

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 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 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 of 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

Key achievements Q1 24/25

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 the changing climate. A new Climate Change officer was appointed this quarter. Plans are in place to review and refresh our Climate Change Strategy during 24/25 and associated action plan which incorporates a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint.



Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge to increase education and awareness of climate change and suggest adaptations. A total of 126 businesses have now committed to the Pledge with 21 of those signing up during quarter 1. 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. Planning is taking place to hold an 'in-person' Green Pledger event for Climate Week in September 2024 which will provide collaboration, shared learning and an opportunity for our Pledgers to highlight the steps they have taken to progress on their net zero journeys.

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.

Last year work progressed at pace to complete the LHEES methodology stages 1-4. This quarter, Council approved the LHEES Strategy and delivery plan. Overall, Midlothian Council's LHEES sets out a strategy to provide low carbon heat that is affordable to as many households and buildings as possible. Driving low cost, low carbon heat over expensive and challenging fabric retrofit approach will enhance the likelihood of achieving our net zero targets, whilst abiding by our six LHEES outcomes:

1. For Midlothian's communities and property decision makers to be engaged and empowered to deliver Net Zero heating targets, including making homeowners and tenants aware of funding and support available to them.
2. Working with Midlothian Energy Limited to find low/zero carbon heat solutions to meet the Council's climate change targets.
3. Work to alleviate fuel poverty by bringing forward solutions that move people out of fuel poverty or prevent them falling further into fuel poverty.
4. Make Midlothian's homes and buildings as energy efficient as possible using a fabric first approach.
5. Ensure that Midlothian Council will have an awareness of investment and grant funding opportunities and seek to secure these opportunities to deliver heat decarbonisation projects.
6. Work to whenever possible to create and keep jobs and revenue from heat decarbonisation projects within the Midlothian economy.

Following publication of the final LHEES strategy and delivery plan, an engagement campaign will take place over the next quarter.

Road Services

This quarter, under the combined Capital Works Programme and Residential Streets Programme, a total of 3.535km of carriageway and 0.05km of footway was resurfaced. Representing 0.51% and 0.01% of the carriageway and footway network respectively. Carriageway resurfacing is on target for the quarter. Although footway surfacing is behind target, it is expected to progress from July onwards bringing this back on target by quarter 2.



851.5 tonnes of material was used in quarter 1 to fill potholes. 226.46 tonnes of material was used for temporary repairs and 625.04 tonnes for pothole pro permanent patching. This is an increase of 104% compared to this period last year where 417.16 tonnes were used. The Pothole Pro project equated to 5,056m² of permanent patching, repairing 960 potholes this quarter.

As part of the street lighting capital programme a target of 500 new lighting column replacements are planned for this year. No lighting columns were replaced during quarter 1 because the programme will commence at the end of quarter 2 and the annual target is expected to be made by the end of the year. In addition, a further 472 street light replacements are programmed for this year which include LED upgrades.

This quarter 24 new variable speed message signs and 19 'school zone' signs were installed utilizing Transport Scotland funds. CCTV contracts were awarded this quarter for upgrades at Shawfair park and ride.

Waste and Recycling

As part of a wider Neighbourhood Services review, a new management structure for the Recycling Team was implemented in quarter 1. This has resulted in streamlined management of the service which has already seen an increase in productivity and time management of front line teams.

The implementation of an excellence model has seen the creation of an improvement plan which will see the development of new systems and procedures in all aspects of the service. For example, the way the service engages with residents in relation to enquiries has improved significantly since the start of Q1, resulting in a responsive and timely service to residents who contact the service.

Work has continued this quarter to introduce a digital asset management and operational deployment system for the waste collection service. This will be a huge step forward and will see an improved service to the residents of Midlothian. The system will include smart routing of the collection rounds as well as providing crews and customers with real time service updates about collections.

The service culture review has seen over 80 staff sign a voluntary pledge to improve working conditions for all members of the team by improving the culture of the management team and front line staff. The HEART pledge sets out a number of key principles which staff have voluntarily agreed to adhere to.

In quarter 1, the plans to expand food waste collection service were reviewed and amended ahead of roll out to customers in quarter 2. This included a review of the current collection rounds and consultation with front line staff and trade unions. The expansion of the food waste collection service is the latest phase of the plan to transform the waste collection service as part of the move to implement twin stream recycling in 2025.



Neighbourhood Environment Team

In quarter 1, the Greenspace service launched the new Neighbourhood Environment Team as part of the wider review of the Recycling and Greenspace Service. The new team combines elements of the former street cleaning service with specialist elements of the greenspace team to create a new service that aims to improve the quality of the local environment for our residents. As part of the Greenspace service, the Neighbourhood Environment Team will carry out the following works in our local communities;

- Ensuring our streets remain clear of litter
- Cleaning our bus stops so that they provide safe, clean shelter for residents
- Emptying street litter bins
- Spraying and removing weeds from footpaths and roads
- Mechanical sweeping of roads and pavements
- Ensuring pathways are clear of overhanging trees and shrubs
- Keeping Midlothian clear of fly tipping
- Edging back grass verges to reclaim overgrown footpaths
- Power washing of high streets and public areas

Nature restoration fund

The Council has been provided with a further £100k of funding from the Scottish Government as part of the Nature Restoration Fund. The Greenspace team is now in the process of creating plans to further enhance the work carried out in 2023 to plant one million bulbs at key sites across Midlothian. The projects will be delivered in quarter 4 and will focus on creating new habits and enhancing existing natural areas in our parks and open spaces. Further updates will be provided once the plans have been developed.

Play area improvements

The team are continuing to deliver the play area improvements programme funded by the Scottish Government grant, with further projects planned for 2024 in play areas across Midlothian. Further updates will be provided as projects are developed throughout the year. 8 improvements across our play areas, parks and green spaces were completed this quarter including the installation of a new Pétanque court.

Village improvements

In quarter 1 the Greenspace Team have been developing plans to carry out clean up works in village areas to build on the success of the work carried out last year which saw improvements to 16 areas including; Pathhead, Leadburn, Fala, Howgate, Lasswade, Ford, Edgehead, Auchendinny, Newton village and Silverburn to date with works planned for Cousland, Carrington, Millerhill, Temple, Whitehill and Middleton. The works will commence in quarter 3.

Working with the community

The Greenspace Team have continued to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian. The work we carry out jointly has a huge impact on the quality of the local environment and we are determined to strengthen these partnerships over the rest of 2024. Our volunteer groups provide added value to the work that we do with litter picking, gardening and fund raising to brighten our local areas. This quarter, 1,890 volunteer hours (300 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers continue to remain high.

Galas and Events

The Greenspace team have supported the summer events programme and Galas across Midlothian this quarter. The events have been a huge success and the team have received positive feedback from those attending the events as well as the organisers.





Greenspace service

Quarter 1 has seen the creation of the new Greenspace service which incorporates the Neighbourhood Environment Team as well as the former Land and Countryside Team. The service has a new management team who are in the process of reviewing all systems, procedures and ways of working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

The grounds maintenance team, Rangers, Cemetery team, play area staff and arborists are all being reviewed to strengthen these teams and to improve service delivery to ensure we provide the best quality parks, open spaces and cemeteries for our residents.

Protective Services

Our Business Regulations Food and Safety team continue to prioritise proactive interventions at food businesses registered with Midlothian Council with the highest risk for food safety and standards. These include retailers and caterers with significant or sustained non-compliances in food law. During Q1, 33% of our planned priority inspections were completed. In addition, the team completed 4 Official Control Verification interventions at approved establishments that supply products of animal origin.

