

Minute of Meeting

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
Monday, 7 October 2024
Item No 4.1



Performance, Review and Scrutiny

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 11 June 2024	11.00 am	Hybrid meeting held in the Council Chamber at Midlothian House and virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Councillor Milligan (Chair)	Councillor Winchester
Councillor Curran	Councillor Drummond (Virtual)
Councillor Imrie	Councillor McCall (Virtual)
Councillor McEwan	Councillor Pottinger (Virtual)
Councillor Russell	Councillor Bowen
Councillor Virgo (Virtual)	

In attendance:

Grace Vickers, Chief Executive
Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Morag Barrow, Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer
Joan Tranent, Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer
Nick Clater, Head of Adult and Social Care Services / Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Hannah Forbes, Democratic Services Assistant
Gary Leadbetter, Democratic Services Officer

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Elected Members and Officers to the meeting of the Performance, Review and Scrutiny (PRS) Committee.

Apologies were received from Councillor Smaill.

2 Order of Business

The Order of Business was as detailed in the agenda.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

4.1 The Minute of the Meeting of the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 March 2024 was submitted and approved as correct record.

4.2 The Action Log was noted.

Homeless education classes were queried, relating to the age group of 16–25 year olds and what group that actually captures, how is this going to be monitored and that there needs to be coordination between education, housing team and homelessness to ensure these classes are delivered.

The Chief Officer Place advised that they would discuss with Education to ensure there is alignment in relation to the classes. In terms of the age group, it was stated that this is being targeted towards school leavers and from September with the new contract in place for S4-S6 pupils however this has been asked to be reconsidered to target earlier than this. This will be monitored through the contract, they can feed back quarterly to Cabinet and Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee.

It was highlighted that in the meeting of the 19/9/23 where a question was asked in relation to online resources for families that are waiting on the CAMHS referral that the Committee are still waiting on feedback.

Chief Officer Children's Services advised there is a meeting at the Western General 2 weeks on Friday where the whole of the Lothians are starting to look at a pathway that is going to support families, unfortunately it is a slow process and is currently ongoing.

Concerns were raised in relation to Newbattle High School if any spare parts are not available this will cause closure of the swimming pool for over 8 weeks,

reputational damage is an area of concern and local promotions were to be explored and wanted more information of what they were.

The Chief Officer Place stated that the promotions detailed there were a swim pass for the whole month of May and one for the gym equipment. This was for people to use the facilities at a reduced rate.

The ongoing issue regarding the streetlighting was raised, the issue gets fixed but not for long. What power does the Council have to ensure that Scottish Power act quicker to fix this issue.

The Chief Officer Place stated that that the Council has have written to SPEN, expressing its disappointment also its desire to engage with them to ensure the residents of Midlothian are being responded to timeously.

5. Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Adult Health and Social Care 2023/24 Annual Performance	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Head of Adult services spoke to the report and mentioned throughout the report there are some key highlights and focus on the report of sickness absence that is an outstanding action. In terms of what the work that has been going on this year, the work that we are doing with careers on going area of development.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Adult Services for the report and opened it up for questions.</p> <p>A discussion took place highlighting the sickness absence and discussed the figures and time periods that individuals are off for and how this is affecting other members of staff. A question was put forward to the Head of Adult Services relating to Newbyres and when we expect to see this up and running fully, so we can address the much-needed care home packages. It was highlighted that it was positive to see a part-time supervisor who is going to concentrate on the ongoing issues with absences</p> <p>The Head of Adult Services detailed to the Committee that this is a task that is addressed daily now due to the level of absences. It was explained that there are a set number of hours that the service needs to be provided, with the ongoing issue of absences the service usually use agency staff or move staff around to support the service that it needs to provide. It was then highlighted over the next 4-8 weeks the service expected to see people moving back into Newbyres, however it is not at a point where this will be up to 61 beds utilised. There are still concerns on the sickness absences and other vacancies that it currently has however there should be an increase to 48 beds over the next 2-3 months. The main focus is resident safety.</p>		

The Chair closed the discussion and thanked the Head of Adult Services and passed congratulations for the positive outcomes in the report, and asked for an updated report on sickness absences and could a breakdown of these could come back to the next meeting.

