

Best Value Assurance Report Update**Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive****Report for Noting****1 Recommendations**

Council is asked to:

- a) Note the updates to the Best Value Assurance Report Improvement Action Plan, some of which have now been superseded as a result of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Midlothian Route Map and the new strategic transformation boards which are in place.

2 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update regarding Best Value and the previously presented Improvement Action Plan put in place following publication of Midlothian's Best Value Assurance Report by the Accounts Commission on 4 July 2019 which was presented to Council on 20 August 2019 and followed by a subsequent update on 11 February 2020 and 17 November 2020.

Date: 31 May 2021**Report Contact:**

Myra Forsyth, Continuous Improvement Manager

myra.forsyth@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background

3.1 Audit Work to support the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) for Midlothian Council was carried out between January and March 2019. The audit focused on 5 key questions:

1. Does the council have clear strategic direction?
2. How well is the council performing?
3. Is the council using its resources effectively?
4. Is the council working well with its partners?
5. Is the council demonstrating continuous improvement?

The audit work was carried out by a team of auditors and best value auditors from Ernst & Young and Audit Scotland and involved an extensive review of documentation and interviews with elected members, council officers and partners.

3.2 The BVAR report published by Audit Scotland recognised that the Council had delivered a number of ambitious projects since the Council's last Best Value report in 2012, in particular in relation to schools, community campuses, housing and transport. Other key points noted in the report advised that:

- The council still needs to focus on some key requirements for Best Value, including financial sustainability, financial management and transformation.
- There are risks around the council's successful delivery of change due to its past track record and the scale of the challenge in both the medium and longer term.
- Elected members need to work together to urgently agree the medium-term financial strategy and transformation programme.
- Performance across services is mixed and the council is among middle performing councils using benchmarking indicators.
- The council makes good use of data to understand and improve its performance.
- Partnership working continues to be a strength at the council.

3.3 The report also set out the Accounts Commission Findings and identified a set of recommendations for the Council. The recommendations detailed below were therefore used to develop the improvement action plan, an update of which is detailed in Appendix C:

- As a matter of urgency, officers and elected members need to work together to develop and agree the medium-term financial strategy and progress the council's transformation plans.
- The council needs to develop and sustain more constructive relationships between members and between members and officers. It needs to implement effective cross-party governance arrangements to ensure that it delivers the medium-term financial strategy and transformation plans.

- The council needs to ensure that workforce planning reflects the medium-term financial strategy.
- The council should undertake a review of its capital programme, to ensure that the timeframes for delivery are achieved going forward and that monitoring and reporting mechanisms are enhanced to drive more accurate analysis and planning around capital work.
- The council need to continue to implement financial planning arrangements to address budget gaps, underpinned by robust financial budgeting and monitoring arrangements.
- The council should refine its vision in light of the outcome of consultation work through the Services with Communities transformation workstream and to ensure that it focuses its activity most effectively.
- Elected members need to exercise appropriate scrutiny at all times, take ownership for personal development plans and take up relevant training opportunities.
- The council should continue to build on positive elements of community empowerment. It should look to increase community ownership of local neighbourhood plans and work with communities to improve how they monitor progress.

3.3 The Council being ambitious for the future of Midlothian, supported by our Vision as a Great Place to Grow, developed the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), an important step-change. The MTFS aimed to provide a clear and concise overview of future sustainability given the demand pressures and the decisions that would need to be taken in order to make headway towards addressing budget gaps covering the financial period to 2022/23.

3.4 To further support the necessary step-change required the following key drivers where introduced:



Diagram 1: 9 Key Driver for Change

4 Progress

4.1 Since the introduction of the improvement plan a number of actions supporting the recommendations have progressed including:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved by Council in June 2019 with cross party recommendations made to Council in February 2021 to implement a corporate solution for the 2021/22 budget, ensuring the need for no additional service reductions at an already challenging time for communities.
- Consolidation of change and transformation plans into a single programme with a clear governance route through BTB and BTSG.
- Launch of the Council's new Senior Leadership Structure to support the strategic delivery of the Council's Vision and ambition which includes the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Midlothian Route Map.
- New strategic transformation boards are in place which report to BTB and onto BTSG
- In their annual report for 2019/20 the external auditor, EY, noted a green rating for financial management and amber for financial sustainability. The latter reflecting the wider sustainability challenges facing the public sector. As demonstrated by the approach to secure financial balance for the 2021/22 budget the Council has continued to strengthen financial planning arrangements underpinned by robust financial budgeting and monitoring arrangements with a quarterly financial monitoring board now meeting to scrutinise the financial performance of services. A similar corporate solution will be progressed for the 2022/23 budget, the last to be determined by this term of Council. In turn this allows the leadership team to focus on the development of the next MTFS for the term of the next Council elected in May 2022.
- Alignment of change and transformation savings plans for BTB/BTSG with the quarterly financial reporting process.
- Developing more constructive relationships between members and between members and officers. The cross-party Business Transformation Steering Group (BTSG) continues to drive forward the medium term financial strategy including supporting transformation plans. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic emergency phase, the Chief Executive has met weekly with the group leaders and deputy leaders of the three political groups as part of the regular reporting arrangements.
- Work is continuing with elected members to take ownership for personal development plans and take up relevant training opportunities including briefings, seminars and cross-party working groups. A process to capture activity centrally has also been introduced.
- The workforce strategy was approved by Council in December 2019 and further work, as part of the Covid-19 recovery phase,

