

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 3 2023/24



Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

Individuals and communities in Midlothian will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

Our new [Single Midlothian Plan](#) focuses on three main priorities:

- 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 2030.

In recent Census results, 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.

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new [Transformation Blueprint](#) 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success. The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, 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.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5 year funding gap of £29.121 million outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
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 that all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce.
4. Design a workplace fit for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way as well as utilising our assets to maximise their potential.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in integrated service delivery which improve community outcomes.

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

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier - Achievements

The 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.

This report brings together the priority actions of the seven main areas that plan and deliver integrated care and support:

- Adult Services
- Older People
- Justice Service and Protection
- Public Health
- Mental Health and Substance Use
- Midlothian and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP)
- Learning and Development.

Midlothian HSCP must make progress towards the aims of Midlothian IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan, work alongside the Community Planning Partnership, and contribute to the strategic aims of both NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council.

This quarterly update is provided in alignment with the four key themes of Service Actions & Indicators:

Prevention

Prevention is a key role of services within the HSCP. Social Work services in particular work with our most vulnerable populations and are crucial to ensuring people remain safe and well. Public protection is prominent and is key to what social workers do. Public health continues to work with key strategic partners across health and social care, the third and voluntary sector to influence improvements in outcomes.

Understanding Changing Needs

All services are working towards the establishment of feedback mechanisms to ensure that service planning and delivery meet the needs of people and communities.

Effective, efficient and quality (Best Value)

Financial Recovery templates continue to be monitored through the Finance and Performance Group. In addition, all Adult Health and Social Care services have attended two of a series of three Financial Recovery Workshops hosted by the HSCP with support from NHS Lothian's Sustainability & Value Team.

Improving Outcomes - socioeconomic, health and wellbeing, personal outcomes

Services continue to be supported to use OutNav software to capture their progress and contributions towards achieving improvements in outcomes. There is a strong commitment from the HSCP to having a more systemic approach to outcomes as it is acknowledged that this has been a gap.

Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements

This theme aims to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, working with a range of individuals and organisations within community justice. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 supported a redesign of the community justice system, transferring the responsibilities for reducing offending and reoffending to local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). A National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) and National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (2023) were published by the Scottish Government to outline the new model.

The Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) has been approved and we are working on the actions agreed in the plan. The Community Justice Service was onboarded to OutNav, the digital platform used to capture contributions and report on progress towards improved outcomes at personal, service and strategic levels.

Research continues to show that community-based sentences are more effective in reducing offending than short prison sentences; they enable those convicted of offences to retain connections with local supports and family relationships. Community Payback Orders (CPO) have a number of requirements but Supervision and/or an Unpaid Work or Other Activity Requirement are those most often used by the Courts.

In the reporting year the Unpaid Work team completed 278 projects which benefited 221 people. We collated feedback from beneficiaries at the end of a project and 100% of respondents reported that the quality of the work was good (3%) or excellent (97%). From the feedback provided by individuals on an order, 100% of those who completed unpaid work or other activity advised that they learnt new skills and had been able to make reparation for their offending behaviour.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child - Achievements

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 2020-2023, 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 plan is coming to an end and a new three-year plan 2023-2026 is currently being drafted.

The GIRFEC outcomes for the final year of the three-year plan for 2022-23 are:

1. More children and young people are safe, healthy and resilient
2. More children and young people receive timely and effective mental health support when they need it
3. Inequalities in learning are reduced

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

Based on the national Getting it right for every child wellbeing framework a set of priority actions has been developed which will make a significant contribution towards achieving the wellbeing outcomes. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) are fully committed to realising the children's rights approach and ensuring that the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded in plans taken forward.

Outcome 1: Midlothian Children and Young People are Healthy, Active and Nurtured

Outcome 2: Midlothian Children and Young People are Achieving and Responsible

Outcome 3: Midlothian Children and Young People are Respected and Included

Outcome 4: Midlothian Children and Young People are Safe and Nurtured

Work is being progressed and is almost complete around gaining a clearer understanding on how all referrals come into the service.

This has been a significant piece of work involving many stakeholders. Within Q3 there is a 29.0% decrease compared to last year at this time and a 39% decrease in referrals from Q1. The impact of this piece of work is already evidencing positive results. This said the complexity of the referrals coming into the service remains high however it is hoped that we shall offer a much-improved service.