Decision

The Head of Adult Services.

Action

Update on sickness absences and a breakdown of these.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities 2023/24 Annual Performance	Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Social Work Officer spoke to the report and highlighted the key achievements and challenges in the report. Some key highlights were that over the year there has been a 56% reduction in referrals going into social work, that is positive and is testament to all the hard work that the staff have done over the past year. Another key achievement is the Family Wellbeing Service, over the year we have had 172 referrals coming into the service. Moving forward into 24/25 we will start to evidence more of the referrals that are coming into the service as this is where we expect and hope to see the growth in relation to our early intervention and preventative work. Self directed support since Q1 there has been 33 families using the support that is an 80% increase that is testament to the workers encouraging families to accesses funding where they can.

The Chief Social Work Officer stated the challenges around this would be not having enough resources within the community in order to meet the number of children that do have additional support needs. This being a major piece of work we are looking at along with others. It was highlighted that were has been some really good work although there are still many challenges in children's services.

The Chair thanked the Chief Social Work Officer for the report and opened it up for questions.

A discussion took place and it was asked in relation to the National Care Service are children going to be included in this, it was also asked for some clarity on the CAHMS waiting list and the developing of the pathways agreement for CAHMS. The Committee asked for data in relation service priority 6, the increase between Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 for the people being offered income assessment and how did they benefit form that and what was the income benefit for each family. It was

then asked how many unaccompanied migrant children are there currently in Midlothian.

The Chief Social Work Officer advised that no decision has been made regarding the National Care Service for inclusion of children, there has been many discussions however no decision yet. It was advised that the CAHMS waiting list is sitting in a better state although for any figures that will need to be brought back. The waiting list has been split into 2 - Neurodevelopmental Pathways where we are seeing an increase of 200 families per quarter and High Risk Families who need immediate help. It was stated that CAHMS is an improving picture. The Chief Social Work Officer agreed to bring back data in relation to service priority 6. It was stated that there are currently 12 migrant children currently living in Midlothian and they range from 14-23 years of age, they live in a variety of different care settings.

The chair closed the discussion and thanked the Chief Social Work Officer for the report.

Decision

The Chief Social Work Officer

Action

The Chief Social Work to bring back data in relation to CAHMS and more information regarding service priority 6

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Corporate Solutions 2023/24 Annual Performance	Chief Operating Officer Education

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions stated the report is split into 2 parts, first being the annual summary of activities across corporate solutions services for the 23/24 year and the Quarter 4 performance for the year end. Corporate solutions focused efforts this year on the delivery of outcomes aligned to the councils' strategic objectives and also the transformation blueprint. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions spoke to the report highlighting key parts throughout.

A discussion took place highlighting the campaign for encouraging the eligible families for free school meals and clothing grants, how many families are eligible and what is the percentage take up on free school meals and clothing. It was stated that regarding the Social Welfare Fund stating it would be helpful to know how many applications were approved and how many were rejected.

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions advised this was not to hand and this would be given as a post meeting note for the minute. Regarding the Social Welfare Fund they will come back with that information.

There was thanks passed to all staff involved in all of the work that has been going on in the background to bring Midlothian into the 21st Century and making it an employer of choice. There was also acknowledgement passed for all the hard work

put into Midlothian Libraries and the rollout of Lend and Mend in Loanhead and Danderhall Libraries.

The Chair stated it was a positive report and closed the conversation.