is now taking place to ensure that workforce planning reflects both the bold ambition of the Midlothian Route Map including digital by default, local by default, remote working and carbon neutral approaches.

- Initial pilot of Financial Dashboard within Children's Services which will support further roll-out.
- The capital programme has been accelerated in line with the Midlothian Route Map Through and Out of the Crisis which was approved by Council in June 2020. Supporting capital projects were approved by Council in June and August 2020. Two new Heads of Development have been appointed to take forward this ambitious programme at pace. The latest iteration of the capital plans, including pipeline progress sets out investment of circa £0.8bn over the period.
- Reviews are progressing to continue to build on positive elements of community empowerment; plans to review local neighbourhood plans and work with communities to improve how they demonstrate impact. The work refocused during the pandemic to ensure community cohesion, community access to services for those most vulnerable and mitigating aspects of poverty including access to food. This involved a combined effort of informal community volunteering to more structured co-designed interventions such as the Midlothian Key Essentials Fund and income maximisation call back services. Moving forward the CPWG are considering how best to embrace these within a period of change and recovery.
- The Compact has been developed in partnership with the Third Sector in light of the outcome of consultation work through Services with Communities and has been approved by Council and endorsed by the CPP. The TRACK values of the compact underpin the ethos of partnership working the third sector.

- 4.2** Midlothian and its communities have faced an unprecedented challenge as we have grappled with how to respond to a global pandemic. Whilst this experience has been extremely challenging, it has also acted as a catalyst for change with staff across the Council rapidly adapting to working completely differently, delivering more services remotely and trying to maintain services whilst supporting people through the crisis.
- 4.3** The rapid response to the pandemic has resulted in a complete transformation of how the council works, including remote working, local by default, digital transformation and services reviewing how they operate. There are things we have paused or stopped doing and we've also started doing lots of new things. These are outlined in the Midlothian Route Map through and Out of the crisis which was approved by Council in June 2020.
- 4.4** The recently published [Local Government Overview 2021](#) report considered the initial response of councils to the pandemic and noted that service delivery and working practices have changed at an unprecedented pace and on a scale that would have been considered

impossible in the past. Further noting that the need to respond quickly has allowed councils to operate more flexibly and achieve outcomes that would have taken much longer. Midlothian's response largely reflects the key messages within the Accounts Commission overview report, some examples of changes introduced are also noted:

- a) The Covid-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on all aspects of society, including the economy, jobs, and the physical and mental health of the public
 - *In recognising that the greater negative impacts for the socio-economic disadvantaged and existing inequalities intensified, the Council, along with partners, put their initial focus on maintaining critical services delivery and protecting communities.*
- b) Relationships with communities have been vital
 - *The Council and partners worked well together as evidenced by the launch of the #KindnessMidlothian CPP campaign on 18 March, supporting people who were shielding and facilitating community support hubs.*
- c) Levels of service disruption have varied
 - *Services experiencing significant disruption in Midlothian included Education, social care and leisure whilst other core services continued on a reduced basis.*
- d) Some services were delivered virtually
 - *A significant digital response was delivered at pace and included provision of remote learning for children and young people with 4,500 chromebooks deployed and a transition to remote working for a significant number of staff calling for 727 additional laptops, 2,067 users with direct access and 430 additional smartphone devices deployed council wide.*
- e) The workforce demonstrated the versatility to take on new roles
 - *Staff redeployed from services that were closed or reduced into services facing increased pressure while working under challenging circumstances.*
- f) There were significant changes in council governance structures and processes
 - *Council initially suspended meeting schedules and adopted different approaches to decision making whilst establishing virtual meetings. Weekly meetings were initially introduced with the Leader, Depute Leader, the Administration, Group Leaders and Political Groups while weekly, then fortnightly with Community Planning Partners, to harness the collective response to the crisis.*
 - *Daily meetings took place for the Corporate Incident Management Team to monitor and respond appropriately to the crisis during the period of lockdown.*
 - *The Council committee schedule was reintroduced for virtual meetings from June 2020 and earlier this year arrangements were put in place to allow public access to Council and committee meetings.*

