



Midlothian Council
Annual Performance Report
2023/24

For more information visit:

www.midlothian.gov.uk/performance

The top three priorities for 2023-24 are:

- Individuals and communities have improved health, and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2040.

The Single Midlothian Plan 2023-27 incorporates seven overarching themes which support the achievement of outcomes. This thematic approach is used for quarterly reporting. The themes are:



Midlothian will be Healthier

By working with all our community partners, we will help more people in Midlothian live healthier lives for longer.



Midlothian will be Safer

People can live in Midlothian free of fear and harm.



Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child Our vision for children and young people in Midlothian is to have the best possible start in life and live safe, healthy, active, happy and independent lives.



Midlothian will Support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities

Our vision is to reduce the gaps in learning, economic circumstances and poverty.



Midlothian will be Greener

Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045.



Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected

To create a connected, collaborative and ambitious economic culture in Midlothian.



Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty

To reduce all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.

SINGLE MIDLOTHIAN PLAN THEMES

Midlothian will be Healthier



Duty Social Work and Adult Protection

Duty Social Work continued to ensure that individuals referred to the service are supported and supported in crisis, including signposting to appropriate services, undertaking assessments and direct interventions. Work continued with colleagues and VOCAL to identify and support unpaid carers.

Work continued to ensure that staff have the relevant skills, competence and knowledge to work effectively, and that they are trauma informed and able to engage with service users using a range of approaches.

Care at home continued to be challenged with increasing demand for people to live safely at home in the community. The commissioned providers and the in-house service have all been inspected by the Care Inspectorate and received positive grades relating to service delivery.

All services continued to promote self-management by, informing, sign posting and encouraging the use of digital platforms. Midlothian's Mental Health and Resilience Service (MHARS) continued to provide prompt, effective and compassionate support to individuals aged 18-65 residing in Midlothian.

Effective collaborative working between the Adult Community Mental Health Team and Intensive Home Treatment Team has been essential in providing an effective response to supporting individuals at home rather than in hospital. This is achieved through assertive outreach, dynamic risk assessment, early intervention, and prevention, supporting individuals in their own home environment where appropriate.

Services continued to contribute to working groups to promote a public health agenda and increase strategic partners. Various groups include: trauma training steering group, Mid & East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership Group, Midlothian Suicide Prevention Group, Equally Safe Strategy Leadership Group, Midlothian will be Healthier Thematic Group, Lothian Green Health Network and the Third Sector Summit.

“By working with all our community partners, we will help more people in Midlothian live healthier lives for longer.”

Delivery of strategic outcomes



Midlothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) plan and direct delegated health and social care services for the people of Midlothian. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) oversees the delivery of all the services delegated to Midlothian IJB.

The aim of integrated health and social care is for the people to experience more joined up treatment and care.

In order to meet the legal requirements of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, the HSCP was required to develop, consult on, and publish a 3 year Strategic Plan. [The Strategic Plan for 2022-25](#) which was published in April 2022

Sport and Leisure: Tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of 4,628 memberships this year to date. An increase of 13% from quarter 1 of this year. 1,250 primary 4 pupils attended free swimming lessons this year.

Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) is a sport and leisure physical activity referral programme, aimed at adults who are inactive and experience various health conditions. The programme offers a range of supported activities across Midlothian to help manage these health conditions. This year saw 5,688 Midlothian Active Choices attendees and 1,435 new referrals after completion of MAC sessions.

Website/Social Media: Supporting Midlothian Health and Social Care GP surgery teams with Pharmacy First social media campaign encouraging patients with minor ailments to administer self-care at home, check symptoms online, and attend a local pharmacy for help before phoning their local surgery. Published information for mental health services available to Midlothian residents, with one focused on the Mental Health Practice Nurse service available through GP surgeries; the other on Midlothian Access Point (MAP), which provides signposting assistance linking patients to local mental health services.

2023-24 Outcomes included:

7,200 hours /week
approximately, of care delivered at home from our service, external providers and SDS Option 2 pathways.

37

Midlothian Trauma Training events delivered July 2023 – February 2024 to 387 participants.

171

people given health assessment by Health inclusion team since April 2023

152

completed Adult Carer Support plans were supported by the HSCP and 615 were supported by VOCAL.

33

online platforms supported by mental health services.

71

admissions for Adult Mental Health Beds, with a mean average of 5 beds used per month.

444

people with a Learning Disability supported by Midlothian's services.

Midlothian will be Safer

People can live in Midlothian free of fear and harm.



Justice Services: Justice services work collaboratively to ensure that those subject to statutory supervision are enabled and supported to effectively participate.

The service takes a person centred and flexible approach when seeking to engage individuals, including how to support them to engage on their order, or licence.

The Justice Service increased access to services for perpetrators of domestic abuse and to victims and children who have been impacted by the behaviour. There are two routes through which men can access support: after conviction a Court can impose a Community Payback Order (CPO) with a requirement to undertake the Caledonian Programme – if the man is assessed as suitable. There is the option to undertake the programme voluntarily (non-court mandated) via Your Chance to Change. Referrals can also be received from partner agencies.

The service works closely with Psychological Therapy Team colleagues to ensure appropriate responses are taken for those with complex needs - ensuring risk assessments are robust.

Suicide Prevention: The Creating Hope Together strategy has a clear focus on inequalities, prevention and determinants of health and wellbeing. Specifically, the strategy aims to take a population health approach to

Suicide Prevention and try to tackle key risk factors such as poverty and isolation.

Substance Misuse: Services continue to make ongoing improvements to deliver the 90% target individuals accessing services to be seen within 21 days from point of referral to treatment.

Neighbourhood Services: a total of 4,352 memorials were inspected throughout the year, safeguarding our heritage and enhancing public safety. Capital programme was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements. 14.83km of carriageway resurfaced and 4.59km of footway resurfaced this year. 1,802.52 tonnes of material used in 2023/24 to fill potholes. The Pothole Pro project equated to 9,214m² of permanent patching, repairing 2,985 potholes this year.

Protective Services: Public Health and Environmental Protection team received 1,121 service requests this year from Midlothian residents and businesses and 412 requests from internal sources.

Trading Standards received 208 consumer complaints this year with at least £28,200 returned to Midlothian consumers following their involvement including refunds, repairs and replacement goods.

2023-24 Outcomes included:



Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child

Our vision for children and young people in Midlothian is to have the best possible start in life and live safe, healthy, active, happy and independent lives.



In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026, is a statutory three-year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. The new 3-year plan was approved towards the end of 2023.

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups, namely:

1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

Children's Services

Children's Services are fully committed to realising a children's rights approach to all of their work and ensuring that the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded alongside the Promise commitments.

Referrals into the service in Q4 saw a 56% decrease compared to Q1 (2,353 to 1,324). The Family Wellbeing Service received 172 referrals over the year. Improvement plans were introduced and are being monitored for Fostering/Adoption and Continuing Care, Hawthorn Family Learning Centre and Young People's Care Homes.

The new National Child Protection Guidance was implemented during the year. Midlothian's looked after away from home population was fairly static and fluctuated between 140 – 152 children. The number of children's names on the child protection register also remained fairly consistent across the year. Funding for a single point of access post was agreed with CAMHS to support the development of pathway for children and families to navigate mental health services

Education

Education Services encompasses Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), Primary Schooling, Secondary Schooling, Special Schooling, Additional Support Needs, Digital Learning, Educational Psychology and Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE).

The Education Service Plan is informed by and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board. The Education Service Improvement Plan not only reflects the key priorities in the Midlothian Single Plan but also aligns closely with the key priorities in Education – Achieving Excellence and Equity: National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2023.

Priority 1: Raising attainment to ensure that all children and young people in Midlothian achieve outcomes which lead to positive destinations

In summary, the attainment outcomes for leavers in 2022/23 are positive in comparison to last year and pre-pandemic levels. Almost all leavers are in a positive destination (95.3%), and there is strong performance in attainment in comparison to our virtual comparators. There was also positive achievements in SCQF levels 3 and 4 versus the national and LGBF comparator authorities. There are however challenges where improvement will be focused, which includes the core middle 60% attainment cohort and learners at SCQF level 6.



Priority 2: All children & young people feel valued & included, and have the same opportunities to succeed

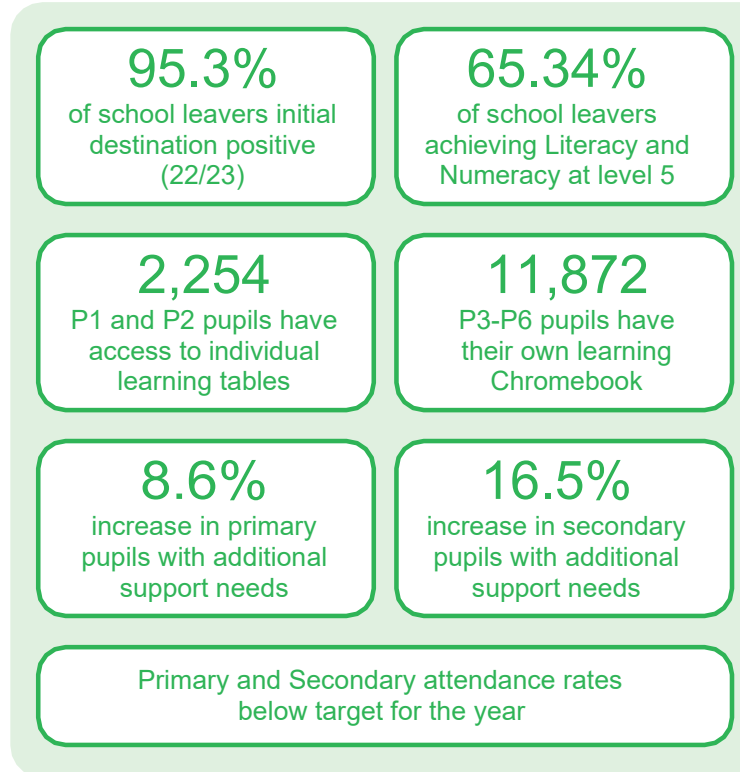
A full refresh of school roll projections was undertaken to assess current and future demand and will inform and shape the Learning Estate Strategy of the next 5 years.

Active Schools Midlothian: team continue to work in partnership with Sports Scotland, providing opportunities for our children to adopt healthy and active lifestyles throughout their school years and into adulthood by supporting and sustaining a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who, in turn, deliver extra-curricular physical activity and sport before, during and after school and in the wider community.

