

Midlothian Council Report

Quarter Three 2021/22

Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

The Route Map through and out of the crisis, approved by Council in June 2020, set out how the Council would work with its partners and communities to put the necessary changes in place to support recovery from the pandemic and to meet the challenges ahead. Our focus in supporting the recovery and retaining the best elements of transformation that took place in response to the pandemic has been to secure permanent changes to the way the services are delivered in order to build back better.

Each service has a Service Plan which provides a link to the outcomes contained within the commitments of the Single Midlothian Plan, the Route Map through and out of the crisis, the Listen and Learn report, any relevant legislation that is specific to the service and to the strengths and improvement activities identified as part of self-evaluation.

Service plans translate 'what we intend to do' into 'how we will achieve it'. There is a clear link between the priorities in the service plan and those identified in the SMP and the Council's strategic priorities. Whilst detailed progress for individual service plans are provided quarterly the following provides a summary of key updates against the five overarching thematic areas within the Single Midlothian Plan as follows:

- **Adult Health and Social Care** - Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services
- **Community Safety & Justice** - Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in
- **Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child** - Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- **Improving Opportunities for Midlothian** - Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities.
- **Sustainable Growth in Midlothian** - Growing the local economy by supporting business growth and responding to growing demand for housing in a sustainable environment.

Whilst a full update for quarter three performance for each of the Council's Service areas is published separately, this report reflects an overview of the key service updates, against the thematic areas of the Single Midlothian Plan.

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2021/22

Adult, Health and Care - Achievements

Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services

Our Vision: People in Midlothian are enabled to lead longer and healthier lives.

Our Values: Right support, right time, right place.

Midlothian Integration Joint Board plan and direct the services that are delivered by Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). The HSCP is a partnership between NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council and is responsible for services that help Midlothian residents to live well and get support when they need it. This includes all community health and social care services for adults in Midlothian and some hospital-based services such as Accident and Emergency.

Work on the IJB Strategic Plan 2022-25 continued in Q3. In order to meet the legal requirements of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, the HSCP is required to develop, consult on, and publish a new Strategic Plan in 2022. Official consultation on the draft plan is underway. The feedback from the consultation will be considered by planning groups and required changes will be made to the plan before the final plan is submitted to the IJB in March 2022 and published by 1st April 2022.

HSCP COVID-19 Response: The COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges and much disruption to the Health and Social Care Partnership, its partners and the communities it serves. There was increased anxiety and pressure on many service users, unpaid carers and staff. While challenges may have changed since 2020, they continued in 2021, and into 2022. The Omicron variant resulted in additional vaccination clinics and changed restrictions.

The top priority of the Partnership is the safety of clients, carers, communities and staff. In response to the pandemic it was important to be innovative and support clients effectively and safely. In Q3 some services again had to adapt in how they operated with, for example, changes to relative visiting arrangements and changes to service delivery, reduced face to face where feasible. Reduced opportunities for carer respite remain a concern. The Omicron variant resulted in increased staff absence – people isolating or testing positive for the COVID. This increased pressure on service delivery.

As well as presenting a tremendous challenge to services, staff and partners, the crisis also created an opportunity to build on existing and new community connections. Volunteering programmes continued and were further supported by the Partnership.

Seasonal Flu/COVID Booster Programmes: The COVID Booster programme for eligible residents started on Monday 27th September. Vaccinations for care home residents, children under 5 and primary school children also started. This is the first year when the Health and Social Care Partnership is leading the flu programme and has taken over this service from General Practices as part of the new GP contract. The majority of vaccinations are provided from three venues: Gorebridge Leisure Centre, Midlothian Community Hospital and Eastfield Medical Practice. The Health and Social Care Partnership also leads the ongoing COVID vaccination programme which includes Evergreen (1st and 2nd COVID doses), 12-15 years olds, and 3rd dose for people who are immunosuppressed and the Booster programme.

As a result of the Omicron variant there was additional pressures on the booster programme in efforts to have people boosted before the end of the year. Additional clinic hours were arranged with increased stations and vaccinators. At full capacity a total of 9001 appointments per week were offered across both sites plus 658 for Tranche 1/evergreen. By end Q3 50,253 of all adults in Midlothian had received a booster, including 91.5% of adults over 70 years. A clinic for people with a Learning Disability was held on 08.12.21 - approximately 80 people vaccinated.

