

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 1 2023/24



Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

Individuals and communities in Midlothian will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

Our 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

As the fastest growing local authority in Scotland, Midlothian will see a growth rate between now and 2028 of 13.8% compared to the Scottish average of 1.8%. Our demographic profile shows growth in all age groups but particularly acute in the 0-15 years and over 75 age groups and therefore there will be significant demand for early years, schools and older people's services. 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.

Whilst a full update for the performance for each of the Council's Service areas is published separately, this report reflects an overview 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

This theme brings together 60 services, parts of Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian to help everyone in Midlothian live well and get the right support when they need it. To achieve this, progress must be made towards the aims of Midlothian IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan, with Community Planning Partners, and contribute to the strategic aims of both NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council. In order to meet the legal requirements of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, the HSCP was required to develop, consult on, and publish a new 3 year Strategic Plan in 2022. The new [Strategic Plan for 2022-25](#) was published in April 2022.

Outcome 1: Midlothian Care and Support Community Cooperative
Outcome 2: Falls Prevention and Support
Outcome 3: Digital Self-Management Platform

Outcome 4: Early Identification and Support for People Living with Frailty

Adult Social Care is leading on the first of these outcomes to explore and define the demand for and the benefit of Midlothian Care and Support Community Co-operative that facilitates personalised support for carers, identifies local assets, and enhances local economic value. A Midlothian Care and Support Community Cooperative will provide carers with an increased range of resources and advice through a community-based support network, allowing more flexible support, more choice, and more control for carers in decisions that affect them and the person they care for.

Last year, 17% of carers did not feel they had a say in the services provided for the person they look after. This number rose to 31% for those caring for someone due to substance use. 38% of carers did not feel services were well coordinated and described additional stress caused by having to speak to several organisations to get support. Carers in Midlothian told us they would like to see more services in their local communities at a time that suits them and was provided in one place. We anticipate that a Community Cooperative will help carers find the right support, in the right place at the right time.

Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership contracts services from approximately 40 organisations to support people and communities. This is approximately 33% of the total Adult Social Care budget.

Adult Services teams support people with a range of needs to live independently and access the right care, at the right time. Our work to support unpaid carers helps them to focus on their own health and wellbeing and enable them to continue in their caring role. The Welfare Rights team help people to claim welfare benefits, and make sure they receive all the benefit income they are entitled to. The majority of direct support is provided by services commissioned from external organisations.

In Q1, Over 100 people came along to the Beacon in Gorebridge on Wednesday 3rd May for a free and fun Health event for people with a Learning Disability and their carers. Q1 also saw the start of a themed Care Inspectorate/HIS inspection of our services for people with Physical Disabilities, Long Term conditions and their carers.

Older Peoples Services ensures that people over 65 receive person-centred care to live well in their community for as long as possible. This includes a range of service offers, support and equipment to help people live independently at home. These services provide support that often means people don't need to go to hospital, or supports people recover in their own home when they leave hospital. Q1 saw the phased reintroduction of respite provision at Highbank with an initial 2 beds opening for respite use.

Public Health team support staff to design and deliver services that support early intervention and prevention, and make connections and share good practice about how to avoid inequalities, monitoring and evaluating long term, population level outcomes.

Mental Health and Substance Use service includes Integrated Mental Health Teams and Substance Use who work in partnership with people to achieve their personal health and wellbeing goals. Over Q1 the Dementia Team, which is an integrated Council and NHS Team, have been nominated for Team of the Year in the NHS Lothian Celebrating Success Awards (due to be held in September 2023). The Substance Use Service successfully implemented the first 5 Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards. Q1 also saw an increase of 33 per cent compared to Q1 of 2022 for individuals accessing digital support through Midspace.

Midlothian and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP) plans, commissions, and funds a network of services for people affected by their own or someone else's alcohol or drug use. Support is available for families and adult carers, and recovery-focused services are provided to address people's alcohol and drug use.

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.

