

Minute of Meeting

Midlothian Council
Tuesday 25 February 2025
Item No 5.1



Midlothian Council

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 17 December 2024	11:00 am	Council Chambers, Midlothian House/Hybrid

Present:

Provost McCall (Chair)	Deputy Provost Bowen (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Parry (Council Leader)	Councillor Cassidy (Deputy Council Leader)
Councillor Alexander (virtual)	Councillor Curran
Councillor Imrie	Councillor McEwan
Councillor McKenzie	Councillor McManus (virtual)
Councillor Milligan	Councillor Pottinger (virtual)
Councillor Russell	Councillor Scott
Councillor Small	Councillor Virgo
Councillor Winchester	

Religious Representatives:

Anne-Theresa Lawrie	
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In attendance:

Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive	Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships	Morag Barrow, Director of Health and Social Care: Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership, Chief Officer to Midlothian Integrated Joint Board
David Gladwin, Chief Financial Officer/ Section 95 Officer	Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place	Duncan Stainbank, Chief Internal Auditor
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer	Peter Arnsdorf, Planning, Sustainable Development and Investment Manager
Nick Clater, Head of Adult Services, Chief Social Worker	Claire Gardiner, Audit Director, Audit Scotland (virtual)
Annette Lang, Group Service Manager (Community Planning Partnership, Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability)	Alan Turpie, Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer
Gordon Pollock, Project Director Zero Waste Edinburgh & Midlothian	Hannah Forbes, Democratic Services Officer
Iina Jaara, Democratic Services Team Leader	Louise Middleton, Democratic Services Officer
Maria Perez, Democratic Services Officer	Nicola Thorburn, Democratic Service Officer

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair, Provost McCall, welcomed everyone to the meeting of Midlothian Council and thanked the children from King's Park Primary School for getting everyone into the Christmas spirit with their singing. The Chair advised that the meeting was open to the public and would be webcast live.

Apologies were received from Councillor Drummond.

The Chair highlighted the hard work of the Roads Team in keeping residents safe during the recent bad weather and thanked them for working day and night to ensure Midlothian roads are cleared and gritted.

The Chair congratulated Loanhead Miners Under 14 Girls' Football Team who recently won the Claire Emslie League, and noted the Team Captain is Savannah Montgomery who is the daughter of a Midlothian Council staff member.

The Chair also commiserated the players of the Dalkeith Thistle Girls' Football Team, who had been unbeaten until they lost to the Dalkeith Miners on penalties.

2. Order of Business

The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer noted that the order of business is as per the agenda apart from a late report and adding its inclusion in the order of business would be at the Chair's discretion. Due to its contents, if accepted, this late report will be added to the private section of the agenda.

The Chair accepted the late report and agreed it would be discussed as item 9.2 on the agenda.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Deputations

None.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
5.1	Minute of Special Council Meeting of 12 November 2024	Executive Director Place
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Minute of the Special Meeting of Midlothian Council held on the 12 November 2024 was submitted for approval.</p> <p>Councillor Parry moved to approve the Minute of the Special Meeting of Midlothian Council of 12 November 2024, seconded by Councillor Virgo.</p>		
Decision		
<p>The Minute of the Special Meeting of Midlothian Council held on 12 November 2024 was approved as the correct record.</p>		
Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
5.2	Minute of Council Meeting of 12 November 2024	Executive Director Place
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Minute of the Meeting of Midlothian Council held on the 12 November 2024 was submitted for approval.</p> <p>Elected Members reported a discrepancy between the record of item 9.1 in the minute and their recollections of the discussion. The Executive Director Place requested that the minute is checked against the recording and amended accordingly. The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer noted that as item 9.1 was a private item, there is not a recording, and this would need to be discussed out of the public meeting. It was agreed this would be discussed during the private session.</p> <p>Elected Members referred to item 8.4 in the minute noting that some parents of P7 pupils from Loretto Primary School had written to Elected Members with concerns about the S1 intake to St David's High School. The parents had received a communication that they reported stated they may not be automatically entitled to a</p>		

place at St. David's High School. Elected Members asked for reassurance that there is no deviation from the current policy and that there will be places for all P7 pupils transitioning into S1 for next year and subsequent years, and that any changes from this policy are approved by Council.