Evidence of an extensive ongoing rat infestation throughout a Midlothian food business resulted in closure of the business for 10 days to protect public health due to imminent risk. A Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice was served on the Food Business Operator at the time of the visit and a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order was subsequently granted by the Sheriff Court, ratifying the actions of the officers. Interventions by the authorised officers saw the conditions of the food business significantly improve allowing the business to reopen. However, a further routine inspection 3 weeks later found the conditions had once again deteriorated and evidence of rat activity within the premises led to a Remedial Action Notice being served by officers, closing the business for a further 2 weeks to make the required improvements. Due to the nature of the offences found by officers a report is being prepared to be sent to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

This quarter, all three Midlothian based residential caravan sites requiring license renewal were issued with their 5 year license.

East Region Health Protection Team (HPT) have notified the team of 24 confirmed cases of infection disease within Midlothian over the past 3 months. This is a significant increase in cases with an average of 22 cases notified within a year. Investigations conducted by officers have led to 2 Exclusion Orders and 2 Restriction Orders issued by HPT to prevent spread of the infectious agents. Public Health Scotland have issued alerts to all Local Authorities to raise awareness of the increased incidents of Cryptosporidium, linked to animal contact events and non-O157 E. coli linked to a UK outbreak.

Our Trading Standards team received 46 consumer complaints this quarter, a decrease from 58 during the same period last year and 72 in Q1 of 22/23. All consumer complaints were responded to within 5 working days and 88% completed within 14 days. Completion is not fully within service control and is dependent on traders and complainants responding to investigations. This quarter at least £21,470 has been returned to Midlothian consumers following Trading Standards involvement.



Trading Standards prosecution cases continue this quarter with one report submitted to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994, Tobacco & Related Products Regulations 2016 and Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015. The Midlothian resident was found to be possession of 8,400 counterfeit cigarettes and 17 counterfeit tobacco pouches by Police Scotland. This information was provided to Trading Standards who prepared and submitted the case earlier this quarter and has already been subject of a pleading diet. Two other reports submitted earlier this year, one relating to 933 oversized vapes and the other for landscaping work charged for but not carried out were subject to pleading diets at Edinburgh Sheriff Court in June and further pleading diets in July with a trial date in December.

29 Trading Standards primary inspections took place this quarter of a targeted 145 for the year, although off target, most inspections take place over quarters 3 and 4 so our overall annual target is expected to be met. Due to extensive inspections to farms and small holdings over the last year, only 8 small holdings/farms are required for inspection this year.

This quarter 38 intelligence logs were recorded on IDB, the national Trading Standards Intelligence database (IDB) by our Trading Standards team. In comparison to other Scottish Councils, Midlothian sit in the top quartile for logs created. As part of Operation CeCe Scotland, a joint initiative between Scottish trading standards and HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) to tackle the illegal tobacco trade at retail level, 14 packs of counterfeit cigarettes were found in a shop by Trading Standards using detector dog services funded through the Society of Chief Officers Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS).

This quarter our Public Health Environmental Protection team contributed to a focus group with the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission, contributing experience and suggestions to shape the implementation of forthcoming animal licensing legislation.

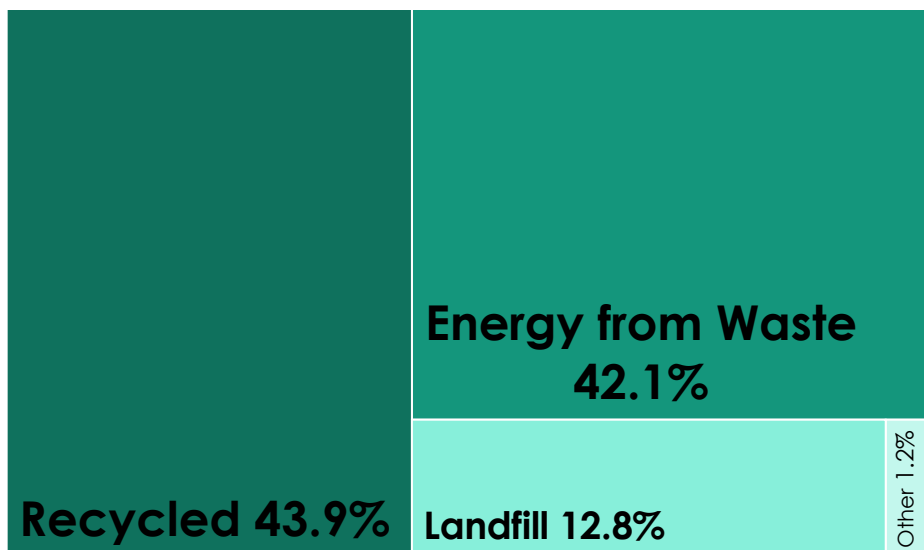
The team successfully applied and have been awarded college fee funding from Skills Development Scotland for a Regulatory Services Apprentice. The team are progressing with development of the role and hope to move forward with a candidate in quarter 2. Midlothian Council will be part of this new pilot apprenticeship scheme aimed at partially addressing the national shortage of Environmental Health Officers by providing a new route into the field. In addition, interviews for a post recently redesigned to create the role of Technical Enforcement Officer took place this quarter and a preferred candidate has been offered the position.

The team received 360 public health service requests this quarter from Midlothian residents and businesses, a slight increase from 345 compared to the same period last year. A further 116 service requests were received from internal sources, an increase of 61 from the same period last year.

66 abandoned vehicle reports were responded to this quarter, of which 18 notices were served and 4 vehicles removed for destruction. Officers are proactive in contacting owners early in the process prior to having to go to formal notice by affixing 'awareness' notices at their first visit, encouraging the owners to contact us. This allows the owner to informally deal with the issue before moving to formal notice.

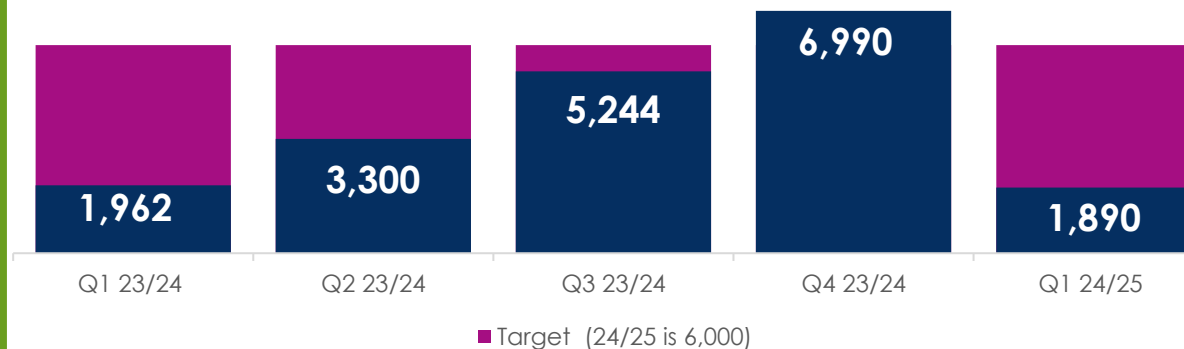
Neighbourhood Services – performance

% OF ALL DISPOSED WASTE*



*data shows figures for Q4 23/24. Q1 24/25 not available until Q2.

