

# Notice of Meeting and Agenda



## Cabinet

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Date:** Tuesday, 1 December 2020

**Time:** 11:00

**Executive Director:** Place

**Contact:**

Clerk Name: Gordon Aitken

Clerk Telephone: 0131 271 3159

Clerk Email: [gordon.aitken@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.aitken@midlothian.gov.uk)

.

## **1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

---

## **2 Order of Business**

---

Including notice of new business submitted as urgent for consideration at the end of the meeting

## **3 Declaration of Interest**

---

Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest

## **4 Minute of Previous Meeting**

---

- |            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| <b>4.1</b> | Minute of Meeting of the Cabinet of 20 October 2020 | 3-7 |
|------------|---|-----|

## **5 Public Reports**

---

- |            |   |       |
|------------|---|-------|
| <b>5.1</b> | Third Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report 2017-20 – Report by Chief Officer: Place | 8-39  |
| <b>5.2</b> | Adult Social Care Q2 Performance Report   | 40-45 |
| <b>5.3</b> | Children’s Services, Partnerships and Communities Q2 Report                       | 46-50 |
| <b>5.4</b> | Corporate Solutions Q2 Performance Report   | 51-59 |
| <b>5.5</b> | Education Q2 Performance Report   | 60-64 |
| <b>5.6</b> | Place Q2 Performance Report   | 65-68 |
| <b>5.7</b> | Midlothian Council Q2 Report  | 69-80 |

**(A) TO CONSIDER RESOLVING TO DEAL WITH THE UNDERNOTED BUSINESS IN PRIVATE IN TERMS OF PARAGRAPH 1 OF PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973 - THE RELEVANT REPORTS ARE THEREFORE NOT FOR PUBLICATION; AND (B) TO NOTE THAT NOTWITHSTANDING ANY SUCH RESOLUTION, INFORMATION MAY STILL REQUIRE TO BE RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 OR THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004.**

## **6 Private Reports**

---

- |            |   |       |
|------------|---|-------|
| <b>6.1</b> | Minutes of Education Appointment Committee of 24 September 2020 | 81-82 |
| <b>6.2</b> | Minutes of Education Appointment Committee of 25 September 2020 | 83-84 |
| <b>6.3</b> | Minutes of Education Appointment Committee of 14 October 2020   | 85-86 |

## **7 Date of Next Meeting**

---

Tuesday 19 January 2021 at 11.00am

# Minute of Meeting

Cabinet  
Tuesday 1 December 2020  
Item No 4.1



## Cabinet

Date	Time	Venue
20 October 2020	11.00 am	Held via Microsoft Teams

### Present:

Councillor Milligan - Convener	
Councillor Muirhead – Depute Convener	
Councillor Curran	
Councillor Imrie	
Councillor Hackett	

### Religious Representatives:

Mrs Elizabeth Morton	
----------------------	--

## 1 Apologies

---

Apologies for absence had been received on behalf of Vic Bourne.

## 2 Order of Business

---

The Order of Business was as detailed within the Agenda.

## 3 Declarations of interest

---

No declarations of interest were received.

## 4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

---

The Minute of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 September 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

## 5. Reports

---

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Integrated Children's Services Inspection Report	Chief Officer, Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
<p>The purpose of the report was to provide feedback from the recent Joint Children's Services for children and young people in need of care and support within Midlothian and the areas for improvement highlighted.</p> <p>Formal feedback in relation to the inspection was received on 6 July 2020 with the following grades awarded;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership and Direction – GOOD</li><li>• Impact on Families – GOOD</li><li>• Impact on Children and Young People – GOOD</li><li>• Improvement in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people – GOOD</li><li>• Evaluation Scale 4 GOOD = Important strengths, with some areas for improvement</li></ul> <p>The inspection identified a number of key strengths and good practice as follow;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaders had embraced their collective responsibility to protect children, demonstrated through their well embedded, collaborative approach to quality assurance and scrutiny.</li><li>• Staff recognised risk and took timely and appropriate action to keep children safe, and key processes for assessing and managing risk for children and young people in need of care and protection were well established.</li><li>• The wellbeing of children in need of care and protection was improving, with most children and young people benefiting from positive and caring relationships with staff and carers.</li></ul>		

- As a result of operational and strategic effort, partners had achieved significant reduction in the overall number of looked after children and young people and a reduction in out-of-authority placements.
- Children and young people had their rights respected and they benefited from opportunities to have their voices heard throughout the well-established Champions Board structure.

