

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 3 2024/25

Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

The new Single Midlothian Plan focuses on three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In recent Census results, Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland with an increase of 16%. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas living a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success.

The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5 year funding gap of £29.121 million 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 fit for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way as well as utilising our assets to maximise their potential.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in integrated service delivery which improve community outcomes.

Following approval from Council, this quarter saw the formal launch of our **Workforce Strategy 2024-34** and **Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29**. The strategies are a core elements of the council's Transformation Blueprint and will support the council's medium-term financial strategy (2023-2028).

Workforce Strategy 2024-34 is accompanied by a 3-year short-term action plan and the strategic aim are:

- **Plan:** deliver an evidence and outcome-based workforce planning framework that is an integral part of the council's approach to strategic planning.
- **Attract:** ensure the council becomes the employer of choice for the population of Midlothian, by deploying best practice in attracting the best staff.
- **Train:** enable the council to become a "Learning Organisation", providing staff with business-focused training and development to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to deliver their best.
- **Employ:** ensure Fair Work principles continue to be at the heart of management practice, ensuring staff are, and feel, valued and rewarded.
- **Nurture:** create a workforce and leadership culture focusing on the health and wellbeing of a demographically balanced workforce that reflects the community it serves.

Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29 outlines the key priority areas the Council will focus on over the next 5 years, harnessing digital tools, technology and data. The key areas are:

- **Automate:** For an Efficient, Modern Council
- **Reimagine:** Transform Service Delivery
- **Data:** Deeper Insights and Preventative Operations
- **Secure and Sustain:** Protect and Preserve

Whilst a full update for the performance for each of the Council's Service areas is published separately, this report reflects a summary of the key service updates, against the thematic areas of the Single Midlothian Plan.

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier – Achievements

The Midlothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) plan and direct delegated health and social care services for the people of Midlothian. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) oversees the delivery of all the services delegated to Midlothian IJB. The aim of integrated health and social care is for the people to experience more joined up treatment and care.

Achievements from Public Health include:

- **Learning Disability Team** – the St Cuthberts supporting living project is nearing completion with the first tenants having moved in. The core and cluster service consists of 8 flats with 24/7 on site support.
- **Older People's Social Work Team** – an event arranged by the Older People's Assembly in November provided the opportunity to discuss supports and community resources and resulted in positive feedback and allowed for networking and information sharing. The annual Older People's newsletter containing information on services and community groups was distributed throughout Midlothian.
- **Hospital In Reach Social Work Team** – currently working on an improvement plan to ensure connections between home care, rehabilitation service and community services are robust, rapidly accessible with timescales for action, evaluated and managed at the delay meeting were all people experiencing delayed discharge are discussed.
- **Newbyres Village Care Home** – successful Christmas Fair raised significant funds for the activities.
- Public Health Scotland facilitated a **Suicide Critical Response workshop** which has helped establish a baseline for our response to suicide in Midlothian and will help develop the 3-year strategy going forward.
- **Midlothian SUS treatment service** Q3 performance predicted 100%, for all individuals referred to the service both for Substance misuse and Alcohol dependency were seen and assessed/treatment started within 21 days. The service received 44 new referrals over Q3, of which 23 referrals were for alcohol and 21 for Drugs.
- Reviewed and updated quarter 3 data for the **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** working alongside data colleagues in NHS Lothian Intelligence team and published on the Health and Social Care Partnership website. The data provided within the JSNA are of the highest quality and this work has received recognition as a national exemplar by Public Health Scotland and the model has since been adopted by other IJBs. The update was presented to Midlothian IJB's Strategic Planning Group on Thursday 16th January 2025.

The **Near Me** programme, funded by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and the Scottish Government Technology-Enabled Care programme have supported the launch of 2 hubs in Midlothian (in Dalkeith and Gorebridge Libraries) enabling people who lack digital access, digital skills or a confidential space at home to have a remote consultation with health and social care staff. This saves time and travel costs and increases equitable uptake of health services. Library staff are on hand to provide assistance if needed.

Tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of 4,872 memberships up to the end of quarter 3. An increase of 7.6% compared from last quarter. The Sport and Leisure mobile app makes it easier for customer to access and manage their account, book classes, get live pool updates, news and Active Schools information. By the end of quarter 3 the app has over 8,000 users.

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 1,307 Midlothian Active Choices attendees with 364 new referrals received after completion of MAC sessions showing an increase of 7% compared to the same period last year.

The rolling programme of **Wellness@Midlothian** initiatives continues to support the positive health and wellbeing of our staff. This quarter 24 wellbeing events were held covering financial support, carer support, physical wellbeing and information sessions. A total of 324 staff attended various events which is a 95% increase from attendees last quarter.

Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements

This theme aims to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, working with a range of individuals and organisations within community justice. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 supported a redesign of the community justice system, transferring the responsibilities for reducing offending and reoffending to local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). A National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) and National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (2023) were published by the Scottish Government to outline the new model.

Individuals become formally involved with Justice Social Work at the point of conviction when a Court makes a request for a Justice Social Work Report; requests for assessment and risk management planning are received from the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board. Between 1 October and 31 December 2024, the team **received 170 requests** for reports, a **reduction of 3.4%** on last quarter.

Staff in the Justice Service work with men and women subject to Community Payback Orders who present with a wide range of presenting risk and needs. This includes individuals with **mental health, substance use, adverse childhood experiences, trauma and negative experiences** of education and or employment. Staff working within Justice Services require the appropriate level of support and training to enable them to effectively engage with people to progress **interventions towards positive changes** in behaviour. An important part of ensuring that men and women in the justice system have ease of access to services and resources is the provision of robust community-based alternatives to custodial sentences as it enables individuals to remain in their community, **maintain relationships** and ensures continuity of care.

The main community-based sentence is a Community Payback Order (CPO), which can have several requirements attached to it. The most frequently imposed requirements are Supervision and Unpaid Work. During **Q3** the **Courts imposed 42 Community Payback Orders**.

The work undertaken by our Unpaid Work Team is underpinned by the ideals of **reparation, rehabilitation and reintegration** to support those who have been convicted of offences to achieve a positive destination and provide meaningful benefit to our local communities. Those

undertaking unpaid work have the opportunity to gain a range of **skills**, experiences and opportunities to promote their rehabilitation and ability to **desist from offending**.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child – Achievements

In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026, is a statutory three-year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people, and families.

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups:

1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

We are fully committed to realising a children's rights approach to all of our work and ensuring that we embed the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside our Promise commitments.

The Promise – Midlothian continues to progress towards the key foundations of The Promise Scotland Plan 2024- 2030. Committed to listening and acting on the feedback from the voices of our care experienced children and families, in Q2 we secured a 3 year contact with Who Cares? Scotland to support delivery of a participation strategy and to re-fresh our current 'champion's boards'. This work is currently being shared across the entirety of Midlothian and wider partnerships to raise awareness of The Promise and Corporate Parenting duties.

Family Wellbeing Service – A new Team Leader was appointed in November and the service continues to work alongside families, schools, health and third sector partners to support children and their families to improve low school attendance, and other wellbeing concerns.

Team Around the Child (High School) – Team Around the Child (TATC) allows multi agency discussion about a child and their family's needs, to create a plan about which service within the council or third sector are best placed to provide support in a timely manner. Feedback from Education service colleagues about the TATC High School process has been positive, with people sharing that the structure and process of TATC HS is clear and supportive.

Foster Carers – The Family Centred Care team arranged a Christmas celebration for children, young people and their carer as 'Jump In' and foster carers were also offered tickets for the Pantomime.

Disability – Development of a discrete disability team supports the Business Transformation Project focused on improving transitions across Education, Children's Services and Adult Services. The introduction of the team will support better tracking of our young people who will need support as they move into adulthood.

The **Education Service Plan** is informed by and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board. Key priorities are to raise attainment and achievement to ensure that all children and young people in Midlothian achieve outcomes which lead to positive and sustained destinations. The Service Improvement Plan has four main workstreams:

- Learning, teaching, assessment & curriculum
- Attendance & engagement
- Relationships, wellbeing & care and
- Inclusion, equity & targeted supports

The raising attainment team continues to be prioritised to work in primary schools with the lowest attainment and/or are in the improvement Q1 category. The team works alongside teachers and school leaders to plan, teach and engage in Numeracy and Literacy CLPL.

Learning Technologists continue to work with class teachers to plan and co-deliver digital learning sessions for young people, based on a consistent core offer. 199 sessions have been completed since August 2024.

Attendance dashboard has been further developed, providing schools with data monthly and including tracking of numbers at different attendance bands to inform intervention. New tracking systems have ensured accurate tracking and monitoring of attendance for children supported by CLLE and Pathways.

Outcomes this academic year include:

- Individual school data on attainment and achievement reflects positive impact of interventions.
- Attainment and achievement data demonstrates improved positive outcomes for all learners with ASN.
- Improved attendance data in all schools and settings.
- Reduction in exclusions.
- Reduction in violent incidents.
- Midlothian Learner's Plans and Personal Support Plans are in place for all learners who require one.
- Transition Planning for post school destinations is in place for 14+ learners with additional support needs.
- Systems and processes with robust terms of reference are in place for the allocation of additional resource.
- SEEMiS data recording for ASN is up to date and accurate.

