

Place

Annual Performance Report 2021-22



The Place Principle

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.

We have endorsed the place principle because we are committed to strengthening the co-ordination and integration of all place based activity. The principle is a way of bringing together ideas about services, investments, resources and assets to achieve a shared vision. We are creating a shared understanding of what a place is for and what it wants to become with partners and communities collaboratively agreeing the joint actions required to make that happen and delivering these. This approach provides our key stakeholders with a way to exercise local or regional accountability over decisions taken about the way resources, services and assets are directed and delivered.

In implementing the place principle we:

- consider the benefits of planning, investment and implementation activity at the regional level of place - where that focus could drive faster rates of sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- ensure that place based work at the local level being led by Midlothian Council and its agencies/partnerships is taken forward in a way that is integrated and complementary of all the work being taken forward in associated policy areas and plans
- exemplify the behaviours reflecting the core of the principle, working and planning together with our partners and local communities to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places.

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

Hub and Spoke, one of Midlothian's key drivers for change, will see a Locality approach to service delivery adopted, developed in conjunction with community planning partners. The opportunity to review and redesign services that the pandemic has provided will result in a more efficient and effective operation of sites within local communities. This will improve service delivery, and ensure better outcomes for local communities. The continued rollout of enhanced ICT capabilities will strengthen cross service working, produce resource efficiencies and support the localisation of services.

Successes this year

Environmental

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues within the 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. This year 702 new lighting columns were replaced with LED lanterns and an upgrade of 350 sodium lighting units contributing to energy and carbon savings.

Good progress was made in 2021/22 with the annual Capital Works Programme for carriageway resurfacing, despite the ongoing impact of COVID-19. 8 carriageway resurfacing schemes were undertaken, utilising entirely framework contractors. 9.9km of carriageway has been resurfaced for the year (1.4% of the total road network) under the Capital Works Programme, and an additional 4.14km resurfaced during Q3 and Q4 as part of the Residential Streets programme, totalling 14.04km of carriageway resurfaced this year (2.05% of the total road network).

The Residential Streets programme commenced at the start of October, with the first phase of carriageway and footway resurfacing completed during Q3 by our in-house resource. Residential Streets is a two year programme to improve the condition of footways and roads across the county, and an example of a coordinated Neighbourhood Services works programme. Whilst the resurfacing works are taking place, Land and Countryside are attending to verges and overgrown foliage, whilst dropped kerbs requests are also being carried out and street lighting assessments taking place in each location.

The successful delivery of winter service includes responding to a number of storms this year. Land Services/Kickstart staff have been working with roads staff to ensure winter readiness. The winter service manual was revised in partnership with cross-Council service areas and communities. Road Services worked with Property and Facilities Management Services to carry out a review and condition survey of all grit bins, as well as responding to individual community requests. The survey results have been consolidated using the Geographic Information System mapping system for assets to show locations and facilitate requests in real time, and this is now available to view via the Council's website,

In-cab units to enable Waste Services to move to a Digital Depot way of working have been received following a successful funding bid to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund. The intention is that these units will integrate with the new Customer Service Platform allowing service requests to be closed in real time.

Following discussions on reuse, plans are developing on a reuse service at Stobhill. The partnership opportunity was advertised for partners to take items from Stobhill Recycling Centre for refurbishment or reuse. A preferred contractor has been identified to collect household waste for reuse from Stobhill Recycling Centre. Setting up the reuse cabin will be progressed in Q1 2022/23.

Landscaping project works: completion of 5 playground and Auld Gala Park with various tenders underway including Waterfall Park, Kings Park, Easthouses Park and a pump track at North Middletown to continue into 22/23. The Ranger Service continues to engage with communities and volunteers on various initiatives. All 7 sites have been inspected this year and tree works for all sites complete. A Green Flag award was received for the Penicuik to Dalkeith walkway. Unfortunately volunteering has been restricted by COVID-19 over the last year and although off target, groups and event numbers are now increasing. The

annual target of 9,000 reflects pre-pandemic figures and during 21/22, 4,821 hours were used in the countryside, which we expect to increase next year.

Economic

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out its 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.

The Locate in Midlothian website continues to be a valuable tool for employability opportunities and employment support. Each social channel is targeting different audiences and each is performing well in terms of audience growth and interaction.

This year we have continued to maximise opportunities to support recovery of the tourism sector by supporting the development of the tourism forum's digital presence and representation on the steering group. A member benefit has been included of a quarterly roundtable meeting with Economic Development and Business Gateway to raise challenges and opportunities - early intervention in new initiatives can help accelerate those that will encourage more visitors to Midlothian. Business Gateway has referred 40 businesses to Midlothian Tourist Forum and membership is now at 55.