The priority areas for improvement were identified as;

- While children and young people in need of care and protection were helped by a range of purposeful interventions, access to the specialist services required to help them recover from trauma, was not always available at the time they needed it.
- The partnership recognised that more needed to be done to raise educational attainment and reduce the number of care experienced children and young people excluded from school.
- Outcomes and experiences for care experienced young people transitioning into adulthood were variable. The partnership had identified this as a key area for improvement.
- Collaborative leadership of corporate parenting had not yet consistently achieved partner's ambitions for improved and wellbeing across all groups of care experienced children and young people.

In conclusion the Care Inspectorate reported;

- That they were **very** confident that the partnership in Midlothian has the capacity to continue to improve and to address the areas identified for improvement.
- Evidence of strong partnership working at all levels and a confident and competent workforce committed to improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and families.
- The effective Champions Board structure and continued effort from staff across the partnership to enable children and young people to influence service design and improvement.
- The strength of scrutiny and oversight of child protection practice and the drive for continuous improvement.
- The partnerships record of improvement to date in relation to the impact of services on care experienced children and young people.

Joan Tranent was heard in amplification of the report after which there was a general discussion on this matter.

### Decision

(a) To acknowledge the many strengths within the report which evidenced strong partnership working at all levels in addition to the partnership's record of improvement to date in relation to the impact of services on care experienced children and young people;

(b) To congratulate all staff involved within this process across the community planning partnership for their commitment and good work;

(c) To develop an action plan to take forward the priority areas for improvement; and

(d)To refer the report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for consideration

**Action**

Chief Officer, Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Performance Report Insight Data February 2020	Chief Officer, Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities

**Outline of report and summary of discussion**

The purpose of this report was to inform of trends in attainment and achievement of school leavers in Midlothian using the "National Benchmarking Measures" from Insight. Joan Tranent was heard in amplification of the report during which she highlighted that overall, the three National benchmarking measures reported by the Scottish Government Insight tool in the February 2020 update indicated that attainment in Midlothian had improved overall over the five-year period to 2018/19 but that further improvements could still be made, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 6, the middle 60% attaining group and in relation to closing the attainment gap for young people with additional support needs and our looked after young people.

There followed a general discussion on this matter during which the progress made to date was noted and that an Action Plan would be prepared for those areas requiring further improvement.

**Decision**

(a)To note the progress and areas for improvement in educational attainment in the Senior Phase in Midlothian secondary schools; and

(b) To refer the report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

**Action**

Chief Officer, Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Midlothian Council Statutory Report to Scottish Ministers on Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2019/20	Chief Officer: Place

**Outline of report and summary of discussion**

The purpose of the report was to provide details on the Council's statement of compliance with its statutory climate change reporting duties for 2019/20 which was available within the CMIS elected Members Library and to recommend its submission to the Scottish Government by the due date of 30 November 2020.

Derek Oliver was heard in amplification of the report after which there was a general discussion on the content of this submission.

**Decision**

(a)To approve the Midlothian Council Statutory Report to Scottish Ministers on Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2019/20; and

(b)That this report be submitted to the Scottish Government by the due date of 30 November 2020
---

<b>Action</b>
---------------

Chief Officer: Place
----------------------

The meeting terminated at 11.29am

## **Third Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report 2017-2020**

### **Report by Chief Officer Place**

### **Report for Decision**

## **1 Recommendations**

### **1.1 That Cabinet:**

- i) approve the appended report (Appendix B) as the Council's third statutory Biodiversity Report 2017-2020;
- ii) agree to the publication of the Biodiversity Report 2017-2020 on the Council's website and provide the Scottish Government with a copy; and
- iii) refer this report and the Biodiversity Report 2017-2020 to the Performance Review & Scrutiny Committee for its information.