The Family Wellbeing Service has had a significant amount of training on offer to the new workforce to ensure they have a good understanding of their role going forward. They are already working with 100 families and 177 children and young people. We are awaiting the arrival of a permanent new team leader for the service which shall help consolidate the learning and training staff have undertaken. We continue to work with our 3rd sector colleagues to agree how we can offer funding to them to support this service to have a holistic overview of the work we are doing with families.

Focus continues on the following 5 priority areas within Education:

Priority 1: Attainment and Achievement

Priority 2: Included, Involved and Engaged: Wellbeing & Equity

Priority 3: Self-improving Systems

Priority 4: Life-Long Learning and Career-Ready Employability

Priority 5: Finance & Resources

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

The vision for this them is to reduce the gaps in learning, economic circumstances and poverty.

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. CLLE also ensure we meet our statutory duty through our internal performance tracking measures for the CLLE service. There has been satisfactory progress in implementing Shared Prosperity Funded Projects. CLLE has played a key role in formulating the new Local Child Poverty Action Report, jointly with Public Health NHS Lothian, Led by Executive Director CYP. Beeslack Community High School Swimming Projects have

achieved 265 accreditations. Key events and programmes have supported local people this quarter to build skills for learning life and work through **Employability, Youth work, Adult and Family Learning** and **Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty**

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements

The Climate Emergency Group's and Community Planning Partnership vision is *significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030*. Our values are to get to net zero equitably, taking into account different people and communities capacities and abilities to get there. The Group consists of individuals and representatives of Midlothian Community Councils, Community Groups, national government agencies, Third Sector organisations, Midlothian Council, local chamber of commerce, land owners and Midlothian Energy Ltd.

The [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) forms part of the local development plan for Midlothian and will also be the strategic basis that future plans and applications will need to take into account.

The biggest sources of carbon emissions in Midlothian are still domestic uses (30.5%) and transport (27.5%). Therefore, this theme will concentrate on reducing carbon emissions in the areas of domestic heating/power and transport to get to Net Zero.

Thematic actions are designed to increase awareness, promote reflection and action on the key Climate Emergency issues of energy, food and travel. They will lead to a better understanding of carbon emissions and greater investment in greener travel, renewable heat, energy sources and heating efficiency in Midlothian. 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.

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

Outcome 3: Low Carbon/Renewable Energy Development and Home Energy Saving is Increased

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

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. Furthermore, this action will be progressed when the Council's adopted Climate Change Strategy is reviewed in 2023/24

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out its aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within the entire building stock in Scotland by 2045, including addressing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. As part of this Strategy, 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. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

- set out how each section of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

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. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

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- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.

- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

The street lighting capital programme is complete ahead of plan this year with 751 of a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements up to the end of this quarter with 1 unit outstanding due to site complications. A further 446 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming.

This quarter, 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. Work is being undertaken to communicate changes to our customers via our website pages and other promotional activities. Going forward, monitoring these standards will help us communicate more effectively with our customer when complaints arise, giving a clear understanding of the levels of service that can be expected. 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.

Work continues on our parks and greenspaces with 57 improvements/new facilities completed up to the end of quarter 3. Activities this quarter include improvements to parks and play equipment and memorial benches.

Midlothian Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out key actions for delivery this year and addresses the next phase in transforming the services provided to meet housing need. These activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is in its final year, this 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, 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.

Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected - Achievements

A wellbeing economy aims to deliver increased economic opportunities for all, providing meaningful and fair work, better outcomes for young people, sustainable places, improved health outcomes, reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

To develop a wellbeing economy we will use Community Wealth Building (CWB) which is based around five interconnected pillars that centres on People, Place and Planet. Community Wealth Building changes the way local economies function by redirecting wealth into local economies, creating opportunities for the benefit local people. We have embedded three of the pillars into our delivery over the past two years and will continue to build on this work.

The [Regional Prosperity Framework \(RPF\) 2021](#) guides and integrates public, private and Third Sector decisions, actions, collaborations, strategies, policies and investments and sets out 3 key areas to support the rebuilding of the economy:

- people – to access fair work, to learn and develop new skills and to live happy and healthy lives
- places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work in and where enterprise thrives
- planet – meeting our needs in a way that will allow future generations to meet theirs, with a focus on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (sustainability).