Participation, engagement and consultation between statutory partners; non-statutory partners; Third Sector organisations; people in communities; survivors and witnesses of crime; people that have an offending history and families of people with an offending history on their views on ways to reduce offending and re-offending will be reflected in our [Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan](#) (CJOIP). The initial process has identified themes that will be prevalent within the national landscape, which include factors of uncertainty such as the needs of people

alongside availability of resources. These are themes that will require consideration throughout the life span of this CJOIP.

We want to tackle inequalities and marginalised populations through trauma and survivor focussed objectives. The plan will lead in innovative approaches to reduce stigmatisation of Justice and criminological factors, ensuring systems are trauma informed and support people to reach their full potential. The intended outcome is that people can live in Midlothian free of fear and harm. The plan outlines new and alternative approaches in supporting people affected by crime or involved in the Justice System.

Outcome: Midlothian Communities will be Safer

Justice Service and Protection supports people involved in the Parole and Pre-release process including the preparation of Criminal Justice Social Work Reports and pre-release reports. The team supervises people aged 18 and over who are subject to Community Payback Orders, Parole, Life and Non-Parole Licences, Extended Sentences and Supervised Released Orders. Social Workers in the Duty Team support people aged 16 and over with crisis interventions, urgent and planned assessments, development of adult care support plans, reviews, and short-term interventions.

The Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Team works to keep people safe by considering all suspicions, disclosures or actual harm are acted upon (216 referrals in Q1, compared with 235 in Q1 of 2022/23). This helps us provide the right support to protect vulnerable adults in Midlothian, by developing outcome focused care plans.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child - Achievements

The Getting It Right for Every Child theme oversees the effective delivery of the Integrated Children's Services Plan which is built around a set of core principles. Our vision for children and young people in Midlothian is to *have the best possible start in life and live safe, healthy, active, happy and independent lives*.

Based on the national Getting it right for every child wellbeing framework a set of priority actions has been developed which will make a significant contribution towards achieving the wellbeing outcomes. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) are fully committed to realising the children's rights approach and ensuring that the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded in plans taken forward.

Outcome 1: Midlothian Children and Young People are Healthy, Active and Nurtured
Outcome 2: Midlothian Children and Young People are Achieving and Responsible
Outcome 3: Midlothian Children and Young People are Respected and Included
Outcome 4: Midlothian Children and Young People are Safe and Nurtured

Overall library visits (virtual and physical combined) have increased by 30% based on the same period last year with a 48% increase in physical visits. Library memberships remain steady with just under a third of the population of Midlothian registered as library members. A total of 1,321 events took place between April – June 2023 and 892 children's library initiatives.

Work is being progressed around gaining a clearer understanding on how all referrals come into Children's Services. Although there is a 9% increase in referrals for Q1 from Q1 2022, within the last three months from Q4 2022, to Q1 2023, there has been a 12% decrease in referrals which is positive and may be as a result of the work we have started.

The Family Wellbeing Service are already working with over 100 children and young people.

Looked After away from home population is continuing to decrease which is testament to the workforce ensuring that they support families to remain together, where safe to do so. The introduction of Family Group decision making, supports families to devise a plan which promotes families staying together with support from extended family, it is too early to advise if this is reason for this consistent decline in numbers. Conversely child protection registrations are rising, a high percentage of registrations are as a result of domestic abuse. We shall monitor this position going forward.

Focus continues on the following 5 priority areas within Education:

Priority 1: Attainment and Achievement
Priority 2: Included, Involved and Engaged: Wellbeing & Equity
Priority 3: Self-improving Systems
Priority 4: Life-Long Learning and Career-Ready Employability
Priority 5: Finance & Resources

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

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

The [Community Learning and Development Partners Strategic Plan 2021-24](#) aims to build skills for learning, life and work and supporting communities to improve outcomes through community development approaches. The [No One Left Behind plan 2022-25](#) is aimed to address the needs of Midlothian residents seeking employability support. It sets out how the Council and partners will work together to offer a range of targeted programmes and support for all.

Poverty and in-work poverty continues to increase due to the rise in the cost of living, particularly food and energy costs. This means that more individuals and families are struggling to support themselves and provide for their basic needs. As one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland, the Council cannot support more customers using the current resources, systems and processes. This means that the adoption of digital and automated processes will be key to continuing to provide a seamless customer journey, satisfying enquiries at the first point of contact and meeting increased demand.