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. 225 activities were delivered this quarter, an increase from 197 delivered during quarter 3 last year. 3,013 participants attended Active Schools free extra-curricular club which is an increase of 7.5% 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 2,128 volunteers compared to 1,972 during quarter 3 of 23/24.

Midlothian will Support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities - Achievements

The vision for this is to reduce the gaps in learning, economic circumstances and poverty.

The new **CLD Partnership Plan 2024 to 2027** was approved and endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board and approved by Midlothian Council on 17th December 2024.

In the last three quarters 4,697 people have engaged with CLLE services across 426 opportunities. 281 home visits were carried out. 353 people accessing our services live in SIMD 20% and 1,777 in SIMD 40%. In addition, 40 community groups have received support and advice from CLLE.

In Q3 the **No One Left Behind (NOLB)** All Age Employability team have continued to provide support to 198 people, with 59 new starts this quarter. The team has continued to support 244 existing parents on our caseloads from the year 24-25 and a further 67 new parents started in quarter 3.

Youth Work - Universal and targeted youth work is progressing well in all clusters from P5 up to 18-year-olds. 12 young people from the Young Carers CLLE group have successfully completed the Ocean Youth Trust 7-day voyage, which is an amazing achievement by these young people. Street work is actively taking place on Friday evenings, and this is in targeted in areas based on Police intelligence.

255 local people have enrolled in the paid for **adult learning programme** which is offering a variety of courses such as Spanish, French, Painting, Dress Making and national qualifications including Nat 5 Maths. There are also a variety of community-based adult learning and family learning activities on offer.

As part of our effort to reduce **Child Poverty** Children's Services fund three income maximisation projects. These projects support families subject to Child Protection processes or those engaged with Hawthorn Family Learning centre and the Family Wellbeing Service. The three projects continue to support families to access their entitled benefits, grants and reduce debts. Over Q3 the projects collectively generated **£132,570 income for 49 families**.

Library services continue to transform and thrive in responding to the needs of our communities. This quarter figures show:

- library visits remain high with an 11% increase in total visits compared to quarter 2 and an 8% increase compared to the same period last year.
- 155,290 physical library visits were made this quarter, an increase of 13% from the previous quarter and 7% compared to the same period last year.
- 40,885 virtual library visits were made this quarter, an 7% increase compared to this period last year.
- membership continues to increase with a 9% rise in members compared to the same period last year and a 2% compared to last quarter.
- 2,151 library events were held during quarter 3 which is an increase of 45% from the same period last year.
- Book Week Scotland in November saw 79 events held with 586 adults and 2,159 children attending which is a 20% increase from last year.

Libraries play a crucial role in supporting communities with **digital access**, learning and support and in preventing digital exclusion. 709 customers were supported with digital queries this quarter including general IT help, assisting customers to access services online such as job searches, benefits, universal credit and assist in making payments online. There has been an 18% increase in support given this quarter compared to the same period last year.

The new **Library Natter Project** was launched on the 12 December with a focus on Dalkeith community and creating a safe place for people to sit, relax and chat and meet other library users while learning about and engaging with wider Council services and community organisations.

Completed the transfer in ownership of the Poltonhall Sports Complex in December, to Bonnyrigg Rose Community Football Club (BRCFC) in implementation of the decision of the **Community Asset Transfer** Committee.

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements

The Climate Emergency Group's and Community Planning Partnership vision is *significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030*. Our values are to get to net zero equitably, taking into account different people and communities' capacities and abilities to get there. The Group consists of individuals and representatives of Midlothian Community Councils, Community Groups, national government agencies, Third Sector organisations, Midlothian Council, local chamber of commerce, landowners and Midlothian Energy Ltd.

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) forms part of the local development plan for Midlothian and will also be the strategic basis that future plans and applications will need to take into account.

The biggest sources of carbon emissions in Midlothian are still domestic uses (30.5%) and transport (27.5%). Therefore, this theme will concentrate on reducing carbon emissions in the areas of domestic heating/power and transport to get to Net Zero.

