

## Place Performance Report Q2 2023/24



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

Place Services encompasses Building Services; Housing Services; Neighbourhood Services; Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment; Property & Facilities Management; Protective Services; and, since September, Sport & Leisure.

### Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028)

We are committed to building on the learning and new ways of working that were adopted during the pandemic and renew 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 new 5-year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main aims:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes.
- No child or household live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The pandemic has accelerated the financial challenges that we are facing. Reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges and changes that we will face.

The strategic plan 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 the fastest growing local authority in 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 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 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.

## Environmental

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues within Place services to achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. The annual progress report on Climate Change was last presented to Cabinet at its meeting of 24 October 2023.

Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge. 66 businesses have committed to the Pledge with 15 of those signing up during quarter 2. The team continue to work with pledgers to identify the best platform for group sharing. Through the LinkedIn group, pledgers share their experiences and the team continue to share a mix of green information from partners on learning opportunities, support and funding. This quarter an event was hosted during Scotland's Climate change week at the Energy Training Academy where Economic Development gave an overview of progress in supporting businesses to be greener and further promote Midlothian's Green Pledge.

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.

A Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) lead officer is now in post. 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.

The annual Capital Works Programme for carriageway resurfacing combined with the Residential streets programme continues this quarter with 8.61km of carriageway resurfaced, representing 1.23% of the total road network. Footpath resurfacing was brought back on target this quarter with 1.63km of footpaths resurfaced this year to date (representing 0.22% of the footpath network) compared to 0.26km of surfacing that took place in Q1. This quarter a total of 396.4 tonnes of material was used to fill potholes. 168.7 tonnes of material was used for temporary repairs and 227.7 tonnes for pothole pro permanent patching. The Pothole Pro project equated to 2,020m<sup>2</sup> of permanent patching, repairing 866 potholes.

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.

Land and Countryside Services have been heavily involved in the Neighbourhood Services joint working project to make a visible change to the aesthetics of 16 villages across Midlothian. These have included Pathhead Leadburn, Fala, Howgate, Lasswade, Ford, Edgehead, Auchendinny, Newton village and Silverburn with works planned for Cousland, Carrington, Millerhill, Temple, Whitehill and Middleton.

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. Completed park improvements to date include North Middleton Park, Kings Park, Ironmills Park, Vogrie Country Park, Mayfield Skate Park, Roslin Glen Country Park, Waterfall Park and Auld Gala Park. Works in progression include Millerhill Park loop path, Rosewell and Roslin Asphalt Pump Tracks, Cousland, Birkenhead, Clarinda gardens and Ironmills play improvements. Completed green space improvements include work at Rosewell on the Dalkeith to Penicuik walkway, Straiton pond, Roslin gun powder mill, Roslin Walkway and the Miners Memorial at Penicuik. Activities this quarter include, new bench installations, tree planting, fencing and ground works across Midlothian.

The Countryside Ranger Service continues to engage with communities and volunteers on various initiatives and events. Grassland management, to increase pollinator species and carbon sequestration rates, was carried out at Vogrie, Roslin and Straiton Pond by volunteers cutting and lifting wildflower rich meadow areas. 'Vogrie Bioblitz' of the former golf course took place with partners and volunteer recorders to gather information on species as a benchmark for future management interventions in species diversity. Butterfly Surveys were carried out weekly from April to September by volunteers as part of national monitoring scheme. Work continues this quarter with the river Esk giant hogweed eradication project.

This year 3,300 volunteer hours were spent in countryside sites ensuring an attractive, safe and welcoming environment for all to enjoy. Volunteer numbers have increased significantly over the last few years, with a 20% increase in volunteer hours this quarter compared to the same period last year. Green flag status was awarded for Kings Park Dalkeith and Straiton pond. The awards for Countryside sites would not be possible without close partnership working between volunteers and their coordination by our Ranger service.

Public Health and Environmental Protection implemented the short-term let licensing scheme within the time scales prescribed by Scottish Government. This quarter the scheme was further publicised via our social media platforms to increase the number of applications by the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. 100 short term licence applications were received by the deadline, 77 of which were received this quarter.

The Environmental Crime Pilot team commenced in July 2023 with an increased emphasis on fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling. The year long pilot with a team of wardens has the power to issue statutory and fixed penalty notices between £80-£200 to offenders and report potential crimes to the procurator fiscal. 171 fixed penalty notices were issued this quarter with the vast majority in relation to littering.

Our business regulations team was involved in the pilot of a whole systems approach to type II diabetes prevention in Mayfield, Easthouses, Woodburn and Dalkeith areas. An officer visited selected food businesses within these areas to encourage them to trial the free Food Standards Scotland Menucal tool. This tool provides information about the number of calories within the foods offered on their menu, to help customers to make informed choices. To date 3 of the 8 businesses have signed up to the pilot.

Further interventions took place this quarter, a business of concern who had applied for an animal welfare licence was referred to Police Scotland. Reports indicate the Police identified ongoing criminality at the address. As a result of a Dog control investigation an unlicensed business was identified to be reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

Trading Standards received 56 consumer complaints this quarter, 48 of which were completed. Completion is not fully within service control and is dependant on traders and complainants responding to investigations. 65 Trading Standards primary inspections took place this quarter including 25 under Animal Health and Welfare. This is an increase of 54% compared to this period last year. Compared to last quarter a marked decline in the number of illegal vapes being found for sale in the Midlothian area has been noted. It is possible, that following the seizure of approximately 1,400 disposable vapes from 6 shops in quarter 1, that illegal vapes are now less prevalent in Midlothian. This quarter 72 disposable vapes were seized. Vapes are seized due to contraventions of the safety law, mainly concerning the maximum quantity of nicotine.

## Housing

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. The plan also explains how Midlothian Council will address the next phase of its approach to transforming the services provided to those in housing need by developing initiatives with an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness, tenancy sustainability and early intervention. Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is in its final year, this has brought significant change for homelessness over the last 4 years with 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.

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 number of homeless cases provided with advice and assistance this quarter was 509 and prevented from homeless was 171. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible. This represents a 141% increase in advice and assistance compared to the same period last year.

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.

The length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing outcome remains the same as last quarter at 58 weeks showing a continued downward trend from 121 weeks at the same period last year.

## **Economy & Regeneration**

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

Linking into local procurement and locally led economic development, the team continue to work with the local business base to develop locality based and thematic business associations. Dalkeith Means Business and Rosemains Steading are now legal entities, Gorebridge and Penicuik are still in the development phase. Midlothian's Wellbeing Business Association is formally constituted and has had several meetings with members to include economic development support.

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 continue to support the projects from Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. 12 third sector organisations/enterprises were supported this quarter, one business claimed as a start-up. These organisations are a mix of existing third sector organisations, new business associations, and existing social enterprises with growth aspirations.

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, 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. To stimulate interest in starting a business, The team held 5 'Meet the Adviser' sessions at libraries across Midlothian (Dalkeith, Gorebridge, Lasswade, Penicuik, Danderhall) during August and September. The sessions were published across our digital channels and in the libraires and supporting agencies via posters to encourage local residents that may be considering setting up businesses to engage with the service. Client feedback was that it is difficult to take time out of existing business or from work in the case of early-stage start-ups to attend these sessions in person and the preference is to meet on digital platforms going forward to negate travel time and have more flexibility in timing.

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.

Following the adoption of the National Planning Framework No.4, this quarter, the planning service has formally commenced its review of the Council's adopted spatial strategy, the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2. The first phase consists of engagement with community groups, key agencies, the development industry, local residents and elected members. This engagement will be ongoing throughout the year.

At its meeting in September 2023 the Planning Committee determined to refer two cases, one regarding an unauthorised advertisement on land adjoining the A68 Slip Road/A720 City Bypass and the second regarding the erection of an unauthorised dwellinghouse at 10 Kirkhill Terrace, Gorebridge, to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for prosecutorial action.

The percentage of Secondary school meal uptake has increased considerably this quarter from 20.36% in quarter 1 to 45.71% in quarter 2, this is due to changes made to the menu offered to secondary schools to attract pupils back into the dining room.

## **Capital Investment Programme**

As Scotland's fastest growing local authority area, it is critical to delivery that investment in community infrastructure, such as housing, the learning estate, economic investment and green infrastructure, is in the right place at the right time. This will help our communities to live well, live locally and prosper. How we invest in community infrastructure must also respond to changes in our working and living patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities need to be able to readily access the services they require. Capital investment is also an opportunity to support our local economy through job creation and skills enhancement, particularly in relation to supporting a transition to a green economy as we invest in sustainable, highly energy efficient buildings.

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

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

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme 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.

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

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1 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.

## Challenges and risk

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

### Growing Council

In addition to the financial sustainability challenges, other challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery from the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings.

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

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



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

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

### **Risk**

The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is presented retrospectively to Audit Committee quarterly. The most critical risks to the Council are Financial Sustainability, Climate Change and the Change Programme. Place Services is key to the delivery of mitigating actions to these risks; through strategic planning and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and driving forward the Council's transformation programme to derive change and redesign services.

**33**  
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs  
- On Target

**19**  
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs  
- Off Target

**74**  
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs  
- Data only

**3**  
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs  
- No data available

**6**  
Quarterly Place High Service  
Risks

**110**  
Quarterly Place All Service  
Risks

**Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Off Target**

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	History
BS.PLACE.HSN.01 Re-let time permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)		47 days	35 days	
BS.PLACE.P.5.2b Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Modern fa...		98.4%	100%	
HSN3 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the S...		34.3%	100%	
HSN4b Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (LGBF)		18.00 days	7.00 days	
HSN5 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient ...		85.7%	100.0%	
PLACE.MPI.01 Performance against revenue budget		£44.751m	£41.598m	
PLACE.MPI.04 % of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)		85%	90%	
PLACE.MPI.05 % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does ...		86.24%	90%	
PLACE.P.5.2a Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Free from seri...		98.9%	100%	
PLACE.P.5.2c Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Healthy, safe ...		34.3%	100%	
PLACE.PFM.17 Number of secondary school meals prepared per hour (APSE)		8.46	8.84	
PLACE.PFM.18 Number of nursery and primary meals prepared per hour (APSE)		7.27	8.84	
PLACE.PFM.21 Percentage of free school meal uptake (P1-P5)		70.62%	77.57%	
PLACE.SPSO.04.2 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2		37.481	20	
PLACE.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		14.81%	95%	
PLACE.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 wor...		84.21%	95%	
PROSERVICES.19 Percentage of consumer complaints responded to within 5 worki...		98%	100%	
PROSERVICES.30 Percentage of businesses registered for tobacco/vapes in Midlot...		0%	5%	
RHM.h.05.5aiii Percentage of Homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy ...		86.7%	95%	

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