

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 31 AUGUST 2015.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), Tony Boyle, Greg McCarra, Carl John, John McGinty

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 29 June 2015 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development providing an overview of Economic Development and service performance.

The report advised that the Economic Development service had a key role in monitoring the West Lothian Economy and providing services to individuals and businesses to help deliver the conditions for economic growth in West Lothian. The Business and Enterprise team delivered support, advice and assistance to individuals starting up businesses assisted existing companies to safeguard jobs and to grow and expand locally and help attract firms to relocate to the area.

The economic Policy & Business intelligence team informed and developed the local economic strategy, monitored the economy and maximised income from external sources to support service delivery.

The report went on to provide details of what the main activities of the service would be for 2015/16.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development explained that the service worked in partnership with key agencies such as the Scottish Government, SDS, DWP, West Lothian College and Scottish Enterprise to ensure a joined up and improved delivery service for customers.

Economic Development's performance was regularly measured through a suite of performance indicators in line with the council's performance management framework using the Covalent system.

The report advised the service had undergone a review of all its performance indicators including the introduction of new indicators to monitor the performance of the Economic growth plan which included

reporting on the number of jobs created as well as the number of companies supported.

In conclusion the report advised that the activities and performance of Economic Development was contained and summarised in appendix 1 to the report.

The report recommended that the committee:-

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

There then followed a number of questions in particular to the review of the service, EU approval of payments and what if any impact this had on budgets, and what role Economic Development played in the support of the Living Wage Coalition.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing information on the council's participation in the Local Government Benchmarking Network (LGBN), comparing performance on a number of performance indicators. The data was collated and analysed by the Improvement Service and publish in an Annual Report.

The report advised that the Local Government Benchmarking Network was focused on providing a consistent approach to benchmarking local authority performance with a standard data set reported each year to the public.

The 2015 Local Government Benchmarking Network Overview Report contained the comparative performance of all Scottish Local Authorities in 2013/14 and identified national trends in data.

The Depute Chief Executive explained that the Statutory Performance Indicator Direction of the Audit Commission compelled the local government sector to facilitate benchmarking in support of continuous improvement. Developing Local Government Benchmarking Network was a crucial part of the sector's national response and the council was required to publish details of benchmarking and to promote the Local Government Benchmarking Network locally following the annual publication of the dataset and Overview Report.

The report went on to advise that there were 60 key performance indicators, and that these were grouped under 8 categories as follows:-

- Children's Services
- Corporate Services
- Corporate Assets
- Adult Social Care
- Culture and Leisure
- Environmental Services
- Housing Services
- Economic Development

The report went on to advise that the Local Government Benchmarking Network Overview Report provided analysis and interpretation of key national performance trends and highlighted the importance of local context to council performance and complexity in reconciling national priorities and measures. Table 1 in the report outlined the average ranking by each Local Government Benchmarking Network.

Information in the Overview Report should be read and understood in the context that Scottish councils represented very diverse communities in terms of geography, population, deprivation levels and community needs.

Local Government Benchmarking Network performance was analysed to ensure that the variation and causal impact in relation to local priorities and policy choices were understood. This was facilitated by authorities working as part of "family groups" to interrogate the data. West Lothian was allocated to a family group featuring authorities with similar characteristics. Table 2 provided details of the family group allocation.

It was advised that every council had a duty to effectively report performance to the public and were required to provide benchmarking information as part of public performance reporting arrangements.

To fulfil this commitment the new Local Government Benchmarking Network public reporting tool was embedded in the performance section of the council's website.

In response to the publication data the Executive Management Team asked services to undertake the following actions:-

- Consider how the comparative data could be used to improve performance. Such as undertaking learning and/or networking opportunities with leading performers in their area of family groups to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.
- Use the comparative data to enhance the quality of performance information that was report to the public.

- Build on the Local Government Benchmarking Network activity by identifying other meaningful benchmarks of service performance.

In conclusion the report advised that this was the third year that a report had been published and it was intended that the Local Government Benchmarking Network data set would expand and diversify each year to present a more detailed and representative view of councils' performance.

The report recommended that the committee note the contents of the report.

There then followed a number of questions and in particular further information was requested in relation to the composition and review of Family Groups in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) which the officer undertook to provide.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The committee considered a list of items that would form the basis of the committee's work over the coming months.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.