- g) Councils continue to face significant financial challenges, and these have been exacerbated by the pandemic
 - *As noted in 4.1 the Council has continued to strengthen financial planning arrangements and, throughout the period of the pandemic, has and will continue to monitor and report the financial impact of the current and projected position to better respond to the challenges ahead.*
- h) The Scottish Government has provided substantial additional financial support, but the nature and timing of funding has created further challenges for councils
 - *Grants awarded in Midlothian include 3349 crisis grants, 518 community care grants, 69 self-isolation grants as well as paying out £24.4m to help local business using the covid business grant and £866,130 awarded through the food and key essentials fund.*
 - *Whilst funding from Scottish Government is likely to support covering the net financial impact for 2020/21, additional funding includes significant element of one-off grants which may present financial sustainability risk in future years. In addition the approach has created an additional administrative burden.*
- i) Councils have started to plan for longer term recovery from the crisis
 - *As noted in 4.1, financial balance has been secured for the 2021/22 budget and a similar corporate solution is to be progressed for 2022/23. Securing the approach to 2022/23 allows the leadership team to focus on development of the next Medium Term Financial Strategy for the term of the next Council elected in May 2022.*
- j) There has been some ongoing learning resulting from the emergency response to the pandemic
 - *In recognising the changes introduced, such as the use of digital to support changes to service delivery in the form of remote working, the overview report notes the importance of avoiding the risk of reverting to 'business as usual' in areas where new ways of working are having positive outcomes.*

4.5 As identified in Midlothian's Best Value Assurance Report the council has continued to strengthen financial planning arrangements underpinned by robust financial budgeting and monitoring arrangements. As highlighted earlier there was cross party recommendations made to Council in February 2021 to implement a corporate solution for the 2021/22 budget, ensuring the need for no additional service reductions at an already challenging time for communities. A similar corporate solution will be progressed for the 2022/23 budget, the last to be determined by this term of Council. In turn this allows the leadership team to focus on the development of the next MTFS for the term of the next Council elected in May 2022. The immediate and ongoing financial impact of the pandemic has been a key focus during the crisis and regular updates regarding financial

implications have been provided to both CMT and Council. The most recent updates for performance against budget and the Covid-19 Financial Update were provided to Council on 23 February 2021 and noted that services were being provided within budget with a positive variance of 0.25% against the revised budget.

4.6 The introduction of Midlothian's Route Map supports recovery and looks to retain the best elements of the transformation which took place in response to Covid-19 making these permanent changes to the way we work and deliver services. The strategy for recovery, as we continue to respond and emerge from this crisis, is based on the creation of a Wellbeing Economy, designed to achieve wellbeing, inclusion and fairness for our communities and to protect and enhance our environment. The overarching principle is that in delivering services, whether commissioned internally or externally, that we keep our communities, our employees and our environment safe minimising exposure to Covid-19, or any other harmful agent, at the same time as meeting our commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030. The introduction of the Route Map has also resulted in the need to revisit and reset the existing change and transformation programme and the new strategic boards and in place with terms of reference to support their work. The new strategic boards report to BTB and onto BTSG.

4.7 The Route Map builds on our 9 drivers for change as shown in table 1 and also identifies priority interventions to support recovery as listed below:

Holistic Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Council – joined up – services • All through support, minimising transition points
Hub and Spoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local by default supported by 4 Locality Place Teams • Minimal service delivered centrally
Modern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital by Default • Place based front facing services • Home working for those services able to be delivered at home • Digital, rather than physical attendance at meetings
Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change commitment to be Carbon neutral by 2030 • Minimising travel by committing to working as locally as possible
Transformational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strand support the delivery of the other 8 drivers for change
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued investment in early intervention and prevention as a priority
Asset Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local by default • Only retaining physical buildings where required • Maximising opportunities for social housing solutions • Eliminate Homelessness
Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to achieving better than our previous best
One Size Fits One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our citizens come first and are known as individuals and experience services appropriate to best meet their needs

Priority interventions to support recovery:

- Economic Renewal
- Accelerated Capital Programme for Housing and the School Estate
- Education Recovery Plan
- Hub and Spoke Place Service Delivery
- Health and Social Care Transformation
- Digital by default, Remote working and Carbon Neutral by 2030 approaches to the workplace and active travel

4.8 As a result of our recovery and renewal plans captured in Midlothian's Route Map, change and transformation plans that were in place have been superseded. In order to deliver the 'new' normal and continue with the transformation and pace required as we move through the crisis, it has been necessary to review and reset delivery plans moving forward supported by the new strategic transformation boards.