Outcome 1: Improve employability outcomes for Midlothian residents

Outcome 2: Local people will have increased opportunities to influence decisions through work with public sector, Third Sector and community capacity building

Outcome 3: Improve the breadth, quality and impact of informal and formal lifelong learning including access to qualifications

Outcome 4: Enhance the impact of Police Scotland's priorities to support the communities through the work of the Police Scotland Local Authority Liaison Officer

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, land owners and Midlothian Energy Ltd.

The [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#), published on 13 February 2023, now 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 and focus continues within Place services to achieve future emissions targets. Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge. Last year 50 businesses committed to the Pledge and a further 3 this quarter.

Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies draw on a standardised methodology. In conjunction with consultants, Midlothian are now at Stage 4 of the methodology and are currently reviewing the findings and in discussion with key stakeholders regarding the confirmation of data, and identification, review and potential priorities. A LHEES lead officer post has been advertised this quarter.

Air Quality Progress Reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 were accepted by Scottish Government and SEPA. Work has now begun on the 2022-23 report.

The delivery of 1,796 new LED lanterns were completed this quarter and in addition, 304 lighting column replacements were also installed this quarter. External funding of £20,030 awarded from the Material Focus Electrical Recycling Fund to allow a trial kerbside collection of small electrical appliances and batteries to be introduced.

Six new 12 tonne food waste collection vehicles have recently been delivered, including one funded from the Zero Waste Scotland Recycling Improvement Fund to allow the introduction of this service in rural, and previously excluded areas. A dedicated Project Officer will develop new collection routes during Q2. The Garden waste service re-started in March with 17,839 customers signed up to the service by the end of quarter 1, totalling 18,840 garden waste bins to be collected. Customer sign ups have reduced by 2.2% compared to the same period last year.

Work continues on our parks and greenspaces with 21 improvements/new facilities completed up to the end of quarter 1 with a further 29 improvements planned for this year. This quarter 1,962 volunteer hours were spent in countryside sites ensuring an attractive, safe and welcoming environment for all to enjoy.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1, now complete, provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1201, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 712 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress continues with 661 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. This includes the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 189 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents.

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.

To develop a wellbeing economy we will use Community Wealth Building (CWB) which is based around five interconnected pillars that centres on People, Place and Planet. Community Wealth Building changes the way local economies function by redirecting wealth into local economies, creating opportunities for the benefit local people. We have embedded three of the pillars into our delivery over the past two years and will continue to build on this work.

The [Regional Prosperity Framework \(RPF\) 2021](#) guides and integrates public, private and Third Sector decisions, actions, collaborations, strategies, policies and investments and sets out 3 key areas to support the rebuilding of the economy:

- people – to access fair work, to learn and develop new skills and to live happy and healthy lives
- places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work in and where enterprise thrives
- planet – meeting our needs in a way that will allow future generations to meet theirs, with a focus on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (sustainability).

The Economic Development priorities for the 2023/27 Single Midlothian Plan align to the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the wellbeing economy with people focussed outcomes that will also deliver local economic benefit.

Outcome 1: Develop a Midlothian Community Wealth Building Action Plan to guide future economic activity across the partnership

Outcome 2: Increase economic opportunity to maximise income, empowering individuals and communities

Outcome 3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship, increasing business knowledge, for current and future generations

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). This quarter 16 new Midlothian businesses were registered with the Supplier Development which is a significant increase compared to a total of 20 during 22/23. The Business Gateway service continue to promote the social enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model.

Working with our Procurement Team, Economic Development continue to identify upcoming procurement opportunities, promoting local procurement opportunities via digital channels and for any that suit a specific business the client is contacted directly.

Two officers were recruited this quarter via the Shared Prosperity Fund to progress our Community Wealth Building activities.

The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 24. This should realise a forecasted creation of 39 jobs, with estimated turnover in year 1 of £1.25m. 44 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received this quarter from individuals that are considering setting up a business but need support to achieve this.

