

MINUTE
of
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minute of meeting held at 10am in the Collaboration Room, East Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park on 9 October 2023.

Present:

Councillor O'Donnell, Leader ERC; Councillor Buchanan; Councillor Wallace

Steven Quinn, Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Council ; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; David McPhee, Place Director, Scottish Government; Mo Rooney, Place Director, Scottish Government; Lee McLaughlin, Head of Recovery and Intensive Services, HSCP; CI Graeme Gallie, Superintendent, Police Scotland; Supt McCarren, Police Scotland; Anne Marie Kennedy, Chair, VAER; Sharon Kelly, Operations Director - West Region, Skills Development Scotland; Allan Dick- West College Scotland; John Binning- Policy Lead, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport; David McCarrey - Area Commander at Strathclyde Fire and Rescue ER; Alan Coughtrie - Group Commander at Strathclyde Fire and Rescue ER; Fiona McEwan- GGC NHS (Attending for Colin Neil); Anthony McReavy, Chief Executive, ERCLT

Councillor Owen O'Donnell Chair

Apologies: Julie Murray, Chief Officer, HSCP; Colin Neil, Director of Finance, GGNHS; Liz Connelly, Chief Executive, West Scotland College.

Attending: Jamie Reid, Julie Breslin, Claire Coburn- East Renfrewshire Council

INTRODUCTION

1. Councillor O'Donnell welcomed those attending and invited all present to contribute to the discussion.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Board considered and approved the Minute of the meeting on 10 October 2022.

CHIEF OFFICERS PUBLIC PROTECTION GROUP REPORT

3. Councillor O'Donnell invited Ms McLaughlin to introduce the Chief Officer's Public Protection Group Report. The report provides an overview of the partnership working over the last year to protect vulnerable adults and children across East Renfrewshire. The ongoing impact of the pandemic combined with the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact the most vulnerable residents in a number of ways including risk of financial harm, mental wellbeing and domestic violence.

Ms McLaughlin noted that two inspections had recently been completed and that the results were sector leading. East Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership were graded excellent and had no improvements to make; and the Joint Adult Support and Protection inspection was overwhelmingly positive. Sharing some key feedback from the inspections, Ms McLaughlin highlighted two specific findings which demonstrate the multiagency approach having direct, positive impacts on people's lives:

- 100% of inquiries achieved the correct outcome for adults at risk of harm
- 100% of investigations for adults at risk of harm determined the correct outcome

The inspection findings also noted the strong partnership work with Health and it was acknowledged that East Renfrewshire is the only area to see this acknowledged in their report.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked Ms McLaughlin and congratulated all involved in the inspections. He praised the Children's Services Partnership for being the first in Scotland to achieve an 'Excellent' rating and invited comments and questions from the Board members.

Ms Rooney asked whether learning would be shared to other areas and Ms McLaughlin advised a summary document has been produced and shared. She also noted that nationally the Chief Officer's meet regularly to share best practice and that the Child Lead had also presented at a number of national conferences.

Mr McPhee asked whether the success had been driven by people, processes, resources or other factors. Ms McLaughlin responded that the success could be attributed to a mixture of person-centred values; leadership and culture; taking an asset-based approach; strong partnership working and referral rates; third sector support to take an early intervention approach; and the importance of dedicated business support teams to ensure accurate recording and follow-up.

Councillor Buchanan commended the excellent practice which builds on several years of strong partnership working from many of those in attendance. In his role as COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People, he acknowledged the importance of shared learning across authorities.

Councillor Wallace referred to the high referral rate from Scottish Fire and Rescue and asked for more information about the guidelines for making a referral and whether the individual being referred would need to consent to this. Ms McLaughlin advised that this would be managed on a case-by-case basis and that partners are supported around the various practices and circumstances around informing individuals about a referral. There is also wide public messaging which highlights that anyone who is worried about the welfare of an adult or child should make a referral.

The recommendations for the Chief Officer's Public Protection Report were agreed.

- i. Discuss the high-level public protection activity outlined within the report and identify any areas for improvement to the Chief Officer Public Protection group on public protection partnership arrangements within East Renfrewshire.
- ii. Agree the East Renfrewshire Chief Officer Public Protection Group continues to provide annual updates to the CPP concerning public protection scrutiny and improvement activity that provides assurance that people and communities are being kept safe.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/2023: COMMUNITY PLAN END YEAR REPORT

4. Councillor O'Donnell invited Ms Pringle to introduce the Community Plan End Year Report.

Ms Pringle advised the purpose of this report is to present progress on the performance of the Community Planning Partnership and to demonstrate how we are meeting our strategic outcomes.