The Chief Executive confirmed there are no changes to the intake policy for the next academic year. It was noted that the issue the Loretto Primary parents reported is unrelated to the paper presented at the November 2024 Council on the proposed admissions review which, when completed, would be brought back to Elected Members for consideration.

The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships stated that placing requests are considered after the legislative deadline of 15 March 2025, and until then it is not possible to give any early indication if a child is likely to be given a place at their chosen school. In the event a school is oversubscribed the admissions policy is applied and parents will be contacted by the Pupil Placement Team at the end of April 2025. The situation of the Loretto Primary School P7 pupils is therefore not a deviation from the current admissions policy and the purpose of the communication sent to parents was to determine how many P7 pupils wish to submit a placing request to St David's High School.

Councillor Parry moved to approve the minutes with the exception of 9.1 which will be discussed in the private session later on the agenda, seconded by Councillor Cassidy.

Decision

The Minute of the Midlothian Council Meeting of 12 November 2024 was approved as the correct record with the exception of 9.1.

Action

Democratic Services

Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
5.3	Minute Volume Index	Executive Director Place
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
The Minute Volume Index was submitted for approval.		
The Minute Volume Index was moved by Councillor Parry and seconded by Councillor Cassidy.		
Decision		
Council approved the Minute Volume Index.		

Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
5.4	Action Log	Executive Director Place
Outline and Summary of Discussion		

The Action Log was submitted for noting.

Elected Members asked for clarification on the response received by Councillor Parry on the matter of the £20million pledge for Mayfield town development. Councillor Parry stated that the response received from the UK Government was shared with Group Leaders and can be included in the minutes for clarity. Councillor Parry's understanding is that this money would not be forthcoming. Councillor Parry agreed to contact the MP for Midlothian again to reiterate the importance of this funding.

Elected Members asked for an update on the learning estate condition surveys. The Executive Director Place stated that the surveys on High School assets is complete and the suitability assessment on Primary Schools will be completed shortly. Once complete the findings will be presented to the Business Transformation Steering Group (BTSG).

Decision

Elected Members noted the Action Log and agreed to close actions marked for closure.

Action

Letter from the UK Government to be added to the minute of February 2025 Council.

6. Questions to the Leader of the Council

None.

7. Motions

Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
7.1	Inclusion of Local Youth and School Parliaments in Council Meetings	Councillor Virgo
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The notice of motion was proposed by Councillor Virgo and seconded by Councillor Scott.</p> <p>Councillor Virgo noted that in the 2022 local government elections turnout for the 18- to 24-year-old demographic was only 30%, and there is a need to improve engagement and participation of young people in local democracy. This motion to involve local Youth and School Parliaments in Council meetings is to build youth engagement with local government and foster links so the views of the whole community are represented.</p> <p>Councillor Scott seconded the motion, noting that by engaging with secondary and primary students, they have been impressed by their insight and thoughtfulness and believe young people have a lot to contribute. This motion also resonates with the</p>		

principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and will give a voice to children and young people in local government decisions.

Decision

Elected Members approved the motion to include Youth and School Parliaments in Council meetings and noted the motion to the Standing Orders Working Group for consideration on next steps.

Item No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
7.2	Requirement for approval and additionality of Planning Obligations associated with increasing major developments	Councillor Smail

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The notice of motion was proposed by Councillor Smail and seconded by Councillor Virgo.

Councillor Smail explained that this motion is related to house building and the very rapid expansion of housing developments in Midlothian Council. Due to this growth, Midlothian Council will be faced with large expenses to build necessary infrastructure, such as schools. While the cost of building schools has almost doubled in the last 5 years, the developer contributions through Section 75 agreements have barely changed. An anomaly has also been reported by some Community Councils which is the developer's practice of intensification, meaning additional properties are built after the planning permission is granted. Intensification has occurred in several developments in Midlothian such as North Middleton and North Mayfield which have substantially increased in size. This is an issue as the Section 75 agreement is set in stone and these additional houses do not bring any contribution despite adding to the need for council services and infrastructure. This motion aims to strengthen processes so Midlothian Council will be in position to monitor the practice of intensification, generate more funding through developer contributions and keep strict control of the house building industry.