Decision

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Action

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions to provide a post minute note with information relating to the campaign for free school meals and clothing grants.
Information to be provided relating to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.4	Education 2023/24 Annual Performance	Chief Operating Officer Education

The Chief Operating Officer stated purpose of the report covers Q4 and the end of year summary for education and the CLLE service. It was stated that for education this year our focus was to raise attainment and achievement for all our children and young people, which will lead them to a positive destination and that all of our children and young people feel valued and had the same opportunities. In summary a lot has been achieved, there have been several developments in strategies and frameworks to improve the quality, experience and consistency across our schools such as the learning and teaching framework, literacy and numeracy progressions, significant developments in relation to curriculum, development of policies and inclusive practice.

The Chair thanked the Chief Operating Officer Education for the report and opened it up for questions.

Questions were asked to the Chief Operating Officer Education in relation to school attendance, and if there had been an increase in home education. It was stated as a concern that parents to have the ability to defer their child in early education and the pressures that puts on us to deliver early education. It was asked also if the committee could be brought up to date with the current uptake of the new term.

The Chief Operating Officer Education mentioned that later in the reports more information regarding attendance will be discussed, however it was stated that attendance is a national issue of not returning to pre pandemic levels. The legislation allows for home education and there has been an increase to that due to levels of anxiety preventing them coming into school and allows parents to defer their children in early education and there has been a huge increase to that. The Chief Operating Officer Education asked the Chair if this could be brought back out with the meeting as those figures were not to hand.

The chair agreed to bringing the figures out with the meeting and closed the

discussion.

Decision

The Chief Operating Officer Education

Action

The Chief Operating Officer Education to bring back the figures on the current uptake of the new term in reflection of what the projection looked like 2 years ago.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.5	Place 2023/24 Annual Performance Report	Chief Officer Place

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Place presented the report and explained the report details the Q4 for place services proceeded by an annual summary highlighting key achievements across 2023/2024.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and opened it up for questions.

A discussion took place reading the report, it was highlighted there has been a large volume of complaints regarding the maintenance of the cemeteries, noting that they are a place of importance. It was also mentioned to the Chief Officer Place that something needs to be done about the weedkilling in cemeteries. It was highlighted by the Committee, the housing need and that we seem to not be hitting the target. It was highlighted that it seems the Council is managing expectations than meeting the need of Midlothian. Questions were raised to the Chief Officer Place relating to how Midlothian Council compares to other councils regarding housing staff, what is the breakdown of the Midlothian council housing waiting list and what this looks like and lastly the IT solution that has been discussed for housing applications what stage this is at for implementation.

The Chief Officer Place addressed all that was highlighted starting with an apology for the comments and complaints that have been raised in relation to Midlothian cemeteries and explained that this was due to a staffing issue and that has now been addressed, the weedkiller that has been mentioned was due to the weather that has been experienced however work is ongoing to resolve this issue. In relation to the waiting list and breakdown of the housing list this is something that can be distributed after the meeting. The ambition is to get this tenant portal applied however we are not there yet, and we can come back with the estimated timescale.

The Chair closed the conversation by expressing the worry that there has been no increase to housing staff, then stressed the interest people have is why there are in the position they are on the list. The cost of private rent has risen, and people cannot afford and we need to be able to talk and guide people in the correct direction.

Decision
Chief Officer Place
Action
Chief Officer Place to distribute details of the waiting list and a breakdown after the meeting, as well as an estimated timescale for the tenant portal.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.6	Midlothian Council 2023/24 Annual Performance Report	The Chief Executive

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Executive presented the Q4 report along side the Balanced Scorecard which provides a summary of actions. The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service thanked all staff and partners for their hard work over the last year.

The Chair highlighted the risks identified in the reports. It was suggested that it would be helpful to identify if they are High, Medium or Low risk.

The Chief Executive explained that they are pulling together all the risks and this will be presented to Audit Committee. They are all scored, and can look at integrating into quarterly performance reporting.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.7	Lasswade Primary School and Nursery Inspection Report	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The report outlines the outcome of the Education Scotland inspection of Lasswade Primary School and nursery class.