Digital: Technology offers a range of tools to support pathway and service redesign in terms of both iterative improvements and transformative initiatives. We continued to proactively engage with the emerging digital agenda in Scotland to maximise the value that technology, in all its forms, can add. With the inauguration of a new Digital Governance Group within our structure we anticipate improved planning and resourcing of projects (internally) which connect effort across the partnership. We need to consider how services are designed and incorporate technology, therefore, as the HSCP supports development of the next IJB strategic Plan, we are positioning Digital as an enabler of transformation rather than a service or resource to demonstrate the paradigm shift required to deliver digital transformation.

Learning Disabilities: Implementation of a framework for providing positive behavioural support within Midlothian has been completed and continues to receive support from all stakeholders. Implementation has been impacted by COVID19, but the steering group has now reconvened and training at levels one and two is underway and the pathway has been updated. Work with People First to produce a video from a service users' perspective to be used in staff training has been delayed as a consequence of the new guidelines responding to the Omicron variant. Two services are piloting a quality framework aimed at improving the quality of care for service users. PBS Pathway now in use within Community Learning Disability Team.

Older People: Extra Care Housing: As with many other areas, Midlothian faces many challenges in addressing the housing and care needs of an ageing population with increasingly complex requirements. Extra Care Housing is a model of accommodation and care that supports people to live in their own tenancy. Work was progressed on 3 sites (Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Gorebridge) to provide 106 ECH bungalows or flats. Timescales were impacted by Covid 19 but completion dates are still estimated as late 2022 (Dalkeith) and late 2023 (Bonnyrigg and Gorebridge).

Care Homes: Midlothian has 10 older people's care homes, 2 of which are HSCP run with one being an intermediate care facility. The remaining 8 are privately run either by private companies, charitable organisations or independent care homes. Health Boards and local Health and Social Care Partnerships continue to carry responsibilities for the clinical and professional oversight of the care provided to people resident in care homes in line with the Scottish Government guidelines (May 2020).

Care at Home: Care at Home continues to be a key contributor to the HSCP vision for people to receive the right care in the right place; in their home and community as far as possible. It supports efforts to reduce length of hospital stay, as well as admission avoidance. Care at Home is currently provided by the HSCP and external providers. Midlothian experienced significant pressures within Care at Home services over the last 9 months. This was in line with the national challenges to recruit care staff. Despite this pressure, Care at Home worked hard to ensure packages of care continued to be delivered. On 1st September new contracts were awarded to external Care at Home providers. Work has been ongoing with the new providers in order to implement the contracts effectively.

Mental Health: The Mental Health Strategic Planning group developed the Mental Health Action Plan reflecting the priorities set out in the Midlothian HSCP Strategic Plan. Primary Care Mental Health Nurses are now in 12 practices across Midlothian and we have appointed to the OT role to supplement the service. Evaluation of the impact of primary care nurses is ongoing and is a blend of quantitative and qualitative data. Current findings are positive.

Individual Placement Support has been impacted by Covid 19 however the service is providing assessment and support to 8 individuals who are seeking employment and/or Further Education.

Community Safety – Achievements

Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in

Justice Service: Activity during Q3 continued to focus on recovery and our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service delivery focused on managing individuals in the Justice system through a mixture of face-to-face and virtual meetings. This continues to be based on dynamic assessments using risk and needs to determine levels of involvement. The Justice team are continuing to design alternatives to prosecution/Court disposals. Structured Deferred Sentences offered to the Court by the Justice team has been reviewed and streamlined. Change Grow Live and Venture Trust have been identified as offering structured interventions to individuals involved in the Justice system. It is anticipated that this will increase the options for assisting with the backlog of cases within the Court system and provide better outcomes for individuals in the Justice system. Further conversations with colleagues in the Courts have progressed the design of services such as Supervised Bail and Diversion.

Substance Misuse: Key services based in Number 11 in Dalkeith continued to provide services including outreach treatment, injecting equipment provision [IEP], naloxone, information/advice. Despite Covid restrictions impacting service delivery, the Midlothian Substance Use Service instigated an outreach model to those individuals who were most at risk. This includes the trialling of Buvidal [an injectable form of Buprenorphine].

Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child - Achievements

Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families

“All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.”

The new **National Child Protection Guidance** has been published. There is a national implementation group which Midlothian are part of and we have between 18-24 months to fully implement all the actions. Across the Lothian's and with Scottish Borders we are commissioning a person to write local procedures.