Councillor Virgo added that this is a comprehensive motion that aims to bring planning regulations into the 21st century and fit for the pace and scale of growth in Midlothian.

Elected Members noted that Midlothian Council Planning Department keep strict controls of the house building industry and that any additional properties added to a development need to meet the same criteria as the main development, including the developer contributions per the Section 75 agreement. Councillor Smail stated that as part of the motion Council is asked to conduct an audit on the extent of the practice of intensification and consider whether the amount paid in developer contributions needs to be increased as part of a wider planning review.

Councillor Scott proposed an amendment to this motion to consider additional support needs educational provision costs when reviewing developer contributions. This is necessary as given the size of the houses the target demographic are families, and some of these families will have children who have special educational needs.

The motion with the proposed amendment by Councillor Scott was moved by Councillor Smail and seconded by Councillor Virgo.

Decision

Elected Members approved the motion of requirement for approval and additionality of planning obligations associated with increasing major developments with the proposed amendment by Councillor Scott.

Action

To be referred to the Chief Officer Place and Chief Planning Officer to action.

8. Reports

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.1	Midlothian Council 2023/24 Annual Audit Report	Audit Director, Audit Scotland
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Audit Director for Audit Scotland presented the report for noting. Audit Scotland completed an Annual Audit Report on the 2023-2024 accounts, and its conclusions were presented to the Audit Committee in November 2024.</p> <p>The Annual Audit Report provides an unmodified opinion on the Council's annual accounts which means that the statements presented represent a true and fair view of the Council's financial position on 31 March 2024.</p> <p>Exhibit 2 points out seven audit matters for Elected Members' attention. The first three are in relation to condition ratings of Council buildings (received through the post year-end survey) which led to an adjustment of £19 million in the accounts. There were six other adjustments which were minimal and did not affect the General Fund position.</p> <p>Sections 2 to 5 in the report confirm that appropriate and effective arrangements are in place for financial management, governance and performance management. In terms of financial sustainability, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has identified a budget gap of £21 million by 2028/29. The Audit Director stated that Midlothian Council is not underestimating the risk and is taking appropriate action to address sustainability.</p> <p>The Audit Director referred to the Best Value Report. The Workforce Strategy recommendations made in the Best Value Report are in the process of being implemented and there are links to the Transformation Blueprint. The Audit Director</p>		

thanked the Finance Team for their hard work and cooperation during the audit process.

The Chair thanked the Audit Director for the report and opened it up for questions.

Elected Members thanked Audit Scotland, the Chief Financial/Section 95 Officer and the Finance Team for their hard work, as well as the Audit Committee who already reviewed the Annual Audit Report.

Decision

Elected Members noted the recommendations in the report.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.2	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2025/26 to 2028/29	Chief Financial Officer/ Section 95 Officer

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer presented the report for noting.

This report provides key messages and updates following fiscal announcements that will affect the 2025/2026 Council budget and the feedback from the recent public budget consultation.

Sections 3.5 to 3.11 provide commentary on the UK Government budget and its implications for the MTFs. The main implications are £1.3 billion increased funding for Scotland through the Barnett formula in the current financial year and a further £1.9 billion in the financial year 2025/2026, increases to the employers' National Insurance contribution and reduced minimum threshold which will cost almost £5 million to the Council pay bill as well as the continuation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for another year of which has been confirmed as £1.17 million.

Sections 3.12 to 3.22 in the report discuss the 2025/2026 Scottish Government budget. This contains additional spends which are non-ring fenced or directed for councils of approximately £289 million revenue and £48 million capital. For 2025/2026 there is no Scottish Government prescribed Council Tax cap or freeze. The draft local government finance settlement was published last week, and while it is too early to provide detailed analysis on these events' consequences for the Council budget, there is an increase in overall funding. There is also an improvement in Midlothian's share of national funding pots, particularly those based on population and school age pupil numbers. There is also an improvement in the floor position for Midlothian.