The Community Plan sets out the Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) long term vision for East Renfrewshire through five strategic outcomes. The Plan incorporates Fairer East Ren, (the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan), required under the Community Empowerment Act. Fairer East Ren (FER) is focused on tackling inequalities and closing the gap between communities in East Renfrewshire.

The CPP indicators are mainly national measures as these tend to look at systematic changes across multiple areas including health, community safety and protection and employment. There are also some more local measures taken from the Citizens' Panel.

Ms Pringle presented the key highlights under each of the five strategic outcomes.

Outcome 1: Early Years and Vulnerable Young People

The Community Plan indicators for this outcome focus on population level measures including life expectancy at birth (which remains higher than the national average), the dependency ratio of children and young people, healthy birthweight and child poverty.

Most of these measures have remained static or changed in a positive direction over the last year and compare favourably to the Scottish average. We continue to have higher than average children, young people dependency ratios, which can put pressure on service demand.

Within the Community Plan there are Fairer East Ren intermediate outcomes with a focus on inequalities, including a target to reduce child poverty. Despite a reduction in child poverty in previous years however, the most recent data shows this has increased which reflects a nationwide trend. Ms. Pringle explained that the data measures for Child Poverty can fluctuate and should not be compared across other areas and years. East Renfrewshire continues to be below the national average.

Outcome 2: Learning, Life and Work

The proportion of school leavers in East Renfrewshire achieving a positive destination is exceptionally high and in October 2022 we reported our highest ever proportion at 98.5%, exceeding the national average of 95.7%.

The proportion of residents aged 16–65 years who are economically active has increased since 2021 to reach an average rate of 79.5% and is now higher than the Scottish average (76.2%) and above pre-pandemic rates. The Fairer East Ren indicators show a slight decrease in out of work benefit claimants; returning to pre-pandemic levels and comparing favourably against the national average. The workless household indicator (those with no adult in employment) shows an increase to 19.9% which is above the Scottish average of 18.6%. However, it should be noted that there is a time lag with this data meaning the reported data is from 2021.

Outcome 3: Environment and Economy

Citizens' Panel survey results have shown a decrease in satisfaction with East Renfrewshire as a place to live, the lowest since 2013. A focus group was held in March 2023 to explore this response further. Participants stated that they had some concerns about the quality of the local environment e.g. littering and maintenance. Issues with public transport were also identified. More positively, participants highlighted the strong assets of the area including education and social care and a commitment by residents to play a role in maintaining the quality and appearance of their local neighbourhoods. The Local Action Plans will help the Council focus on priority areas for improvement.

From an economic growth perspective, the working age population has been slowly decreasing over the last few years with the latest figure of 59.1% lower than the Scottish average of 63.8%. This reinforces the importance of planning services; with a focus on this high child and older people dependency ratio which means a proportionally lower working age contribution.

We have also seen a slight reduction in median earnings, but these remain above average nationally.

More positively, 63.5% of the adult population are qualified to NVQ level 4 (HND/Degree) and above, the highest rate in Scotland ensuring we have a well-skilled workforce.

Outcome 4: Safe, Supportive Communities

Performance under this outcome reinforces East Renfrewshire's reputation as one of the safest places to live in Scotland. This outcome can only be delivered through effective partnership working and this is strongly demonstrated through weekly GRIP meetings involving Police Scotland, British Transport Police, the Housing Department, HSCP, Environmental Health, Community Safety and Community Learning & Development Youth Services where intelligence is shared to target resourcing.

We continue to see a reduction in the number of reported crimes with a low of 227 per 10,000 in 2022/2023 from 265. East Renfrewshire remains well below the national average of 524 per 10,000. There has been a slight increase in dwelling fires from 55.2 per 10,000 to 58.0 since the previous year, but the rate remains well below the national average of 84.5.

The FER indicators focus on increasing connections for communities including through digital inclusion. A multi-agency cost-of-living working group was established and 33 warm and welcome spaces were set up during the winter months.

Outcome 5: Older people and people with long term conditions

The Community Plan indicators do not show any significant change against last year. They continue to show a higher than average 'older people dependency ratio' which means more demand on services with less people of working age to absorb this demand. Male and female life expectancy show a very slight decrease, part of a national decline.

To ensure our residents are safe and socially connected we measure several indicators through our FER plan including domestic abuse outcomes. Indicators show that there has been a positive impact in outcomes for women experiencing domestic abuse.

The FER plan measures how safe and connected residents feel in their communities through the number of Confidence at Home Packages provided by the Council's Prevention services and Nuisance call blocking. The packages increased by 22% in the past year to 1,141, and there was a 10.4% increase in the number of nuisance calls. Park footfall is another measure of how safe our communities feel, and this year we saw an increase of 5.8%.