## **2 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 This report seeks; approval of the appended paper as the Council's third statutory Biodiversity Report 2017-2020 (using the Scottish Government's template); agreement for it to be published on the Council's website; and for a copy to be forwarded to the Scottish Government. This covering report and Biodiversity Report set out the actions undertaken by Midlothian Council since November 2017 to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. The Acts require the publication of the report and the submission to Scottish Government.

**Date 10 November 2020**

### **Report Contact:**

Grant Ballantine Lead Officer Conservation and Environment (Planning Service) - [grant.ballantine@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:grant.ballantine@midlothian.gov.uk)



### **3 Background**

- 3.1 Biodiversity is the variety of life. It includes plants, animals, even micro-organisms and bacteria, interacting with each other and the non-living environment (soil, water, etc.) to form living ecosystems. These interactions within ecosystems cleanse the air and water, pollinate crops, break down waste, control pests and diseases and regulate natural events. The production of food, fuels, medicines and the fibres of our clothes is dependent upon this web of life. Once ecosystems are disrupted, life, life patterns and the availability of such goods and services can be put at risk.
- 3.2 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 requires public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity in delivering services, having regard to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (published in 2004). The strategy sets out local government's role in conserving biodiversity: including through community planning, spatial planning, education and greenspace management. The 2004 Strategy was supplemented in 2013 with the "2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity". The aims of the 2013 document are:
- protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthy ecosystems;
  - connect people with the natural world, for their health and well-being, and to involve them more in decision making; and
  - maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.
- 3.3 The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requires public bodies to publish a 'Biodiversity Report' every three years that sets out the actions taken by the public body in carrying out its biodiversity duty. The attached proposed report highlights the activity undertaken by Midlothian Council in carrying out that duty. The Council's last biodiversity report was published in November 2017 and can be viewed on the Council's website.

### **4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)**

#### **4.1 Resource**

There are no additional resource implications for Midlothian Council from this report. Preparation of the Biodiversity Report has been undertaken within existing budgets. Resource for future work on biodiversity matters will need to be identified as part of Service Plan preparations.

Volunteer contributions to the furtherance of biodiversity in Midlothian are highlighted in the appended Biodiversity Report.

#### **4.2 Digital**

None

Subject to Cabinet approval, the appended biodiversity duty report will be uploaded to the Council website.

#### **4.3 Risk**

The Council is required by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 to publish a third “Biodiversity Report” on its website and provide a copy to the Scottish Government. Failure to meet this requirement risks resultant reputational damage.

Lack of resources and consideration for safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity, such as implementing the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 (LBAP) and other associated work reported in the appended biodiversity duty report, could pose a risk in terms of determining whether the Council is properly discharging its biodiversity duty. That could also create reputational damage for the Council.

#### **4.4 Ensuring Equalities**

This report does not relate to a new or revised policy or service change/budget change. It is therefore considered that undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) in relation to this report is not necessary.

#### **4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)**

See Appendix A

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A – Additional Report Implications**

**Appendix B – Midlothian Council Third Biodiversity Duty Report 2017-2020**

## **APPENDIX A – Additional Report Implications**

### **A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan**

Natural environment priorities and actions have been included within the environment component of the Midlothian Sustainable Growth Community Planning Theme, one of Midlothian's five community planning themes. This environment component has now become part of the Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group. The new Climate Emergency Group will retain natural environment priorities and actions relating to biodiversity safeguarding and enhancing.

### **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**

In discharging its Best Value duties the Council is required to contribute to the achievement of sustainability. The Council's Sustainable Development Framework notes the stresses being placed on global life-support systems, including through biodiversity loss.

### **A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Through work facilitated by the Council's Ranger Service significant engagement with individual and community groups is undertaken in its nature conservation and biodiversity work.

Public ownership and partnership are principles of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). This occurred through the Midlothian LBAP Steering Group for the production of the LBAP and continues through the implementation of LBAP actions. Ongoing engagement and

partnership will be occurring through the work of the Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group.

#### **A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

There is no direct impact arising from this report.

#### **A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Biodiversity is central to life. Its safeguarding and enhancement are also central to quality of life. The Council would be at risk of failing in its statutory duty and policies and strategies if it neglected biodiversity. Enhancing biodiversity will add to the quality of life for residents and visitors.