Number of vounteer hours in countryside sites (cumulative)



8 park and greenspace improvements/new facilities complete this quarter out of 50 planned

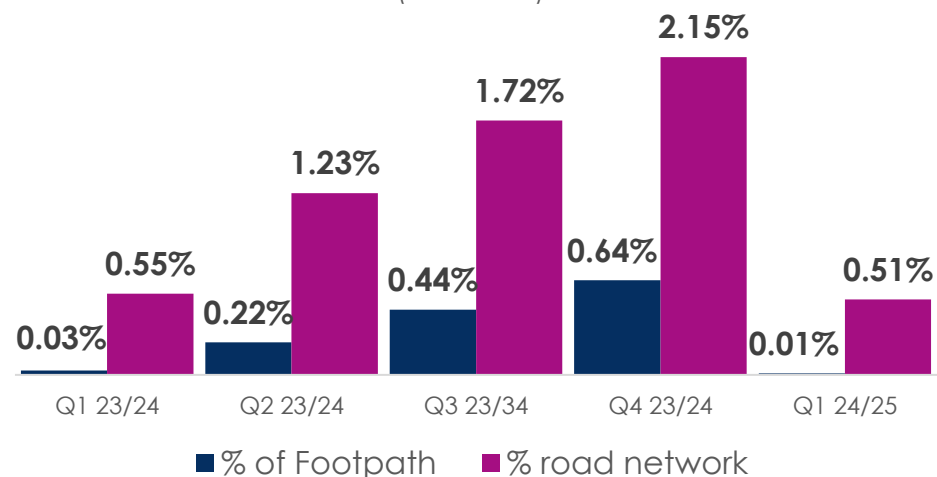
851.5 tonnes of material used to fill temporary and permanent potholes this quarter.

5,056 m² of permanent patching achieved this quarter.

960 potholes were permanently repaired this quarter.

186 tonnes of carbon emissions saved from street lighting this quarter.

% of Roads and footpath resurfaced (cumulative)



Protective Services – performance

Food Standards

92% of food related service requests from mid residents and Businesses responded to with target of 10 working days.

33% of Priority 1 and 2 premises receiving completed food law intervention in line with the service plan.

59 food law service requests received this quarter

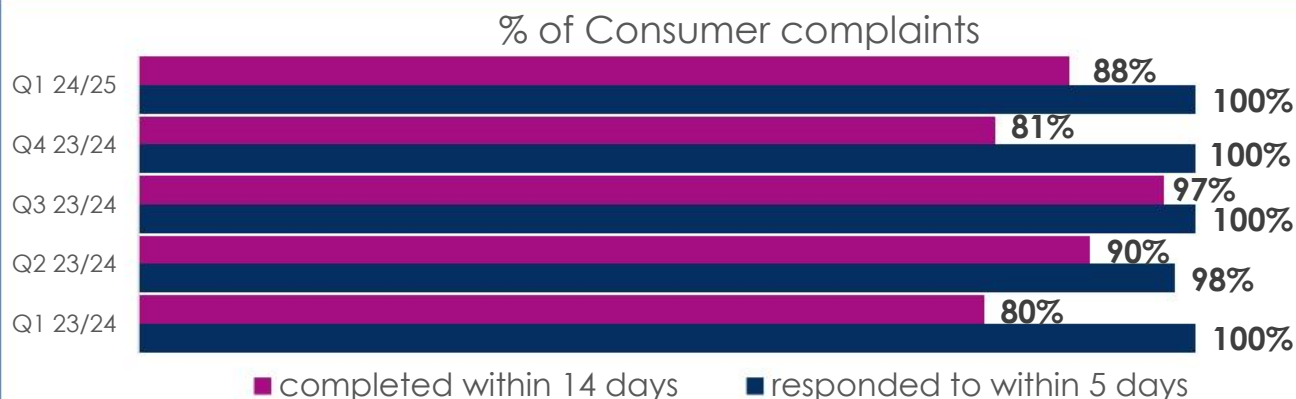
Public Health

360 Public Health service requests received from residents and businesses this quarter.

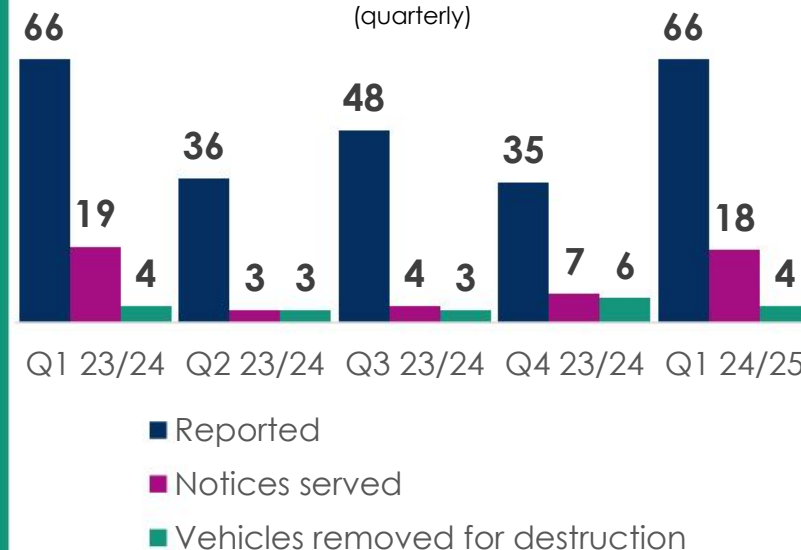
96% of public health complaints receiving first response within timescale this quarter.

Trading Standards

46 consumer complaints received this quarter (decrease from 58 in Q1 23/24)



Number of abandoned vehicles (quarterly)



180 liquor licence applications received in Q1 with **99%** determined

102 Civic Government license applications received with 95% determined

Housing

Key achievements Q1 24/25



Meeting housing need

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 to 2028/29 was submitted to the Scottish Government during 23/24. The SHIP identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5 year period. The delivery of more affordable housing remains a high priority for Midlothian, as reflected by our ongoing and ambitious housing development programme.

This quarter we have received the completed handover for 96 new build homes in Conifer Road, Mayfield, St Cuthberts in Bonnyrigg High Street and Buccleuch Wynd.

There were 6,260 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this quarter, a 33% increase compared to the same period last year. 122

lets were made this quarter, 3 houses were let through our Housing first model. 31 lets were made to new build and open market purchases.

Re-let times to permanent accommodation properties this quarter has averaged at 23 days to re-let which is lower than this period last year at 27 days and continues on a downward trend from 45 days in 22/23.

Changes to our Housing allocation policy were approved by Council on the 26th of March 2024 following a consultation process with tenants and stakeholders earlier this year. The policy aims to prioritise applicants needs and to let the available vacant properties to those in the greatest need in accordance with current guidance and legislation. This quarter the team completed all associated delivery plans. The policy is now available on our website and further communications to all applicants will take place during quarter 2 outlining future plans and changes. In addition, Council also approved the adoption of our Mixed Tenure Strategy. With rising numbers of housing applications for social housing, the strategy will support the active promotion of a range of mixed tenures in meeting the needs of affordable housing.

After collaboration with residents and tenants we have reviewed our Tenancy Participation Strategy. The new Tenancy Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-27 is now published on our website and sets our commitments in making sure there are opportunities for all tenants and service users to participate in the design and delivery of our Housing Services.

This quarter our Annual Return on Charter was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The results of which were positive in general and specifically in relation to the time people spend in temporary accommodation and the elimination of our use of bed and breakfast type accommodation.

Homelessness



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. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. The [Homeless Persons \(Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities\) \(Scotland\) Order 2022](#) gives people in housing crisis the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need and aims to help them integrate more fully into the local community and to reduce repeat homelessness. The removal of the necessity to have a local connection to an area under this legislation has seen a shift in persons now presenting to Midlothian and as result the total number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter was 396, an increase of 27.7% compared to the same period last year.

Strengthening our support services, this quarter we have commissioned WithYOU (soon to be rebranded as Care Support Scotland from 1st August 2024) to manage our Supported Accommodation Service, Tenancy Support Service and Housing First. WithYOU cover a range of support services and work with people experiencing different levels of vulnerability, including those with lifelong support needs to people experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing transition plan we see households moving through the homeless system more quickly. Officers take a proactive approach when allocating properties to place

applicants in area of choice where possible, increasing the chances to accept the property being flipped to permanency and allows for a more sustainable community.

