

## Place Performance Report Quarter Three 2022/23

*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.*

### Challenges

Over recent years, innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted at pace to respond to the needs of our citizens, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality. This has resulted in a complete transformation of how the Council works. Our 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.

Quarter 3 (October – December 2022) was a challenging quarter for Place as it continues to support post-pandemic recovery, operate a business as usual approach to service delivery and progress a range of transformation projects.

Inflation as well as rising energy costs are affecting the construction industry in Scotland and the UK is currently experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. Whilst measures such as value engineering are partially mitigating cost increase there is a risk that the capital budgets will need to be increased with a resultant impact on the funding strategy. The situation continues to be monitored however it is necessary to revisit existing capital plans and also review the 2022/23 service budgets and implement savings measures in the year.

### 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 within Place services to 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. The annual progress report on Climate Change was presented to Cabinet at its meeting of 18 October 2022.

Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Carbon Pledge. As of Q3 there are now 41 businesses committed to the Carbon Pledge, which is now a prerequisite for any businesses looking to secure grant support from the LACER Green fund. Economic Development are working with the pledgers to identify the best platform for group sharing, enabling the sharing of experiences, ideas and peer support.

Work continues with Midlothian Energy to develop business case options for addressing building fabric and energy decarbonisation of the existing estate. The planned site has been secured for the new Midlothian Energy Centre at Millerhill, as a key step in the delivery of District Heating at Shawfair. The energy services agreement with Shawfair LLP received shareholders consent in December allowing closure of the deal to supply and manage heat distribution for Shawfair. The conclusions of the heat offtake agreement at Millerhill waste and recycling plant allowed the signing of the design and build and operating and management agreements for the energy centre and undertaking of the installation of the distribution network. Contractors are now appointed and work progressing.

During Q3 we ran a consultation on our Electric Vehicle charging network to gather feedback on providing accessibility, reliability and affordability of a charging network across the Midlothian area. The consultation will shape our Electric Vehicle Infrastructure strategy and expansion plan for 2023. A business case has been developed and considers the expected future increase in EVs and associated need for additional chargers throughout Midlothian. It also sets out possible funding options and what the future EV charging network could look like.

Successful delivery of the first 9 weeks of the winter service was delivered through a challenging severe weather period due to widespread snow followed by a deep freeze in December. 4,303 hours of resource was spent in response, including collaborative working with land services, positive testing of our resilience levels for plant, resource and salt.

The annual Capital Works Programme for carriageway resurfacing combined with the Residential streets programme continues to make good progress this quarter with 15.26km of carriageway resurfaced over Q1 to Q3 (2.2% of the total road network) with our annual target of resurfacing 2.2% of the total road network being achieved. In addition 3.03km of footways were resurfaced to the end of this quarter (0.43%), meeting our target for this quarter and expected target to be met for the year.

Successful procurement of new contracts for both lighting capital and traffic signal maintenance will deliver best value for the service. Funding has been diverted to the delivery of 1,796 new LED lanterns and 151 lighting column replacements in 22/23 due to late procurement of these contracts

Community benefit fund from Levensseat Recycling Centre was awarded to Loanhead Bike Refurbishment project, allowing the purchasing of spares to repair bikes for reuse, as well as bike maintenance. The "Sew Far so Good" project in Glencourse Centre in Penicuik is supporting local residents to mend and repair clothes and to Playbase, Dalkeith for support in operating the Bric-a-brac re-use cabin at Stobhill. The re-use cabin for the collection of household bric-a-brac for "play through learning" was opened this quarter.

The kerbside garden waste collection season was extended to offer an additional collection to customers whose service was affected by Industrial Action. For 2023, a total of 18,680 householders have subscribed to the service with a total of 19,686 bins.

This quarter, the Waste Services team began working on an options Appraisal with Zero Waste Scotland to consider how waste/recycling might be collected in the future considering the Household Waste Charter, and the impacts of both the Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility.

Land and Countryside project work has been progressing well this quarter. Play areas at Danderhall and Kings Park Nursery have now been completed with new play equipment and planting. Waterfall park

refurbishment is now complete and North Middleton Pump Track Pump track completed and is being well used by community. Dalhousie Mains, one of our large soft landscaping projects, is near completion. Other works in progression include Burnbrae primary, Penicuik park, Millerhill park.