Thematic actions are designed to increase awareness, promote reflection and action on the key Climate Emergency issues of energy, food and travel. They will lead to a better understanding of carbon emissions and greater investment in greener travel, renewable heat, energy sources and heating efficiency in Midlothian. The actions will help inform and give people the opportunity to get involved to make a difference. Midlothian's future will be different through having more people aware and engaged in Climate Emergency issues, both consciously and subconsciously. This will make Midlothian more resilient to the effects of Climate Change and in addition help contribute more widely to Climate Change resilience.

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

Outcome 3: Low Carbon/Renewable Energy Development and Home Energy Saving is Increased

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy which 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. Focus continues within Place services to achieve future emissions targets. This quarter Council were asked to consider the findings of the Climate Action Support Report (CASR) prepared by Aether consultants relating to climate emission reduction trajectories for the Council's estate. A refresh of our Climate Change Strategy and underlying action plan is in development to support the Council and wider local authority partners in their collective journey to net zero across Midlothian.

This quarter saw the official opening of **Midlothian Energy Limited (MEL) Centre** which will capture low carbon heat from the Millerhill Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre and use this heat to supply 1,000s of homes, education and retail properties at Shawfair. Council endorsed a 5-year business plan for Midlothian Energy Limited that includes future plans to supply low carbon heat to new homes in Midlothian through the MEL heat network and expansion into

existing buildings and other areas of Midlothian. The first home is now connected to the heat network at Craighall Village (CALA) and Plot Connection Agreement is also in place with Robertsons in Shawfair.

Our new **Active Travel Strategy 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034'** was approved this quarter at December Council. The strategy will allow Midlothian Council to continue to seek further funding from 2025/26 onwards for active travel projects throughout Midlothian. The new strategy will lead the way in providing safe, convenient, well connected and well maintained active travel networks.

Economic Development continues to promote the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** with businesses signing up to the Pledge continuing to rise each quarter with a total of 169 businesses now committed, 22 of those signing up during quarter 3.

During quarter 3, the waste services launched the recycling app (**LitterLotto**) which encourages residents to recycle at home for the chance to be entered into a free prize draw for £100 each month as well as a £1,000 UK wide free prize draw.

The new **Neighbourhood Environment Team** became fully established within the Recycling and Greenspace Service this quarter. 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.

The **Greenspace Team** have continued to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian, supporting 6 volunteer groups who help manage our countryside sites. Our volunteer groups provide added value to the work that we do with litter picking, gardening and fund raising to brighten our local areas. Up to and including this quarter, 5,107 volunteer hours (851 days) were spent in countryside sites. This quarter the Park Ranger Service hosted a Christmas 'thank you' celebration for our volunteers and our ageing well volunteer leaders. During the quarter the Ranger service also delivered the Midlothian Outdoor Festival attracting over 1,500 participants to a wide range of outdoor activities

Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected – Achievements

A wellbeing economy aims to deliver increased economic opportunities for all, providing meaningful and fair work, better outcomes for young people, sustainable places, improved health outcomes, reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

The **Midlothian Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2025-2030**, a comprehensive plan aimed at fostering a wellbeing economy that supports local residents, communities and businesses was approved by Council in November. The strategy aims to create an economy that benefits all residents, ensuring opportunity and fair work for everyone through collaboration, inclusivity, innovation, and ambition. The strategy aligns with Local and National Plans, including the Single Midlothian Plan 2023-2027, and focuses on the following strategic priorities:

- Develop Midlothian's proposition within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region
- Enhance skills and employability opportunities in Midlothian, to meet the challenges and opportunities of inclusive Green Growth with entrepreneurship recognised as valuable career pathway
- Maximise the potential of Midlothian's key sectors to support a Just Transition
- Capitalise on the strengths of Midlothian's strategic partners to embed community wealth

across all services to realise a wellbeing economy

- Re-imagine our town centres, ensuring they meet Midlothian's economic, social, cultural and environmental needs
- Deliver infrastructure enhancements that will support Midlothian's transition to a Wellbeing Economy

The **Business Gateway Midlothian Service** continues to offer consistent levels of activity across various support services, from pre-start to start-up and existing business growth support. 44 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received in quarter 3. The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 17, creating a total of 23 jobs and an estimated contribution of £1,230,000 to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. As part of the Business Gateway Service redesign, quarter 3 saw the launch of new CRM tools; 'customer categories' and the 'progress tracker'.

The second cohort of the Learn Ecommerce Expert Help programme went live in December with 14 local businesses enrolled. The programme will continue through January with one to one and group sessions with the Learn Ecommerce Expert Help provider. The Net Zero Nation 12 month Programme which supported 13 diverse local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey finished in December 2024. The popularity of our HR Expert Help programme has meant the budget was fully allocated in November 2024. 21 local businesses took advantage of the support since launch in March 2023.