Libraries: 4,091 children’s library initiatives took place in 2023/24. The Summer Reading Challenge, based around the power of play, sport and games, saw over 1,000 children sign up this year (a 15% increase on last year) with 55% of those completing the challenge (a 4% increase on the numbers finishing last year). Nearly 130 events were attended by over 4,000 children and their families and over 21,000 items of junior stock were issued over July and August.

As a result, libraries saw 668 new child memberships which reflects the positive engagement of the Summer Reading Challenge. Book Week Scotland saw 66 events held across our libraries including Bookbug sessions, author visits, workshops, crafting, school visits and Bookbug bag gifting sessions. Almost 2,300 people attended which was a great turn out for what was a very wet Book Week Scotland.

Education 2023-24 Outcomes included:



Children’s Services 2023-24 Outcomes included:

74
families using Self Directed Support option 1

81
families participating in family group decision making

52
families have a family group decision making plan

224
families offered income assessments (41% more than previous year)

Midlothian will Support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities



Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE)

A positive progress visit of Midlothian Community Learning and Development Partnership by Education Scotland HMle took place in March 2024. The inspection focused on:

- How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?
- How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?

Initial feedback provided indicated that leadership of CLD at all levels is confident and effective. Noting that there is a shared vision and ambition for improving the lives of individuals and communities. Further noting that there is a well embedded culture of strong partnership working and that robust evidence bases underpin

the work taking place to remove barriers to participation. The feedback recognised that overall participants across a range of CLD services are gaining new knowledge and skills to help them meet their aspirations and needs.

As a result of gaining new skills and qualifications, learners are better able to secure employment. Across provision, the achievements

of young people and adults were noted as being regularly recognised and celebrated well.

An action plan was to be developed to address areas of continuous improvement.

CLD Partnership Plan: Overall, very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the [CLD Three Year Partnership Plan](#) which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building (with zero red actions, 10 amber and 23 green).

The CLLE service and partners worked together to produce a [padlet](#) which provides detailed information on the opportunities available to support young people, adults, families and communities to build skills for learning, life and work. The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model until June 2024

Libraries: The number of library events has increased by 7% from last year with 6,135 library events held this year resulting in a total of 81,006 attendees, an 11% increase from those attending events last year. This covers regular events and activities for both adults and children as well as standalone events. This year, Library Services were awarded the SLIC Library Service Excellence Award for activities that put our communities at the heart of the service.

2023-24 Outcomes included:

298 parents supported by Parental Employability Project (186 new & 114 existing). 80 entered or progressed their employment with more hours or pay. 80 entered or progressed self-employment to increase income. 36.78% achieved a work-related accredited qualification totalling 275. 9 started Further or Higher Education

3,422
engagements by young people accessing youth work provision

1,525
engagements in community based & adult learning programme

58
groups received direct community capacity building support

477
participants in paid adult learning programme

799
people received 1:1 support

6,225
local people engaged with CLL projects

2,531
qualifications gained by CLLE learners

509
CLL opportunities/projects/courses offered

2,652 library customers supported with digital queries

Midlothian will be Greener



Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

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. In line with Scottish Government, this date has been revised to 2045. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues to achieve future emissions targets. Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area.

This year work has progressed at pace to review the findings of the previously reported Stage 4 LHEES study, the outcome of which has provided a good foundation for the remaining stages. There has been positive and good engagement with internal stakeholders' business and community representatives, and regular engagement with Joint Venture Partners Midlothian Energy who will be an essential partner in delivering an effective and viable plan. The LHEES Strategy and covering report is complete and approved by the Scottish Government for compliance and subject to Council approval.

Thematic actions are designed to increase awareness, promote reflection and action on the key Climate Emergency issues of energy,

food and travel. The actions will help inform and give people the opportunity to get involved to make a difference. Midlothian's future will be different through having more people aware and engaged in Climate Emergency issues, both consciously and subconsciously. This will make Midlothian more resilient to the effects of Climate Change and in addition help contribute more widely to Climate Change resilience.

Work continues to engage with businesses regarding their own climate change commitments via the 'climate change pledge' programme and there is increasing awareness in the Council and across communities on the back of communications from the Council and the working progressed by the Community Planning Climate Change Emergency group.

Parks and Greenspaces: Utilisation of the Nature Restoration fund from the Scottish Government, Butterfly and Bee happy mixes of Bulbs and wildflowers were planted at some of our prominent roundabouts and in our parks. 20 locations were planted with 1,184,670 bulbs. To further support the Scottish Government's draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Midlothian's Local Biodiversity action plan, additional funding was spent on further biodiversity measures to be undertaken in the next quarter involving large areas of wildflowers on the former Golf

Course at Vogrie Country Park to create pollinator friendly areas.

Our Countryside Ranger Service continues to ensure our sites are an attractive, safe and welcoming environment for all to enjoy. This year, 6,990 volunteer hours (1,165 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers have increased significantly over the last few years, with a 25% increase in volunteer hours this year compared to last year and a 45% increase from 2021/22. Work on our Countryside sites would not be possible without close partnership working between volunteers and their coordination by our Ranger service.

Other achievements this year included: 36 ranger events held with 1,557 participants and 174 school and community group events with 2,603 participants; delivery of Midlothian Outdoor Festival 2023, including 30 events and over 1,550 participants, with volunteers and partners throughout Midlothian; and Grassland management to increase pollinator species and carbon sequestration rates carried out at Vogrie, Roslin and Straiton Pond by volunteers cutting and lifting wildflower rich meadow areas

Housing: the housing programme included the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland with 191 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. At present any further Passivhaus developments are paused for a cost benefit analysis exercise.

Building Maintenance: Earlier in the year, Building Maintenance Service commenced the trial fit out of a brand new heating system which incorporates infra-red heating technology and are monitoring the cost of running this system through the winter with the assistance of the tenants who have moved into this property. This is a further step in achieving net zero and reducing the heating costs for our tenants. In line with our Damp and Mould policy the service continued to roll out the environmental sensors throughout our portfolio. This year BMS have installed 2,370 monitors across 1,158 homes.

Street lighting: capital programme was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements. A further 1,164 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming.

Waste services: Waste Services team carry out over 5.8 million individual waste and recycling collections each year. The team completed 99.95% of all collections as scheduled. New waste service standards and waste collection policies were approved by Council. The development of these policies will ensure services operate transparently and fairly, encouraging householder participation, maximise the quality and quantity of materials

collected for recycling and improve operational efficiencies.

In addition, £2.2m was awarded from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund which allow the Council to fully transition existing waste and recycling collection services to meet the recommendations in the Charter for Household Waste Recycling.

Protective services: Environmental Crime Pilot was launched this year with an increased emphasis on fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling.

The year long pilot has the power to issue statutory and fixed penalty notices between £80-£200 to offenders and report potential crimes to the procurator fiscal.

Libraries: This year saw the launch of Gorebridge Library's Lend and Mend Hub. The Hub provides free access to sewing machines and other equipment to allow communities to repair, re-use and upcycle their own items.

2023-24 Outcomes included:

77

Greenspaces: improvements or new facilities completed.
28 improvement projects: 12 play areas and 16 village improvements

25%

increase in volunteer hours this year compared to last year

6,990

volunteer hours (1,165 days) spent in countryside sites

2

Green Flags awarded at Straiton Pond nature reserve and Kings Park

5.8 million

individual waste and recycling collections each year.

108

Businesses signed up to Midlothian Business Green Pledge

38.1%

energy from waste

17.2%

waste to landfill

43.5%

waste recycled

Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected

To create a connected, collaborative and ambitious economic culture in Midlothian.



Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our ambitious approach to managing the transition from pandemic 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. Work is ongoing to refresh the Economic Strategy.

Localised procurement is promoted to clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). Businesses are encouraged to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers.

The creation of action groups to take forward key areas of proposed work to focus on are:

- Refresh of the Local Procurement Strategy, supporting Community Wealth Building.
- Managing change – the need for better understanding throughout the Council to increase the local spend and to minimise unregulated spend.
- Creation of sessions hosted by procurement and economic development to encourage services to direct spend to the local supply base.

The Economic Development priorities for the 2023/27 Single Midlothian Plan align to the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the wellbeing economy with people focussed outcomes that will also deliver local economic benefit.

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 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 the pandemic.

These new opportunities help lead the way out of the pandemic and towards a better future for Midlothian.

Housing: the housing programme Phase 1 provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phases 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1134, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 645 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. An additional 327 homes are funded for delivery in phase 5.



2023-24 Outcomes included:

181

new build homes handed over, extending housing stock to 7,170 by end of 23/24

235

'Planning to Start' business enquiries received, 120% more than previous year

103

new business start-ups this year

1,690

Locate in Midlothian followers

2,288

Business Gateway followers

63

Social enterprises supported this year

54.6

weeks average time to determine planning applications for major developments in Q4 (up from 50.1 weeks in Q3)

9.3

weeks average time to determine planning applications for minor developments in Q4 (up from 9 weeks in Q3)

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty

To reduce all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.



Homelessness: There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing transition plan we are seeing households moving through the homeless system more quickly.

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 to 2028/29 was submitted to the Scottish Government.

The SHIP identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5-year period. The delivery of more affordable housing remains a high priority for Midlothian, as reflected by our ongoing and ambitious housing development programme.

Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has brought significant change for homelessness over the last 4 years in ending the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation and developing better quality temporary accommodation, developing nomination

agreements for people experiencing domestic abuse, and leaving the armed forces to enable access to permanent housing, preventing the need for a homeless assessment. Midlothian Council also adopted a model of Housing First which finds suitable properties before inviting nominations from a multi-disciplinary core group. Through the last award of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) monies this year, Housing Services have commissioned the Rock Trust for a two year contract to support our young tenants, helping them to move on from homelessness or avoid it altogether.

Cost of Living Crisis: To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force in 2022, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities. The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model till June 2024, with a further report being prepared jointly by CLLE and Place Directorate regarding future Cost of Living Supports.

Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty: 58 groups in the last 12 months have received direct community capacity building support.

Warm and Well Hubs: As part of Challenge Poverty Week we relaunched our 4 warm and well hubs. Working in partnership with other services including Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Citizens Advice Bureau, Social Security Scotland and Into Work, a number of workshops and drop-in sessions were held in our Warm and Well Hubs providing advice on benefits, employability support, household budgeting and Cost of Living support and advice. In order to continue to support our communities through the Cost of Living Crisis, Dalkeith Library launched a free coat swap where coats could be donated or taken by those who were in need.

