

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

EXTERNAL SERVICES/PROVIDERS MONITORING GROUP

MINUTES of Meeting of the EXTERNAL SERVICES/PROVIDERS MONITORING GROUP held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 29 November 2022 at 2.00 pm

- Present:- Councillors M. Rowley (Chair), P. Brown, J. Greenwell, M. Douglas, S. Hamilton and E. Thornton-Nicol
- Apologies:- Councillors E. Jardine
- In Attendance:- Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships, Director Resilient Communities, Chief Officer Audit and Risk, Chief Officer Roads, Contracts Manager (P. McNulty), Estimator (M. Douglas), IT Client Manager (N. Byers), Mr E. Jackson (Live Borders), Mr J. Wordsworth-Goodram (CGI), and Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

1. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for approval and signature by the Chair.

2. LIVE BORDERS PROVISION AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by Director Resilient Communities that presented key information in regard to the Live Borders contract for the first two quarters of the 2022-23 financial year and provided Elected Members with key information on the governance of the contract, updated information on the delivery of the commissioned services and key performance information. Live Borders had previously presented performance information to the Executive Committee on a 6-monthly basis. Live Borders would now present to the External Services/Providers Monitoring Group following changes to the SBC Scheme of Administration. The meeting of the External Services/Providers Monitoring Group was the first opportunity for Live Borders performance information to be presented to the group and was also an opportunity to discuss the KPI performance report format contained in Appendix 1 of the report, and the group's expectations for future reporting. The Director Resilient Communities highlighted challenges that were impacting the sport, leisure and cultural sector which included the impact of Covid-19, the rise of energy costs and the cost of living crisis, and that the Joint Officers Group were considering those challenges and were looking at options to mitigate those factors.
- 2.2 The Director Resilient Communities introduced Mr Jackson, Chief Executive of Live Borders, to present the report who advised that Live Borders faced a number of challenges and pressures related to the Covid-19 pandemic, inflation and the cost of energy. Participation level tracking was showing a rate of between 80-90% of pre-Covid-19 participation levels with variations across the business with health and fitness having showed a rate of approximately 80% and swimming showed rates in the high-90% level. It had been difficult to make meaningful comparisons across KPIs where some indicators were above target levels and some had fallen behind.

- 2.3 Concern was raised by the Chair whether it was overoptimistic of the service to expect that many of the RAG indicators showing as red would move to green when the cost of living crisis would continue while also moving into a period of bad weather. Mr Jackson advised that this had been raised at a recent Live Borders Board meeting. It was explained that the approaching quarter three and four periods were strongest for Live Borders in terms of sporting participation. With regards to the shift required on other targets, the Board would undertake to reflect that the shift projections were as accurate as possible. Target KSI 1b for culture visits was requested to be reviewed as it had been difficult to explain the trend against the target which showed an upward trend although the rate remained at half of the target rate. KSI 3 Learn to Swim Memberships was subject to the status of Peebles Swimming Pool which was closed for business. KSI 4 Memberships was anticipated to move to green alongside KSI 6 Health Referrals which had shown success in the undertaking of the referrals programme which had previously been paused for six weeks. Mr Jackson advised that he would prepare a paragraph for the Group, which would also go to the Live Borders Board, which would set out why there would be more shifts from red to green and why Live Borders were confident in further shifts.

MEMBER

Councillor Greenwell joined the meeting during the above discussion.

