

MINUTE of MEETING of the PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 23 AUGUST 2017.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Chris Horne, Dave King, George Paul, Damian Timson

Absent – Councillor Peter Johnston

In Attendance – Robin Lever (Senior People's Forum)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 16 June 2017. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

3. RIPSA POLICY

A report had been circulated by the Governance Manager attaching a revised and updated policy in relation to the council's use of and responsibilities in relation to the regulation of investigatory powers.

The Governance Manager explained that the council had duties and responsibilities in undertaking certain types of surveillance in relation to its own functions concerning the detection of crime and protection of public health. The report concerned "directed covert surveillance" carried out for one of three legal purposes. The three legal purposes were outlined in the report.

It was noted no authorisation was needed for overt surveillance, ad hoc surveillance, unplanned surveillance and surveillance purely internal to the council in its role as employer rather than as a public body. Further explanation and examples were provided in the report.

The Panel was informed that a very small number of authorisations were given each year for the use of covert surveillance by officers. The authorisations requested and granted in the previous five years were shown in a table within the report.

To ensure compliance, the council had had a policy in place since 2003. However, it was no longer fit for purpose and required to be replaced. The amended version was attached to the report for the Panel's

consideration prior to submission to Council Executive for approval. It covered the requirements of the relevant legislation, the statutory Codes of Practice and recognised good practice. Once approved, it would take immediate effect.

Finally, the Governance Manager advised that a triannual inspection was undertaken by the OSC in 2016 and recommendations were made by the Inspector. The amendments to the policy were designed to meet these recommendations.

It was recommended that the Panel:-

1. note and consider the draft policy in the appendix to the report which was intended to be submitted to the Council Executive for approval.
2. note that following approval of the revised policy, updated procedures and management guidelines would be put in place to support and implement the policy.

Questions raised by Panel members were then dealt with by the Governance Manager. In addition, the Governance Manager undertook to provide Panel members with a copy of the 2003 policy.

Decision

To note the terms of the report and that it would be forwarded to the Council Executive for approval.

4. REVIEW OF PEOPLE STRATEGY 2013/2017

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services concerning a review of the People Strategy 2013/17.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that the People Strategy 2013/17 was designed to support the council's key aim of improving the quality and value of the services it provided to the people of West Lothian.

The strategy provided a framework and related action plan for delivering the following five strategic outcomes:

- Engaging and motivating the council's employees
- Recognised as a good employer
- Helping its employees to succeed
- Ensuring equality for all
- Ensuring a healthy and safe workforce

There were nineteen performance indicators used to monitor progress of the People Strategy outcomes. Of these indicators, sixteen were green,

one was amber and two were red. Detail of performance against target was contained in the People Strategy Scorecard which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Actions in place to increase performance for those reported as amber or red were detailed within the report.

In relation to the future Strategy, it was noted that officers had developed a wide range of tools to support good management practice. The revised Strategy for the period 2018-22 would focus on deployment of these and reinforce the requirement to embed the arrangements into everyday practice. Areas of future focus were set out in the report.

The Head of Corporate Services concluded that all actions to implement the nine key activities agreed in the People Strategy were now complete. Work would continue to review the strategies and processes implemented to ensure their effective deployment. This would be a feature of the revised People Strategy 2018-2022.

The Panel was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. ICT STRATEGY 2015/17 REVIEW

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services presenting the outcome of a review of the ICT Strategy 2015-17 for the period 2016/17.

The Panel was informed that the ICT Strategy 2015/17 had been approved by Council Executive on 23 January 2015. The Strategy recognised council priorities, financial constraints and technologies that provided the council and customers with new engagement channels at reduced cost. The Strategy was underpinned by a Technical Framework that outlined the infrastructure, systems, data management and security required to support the delivery of council services.

The Head of Corporate Services reported that the annual review for 2016/17 had been completed in May 2017 via the ICT Programme Board representatives and all Heads of Service to ensure that the Strategy remained aligned to council priorities and service objectives.

Five reports on technology in the public sector had influenced the council's thinking on the delivery of ICT and were factored into the ICT Strategy 2015/17. These were listed within the report. Three of these strategic reports had been updated since the ICT strategy had been approved.

The report went on to examine the internal factors that could facilitate the modernisation of council services. In addition, the ICT Strategy would continue to support the delivery of a number of corporate strategies.

Appendix 1 to the report provided a detailed update on progress against each of the five key Outcomes driving the Strategy.

The Head of Corporate Services concluded that the ICT Strategy and five outcomes remained relevant to the council and aligned to the council's and service objective. Progress and performance was positive and continued to be actively monitored through the ICT Programme Board.

The Panel was asked to note the terms of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services informing the Panel of the Scottish Government's public consultation on the Socio Economic Duty.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 provided that, when a public authority was making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, it must have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that was designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which resulted from socio-economic disadvantage.

Although the protected characteristics elements of the equality duties had been enacted, the socio economic duties had not become law. The Scottish Government now planned to introduce the Socio Economic duty and was consulting on the way in which the duty should be introduced.

A draft response to the consultation had been prepared, in consultation with all Council Services, and was attached at Appendix 1. The response recognised that the socio economic duty would complement and strengthen the current public sector equality duties.

It was recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the Scottish Government's consultation on the Socio Economic Duty.
2. Note that Appendix 1 to the report would form the council's formal response to that consultation.
3. Note the intention to present the proposals contained in the report for approval by Council Executive.