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 and will be presented for approval to Council later in the year.

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). The team actively encourage businesses 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. This quarter discussions took place between Economic Development and Procurement proposing the creation of action groups to take key areas of work. Proposed areas of focus 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.

Outcome 1: Develop a Midlothian Community Wealth Building Action Plan to guide future economic activity across the partnership

Outcome 2: Increase economic opportunity to maximise income, empowering individuals and communities

Outcome 3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship, increasing business knowledge, for current and future generations

The Business Gateway service continue to promote the social enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model. Contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives, the team support projects from the Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. The Community Wealth Building Officer recently contacted 32 local social enterprises, 12 have engaged and are in receipt of ongoing support. The Economic Development service has provided a total of 27 support inputs to social enterprise during the quarter and Business Gateway Advisers are providing ongoing business support to 5 social enterprises.

The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 24. This should realise a forecasted creation of 40 jobs and an estimated contribution of £1.86M to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading.

A further 60 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received this quarter from individuals that are considering setting up a business but need support to achieve this, these clients tend to have numerous sessions with their advisor covering areas such as business planning, access to finance, regularity compliance, routes to market and can take from 3 months to a year to reach the trading stage.

Our Estates team have had continued success in managing our PIA estate. Surveys have been concluded in relation to potential presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in our Schools. All schools within the at-risk date range of 1930-2000 have been surveyed by consultant engineers who have confirmed that RAAC is not present. An assessment of the Housing stock also found no RAAC. The Non-Housing stock condition surveys continue to be progressed in line with allocated budget and agreed timelines.

There were 5,481 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period. The total number of lets made all applicants this quarter was 136 with 53.7% made to homeless applicants and 46.3% to general needs.

We have maintained the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award for over 9 years and work has commenced on the development of our Wellbeing Strategy which will focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing. The rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives continues this quarter to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff.

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty - Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.

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 as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. Our refreshed vision for the service is that individuals and families will be able to access housing that is affordable and of good quality in sustainable communities. Housing Services are currently exploring a new approach to deliver services and are trialling new team set ups consisting of a community housing team, aiming to ensure every tenant and resident has their individual needs and rights recognised and is treated fairly with respect to enable tenancy sustainment. A core housing team, improving quality and turnaround of our properties, ensuring residents are informed of housing options and homeless applicants are provided temporary accommodation and a Homelessness team focused on preventing and supporting homelessness.

The Scottish Housing Regulator reviewed our Homelessness practice this quarter and showed an understanding of the local issues we face, providing positive feedback to Housing Services for the work completed during this challenging period.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2023/24 budget at its meeting on 21 February 2023. Delivery is reliant on a combination of savings and service reductions and includes the use of retrospective service concession savings and earmarked Covid recovery reserves. Whilst the 2023/24 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years will be embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability, and close working continues with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports for quarter two 23/24, presented to Council in November 2023. The team continues to provide in-depth financial input to key revenues and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Economic pressures: Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction industry in Scotland. The UK is experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. The pandemic has also accelerated financial challenges, and the growth from being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland places significant pressure on Midlothian to be able to deliver high quality services to its citizens.

In response to all these pressures, a range of reprioritisation activity is taking place, with a revised Capital Plan being considered by the cross-party Business Transformation Steering Group, and options to review what and how services are delivered as part of the savings measures to reduce the funding gap recommended to Council.

Growing Council: Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. In addition, Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

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

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

National Care Service: The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the

associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Services (Scotland) Bill. If enacted, the bill would have fundamental implications for the community and for Local Government itself. The wide reaching changes in the bill aim to deliver a National Care Service by the end of the parliamentary term, which will impact on all aspects of the work of the Corporate Solutions team, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. Recent data shows the annual inflation rate was 4.0% in December 2023, up slightly from 3.9% in November. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force last year, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities

Midlothian Council - How we are Performing-



PI Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
BS.MC.MPI.01 Performance against revenue budget		£293.373m	£289.676m	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		92.5%	95.0%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		78.77%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		83.33%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		65.38%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	

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