The length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing outcome was 51 weeks, showing a continued downward trend from 106 weeks at quarter 1 of 22/23 and 58 weeks for the same period last year. Although figures for the length of time homeless applicants spent in temporary accommodation is currently not available (as part of our Scottish Government homeless report) data from Q3 23/24 shows that an average of 39.5 weeks was spent in temporary accommodation compared to an average of 89 weeks over the same period in 22/23. It is expected that figures will continue to remain within our 60 week target.

The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was 38 this quarter, reducing the need for multiple moves before being permanently housed, allowing for links established within the local community to be maintained.

Homelessness prevention assists around 20 households with advice and assistance about homelessness prevention per week. This is rental assistance advice, financial awareness advice and mediation. The number of homeless cases provided with advice and assistance this quarter was 222. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this quarter with 95.6% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

Building Maintenance

The total number of jobs completed internally by our Building Maintenance Service this quarter was 8,052. Jobs include all reactive, planned works, voids and inspections.

This year the Building Maintenance Service (BMS) Capital upgrade programme has been set at just over 3000 upgrades across our estate, continuing on from achievements last year. These upgrades include the continuation of our new windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchen programmes helping Midlothian Council maintain its Scottish Housing Quality Standards. The service also aims to complete the remaining fire door installs to all our flats to ensure that we are also in keeping with the latest fire regulations.



This quarter we have increased the percentage of Council Housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards criteria to 72.1%. Although this is still off target there has been a significant increase from 34.3% meeting standards at Q1 of last year. Due to changes in the Energy Efficiency regulations affecting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) criteria, 431 houses were identified as failing the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). We have reduced these failures to meet 2025 targets. However, with the Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's) now part of the SHQS we found that 4733 were failing assessment. We have reduced this figure to 2,035, resulting in 72.1% now meeting standard. Work is progressing to bring this indicator back on target. 100% of smoke alarms comply with current legislation.

In line with our Damp and Mould policy the service continues to roll out the environmental sensors throughout our portfolio. This year BMS are aiming to install around 2,000 monitors across 1,000 homes. This continued roll out will provide us with valuable information from within our homes, allowing us to achieve our targets set out in our Damp and Mould policy. The information collated by the monitors is sent through to a portal using a gateway system that also monitors our smoke alarms.

Housing – performance

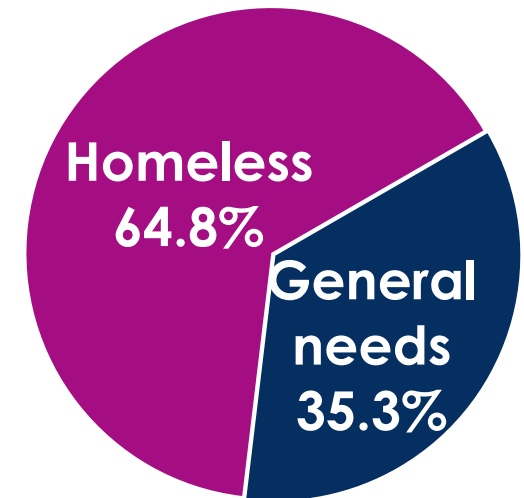
6,260 applicants on housing waiting list this quarter (General needs and Homeless) (increase from 4,714 in Q1 23/24).

31 Lets to new build and open market purchases this quarter.

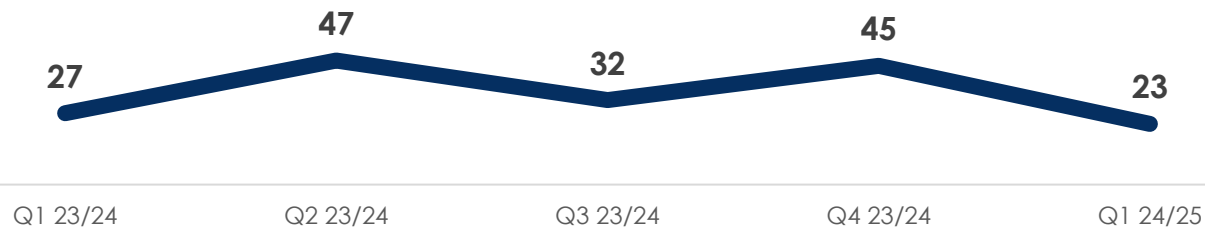
3 Lets to Housing First applicants this quarter.

122 housing lets this quarter.

% of lets made to applicants

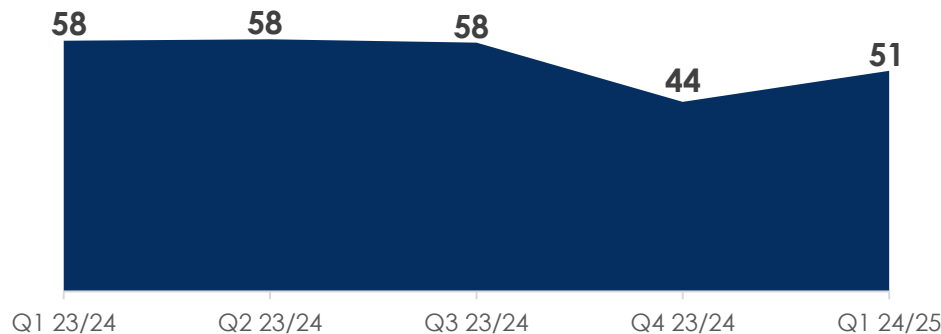


Time taken to re-let permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)

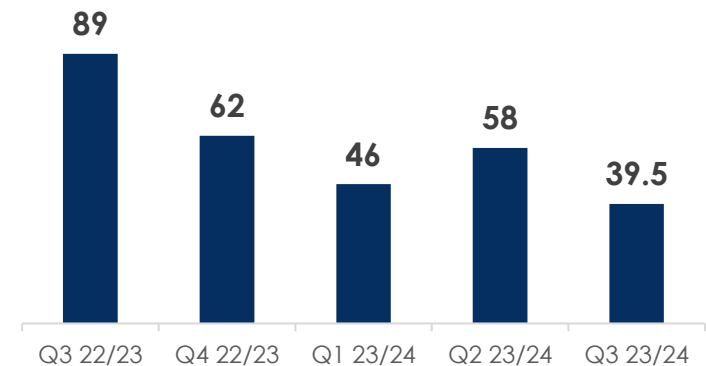


95.6% of Homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants wait until receiving a permanent housing outcome

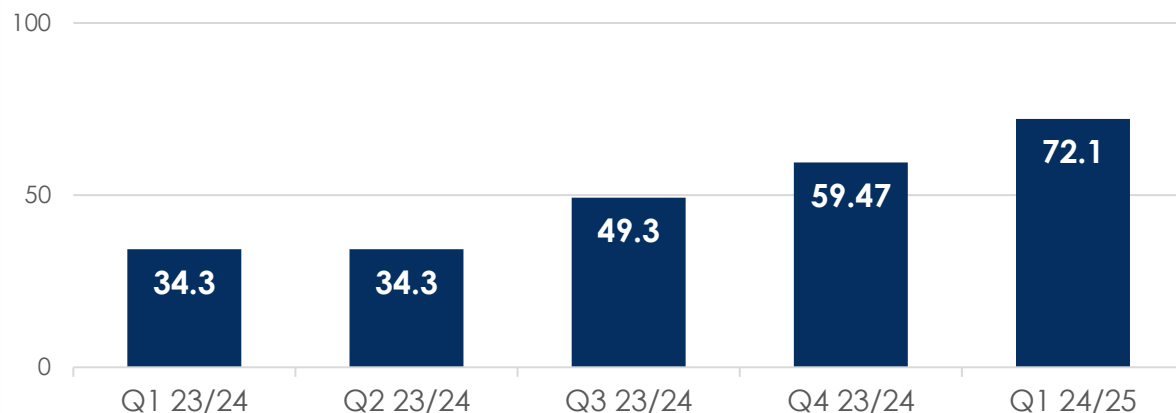


Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation



Building Services – performance

% of Council housing meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) (cumulative)



23.79 hours

Average time taken to complete emergency repairs for Q1.

8,052

jobs completed this quarter by our Building Maintenance Service

Percentage of housing repairs completed on time this quarter:

93.51%

of
emergency repairs
completed on time

87.58%

of
priority 2 repairs
completed on time

83.48%

of
priority 3 repairs
completed on time

Building Standards

58% of

first reports for building warrant applications were issued within 20 working days

74% of

Building warrants were issued within 10 working days, following receipt of satisfactory information

Building Standards customer satisfaction rate:

7.7

out of 10

Economy & Regeneration

Key achievements Q1 24/25

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



Business gateway Service

The Business Gateway Service has seen an increase in demand this quarter compared to the same quarter in 2023.

55 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received in Q1, an increase of 11 compared to the same period last year. Enquiries are received 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.

The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 37, creating a total of 53 jobs and an estimated contribution of £1,640,000

to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. This is an increase of 13 new business starts, 14 jobs and an estimated £370,000 economic contribution compared to the same period in 2023/24.

Business Gateway Expert Help Programme

Work is underway with our Net Zero Nation Programme which is supporting 13 diverse local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey. The businesses will take part in 12-month Net Zero Business Accelerators with funding support from Midlothian Council/Business Gateway Midlothian. In return, they must sign an agreement where they commit to approach their Net Zero strategy and credible carbon reduction plan with vigour, speak at physical and online events to encourage other business leaders to start their own transition to Net Zero. The companies will receive a 12-month carbon accounting software license, an expert partner providing 1:1 support over 12 months to help them produce their audited carbon accounts, their carbon reduction plan produced, an auditor to verify and certify their carbon accounts and carbon reduction plan. After completion in December 2024, the team will commence case studies on those outcomes in Q3 24/25 as the programme comes to a close.

Our first Learn e-Commerce Expert Help programme commenced this quarter in April. 18 businesses enrolled for the digital course, with 6 going on to receive 121 expert help guidance from the trainers. The feedback from clients has been extremely positive with tangible improvement to their businesses immediately felt. A second round of this programme has been launched, with an expression of interest page, live on our Locate in Midlothian site for delivery in late Summer/Autumn this year.

The team continue to provide expert help consultancy in financial management and Human Resources to support the Fair Work Policy to Business Gateway clients on an as needed basis.

Business gateway Service redesign

The successful launch of the Business Gateway portal and the new 'strengthen your business' client enquiry tool has 15 enquiries received so far. This is designed for existing businesses that are not registered with Business Gateway and are already trading. The introduction of this tool has reduced the level of data input required of local Advisory teams. National and local marketing will take place over the next quarter to increase awareness with existing businesses that can be supported.

Business Gateway Midlothian Spring Coffee Morning

A Business Gateway coffee morning took place at Rosemains Steading in Pathhead on 19th April with attendees hearing from a business psychologist and coach about successful, confident sales techniques. The Polar Academy who are taking pupils from Dalkeith High School on an arctic expedition in 2025, to help build their confidence and skills for the future, also delivered a presentation to include a previous beneficiary of the programme which was very well received and resulted in 3 offers of support from local businesses in attendance. The Directors of Rosemains Steading shared their journey on the development of their Business Association and chosen legal structure of a Community Interest Company. 37 businesses attended and got to explore Rosemains Steading after the event, meeting and purchasing from the businesses based there.

The next scheduled [BG Coffee Morning](#) is being held on Friday 6th September 2024 at The Craigie Hotel in Penicuik.

A joint event between Midlothian Science Zone and Business Gateway was held on 16th April at The Energy Training Academy (ETA) to introduce forum members to the ETA's services and tour the Net Zero House on-site.



Economic Development events delivered this quarter:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund online sessions held in April to support potential applicants to the fund with a total of 10 attendees.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund online session held in May to support third sector applicants to the fund with 7 attendees.
- Facilitated a Career Ready online event in May to encourage local businesses to mentor and provide summer placements for school pupils. The criteria for applying organisations was restrictive as businesses must employ 10 or more, we had interest from many smaller businesses that could not participate.
- Facilitated a Community Benefit input in June from Morrison Construction to provide an in-person workshop held at Bush House
- In person session on UK Shared Prosperity Fund delivered to Business Association in June at Rosemains Steading with 12 attendees.

Business Associations

There are now 4 active Business Associations in Midlothian. 3 are geographic covering Dalkeith, Rosemains and Penicuik with the Midlothian Wellbeing Association being the only thematic association formed to date. Officers are supporting organisations to develop a further two thematic Business Associations, one following on from the success of the externally funded Women in Business Series reported in Q4 2023/24 and the other to include food and drink businesses, covering both production and retail/wholesale.

Social Enterprise

The Business Gateway service continue to promote the Social Enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model. Contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives, the team support projects from the Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. The service supported 23 Social Enterprise organisations and 1 school based social enterprise in quarter 1, of these 2 were registered as new starts with a projected income of £180k and 4 jobs in year one.

Support provided included:

- 1 Charity receiving in depth support to develop a social enterprise (Community Interest Company) as a trading subsidiary to generate unrestricted funds to support the core work of the charity to reduce reliance on grant funding.
- 1 private sector organisation creating a social enterprise to take their current sport offer and extend it to support community wellbeing.
- 1 collaboration of East Lothian private sector businesses creating a green construction social enterprise after being inspired by The Energy Training Academy (ETA) model and choosing Midlothian to locate in due to the support ETA have received for the Economic Development Service.

Land and Property

Property enquiries are specific premises enquiries and sign ups to the property mailing list. We had a total of 23 enquiries from local businesses in Q1 of which 10 were from businesses outside of Midlothian, these could be considered Inward Investment enquiries however they are all smaller businesses looking to relocate.

Economic Development have provided a further 3 inputs of support to businesses approaching us via the Invest in Midlothian webpage:

- New entity in the early stages of creating an accessible community space for tennis with further children's play area, food and drink options and changing spaces – referred to Crown Estates Scotland for the Whitehill Development at Rosewell.
- Vault City Brewing, consolidating the business from 3 premises in Livingston, Portobello and Newtongrange to one location at Midlothian Science Zone, purchasing a Scottish Enterprise building that has been vacant for a number of years. This will be a high growth business that the service will continue to support.
- Doctoral College/University of Newcastle, referral to Edinburgh College as advantageous synergies instead of supporting to find own premises, this will bring post graduate students into Eskbank College generating additional revenue for the college and may present opportunities for this organisation to work with our local schools and businesses on Innovation and Enterprise.

Property Assets

This quarter our Estates team concluded the Shawfair land acquisition for the education provision at the site. Tenders for and offers over asking price were received for property at Leadburn and Loanhead Police station. Asset valuation was completed and submitted to Finance for auditing. Missives were agreed for the acquisition of 3 houses under the Ukrainian Resettlement Programme.

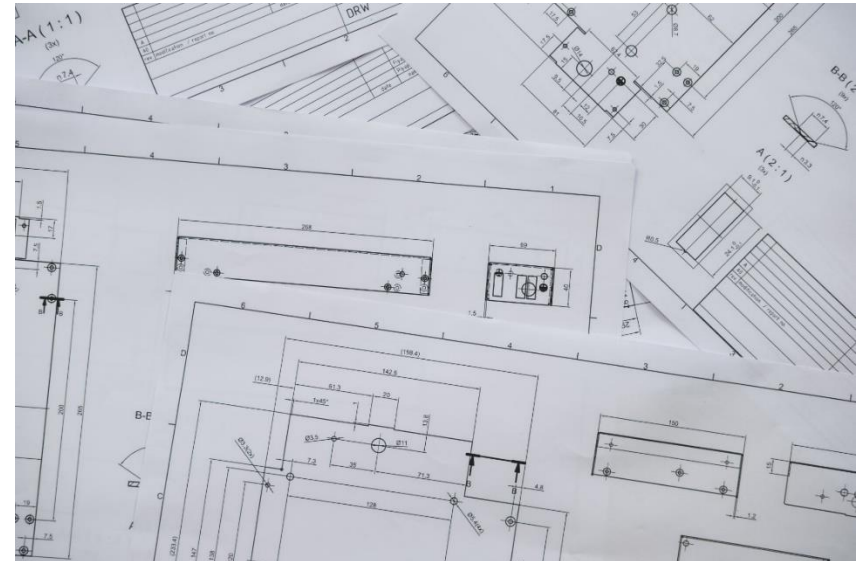
Planning

Following the adoption of the National Planning Framework No.4, the Planning Service formally commenced its review of the Council's adopted spatial strategy, the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2 (MLDP2). The first phase consisted of engagement with community groups, key agencies, the development industry, local residents and elected members. This engagement was ongoing throughout 2023/24 and continues into 2024/25. At its meeting in June 2024 Council approved the MLDP2 Evidence Report, including setting a Local Housing Land Requirement at 8,851, for submission to the Scottish Government for 'Gate Check'. This is the first major milestone in the MLDP2 process.

During quarter 1, the Planning Committee granted planning permission for a new primary school campus at Mayfield and a waste transfer state at Middleton Quarry. The Planning Committee also approved the Dalkeith Regeneration Development Framework Planning Guidance, which sets out the Council's vision for Dalkeith Town Centre.

Building Standards

Although performance targets in relation to building warrant applications issued are off target this quarter, our Building Standards service continues to provide a high level of customer satisfaction against an increasing service demand. The Building Standards service review has been agreed and outlined in the review is the proposal to increase the workforce to manage the increase in workload, as well as successfully managing the future of the service as it navigates through the expected changes in succession planning.



Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment–performance

Number of new Business start ups (quarterly)



Social media

1,729 Locate in Midlothian followers.

2,369 Business Gateway followers

15 'Strengthen your business' enquiries this quarter

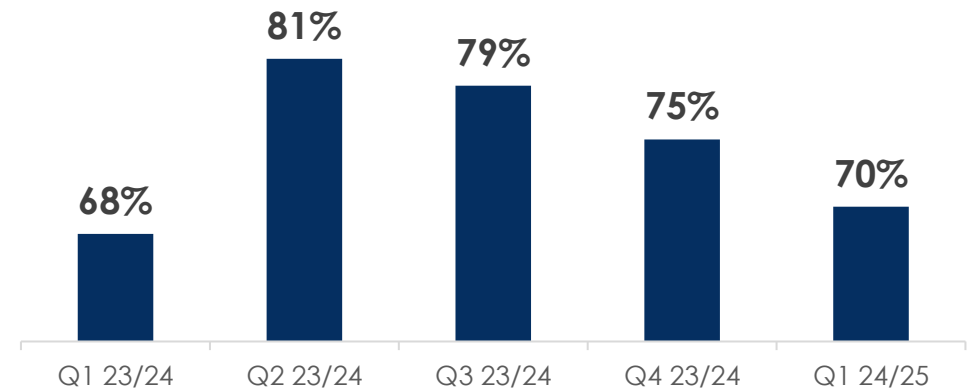
5 Instances of Local Growth Advisor support (LGAS) this quarter

21 Businesses signed up to the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** this quarter (increase from 3 in Q1 23/24)

24 **Social enterprises supported** this quarter (increase from 15 in Q1 23/24)

55 'Planning to Start' enquires/submissions this quarter (increase from 44 in Q1 23/24)

% of planning applications completed within target of 80%



28 weeks

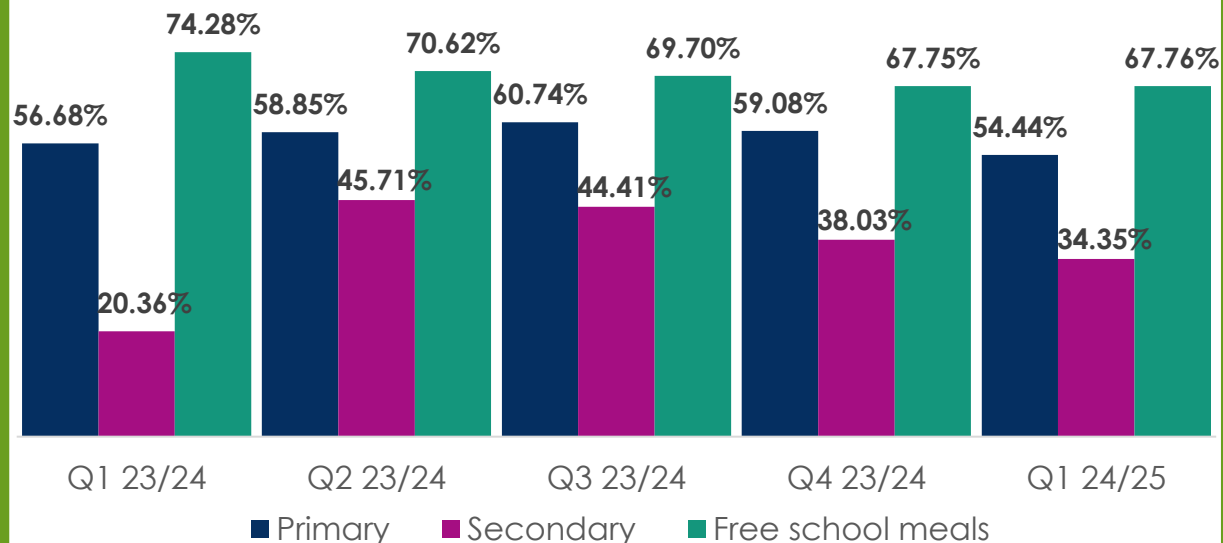
Average time to determine planning applications for **major** developments.

10 weeks

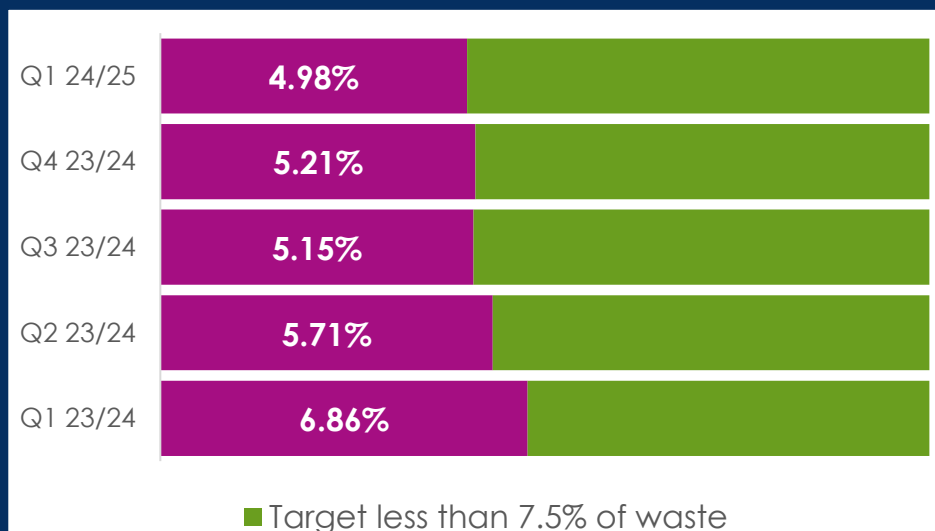
Average time to determine planning applications for **local** developments.

Property and Facilities – performance

% of school meal uptake



Percentage of school meal food waste

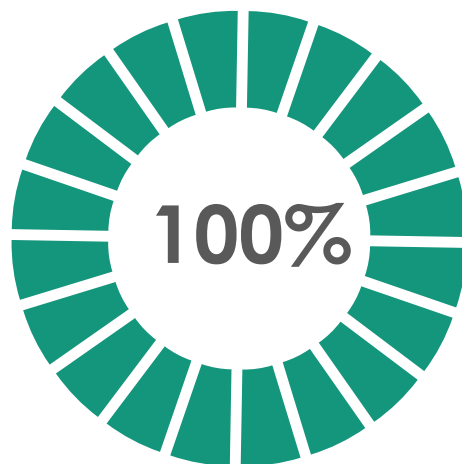


7.3 nursery and primary school meals prepared per hour this quarter (7.13 in Q1 23/24)

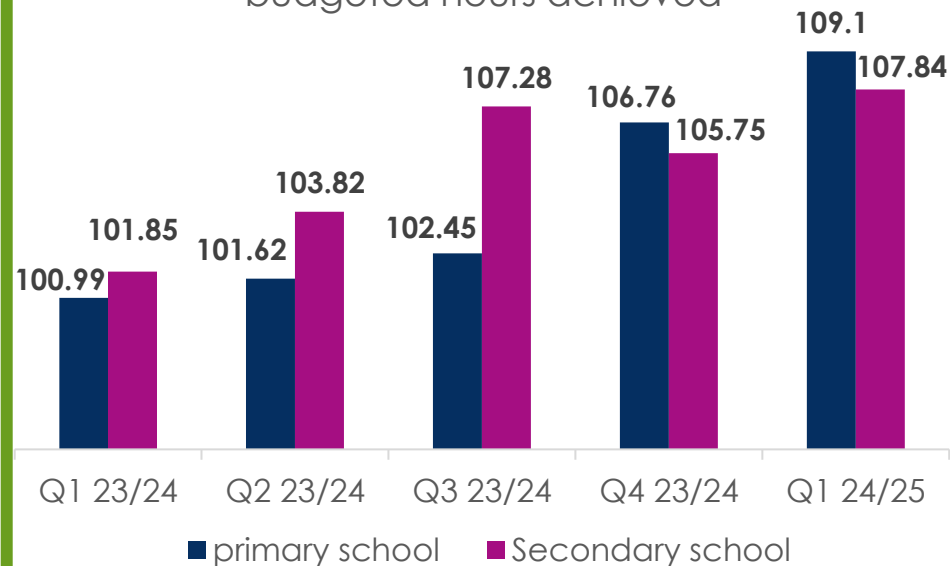
TARGET: APSE national average 8.84 meals prepared per hour

7.13 secondary school meals prepared per hour this quarter (4.33 in Q1 23/24)

% of Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) complete



Percentage of cleaning hours against budgeted hours achieved



Health and Wellbeing

Key achievements Q1 24/25

Across our Facilities services, the percentage of Secondary school meal uptake this quarter remains steady at 34.35%, an increase from 20.36% in quarter 1 of last year. This is due to changes made to the menu offered to secondary schools to attract pupils back into the dining room. The percentage of Primary school meal uptake for quarter 1 was 54.44% and again remains steady compared to previous quarters. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24% with quarter 1 uptake for Midlothian at 54.44%. The percentage of school meal food waste has decreased to 4.98% from 6.86% compared to the same period last year.



Across Sport and Leisure services, our tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of 4,386 memberships up to the end of quarter 1. An increase of 7% from quarter 1 of last year.

Towards the end of quarter 1, a new Sport and Leisure mobile app was launched. The new app will make it easier for customer to access and manage their account, book classes, get live pool updates, news and Active Schools information. The app had 500 downloads within the first week of launch. Our app can be found on the Apple and Google store.

456 primary 4 pupils attended free swimming lessons this quarter after an effective system was put in place from our programme development officer. 19 sessions were delivered over 11 weeks.

Our Active Schools Midlothian team continue to work in partnership with sportscotland, providing opportunities for our children to adopt healthy and active lifestyles throughout their school years and into adulthood by supporting and sustaining a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who, in turn, deliver extra curricular physical activity and sport before, during and after school and in the wider community. 163 activities were delivered this quarter, an increase from 134 delivered during quarter 1 last year. 2,466 participants attended Active Schools free extra curricular club which is an increase of 38% compared to the same period last year. The number of volunteer hours delivered in the Active Schools Programme has also increased from this time last year with 1,162 volunteers compared to 677 during quarter 1 of 23/24 showing a 72% increase.



In addition, Newtongrange Primary school and Newbattle High school achieved the Gold sportscotland award. The sportscotland School Sport Award is an assessment and planning tool which encourages schools to demonstrate an on-going commitment to increase young people's opportunities and engagement in physical education, school sport and leadership and provide clear pathways to life-long participation in sport.

15 pupils successfully completed the Active Schools Leadership Academy. A Partnership was formalised with Edinburgh College to offer Active Schools placement opportunities to students.

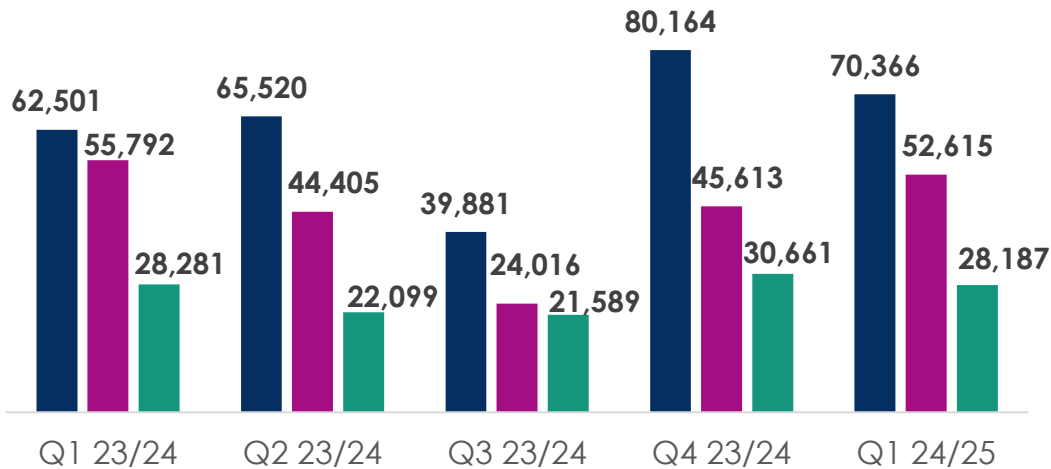
Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) is a sport and leisure physical activity referral programme, aimed at adults who are inactive and experience various health conditions. The programme offers a range of supported activities across Midlothian to help manage these health conditions. This quarter saw 1,670 Midlothian Active Choices attendees, an increase of 29% compared to the same period last year and 416 new referrals after completion of MAC sessions showing an increase of 21%.

Various training and development took place this quarter across our Sport and Leisure service including 9 staff receiving National Pool Lifeguard Qualifications (NPLQ) and 7 NPLQ renewals. 35 staff received emergency first aid training, 28 staff received gym instructor training, 17 staff received first aid at work training and 4 staff received stretcher training.

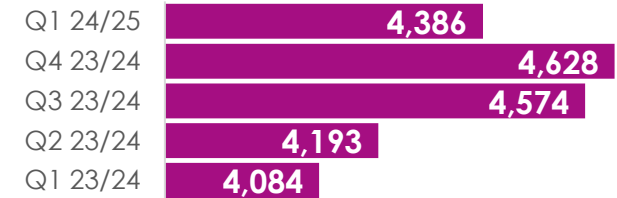
Sport and Leisure - performance

Number of attendances at Sport and Leisure facilities (quarterly)

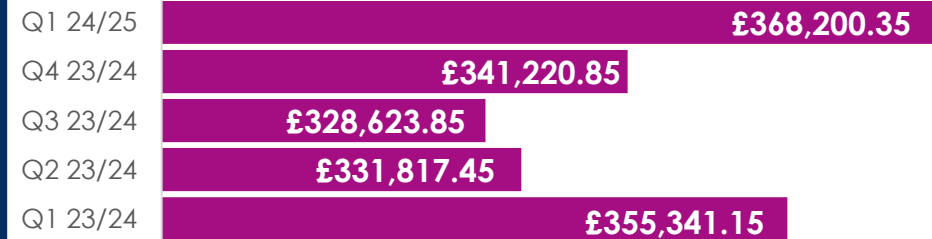
- All facilities (excl pools)
- Swimming pools
- Outdoor facilities -pitches/pavillions



Number of Tonezone memberships (cumulative)

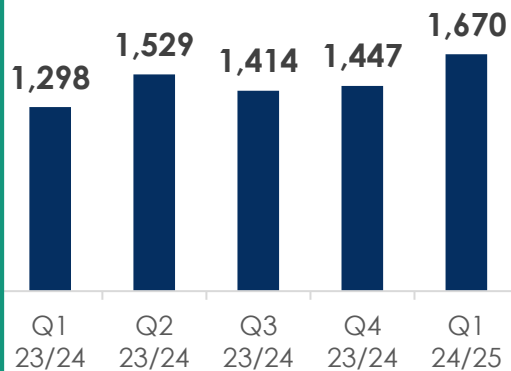


Total income generated from Tonezone memberships

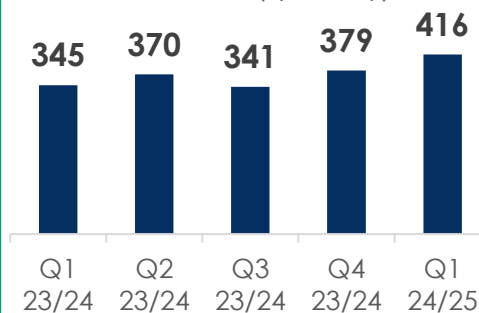


Midlothian Active Choices (MAC)

Number of MAC attendees (quarterly)

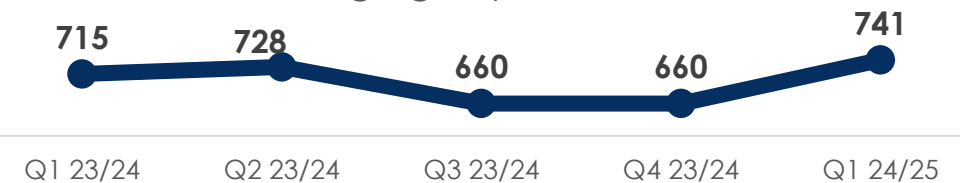


Number of new referrals after completion of MAC sessions (quarterly)



Ageing Well and Active Schools programme

Number of activities offered by Ageing Well to 50+ age groups (quarterly)



163

activities involving Active Schools programme (increase of 29 since Q1 23/24)

2,466

participants attending Active Schools clubs (increase of 684 since Q1 23/24)

1,162

volunteer hours delivered in Active Schools programme (increase of 485 since Q1 23/24)

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 1134, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 645 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. An additional 327 homes are funded for delivery in phase 5. This included the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 191 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. At present any further Passivhaus developments are paused for a cost benefit analysis exercise.

This quarter, key achievements across our Construction and Development team include:

Destination Hillend: very near completion of Contract 1 at Hillend with parking and service infrastructure in place. The Alpine Coaster is undergoing operational testing to be ready for operation from September (soft start weekends only) with full opening planned for the October break.

Learning Estate

- Easthouses Primary School was completed in August 2024 ready for the new school term. The high quality learning space was welcomed by clients in CYPP, delivered on time and to budget.
- Woodburn Primary School 9 class, STEM and gym extension on site and still on programme for completion in November 2024. The new expanded kitchen is due to be complete by the end of August 2024.

Housing

- New Passivhaus housing developments completed and certified in Bonnyrigg High Street, in addition to Buccleuch St, Dalkeith and Burnbrae, Bonnyrigg. A Post Occupancy Evaluation by Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) is currently underway to understand the impact of this quality of homes on our tenants.
- The largest (92 home) Passivhaus housing development is progressing well on site at the former Newbattle High School.
- Replacement Highbank Intermediate Care with extra care housing is progressing well on site with Ogilvie in Bonnyrigg, all

being built to Passivhaus standard.

- Newbyres, Gorebridge replacement housing site awarded to Cruden in June 2024, constructing 79 new homes.

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.

The recent Census results 2022 highlights that Midlothian remains the fastest growing local authority in Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%. In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8.

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:

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

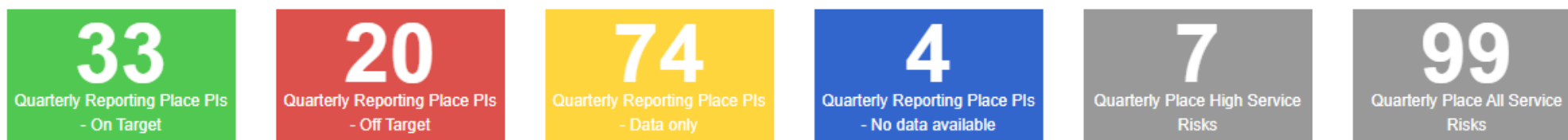
Through the Data Driven Innovation strand the Deal will leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities in order that Easter Bush becomes a global location of Agritech excellence. The Easter Bush project includes significant investment in transport infrastructure along 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. Corporate Solutions 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 drive change and redesign services.

Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q1 24/25

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - <https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login>)



Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	History
BS.PLACE.P.5.2b Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Modern fa...		98.4%	100%	
PLACE.P.14.2f Percentage of the footpath network resurfaced (cumulative)		0.01%	0.03%	
HSN3 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the S...		72.1%	100%	
HSN4b Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (LGBF)		30.00 days	7.00 days	
PLACE.BUILDS.02 Be on site with first modular housing development within 12 mon...		No	Yes	
PLACE.BUILDS.04 95% of first reports for building warrant applications issued withi...		58%	95%	
PLACE.BUILDS.05 90% of Building warrants issued within 10 working days, followin...		74%	90%	
PLACE.MPI.05 % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does ...		84.96%	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 ...		72.1%	100%	
PLACE.PFM.17 Number of secondary school meals prepared per hour (APSE)		7.13	8.84	
PLACE.PFM.18 Number of nursery and primary meals prepared per hour (APSE)		7.3	8.84	
PLACE.PFM.20 Percentage of secondary school meal uptake		34.35%	36.23%	
PLACE.PFM.21 Percentage of free school meal uptake (P1-P5)		67.76%	77.57%	
PLACE.PLAN.01 Determine 80% of planning applications within target (2 months for...		70%	80%	
PROSERVICES.25 Number of Trading Standards Primary inspections (quarterly)		29	36	
PROSERVICES.30 Percentage of businesses registered for tobacco/vapes in Midlot...		0%	1.4%	
RHM.a.04.4oi Percentage of lets made to general needs list applicants		35.25%	40%	
PLACE.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		68.03%	95%	
PLACE.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 wor...		87.8%	95%	

← 1 of 1 →