4.9 The previous Change and Transformation Programme and associated savings will be monitored and reported as part of the established quarterly financial monitoring process. In light of Covid-19 a further exercise with the relevant accountants was undertaken to ensure that all savings aspects of the programme are captured and transitioned for future scrutiny to the existing quarterly Financial Monitoring activity and a transition report presented to BTB to ensure a formal audit trail of the change in approach is recorded.

4.10 To continue the focus on delivering against the Route Map the following strategic Boards have been introduced:

- Economic Renewal Board
- Capital Strategy Board
- Hub and Spoke Place Based Solutions Board
- Remote Working Board
- Digital First Board
- Carbon Neutral by 2030 Board
- Children Young People and Partnership Board
- HSCP Transformation Board

Continuing to adopt the 9 drivers for change ensures development of a more holistic programme and ensures that the vision, ambition and intended transformation has a strategic and forward facing focus.

4.11 Working in partnership with Nesta, an innovation foundation which focusses on people powered results, work was also undertaken to gather staff experiences during the pandemic from a range of services across the Council. The output of the work undertaken with Nesta and a staff survey produced a Listen and Learn report which has also been used to further inform the continuous improvement and transformation activities being taken forward by services. The activities identified are informed by the recommendations within the Listen and Learn report and are set out against the drivers for change, previously identified,

and as represented in appendix D. This approach will ensure that plans put in place are created with a holistic approach and avoid the risk of any silo based development of plans within services.

- 4.12** Resetting the Council's approach to transformation and continuous improvement in line with the Road Map and the Listen and Learn Report ensures a continued focus on Best Value. With the plan development ensuring continued good governance via BTB and BTSG, effective management of resources informing the development of delivery plans, and a focus to deliver improved outcomes to Midlothian's residents, businesses and visitors.

5 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

5.1 Resource

No additional resources are required as result of this report, however future improvement planning actions will consider any future resource requirements.

5.2 Digital

There are no IT issues arising from this report. The new Digital First Board will be a key strategic driver to deliver at pace the ambition of the Midlothian Route Map.

5.3 Risk

The Council has a statutory duty to respond to the published findings and the supporting improvement action plan responds to these duties in part.

5.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

Whilst equalities is a key requirement for Best Value organisations, there are no direct equalities issues to be considered for this report.

5.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Background information/Links

Appendix C – Best Value Assurance Report Recommendations Action Plan

Appendix D – Listen and Learn Report Extract

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:

- Reducing inequalities in learning outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in health outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in economic circumstance
- Reducing the impact of climate change

Best Value guidance identifies two cross-cutting themes which Best Value organisations should fully embrace across all activities by which they deliver their outcomes. The cross-cutting themes are Equality and Sustainability.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- ☐ Holistic Working
- ☐ Hub and Spoke
- ☐ Modern
- ☒ Sustainable
- ☐ Transformational
- ☐ Preventative
- ☐ Asset-based
- ☒ Continuous Improvement
- ☐ One size fits one
- ☐ None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- ☐ One Council Working with you, for you
- ☒ Preventative and Sustainable
- ☒ Efficient and Modern
- ☐ Innovative and Ambitious
- ☐ None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Resetting the Council's approach to transformation and continuous improvement in line with the Road Map and the Listen and Learn Report ensures a continued focus on Best Value.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The Best Value Assurance Report was produced following engagement with both officers and partners and following a significant review of documentation available, including documents from partners and communities.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The duty of Best Value in Public Services is as follows:

- To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and in making those arrangements and securing that balance,
- To have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements, and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The above considerations informed both the Medium Term financial Strategy and Midlothian's Route Map through and out of the crisis.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Best Value duty supports the need to consider preventative approaches where appropriate and possible.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Sustainability is a key requirement for Best Value organisations and this informs the continuous improvement activities across Council.

APPENDIX B

Background Papers/Resource Links (insert applicable papers/links)

1. Best Value Assurance Report Midlothian Council
https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2019/bv_190704_midlothian.pdf
2. Midlothian – Listen and Learn Report
https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/731/nexta_listen_and_learn_report_for_midlothian_council_-_september_2020
3. Local Government in Scotland Overview 2021
<https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/local-government-in-scotland-overview-2021>

Appendix C - Best Value Assurance Report Recommendations: Action Plan

The Action Plan is based on recommendations identified in the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) published by the Accounts Commission on the 4 July 2019. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic a number of previously agreed actions have been superseded as a result of changes introduced to respond to the crisis (further information is included within the actions noted below).