#### **A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

This report, through the Biodiversity Duty Report, seeks to highlight what the Council has been doing to help safeguard and promote biodiversity. As stated above in section A.7 of this report, biodiversity is central to life. Safeguarding and enhancing of biodiversity will help support sustainable development.

## **APPENDIX B: MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL THIRD BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2017-2020**

The Biodiversity Duty REPORTING TEMPLATE: LEVEL ONE ORGANISATIONS

### **Report Outline**

Bodies are encouraged to use the following structure for their report. This is set out in the template below, which you can either type directly into, or copy into a separate document.

- Section 1: Introductory information about your public body
- Section 2: Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature
- Section 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity
- Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity
- Section 5: Public engagement and workforce development
- Section 6: Research and monitoring
- Section 7: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

### **Completion Notes**

These completion notes offer guidance to support your public body to complete your Biodiversity Duty Report. Taken together with the associated hyperlinks, they provide suggestions on the breadth of actions that could be included in your report. They may also assist with forward planning on how biodiversity can be taken into account in future.

While they incorporate the key elements on which you may wish to report, they are not an exhaustive list and it is likely that there will be a range of additional work that your organisation carried out in support of biodiversity on which you may also wish to report. To find out more on the Biodiversity Duty see the [NatureScot website](#).



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PUBLIC BODY

Please describe your organisation's role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p><b>Organisation: Midlothian Council</b></p> <p>Midlothian Council is a Scottish local council authority responsible for the provision of a variety of services in Midlothian which are typically provided by local government. These services include, but not exclusively, education and training, social care, roads, waste and recycling collection, civil registration services, housing, property management, land and countryside management, trading standards, environmental health, planning, economic development and building standards.</p> <p>The Council Leader is one of 18 elected local councillors that run the Council.</p> <p>The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for the effective operation of the Council and in ensuring that excellent and efficient services are delivered to the people and communities of Midlothian. The below three part structure of the Council supports and delivers this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joint Director, Health and Social Care, Chief Officer of Midlothian Integrated Joint Board;</li><li>• Executive Director, Place; and</li><li>• Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships, Chief Education Officer.</li></ul> <p>Delivery of biodiversity safeguarding and enhancement most directly effects the following Council services and forms a fundamental part of daily work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land and Countryside Services – through management of Council land, the Ranger service, and engagement with the general public through the activities of Land and Countryside Services and the Ranger Service; and</li><li>• Planning – through land use planning, development plan and guidance production and the determination of planning applications.</li></ul>
--	--



**Text Field**

Political leadership and responsibility for biodiversity at Midlothian Council lies with its Cabinet. The lead service for reporting duty is Planning which is within the Place Directorate.

The Single Midlothian Plan during 2017-2020 always contained Environment priorities and actions. The 2020/2021 Single Midlothian Plan includes, amongst others, actions relating to the delivery of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 (pages 64-65). These actions can be seen in the below table and through the below link to the Council's website:

[https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single\\_midlothian\\_plan\\_2021](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single_midlothian_plan_2021)

Action	Due date	Indicator	Target	Ownership
Promote the restoration and creation of pesticide free, flower rich habitats in the countryside and urban areas	31/3/21	Create at least 2000m <sup>2</sup> per year of pollinator habitat	New Measure	Midlothian Council/ Local Community
Produce management plans for three Local Biodiversity Sites	31/3/21	Produce three site management plans	3	Midlothian Local Biodiversity Plan Partners
Run workshops on promotion of biodiversity knowledge and enhancement, including workshops on the construction, installation, maintenance and	31/3/21	1 workshop per delivery partner (4 in total)	4	Midlothian Local Biodiversity Plan Partners



		monitoring of homes for wildlife in gardens and greenspaces				
		Promote removal/modification of fish barriers on the River North Esk	31/3/21	Remove or modify 1 barrier	New Measure	SEPA, owners, communities and businesses supported by the Midlothian Biodiversity Partnership
		Establish a Climate Emergency group in the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership	31/3/21	Replace the current Sustainable Development theme "Environment" group - 1 new group established	New Measure	Midlothian Community Planning Partnership and associated members
		Investigate a Sustainable Growth Agreement (SGA) between Midlothian Council and SEPA	31/3/21	1 SGA agreed	New Measure	Midlothian Community Planning Partnership
		Investigate identifying tree coverage on community planning partners landholdings using appropriate software	31/3/21	Tree coverage record established	New Measure	Midlothian Community Planning Partnership