The inspection took place by HMI in November 2023 and the report was published in February 2024. The report stated the positive outcome of the inspection. The Education Chief Operating Officer expressed that it was pleasing to see the strengths highlighted in the report from the school and the nursery. There will be no further inspections to Lasswade Primary/Nursery School.

A declaration of transparency was made by Councillor Virgo, but followed on to state thanks to all members of staff that work at the school for the outstanding

inspection.

The Chair closed the discussion with mentioning that this is a very positive report for any school to receive.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.8	Lawfield Primary School and Nursery Inspection	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The report outlines the outcome of the Education Scotland inspection of Lawfield Primary School and nursery class.

The first inspection was stated to have taken place at the end of 2019, inspectors returned in Autumn 2021 and lastly March 2023. Since the inspections there has been significant additional support put in place in terms of additional staff and officer time and expertise. In March 2024 HMI advised the school was making improvements however HMI are insistent on a return visit in 12 months time. Midlothian Education Service expressed they do not accept this next step and don't believe this is in the best interest of the school. It was mentioned the new head teacher that was appointed at end of May has made improvements at pace, and the support continues to be provided.

The Chair thanked the Education Chief Operating Officer for the report.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.9	Newbattle High School Inspection	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by Education Scotland which was communicated in their report of 6th February 2024.

Inspectors visited the school in November 2023, key strengths were detailed in the report along with the area of improvements. The report was a positive inspection outcome for the school however, inspectors have requested a progress report in 18 months from the original inspection. The Education Chief Operating Officer passed thanks to the staff and partners for the ongoing commitment to young people, their families and the community of Newbattle.

The chair passed thanks to the Headteacher.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.10	Inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD) Services in Midlothian	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The purpose of this report is to highlight the positive partnership inspection of CLD through the recent progress visit. The formal report was published on 30 April 2024.

CLD has a statutory function, HMI progress visits - Midlothian had their progress visit in March 2024. The focus of the report was leadership of the service and the impact of the service users. The Education Chief Operating Officer stated that they were delighted to report they were recognised for strong partnership working, staff and partners going the extra mile for users. Based on evidence in advance and during the inspection week and feedback received through stakeholder engagement, HMI awarded the highest evaluation. There will be no further action in relation to the progress visit. The next steps will be included in the 3 year CLD plan required for September 2024.

Recognition was passed for all the hard work of the committed group of staff on a very positive inspection outcome.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.11	Highbank Intermediate Care Home Inspection	Head Primary Care and Older People

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to highlight the positive partnership inspection of CLD through the recent progress visit. The formal report was published on 30 April 2024.</p> <p>Highbank Intermediate Care Facility had an unannounced inspection in January this year. They were inspected on 3 elements of service being care delivery, residents wellbeing leadership care and support.</p> <p>There were no recommendations made and no improvement actions made as a result of the inspection.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the leadership in these buildings are key to getting the reports with such great outcomes of inspections, the chair passed thanks and congratulations to all the staff in relation to this inspection.</p>		
Decision		
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.		
Action		

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.12	Attendance Update for Midlothian	Education Chief Operating Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The purpose of this report is to present a summary of attendance in Midlothian. The historic and current trends in attendance are presented alongside the ongoing work that is taking place across the authority and within schools to improve the outcomes of our young people.</p> <p>The Education Chief Operating Officer detailed this report serves an update on the report requested by members at a previous meeting, as previously stated the school attendance is of national concern with attendance rates not returning to pre pandemic levels.</p> <p>It was shared to the committee the disappointment that some of the improvements are not seeing the impact as quickly as anticipated.</p> <p>Acknowledgement was passed to the attendance strategy group for the power of work that a has been achieved this year and the ongoing focus of school leaders for session 24/25.</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all for attendance at the meeting.</p>		

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.
Action

6 Private Reports

No items for discussion.

7 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 7 October 2024.

The meeting terminated at 12:56pm.