

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 15 AUGUST 2016.

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

Apologies – Councillor Tony Boyle

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 30 May 2016 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3.. COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing analysis of council-wide complaints closed during 2015/16

The committee was advised that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed and published a model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) on 28 March 2012. The model CHP was to ensure a standardised approach in dealing with customer complaints across the local authority sector. All local authorities were required to adopt the model CHP by 31 March 2013.

The SPSO outlined four elements of the model CHP that should not be amended to ensure a standardised approach across all local authorities and were as follows:-

- The definition of a complaint
- The number of stages
- Timescale at each stage
- The requirement to record, report and publicise complaints information.

Contained within the report at Table 1 was the total complaints closed per 1,000 population over the past 5 years. The table showed that there had been an increase in complaints received by the council in 2015/16 when compared to previous years from 2,113 to 2,330. Table 2 showed complaints closed by service and table 3 showed a break-down of

complaints by category over a 5 year period.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained the current service level complaint performance varied across the council and was linked to the complexity and quantity of complaints received. Housing, Construction and Building Services and Operational Services had a combined total of 689 complaints categorised as Standard of Service.

The increase in Policy Related complaints was attributable to an increase in Operational Services Policy complaints from the equivalent quarters in 2014/15. The increase in Employee Attitude complaints was driven by Operational Services and Housing, Construction and Building Services with a combined total of 179 complaints.

Poor communication complaints were generated by Housing, Construction and Building Services, Operational Services and Education Services. The main contributors to Waiting Time complaints were Housing, Construction and Building Services.

Appendix 1 to the report provided information on council wide performance against the SPSO defined measures covering the period 2015/16

The report went on to advise that the Corporate Complaint Steering Board identified 4 high level indicators that provided a summary of complaint handling performance. Table 4 provided a summary of service against the 4 key indicators.

Appendix 2 contained the improvement actions based on complaint analysis covering 2015/16. Table 5 provided indicative ratios for the number of complaints against the specific customer groups for Area Services, Education Services, Housing, Construction and Building Services and Operational Services.

The report concluded that in 2015/16 the council closed 2,330 complaints and this represented an increase of 217 from 2014/15. The council's performance in relation to the processing of complaints across the various key indicators had improved.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee :-

1. Note the corporate and service complaint performance against the standards outlined in the council's complaint handling procedure; and
2. Continue to monitor complaint performance and request additional information from services as required.

#### 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 advising that the council participated in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Network comparing performance on a number of indicators. The data was collated and analysed by the Improvement Service and published in an annual report.

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

The comparative performance of the 32 Scottish local authorities was published in an annual report that identified national trends across eight thematic categories of council activity. The report also highlighted local challenges and priorities, how this varied across councils and the subsequent impact on performance.

The report summarised the council's comparative LGBF performance in 2014/15 and represents the fifth year of benchmarking data.

The Depute Chief Executive explained that the 2014/15 annual report was published by the Improvement Service and compared council's performance across 56 performance indicators, grouped under the following categories:-

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

The information across the categories generally focused on how much councils had spent on particular services, the service performance and how satisfied people were with the major services provided.

The report went on to advise that LGBF performance was analysed to ensure that the variation and causal impact in relation to local priorities and policy choices were understood. This would be facilitated by authorities working as part of "family groups" to interrogate the data.

The Improvement Service allocated the council to a family group featuring authorities with similar characteristics. The council was a member of family group 3 with the general characteristics set out in table 1 in the

report. The council's 2014/15 performance in comparison to 2013/14 performance and changes in ranking by performance indicator were summarised in table 2. Appendix 1 contained the council's performance in each indicator.

The council's average ranking and the top ranked local authority in the eight categories of LGBF were analysed and summarised in table 3. The overall average ranking of West Lothian Council in Scotland in 2014/15 was second as it was in 2013/14.

The report went on to advise that the Accounts Commission undertook annual evaluation of local authorities public performance information to assess compliance with the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) Direction and provided a general health check on public performance report (PPR) across Scottish authorities.

The 2015 SPI Direction significantly changed the evaluation criteria, moving from 4 indicators, one of which included LGBF requirements, to 2 indicators as follows:-

- SPI 1. Achievement of Best Value: each council would report a range of information.
- SPI 2. Each council would report its performance in accordance with the requirements of the LGBF.

All councils were required to publish the LGBF data and comparative analysis annually on their website. Compliance with the LGBF represented 50% of the total evaluation score for the council in the 2015 assessment of PPR.

The report concluded that the LGBF national benchmarking report provided the public with comparative analysis of Scottish local authorities' performance in 2014/15. Comparison across the 56 performance indicators showed that the council had areas of strong, sector leading performance and highlighted areas where improvement to performance was required.

The LGBF was intended to support councils to improve performance in key activities and the development also formed a critical part of the sector's response to requirements for public performance report and benchmarking.

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

### Decision

To note the contents 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.