Midlothian Council elected local Councillors and officials are involved with the following external bodies which have a remit incorporating biodiversity:

- Cllr Russell Imrie and Cllr Peter Smaill (Provost) are Board Members of the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust.
- Cllr Russell Imrie, Cllr Kelly Parry and Cllr Pauline Winchester are members of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee. Cllr Andrew Hardie is a member of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Advisory Group.
- Midlothian Council had been a partner in the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership 2017-2020, and was represented by a senior Council staff member on the Partnership Group. The Council is involved in the replacement of the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership.



## SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p><b>Land and Countryside and the Ranger Services</b></p> <p>The work of the Land and Countryside and the Ranger Services actively promote biodiversity enhancement and engagement in the natural environment. Land and Countryside Services maintain Council controlled land in line with service plans and seeks to enhance biodiversity where it is able. A recent example is the woodland management for biodiversity at 50 ha site in Cuiken Glen and Mauricewood Woodland, near Penicuik, at a cost of £400,000. The work involved improving the path network to increase public access to enjoy the woodlands. Ash has not been favoured for new planting in the woodland management to help prevent future loss from Ash die back disease.</p> <p>Midlothian Council Ranger Service manages the countryside for the benefit of people and wildlife at the following sites: Vogrie Country Park, Roslin Glen Country Park, Springfield Mill, Gore Glen Woodland Park, Straiton Pond Local Nature Reserve and both the Penicuik to Dalkeith and Roslin to Straiton Walkways (active travel routes).</p> <p>The Objectives of the Ranger Service are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation: To encourage participation in Midlothian's countryside and to work in partnership with communities;</li><li>• Education: To help everyone learn about Midlothian's countryside and heritage; and</li><li>• Conservation (biodiversity).</li></ul> <p>Volunteering to safeguard the natural environment and biodiversity is a key part of the work of the Ranger Service. The Ranger Service works with volunteers in its management of these Midlothian assets and works with all ages to promote enjoyment and learning of the outdoors and natural environment. Further details of this work with volunteers is provided in section 5 of this report.</p>
--	---



### **Land and Countryside, Ranger and Planning Services**

The Planning Service, Land and Countryside and Ranger services combined to work with partners to produce the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024.

#### Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024

In February 2019 Midlothian Council adopted a new Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) 2019-2024. This document replaced the 2006 Midlothian LBAP.

A Steering Group of informal partners\*, including community representation, was formed in 2017 to oversee and contribute to the creation of this new LBAP for Midlothian. The group developed a new approach for this LBAP which focused on a much smaller number of themes and actions than the 2006 LBAP. It was agreed there were too many actions in the 2006 LBAP and that availability of resources would not support such an approach for the new LBAP. It was agreed to focus on a few key priorities that would be deliverable over the lifetime of the LBAP in a context of resource constraints. The outcomes of the Single Midlothian Plan, particularly those that safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity would contribute to, strongly influenced the identification of six priorities for the LBAP. (\*Including SEPA, Scottish Water, NatureScot, Pentland Hills Regional Park, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Forestry and the local records centre (The Wildlife Information Centre)).

The six identified priorities for the Midlothian LBAP 2019-2024 are:

- Pollinators
- Homes for Wildlife
- Rivers, Streams and Ponds
- Invasive Non-Native Species
- People and Nature
- Protected Sites and Species

Twelve actions were identified by the Steering Group to help deliver these six priorities. The LBAP sets out the work to be undertaken to deliver these actions and the partners that will be involved in, and also lead on, delivery. An action and delivery table is included at the end of the LBAP to make these points clear.



The work to deliver the 12 actions brings together local government – particularly Council services, government agencies, charities, developers and communities groups. Community representation was included at the start of the process and more needs to be done to encourage further community involvement in the delivery of the LBAP actions. Action 10, Promoting Citizen Science, reflects the Steering Groups desire and intention have more public involvement and interest in biodiversity.