The increased funding will have a positive impact on the projected budget gap, based on the flat cash settlement, but it is too early to quantify this figure. There are other pressures to consider like Adult Health and Social Care spending and the increased National Insurance employer contributions. Additional consequential are expected to flow to Scotland but the Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 officer warned

of the risk of this funding falling considerably short of the additional costs that are mentioned in the report.

Work continues on the 2025/2026 Council base budget which is due to be presented to the Business Steering Transformation Group on 14 January 2025 with final saving options. A balanced budget will be presented to Council in February 2025.

Section 4 and appendixes B and C give information on the budget consultation responses.

The Chair thanked the Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer for the report and opened it for questions.

Elected Members noted that the consultation responses are very helpful for understanding residents' priorities and thanked all Council staff who were involved in the budget consultation.

Elected Members noted that there will be clearer indication in January 2025 about the final amount of the cash flat settlement. Another matter in which further clarity is needed is the National Insurance employer contributions. Councillor Parry advised that a letter has been sent to the Treasury on the matter, but a response has not yet been received. Councillor Parry will also meet with the MP for Midlothian to make similar representations and follow up on the letter sent to the Treasury. Elected Members welcomed the recent announcements from the UK and Scottish budgets, as it will result in a less challenging position for Midlothian Council.

Elected Members also pointed out that small business and retailers will also be affected by the decision to raise National Insurance contributions.

Elected Members referred to the budget consultation responses and noted that many respondents are asking for clearer information on Council finances, expressing their hopes that the consultation may be the starting point to greater engagement with residents.

Decision

Council noted the recommendations set in the report.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.3	Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report 2024/2025	Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
The Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer presented the report for noting.		
The report informs Elected Members of treasury management activity undertaken during the first half of 2024/2025 and the forecast activity for the second half of 2024/2025 in accordance with the Treasury Management and Annual Investment		

Strategy. Elected Members are invited to comment on this report which was also presented to Audit Committee.

Section 3 of the report provides background information.

Section 4 provides a summary of the economic environment of the first half of this financial year.

Section 5 describes the main areas of treasury activity focused on a continuation of the existing deposit strategy to balance cash and reserves with some internal borrowing.

The underborrowed position increased slightly during the first half of the current financial year, and whilst continuing to plan for the longer term in line with market expectations, Council continued to take advantage of low interest rates and react quickly to favourable market conditions. The profile of funds and deposits on Table 2, page 90 of the agenda, shows little overall change during 2024/2025 other than replacing matured deposits with new ones at a similar interest rate.

Section 6.1 provides an update on economic conditions post-UK budget showing an increase in inflationary pressures and section 6.2 shows expected treasury activity for the second half of the financial year 2024/2025. Through effective treasury decisions the Council avoided the need to borrow during the period of high interest rates. The Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer stressed the need to not overly rely on internal borrowing and added that the Finance Team will continue to explore favourable borrowing opportunities.

Section 7 updates prudential indicators based on activity during the current financial year. A revised list of indicators will be presented to Council in February 2025.

Section 8 shows Midlothian's average fund rate compared to other Local Authorities. Data on other Local Authorities illustrates the financial benefits of the current treasury management strategy for Midlothian Council. Moving closer to the Scottish average would have resulted in additional annual loan charges.

The Chair thanked the Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer for the report and opened it up for questioning.

Elected Members noted that the current revised estimate of borrowings is above the authorised limit, and the report warns that Council may need to make a decision regarding increasing their borrowing limit. Elected Members asked about the magnitude of this increase and what consequences it may have. The Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 officer stated the current borrowing limits were approved by Council in February 2024 and restricted the Chief Financial Officer/Section 95 Officer's ability to borrow, but that the amount of future borrowing will depend on the results of the Capital Plan Prioritisation, as there are significant pressures exerted by the growing population of Midlothian and these may need to be met by borrowing.