During discussion, a recommendation was made by Councillor Sullivan that the response should include an additional comment concerning the budget constraints faced by public authorities and the additional

resources required to meet the duty. Panel members were in agreement with this recommendation.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report and the council's formal response to the Scottish Government's consultation.
2. To note that the proposed response would be forwarded to the Council Executive.
3. To recommend to the Council Executive that the response include an additional comment as suggested by Councillor Sullivan.

7. SELF ASSESSMENT 2017/20

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services providing a summary of the output from the assessment activity undertaken in West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) programme from 2014 to 2017. The report also provided a review of the approach to self-assessment and improvement planning in the council.

The Panel was informed that the council used the WLAM to assess the quality and cost effectiveness of council services provided to the community. The WLAM was based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model and provided a consistent structure around which performance and improvement in council services could be supported. As well as embedding the principles of continuous improvement and involving staff in improvement, the framework had been utilised to standardise or reinforce corporate approaches in performance management, service standards, customer consultation and complaint handling.

It was noted that a total of 37 WLAM assessments had been undertaken during the period with an average score of 468 out 1,000 for council services. The average scores achieved by services in the WLAM process were outlined for the previous four improvement cycles were shown in table contained in the report.

Table 2 within the report showed the Review Panel Outcomes for 2014 – 2017.

The report provided the following appendices:-

Appendix 1 WLAM Unit Scoring Comparison 2011/13 to 2014/17.

Appendix 2 Process Overview – Validated Self-Evaluation and West Lothian Assessment Model

In relation to Self-Assessment 2017-20, the report contained an evaluation of the options open to the council for the self-assessment programme.

The Head of Corporate Services concluded that, overall service scores had improved, with some services having achieved significant improvement from past years in WLAM scores, whilst others had seen more incremental positive change. The amendments to the WLAM unit groupings for the 2014/17 programme had addressed concerns of units being either too small or large.

The WLAM/Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) had been removed by the Improvement Service through consultation with users of the PSIF. However, the revised PSIF offering would impact on the links to EFQM, Customer Service Excellence and the Investors in People framework and was considered to offer a diminished framework.

It was recommended that the Panel note:-

1. The summary position for the 2014/17 programme;
2. The evaluation of the self-assessment approach undertaken by the council to date;
3. The proposed self-assessment approach for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. ADVICE SHOP CONTRIBUTION TO MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY

A report had been circulated by the Head of Finance and Property Services informing the Panel of the work undertaken by the Advice Shop from April 2016 to March 2017 which evidenced the contribution and impact it made in supporting West Lothian residents to maximise their income, keep warm, remain in their homes, manage debt, become financially included and to be 'better off'.

The Advice Shop Annual Report 2016-17 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It highlighted a range of projects and initiatives but did not cover all the activity undertaken by the Advice Shop.

The Panel was informed that work had been undertaken with Alzheimer Scotland, Carers West Lothian, HMP Addiewell, NHS Lothian and West Lothian Food Bank, along with council services to build understanding, knowledge and confidence in referring to the service.

With funding through the European Social Fund, a one-2-one project had commenced in October 2016. The project offered tailored, ongoing advice with a named advisor to support customers to stabilise their financial position. To date, there had been very positive outcomes associated with the project and health care professionals were making good use of the resource.

Questions raised by Panel members were dealt with by Elaine Nisbet, Anti-Poverty and Welfare Advice Manager.

It was recommended that the Panel note the positive achievements of the Advice Shop in relation to actions to implement the agreed anti-poverty strategy.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report .
2. To record the Panel's appreciation of the work undertaken by the Anti-Poverty and Welfare Advice Manager and Advice Shop staff.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPATIAL HUB

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services providing an update on proposals by the Improvement Service to develop a Local Government Spatial Information Hub to provide a single point of access to quality assured Scottish local authority data in consistent form.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that spatial data is any data with a direct or indirect reference to a specific location or geographical area. The Council was required to make available spatial datasets and to create services for accessing those datasets.

The Council currently provided datasets to the Improvement Service who had supported the creation of the One Scotland Gazetteer and the One Scotland Mapping Agreement. The Improvement Service was looking to exploit the intellectual property rights which Councils held in terms of spatial data by establishing a Spatial Hub Partnership to develop a resource which provided a single point of access to quality assured Scottish local authority spatial data in consistent form. The Improvement Service had stated that they expected to make a payment to local authorities in the order of £400,000 - £600,000 for 2017/18 and for this to increase annually over the next three to five years. Once the Improvement Service's operational costs had been recovered, revenue would be returned to Scottish local authorities in the form of a dividend against the local costs of the One Scotland Mapping Agreement.

The Improvement Service were proposing to enter into a Partnership Agreement with all 32 Scottish local authorities which they were indicating would not be a contractual arrangement but would be an agreement "to work together in the true spirit of partnership to ensure the collective benefits were secured and maximised". A copy of the draft Partnership Agreement was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Spatial Hub provided several benefits to the Council, and these were listed in the report.

It was recommended that the Panel:

1. note the proposals by the Improvement Service to develop a Spatial Information Hub, and
2. recommend to Council Executive that the Council should enter into the Partnership agreement to work with the Improvement Service and the other local authorities to develop a resource which provided a single point of access to quality assured Scottish local authority spatial data in consistent form.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report and
2. To agree that the report be forwarded to Council Executive for approval.

10. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

The Panel was asked note a correction to the Workplan which concerned the removal of item 8 as this matter had been dealt with.

Decision

To note the workplan and that an amendment would be made to remove item 8 from the list of items scheduled for September.