1. As a matter of urgency, officers and elected members need to work together to develop and agree the medium-term financial strategy and progress the council's transformation plans.





Actions associated with this recommendation were complete prior to March 2020.

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to be agreed by Council.	30-Jun-2019	✓	100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. The MTFS was approved at Council in June 2019 with further work being progressed to identify savings for the remaining budget gap
MTFS and Transformation Programme governance framework via BTSG to be agreed by Council.	30-Jun-2019	✓	100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. The MTFS was approved at Council in June 2019. Further work to agree a revised terms of reference looking towards longer term planning was undertaken.
MTFS and supporting Transformation Programme plans, reporting and monitoring arrangements to be put in place.	31-Aug-2019	✓	100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. Changes introduced to align quarterly financial monitoring with BTB/BTSG reporting and report templates revised to reflect the changes introduced, including a consolidated plan for change and transformation. However, the Council is committed to continuous improvement and work is ongoing to streamline reporting and monitoring processes.

Update - On 20 March 2020 the council moved to critical service delivery in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The rapid response to this pandemic resulted in a complete transformation of how the council works, including remote working, digital transformation and rapid response. To support recovery and renewal from the pandemic the Council agreed a strategy in the form of their Route Map through and out of the crisis. This new strategy seeks to both support recovery and to retain the best elements of the transformation which took place in response to Covid-19 and make these permanent changes to the way the council delivers its services. The Covid-19 crisis has created a very different way of working and rapid learning for Midlothian Council at all levels. The Route Map sets out a flexible and iterative renewal plan by Midlothian Council, in association with partners, to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and resulted in the need to refocus and refresh previous transformation plans.

2. The council needs to develop & sustain constructive relationships between members & between members & officers. Implement effective cross-party governance arrangements, ensure that it delivers the medium-term financial strategy & transformation plans.




Note that existing plans were superseded as a result of the Council's COVID-19 response and the necessary changes introduced in the immediate, recovery and renewal phases.


Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
All Elected Member development day – Roles and Responsibilities, Cross-party working group frameworks etc	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q2 20/21: Complete - Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however activity and changes introduced during the crisis have superseded this planned action as Elected Member development discussions have been completed via email and further activity relating to member development is covered under recommendation 7.
Elected Member and Officer Protocol developed	31-Aug-2019		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. Proposal developed and approved by CMT and presented to September BTSG who asked that further consideration by members take place and additional information be provided by officers re existing multi-ward protocol. Protocol will be progressed in Q4 as part of BVAR 2.2b.
Elected Member and Officer Protocol agreed and implemented	30-Sep-2020		100%	Q2 20/21: Complete - Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however activity and changes introduced during the crisis resulted in the protocol being superseded. Changes to how Elected Members and Officers work together were introduced in order to respond effectively in terms of information sharing and decision making during the crisis and a virtual meetings protocol, alongside additional regular meetings for Group Leaders and Groups with officers was introduced
Refreshed Scrutiny Training/Guidelines/Checklist	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q2 20/21: Complete. Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however activity and changes introduced during the crisis have superseded this action and as a result it has been closed and replaced with refreshed development of an Elected Member Development Programme as noted in recommendation 7.

Update - This recommendation was effectively superseded as a result of necessary changes introduced to address restrictions introduced by the pandemic. In order to work together effectively during the lockdown period of the pandemic members and officers were required to adapt to a virtual environment with increased frequency of communication which has supported the development of more constructive relationships. Initially the Chief Executive/Officers held separate weekly meetings with the Leader and Group Leader, the Administration, Group Leaders and there was also the opportunity for a meeting for all groups. In addition the frequency of the Community Planning Partnership increased to fortnightly. A protocol and revised reporting templates were also introduced to support members using the virtual meeting environment. Individual member development needs have also been sought as a result of the changed working environment and further development to support elected members moving forward is required.

3. The council needs to ensure that workforce planning reflects the medium-term financial strategy.

Note that existing plans were superseded as a result of the Council's COVID-19 response and necessary changes introduced in the immediate, recovery and renewal phases.


Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Review and update the Council's Workforce Strategy and associated Service Workforce Plans to fit with the revised priorities and finances as per MTFS.	31-Aug-2020 TBA		75%	<p>Q2 20/21: Update - Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however responses and subsequent changes introduced during the crisis now call for this action and target date to be reviewed. Internal Audit follow-up of actions will be undertaken concurrently.</p> <p>The workforce strategy was refreshed and presented to Council in December 2020 Service workforce plans were expected to be updated to reflect both MTFS and new leadership structure but this has been disrupted by the focus on the response to the pandemic. Services are currently preparing new service plans reflecting the new leadership structure, route map and approved nesta recommendations and the service workforce plans will flow form that over the remainder of the year. To assist, a revised workforce planning template will be available to Chief Officers to ensure consistency of approach to workforce planning moving forward and to ensure they align to both the MTFS and service plans.</p> <p>Update 2021: Co-designed with Nesta, a significant piece of transformational work is almost complete within Neighbourhood Services that will see the introduction of a 'people powered strategic framework' that will transform how the council works as a team together with our communities to support people in Midlothian to feel safe and secure, living well locally. Moving forward, this strategic framework will form the basis of how we shape and test new ways of working in partnership with local communities in other areas of the Council.</p> <p>An Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy has also been created and subject to staff consultation, as part of a review of the Workforce Strategy to ensure we continue to deliver employee-led wellbeing interventions to promote and support the health and wellbeing of our workforce.</p> <p>Work is also underway to create a talent management strategy and employee engagement strategy to ensure we attract, engage, retain, nurture, develop and deploy our staff in the most effective and efficient ways to deliver our ambitious agenda.</p>
Develop data analytics to support real time reporting for managers in relation to people and financial data	31-Aug-2020 TBA		50%	<p>Q2 20/21: Update - Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however responses and subsequent changes introduced during the crisis now call for this action and target date to be reviewed.</p> <p>Proof of concept developed for HR data and financial dashboard piloted for Children's Services. Pandemic has resulted in resources being diverted but this will be progressed as part of refreshed digital strategy and be a key focus on the newly formed Digital led transformation board.</p>
Develop data analytics for a data set to support Elected Member and Officer understanding and decision making with	30-Sep-2020		25%	<p>Q2 20/21: Financial Dashboard were piloted successfully for Children's Services in 2019/20 and this has assisted in identifying areas where business processes which support/impact on the service can be improved</p>

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
regards to financial performance	TBA			and where more detailed information is sought by managers (for example transport costs at client level rather than service level) . Building on the Children's Services pilot the plans were to roll out to other services and doing so as part of the transition to support the new leadership structure. Further work to do this was delayed as a consequence of the onset of the pandemic and also the loss of expertise previously committed to this work.
Ensure workforce planning and profiles reflect the changing pressures on services due to the growing population	30-Sep-2020 TBA		25%	<p>Q2 20/21: Update - Due date initially reset as a result of COVID however responses and subsequent changes introduced during the crisis now call for this action and target date to be reviewed. (See first action above)</p> <p>Update 2021: Significant co-design work has been undertaken with staff and Nesta to redesign how we deliver our Neighbourhood Services to our communities, seeing the creation of new collaborative partnerships and co-designing solutions with local people.</p> <p>A revised workforce planning template will be available to Chief Officers to ensure consistency of approach to workforce planning moving forward and to ensure they align to both the MTFS and service plans.</p>

Update - The Route Map through and out of the crisis is filled with hope and ambition to rebuild Midlothian following the global pandemic. It represents a significant shift for the council in order to help Midlothian deliver services which are digital by default with services delivered at the most local level, within the resources available, and enabling those who can work remotely to continue to do so. This ambition calls for a significant refresh and refocus of the existing workforce strategy and planned service workforce activity across the Council. Changes to working practices also call for policy changes to be developed to respond to the new ways of working.

4. The council should undertake a review of its capital programme, to ensure that the timeframes for delivery are achieved going forward & that monitoring & reporting mechanisms are enhanced to drive more accurate analysis & planning around capital work.

Actions associated with this recommendation were complete prior to March 2020.



Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Re-establish Capital Programme Board framework and reporting responsibilities including Review of Capital Plan and programme to achieve more accurate forecasting and delivery	30-Jun-2019		100%	<p>Q3 19/20: Capital Plan and Asset Management Board has implemented a gateway review and reporting process (at this point for all projects over £1m). This has subsequently been complemented by the roll out of project flash reports to allow BTSG oversight of progress in delivering capital projects and to keep all members informed of progress in their ward. The gateway review process is designed to strengthen the overall governance of projects, provides a means to more effectively monitor projects against the agreed milestones and allows risks to be monitored and managed effectively. Whilst framework is in place work continues to</p>

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
				ensure it is fully embedded across all £1m plus projects to ensure consistency.

Update - Whilst the action supporting this recommendation is complete it is useful to note that within the Route Map through and out of the crisis priority interventions are identified, one of which is an Accelerated Capital Programme for Housing and the School Estate.

5. The council need to continue to implement financial planning arrangements to address budget gaps, underpinned by robust financial budgeting and monitoring arrangements.