Wellbeing: In conjunction with Midlothian Voluntary Action's project MFIN (Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network) and the cost of living agenda, HR and Communications staff were involved with promoting support available through partner agencies to combat the cost of living pressures currently being experienced by employees and friends and family living in Midlothian communities. This included awareness of supports for debt advice, energy costs, healthy eating and stress management.

Website/Social Media: A dedicated communications campaign encouraging eligible families to apply for free school meals and clothing grants. A further social media campaign to promote Social Security Scotland's Drop-In Services at libraries throughout Midlothian and a short social campaign to raise awareness of the updated offering of the Best Start Food Grant.



2023-24 Outcomes included:

35

days averaged for property re-let times to permanent accommodation continuing a downward trend from 46 days in 21/22

93.2%

of homeless applicants sustained a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

43.8

weeks homeless applicants wait time. Down from 70 for same period last year

139

temporary accommodation households flipped to permanent accommodation this year

552

housing lets this year, 56.52% Homelessness and 43.48% General needs

19

houses let through our Housing first model

217

lets were made to new build and open market

£527,868

granted from Scottish Welfare fund for crisis

1,243

homeless cases provided with advice and assistance

5,712

applicants on housing waiting list this year

£449,088

granted for community care grants up to Q4

Other areas of interest

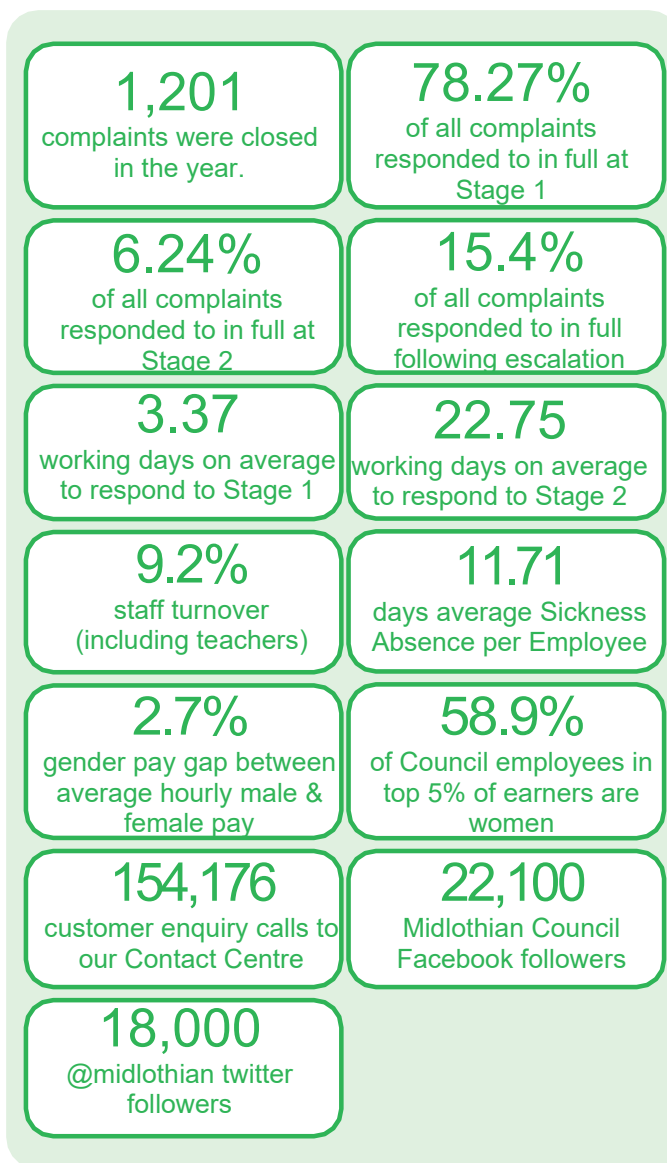


Growing Council: Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland with an increase of 16%. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas living a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.



Corporate Solutions will “deliver forward looking services fit for a modern 21st Century organisation and put the citizen at the centre of service redesign”. Corporate Solutions supports the whole Council delivering services to internal and external stakeholders, playing a key role in the delivery of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and ensuring organisational compliance, developing the workforce, and advancing transformation.

2023-24
Outcomes included:



Local Government Benchmarking Framework

Comparing performance, or benchmarking, allows us to compare our performance with other local authorities so that we can identify best practice, learn from each other, and improve what we do. We do this through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).


The framework is a set of performance indicators developed for Scottish councils to compare performance and encourage shared learning and continuous improvement. Information on our performance in the LGBF Framework nationally and against similar councils is available via the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework Dashboard](#).

Your feedback counts

Whether you want to know more about our performance, have something to say about this report, or want to suggest an alternative way of receiving this kind of information in the future.

Please contact the Continuous Improvement Team:
Continuous.Improvement@midlothian.gov.uk

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COMMUNICATING CLEARLY

We are happy to translate on request and provide information and publications in other formats, including braille, tape or large print.

如有需要我們樂意提供翻譯本，和其他版本的資訊與刊物，包括盲人點字、錄音帶或大字體。

Zapewnimy tłumaczenie na żądanie oraz dostarczymy informacje i publikacje w innych formatach, w tym Braillem, na kasecie magnetofonowej lub dużym drukiem.

ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰੇਲ, ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ।

Körler için kabartma yazılar, kaset ve büyük nüshalar da dahil olmak üzere, istenilen bilgileri sağlamak ve tercüme etmekten memnuniyet duyarız.

اگر آپ چاہیں تو ہم خوشی سے آپ کو ترجمہ فراہم کر سکتے ہیں اور معلومات اور دستاویزات دیگر شکلوں میں مثلاً بریل (ناہیا افراد کے لیے) بھرے ہوئے حروف کی لکھائی) میں، ٹیپ پر یا بڑے حروف کی لکھائی میں فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

Contact **0131 270 7500** or email:
communications@midlothian.gov.uk



Midlothian – A Great Green Place to Grow

Planning and Performance Management Framework 2025

(January 2025)

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Midlothian – A Great Green Place to Grow

Midlothian – A Great Green Place to Grow. Our ‘Great, green place to go’ vision and supporting strategies recognise that the next five years will, amongst other priorities, see Midlothian build on its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and build a wellbeing economy while working towards delivering against our climate change commitment.

Our [Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028](#) and supporting Medium Term Financial Strategy are designed to align with the [Single Midlothian Plan](#) which is supported by the Council’s Service Plans.

Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of our new 5 year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically we have three priority outcomes:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work
- No child or household live in poverty
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045

Our nine drivers for change (see figure 1) continue to support our continuous improvement and transformation journey while the Transformation Blueprint (see figure 2) focusses on the nature of the work and developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

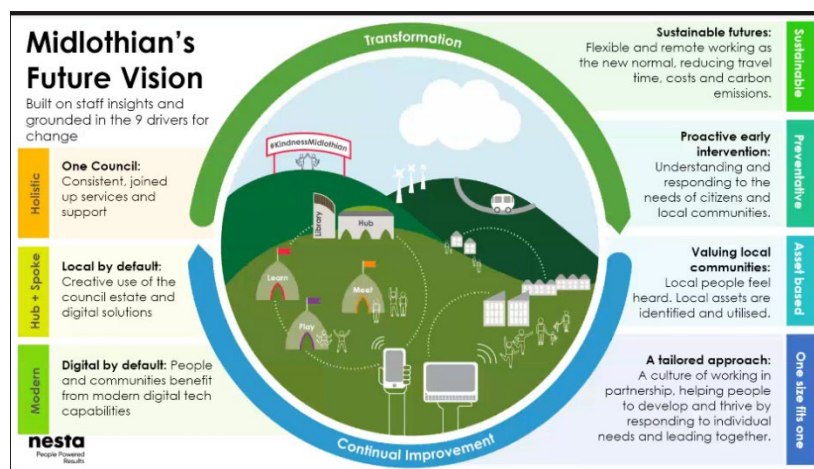


Figure 1: Enabling Strategies: Our nine drivers for change



Figure 2: Transformation Blueprint Dimensions

A key focus supporting delivery of our ambition is a focus on outcomes and the associated planning and performance management framework (PPMF).

The Framework

The Council and its partners will continue to strive for effective, efficient and sustainable services which provide best value and focus on continuous improvement. Introducing a revision to our existing Planning and Performance Management Framework (PPMF) ensures a focus on outcomes while continuing to reflect our statutory performance reporting requirements set out in the Statutory Performance Information Direction 2024 which states that each council will report a range of information covering the following four key areas:

- 1: Using resources effectively to address strategic priorities**
- 2: Working with partners and communities to achieve shared outcomes**
- 3: Financial sustainability and budget transparency**
- 4: Use of data and assessments to support improvement and transformation**

The Accounts Commission expects clear, balanced and effective reporting to the public on how well services are performing, enabling citizens to understand the reasons behind decisions that can have a significant impact on their lives. The better informed people are, the more they feel able to engage in the decision-making process. The [Council's Performance](#) web pages reflect these requirements.

The Commission has a statutory duty to direct councils to publish information that will:

- enable comparisons of performance between councils and over time (developed for and with councils, there is an expectation that indicators from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) should be used, as this is seen as the most effective and comprehensive means of enabling comparisons to be drawn by councils themselves and by the public), and
- show how well they are improving local outcomes with community planning partners in their area.

Complying with the SPI Direction is fundamental to councils fulfilling their duty to secure best value – a duty that focuses on improving lives and services for local people alongside using resources effectively. The Direction reinforces the importance of councils being transparent through reporting to their local communities on how well they are meeting this duty.

Information on performance over time and in comparisons to others is a crucial tool for continuous improvement and transformation. Through public performance reporting, councils should be able to demonstrate:

- how they are working with partners to achieve shared local outcomes,
- how they are responding to the needs of their local communities,
- how they are learning from best practice elsewhere,
- what factors are impacting on their performance
- how they are using data to inform decision-making, and
- how they measure success.

In satisfying the requirements set out in the directions, the Commission requires each council to ensure that its reporting meets the following criteria:

- Balance in reporting areas of improvement that have been achieved and not achieved.
- This is undertaken in a timely manner.
- Easy access to its performance information for all of its citizens and communities, with such information presented in an accessible style.