- 2.4 Mr Jackson explained that the target KSI 22 Surplus/Deficit was showing a RAG status of red and was projected as red for 'unlikely to be met' as it was shown to be a missed financial target. The current deficit was at £449,000 and was projected to be £800,000 by the year end. The financial challenges were attributed to the legacy impact of Covid-19, inflation and the rising cost of energy. The deficit was expected to be covered by reserves. Changes in the library membership targets were explained due to a cleansing exercise of library memberships of people that had not used the service in two years which resulted in the reset of the target. Councillor Thornton-Nicol raised the matters of Selkirk Library and Selkirk Swimming Pool being open for limited hours in a week and whether there would be more users using services and bringing in revenue if opening hours were increased. Mr Jackson explained that a substantial survey of lapsed library users had been undertaken to assess whether individuals would return if opening hours were extended. There were Live Borders venues' opening times that had recently been extended based on feedback. Libraries were performing gradually better and users and communities would continue to be consulted. Swimming pools and sports centres had usage rates assessed to inform opening hours and Selkirk Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre was due to be extended to incorporate weekend use following consultation with regular users. Mr Jackson further explained that swimming pools generally worked on the basis that 12 people were needed to swim per hour to cover staff costs. The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to have a briefing note provided which showed operational performance on particular libraries, cultural locations and swimming pools to assess the asset infrastructure of Live Borders, which would help to bring understanding on whether certain assets were performing well. Councillor Thornton-Nicol further suggested that the mobile library should form part of the briefing note.
- 2.5 The narrative for the target KSI 1b for cultural participation was raised which showed visitor numbers for museums and libraries. The Chair asked whether libraries should get a separate indicator and suggested this may be an example of whether information behind the data presented would illustrate specific challenges in certain assets. Mr Jackson advised that the information in the report was an aggregation of data across the service. The target for cultural participation was highlighted for review however the upward trend for footfall was welcomed and it was understood to have been driven by good rates from libraries. Live Borders was comfortable in growth of museums and galleries and that libraries were heading in the right direction. The Great Tapestry of Scotland challenges were brought about from the Covid-19 pandemic but targets were moving in the right direction. In the first full year, there were 24,000 paid-for entrances to the upper gallery. Retail associated with the Great Tapestry of Scotland was strong and

the cafe had approximately 60,000 transactions for the first full year. The Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions had calculated a 31% loss of visitors across the industry which Live Borders were not far from. Mr Jackson emphasised that he had been tasked to review target projections to reflect a more accurate target representation of participation in cultural representation whereas the data of actual values were demonstrating positive progress. The Chair suggested that the targets and attendances for each of the cultural attractions should be presented to understand whether there were variances in performances of each attraction.

- 2.6 Councillor Greenwell commended the staff at Kelso Swimming Pool that supported children as part of a charity visit. The Chair further commended the Jim Clark Museum and noted that participation rates were doing well.

**DECISION
AGREED that:**

- (a) an updated Service Provision Agreement should be considered and discussed at a future External Services/Providers Monitoring Group;**
- (b) a briefing note be presented to the External Services/Providers Monitoring Group which detailed operational performance of Live Borders assets including libraries, cultural locations and swimming pools; and,**
- (c) reviewed and adjusted targets be presented to a future meeting of the External Services/Providers Monitoring Group.**

3. CGI CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 With reference to paragraph 2 of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022, there had been circulated copies of a report by Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships that presented key information with respect to the CGI contract for the first three quarters of 2022 and key updates on performance to date. The report provided Elected Members with key information on the governance of the contract, updated information on the transformation programme delivered with CGI including the Social Work Pathfinder transformation programme, key performance information with respect to the service delivery of the contract and a note of key issues associated with contract management, which included change requests signed in the quarter and Impact Assessment status. Powerpoint presentation slides which accompanied the report were circulated to members which provided further detailed information on each of the areas of the report. The Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships introduced the report and highlighted key aspects. With regards to key projects, there were a number of projects that were marked 'red' or 'amber'. This was explained as being due to a number of third party pressures which included work with an external provider on cabling and infrastructure on various projects. There had also been problems with firewalls which prevented upgrades being undertaken. There was one missed performance target regarding customer satisfaction and work was being implemented to address this. WiFi issues in Jedburgh High School were being addressed and cabling work was underway to remedy this.
- 3.2 Mr John Wordsworth-Goodram presented the slides which highlighted key information from the report. It was confirmed that the issues experienced with Lync calls failing in the Galashiels office were resolved and that information was included within the report on action on recruitment in the Scottish Borders region. A number of boards met to take forward the joint goal of the Scottish Borders to be the smartest rural region in the UK. The meetings of those governance boards continued to meet and that minutes were taken of those meetings. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram confirmed that partners continued to work as a team on imperatives related to the Transformation programme.

- 3.3 The Social Work Pathfinder Programme was confirmed as being in delivery having commenced on 5 October 2022. The Pathfinder programme focused on Social Work with a view to:
- provide mobile technology to enable front line staff to capture data to populate the system when they meet with clients which would remove the need for note taking, dictation, transcription and data entry to Mosaic;
 - revise business processes to capture accurate data to allow the service to improve efficiency and make more informed decisions on further improvements; and,
 - develop a performance dashboard to provide Directors with the information they need to manage their service.
- 3.4 Project teams were in place working across the project workstreams. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram highlighted the timeline of the Pathfinder programme which was progressing as planned. The Digital Customer Access project had concluded. Internet Migration project was due to conclude by the end of November 2022. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram advised on the progress of projects which were marked as 'red' and 'amber' and that work was being undertaken with Scottish Borders Council colleagues to speed up those projects. Firewall issues had affected Macbook deployment and Lync 2010 Decommissioning however a new firewall was prepared and advice was expected from Scottish Borders Council to choose a time when the migration to the new firewall could take place. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram paused to answer questions from Members. It was advised that the Depot WiFi project progress was marked 'red' due to third-party related issues. An alternative third-party contractor was being sought to complete the project. The Managed Print project was also affected by the same third-party contractor. The Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships advised that one supplier had been delivering several pieces of work and that officers were assessing alternative suppliers to undertake specific work.
- 3.5 Service successes and challenges were highlighted. Inventor/Autodesk was packaged and rolled out to all high schools within a short duration to minimise the impact on pupils' curriculum. CGI experienced a number of challenges in education particularly with Network/WiFi issues reported at the Jedburgh Campus. Network cabling was checked which showed the existence of errors which were being resolved by a third-party cabling company. CGI had engaged with other schools to identify WiFi related issues which contributed to the development of a remediation plan. Work had been undertaken to resolve firewall issues which affected resiliency capacity. New firewalls were due to be installed on week commencing 14 November 2022. In response to a question about tracking satisfaction levels in schools from the Chair, Mr Wordsworth-Graham advised that client satisfaction was a focus of work as part of addressing the failure of its relevant KPI. Part of the work was to break down customer satisfaction by directorate so that satisfaction in education could be assessed. A number of customer satisfaction user groups within directorates was to be created so that they could engage directly with CGI Service Desk. There was a high level of availability across applications across Priority 1, 2 and 3 applications managed by CGI. CGI engaged in a number of activities and sponsorship of community initiatives and Mr Wordsworth-Goodram advised that he would welcome suggestions for how CGI could support more groups in Scottish Borders communities. With regards to STEM learning, CGI ran STEM activities with different age groups with age-appropriate activities which progressed through age groups. CGI wished to work within school and to bring the wider community to CGI buildings to engage in STEM opportunities. CGI were keen to expand opportunities for groups to receive support and that there was no limit to the amount of community organisations and sport clubs that CGI would sponsor and it was advised that teams and clubs looking for sponsorship should contact Mr Wordsworth-Goodram. In respect to digital inclusion and supporting people not digitally connected and to learn skills to be digitally connected, Mr Wordsworth-Goodram advised that he would support a pilot to support older people in a community centre to do basic learning in digital skills. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram advised

that discussions were taking place for how CGI works with partners in the community and that he could advise on activities taking place.

- 3.6 With regards to recruitment, the Tweedbank CGI office building opened on 8 August with its official opening having taken place on 4 November 2022. Mr Wordsworth-Goodram advised that since the circulation of the report, there was a little over 67 CGI members employed that lived in the Borders and there were 112 members working on the Scottish Borders Council contract. All roles in the UK that allowed home working were being promoted in the Borders. There were 379 relevant vacancies across different skillsets that were being reviewed to be marketed in the Borders. CGI were working with CodeClan and Skills Development Scotland to promote opportunities in the Borders. CGI balanced recruitment of individuals with limited IT skills where their skillset would be developed as part of their employment, such as with graduate recruits and Modern Apprentices, and also ensured that appropriately skilled individuals were recruited to deliver the requirements of clients. Visits had taken place at a number of careers fairs to target school children to consider STEM and IT/technology jobs with CGI. The Chair suggested that the Tweedbank facility may be an opportunity to encourage people to consider careers in IT and with CGI by visiting the working environment. After a question from the Chair on CGI members working in the Scottish Borders Council contract, it was confirmed it would be a safe assumption that the staffing number required to work on the SBC contract was approximately 150.

**DECISION
NOTED:**

- (a) **the report and the associated slide deck; and,**
- (b) **the information provided within the report and the associated slide deck detailing the performance of the CGI over Quarter 1,2 and 3 and updates since Q4 noting Q4 has not concluded in 2022.**

4. SBC CONTRACTS 2ND QUARTER REPORT 2022-23

- 4.1 With regards to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022, there had been circulated copies of a report by Chief Officer Roads that provided a summary on the performance of SBc Contracts for the financial year 2022-23 up to 30 September. In regards to road surfacing activity to 30 September 2022 SBc Contracts successfully completed 12 Surface Dressing Patching sites, 5 Carriageway Patching sites, 7 Screed sites, 3 Capital Resurfacing schemes and 2 contracts for private clients. With specific regard to surface dressing, SBc Contracts had applied treatment to 124,580m² across the network. At 6 sites, deemed as high stress, there was further applied treatment with a Secure Chip application. Works at Chirnside Bridge, Ross High School and Eddleston Cycleway were successfully completed. There were contracts which had extended beyond the financial years. In 2022-23 there were 12 sites which remained active and which commenced in 2021-22, and since April 2022 works had commenced on 62 new sites, 8 of which remained active. Good weather in summer 2022 helped with road resurfacing programmes and with performance on other contracts. Successful programmes highlighted were:

- Completion and opening of the Inspire Academy Building at Tweedbank;
- Delivery of the 20mph speed limit programme;
- Completion of three replacements culverts at Fernihurst, Billhope and Letham;
- New pedestrian crossings at Duns and Peebles;
- Repairs to 12 damaged bridges;
- Significant rural road relining across the Borders; and,
- 6 projects to repair flood damage across the Borders.

- 4.2 For the four months to 30 September repairs had been completed using the Pothole Pro on 10 sites on the A-Class network which repaired 522 potholes which amounted to 2,064m² of asphalt. The Chief Officer Roads advised that the deployment of the Pothole

Pro was believed to have helped the Council meet its obligations to repair the roads in a timely manner, and whilst the Pothole Pro was only one technique and approach to what was an integrated management regime, the Pothole Pro would be important as the permanent nature of the repairs it made would help with efficiency, and improve the road user experience, whilst also allowing reductions to be made in the SBC fleet. Initial enquiries had been made with Education and Lifelong Learning into promoting careers opportunities within the service and whilst there were no immediate opportunities, future opportunities would be sought to promote the service as a career choice. Approaches to succession and people management would continue to be in line with SBC programmes. Members discussed the report and recognised the positive impact the Pothole Pro had on pothole repair work.

DECISION

NOTED the performance of SBc Contracts for the 2nd quarter of 2022-23.

5. **PRIVATE BUSINESS**

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Act.

6. **MINUTE**

Members considered the Private Section of the Minute of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022.

7. **CGI CONTRACT PERFORMANCE**

Members considered the report by Director Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships.

8. **SBC CONTRACTS 2ND QUARTER REPORT**

Members considered the report by Chief Officer Roads.

The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm.