 4, Kevin Anderson confirmed that Primary 1 too Primary 4 continued to be catered and that plans to reintroduce this after the October half term break were being considered where possible noting restrictions to the school estate and staff distancing measures among other considerations. Kevin Anderson further advised that food supply and security are dependent on a range of local suppliers and that the impact of Brexit to the supply chain is being monitored via the Brexit oversight group.</p> <p>In response to a question referencing whether the costings of future homes and construction projects had been completed, Kevin Anderson advised that costings had been completed although Kevin Anderson advised that the initial costings did not take the issues of the present inflation to the cost of materials into account. Kevin Anderson highlighted that, to date, these had been covered with contingent values and that further options regarding contingencies and resilience would be brought to Council and the all Member Seminar. It was also highlighted that the estimate from the Treasury and the Bank of England was that the rate of inflation would be short lived to the end of the calendar or financial year although interim measures could still be considered to ensure that construction projects remained on target or that the impact of inflationary pressures was limited.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the perceived need for labour Kevin Anderson advised that Midlothian Council had not seen much of an impact with regard to the demand on HGV drivers and advised a career pathway had been developed however, he couldn't guarantee there would not be an impact in the future but that work was being done to mitigate this.</p> <p>When asked as to why £18 Million had been spent on housing in 2020 with only 29 houses built, Kevin Anderson noted that this figure also included acquisitions and land bank investments and confirmed that a full breakdown would be brought to the</p>		

next audit committee.

Kevin Anderson advised on the lack of movement to the average homeless time and the fact that people staying in tenancies for longer periods of time. He also advised on the availability of alternative housing options, including shared accommodation and that the extension of the areas of choice through the housing allocation policy should assist with this.

In answer to a question regarding property turnaround times following a change of tenant. Kevin Anderson advised that Midlothian Council used the turnaround period to complete essential work's to minimise the impact on new tenants. It was highlighted that there was a limited stock of wheelchair adapted housing and that matching was dependent on the area of choice.

Decision

Noted the content of the report.

Post meeting note from Executive Director: Place to Councillor McCall

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

I advise that is provided in a way 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.

As an 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).'

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Councillor Lay 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		
<p>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 Grace Vickers advised that an update had been provided to the citadel partnership and that this would be forwarded to Democratic Services for circulation.</p> <p>Thereafter, Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor 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</p>		

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.

William Venters, Principal Solicitor advised that further guidance from the monitoring officer should be sought to ensure that (a) the establishment of a subcommittee was not 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.

6. Private Reports

No items for discussion

7. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 2 November 2021 at 11 am

The meeting terminated at 1.12pm.