Decision

Council noted the recommendations set in the report.

Provost McCall left the meeting at 12.02

Deputy Provost Bowen chaired the meeting from 12:03 pm.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.4	Community Learning and Development Partnership Plan 2024 to 2027	Education Chief Operating Officer
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Group Service Manager (Community Planning Partnership, Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability) presented the report for decision.</p> <p>The report presents the new Community Learning and Development Partnership (CLDP) Plan for the period 2024 to 2027. Elected Members are asked to note the statutory duties of the Education Authority for planning and reporting, approve the progress report for 2021/2024 and the plan for Midlothian for 2024/2027.</p> <p>The CLDP Plan in Midlothian includes youth work, adult learning and community development and employability, delivered by Midlothian Council's Community and Lifelong Learning Team as well as Third Sector partners. The CLDP Plan looks at successes and achievements of the past three years, including a very successful inspection and looks at ambitions for future years. This was due to be published in July 2024 but there was a delay due to the publication of the National Community Learning and Partnership review in July 2024. The findings of that this review have been included in the report.</p> <p>The CLDP Plan includes a one-page summary on what the service focuses on and the positive impact this work has on Midlothian residents. The report was approved by the Community Planning and Partnership Board last week and is now presented for Elected Members' approval.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Group Service Manager (Community Planning Partnership, Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability) for the report and opened it up for questioning.</p> <p>Elected Members noted the underrated role of community learning services in improving residents' wellbeing, especially those struggling with the cost –of living crisis. Elected Members thanked all those involved in the service for their hard work and praised them for meeting targets in increasingly difficult conditions and having ambitious yet realistic goals.</p> <p>Elected Members stated that youth work is crucial to ensure that local youths engaging in antisocial behaviour can see the error of their ways. It was suggested</p>		

that considering the recent incidents in the Dalkeith Ward the CLDP should reach out to these youngsters.

The CLDP Plan 2024 to 2027 was moved by Councillor Parry and seconded by Councillor Scott subject to Councillor Russell's comments.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.5	Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scottish Borders MAPPA Annual Report for 2023/2024	Head of Adult Services and Chief Social Work Officer

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Head of Adult Services and Chief Social Work Officer presented the report for noting.

The report advises of the activities undertaken by agencies across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scottish Borders who work in partnership as part of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and provides statistical information on activity. MAPPA is a statutory framework through which the Responsible Authorities discharge their responsibilities to protect the public and avoid the risk of serious harm.

There are 3 categories of individuals subject to management under MAPPA. There are registered sex offenders, patients subject to special restrictions under the mental health legislation, and those who are at risk of serious harm. The majority of individuals subject to management under MAPPA belong to the registered sex offender category.

There are three levels of management under MAPPA. The 2023-2024 report has a foreword by the previous Head of Children's Services and Chief Social Work Officer which points out that only a small number of individuals are managed under MAPPA in Midlothian.

The Head of Adult Services and Chief Social Work Officer noted that there has been a slight increase in numbers from the previous year and that the 5-year average of individuals managed under MAPPA is 864. There are three levels within the framework, and the majority of individuals are managed at level 1, which is the lowest and managed by police solely. Level 2 cases have Criminal Justice Social Work involvement. There are no level 3 cases this year in Midlothian, which is consistent with previous years.

The Head of Adult Services and Chief Social Work Officer thanked the Criminal Justice Social Work Team at Number 11 and noted a typing error on page 159 of the report, where the report refers to Cabinet when it should read Council instead.

Elected Members acknowledged the joint work of Social Work with other partners to manage the individuals subject to MAPPA and protect residents from potential

predators. Elected Members added that the Police hold the work delivered by the partnership in high regard and noted that work is often under the radar and only becomes known to residents in the rare occasions when incidents happen.

Decision

Council noted the recommendations set in the report.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.6	Review of Scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024	Chief Executive

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Executive presented the report for decision, requesting that the Council agree to a new Scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places, which takes into consideration the representations received.