Ms Pringle also noted the progress made in terms of Locality Planning and referred to the continued work with Partners to reduce the inequalities experienced by residents in areas where outcomes in health, employment, education and experience of crime can be disproportionately poorer when compared with other areas of East Renfrewshire. Within East Renfrewshire, these locality planning areas are Auchenback; Arthurlie, Dunterlie, & Dovecothall (ADD2); Neilston and Thornliebank.

The report highlights participatory budgeting events over the last year and also noted that there had been more face-to-face engagement with community groups and residents from these areas over the last year.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked Ms Pringle for her presentation and invited comments and questions.

Councillor Wallace referred to the report finding which showed 1 in 5 households are workless and asked what the barriers are to entering work for these households. Mr Reid responded that the circumstances within each household will vary and many face complex barriers to work, but that there are also wider structural barriers including the local economy and transport. There is ongoing work to address some of these barriers including work with Glasgow City Region around City Deal, improvements to Aurs Road and Auchenback rail link. Councillor Wallace further questioned what work is being doing around affordable transport. Mr Binning responded that the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy identifies issues around affordability, service frequency and various challenges to the industry, including loss of drivers since the pandemic. The Regional Transport Plan has noted these points and looked at them in line with the powers of the Transport Scotland Act to identify what can be influenced at a local level.

Mr Quinn noted that the report highlighted many positives particularly around education, qualifications and earnings but suggested that the CPP should think beyond education for children and consider lifelong learning also. Councillor Wallace agreed this was important to support people into work, even if that work was lower paid, with a view to progressing.

Ms Rooney asked about the increase in the number of dwelling fires and what had driven this. Mr Coughtrie advised that there could be several underlying factors including the increase in the number of new houses being built in the area and the increase in the number of people working from home. Further it was noted that East Renfrewshire has the highest attainment rate for home safety visits for any single appliance station.

Councillor O'Donnell referred to the child poverty rate and the fact it hadn't risen by as much as predicted, and asked what work is being done around this. Ms Pringle advised that East Renfrewshire is currently undertaking some sector leading data work around a financial vulnerability dashboard, and this was mentioned by the First Minister in a recent speech. In addition, a child poverty workshop had taken place with a number of key partners to develop more targeted actions going forward. These actions will address both the entrenched, multigenerational poverty and those newly tipped into poverty.

The recommendations for the Annual Review 2022/2023: Community Plan End Year Report were agreed.

- i. Note the Community Plan and Fairer East Ren End Year Report
- ii. Note the continued phased progress for Locality Planning
- iii. Approve the Annual Progress Reports on the Community Plan and Locality Plans, in principle, for publication to communities and delegate responsibility to the Council's

Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make minor amendments as required.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

5. Councillor O'Donnell invited Mr Reid to introduce the item on Vision for the Future.

Mr Reid spoke about the existing Community Plan being structured around five outcomes and noted that over recent years the strategic planning landscape has become increasingly complex. Vision for the Future (VFTF) aims to create a new, ambitious, shared vision for East Renfrewshire over the next 10/15 years. In March 2022 a paper went to Council for approval to refresh VFTF in the context of pandemic recovery and emerging research and engagement findings. During the first half of 2023 there was a series of engagement workshops with senior leaders, elected members and Community Planning partners and Council staff alongside public consultation and engagement exercises that led to a proposed high-level vision integrating both Council and Community Planning strategic planning. The strategic planning process at this level is complex with several inter-dependencies and over the next 18 months we will work together to shape key missions and outcomes.

VFTF is comprised of three emerging themes:

- Empowering future generations: this theme includes maintaining education standards and closing the poverty attainment gap; equal access to high quality opportunities, experiences, and outcomes; improved mental health and wellbeing; and reducing risk taking for young people.
- Communities and place: this theme includes being environmentally and socially sustainable; creating thriving villages/towns; creating a thriving economy, including evening economy; high-quality, affordable housing; and strong social connections.
- Wellbeing and vulnerability; this theme includes strong social connections; people living physically and mentally healthy lives; tolerance, equity, inclusiveness and diversity; closing the outcomes gap; and preventative approach.

Mr Reid shared the high-level roadmap which showed what work has been done to date, and what is planned until autumn 2024. This work includes agreeing outcomes and exploring place tools which can be used. This is a complex process with lots of interdependencies but the ambition is for VFTF to be a live document, linked to real action.

Councillor O'Donnell thanked Mr Reid for his presentation and invited comments and questions.

Ms McEwan asked how funding is being factored into the development of VFTF. Mr Reid advised that there was no associated budget but that VFTF should focus on creating "shovel-ready ideas" and be in a position to apply for funding as opportunities open up. He also noted that a long-term strategic vision needs to be ambitious even where there

are current financial constraints as it is important that we are aspirational for the area and can align future emerging financial opportunities to this vision.

Mr McPhee referred to East Renfrewshire as a commuter area and questioned whether the ambition would be to change this profile or to embrace it. Mr Reid responded that we are not currently able to articulate this and it is still under active consideration under theme 2.

Mr Quinn noted that one of East Renfrewshire's key strengths is its geography and the fact people want to live here, but one of the issues it faces is the lack of land to bring business to the area. So, he felt it would be best to build on these existing strengths.

Councillor Buchanan commented that the area could be a victim of its own success. There has been continued growth in East Renfrewshire which adds pressure on services and potentially some loss of sense of community.

The recommendations for Vision for the Future were agreed.

- i. Note the progress made on Vision for the Future in terms of the three themes and road map
- ii. Agree to support the next phase of activity in relation to vision and mission setting

VERITY HOUSE AGREEMENT

6. Councillor O'Donnell invited Ms Rooney and Mr McPhee to introduce the item on the Verity House Agreement.

Ms Rooney advised that the Verity House Agreement sets how Scottish Government and local authorities will work together, how they will approach shared priorities and how they will engage. The Agreement has three shared priorities;

- tackle poverty, particularly child poverty, in recognition of the joint national mission
- transform our economy through a just transition to deliver net zero, recognising climate change as one of the biggest threats to communities across Scotland, and
- deliver sustainable person-centred public services recognising the fiscal challenges, aging demographic and opportunities to innovate.

Each of these priorities encompasses a breadth of existing activity and potential programmes of joint work and local flexibility will be required to maximise impact. This agreement is a high-level statement of intent upon which we will build.

The Agreement includes four distinct sections:

- The way we work together: this includes issues such as mutual trust and respect; achieving better outcomes; and no ring-fenced funding or direction of funding.

- How we will approach our shared priorities: this includes “local by default, national by design”; involving local authorities fully in policy development of national delivery models; and evidence-based policy making.
- Accountability and Assurance: this includes the monitoring framework for the Agreement; and streamlining and refining of strategic and service level plans.
- Engagement: including a revised programme of engagement with local authorities; and Place Directors acting as ambassadors for Community Planning Partnerships.

Mr McPhee continued that whilst the Verity House Agreement is between local and national government, it recognises the importance of Community Planning Partnerships. He noted the importance of understanding the local context and using this to build relationships as Place Directors. A letter had been sent to relevant SG committee setting out the current progress and noting that further time is required to work through a number of the commitments made in the Verity House Agreement but that positive progress had been made.

Councillor O’Donnell thanked Ms Rooney and Mr McPhee and invited the Board members to discuss.

Councillor Wallace welcomed the Agreement but noted reservations about whether change will happen, referring to several years of cutbacks from Scottish Government. Mr McPhee acknowledged it is understandable that there may be some ‘healthy scepticism’ however he assured Board members that there was a genuine willingness and ambition to make this work. He reiterated the importance of the Place Director role in engaging with local authorities and using feedback to inform decision making.

Councillor Buchanan noted that there have been several policy developments throughout the years that demonstrate a disconnect between local and national government. Local government take responsibility for the operational delivery and at times the practical infrastructures can be overlooked at a national level when setting policy. The Verity House Agreement should bring together the right people to take decisions and consider all implications and practicalities.

Councillor O’Donnell commented that the Verity House Agreement was needed due to a breakdown in trust based on funding issues. Local Authority expectations of the Agreement are high and there is pressure on Scottish Government to meet these, to build mutual trust. The removal of ring-fenced budget is important in the short term and a key test of change will come when budgets are set next year.

Mr Quinn noted the wealth of experience available in local government and the importance of utilising this. The policy experience from Scottish Government should be used alongside the operational experience which local government can provide. Mr McPhee advised that there is a new approval process at Scottish Government which requires that the implications around the Verity House Agreement are referenced and considered in advice and policy development. This is one step that is being taken to ensure that policy areas always consider local implications. Mr Quinn added that Scottish

Government Ministers need to ensure they are looking widely across the policy area and not only referring to one part of service delivery

Cllr O'Donnell thanked Ms Rooney and Mr McPhee for the input. He welcomed the new agreement and was hopeful for positive improvement as officers want to make this work.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7. No other business raised.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8. The next Community Planning Partnership Board meeting will take place on 7th October 2024 at 10am (note change to 03rd October)