Children's Services continued to be impacted by Covid and some restrictions, including the increase in number of staff who have had to self-isolate. Staff continue to work on a rota basis within Eskdaill Court until such times that Scottish Government guidance allows for a return of all staff.

Reducing Poverty: The income maximisation project has demonstrated that this was a successful pilot which shall continue to be a part of children's services work going forward. This early intervention approach of supporting families to ensure they access the benefits they are entitled to, is a key support in helping families get out of the poverty trap. Covid-19 has impacted hugely on families' financial position and therefore the need to ensure that we continue to offer this service is required to try and reduce the impact of poverty. The child poverty working group led by CLLE is revising their action plan.

Attainment and Achievement: A Midlothian Curriculum for Excellence report has been written to give detailed analysis and plans for next steps in relation to raising attainment. An attainment session has been held with Education Scotland SRA and planned for with CPWG. Work is ongoing with the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and our Education Service to further focus on intervention strategies to address the widening poverty related attainment gap.

Improve attainment within the senior phase by maximising opportunities through curriculum planning, consortium arrangements and partnership delivery, including addressing the ASN Senior Phase Gap

Attainment deep dive meetings held in Autumn term with each Secondary School senior leadership team. Schools have analysed Insight data against current progress data and have identified key priorities within the following areas:

- Surprises or unexpected trends which have come through the 2021 Insight data and analysis
- ASN groups and any related issues
- Curriculum & progress pathways, including any immediate changes required
- Key department highlights and improvement priorities
- Gaps in attainment relation to inequities, and link to PEF planning and/or Care Experienced learners

Improve Equity and Inclusion: Nurture was a new key priority within the Education Service Plan 2020-2021 and the Equity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2021 and the strategy has been shared with and ratified by the GIRFEC Board. In November 2020, a Nurture Strategy Group was established. This is led by two Educational Psychologists and includes representatives from Education, Children and Families and Community Life Long Learning. Consultation takes place regularly with stakeholder representatives to inform our approach. The Nurture Strategy Group meets every two months, involving representatives from High Schools, Primary Schools and Early Years settings, Children

and Families Family Placement team and Residential team, the Inclusion and Well-Being Service, Community Life-Long Learning and a representative from the third sector providing counselling.

Improving Opportunities Midlothian - Achievements

Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities

Customer Services Strategy defines the key drivers that will enable Midlothian Council to deliver 'customer service excellence' to our communities. It outlines the commitment to provide choice to the customer in the way services are accessed and provided. This includes innovation, partnership working and optimising the use of technology within resource constraints. The strategy will help us to change the way we deliver services utilising the latest technologies and linking to national frameworks.

As one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland, the Council cannot support more customers using the current resources, systems and processes. This means that the adoption of digital and automated processes will be key to continuing to provide a seamless customer journey, satisfying enquiries at the first point of contact and meeting increased demand.

Customer self-service and new automated processes can help deliver some key services without customers dealing directly with a member of staff and could truly transform the way the Council deliver services. We already have a well-managed public facing website with SOCITM awarding our site four stars. Midlothian is one of only four Councils in Scotland to achieve this accolade. During 2020/21, increasing the pace of digital transformation, particularly in front-facing customer services, will be a service and corporate priority, for Midlothian Council – one that can deliver the required efficiencies without negatively affecting customer experience.

The Communities, Lifelong learning and Employability Service: As part of the Community Learning and Development Partnership Strategy increasing our engagement with local people to pre-pandemic levels was a key priority. Our target for 2021/22 was 4000 engagements, by the end of Q3 we have exceeded this by 612. 1,817 of the 4,612 engagement were with people and families living in the 40% areas of deprivation. It is important to keep this momentum and building local people's confidence to engage with us both online, in person and blended going forward over the next two years our target is 7,000 plus engagements. We have also exceeded our target of providing one to one employability or positive destination support to 685 individuals exceeding our target by 185. The communities team have supported 66 groups mainly with operational support and also an asset transfer request progress to panel decision

Supporting local people to secure employment or learning opportunities – Improving skills, for learning, life and work.