Note that existing plans were superseded as a result of the Council's COVID-19 response and necessary changes introduced in the immediate, recovery and renewal phases.

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Develop data analytics to support real time reporting for financial data and budget monitoring (see Item 3 above)	31-Aug-2020 31-Mar-2021		50%	Q2 20/21: Financial Dashboard were piloted successfully for Children's Services in 2019/20 and this has assisted in identifying areas where business processes which support/impact on the service can be improved and where more detailed information is sought by managers (for example transport costs at client level rather than service level). Building on the Children's Services pilot the plans were to roll out to other services and doing so as part of the transition to support the new leadership structure. Further work to do this was delayed as a consequence of the onset of the pandemic and also the loss of expertise previously committed to this work.
Refresh governance structure on the delivery of savings and in relation to MTFS following June Council.	31-Aug-2019		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. The MTFS was approved at Council in June 2019. Further work also undertaken to progress a revised terms of reference looking towards longer term planning.

Update - The unprecedented economic turbulence and scale of required state intervention will inevitably have both short and longer term implications for public finances across the UK and Scotland which will require the Council to reassess its medium and longer term financial planning and investment programme as the full financial, economic and fiscal impact of the pandemic becomes clearer in the months ahead and indeed as the Council in response re-shapes its priorities moving forward. Members should note that the financial position remains fluid as the impact and consequences of the pandemic both for Council services and for communities across Midlothian continue to evolve. Further updates on the financial position and outlook will be provided to the Council on a regular basis recognising that the financial impact of the pandemic will continue to evolve.

6. The council should refine its vision in light of the outcome of consultation work through the Services with Communities transformation workstream and to ensure that it focuses its activity most effectively.





Actions associated with this recommendation were complete prior to March 2020.

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
MTFS informed by outcome of Our 2040 Vision exercise and the following 4 key themes from various consultation activities: •One Council: Working with you, for you •Preventative and Sustainable •Efficient and Modern •Innovative and Ambitious	31-Aug-2019		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. Following refresh of transformation and change programme the Services with Communities workstream sits within the One Council: Working with you, for you MFTS strand and a supporting programme of activity has been identified and is being taken forward by the Strategic Service Redesign Manager. Consultations to be negotiated on appendix A of the MTFS to take place March/April 2020 onwards. The council and its partners are working to a shared vision for the area through the Single Midlothian Plan and continues to work with its communities to deliver improvements. It is currently taking action to further improve its relationships with the third sector. A draft Compact document with the third sector was produced Dec 2019 Vision being used to inform Third sector climate funding bid. Climate change prioritisation work underway based on 2040 vision. Midlothian Council has declared a climate emergency and a 4th key priority is being considered for community planning. The new Compact between the Council and the Third Sector was agreed by Council in October 2020.

Update - The Route Map and strategy for recovery, is based on the creation of a Wellbeing Economy, designed to achieve wellbeing, inclusion and fairness for our communities and to protect and enhance our environment. Our overarching principle is that in delivering services, whether commissioned internally or externally, that we keep our communities, our employees and our environment safe minimising exposure to Covid-19, or any other harmful agent, at the same time as meeting our commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.

7. Elected members need to exercise appropriate scrutiny at all times, take ownership for personal development plans and take up relevant training opportunities.




Note that existing plans were superseded as a result of the Council's COVID-19 response and necessary changes introduced in the immediate, recovery and renewal phases.


Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Develop an Elected Member Development Programme (including use of 360 Tool)	30-Jun-2020 TBA		60%	Q4 20/21: Update - As noted previously and in an update report to CMT in December 2020, an outline programme has been identified and whilst further engagement is required with members to identified individual session content, elected member briefings/seminars have continued to be delivered and recorded for those sessions identified as particular areas of interest. The recent lockdown has delayed progress of those areas noted within the development programme and the due date initially reset to end of June 2021.
Introduce an Elected Member Learning and Development commitment and personal development plans?	30-Jun-2020 TBA		60%	Q4 20/21: Update - As noted in report to CMT December 2020 Personal Development Plans have been made available to all members and some individual PDPs have been completed. The due date has been extended to allow for the delay caused due to the further lockdown and a final review of take-up will be completed over the coming months.
Re-establish a central Training Records system for Elected Members	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q2 20/21: Complete – Process set up to capture scheduled development sessions activity centrally prior to Covid-19, further checks carried out in Q2 confirmed process was still in place.
Improve the quality of reports to ensure they are readily understood and Elected Members are clear on what decisions they are being asked to make.	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q2 20/21: Complete - In order to support the virtual meeting environment members are required operate within during and following the initial lockdown a virtual meeting protocol and revised reporting template were introduced to provide further clarity of the purpose of the report and key information required.

