

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 22 JANUARY 2018.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Charles Kennedy, Dave King

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Performance Committee confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 22 January 2018. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

3. CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Service providing an overview of Construction Services along with details of service performance.

The Committee was informed that the principal purpose of Construction Services was to provide multi-disciplinary professional and technical construction related services to ensure ongoing operational availability and suitability of the property estate. The service consisted of the following teams:-

- Projects Team
- Planned Improvements and M&E Services Team
- Maintenance Team
- Asbestos Team
- Clerk of Works Team

The service had a total complement of staff of 47.6 FTE and an annual income of £2,718,127. Further information on the service, including details of engagement with key partners, was provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

In relation to performance, it was noted that Construction Services performance was regularly measured through a suite of performance indicators in line with the council's performance management framework, using the Pentana system (formerly Covalent).

The performance indicators were representative of a range of activities delivered by the service and included statutory, public performance reporting and management indicators, including measures of customer and staff perception.

Performance was regularly reviewed within the service at management team, performance reviews with managers and the Head of Service, individual team meetings and monitored via 1-2-1 meeting with employees where appropriate.

Appendix 2 to the report provided a representative sample of performance indicators covering the key themes of:

- Customer Results
- People Results
- Service Results
- Efficiency Measures
- Effectiveness Measures

The report provided details of the 2017 service employee survey results, highlighting improvements in six of the seven categories in comparison to the previous year.

In November 2016 the service had completed a WLAM assessment. The overall score for the service had improved from 392 in the 2011-13 cycle to 483 in 2014-17.

The report provided a list of the key areas recommended by the Review Panel for improvement.

The Committee was informed that the service provided performance information to the Scottish Government Core Facts in relation to the condition of the school estate on an annual basis.

Further benchmarking indicators in relation to Compliance of the school estate had recently been agreed for inclusion in the Scottish Government Core Facts and the service would be submitting performance information in support of these for 2017/18.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report and appendices;
2. Provide feedback on service performance; and
3. Identify any recommendations for performance improvement.

Questions raised by Committee members were then dealt with by the Construction and Design Manager. The questions related to the selection of performance indicators contained in the appendix to the report.

In addition, an issue was raised relating to apprenticeship opportunities. A further issue was raised concerning community engagement and consultation with stakeholders on major projects. The comments and issues raised by Committee members would be fed back to the service by the Construction and Design Manager.

The Committee also commented on the low sickness absence rate, noting that Construction Services had recorded levels below the corporate target of 3.6% consistently for 13 months.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the activities and performance of the Customer Service Centre.

The Committee was informed that the Customer Service Centre (CSC) was the central contact point for all council customers in West Lothian. The service dealt with all enquiries on behalf of three main services; Operational Services, Housing, Customer and Building Services and Revenues, as well as answering the majority of enquiries across all services via telephone and email. The CSC was structure into four teams that answered specific types of calls. These were:-

- Housing Repairs
- Revenues
- Careline
- General Enquiry (including waste, planning, pest control and pupil placement)

The Committee was informed that the CSC had been through a full WLAM Assessment in February 2017. Previously the service had attained a WLAM score of 475 in 2011-13 and were on cycle 3 of the review programme. At the most recent assessment the service had improved its WLAM score to 491 for 2014-17 and were on cycle 2. The Review Panel would assess the service in February 2018.

A table within the report showed the number of performance indicators the service routinely collected, with comparative figures for 2014/15. Of the 125 indicators, 102 were showing as green, 9 were amber and 14 were red. The most recent performance information for the public and high level performance indicators was included as Appendix 1 to the report.

Of the 13 public and high level indicators, 12 were showing as green and 1 was amber. The amber indicator related to "Percentage of Customer Service Centre Enquiries Resolved at First Point of Contact". The reason for the decrease in performance was due to an increasing number of customers being able to self-serve via automated payments and online web forms. This meant a larger number of calls being dealt with were more complex and needed support from other services.

The Committee was shown a number of presentation slides, one of which

showed the volumes of traffic to CSC for the period 2012-2017.

The Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services concluded that the recent WLAM Assessment had seen the service perform well with a significantly increased score. Improvement actions were being taken forward by staff teams. A key focus for this activity was around improving benchmarking information to allow comparisons to be made with other authorities.

The Performance Committee was asked to:

1. Note the performance report for Customer Service Centre;
2. Provide feedback on the performance information; and
3. Identify any issues and make recommendations for performance improvement.

Questions raised by Committee members were dealt with by the Customer and Community Service Manager.

The Committee also noted that sickness absence rates were significantly higher than the target figure and that this was being addressed through a number of measures. There followed a discussion around the nature of complaints received by staff and it was acknowledged that there was a need for staff to feel valued. Managers were meeting with staff to gain a better understanding of the issues which led to increased levels of stress amongst staff.

The Committee heard from the Customer and Community Service Manager concerning benchmarking with other local authorities. This had proved challenging for a number of reasons, however, officers would continue to explore benchmarking opportunities to support improvement.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan.

6. SCRUTINY BRIEFING BY GRAEME STRUTHERS

The Committee heard a presentation by the Depute Chief Executive examining current performance management and performance scrutiny arrangements in the council and asking the Committee to consider ways to strengthen scrutiny and officer support to Committee.

The Committee noted the following recommendations from the Best Value Assurance report:-

“The council should work with elected members to help ensure they are fully involved through the committee and PDSP structure in monitoring, scrutinising and driving the council’s performance.

The council should be clear on the key performance indicators that support its vision and priorities so that it is able to effectively monitor whether it is achieving its vision.”

The presentation set out the key aspects of performance management and provided information in relation to Reports to Committee, the Corporate Plan, Complaints, LGBF, WLAM/Service Reports and Council Performance Reports.

The Committee was asked to consider the scope of the information being presented for scrutiny and to consider what the performance told the Committee about the service overall. The key considerations were listed as follows:-

- Committee received information it needed to effectively challenge corporate and service performance.
- Committee had constructive discussions about performance
- Committee made recommendations for improvement and/or
- Committee put in place measures for under-performing areas.

The Chair suggested that the Committee note the information presented and that members take part in a further discussion on the points raised in the presentation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.