The Locate in Midlothian website continues to be a valuable tool for employability opportunities and employment support with 58 property enquires received via the site during Q1, all enquirers contacted by Business Gateway advisors to offer wider support. This quarter, Property and Facilities updated their 'Estates' webpages resulting in an improved general enquires section and introduction of a new GDPR compliant offers invited page, both pages are now on our Locate in Midlothian website.

Our Estates team have had continued success in letting a number of properties within the existing PIA estate including two at the recently acquired Hardengreen Industrial Estate. Letting of office space at Hardengreen Business Centre and the newly acquired Hardengreen Business Park.

There were 4,714 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period. The total number of lets made to the general needs applicants this quarter was 90 and 55 made to homeless applicants. Re-let time for permanent properties has increased slightly to 27 days this quarter however remains significantly lower compared to this period last year at 45 days. The length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing outcome has further decreased this quarter to 58 weeks.

We have maintained the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award for over 9 years and work has commenced on the development of our Wellbeing Strategy which will focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing. The rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives continues this quarter to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff.

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.

During 2022/23 the Community Planning Partners created dedicated groups and designed new services to support communities through the cost of living crisis. The Strategic Poverty Prevention Group was set up with a focus on prevention and elected members created a formal Council Cost of Living Crisis Task Force which focused on mitigation. The learning from both these groups have informed the action plan.

The partnership will work together to increase the number of employers offering fair work in Midlothian and support local people to be in a strong position to secure higher paid jobs. Helping local people maximise their income by ensuring they know where to access support and how to claim the financial support available to them. Childcare and transport needs to meet the needs of individuals and families to support them to be able to take up and retain employment opportunities.

Outcome 1: Poverty and child poverty is reduced through use of partnership levers and resources

Outcome 2: Benefit income maximised for individuals and families and financial resilience is improved for low income households

Outcome 3: The most significant impacts of poverty on individuals and families are reduced

This quarter there is a 3% decrease in the number of live homelessness cases compared to last year due. During 2022/23, 114 households had their temporary accommodation converted to a permanent tenancy, all households who have been in their current accommodation, and accommodation suitable to be converted for over 3 months have been offered the opportunity to do so, leading to a 12% decrease in households in Temporary Accommodation. The Housing team are currently trialling a dedicated member of staff supporting tenants at risk of eviction. The number of homeless cases provided with advice and assistance this quarter was 448 and prevented from homeless was 114.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2023/24 budget at its meeting on 21 February 2023. Delivery is reliant on a combination of savings and service reductions and includes the use of retrospective service concession savings and earmarked Covid recovery reserves. Whilst the 2023/24 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years will be embedded in the Council's Strategic Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Close working continues with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Economic pressures: Inflation as well as rising energy costs are affecting the construction industry in Scotland and the UK is currently 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. Whilst measures such as value engineering are partially mitigating cost increase there is a risk that the capital budgets will need to be increased with a resultant impact on the funding strategy. The situation continues to be monitored however it has been necessary to review and prioritise the existing capital plans and also review the 2023/24 service budgets to implement savings measures in the year.

Growing Council: Midlothian is consistently projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland. From 2018 to 2028, the population of Midlothian is projected to increase from 91,340 to 103,945. This is an increase of 13.8%, which is in contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole, with a 40.9% increase in older people over 75. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas giving a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

National Care Service: The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Services (Scotland) Bill. If enacted, the bill would have fundamental implications for the community and for Local Government itself. The wide reaching changes in the bill aim to deliver a National Care Service by the end of the parliamentary term, which will impact on all aspects of the work of the Corporate Solutions team, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households is already being noted across the UK with 93% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in March 2023 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 10.4% is the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. The price rises will impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food.

The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force last year, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities.

Midlothian Council - How we are Performing-



PI Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
BS.MC.MPI.05 Performance against revenue budget		£287.019m	£283.793m	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	
CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		92.4%	95.0%	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		87.68%	95%	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		72%	95%	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	
BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		73.33%	95%	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →