

THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Wednesday 29 September 2020 – 2:00pm

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

MINUTE

Board members present

Cllr Adam McVey	The City of Edinburgh Council
Gavin Donoghue	The University of Edinburgh
Sean Scott	Police Scotland
Cllr Robert Aldridge	The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Susan Rae	The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Iain Whyte	The City of Edinburgh Council
Elaine Morrison	Scottish Enterprise
Audrey Cumberland	Edinburgh College
John Tibbitt	Edinburgh Association of Community Councils
Cllr Susan Rae	The City of Edinburgh Council
Kenny Rodgers	Scottish Fire and Rescue
Angus McCann	Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board
Ella Simpson	EVOG
Sarah Ogden	Castle Rock Edinvar
Richard Thomas	Police Scotland

Advisers present

Andrew Kerr	The City of Edinburgh Council
Michael Chalmers	Scottish Government

In attendance

Cllr Karen Doran (Substituting for Cllr Cammy Day)	The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Kate Campbell	The City of Edinburgh Council
Michele Mulvaney	The City of Edinburgh Council
Paula McLeay	The City of Edinburgh Council
Valerie Lawrie	The City of Edinburgh Council
Saty Kaur	The City of Edinburgh Council
Chris Adams	The City of Edinburgh Council
Martin Higgins	NHS Lothian
Nickey Brown	The City of Edinburgh Council
Crawford McGhie	The City of Edinburgh Council

1 Minutes

Decision

To agree the minutes of 3 June 2020 as a correct record.

2 Homelessness Presentation

Nickey Brown, Homelessness and Housing Support Senior Manager for the City of Edinburgh Council was invited to report to the Edinburgh Partnership on the City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC's) approach to homelessness following emergency measures which had been implemented in respect of minimising the spread of Covid-19.

Covid-19 had offered an opportunity for the Council to engage with people impacted by homelessness. While the public health crisis was ongoing, support had been provided to people without recourse to public funds which had meant that individuals seeking support were linked into repatriation, advocacy and employability services. For the Registered Social Landlord, Council Housing and Owner Occupation settlement population- there had been a slowdown in movement of people into these groups. Between March to July in 2020 there were more people in temporary housing.

Under usual circumstances, prior to the Covid-19 lockdown period, 120 people in the city were known to be sleeping rough. Homelessness Services estimated 12-15 people who were still sleeping rough during this period and third sector providers were meeting regularly to discuss this cohort. When emergency measures were in place to support homeless people, accommodation had been offered in large hotels, however people that were accommodated in hotels during the pandemic had a move on plan and their journey from exiting the hotel was being carefully monitored.

There had been a report presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council which set out the scale of the issue of homelessness and access to settled accommodation in Edinburgh. By May 2021 the Scottish Government would no longer require those seeking housing to have a local connection to the area and there was an expectation that there would be an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless in the city, presenting greater pressure on the City of Edinburgh Council.

The financial implications had been considerable both in terms of the Covid-19 component and by supporting those with no recourse to public funds. The forthcoming changes expected to Scottish Government policy were expected to add to the overall financial challenge.

A number of questions and comments emerged from those attending which focussed on the following issues:

- What were the key asks of Partners to enable the Council to make progress on the challenge of Homelessness?
- That the council's Rapid Rehousing transition Plan was responding to the challenges faced.
- The strand of preventing homelessness was required to be seen in a wider societal way and that everyone had a role to play in preventing homelessness.
- The change to local connection criteria by the Scottish Government and what was being done to respond to this?
- That a report would be presented to the Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council in November and would highlight the challenges which were specific to Edinburgh.
- That the Scottish Government had indicated that they were willing to work with the Council if as a result of a change in the legislation for no longer requiring a local connection to seek settlement in an area, there was an upsurge in settlement requests. This would require quarterly monitoring of anticipated likely increase of people presenting as homeless in the city.
- That those living in private rents or middle market rent were all at risk of homelessness. There was always a time lag to the claim of benefits, and a plea whether the Council could work with Scot Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to bring forward a statement that these arrears were not immediately chased when those who fell upon difficult times were awaiting funds as part of a welfare claim?
- That the Council had a team who dealt with presentations for those seeking support with housing. During Covid-19 there has been a pause to dealing with evictions. There was joint working underway with the DWP to resolve benefits claims quickly and to tackle groups who had fallen out of private renting.
- That providing a person-centred approach was considered very important and a wealth of work had been undertaken by negotiating with landlords.
- What the Edinburgh Partnership could do to allow benefits payments earlier, in terms of lobbying with the DWP?
- That the Housing team was working in tandem and collaboratively with Homelessness team in the City of Edinburgh Council and the acknowledgement that there would be some families with vulnerabilities who were not known to housing or social work.

Decision

1. To circulate the rapid rehousing plan to members of the Edinburgh Partnership.

2. For Members of the Partnership to consider how their organisations could consider and embed a preventative approach to homelessness.

3 Edinburgh Poverty Commission

Councillor Adam McVey highlighted that the Poverty Commission had now published its final findings and that the Council's response to the conclusions of the commission was endorsed. The challenge ahead would involve how the Edinburgh Partnership should constructively respond to the Commission's findings, both as a Partnership and on behalf of organisations' individual responses.

Decision

1. To create specific actions for the Edinburgh Partnership to respond to the Poverty Commission's final findings via the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Group as the delivery vehicle for the Edinburgh Partnership.
2. To circulate the Poverty Commission's final findings to members of the Edinburgh Partnership.
3. To note that the Council's response to the Poverty Commissions final findings was positive.
4. To request that Edinburgh Partnership and its constituent organisations consider how they could implement the approaches as set out in the Poverty Commission's final findings.

4 Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Annual Progress Report

The Edinburgh Partnership was required under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to produce a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The plan presented provided the framework for supporting the delivery of partnership working to improve outcomes for those residents in the city experiencing the greatest inequality. An annual update on the plan was presented.

Decision

- 1 To approve the LOIP annual progress report.
- 2 To note an update report would be presented to the Edinburgh Partnership Board in December 2020.
- 3 To note the value in tracking data relating to the number of apprenticeships, individual career move supports and to note the availability of data during this particularly fluid time and how data may be used to support the ambitions of the LOIP Delivery Group.

5 Edinburgh Partnership Communications

An update on the communications work programme was presented which focussed on three areas of development – the joint communications approach for COVID-19 recovery planning, the Edinburgh Partnership communications strategy and the new Edinburgh Partnership web platform.

Decision

- 1 To agree to proactively endorse close collaboration of renewal communications aimed at citizens and city partners.
- 2 To note the progress to date to develop the communications strategy and agree to receive a further report at a future meeting to approve the strategy.
- 3 To agree to promote the Edinburgh Partnership website through partner networks and contribute to content for Phase two development.
- 4 To provide background information on Community Planning on the landing page of the new website.

6 Criminal Justice

The Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership (ECSP) was responsible for developing and implementing Edinburgh's Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) on behalf of the Edinburgh Partnership (community planning). The completed Community Justice Local Area Annual Return Template was presented and contained examples of partner's individual and collective community justice activity during 2019/20.

Decision

To approve the completed Community Justice Local Area Annual Return for 2019/20.

7 Community Safety

The new Community Safety Strategy developed to replace the current Antisocial Behaviour Strategy covered the years 2020 to 2023. Plans for a formal launch in April 2020 were suspended due to re provisioning of activity, officers and resources in response to Covid-19, however some of the actions outlined under each priority had been able to be progressed. An overview of the strategy (that was agreed by members of the Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership on the 3rd March 2020) and an update on some of the key actions which had progressed to date was presented.

Decision

To note the content of the report and the new Joint Community Safety Strategy 2020 – 2023.

8 Recovery Planning

Each organisation attending was invited to share how their organisation was progressing with their recovery planning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The City of Edinburgh Council expressed concerns around rise in Coronavirus cases within care homes and gave assurances that all Council activity was being undertaken with consideration of the public health concerns.

The NHS noted the increase in coronavirus cases in care homes and advised that increases in new coronavirus cases were driven by students mainly however that numbers were decreasing.

Work with schools had been ongoing to control cases and there had been a recruitment drive to secure staff to do contact tracing. The NHS took the opportunity to applaud the Council's Environmental Health team for their endeavours during this time. The NHS has a Remobilisation plan as part of the recovery planning and intended to recommence screening programmes and provide capacity to treat patients and looking to drive activity through the 111 service so that patient flows could be managed.