The recommendation was that Council:

- (a) Adopt the Proposed Scheme of Polling Districts and Places as outlined in the Annex to Appendix B;
- (b) Agree to carry out the statutory procedures, in liaison with the Electoral Registration Officer, to publish the revised Scheme of Polling Arrangements to take effect from December 2024; and
- (c) Remit to the Chief Executive to continue to liaise with representatives of recognised Political Parties for any necessary further Scheme revisions.

Elected Members raised concerns regarding the accessibility of the Ward 1 Penicuik Centre, as all the voting stations are on the first floor. While there is a lift in operation, it is unclear if this would be sufficient if there was a high volume of people present on polling days, as this location has five polling stations. Elected Members asked if it would be possible to look at alternative venues in Penicuik.

The Chief Executive confirmed that it is a legal requirement that the venues chosen as polling stations meet the accessibility needs of everyone and that those that arrive to vote can do so. Elected Members highlighted the use of Newbattle Community Campus, noted the volume of postal voters in that area and asked if any other locations had been considered given that Newbattle Community Campus is at one end of the town. The Chief Executive confirmed that other venues were considered however those were schools that would need to close on polling days.

The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer advised Council that this report has to be approved by end of January 2025 and asked if they were comfortable approving the report as it stands, but on the basis that the Chief Executive would revisit the use of the Penicuik Centre. Elected Members agreed as the only concern was around the disability access. The Chief Executive assured Elected Members that the use of the Penicuik Centre, in terms of there being sufficient disability access, would be revisited.

The report was moved by Councillor Parry and seconded by Councillor Cassidy.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Action

Revisit the use of the Penicuik Centre as a Polling Station and ensure there is sufficient disability access.

Provost McCall rejoined the meeting at 12:21pm and resumed the role of Chair.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.7	Annual Procurement Report 2023/24	Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer presented the Annual Procurement Report on regulated procurements during 2023/2024 for noting and highlighted an error on page 223 of the report. The estimated value of the Penicuik High School refurbishment and extension should show as £44 million and not £89 million.</p> <p>The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer recommended Council note the report prior to it being published on Midlothian Council's website.</p> <p>Elected Members requested that key performance indicators for Midlothian Council's suppliers be added. The Legal and Governance Manager/Monitoring Officer advised that this can be included in next year's report.</p>		
Decision		
Council noted the recommendation as stated in the report, with the error fixed as above		

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.8	Appointments of Members in Accordance with the Scheme of Administration - Newbyres Community Trust	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
<p>Councillor Scott recused themselves from the discussion and left the Chamber at 12:22pm.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the report for decision. In accordance with Standing Order 14, which requires the Council to consider the appointments of representatives to Joint Committees, Outside Bodies and other partnership working where there is a vacancy, Council is invited to consider the</p>		

appointment of an Elected Member to the Newbyres Community Trust, following the resignation of Councillor Ellen Scott.

Councillor Parry nominated Councillor Bowen, and Councillor Cassidy seconded the nomination.

Councillor Scott returned to the meeting at 12:24pm.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations. Councillor Bowen will replace Councillor Scott as the Council's representative on the Newbyres Community Trust.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.9	Twinning Midlothian	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the report for decision, providing Council with information on the value of Twinning, and requested Elected Member nominations to represent the Council on the Penicuik and Dalkeith Twinning Associations, as well as instructing the Executive Director Place to progress options for further Twinning of Midlothian's towns.

Councillor Parry nominated Councillor McCall to join the Penicuik Twinning Association, and Councillor Russell to join the Dalkeith Twinning Association. Both nominations were seconded by Councillor Curran. The Twinning Associations will now decide if they wish to accept these nominations.

Elected Members requested that the Midlothian Council website includes a dedicated page which lets communities know what Twinning activities are taking place, so everyone has a chance to participate. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions agreed that this could be arranged.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Action

Elected Members requested that the Midlothian Council website includes a dedicated page which lets communities know what Twinning activities are taking place, so everyone has a chance to participate. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions agreed that this could be arranged.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.10	Workforce Strategy 2024-2034	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the report detailing the Council's revised Workforce Strategy 2024-2034 for decision.

The report sets out the ten-year strategy and associated action plan, which Council is requested to approve and adopt as its strategic framework for workforce planning.

Council is requested to note the work undertaken to develop the revised Workforce Strategy 2024-2034, which is still ongoing to design the final version. Council is requested to note that some of the activities contained within the action plan will require additional one-off financial support to deliver. Business cases or proposals will be presented to the BTSG when ready for consideration.

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions thanked those that had contributed to the development of the strategies, including the staff that participated in the survey, the Trade Unions and the interviewees.

Elected Members thanked the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions and Councillor Virgo, as the Elected Member Sponsor for this initiative, for the report.

Elected Members added that the organisation's workforce is the lifeblood of the Council and that the Council's service teams are first class.

Councillor Virgo, Elected Member Sponsor, added that the success of any organisation hinges on its workforce and their ability to anticipate and adapt to future workforce needs.

The report was moved by Councillor Parry and seconded by Councillor Virgo.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.11	Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 – Delivery Programme	Chief Officer Place

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Place presented the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP) - Delivery Programme report for decision. The draft Delivery Programme was initially reported to the Planning Committee at its meeting of 29 October 2024 and has been amended in response to Elected Members comments.

Council is recommended to approve the draft Delivery Programme for the MLDP 2017 for public consultation, instruct the Planning Service to instigate a public consultation for a minimum six-week period, and note the outcome of the public consultation. The final version of the Delivery Programme will be reported back to Council for approval in early 2025, ahead of 31 March 2025 Scottish Government deadline for submission.

The report was moved by Councillor Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Imrie.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.12	Midlothian On the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034	Chief Officer Place

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Place presented the report, including details of additional funding that had been secured and highlighted the key points within the 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034' for consideration and approval.

It is recommended that Council:

- a. Approves 'Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034'.
- b. Notes and welcomes the responses to the 12-week public and stakeholder consultation on the final draft of 'Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034'.
- c. Agrees to seek funding to deliver safer walking, wheeling and cycling active travel infrastructure, route improvements and behaviour change programmes, as set out in the Active Travel Strategy Route Action Plan and 10-year Project Pipeline.
- d. Agrees to accept future reports on progress relating to the aims and objectives of the Active Travel Strategy and the delivery of active travel and sustainable transport projects and activities.
- e. Notes progress to date in 24/25 towards the securing of active travel funding, infrastructure delivery, delivery of behaviour change activities, development of proposals for 25/26, and other active travel promotional work.

Elected Members thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and for the work done to secure the additional funding, adding that this is a great result for Midlothian, and this will potentially also bring greater connectivity with areas outside Midlothian. Elected Members noted that focusing on active travel is a great way forward for the planet's health and all our health needs and that Midlothian Council is taking steps to make active travel as accessible as possible for everyone.

Elected Members made observations on the low response rate to the public consultation, and whether there is clarity on what the people of Midlothian want. The Chief Officer Place acknowledged the point and reassured Elected Members that the consultations ran for 12 weeks and was heavily advertised, both on social media

platforms and in hard copy format in libraries in a bid to reach all demographics. The Chief Officer Place added that those people that have come forward have been very supportive.

Elected Members queried if there were different funding sources for different areas and whether the plan follows the funding, or vice versa. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that plans are set by specific criteria, and the plans will follow the funding. However, there are still ideas on where Midlothian Council wants to be in terms of planning and the service provision.

Elected Members queried footways funding and how can they be ensured that footways are of a minimum standard. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that any footways need to be of an adoptable standard before Midlothian Council will take ownership for maintenance and quality for active travel.

The report was moved by Councillor Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Alexander.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.13	Animal Boarding Establishment Licence Conditions	Chief Officer Place

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Place presented the report for decision, informing Council of proposed conditions for animal boarding establishment licences (kennels and catteries) and sought Council's approval for implementation.

Elected Members welcomed this report which will help address concerns and provide reassurance within the community regarding how licence conditions are managed and demonstrates that Midlothian Council are actively working with these establishments.

Elected Members queried whether this report included the licensing of commercial dog walkers. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that this was specifically for boarding establishments, such as kennels and catteries, where there is an increased risk to employees due the increase in different breeds becoming more prominent in the community. Commercial dog walkers are covered under a separate system for animal welfare. Elected Members requested that a review is conducted on commercial dog walkers, including a review of any existing policy, and a paper brought back to Council in 2025.

The report was moved by Councillor McKenzie and seconded by Councillor Virgo.

Councillor McManus left the meeting at 12:55pm.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Action

Elected Members requested that a review is conducted on commercial dog walkers, including a review of any existing policy, and a paper brought back to Council in 2025.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.14	Motorhome Overnight Parking	Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships presented the report for decision and sought approval to establish single overnight motorhome parking at identified sites across Midlothian.

Council is recommended to approve a pilot project to establish overnight motorhome parking at identified sites across Midlothian, delegate authority to the Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships to set overnight parking charges for motorhomes based on availability of facilities and benchmarking and agree that a report is brought back to Council on the outcome of the pilot for its consideration.

Elected Members welcomed the report and noted that this is a great attraction for visitors and will generate income while facilitating land that is currently unused.

Elected Members queried how many parks Midlothian Council aimed to have and whether they would be staffed overnight. The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships advised that the number of sites will depend on what other areas in Midlothian are appropriate, and this will be explored after the pilot at Vogrie Country Park has taken place. The team have been working alongside those responsible for the Midlothian Council Parking Strategy and questions for feedback and consultation have been shared for consideration. Staffing of the sites overnight is not the norm for other areas of the UK, and there are different ways to manage this such as barriers that lift and car licence plate booking systems. Therefore, it is not anticipated that these would be staffed overnight.

The report was moved by Councillor Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Virgo.

Decision

Council approved the report and its recommendations.

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.15	Capital Plan Prioritisation - Progress Report	Executive Director Place

Outline and Summary of Discussion

The Executive Director Place presented the report for information. The report details the progress to date in reducing the Capital Plan and the requirement for delivery of the remaining workstream areas to complete the exercise. The rationale for this is to ensure that an effective strategy is in place, is achievable and affordable.

The Capital Plan Prioritisation is being carried out to agree an appropriate and required level of borrowing in the context of a financially sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and while this is an ongoing piece of work, a significant element of this has been progressed as referenced in the paper.

Council is recommended to;

- a) note the actions to date to reprofile the available resources on our Capital Plan priorities
- b) note that further consideration needs to be given to further reducing the size of the existing General Services Capital Plan (GSCP) in the context of a balanced MTFS
- c) note a revised plan of recommended project changes towards an affordable GSCP is scheduled with a timescale for the Council Meeting on 25 February 2025.

Elected Members thanked the Executive Director Place and expressed support for the report. They requested assurance from the Executive Director Place that the full Capital Plan would be shared by the February 2025 Council meeting. The Executive Director Place advised the Capital Plan is expected to be brought to February Council. Elected Members asked that they are given sight of the Capital Plan before the February Council papers are due, possibly in the form of a briefing. The Executive Director Place advised that they are happy to accommodate this.

Elected Members asked if the Capital Plan for February Council will include final proposals and plans for Destination Hillend. The Executive Director Place advised that the plan is unlikely to include final figures as the work on the next phase of Destination Hillend will not begin until after the holiday period, and they are cautious about giving a firm timeline at this point.

The Chair noted that this report is for noting only and advised that Council would be moving to discuss private items.

Decision

Council noted the recommendations outlined in the report.

Action

Executive Director Place to arrange a briefing on the Capital Plan for Elected Members, prior to the report being published to Council.

The public part of the meeting ended at 13:42.

9. Private

Exclusion of Members of the Public

In view of the nature of the business to be transacted, the Committee agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the undernoted item, as contained in the Addendum hereto, as there might be

disclosed exempt information as defined in paragraphs 6,8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:-