Our employability programmes for all ages have experienced an increase in numbers of local people accessing them. There is also a slow but steady increase in the number of employers accessing the employment recruitment incentive which we operate as part of our youth guarantee support. Third sector employers have embraced the opportunity to support young people through the Kickstart Gateway programme which CLLE manages and operates for them. In addition the service has offered Kickstart employment to 3 young people. The completion rate for modern apprenticeships operated through CLLE and the uptake of foundation apprenticeship is a positive picture especially with the challenges faced by young people and employers. We have also supported four third sector organisations including RUTS for example to expand their employability offer through youth guarantee funding. We have also supported 863 adults or families to engage with one or more of our 115 learning opportunities offered across our first steps to certificated programmes. In partnership with city deal we operate a dedicated parental employability support programme, the numbers for this programme have doubled over the last two quarters. We are currently planning a consultation with local people to give them a voice to influence the new offers for adult learning and employability going forward.

Supporting Young People through youth work and wider learning opportunities

We have supported the youth platform to engage with over 1,700 young people through their recent young people's consultation and ran the youth elections for the Scottish Youth Parliament. Our Youth work and Duke of Edinburgh groups have increased their offer, and street work is now on a rotation therefore reaching increased number of geographical communities. The youth work service has provided opportunities for 2641 young people. Our young people's positive destination project at Croft Street Hub has successfully recruited for the Dec 2022 intake.

Sport and Leisure: Following the move to "beyond Level 0" Sport and Leisure operations have continued to move towards pre-covid operations, however there are still significant challenges related to the pandemic such as restricted opening times and Centres being utilised for alternative activities. Sport & Leisure Services has supported Midlothian HSCP colleagues in delivering Flu Vaccination clinics and Let's Prevent, the Type 2 diabetes prevention programme by accommodating and integrating those services within Sport & Leisure facilities and programmes

Sustainable Growth - Achievements

“Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. The Place service ambition is to deliver joined-up, collaborative, and participative approaches to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enabling better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.”

Over the past year, innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted to respond to the needs of our citizens at pace, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality. This has resulted in a complete transformation of how the Council works. Place services are continuing to build on this learning moving forward, harnessing the energy, flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our workforce, to embed a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across Place.

Hub and Spoke, one of Midlothian's key drivers for change, will see a Locality approach to service delivery adopted, developed in conjunction with community planning partners. The opportunity to review and redesign services that the pandemic has provided will result in a more efficient and effective operation of sites within local communities. This will improve service delivery, and ensure better outcomes for local communities. The continued rollout of enhanced ICT capabilities will strengthen cross service working, produce resource efficiencies and support the localisation of services.

Environmental: Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint.

Two applications to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund were successful. Funding has been received for an additional vehicle to operate kerbside food waste collection in rural areas, and for in-cab technology for all waste collection vehicles.

Economic: Midlothian Council approved a new Economic Renewal Strategy which sets out its ambitious approach to managing the transition from lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face, the strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery.

The Carbon Charter was refreshed and a marketing campaign developed with the aim of encouraging businesses to sign up and benefit from developing tailored action plans with our Business Gateway team to support the net zero agenda. 11 local businesses have now signed up to the Midlothian Business Carbon pledge. Two businesses have been working with our Digital Officer to develop a feature and both now have our Pledge logo on their website.

Procurement - The Procurement team in conjunction with Economic Development have developed a SME Strategy to support and assist local businesses to win contracts fairly and transparently on a competitive market. We will further develop our collaborative and commercial relationships with key partners as part of our strategic category management approach, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the citizens of Midlothian.

Capital: Midlothian are taking a very positive and flexible approach to build momentum around the new supply recovery. There is a clear recognition that there will be a delay in starting and completing projects in the current five year programme and speculation about medium and long term impacts of the pandemic. A full evaluation was carried out of all current and planned construction projects and resourcing reviewed. This construction will directly support employment and wherever possible, new housing will be located close to good community facilities, shops and employment opportunities, with efficient and high quality public transport connections. New development shall be of high quality, balancing a desire for good contemporary design with respect for the area's heritage. The established community will benefit as much as possible from growth, through new affordable homes, enhanced employment prospects, improved education facilities and the development of green networks with opportunities for leisure and recreation.

Digital Strategy and Digital Learning Strategy: Supported by the appointment of SOCITIM as a strategic partner and led by the Digital First Board work progressed to deliver an ambitious new digital strategy, aimed at improving the way services are delivered to Midlothian citizens. Entitled 'Empowering people, enabling growth', the 3-year strategy sets out how local outcomes will be improved by delivering digital services to digitally connected communities.