The Integration Joint Board meeting structure had recommenced, with a keen eye on Personal, Protective Equipment, Testing and Care Homes.

For EVOC much of their work was with small community-based organisations, and attention was focussed on provisioning this support in the longer term, particularly in the response to mental health and wellbeing challenges faced as a result of the prolonged period of measures to reduce social contact stemming from the lockdown. There were apprehensions around unpaid carers providing the ongoing support, when support services had been withdrawn as a result of lockdown and EVOC was seeking to avoid crisis interventions where carers had no longer been able to cope. EVOC had concerns around the sustainability of services beyond the Government's furlough scheme, which was due to conclude in October 2020.

The University of Edinburgh has a small number of positive coronavirus cases within their halls of residences and preparations were underway for movement into phase four of the Scottish Government's route map, however at present teaching remained in the hybrid online and in person.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had managed to provide an ongoing service however had experienced staffing challenges where test and protect had resulted in an entire fire station staffing being advised to isolate. Some of the prevention work which was underway prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 was recommencing alongside efforts to identify people that were vulnerable.

The Council's Spaces for People initiative, which had emerged due to the need to create spaces on public footpaths to allow for people to socially distance from each other, in a bid to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, has resulted in the narrowing of carriageways and expansion of footpaths and road closures which had resulted in members of the public expressing concerns about emergency vehicle access. Councillor Karen Doran, in her capacity as Vice Convenor for the Transport and Environment Committee, agreed to discuss this matter in detail out with the Edinburgh Partnership with Kenny Rodgers.

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce was switching activity onto the digital platform and in response to Covid-19 guidelines and the associated impact on businesses, were lobbying the Scottish Government through Scottish Chambers of Commerce.

Decision

- 1 For Kenny Rodgers and Councillor Karen Doran to discuss Spaces for People and the impact of this initiative on emergency access vehicles.
- 2 To note Councillor Adam McVey's vote of thanks to organisations for responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

9 Food Insecurity

As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic a Vulnerable Groups Board was established and was responsible for creating and monitoring several immediate support activities.

As the direct funding streams associated with the Covid-19 response were expected to come to an end, those involved in the immediate support activity began to consider how best to build on experience gained to ensure a more effective response to any similar future emergencies. The opportunity to continue to improve working relationships between statutory authorities and third sector organisations had been recognised as one area of focus for future activity.

The activity to address food poverty in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the range of third sector organisations that were already involved in tackling food poverty and health inequalities across Edinburgh. In addition, other organisations have developed capabilities in direct response to the pandemic.

The immediate response work had also shown there was a wide range of Council services which interact, commission or have contracts with the third sector in relation to meeting several different citizen needs. Feedback from the third sector had highlighted a wish for further conversations with the Council around opportunities to become more sustainably involved in a range of future service

provision, including tackling food poverty, and as such an event to discuss this further would be taking place.

Decision

1. To note the update in relation to the immediate support activity which had been carried out in partnership across the city in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To approve that an event involving all those organisations involved in addressing food poverty across the city, which focused on continuing to improve relationships and working practices, was arranged as a key Partnership follow up activity.
3. To note the intention of the Life Chances Poverty and Prevention workstream to take forward long term planning for transformation of the Council's future work with all third sector organisations in Edinburgh.

10 Adaptation and Renewal Equalities Principles

Equalities officers across the Council, NHS Lothian and the IJB identified a need to provide a practical and shared partnership approach to equalities to support the development of partner recovery programmes following the Covid-19 emergency response.

Officers from across a number of partner organisations have collaborated to develop a set of principles that aim to support a cultural shift enabling equality to be mainstreamed into the redesign and delivery of services as the city recovers from the pandemic. These principles would provide a basis for the new Equalities, Diversity and Rights Framework.

The Council was considering how to meaningfully embed these principles into its Adaptation and Renewal Programme in order to ensure that all citizens' experience of accessing public sector services is positive and that recovery plans have the greatest impact on those citizens identified as being most disadvantaged before and during the pandemic as a result of sharing protected characteristics. An update on progress, setting out the draft equalities principles and next steps was shared.

Decision

1. For members to feedback on the draft equalities principles and next steps.
2. To note that there would be an update to a future meeting of the Edinburgh Partnership.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 2pm.