

20/21 – Place and Corporate Solutions COVID insights

We've received **2,889**

Covid **Business Grant**
applications paying out

£24.4m

since March 2020
to help local business



5,140

**Midlothian
food and
key
essentials
fund**

applications
processed



£866,130

Awarded
through
**food and
key
essentials
fund**



£20,000 of Zero
waste funding was used
to implement **social
distancing measures** at
our **recycling centres**
and the re-opening of
Penicuik depot.

447,000 meals and packed
lunches provided in the last year
for nurseries, schools and hubs



1,000 additional **cleaning**
hours per week deployed across
buildings, schools and hubs to
reduce the spread of the virus for
our keyworkers



1,203

Covid-19
checks carried
out by
**environmental
officers** during
May and June
2020



4,500 chromebooks
deployed to education to
support remote learning

We have awarded

3349 crisis grants

518 community
care grants

69 self-isolation
support grants since
March 2020



727 additional **laptops**
deployed across the
council to facilitate the
shift to remote working

2,067 users with **direct
access** for remote
working

430 additional
smartphone devices
deployed to staff council
wide

Place Annual Performance Report 2020/21

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.

The last year has brought unprecedented challenges with the COVID pandemic. Scotland has been in two full lockdowns totalling over 25 weeks where a number of Place services were halted and the focus shifted to critical and essential service delivery only. During this time, our workforce demonstrated incredible strength and agility, refocussing their activity to provide a range of additional supports to our most vulnerable communities as well as continuing to deliver essential frontline services. Examples of this activity includes:

- Meeting the increased demands placed on Environmental Health as they provided a comprehensive response to adapting and changing restriction legislation, business and community engagement and intervention, test and protect, testing programme roll out, identification of locations associated with positive cases and adopted revised working practices to reflect regulatory changes
- Health and Safety managing the challenging risk and contingency landscape in our workplaces to keep staff and citizens safe
- Delivery of additional cleaning services for touch point cleaning across our learning estate throughout the day and the sanitising/fogging of classrooms within schools where positive COVID-19 cases are reported
- Economic Development's launch of an Economic Renewal Strategy and [Locate in Midlothian](#) website, the creation of a jobs board and information on partner provision of employability support and grants available to support local businesses and the administering of the Newly Self Employed Hardship Fund and COVID Business support packages
- Redeployment of Land & Countryside, Building Maintenance and Sports & Leisure staff to assist with winter maintenance programme and waste collections, ensuring essential services continue to be delivered for Midlothian's citizens
- Place services operating in close liaison with Midlothian Community Action Team to work with the public to ensure social distancing was maintained across the county, including on our busiest walkways and open spaces

Midlothian's communities have required urgent and critical support through the pandemic, and the Council has faced demands and pressures never previously experienced. Innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted to respond to the needs of our citizens, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality, at pace. The rapid response to this pandemic has resulted in a complete transformation of how the Council works. Place services will continue to build on this learning moving forwards, harnessing the energy, flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our workforce, to embed a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across Place.

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

Successes

Despite the unprecedented challenges that have been faced this year, Midlothian has continued to deliver a range of pre-pandemic commitments, as well as develop a comprehensive programme for recovery and renewal to be realised over the coming years.

Environmental

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings. In December 2019, 4 months before the first lockdown, the Council passed a motion declaring a 'climate emergency', with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2033. Despite the challenges that followed with the COVID-19 pandemic, in August 2020 the Council's Climate Change Strategy was approved. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. Focus continues within the Place services to achieve future emissions targets.

Waste Services was successful in their application for £20,000 of funding from Zero Waste Scotland to implement social distancing measures at Midlothian's two Recycling Centres, allowing Penicuik Recycling Centre to re-open with a one way traffic system. Community waste activities have focussed on promoting the reuse cabin at Stobhill recycling centre and continued support for community clear ups and litter picks.

We continue to achieve our ambition for access for all abilities to our parks and play areas. Work has concluded at a number of sites including Scots Corner early learning and childcare centre in Penicuik. Landscape installations were completed at three new social housing sites. Ongoing works includes a consultation with primary schools throughout the area. In partnership with volunteers the landscaping team remains focused on developing and maintaining walking and cycling routes, taking opportunities to publicise and promote co-production with communities. This year much operational focus was placed on parks and walkways heavily utilised by local residents to ensure social distancing was maintained.

Economic

Midlothian Council approved a new Economic Renewal Strategy (an addendum to the Council's Strategy for Growth 2020-25) in June 2020, in response to the pandemic. Setting out its ambitious approach to managing the transition from lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face, the strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery.

Locate in Midlothian, Midlothian's new website focussed on economic development, was launched during the pandemic, with supporting social media channels. These digital platforms were instrumental in the programme for recovery and renewal, with the creation of a jobs board which was expanded to include information on partner provision of employability support.

Regeneration

The Planning Service has received approximately £2.5m and secured £17.8m in developer contributions in 20/21 towards new schools, community facilities, sport, leisure and play provision, transport infrastructure and town centre improvement projects.

Town Centre Capital Fund - seven applications were approved totalling awards of £910,000. 2 projects are complete, 3 are in the final administration phase and the Penicuik Town Hall project, the largest grant awardee has completed the installation of publicly accessible WIFI in the Town Hall. The major works will be completed by the September 2021 deadline.

On 21st September 2020 Midlothian Council accepted a further £331,000 from the Scottish Government's £30 Million capital contribution into regeneration in 2020/21, part of the £230 million economic recovery stimulus package. Teams across the Council got involved in identifying projects for consideration and four projects are now in progress.

Housing and homelessness

As well as the emergency response to the pandemic that was delivered by the Council's Housing and Homelessness Service teams, work was still ongoing to progress a number of strategic objectives and ambitions. Extensive community and stakeholder consultation and engagement was undertaken over two phases – during July and August 2020, November 2020 and January 2021. This engagement has informed the development of the next iteration of the Local Housing Strategy 2021/26, which is a significant document outlining the Council's strategic vision and priorities for housing. The strategy outlines how we will direct investment in housing and related services and the outcomes that we will achieve. This strategy is due for approval by Council in May 2021.

In December 2020, the Council achieved its goal to end the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. This was principally achieved by expanding the shared accommodation project detailed in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and the utilisation of shared accommodation services. This resulted in an increased number of properties that would normally be let as permanent tenancies being transferred to the temporary accommodation letting stock. This was partly offset by flipping over temporary occupancy agreements into permanent Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements at the request of households, reducing the time households spend in temporary accommodation, in accordance with the revised Housing Allocation Policy.

The council's Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020. To address the need for affordable housing, the SHIP details potential sites for 2,602 new affordable homes to be built during 2021-26. New council housing developments were completed at Loanhead, Penicuik and Danderhall. The allocations were prioritised to local residents via Local Lettings Initiatives. 140 new affordable homes were delivered during 2019/20.

Capital programme

Midlothian are taking a very positive and flexible approach to build momentum around the new supply recovery. There is a clear recognition that there will be a delay in starting and completing projects in the current five year programme and speculation about medium and long term impacts of the pandemic. A full evaluation was carried out of all current and planned construction projects and resourcing reviewed, to take advantage of off the shelf opportunities or second hand purchases directed at meeting recovery objectives and supporting economic activity, and ensure appropriate resourcing remains in place to progress all construction projects effectively (comprising approximately 70 projects). This construction will directly support employment and wherever possible, new housing will be located close to good community facilities, shops and employment opportunities, with efficient and high quality public transport connections. New development shall be of high quality, balancing a desire for good contemporary design with respect for the area's heritage. The established community will benefit as much as possible from growth, through new affordable homes, enhanced employment prospects, improved education facilities and the development of green networks with opportunities for leisure and recreation.

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 year's provision. This currently covers approximately 30 projects at various stages of development.

The Capital roads programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes commenced at the end of June 2020, following easing of the Covid-19 first lockdown restrictions. Despite construction restrictions, 16 of 25 individual carriageway schemes completed equating to 3.71km of carriageway resurfacing, and 6 of 19 individual footway schemes completed equating to 2.7km of footway resurfacing. The embracement of new Scottish Road Works Register for coordination of all road works and Utility Works is ongoing with all street data now uploading to the One Scotland Gazetteer, managed by the Improvement Service, and adoption of new street conventions.

Challenges

The challenges for Midlothian continue to grow with the impact of COVID-19 and our recovery out of the pandemic, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings. Population growth over the next 10 to 15 years will see Midlothian remain the fastest growing Council in Scotland. A 0-15 population increase is projected at 20% and 75+ population increase is projected at 100% between 2014 and 2039. This pace of growth demands additional capacity within the school estate to cope with the projected increase in pupil numbers. The general population growth forecast places additional pressure on our infrastructure, including the growth of the road network as new development roads are adopted, and increases the demand on essential services such as waste collection.

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

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

The vision for the Place is supported by the following Council key strategies:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- The Council's Capital Strategy (Including Housing Revenue account)
- The Climate Change Strategy
- Single Midlothian Plan

To date, we have demonstrated how we embrace change and innovation through the delivery of new affordable homes, new schools, improved positive destinations for school leavers and the arrival of the Borders railway as well as new initiatives such as Energy from Waste Plant, Destination Hillend and reducing our offices and other property assets.

Place



Successes and Challenges

Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 7 ● 4 ● 1 ● 7

Service Plan Actions (latest)

● 4 ● 4 ● 0

Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 15 ● 13 ● 3 ● 16

Service Risks (latest)

▲ 42

Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs ● 7

% of service priorities on target / completed, of the total number

% of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)

% of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does not include Corporate PIs)

Average time in working days for a full response for escalated complaints

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions ● 4

Continue to promote and implement the business support provisions

Complete Phase 2 and progress Phases 3 and 4 of HRA social housing and new build programme

Designate housing for particular needs with existing and new build stock

Undertake programme of work to upgrade Council Houses to maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs ● 15

Number of environmental awards e.g. Green flags

Re-let time permanent properties (calendar days)

Percentage of the Councils housing stock meeting the 'Modern facilities & services' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria

Percentage of consumer complaints completed within 14 days.

% of the footpath network resurfaced (cumulative)

Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites

Number of individuals involved in Community Schemes

% of total road network resurfaced (cumulative)

Number of intelligence logs made

Number of primary inspections conducted.

Number of property reviews implemented (cumulative)

Income identified for the Council by sourcing third party opportunities through land & countryside working on hard and soft landscaping

Determine 80% of planning applications within target (2 months for a local application and 4 months for a major application).

Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Free from serious disrepair' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria

Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Healthy, safe & secure' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria

High Risks

Risks ▲ 0

There are no High Risks

Key
PIs
● Off Target
● On Target
● Data Only
● Data Not Yet Available

Key
Actions
⊗ Off Target
● On Target/Complete
● Data Not Yet Available

Key
PIs
● Off Target
● On Target
● Data Only
● Data Not Yet Available

Key
Risks
▲ High Risk/Medium Risk
● Data Not Yet Available