Local Procurement: We have a dedicated officer in the Economic Development Service and although progress has stalled over the COVID-19 period due to capacity, we are in a good position to now take this forward with momentum as businesses are more comfortable directing resource at future opportunities. Addressing a gap in the learning cycle, we are introducing a procurement mentor to the client journey providing 121 support; this should increase the volume and quality of local bids.

Tyne Esk LEADER Scottish Rural Parliament project is now complete with a Midlothian/East Lothian needs based funding strategy produced. This will to inform the way forward. Close links with communities were fostered and communities are welcoming to further engagement with the Scottish Rural Parliament. Opportunities that may arise are working with the Scottish Rural Youth Task Force/Scottish and Rural Islands Youth Parliament for young people, with Tyne Esk as potential first hosts, and Scotland's Older People Assembly for older people.

This year the Economic Development team, with other departmental support completed the allocation of the discretionary fund. The fund provided small business support with on-off grant payments who were impacted by COVID.

Regeneration

The Planning Service has recovered approximately £11.8m and secured £12.9m in developer contributions in 21/22 towards: new schools; community facilities; sport, leisure and play provision; transport infrastructure; and town centre improvement projects.

The Planning Committee this year have granted various permissions for significant strategic planning applications leading to new tourist facilities, investment and job creation

Town centre Capital fund, of the seven applications approved (£910,000) all projects are now complete with Penicuik Town Hall completing this quarter. Further public realm works have also recently received funding through the Place Based Investment Fund.

Housing and homelessness

Midlothian Council's Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2021. To address the need for affordable housing, the SHIP details potential sites for 2,446 new affordable homes to be built between 2022/2022 and 2026/27.

There were 4,237 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period.

431 permanent homes have been provided to housing list applicants via the common housing register since 1 April 2021. An increase in 104 lets (32%) in permanent homes compared to last year.

During this reporting period, 99 households were assessed as homeless, with 385 households assessed since 1 April 2021. It is a positive decrease of 22% in the overall number of homeless households assessed compared to 493 households assessed during 2020/21. Since 1st April 2021, 790 households have been provided with advice and assistance compared to 515 for 2020/21. During 2021/2022 48 temporary properties have been successfully converted to permanent tenancies. The service has also progressed the delivery of 22 Housing First cases.

Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government on 30th June 2021. This sets out a vision that by 2024: an increased number of homeless households will obtain permanent accommodation, no homeless household will be accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation, and the average time taken for the Council to complete its homeless duty will have halved from 105 to 52 weeks. As of quarter 4 the length of time homeless applicants waiting until receiving a permanent housing is 85 weeks which has steadily improved throughout the year, with a reduction of 42 weeks in comparison to Q1.

95% of new tenants were very satisfied with their new council home and experience with the Housing and Wellbeing Service. 100% of new tenancies were sustained after 12 months.

The Equally Safe Housing and Homelessness Policy was approved this year and is currently being implemented. It has been developed with Midlothian Women's Aid and Mid and East Lothian's Public Protection Team taking into account the specific needs of those experiencing domestic abuse and upcoming legislative changes.

To comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework, the Council approved the Annual Assurance Statement providing full assurance that it is meeting legislative and regulatory standards.

Capital programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In relation to our ambitious affordable housing programme, in total there were 334 site starts in the year, with 180 homes completed. In total, Midlothian Council attracted over £15m of Scottish Government grant funding into its affordable housing programme in 2021/22.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. This includes the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 182 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. The conversion of Jarnac Court in Dalkeith is also now complete and will soon be providing temporary housing accommodation for those most in need.

Works are now underway at Polton Street in Bonnyrigg, where Midlothian Council is working closely with the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership to build 46 homes with onsite care, as well as an Intermediate Care Facility providing interim and respite care for up to 40 short term residents and a new Day Services facility to support older people in the refurbished former Bonnyrigg Infant School. All of the new build elements of this development will be built to Passivhaus standard.

Destination Hillend continues to move forward. The first package of works, relating to the upgrade of the junction at the entrance are now out to tender and relevant planning applications are progressing. Design

development continues on the most exciting elements of this development: the alpine coaster, the zipline and the new snowsports centre.

A public consultation exercise was completed for the A701 Relief Road and that project is also progressing, with the imminent selection of a preferred route and publication of the Stage 2 Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance report.

Utilising the Place Based Investment Fund, we have also invested in further public realm upgrades in Penicuik Town Centre, a new mobile library bus and a pop-up park in Newtongrange Town Centre.