Best Value relates to ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, partnership and community working, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. The duty of Best Value applies to all public bodies in Scotland. It is a statutory duty for all local authorities.

The seven themes within the 2020 Best Value guidance have been adopted by the council as part of our Best Value Framework for monitoring compliance with Best Value duties. The Best Value themes reflect the wide scope required to fully demonstrate Best Value, reflecting the changing and complex environment in which local authorities deliver services:

- Vision and Leadership
- Governance and Accountability
- Effective Use of Resources
- Partnerships and Collaborative Working
- Working With Communities
- Sustainable Development
- Fairness and Equality

The Council continues to put **delivering in partnership** with our Community Planning Partners at the heart of what we do. We recognise that there is always more we could do to improve services, make them more effective and deliver them more efficiently – balancing quality of service with value for money.

The Council's commitment to **continuous improvement** and this framework are centred on the belief that we have to be self-aware of our strengths and weaknesses, we need to be more proactive about identifying improvement opportunities and managing our performance and be critically honest in our evaluation of our own performance. Inspections, audits and accreditation support the process by providing independent and external assessment of how we are doing and what can be improved.

All **Council staff** have a responsibility to strive to deliver excellent, efficient and effective services. The [Workforce Strategy](#) approved by Council in December 2024 focuses on delivery of the Transformation Blueprint. However, managers throughout the organisation have a responsibility to lead and manage the improvement process and delivery of transformation, they do this by adopting good management behaviours and practices including:

- Translating the Single Midlothian Plan and translating Council strategies into something that is meaningful for their service
- Showing staff that performance matters by what they do
- Working within and putting into practice the Planning and Performance Management Framework established by the Council
- Taking time to join-up their thinking and learn about whether things are improving, and if not why
- Measuring what matters to service users and to staff to encourage effort around what is most important
- Taking action on what matters the most, to ensure that change happens
- Helping people perform to the best of their ability and being prepared to deal with situations where the service is under-performing.

The framework incorporates the following inter-related elements to ensure that planning and performance management activities deliver on the continuous improvement agenda:

- Setting clear outcomes and priorities – what we need to do to achieve our vision and ambitions for Midlothian
- Self-evaluation – measuring how are we doing and what do we need to improve
- Service and improvement planning and management – setting out how we are going to deliver and manage services and improvement
- Performance management, monitoring and reporting – monitoring how we are doing
- External assessment and accreditation – how others see us and gaining external validation.

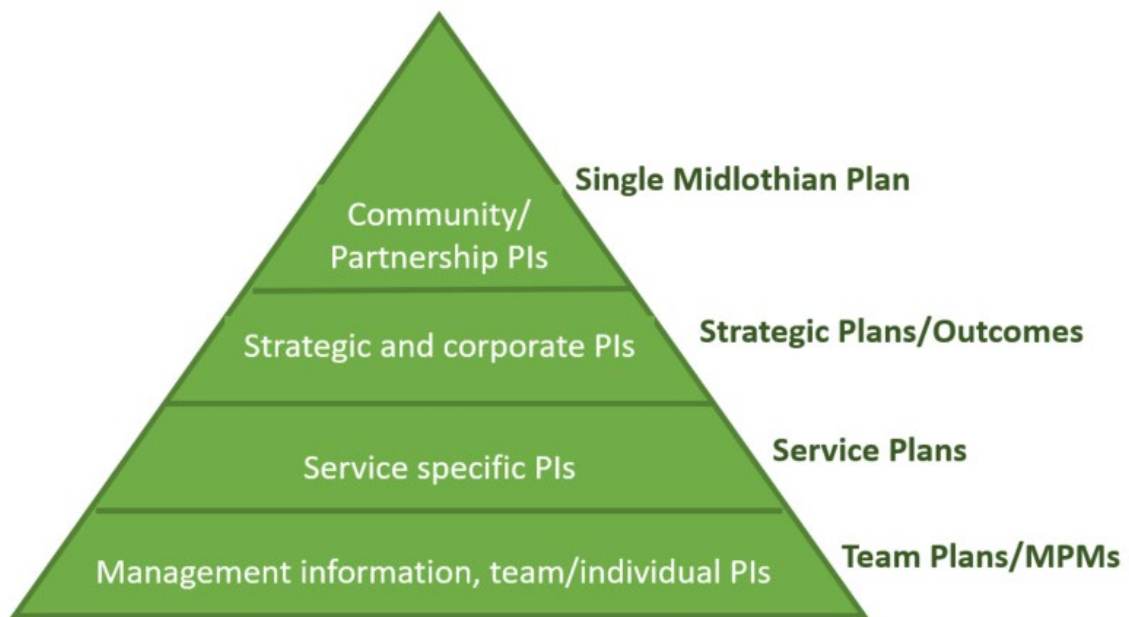
Another way of expressing this is through the concept and language of **Best Value**:

- Are we doing the right things?
- Are we doing them right?
- How do we know how well we are doing?
- Could we do things differently and better?

The framework allows for outcomes and priorities across the full range and level of planning carried out to be captured and the associated **performance measures and indicators** to be identified to support the performance management process. Diagram 1 represents the different levels of plans and measures/indicators incorporated within the framework.

Diagram 1: Hierarchy of performance indicators and plans

Hierarchy of performance indicators



Performance Management

In practice, performance management involves four areas of activity: planning, delivering, monitoring and reviewing as shown in the Diagram 2 below with examples of outputs shown in Table 1. Examples of performance management outputs are shown in Table 2 and the timeframe for the Council is shown in Diagram 3.

Diagram 2: Planning and Performance Management Framework Cycle

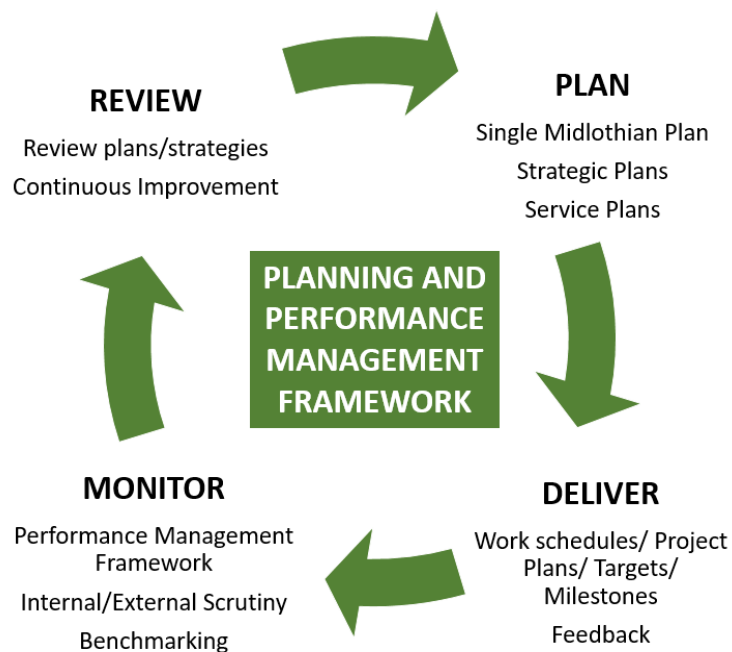


Table 1: Examples of activities across the framework cycle

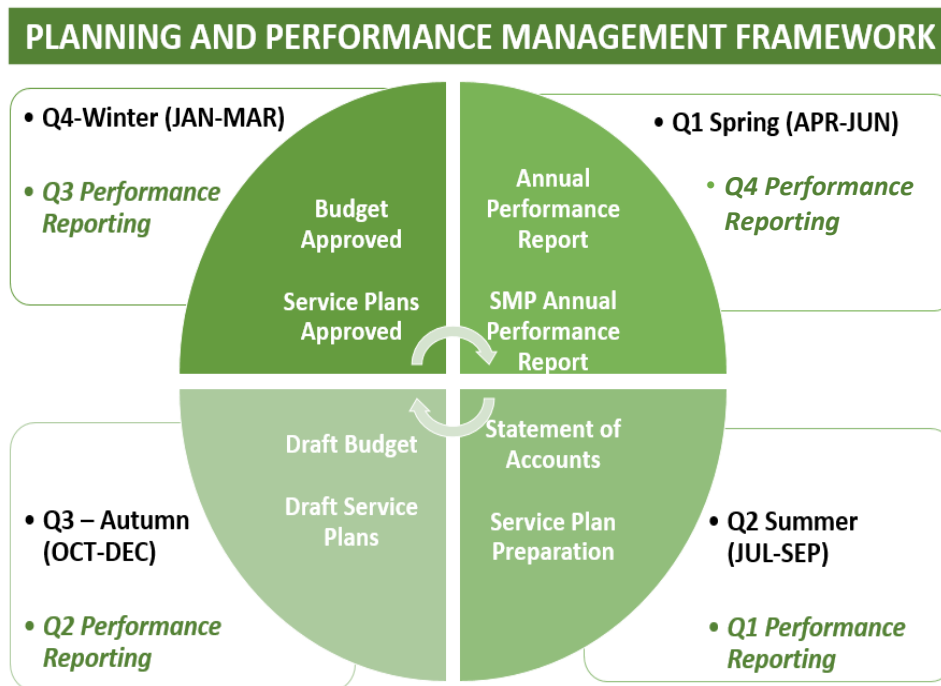
Activity	Council wide	Service/ Unit / Team / Individual
Planning what we need to do	Single Midlothian Plan Transformation Blueprint Medium Term Financial Strategy	Service Plans Unit/Team Plans Individual Plans/Making Performance Matter 1-2-1s
Delivering what we have planned	Delivering services/achieving Outcomes Feedback	Work schedules/project plans/targets/ milestones) Achieving Outcomes Feedback
Monitoring or checking how we are delivering	Performance management process Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports/Balanced Score Card Internal/External Audits Inspections Benchmarking Indicators Staff Surveys Trade Union engagement forums (DCGs, CJWG and JCG)	Performance management process Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports/Pentana Browser Making Performance Matter process Customer Feedback/Complaints/ Compliments Listen and Learn exercises
Reviewing what we do to make it more successful	Review Single Midlothian Plan Review of Council Strategy Self-evaluation (e.g. MEF)	Self-evaluation (MEF) Performance improvement tools; for example, CSE Making Performance Matter process

Table 2: Key documents and policies supporting the framework

Outcomes and Priorities	Self-evaluation	Service and Improvement Planning and Management			Performance Reporting	Financial Management	External Assessment
		Service Planning	Workforce Management	Risk Management			
<p>Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)</p> <p>Single Midlothian Plan</p> <p>Transformation Blueprint</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Council Balanced Score Card</p>	<p>Midlothian Excellence Framework (MEF)</p> <p>How good is our -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education authority • early learning and childcare • school • community learning and development <p>Care Inspectorate quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare</p> <p>Quality Framework for children and</p>	<p>Planning and Performance Management Framework 2025</p> <p>Service Plans</p> <p>Service Planning Guidance</p>	<p>Workforce Planning</p> <p>Workforce Strategy</p> <p>Service Review Process</p> <p>Competency Framework</p> <p>Equalities in Employment Monitoring</p>	<p>Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>Strategic Risk Profile</p> <p>Service Risk Registers</p> <p>Internal Audit</p>	<p>Single Midlothian Plan Performance Reports</p> <p>Annual/Quarterly Performance Reports</p> <p>Benchmarking Review</p> <p>Balanced Scorecard</p>	<p>Budget Setting and approval process</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Financial Reporting requirements (Revenue/ Capital/HRA etc)</p> <p>Financial Monitoring CMT</p>	<p>External Auditor Report (including Best Value)</p> <p>Citizens Panel</p> <p>Customer Feedback</p>

	young people in need of care and protection						
	Employee Engagement Survey						
	Listen and Learn						

Diagram 3: Planning and Performance Management Framework Timeframe



Outcomes and Priorities

The Council's outcomes and priorities have been identified and agreed with our Community Planning Partners and are captured in the Single Midlothian Plan and in the Transformation Blueprint. Each Service develops 'Service Outcomes' which directly reflect the services that they provide, and showing how they contribute to the delivery of the outcomes and priorities in the Single Midlothian Plan and the Transformation Blueprint. The Balanced Scorecard also provides the opportunity to identify, frame and report on key measures and outputs that reflect the strategic outcomes and priorities.

Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Performance Measures/Indicators - Accurate, high quality, timely and comprehensive performance data is essential to the effectiveness of the Council's Planning and Performance Management Framework.

Performance data is generated for a range of purposes:

- Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) and SOLACE Benchmarking Indicators are collected by all Scottish local authorities
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are defined by the Council and Community Planning Partners and are aimed at measuring performance in relation to the key priorities/outcomes
- Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) indicators are defined in the Single Midlothian Plan and are aimed at measuring performance in relation to the SOA outcomes
- Service Scorecard Indicators are defined to measure performance in relation to outcomes and priorities outlined in Service Plans, to assist managers to assess how the service is performing against the agreed performance management framework.

The range of performance data collected should be regularly reviewed to ensure that data collected is useful in terms of being able to measure performance against key priorities and outcomes. It is important that data collected provides the ability to measure performance against outcomes and the quality of the service provided, not just the volume of service delivery. All indicators should include stretching targets based on improving past/current performance so that they contribute to the improvement momentum.

Consideration should also be given to how the Council's performance can be benchmarked against comparator authorities or organisations. Services such as the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Performance Networks can be a useful tool to support benchmarking.

Monitoring and Reporting - The reporting of performance data is required in a number of respects. The regular reporting of accurate and clear information (and effective scrutiny of that information) helps lead to good decision making and improved performance. Managers can use performance data to identify where performance is below expectations and take remedial action to improve performance. Reviewing targets in the light of experience – setting higher targets where performance is above expectations – can help to drive continuous improvement.

The reporting of performance to elected members, the public and other stakeholders helps to ensure accountability.

Performance indicators are reported via Pentana, the Council's performance management software. Pentana can also be used to report and monitor actions from Service and other Plans and Risks. Performance Indicators, Service Plan Actions and Risks can all be captured and viewed via Pentana Browser.

Performance is reported in several different ways to satisfy the needs of different stakeholders as is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Reporting of Performance

Report	Quarterly/Annual Performance Reporting	Annual Council Performance Report	Performance Framework (Balanced Scorecard) Reporting	Single Midlothian Plan Reporting
Purpose	Quarterly Performance Service reports include all of the key indicators that Services measure. Indicators may reflect inputs, outputs and outcomes. Actions might also be reported. The Council report is set out against the thematic of the Single Midlothian Plan.	The Annual Council Performance Report includes Key Performance Indicators. The indicators show how the Council is performing against the outcomes and priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan.	The Balanced Scorecard captures the outcome indicators from the Single Midlothian Plan which Midlothian Council is actively targeting.	Performance reporting of the Single Midlothian Plan shows how the Council and its partners are performing against the agreed outcomes and priorities
Example	% of working days lost due to sickness absence	Number of homecare hours per 1000 population aged 65+	Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	% of satisfactory complete Community Payback Orders
Content	Performance narrative/visuals Performance indicators Actions	Narrative/visuals against the SMP Thematic areas. Key Performance Indicators including Balanced Scorecard.	Report set out against the outcomes and measures related to Customer, Finance, Service Improvement and Learning and Growth Local Government Benchmarking Indicators	Narrative overview for each of the SMP thematic areas CPP Thematic Actions CPP Thematic Performance Indicators
Audience	Chief Executive, Directors, Chief Officers, Cabinet and PRS. Published on Council website	Public and community groups, Elected Members	Operates as a strategic performance management tool for the whole Council. Published on Council website	CPP Board, Council, Public
Frequency	Quarterly/Annual	Mixture of quarterly and annual measures	Half-yearly and Annual	Half Yearly and Annual
Media	Report published on Midlothian Council website Pentana (performance management software and browser)	Report published on Midlothian Council website	Report published on Midlothian Council website Pentana (performance management software and browser)	Report published on Midlothian Council website Pentana (performance management software and browser)

Self-evaluation

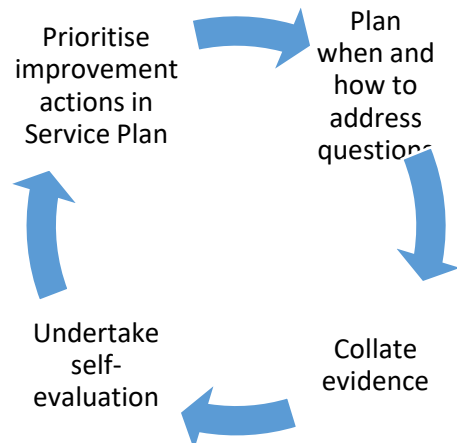
The development of a robust self-evaluation approach is a key component of the planning and performance management framework. Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and taking action to build on strengths and address weaknesses is essential if the Council is to continually improve. A good practice self-assessment toolkit for performance management which focuses on the key questions noted below has been introduced to support the introduction of a revised planning and performance management framework and is available in Appendix 1.

1. Is there a consistent, rigorous and open approach to performance management?
2. Do the organisation and its partners know how well they and each other are performing against planned outcomes?
3. Is knowledge about performance used to drive continuous improvement in outcomes?

The Council's corporate self-evaluation tool is the 'Midlothian Excellence Framework' (MEF), a model based on the PSIF model. Through collating and evaluating evidence and assessing performance across key questions MEF provides the basis for services to identify areas for improvement. Any improvement actions that need to be undertaken as a result of self-evaluation should be included in the relevant Service Plan. An overview of the MEF framework is shown in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4: Midlothian Excellence Framework Overview - Key questions/Self-evaluation cycle

- How effective is our Leadership?
- How effective is our Service planning and performance management?
- How well are our Staff managed, developed, involved, communicated with and recognised and cared for?
- How well do we work with Partnerships and manage resources?
- How well do services manage the needs and expectations of customers?
- How good are our results in relation to our Customers, Staff, Communities and key performance targets?



Different self-evaluation models may be used where a specific model has been developed for that service area (for example, the Care Inspectorate Performance Improvement Model). Where alternative self-evaluation models are used it is important that they are based on a structure that is similar to MEF. Performance improvement tools, such as, Customer Service Excellence (CSE), can also be used to complement MEF by assisting services to review the effectiveness of their processes.

Service and Improvement Planning and Management

Service and improvement planning and management is principally carried out at a service and team level through the Service Planning process and at a Council wide level through strategic planning of Transformation, Finance, Workforce and Risk.

Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028) – In moving to a post pandemic world, we committed to building on the learning and new ways of working adopted during this time and renewed our focus on delivering our key priorities at the most local level possible. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of our 5 year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work
- No child or household live in poverty
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030

The pandemic accelerated the financial challenges and reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for future challenges and changes.

The Transformation Blueprint sets out our biggest challenges that need to be addressed over the next five years. We will continue to work to address the inequalities that our communities face, respond to the demands of being one of the fastest growing local authorities in mainland Scotland, and delivering our vision of being a great, green place to grow.

Transformation Blueprint Objectives

1. Support the Council to address the 5 year funding gap of £29.121 million outlined in the MTFS
2. Follow the Money to ensure that the services we commission, contracts we manage and digital solutions we use deliver value for money.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring the all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce
4. Design a workplace for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in joined-up service delivery which improve outcomes

Service Planning - Service Plans (and Team Plans) provide a link to the outcomes and commitments contained within the Single Midlothian Plan, the Transformation Blueprint and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and any relevant legislation that is specific to the Service and to the results of self-evaluation using the 'Midlothian Excellence Framework' or other similar self-evaluation tool.

- *The Service Plan* provides a specific representation of what is involved in the delivery of outcomes and priorities, recognising the outcome indicators and measures, resource implications, actions, and risks concerned. Service Plans translate 'what we intend to do' into 'how we will achieve it'.

- *The Team Plan* links to the Service Plan, but serves a different purpose. Team Plans provide a more functional link for staff and managers to refer to. For most staff the Team Plan would answer the question of ‘What am I meant to be doing?’ The Team Plan is not supposed to re-iterate the links that are explained in the Service Plan, just as the Service Plan is not intended to re-invent the Single Midlothian Plan.

Service Plans will identify the relevant Single Midlothian Plan/Strategic Plan outcomes and priorities to which the service will contribute as well as define service specific priorities, with associated outcome indicators and measures. Plans will also capture challenges the service is facing, summarise strengths and areas for improvement arising from self-evaluation and also reflect the actions required to achieve the stated outcomes and priorities with appropriate outcome indicators and measures.

Service Plans will contain the outcome indicators for each Service. Identified actions and improvement actions should contribute to the achievement of the outcome indicators. Any indicators or measures used should have a clear definition to establish what is being measured and how. They should contain robust and reliable data and should, if possible, facilitate comparison with other areas or organisations.