A Business Gateway Midlothian Coffee Morning held on the 8th of November 2024 at the Energy Training Academy with a focus on sustainability, saw 23 businesses attend.

A total of £374,813.36 of grant funding was allocated to 3 themes, Community Wealth Building, Tourism Culture & Heritage and Exporting with the final tranche of funds allocated this quarter. Over the course of the programme we have distributed 31 grants.

The **Alpine coaster** at Midlothian Snowsports Centre opened successfully on the 14th of September. After a successful communications campaign the coaster was fully booked since its opening weekend to the 13th of October with 11,479 tickets being sold. This quarter a further 18,779 tickets were sold.

Nominated for 2 **Scottish Property Awards** (Regeneration and Education) for Buccleuch Street Passivhaus housing and Easthouses Primary School.

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty – Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty. 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 as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented.

The Council's **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 to 2029/30** was submitted to the Scottish Government in October 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.

From March 2024 to date we have received the completed handover for 119 new build homes (23 this quarter) in Conifer Road, Mayfield, St Cuthberts in Bonnyrigg High Street, Buccleuch Wynd, Pathhead and Danderhall. The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was 53 this quarter, reducing the need for multiple moves before being permanently housed, allowing for links established within the local community to be maintained.

There were 5,971 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this quarter, a 9% increase compared to the same period last year. 152 lets were made this quarter (averaging 50 lets per month), 4 houses were let through our Housing First model. 40 lets were made to new build and open market purchases. Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this quarter with 91.8% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

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 196. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

Midlothian House Project – The fifth cohort of young people to be supported by the project started in Q3. There are currently forty-six young people involved with the project. Young people and colleagues held a stall at the Care leavers National Movement Conference in November showcasing the Midlothian House Project and one of our young people spoke at the conference sharing their experience of leaving care and being supported by the team.

This quarter we have increased the percentage of Council Housing stock meeting the **Scottish Housing Quality Standards** criteria to 80.29%. Although this is still off target there has been a significant increase from 49.3% meeting standards at quarter 3 of last year. Work is progressing to bring this indicator back on target.

The percentage of Secondary **School meal uptake** this quarter has increased to 40.89% and continues to sit above the APSE average of 36.23%. 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 3 was 59.56% and again remains steady compared to previous quarters. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24%. The percentage of school meal food waste has decreased to 4.24% from 5.15% compared to the same period last year.

To coincide with **Challenge Poverty Week** our four **Warm and Well Hubs** in Danderhall, Lasswade, Loanhead and Newbattle Libraries were relaunched. The coat collection point was relaunched at Dalkeith Library and a new one was launched at Loanhead Library. We have worked in partnership with a number of other services including Community Lifelong Learning & Employability, Citizens Advice Bureau, Ageing Well and Changeworks, to host workshops and drop-in sessions providing advice on benefits, home energy efficiency, household budgeting and Cost of Living support and advice. Danderhall Library now has a pop-up pantry, working with the Cyrenians and Penicuik Library is now a collection point for food parcels from the Midlothian Food Bank rather than people having to travel to Gorebridge.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2024/25 budget at its meeting on 27 February 2024. Whilst the 2024/25 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges. Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council.

Economic pressures: Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction industry in Scotland. The UK is experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. The pandemic has also accelerated financial challenges, and the growth from being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland places significant pressure on Midlothian to be able to deliver high quality services to its citizens.

Growing Council: The recent 2022 Census results have now been published. Between 2011 to 2022 data shows that Midlothian had an increase in population 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. In addition, Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges, as they feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services, in particular local authorities. Requests for crisis funding continue to remain consistently high compared to last year with a 3% increase in applications received. 100% of our total Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget up to and including the quarter has been allocated. However, the Scottish Government granted Midlothian a further £260,000 in December with a further £37,000 for administration. 5,109 applications were received for Crisis Grants and 931 received for Community Care Grants up to and including this quarter. This demonstrates the continued significant financial challenges faced by our communities.

Workforce Challenges: There are workforce challenges across a range of services including health and social care, social work and regulatory services due to on-going pressures in the wider workforce availability which impacts on recruitment.

Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q3 24/25

Midlothian Council - How we are Performing-



PI Off Target i

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
BS.MC.MPI.17 % of internal/external audit actions progressing on target.		69.88%	85%	Q3 2024/25	
CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		91.9%	95.0%	Q3 2024/25	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		76.74%	95%	Q3 2024/25	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		90%	95%	Q3 2024/25	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		86.96%	95%	Q3 2024/25	

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