The Countryside Ranger Service continues to engage with communities and volunteers on various initiatives such as the Midlothian Outdoor Festival, attracting 1,072 visitors taking part in walks, talks and activities throughout the county. Tree survey work was completed on Penicuik to Dalkeith walkway, Springfield Mill and Straiton pond. Up to Q3, 4,212 volunteer hours were spent in countryside sites. In addition, the ranger service secured partnership funding with Scottish Water for a ranger post at Gladhouse reservoir and delivery of equipment as part of the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund for biodiversity which will be utilised for maintenance of grassland and wild flower meadows.

Public Health and Environmental Protection have successfully implemented the short-term let licensing scheme within the time scales prescribed by Scottish Government. To date only a handful of applications have been received but plans are in place to proactively contact known short-term let hosts early this year to remind them of the deadline for their license application and publicise the scheme further on our social media platforms.

Air Quality Progress Reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 were submitted to Scottish Government on 31st October 2022 for appraisal. Our Air Quality monitoring programme which had been suspended due to resourcing issues has been successfully restarted with Edinburgh Scientific Services changing the Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) tubes on our behalf. This work is done for us at no additional costs as part of our contact with the lab.

The vast majority of animal welfare licensing visits have taken place in November and December 2022. This has meant, where the license fee has been paid, the license for 2023 has been granted prior to expiry of the 2022 license. The remaining licensing visits will be concluded early in 2023.

An Abandoned Vehicle Procedure, introduced during 2022, continues to be refined this quarter but is working well. Officers are having a lot of success in contacting owners early in the process prior to having to go to formal notice by affixing 'awareness' notices at their first visit to the vehicle which encourages the owners to contact us. This allows the owner to informally deal with the issue before moving to formal notice.

The Protective Services Business Regulation team hosted a number of visitors who were keen to better understand our roles in food safety and public health, building relationships for effective joint working. This included deputy CEO of Food Standards Scotland and a Clinical Fellow from the Health Protection Team. In addition, the Business Regulation Team has been working with an Environmental Health contractor to carry out our lowest risk food premises inspections. This has allowed the team to progress the backlog of food inspections after all inspection work ceased due to COVID restrictions.

## **Economy & Regeneration**

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our 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. A report on EU-Exit impacts and the economy was presented to Council in October and work has commenced with Ekosgen which will inform the refresh of the Economic Strategy to be presented for approval to Council in early 2023.

In addition, the Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund (known as LACER) provides grants to support businesses, social enterprises and tourism in Midlothian. Funding allocation has been split across the following areas:

- Business Associations £15,000
- Social Enterprise Start and Grow fund £80,000
- Tourism, Culture & Heritage Officer £43,859
- Tourism Support £10,000
- Green Transition Fund £249,922

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients and have made 6 referrals to the Supplier Development Programme. The team continue to promote opportunities via our digital channels and clients are contacted directly if they suit a specific business.

Social enterprise enquiries are received via the Business Gateway service who promote the model to clients with plans where the objectives and values align to the social enterprise model. Plans are in place for the virtual delivery of community enterprise sessions across Midlothian in 2022/23 contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives and the team continue to support the projects from Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. The “Newtongrange Development Trust and a Social Entrepreneur” session was held in Q3.

The Locate in Midlothian website continues to be a valuable tool for employability opportunities and employment support with 23 property enquires received via the site during Q3, all enquirers contacted by Business Gateway advisors to offer wider support. In total the team have received 119 enquires. The Locate in Midlothian website received 1,458 visits from 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct to 10<sup>th</sup> to November. (It should be noted that website visits are expected to be significantly higher across the quarter but due to a switch in software during the quarter reporting issues are being progressed with the developer). Each social media channel is targeting different audiences and each is performing well in terms of audience growth and interaction with 1,767 ‘Business Gateway Midlothian’ followers and 1,621 ‘Locate in Midlothian’ followers across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

The level of Business start-ups took a significant drop in Q2 (with 6 start ups) but has recovered this quarter (26 start ups). New client reasons for starting up include:

- Part time work sufficient before but not during cost of living crisis
- Developing in order to create additional income to cover gaps in earnings, whilst remaining in employment

- Redundancies or threat of job loss motivating clients to investigate self-employment

Most of the start-ups that Business Gateway work with are either self-employed (sole traders/gig economy), or setting up a micro enterprise (employ <10) or as a social enterprise. All business types are finding it challenging to access funding in the current economic conditions which is a key element in the community wealth building approach; to support individuals and grass roots organisations develop and prosper. The transition to a wellbeing economy is dependent upon organisations and communities having access to grants and loans. We are fortunate that we have a small start-up fund and the Lacer social enterprise funds at present however it should be noted that those seeking to set up a micro enterprise are likely to require access to larger amounts via the Start-up Loan fund or Business Loan Scotland and the cost of living crisis is having an impact on their borrowing ability as personal outgoings increase.