Service Plans should also identify the main risks that might prevent the Service from achieving its ambitions

Financial Planning and Management - The financial objective of the Council is to provide the services that the Councillors believe are required for the lowest Council Tax or service charge possible. Underpinning this objective are two key principles of public finance that the Council must observe – that there should be no taxation in advance of need and that there should be fairness in the tax burden between generations and taxpayers.

Budget review and development is not a once-a-year process. External circumstances are continuously changing and performance compared against budget is under regular review with formal reports produced at agreed intervals and a year-end report to the Council following submission of the draft accounts for audit. In addition, monthly and quarterly performance reports are issued to managers with budget responsibility and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) scrutinise the financial position quarterly. The overall finances of the Council are also subject to detailed annual independent audit review.

If at any time spending pressures are not containable within the Service/Team, the service manager should report this to their Chief Officer. Further consultation on the flexibility to move budgets between groups may then occur. Should this not resolve the spending issue, it is the service Directors’ responsibility to formally report this to the Chief Financial Officer. In this situation the matter may be reported to Cabinet and the Council may be asked to reconsider their policies applying within that Service with a view to reducing services and costs or increasing charges and income. If this cannot be achieved, then the Council may be asked to approve policy changes elsewhere that will yield the necessary savings through service reductions or increased charges.

Workforce Management Planning - The Workforce Strategy outlines the Council’s approach to workforce development and people management. Its intent is to ensure that the Council’s workforce is ready and able to deliver the outcomes within the Single Midlothian Plan, Transformation Blueprint and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Strategy is driven by a number of key strategic actions focussed on the following areas of people management and workforce development improvement:

- Performance
- Customer Focus

- Leadership
- Innovation
- Wellbeing and Engagement
- Community and Partnership Working
- Continuous Improvement.

The Making Performance Matter process provides an opportunity for all staff to review how they contribute to the Council's vision and strategic plans. It provides the link between the staff and the planning and performance management framework by identifying what and how individuals can be supported to deliver against work related objectives set with them.

Risk Management - This is the process of identifying, analysing, treating and monitoring risks which the organisation face. Risks are recorded within the Corporate Risk Register, Service Risk Registers and/or project risk registers. The Pentana Risk module facilitates the recording and monitoring of risks electronically.

Corporate risks represent those risks with the potential to impact on the 'corporate body', Midlothian Council, in achieving its stated policies and corporate objectives and those that require strategic leadership (for example the Single Midlothian Plan/Transformation Blueprint). The Corporate Management Team has responsibility for the Strategic Risk Profile

Service risks represent the potential for impact on 'individual services' in relation to service delivery, or the experience of those who work within the services, i.e. staff, partners, contractors and volunteers, or the general public and clients in receipt of the services provided. Service risks may be included on the corporate risk register where a risk impacts on multiple services or requires significant central resources in the development of risk control measures. Chief Officers have responsibility for Service Risk Registers.

The Strategic Risk Profile (SRP), Service Risk Registers and risk management plans are formally reviewed annually to ascertain progress and to check for contextual changes affecting the risks but are also subject to ongoing review and monitoring by the Corporate Management Team and as part of the Audit Committee governance process, with the SRP being presented to Audit Committee quarterly for review. Services are also encouraged to be proactive in identifying new or potential risks throughout the year.

Scrutiny

The role of Elected Members - Scrutiny is conducted by the Performance Review and Scrutiny (PRS) Committee and the Audit Committee. The Committees each plan their workload in advance in order to balance regular items with scrutiny arising from performance monitoring. The Committees are able to recommend changes in policy or practice to Council, Cabinet or to Council officers where appropriate.

Members of the PRS Committee are provided with a briefing on each Quarter's Performance Indicators and they can seek further information or explanation of any issues about poorly performing indicators at the subsequent Committee meeting. All elected members have access to the elected members browser function on Pentana which provides online access to the latest quarterly performance data via service dashboards.

A Risk Management Policy is in place which underpins the quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Profile by the Audit Committee. At time of writing the policy is being revised and a link will be added once the policy is approved.

Table 4: Purpose/Responsibility of the scrutiny committees

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee	Audit Committee
<p>Performance Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing performance when viewed against policy objectives arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The Planning and Performance Management Framework and the quarterly performance reports to committee. ➢ External inspection reports. ➢ The Community Planning Partnership and other major partnership projects. ➢ Specific performance reports requested by the committee. ➢ Ad hoc performance reports presented to the Committee by Chief Officials. ➢ Any other reports of a performance-related nature • Making recommendations by formal report to the Cabinet on unsatisfactory performance highlighted in areas above <p>Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the delivery of corporate improvement programmes and ensuring that they are progressing in line with corporate aims and objectives. Reporting findings and recommendations to Cabinet. • Commenting on decisions and policies agreed by Cabinet and other committees and the impact they have on Midlothian as an area, and making recommendations as appropriate to Cabinet. • Inviting Cabinet and Other Committee members to attend and elaborate on Cabinet or Committee decisions or proposals. • Where appropriate eliciting views of partners, service users and/or interested parties on Cabinet decisions. • Inviting stakeholders to attend and elaborate on any matter relating to the Council e.g. Police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. • Provides independent assurance to elected members of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. • Provides independent review of Midlothian Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. • Oversees internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

Role of Corporate Management Team (CMT) - CMT, use their regular meetings to consider a range of reports relating to performance. These reports are brought forward by Directors, Chief Officers or Strategic Leads and highlight any significant issues in relation to performance, finances, workforce and risk. CMT also consider quarterly reports on Key Performance Indicators as part of quarterly performance meetings with the Chief Executive. Outcomes from this level of scrutiny can suggest or take action in response to poor performance or increased risk in any area to ensure that the Council maintains its improvement momentum.

External Assessment and Accreditation - Scrutiny coordination in local government is led by the Strategic Scrutiny Group (SSG). The SSG comprises Scotland's main public sector scrutiny bodies and aims to deliver efficient and effective, well-coordinated scrutiny

that supports improvement. It is convened and chaired by the Accounts Commission and is supported by the Operational Sub-group (OSG).

Scrutiny bodies share intelligence and agree scrutiny risks in each of Scotland's 32 councils using the shared risk assessment process (SRA). The process is designed to identify where scrutiny will make the most difference in terms of helping councils to improve and providing assurance to the public. It also provides a focus for more coordinated engagement between councils and scrutiny bodies.

In [March 2020 revised statutory guidance](#) was produced for **Best Value** which was felt to better reflect the significantly changed policy and public service delivery landscape within which local government bodies now operate.

The revised guidance reflects that achieving Best Value is increasingly dependent upon the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborative working arrangements, in addition to how well a council manages its own activities. Since the original Best Value guidance was published in 2004, there has been an increased focus on partnership and collaborative working across the public sector, with more of a requirement to work jointly to deliver shared outcomes. The revised guidance also reflects an increased emphasis on citizens and personalised services, a focus on outcomes, and a need for innovation in designing public services for the future.

Alignment of key plans and strategies with partners, an understanding of place, a commitment to reducing inequalities, empowering communities to effect change, and being able to measure improved outcomes for people who use services have increasingly become key requirements in demonstrating the achievement of Best Value.

There are five themes in the revised guidance which broadly replace the previous themes used as follows:

- Vision and Leadership
- Governance and Accountability
- Effective Use of Resources
- Partnerships and Collaborative Working
- Working With Communities

There are a further two cross-cutting themes in the latest Best Value guidance that a local government body is advised to embrace across all of its activities. These are:

- Sustainable Development
- Fairness and Equality

The Accounts Commission Strategy 2021-26 set out plans to introduce a new approach to auditing Best Value in councils from the 2022/23 financial year audit. The new approach integrates Best Value audit work into annual audit work with the outcome of Best Value work being reported through Annual Audit Reports. In addition, Auditors will also report annually to the Commission on specific themes to facilitate the exchange of ideas and performance data, as well as offering a detailed analysis of a specific aspect of the work of all councils. The first themes identified were leadership and workforce innovation and more recently transformation. From October 2023, short reports (Section 102 reports) will also be presented to the Accounts Commission, with each council requiring to submit one S102 over a four year period. All reports produced by our External Auditor are presented to Audit Committee for consideration.

The **MEF self-evaluation** is intended to meet the requirements of external inspections carried out by regulators and inspections bodies. Many of the questions and statements addressed in MEF can be matched to questions and statements covered by external audits and inspections so that duplication in completing various evaluations and submissions can be minimised.

Accreditation - Accreditation and awards from peer bodies and accreditation bodies can be a useful way to assess whether the Council as a whole, or particular services, are performing to the highest standards.

Appendix 1 – Good Practice Self-Assessment Toolkit

1. Overall question: Is there a consistent, rigorous and open approach to performance management?	
Key features of good practice	Current position
<p>A. Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic monitoring and review ensures the organisation stays on track. • There is a culture of open debate and constructive challenge, with a focus on solutions rather than blame. • The organisation has helped to develop performance management for its key strategic partnerships. • This is robust, systematic and sustainable and is helping to deliver outcomes in line with priorities. 	
<p>B. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have a record of focused involvement in performance management through formal meetings. • Leaders make use of information to manage continuous improvement. • Scrutiny is outcome-focused, working within the framework of agreed corporate plans. • The leadership team have clearly defined roles in performance management. 	
<p>C. Monitoring & Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation adjusts the frequency of monitoring and review of different performance information. • This takes account of risk and timescales for taking remedial action. 	
<p>D. Prioritisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are strong mechanisms to help sustain the focus on priority issues, including 'shared priorities'. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation has a track record of using performance management to help secure outcomes for the community that reflect its ambitions and priorities. • Performance management is integrated with the management of resources so that resources follow priorities whilst retaining the flexibility to respond to performance issues. • This happens within an annual cycle that is regularly reviewed and improved. 	
<p>E. Raising Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a well-publicised, user-friendly and supportive system for service users and staff to submit complaints, grievances or representations. • The organisation takes seriously the need to respond to grievances and complaints about service delivery and deals with these in a timely way. • User focus is well understood and is a central driver of the organisational culture. • The organisation is open to external evaluation and challenge and makes effective use of opportunities to learn in this way. 	
<p>F. Organisational Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management is well embedded across the organisation. • Managers and staff focus on what is important, especially where performance is not meeting targets. • Performance management is seen as part of how people work and manage proactively rather than just monitoring. • Most senior officers set a strong example which cascades through the organisation. • There are strong links between the organisation's overall ambitions and strategic plans, through to service and 	

