

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 4 June

2014 at 11.00 am.

Present: Councillors Milligan (Chair), Baxter, Bennett, Muirhead, Pottinger, Russell, de Vink and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Coventry, Beattie, Boyes and Montgomery.

1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

2 2012/13 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

There was submitted report, dated 28 March 2014, by the Executive Officer, Business Transformation providing an update on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and in addition, presenting an overview of the Council's performance against the indicators for 2012/13. The report advised that the indicators for 2012/13 were grouped under eight service groupings and had been developed from using cost information for Councils from various sources including the Local Financial Returns which formed part of central government's monitoring of local authority expenditure. The Council's performance, benchmarked against other Scottish Local Authorities, was summarised as follows:-

Ranking	Percentage
Top quartile (Ranked 1-8)	22%
Second quartile (Ranked 9-16)	28%
Third quartile (Ranked 17- 24)	30%
Bottom quartile (Ranked 25 -32)	20%

The report also provided details of those indicators in the top and bottom quartiles along with details of proposed improvement actions and an analysis of the 2012/13 data.

Decision

- (a) To note that Officers would provide clarification on the different types of statistics applicable to Waste Services (collection: disposal costs etc) to elected members;

- (b) To note that the “Family Groups” within the exercise continued to be reviewed in order to provide more exact information for use by Councils;
- (c) To note the improvements achieved in the last five years whilst recognising that there remained room for improvement in all areas of operation;
- (d) To note the continued focus on improving the Council’s performance in respect of educational attainment and that within smaller local authorities these statistics could be substantially affected by minor influences;
- (e) To note that a definition and a breakdown of Corporate and Democratic core costs would be provided to Elected Members;
- (f) To note that officials were investigating the breakdown and methodology used in determining the Council’s reported costs in respect of the cost of Road Maintenance per Kilometre; and
- (g) To otherwise note the report.

(Action: (a) Head of Commercial Operations; (b) Business Transformation Manager.)

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Councillor de Vink joined the meeting at this stage (10.29 am).

3 2013/14 Annual Performance Reports

There were submitted Annual Performance Reports for 2013/14 in respect of Midlothian Council and the Plans for Commercial Operations; Customer Services; Finance and Human Resources and Property and Facilities Management. Each report contained a summary of the progress in delivering Strategic Outcomes and a summary of emerging challenges and risks. Thereafter, the Cabinet received verbal updates in respect of each of the reports.

Decision

- (a) To note the continued pressures on Council budgets arising from constraint funding and demographic change and the need to provide outcomes at a lower cost;
- (b) To receive a progress report on the LED Street Lighting Programme including details of the financial savings anticipated and the possible areas for the investment of those savings;
- (c) That Elected Members be provided with details of those flower beds in public parks etc which were to be removed/discontinued;
- (d) To note the success in securing a number of sources of external funding to facilitate community projects and to congratulate staff for their efforts in this respect;

- (e) To note that agreement had been reached with Grounds Maintenance Staff in respect of Seasonal Working Hours;
- (f) To note that as part of the EWIM programme, the offices in Jarnac Court, Dalkeith would close, with operations currently provided there being provided from Buccleuch House;
- (g) To note the intention to provide a HUB facility at Mayfield Library as a pilot project and if proved successful to possibly extend the service to other areas;
- (h) To note that a fundamental element of the SWITCH programme was the retraining of staff in different disciplines;
- (i) To receive a report on the numbers of staff displaced into the SWITCH programme and the numbers reassigned to posts on a permanent basis; and
- (j) To otherwise note the reports.

(Action: (b); (c) Head of Commercial Operations (i) Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support).

The meeting terminated at 12.20 pm.