Challenges

The challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery out of the pandemic, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings. Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all council areas in Scotland. From 2018 to 2028, the population of Midlothian is projected to increase from 91,340 to 103,945. This is an increase of 13.8%, which is in contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole with a 40.9% increase in older people over 75. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas giving a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. This pace of growth demands additional capacity within the school estate to cope with the projected increase in pupil numbers. The general population growth forecast places additional pressure on our infrastructure, including the growth of the road network as new development roads are adopted, and increases the demand on essential services such as waste collection.

As part of work to address the issue of significant population growth and demographic changes within Midlothian, the key drivers of change in delivery of sustainable and transformational services and regeneration of our communities must be viewed holistically. We have endorsed the Place Principle because we are committed to strengthening the co-ordination and integration of all place based activity. This means we will:

- consider the benefits of planning, investment and implementation activity at the regional level of place - where that focus could drive faster rates of sustainable and inclusive economic growth
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Service Performance

The COVID pandemic continues to have a direct impact on Place services during the quarter and this is reflected in some of the service performance indicators set later in this report.

An average of 67.5% of public health requests were responded to this year, a reduction compared to 74.4% responded to last year. This is a result of the Environmental Health team being diverted to proactively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Intelligence logging although off target remains strong and one of the highest in Scotland for our authority size. Figures are dependent on justifiable intelligence.

Due to Covid 19 enhanced cleaning and janitorial services has continued to take place this year in all schools, resulting in continued increased weekly hours:

Primary schools – Budgeted weekly hours are 2105, currently 2825 hours used per week due to Covid measures.

Secondary schools – Budgeted weekly hours are 1392, currently 1632 hours used per week due to Covid measures.

Janitorial services – Budgeted weekly hours are 1140, currently 4130.5 hours used per week due to Covid measures

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services. A potential key challenge will be an increase in homelessness as the financial measures put in place to protect households during the Covid pandemic are now withdrawn, alongside the recent increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2021/22.

Re-let time for permanent properties has reduced to 39 days this quarter and temporary re-lets has increased to 41 days. This has been due to properties requiring extensive works, delays with utility connections and some delays with furnishing contractors.

Average time to complete non-emergency repairs has remained off target (7 days) throughout this year. The yearly average taken across all quarters is 15.27 days to complete non-emergency repairs. Whilst this indicator is not on target there has been improvement over this year in completion times from 17.95 days in Q1 to 14.49 days in Q4. Suppliers are reporting production levels are improving to pre-COVID output but there are issues with delivery of materials and workforce challenges with contractors unable to meet demand.

Due to changes in the Energy Efficiency regulations affecting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) criteria, 431 houses were identified during Q3 as failing Energy Efficiency Standards for Scottish Housing. We have reduced these failures from 431 to 160 to meet the 2025 targets. However, with the Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's) now part of the SHQS from the 31st March 2022 we have found that 4733 fail assessment and therefore we have 34.3% meeting standard due to this. It should be noted that 100% of smoke alarm devices comply with current legislation.

Progress with annual Capital Works Programme for footway resurfacing due to this focus on carriageway works is off target for the year. 3.82km of footway was resurfaced to end of Q4. Our annual target was increased from 0.56% to 0.76% in Q3 to include the Residential Streets Programme work which will continue into Q1.

Domestic residual waste collection tonnages remains high this year and recycling rates lower. Working from home and lockdown periods has resulted in higher waste volumes.

Number of Business starts ups remain low after impact from Covid, however the total number of start-ups for the year to date 2021/2022 represents an increase of 65% for the same period in 2020/2021. Initiatives are in place to promote and encourage businesses where possible in the current climate.

Mitigating the Scottish Government's decision to reject the Strategic Development Plan (SESplan2) for the South East of Scotland which leaves Midlothian and the other Council's in the region without an up to date strategic development plan.

Place

Successes and Challenges

Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 7 ● 3 ● 1 ● 9

Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 12 ● 17 ● 3 ● 17

Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs ● 7

- % of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)
- % of Service PIs that are on target have reached their target. (does not include Corporate PIs)
- Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2
- Average time in working days for a full response for escalated complaints
- Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days
- Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days
- Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs ● 12

- Re-let time permanent properties (calendar days)
- Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Modern facilities & services' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria
- Percentage of consumer complaints completed within 14 days (cumulative).
- % of the footpath network resurfaced (cumulative)
- Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria (LGBF)
- Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (LGBF)
- Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites
- Number of intelligence logs made (quarterly)
- Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation
- Re-let time temporary accommodation properties (days)
- Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Free from serious disrepair' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria
- Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Healthy, safe & secure' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria

Service High Risks (latest)

▲ 0

All Risks - Place

Risks ▲ 36 ● 86

Key PIs

- Off Target
- On Target
- Data Only
- Data Not Yet Available

Key PIs

- Off Target
- On Target
- Data Only
- Data Not Yet Available

Key Risks

- ▲ High Risk/Medium Risk
- Low Risk