While responding to the pandemic has transformed the way the council works, and we are already using technology to allow our services to be more flexible and responsive it was recognised that the Council needs to do much more to harness the opportunities that a digital approach can bring. This includes supporting our communities and local businesses to thrive in a digital world and making sure that our children are prepared for the workplaces of the future.

The new strategy was approved by Council in June and work is now underway to implement the following changes.

- Refresh the council's approach to customer service, focussing on 'digital first', while making sure alternatives remain in place for those who need them
- Have a council website that meets customer needs, enabling customers to request and pay for services online and to log in to see their interactions
- Implement an update service, so that customers contacting the council online can receive follow up text messages or emails
- Look at opportunities to automate and better integrate processes so that staff can focus on the things that matter most to customers
- Enable people to stay independent and healthy for longer by using data and technology
- Introduce bookable online and face-to-face appointments so that customers don't have to waste time queuing or travelling and to help the council reduce costs
- Review and improve online engagement with customers, including online consultations, communications and social media
- Promote Midlothian as a digital destination, creating an environment that attracts leading digital businesses to the area and supporting the innovation of start-ups
- Cultivate digital skills in our communities, ensuring that young people have access to the technology and support that they need to improve educational outcomes and to prepare them with the skills they need for the future
- Reduce digital exclusion and empower learners of all ages, enabling online access and supporting them to develop digital skills
- Support Midlothian to achieve high speed connectivity, smart infrastructure and resilient cyber defences

Housing and homelessness: Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2021. To address the need for affordable housing, the SHIP details potential sites for 2,446 new affordable homes to be built between 2022/2022 and 2026/27. The RRTP sets out a vision that by 2024: an increased number of homeless households will obtain permanent accommodation, no homeless household will be accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation, and the average time taken for the Council to complete its homeless duty will have halved from 105 to 52 weeks.

The Equally Safe Housing and Homelessness Policy was approved and is currently being implemented. It has been developed with Midlothian Women's Aid and Mid and East Lothian's Public Protection Team taking into account the specific needs of those experiencing domestic abuse and upcoming legislative changes.

Challenges and Risks

The challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery out of the pandemic, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings. Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all council areas in Scotland. From 2018 to 2028, the population of Midlothian is projected to increase from 91,340 to 103,945. This is an increase of 13.8%, which is in contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole with a 40.9% increase in older people over 75. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which falls into the most deprived areas giving a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

This growth creates the opportunity to meet the housing need with 25% of new homes being built in the affordable housing bracket, in addition to the expansion in Council house building. This construction will directly support employment and will see a steady increase in the value of Council Tax received over time.

The settlement for Local Government for 2022/23 announced in December represented a cash reduction in core grant of Circa £100m at a time where costs continue to rise. On 27th January a further £120 million one off funding was announced for Local Government. However Councils continue to face a £251m real terms cut which will

increase again in 2023/24 by a further £120m if the one-off funding for 2022/23 is not baselined within the Local Government settlement. The settlement announced in December gave Councils full flexibility to set the Council Tax rate that is appropriate for their local authority area.

It is against that backdrop that the cross party Business Transformation Setting Group is currently considering options to balance the 2022/23 budget and as part of that the Council Tax policy for the year ahead. Recommendations from Business Transformation Steering Group will in turn be presented to Council on 15 February 2022 to enable Council to fulfil its statutory duty, as set out in Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), namely to set its Council Tax and a Balanced Budget for 2022/23.

The challenging grant settlement presents challenges not just for the year ahead but over the medium term, with projections of recurring expenditure to provide services exceeding the recurring funding available. Decision for 2022/23 will have to be taken in the context of the medium term outlook. Indications are that 23/24 and beyond will require significant service reductions, focusing on statutory requirements as well as continued service transformation

Health and Social Care: The Health and Social Care Partnership, its partners and the communities it serves continued to be impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Covid continued to influence how the HSCP delivered core services, it impacted on staff absence and deployment, and it required additional resource, for example to deliver vaccination clinics, coordinate staff testing for HSCP and other staff, and manage PPE provision locally

National Care Service: National Care Service Consultation. This is taking up a significant amount of time to ensure that everyone has the information they require to make an informed decision.

Midlothian Council - How we are Performing



Successes and Challenges

Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

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