Update - The arrival of the pandemic and the 'new' normal as a result has resulted in the need to revisit the type of development and the delivery options which would suit members moving forward. Engagement with the Improvement Service following the initial progress through the Route Map phases will better inform options for development moving forward. In addition, to support members' transition to a virtual meeting environment a new protocol and reporting template were introduced. Ongoing engagement with members regarding developing a programme has continued throughout the period.

8. The council should continue to build on positive elements of community empowerment. It should look to increase community ownership of local neighbourhood plans and work with communities to improve how they monitor progress.

A number of the actions associated with this recommendation were complete prior to March 2020.

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
Introduce a formal mechanism for reporting against all Neighbourhood Plans	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete A mechanism for reporting NP progress is in place, with updates going to the Community planning working group.
Review community engagement, capacity and ownership of Neighbourhood Plans and potential opportunities for wider membership of community councils or formalising wider network of community groups	30-Jun-2020		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. Community councils constitution allows for 16 year olds upwards to join, links have been made with Midlothian youth platform through the CPP planning process . CC's have taken ownership of neighbourhood plans in rural communities where they are now a standing item on agendas. Some CC"s have co-opted community groups to membership through the powers in the revised constitutions. Federation and other third sector groups will be lead partners in review of NP processes.
Review possible declining trend in Citizens Panel questions: •Ability to influence decisions •Involvement in community and identify areas for improvement	31-Dec-2019		100%	Q3 19/20: Complete. Areas for improvement have been identified, and actions have begun, see notes below : Adult Citizens panel returns reduced in this year's summer survey, but an additional 350 children and young people took part in a modified citizen's panel process. A refresh of panel members is now planned The review of neighbourhood planning is underway. This will consider the ways that communities can exert greater influence on the SMP. Discussions have been held with colleagues in Council about the new place planning rights under the Planning Act 2019, the new economic development strategy town centre regeneration goals, and the Public health "healthy places "initiative. Participatory budgeting approach to elected members local environmental improvement budget is underway in Dalkeith and Danderhall. 4 community asset transfers have now been agreed at council all have required community support, 3 formal participation requests have been received and dealt with; Town centre master planning in Mayfield is being led by 5 anchor community organisations supported by the Council. The Federation of community councils has been undertaking further training to increase their capacity to represent residents. The Council undertook stakeholder consultation on the medium term financial strategy. A Place standard approach involving residents in defining core issues in their communities has been undertaken in Bonnyrigg, Mayfield, Gorebridge, Dalkeith and Penicuik so far. The Bonnyrigg place standard weekend engagement event involved slightly over 2500 people. The IJB undertook an extensive public engagement process to devise its most recent plan. Stakeholder joint planning groups continue to influence planning of adult health and social care services. The champions group of care experienced young people influence the planning of care services. The 100 day challenge on mental health support for young people resulted from survey work undertaken by Midlothian Youth platform and involved young people directly in redesigning services and support. Each parent council and pupil council is engaged in developing how learning is delivered. A formal participation request around the new Gorebridge Secondary school has been received and responded to. Early pre – formal

Action	Due Date	Status	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
				consultation process has begun in relation to the A701 secondary school. Public engagement processes on Community Asset transfer have been undertaken in relation to Bonnyrigg After school club, Loanhead after school club and Bonnyrigg Rose Community Football Club asset transfer requests. Service user joint planning groups have participated in the delivery of a new Community Justice plan Service user joint planning groups have participated in the delivery of a new IJB delivery plan Third sector summits are held with IJB directorate, the third sector adult and youth and children's forums meet regularly with Council , the youth and children work group meet each week before the GIRFEMC board to agree points they wish to raise on the agendas and responses to proposals coming from CPP partners
Review future models (as a result of reduced internal capacity) for working with communities in designing and delivering services	01-Aug-2022		30%	Q3 20/21: A capacity building model is being undertaken to increase the skills, knowledge and experience across the council to support key staff to be able to work with communities from different Council sectors to co design and deliver services. The most recent joint work in this area has been with regard to Neighbourhood Services which involved local representatives and the third sector being supported to engage and influence service design.

Update - The Route Map and strategy for recovery, is based on the creation of a Wellbeing Economy, designed to achieve wellbeing, inclusion and fairness for our communities and to protect and enhance our environment. Our overarching principle is that in delivering services, whether commissioned internally or externally, that we keep our communities, our employees and our environment safe minimising exposure to Covid-19, or any other harmful agent, at the same time as meeting our commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.

Midlothian's Future Vision

Built on staff insights and grounded in the 9 drivers for change