<p>individual plans, priorities and targets (including value for money targets).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff's, contractors' and partners' views of their own priorities are usually aligned with those of the organisation and they know how these contribute to delivery. • The organisation is self-aware about the strengths and weaknesses of its approach to performance management, and learns internally and from others. 	
<p>2. Overall question: Do the organisation and its partners know how well they and each other are performing against planned outcomes?</p>	
<p>Key features of good practice</p>	<p>Current position</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular, robust and balanced intelligence and information about performance is sought and produced throughout the organisation and key partnerships. • The information produced is simple to access and understand, and is user-focused. • It includes financial, budgetary, quality of service and value for money information. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation has a reasonable understanding of the level of importance and satisfaction that different sections of the community attach to its activities. • This is a key performance measure that is assessed and used to inform improvement priorities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation works pro-actively with its partners and other providers to compare and evaluate processes, costs and outcomes. • It uses comparison and benchmarking to increase its self-awareness and efficiency. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users, staff and other stakeholders are given opportunities to influence how performance is measured and monitored and what targets are set. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have access to service standards and targets. The organisation reports information about its performance in a coherent and accessible fashion. • As a result, the organisation, the community and its partners have a good picture of how well the council is performing, especially against its ambitions and priorities. 	
3. Overall question: Is knowledge about performance used to drive continuous improvement in outcomes?	
Key features of good practice	Current position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation sets realistic but challenging targets for improvement in performance, linked to the management of resources. • The organisation allows time to monitor and compare performance information. • The organisation uses performance information to focus on priorities and takes effective action to address areas of identified under performance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-departmental working is well advanced and the corporate centre is able to coordinate this effectively through the performance management system. • The organisation considers the needs of its diverse communities in planning and delivering joined up services. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation uses its knowledge about performance to solve performance problems at an early stage and this is widespread and systematic. • Information about poor performance and problems is used to inform decision making. • The organisation has a good understanding of the drivers of performance in all areas of activity to support this? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation uses knowledge from complaints and user feedback to drive improvement. • It is developing full access to these for the diverse communities served. • It also makes use of staff complaints and grievances. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It has challenge and review mechanisms that ensure a thorough understanding of levels of customer satisfaction and the drivers of performance in all areas of work.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organisation makes good use of opportunities to learn from its own successes and failures, good practice within the organisation and in other public, private and voluntary sector organisations, its partners and the outcomes from external challenge or review.• The process of learning, both internally and externally, is viewed as a positive, constructive activity.• It is used to develop priorities and improve value for money.	

Source: NIAO adapted from the Audit Commission

Appendix D: Best Value Self-Assessment Checklist



BEST VALUE FRAMEWORK STANDARDS

Annual Compliance Process

Best Value is core to the council's operations throughout the year, the Best Value Framework introduces an annual monitoring and reporting compliance process, which verifies this and provides assurance that the council is meeting its Best Value duties.

The Best Value Standards detailed in this document should be reviewed on an annual basis and updates provided from relevant council officers. Completion of this exercise should provide significant assurance on the achievement of Best Value by the council.

All service managers are asked to provide an update for their service unit confirming that it has complied with Best Value requirements contained in the Best Value Framework during the year. The response to this exercise can be:

- **Yes**, this area has complied with Best Value – the service can provide further (optional) commentary on this.
- **No**, this area has not complied with Best Value – the service should explain what remedial action is being taken and the timescale for this.
- **N/A**, Best Value does not apply to this area – the service should explain why this is the case.

The output from this exercise should also be reviewed and approved by the relevant Chief Officer/Head of Service and to streamline review activity completion of this review will inform and be referenced in the Annual Governance Statement self-assessment exercise undertaken annually

Best Value is assessed annually by the council's external auditors and is an important feature of the Annual Audit report. The Code of Audit Practice sets the framework for public audit in Scotland and outlines the responsibilities of external auditors appointed by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission.

The external auditors are required to comment on how effectively the Council demonstrates that it meets its Best Value responsibilities. This will be assessed under the themes in the Best Value guidance and evidenced in the adoption of the Best Value Framework by the council.

ANNUAL COMPLIANCE CHECK LIST – BEST VALUE STANDARDS 2024/25

BEST VALUE STANDARDS 2024/25 – SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The Best Value Standards detailed in this document should be reviewed on an annual basis and updates provided from relevant council officers. Completion of this exercise should provide significant assurance on the achievement of Best Value by the council.

BEST VALUE STANDARDS AND HOW THEY ARE DEMONSTRATED	RESPONSE (YES/NO/NA)	COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSE
Theme 1 – Vision and Leadership:		
1.1 The local authority’s vision for its area is developed in partnership with its citizens, employees, key partners and other stakeholders.		
1.2 Members set strategic priorities that contribute to achieving the local authority’s vision, reflect the needs of communities and individual citizens, and are aligned with the priorities of partners. They take decisions that contribute to the achievement of those priorities, in particular when allocating resources and in setting monitoring performance targets.		
1.3 The local authority’s vision and strategic priorities are clearly communicated to its citizens, staff and other partners.		
1.4 Strategic plans reflect a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of the local authority’s priorities and the long-term sustainability of services.		
1.5 Service plans are clearly linked to the local authority’s priorities and strategic plans. They reflect the priorities identified through		

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<p>community planning, and show how the local authority is working with partners to provide services that meet community needs.</p>		
<p>1.6 Priority outcomes are clearly defined, and performance targets are set that drive continuous improvement in achieving those outcomes.</p>		
<p>1.7 There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance that enable the taking of informed decisions and the measuring of impacts and service outcomes.</p>		
<p>1.8 There is a corporate approach to continuous improvement, with regular updating and monitoring of improvement plans.</p>		
<p>1.9 The local authority and its partners agree on how the key elements of Best Value will contribute to achieving the commonly agreed local priorities and outcomes. These key elements include the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure continuous improvement, in particular for those services aligned to the local authority’s priorities • provide customer- and citizen-focused public services, which meet the needs of diverse communities • achieve the best balance of cost and quality in delivering services (having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equalities) 		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to sustainable development encourage and support innovation and creativity. 		
<p>1.10 Members and senior managers communicate the approach to Best Value methodically throughout the local authority in terms that are relevant to its staff and set out clear expectations of them. The local authority has a positive culture in which its people understand its vision and objectives and how their efforts contribute to their achievement, and they are engaged with and committed to improvement.</p>		
<p>1.11 Members and senior managers are self-aware. They commit to training and personal development to update and enhance their knowledge, skills, capacity and capabilities to deliver Best Value and perform their leadership roles, and they receive sufficient support to do so.</p>		
<p>1.12 Leadership is effective and there is good collaborative working. Members and senior managers have a culture of cooperation and working constructively in partnership, informed by a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and characterised by mutual respect, trust, honesty and openness and by appropriate behaviours.</p>		
<p>Theme 2 – Governance and Accountability</p>		
<p>2.1 Members and senior managers ensure accountability and transparency through effective internal and external performance reporting, using robust data to demonstrate</p>		

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<p>continuous improvement in the local authority’s priority outcome measures.</p>		
<p>2.2 Management information and indicators that allow performance to be assessed are widely and consistently used by the local authority. Senior management regularly receives information that is used to inform members about performance.</p>		
<p>2.3 Performance is reported to the public, to ensure that citizens are well informed about the quality of services being delivered and what they can expect in future.</p>		
<p>2.4 Learning from previous performance, and from the performance of other local authorities, informs the review and development of strategies and plans to address areas of underperformance.</p>		
<p>2.5 Key organisational processes are linked to, or integrated with, the planning cycle; these include strategic analyses, stakeholder consultations, fundamental reviews, performance management, staff appraisal and development schemes, and public performance reporting.</p>		
<p>2.6 The local authority has a responsible attitude to managing risk, and business continuity plans (including civil contingencies and emergency plans) are in place to allow an effective and appropriate response to planned and unplanned events and circumstances.</p>		

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<p>2.7 Key discussions and decision-making take place in public meetings, and reasonable measures are taken to make meeting agendas, reports and minutes accessible to the public, except when there are clear reasons why this would be inappropriate.</p>		
<p>2.8 The local authority’s political structures support members in making informed decisions.</p>		
<p>2.9 The scrutiny structures in the local authority support members in reviewing and challenging its performance.</p>		
<p>2.10 Members and senior managers promote the highest standards of integrity and responsibility, establishing shared values, mutual trust and sound ethics across all activities. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that members and staff comply with relevant codes of conduct and policies. This includes ensuring that appropriate policies on fraud prevention, investigation and whistleblowing are established and implemented.</p>		
<p>2.11 Members and senior managers understand and effectively communicate their respective and collective roles and responsibilities to members and staff. They understand that effective delegation enables and supports the local authority’s ability to achieve Best Value.</p>		

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<p>2.12 An information governance framework is in place that ensures proper recording of information, appropriate access to that information including by the public, and legislative compliance.</p>		
<p>2.13 Technological innovation and digital transformation are promoted and used to ensure accessibility of performance information and public accountability.</p>		
<p>2.14 Members and employees across the local authority understand and implement their responsibilities in relation to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</p>		
<p>2.15 There are clear governance and lines of accountability when delivering services via a third party, and there is evidence of the application of the principles within the ‘Following the Public Pound’ guidance when funding is provided to external bodies.</p>		
<p>Theme 3A – Effective Use of Resources – Staff</p>		
<p>3A1 A workforce strategy is in place that sets out expectations on how the local authority’s staff will deliver its vision, priorities and values.</p>		
<p>3A2 The strategy is translated into workforce plans, covering employee numbers, skills, knowledge, competencies and organisational structures, that demonstrate how staff will be deployed to deliver the services planned for the future. Plans are regularly reviewed at appropriate intervals according to a clear review cycle.</p>		

