

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 2 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.

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.

We operate an assertive outreach model within Substance Use Services to reduce harm and drug and alcohol related deaths. The service offers a multi-disciplinary working model blending social workers and nurses. Practically, the model involves engagements at No.11, our recovery hub, as well as home visits and appointments elsewhere. Whilst drug-related deaths are a complex issue, the model adopted in Midlothian did have some impact in reducing numbers in 2022 to 4 (from 23 in 2021).

The newly established Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG) has established a layer of governance for Social Work and Social Care services across Adults and Childrens' Services and is Chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer. It considers all inspection reports and other work and monitors and evaluates action plans. Whilst only recently established, SWAG has already provided a degree of governance that did not exist previously in a systematic form.

Understanding Changing Needs

Occupational Therapy and Physical Disabilities service has introduced a paper and electronic feedback form for people to undertake when their involvement with the Service is complete. Through the use of Outnav, responses from service users to our feedback form and collation of emails from people we have supported we are gathering more information to evidence that people engaging with our Service feel listened to and are treated with dignity and respect. People are letting us know that when we are able to work together, that even a small piece of equipment or change to their home environment can make a huge difference to the quality of their life.

This summer MELDAP carried out a consultation process with people with lived and living experience, carers/families, members of the public, services and partners. This included noting their priorities in relation to prevention / children / families services, treatment service and recovery orientated provision.

Duty Social Work Team introduced a paper and electronic feedback form that is initially sent out to those identified as Unpaid Carers. This commenced on 1/9/23.

Improving Outcomes - socioeconomic, health and wellbeing, personal outcomes

The HSCP is currently developing its approach to outcomes and has purchased the OutNav tool from Matter of Focus. It is currently too early to ascertain the effectiveness of this but 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. During Q2 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

The Getting It Right for Every Child theme oversees the effective delivery of the Integrated Children's Services Plan which is built around a set of core principles. 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.*

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

This quarter was a hugely successful year for the Summer Reading Challenge. The theme was Ready, Set, Read! based around the power of play, sport and games. Over 1,000 children signed up for the challenge (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. Libraries saw 668 new child memberships which reflects the positive engagement of the Summer Reading Challenge.

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

This has been a significant piece of work involving many stakeholders. Within Q2 there is a 7% decrease compared to last year at this time and a 12% 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 are already working with over 100 children and young people. Significant amount of training is on offer to the new workforce to ensure they have a good understanding of their role going forward. We have an independent person undertaking a review of what voluntary support we can buy-in to support this service. It is hoped this shall be concluded by the end of October. Arrival of Ukrainian Families and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). We continue to welcome Ukrainian families into Midlothian adopting a holistic approach to the support on offer. We are confident that our steady and thorough approach to this work has ensured that we are robust in the work we are undertaking.

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

The [Community Learning and Development Partners Strategic Plan 2021-24](#) aims to build skills for learning, life and work and supporting communities to improve outcomes through community development approaches. The [No One Left Behind plan 2022-25](#) is aimed to address the needs of Midlothian residents seeking employability support. It sets out how the Council and partners will work together to offer a range of targeted programmes and support for all.

Poverty and in-work poverty continues to increase due to the rise in the cost of living, particularly food and energy costs. This means that more individuals and families are struggling to support themselves and provide for their basic needs. As one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland, the Council cannot support more customers using the current resources, systems and processes. This means that the adoption of digital and automated processes will be key to continuing to provide a seamless customer journey, satisfying enquiries at the first point of contact and meeting increased demand.

Outcome 1: Improve employability outcomes for Midlothian residents

Outcome 2: Local people will have increased opportunities to influence decisions through work with public sector, Third Sector and community capacity building

Outcome 3: Improve the breadth, quality and impact of informal and formal lifelong learning including access to qualifications

Outcome 4: Enhance the impact of Police Scotland's priorities to support the communities through the work of the Police Scotland Local Authority Liaison Officer

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) set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies draw on a standardised methodology. Work is now progressing at pace to review the findings of the previously reported Stage 4 LHEES study, the outcome of which is confirmed as providing a good foundation for the remaining stages. The aim is to now have a draft LHEES strategy and delivery plan prepared for the end of the year. 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.

Work continues with the lighting capital programme with 176 new lighting column replacements this quarter, representing 64% of our annual target now complete. A further 213 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming.

Six new 12 tonne food waste collection vehicles have recently been delivered, including one funded from the Zero Waste Scotland Recycling Improvement Fund to allow the introduction of this service in rural, and previously excluded areas. New collection routes have been developed during Q2. The Garden waste service re-started in March with 17,839 customers signed up to the service by the end of quarter 1, totalling 18,840 garden waste bins to be collected. Customer sign ups have reduced by 2.2% compared to the same period last year.

Work continues on our parks and greenspaces with 30 improvements/new facilities completed up to the end of quarter 2 with a further 20 improvements planned for this year. Activities this quarter include, new bench installations, tree planting, fencing and ground works across Midlothian.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1 provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1201, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 712 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress continues with 645 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. This includes the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 189 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents

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).

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 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, a further 8 new Midlothian businesses were registered with the Supplier Development, with 16 signed up in quarter 1, this is a significant increase compared to a total of 20 during 22/23. The increase could be attributed to local engagement through targeted promotion of meet the buyer events. A digital meet the buyer event was held in July in conjunction with FES who were awarded the Shawfair low carbon district heating system project in partnership with Midlothian Energy Ltd. Not all who registered attended so the team worked with FES to create messaging for direct and online promotion inviting specific business types to contact them directly to be added to their supply chain for the District Heating Network and future projects.

Working with our Procurement Team, Economic Development continue to identify upcoming procurement opportunities, promoting local procurement opportunities via digital channels and for any that suit a specific business the client is contacted directly.

The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 32. This should realise a forecasted creation of 40 jobs and an estimated contribution of £1.46M to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. 56 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received this quarter from individuals that are considering setting up a business but need support to achieve this.

The Locate in Midlothian website continues to be a valuable tool for employability opportunities and employment support with 32 property enquires received via the site during Q2, all enquirers contacted by Business Gateway advisors to offer wider support.

Our Estates team have had continued success in managing our PIA estate including the letting of an industrial unit in Mayfield. The lettings of two retail units on Buccleuch Street, which are due for completion at the end of October 2023, have entered into the negotiation stage with two prospective parties. 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 5,251 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period. The total number of lets made to the general needs applicants this quarter was 39 and 58 made to homeless applicants.

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.

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 Strategic Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Close working continues with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges

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 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.

Growing Council: 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 giving a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

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.

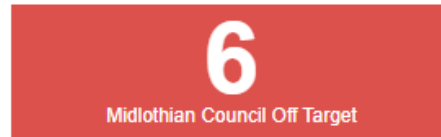
To ensure Midlothian is 'building back better', this investment is also creating new jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, opportunities for businesses and communities and families hard-hit by the impact of the pandemic. These new opportunities help lead the way towards a better future for Midlothian.

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 is already being noted across the UK with 93% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in March 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 10.4% is the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. The price rises will 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.05 Performance against revenue budget		£288.042m	£284.167m	01 Jan 2024	Q2 2023/24	
CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		90.0%	95.0%	01 Jan 2024	2022/23	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		80.75%	95%	01 Jan 2024	Q2 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		17.24%	95%	01 Jan 2024	Q2 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		85.37%	95%	01 Jan 2024	Q2 2023/24	
MC.SPSO.04.2 Average time in working days for a full response at stage 2		36.241	20	01 Jan 2024	Q2 2023/24	

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