In addition, start-up businesses are reporting increasing difficulties in accessing funds, including those backed by the UK Government with credit assessments are becoming more rigorous. Established businesses have reported difficulty in accessing lending from mainstream providers too, restricting their opportunities for growth. This is both within the mainstream and third sector. Consideration in Midlothian's Community Wealth Building plan should be access to low cost borrowing/seed funding for businesses and social enterprises with a clearly defined income generation model.

We have continued to maximise opportunities to support recovery of the tourism sector by supporting the development of the tourism forum's digital presence and representation on the steering group. A £10,000 grant to the Midlothian Tourism Forum will allow the forum to design and build a website to increase membership and interest. The new Economic Strategy planned for 2023 approval will include Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Whilst work is progressing to develop proposals for the Hopefield Economic Development site, the acquisition of Hardengreen H1 and H2 Economic development sites was concluded in Q3 providing mixed Industrial and office spaces. This represents a further expansion and diversification in the style and size of units the Council will be able to make available to support growing Midlothian enterprises.

At its meeting in October 2022 the Planning Committee approved an Enforcement Charter which sets out the Council's approach to investigating and resolving breaches of planning control. At its meeting in November 2022 the Planning Committee determined to grant planning permission for two strategic planning applications; the first for the erection of 96 dwelling houses and associated works at Newbyres Site B, River Gore Road, Gorebridge and the second for the erection of a Farmfoods foodstore retail unit and associated works at 18-20 Edinburgh Road, Penicuik.

## **Housing and homelessness**

Midlothian Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out key actions for delivery in 22/23 and addresses the next phase in transforming the services provided to meet housing need. These activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. The plan also explains how Midlothian Council will address the next phase of its approach to transforming the services provided to those in housing need by developing other initiatives during 2022/23 and into 2023/24, with an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness, tenancy sustainability and early intervention.

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services. A potential key challenge will be an increase in homelessness as the financial measures put in place to protect households during the Covid pandemic are now withdrawn, alongside the recent increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

The number of applicants requiring temporary accommodation has increased this quarter to 140 new cases, reaching a total number of households in temporary accommodation at 362. The number of cases provided with advice and assistance in Q3 was 226 and 77 clients were prevented from homeless by accessing advice and assistance. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible. There were 4,628 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period. Re-let time for permanent properties has decreased to 25 days this quarter compared to 45 days for Q1 and 36 day in Q2. The length of time homeless applicants wait until receiving a permanent housing outcome has decreased to 76 weeks from 121 in Q2.

The first year review of the Homeless Prevention Forum took place this quarter. This is a partnership arrangement established 2021, with an aim to reduce children going into homelessness through evictions. Referrals are triggered when there is risk of eviction via the arrears and housing services teams within Midlothian Council.

Homelessness Officers ensure the necessary partnerships and protocols are in place to plan for addressing the housing needs of people leaving institutions by delivering a Personal Housing Planning approach for vulnerable groups, which contributes to the prevention of homelessness, including those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

This quarter the Scottish Housing Regulator met with Housing Services to review and discuss our engagement plan surrounding homelessness and health and safety within our tenancies. In addition, the Scottish Housing Network concluded a benchmarking exercise against similar sized Local Authority Housing teams. Both meetings praised our material improvements around housing and homelessness and supported the continuation of engagement going forward.

During this quarter we have worked to better improve communications with our housing applicants and tenants, housing duty telephone lines were moved onto Liberty telephony system allowing call recording and ability to report on call handling performance. New private meeting room spaces were opened in Midlothian House for customer engagement. As part of the Midlothian Council rent consultation which presented options for all tenants and waiting list applications on setting next year's rent levels, a series of five public meetings were held across various locations in Midlothian which were promoted by staff, social media and text messaging.

Work continues as part of the resettlement scheme to support and provide routes for people who may be fleeing conflict from a range of different countries. This includes, Afghan Resettlement Schemes, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme which provides a range of routes for people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and the Asylum Dispersal Programme through which people seeking asylum are provided with accommodation in specified nations. The main activities this quarter are, our third Military of Defence sub-let property in Milton Bridge and we have transformed two small hostels into large family accommodation in Dalkeith.

We have worked with Social Work Children and Families to support with responsibilities around Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

**Specialist Housing projects:** Housing First has supported 38 individuals to date. We have accommodated our first Veteran from our new Forces nomination agreement in Penicuik. The National Housing Project has provided six properties for young persons in 2022.

As part of Midlothian Council's Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy, Midlothian undertakes annual surveys to determine the level of tenant satisfaction within Housing services provided by the Council. Survey feedback was received this quarter with 81.5% of council tenants satisfied with services overall during 2022. The next steps will include the delivery of focus groups to gather further feedback on two key themes:

- How tenants can work with the Council to assist in the improvement of areas of the repair services, to improve overall customer satisfaction levels.
- Further steps can be explored to improve customer satisfaction levels to ensure tenants feel more informed about their services and also have the opportunity to participate in the future development and delivery of these services.

## Capital programme

As Scotland's fastest growing local authority area, it is critical to delivery that investment in community infrastructure, such as housing, the learning estate, economic investment and green infrastructure, is in the right place at the right time. This will help our communities to live well, live locally and prosper.

How we invest in community infrastructure must also respond to changes in our working and living patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities need to be able to readily access the services they require. Capital investment is also an opportunity to support our local economy through job creation and skills enhancement, particularly in relation to supporting a transition to a green economy as we invest in sustainable, highly energy efficient buildings.

As a growing Council, we have the opportunity to transform parts of Midlothian in a way that reflects how we live now. We will invest in community infrastructure with a focus on place-making, reducing inequalities, improving economic opportunities and improving education and health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Capital Investment Strategy brings together many strands of the Council's activities to build upon our past successes and drive forward innovation in a co-ordinated and achievable manner for the benefit of Midlothian and its citizens.

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme, totalling £0.8bn, delivers new schools, a record investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

To ensure Midlothian is 'building back better', this investment is also creating new jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, opportunities for businesses and communities and families hard-hit by the impact of COVID-19. These new opportunities help lead the way out of the pandemic and towards a better future for Midlothian.

The Education Learning Estate Strategy programme has been developed and is subject to regular review meetings with Education and stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring, reporting and delivery of improvement and expansion of the Education estate including Early Years provision. This currently covers approximately 30 projects at various stages of development.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1, now complete, provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1201, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 712 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress during 2022 continues with 661 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. This includes the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 189 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents.

## **Growing Council**

In addition to the financial sustainability challenge referenced earlier, other challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery out of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, 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 mainland 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 income received over time.

The approved Capital Strategy sets out the infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Encompassing five main themes the City Region Deal will bring significant investment across the regions with total investment of circa £1.3 billion across:

- Research, Development and Innovation: £751 million
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million



Through the Data Driven Innovation strand the Deal will leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities in order that Easter Bush becomes a global location of Agritech excellence. The Easter Bush project includes significant investment in transport infrastructure along the A701/2 transport corridor. In addition, by improving on-site infrastructure at Easter Bush and transport infrastructure, The University of Edinburgh expects commercial partners will be able to co-locate at scale to commercialise Agritech breakthroughs.

## Quarter 3 - Place ▾



### Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
<b>HSN3</b> Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the S...		34.3%	100%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.MPI.04</b> % of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)		84%	90%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.MPI.05</b> % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does ...		74.42%	90%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.P.4.2b</b> Re-let time temporary accommodation properties (calendar days)		31	28	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.P.5.2a</b> Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Free from seri...		98.9%	100%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.P.5.2c</b> Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Healthy, safe ...		34.3%	100%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.P.10.2a</b> Percentage of Building warrant assessments processed within 10 da...		71.43%	80%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.P.13.1a</b> Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites		4,212	4,500	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	
<b>PLACE.SPSO.05.1</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		92.88%	95%	01 Apr 2023	Q3 2022/23	