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<p>3A3 All employees are managed effectively and efficiently, and know what is expected of them. Employee performance is regularly assessed through performance appraisal, with individuals and teams being supported to improve, where appropriate.</p>		
<p>3A4 Members and senior managers understand and demonstrate that effective delegation is an important contribution to the local authority’s ability to achieve Best Value.</p>		
<p>3A5 The contribution of staff to ensuring continuous improvement is supported, managed, reviewed and acknowledged.</p>		
<p>3A6 The local authority demonstrates a commitment to fairness, equity and safety in the workplace; it adopts relevant statutory guidance through progressive workplace policies and a commitment to best practice in workplace relationships.</p>		
<p>3A7 Leaders ensure that there is the organisational capacity to deliver services through effective use of all employees and other resources. They communicate well with all staff and stakeholders, and ensure that the organisation promotes a citizen- and improvement-focused culture that delivers meaningful actions and outcomes.</p>		
<p>Theme 3B – Effective Use of Resources – Asset Management</p>		
<p>3B1 There is a corporate approach to asset management that is reflected in asset management strategies and plans, which are subject to regular review.</p>		

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<p>3B2 There is a systematic and evidence-based approach to identifying and managing risks in relation to land, buildings, plant, equipment, vehicles, materials and digital infrastructure.</p>		
<p>3B3 The local authority actively manages its asset base to contribute to its objectives and priorities.</p>		
<p>3B4 Fixed assets are managed efficiently and effectively, taking account of availability, accessibility, safety, utilisation, cost, condition and depreciation.</p>		
<p>Theme 3C – Effective Use of Resources – Information</p>		
<p>3C1 Information is regarded as a strategic resource and is managed accordingly.</p>		
<p>3C2 There is a clear digital strategy in place, which includes resilience plans for information systems.</p>		
<p>3C3 Information is shared appropriately, and the local authority seeks to develop data compatibility with its partners.</p>		
<p>Theme 3D – Effective Use of Resources – Financial Management and Planning</p>		
<p>3D1 There is clear alignment between the local authority’s budgets and its strategic priorities.</p>		
<p>3D2 Regular monitoring and reporting of financial outturns compared with budgets is carried out, and corrective action taken where necessary to ensure the alignment of budgets and outturns.</p>		

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<p>3D3 Financial plans show how the local authority will fund its services in the future. Long-term financial plans that include scenario planning for a range of funding levels are prepared and linked to strategic priorities.</p>		
<p>3D4 An appropriate range of options is considered when taking decisions, and robust processes of option appraisal and self-assessment are applied.</p>		
<p>3D5 The local authority has clear plans for how it will change services and realise efficiencies to close future budget gaps.</p>		
<p>3D6 Members and senior managers have a clear understanding of likely future pressures on services and of how investment in preventative approaches can help alleviate those pressures, and they use that understanding to inform decisions.</p>		
<p>3D7 Financial performance is systematically measured across all areas of activity, and regularly scrutinised by managers and members.</p>		
<p>3D8 There is a robust system of financial controls in place that provides clear accountability, stakeholder assurance, and compliance with statutory requirements and recognised accounting standards.</p>		
<p>3D9 The local authority complies with legal and best practice requirements in the procurement and strategic commissioning of goods, services and works, including the Scottish Model of</p>		

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<p>Procurement. There is clear accountability within procurement and commissioning arrangements.</p>		
<p>3D10 There are clear and effective governance and accountability arrangements in place covering partnerships between the local authority and its arm’s-length external organisations (ALEOs), including for performance monitoring and the early identification of any significant financial and service risks; there is evidence of the application of the principles of ‘Following the Public Pound.’</p>		
<p>3D11 The local authority has a reserves policy that supports its future financial sustainability, and its reserves are held in accordance with that policy.</p>		
<p>Theme 3E – Effective Use of Resources – Performance Management</p>		
<p>3E1 Effective performance management arrangements are in place to promote the effective use of the local authority’s resources. Performance is systematically measured across all areas of activity, and performance reports are regularly scrutinised by managers and elected members. The performance management system is effective in addressing areas of underperformance, identifying the scope for improvement and agreeing remedial action.</p>		
<p>3E2 There is a corporate approach to identifying, monitoring and reporting on improvement actions that will lead to continuous improvement in priority areas. Improvement actions are clearly</p>		

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<p>articulated and include identifying responsible officers and target timelines.</p>		
<p>3E3 The local authority uses self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. This includes the use of comparative analyses to benchmark, monitor and improve performance.</p>		
<p>3E4 The local authority takes an innovative approach when considering how services will be delivered in the future. It looks at the activities of other organisations, beyond its area, to consider new ways of doing things. A full range of options is considered, and self-assessment activity and options appraisal can be demonstrated to be rigorous and transparent.</p>		
<p>3E5 Evaluation tools are in place to link inputs, activities and outputs to the outcomes that they are designed to achieve. There is evidence to demonstrate that improvement actions lead to continuous improvement and better outcomes in priority service areas.</p>		
<p>3E6 The local authority seeks and takes account of feedback from citizens and service users on performance when developing improvement plans.</p>		
<p>3E7 Improvement plans reflect a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of the local authority’s priorities and the long-term sustainability of services.</p>		

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<p>3E8 Performance information reporting to stakeholders is regular and gives a balanced view of the local authority’s performance, linked to its priority service areas. The information provided is relevant to its audience, and clearly demonstrates whether or not strategic and operational objectives and targets are being met.</p>		
<p>3E9 The local authority demonstrates a trend of improvement over time in delivering its strategic priorities.</p>		
<p>Theme 4 – Partnership and Collaborative Working</p>		
<p>4.1 Members and senior managers actively encourage opportunities for formal and informal joint/integrated working, joint use of resources and joint funding arrangements, where these will offer scope for service improvement and better outcomes.</p>		
<p>4.2 The local authority is committed to working with partner organisations to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of its stakeholders and communities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scenario planning with partners to identify opportunities to achieve Best Value • collaborative leadership to identify Best Value partnership solutions to achieve better outcomes for local people • proactively identifying opportunities to invest in and commit to shared services • integrated management of resources where appropriate 		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective monitoring of collective performance, including self-assessment and reviews of the partnership strategy, to ensure the achievement of objectives • developing a joint understanding of all place-based capital and revenue expenditure. 		
<p>4.3 Members and senior managers identify and address any impediments that inhibit collaborative working. The local authority and its partners develop a shared approach to evaluating the effectiveness of collaborative and integrated working.</p>		
<p>4.4 In undertaking its community planning duties, the local authority works constructively with partners to agree a joint vision for the Community Planning Partnership and integrates shared priorities and objectives into its planning, performance management and public reporting mechanisms. Service plans clearly reflect the priorities identified through community planning, and show how the local authority is working with partners to provide services that meet stakeholder and community needs.</p>		
<p>Theme 5 – Working with Communities</p>		
<p>5.1 Members and senior managers ensure that meaningful consultation and engagement in relation to strategic planning take place at an early stage and that the process of consultation and engagement is open, fair and inclusive.</p>		

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<p>5.2 Members and senior managers are proactive in identifying the needs of communities, citizens, customers, staff and other stakeholders; plans, priorities and actions are demonstrably informed by an understanding of those needs.</p>		
<p>5.3 Communities are involved in making decisions about local services, and are empowered to identify and help deliver the services that they need. Suitable techniques are in place to gather the views of citizens, and to assess and measure change in communities as a result of service interventions.</p>		
<p>5.4 Active steps are taken to encourage the participation of hard-to-reach communities.</p>		
<p>5.5 The local authority and its Community Planning Partnership work effectively with communities to improve outcomes and address inequalities.</p>		
<p>5.6 A locality-based approach to community planning has a positive impact on service delivery within communities, and demonstrates the capacity for change and for reducing inequality in local communities by focusing on early intervention and prevention.</p>		
<p>5.7 Members and senior managers work effectively with partners and stakeholders to identify a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs of communities in both the short and the longer term. The local authority and its partners are organised to</p>		

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<p>deliver on those priorities, and clearly demonstrate that their approach ensures that the needs of their communities are being met.</p>		
<p>5.8 The local authority engages effectively with customers and communities by offering a range of communication channels, including innovative digital solutions and social media.</p>		
<p>5.9 The local authority plays an active role in civic life and supports community leadership.</p>		
<p>Theme 6 – Sustainable Development</p>		
<p>6.1 Leaders create a culture throughout the local authority that focuses on sustainable development, with clear accountability for its delivery across the leadership and management team.</p>		
<p>6.2 There is a clear framework in place that facilitates the integration of sustainable development into all of the local authority’s policies, financial plans, decision-making, services and activities through strategic-, corporate- and service level action. In doing so, the local authority will be able to demonstrate that it is making a strategic and operational contribution to sustainable development.</p>		
<p>6.3 The local authority has set out clear guiding principles that demonstrate its, and its partners’, commitment to sustainable development.</p>		

ANNUAL COMPLIANCE CHECK LIST – BEST VALUE STANDARDS 2024/25

<p align="center">BEST VALUE STANDARDS AND HOW THEY ARE DEMONSTRATED</p>	<p align="center">RESPONSE (YES/NO/NA)</p>	<p align="center">COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Yes – the service can provide further (optional) commentary on this. • If No – the service should explain what remedial action is being taken and the timescale for this. • If N/A – the service should explain why this is the case.
<p>6.4 There is a broad range of qualitative and quantitative measures and indicators in place to demonstrate the impact of sustainable development in relation to key economic, social and environmental issues.</p>		
<p>6.5 Performance in relation to sustainable development is evaluated, publicly reported and scrutinised.</p>		
<p>Theme 7 – Fairness and Equality</p>		
<p>7.1 The local authority demonstrates compliance with all statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.</p>		
<p>7.2 The local authority is taking active steps to tackle inequalities and promote fairness across the organisation and its wider partnerships, including work and living conditions, education and community participation.</p>		
<p>7.3 The local authority and its partners have an agreed action plan aimed at tackling inequality, poverty and addressing fairness issues identified in local communities.</p>		
<p>7.4 The local authority engages in open, fair and inclusive dialogue to ensure that information on services and performance is accessible to all, and that every effort has been made to reach hard-to-reach groups and individuals.</p>		
<p>7.5 The local authority ensures that all employees are engaged in its commitment to equality and fairness outcomes, and that its</p>		

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<p>contribution to the achievement of equality outcomes is reflected throughout its corporate processes.</p>		
<p>7.6 The local authority engages with and involves equality groups to improve and inform the development of relevant policies and practices, and takes account of socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.</p>		
<p>7.7 The equality impact of policies and practices delivered through partnerships is always considered. Equality impact information and data is analysed when planning the delivery of services, and measuring performance.</p>		
<p>7.8 The local authority's approach to securing continuous improvement in delivering on fairness and equality priorities and actions is regularly scrutinised and well evidenced.</p>		