The 12 actions identified to help deliver the six LBAP priorities are:

- Action 1 Restoration and creation of flower rich habitats
- Action 2 Creation of nest boxes and other wildlife homes
- Action 3 Installation of nesting and wildlife and wildlife homes in new developments
- Action 4 Pond and wetland creation and maintenance
- Action 5 Improving the ecology of watercourses
- Action 6 Tackling Invasive Non Native Species in rivers, streams and ponds
- Action 7 Tackling Invasive Non Native Species on the Borders Railway Line
- Action 8 Management of Urban Woodlands
- Action 9 Wildlife Corridoes
- Action 10 Promoting Citizen Science
- Action 11 Managing Local Biodiversity Sites
- Action 12 Local Priority Species

The actions are reviewed annually to monitor progress and identify challenges to delivery of actions.

### **Planning**

The planning service has specific duties which have significant implications for biodiversity protection and enhancement. More details are in section 3 of this document.

In August 2018 the Council adopted its Midlothian Green Network Supplementary Guidance as required by the Midlothian Local Development Plan (2017). This sets out details for increasing connectivity across Midlothian and also green infrastructure requirements from new development sites. This will help create wildlife habitat as



part of the development. The planning service has in 2020 used IT software to workout tree canopy coverage in different Midlothian electoral wards to try and calculate the sequestration and financial value of trees. This will be used to influence the work of the planning team in supporting the retention of trees, and promotion of tree planting, where this appropriate and can be achieved. In 2018 the Council's planning service worked with Buglife and partners, including NatureScot, on Buglife's B-Line project to identify habitats and potential travel routes. Pollinators are one of the actions in the new Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The following are other examples of specific biodiversity work supported by the Planning service.

#### Local Records Centre

Since 2009 Midlothian Council has financially supported The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC), the local wildlife record centre, by procuring services from them through a Service Level Agreement. Many other authorities in south east Scotland, including all in the Lothians and Scottish Borders Council, have a Service Level Agreement with the record centre for provision of services. Midlothian Council recognises and appreciates the value of a local records centre for helping safeguard and enhance biodiversity, and for the assistance provided to help the Council carry out its functions.

#### Midlothian Local Biodiversity Site System

The Local Biodiversity Site system set up by Midlothian Council in 2009 remains in place and is operative. It replaced the former Local Wildlife Site system and the change was made in line with the 2006 *Guidance on Establishing and Managing Local Nature Conservation Site Systems in Scotland* which requires sites to be assessed against in terms of species diversity, species rarity, habitat rarity, habitat naturalness, habitat extent and connectivity. There are currently over 50 designated local biodiversity sites in Midlothian.

The Midlothian Local Biodiversity Site System is administered by The Wildlife Information Centre, the local records centre, on behalf of the Council through a service level agreement reviewed on an annual basis. The Wildlife Information Centre is a registered charity separate from the Council. The Council is very grateful to all partners that are involved in this important work. The system would not operate without their support and input. The local biodiversity sites feed into the planning process as set out in section 3 of this report.



	<p>The Wildlife Information Centre maintains records for the Council of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• flora and fauna records across Midlothian, including those identified in proposed and designated Local Biodiversity Sites in Midlothian; and</li><li>• details of proposed and designated Local Biodiversity Sites, including site boundaries, site survey and site assessment information.</li></ul> <p>With the assistance of the Wildlife Information Centre, a methodology for considering and assessing potential Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS) and operating the LBS system in Midlothian has been established by the Council. This methodology is updated when and if required.</p> <p>The LBS system is overseen by a Midlothian Local Biodiversity Site Steering Group which is chaired by Midlothian Council. Its other members include The Wildlife Information Centre and acknowledged volunteer local botanical experts, including representatives of the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Botanical Society of the British Isles. NatureScot is a corresponding member of the Steering Group.</p>
<b>Links to related resources</b>	<p>Midlothian Council has a very dynamic and active Ranger Service based at Vogrie Country Park, focusing on recreation, education and conservation (biodiversity). Further details of the Rangers' activities can be viewed on the Council's website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200283/parks/394/midlothian_ranger_service">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200283/parks/394/midlothian_ranger_service</a></p> <p>In February 2019 Midlothian Council adopted a new Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2019-2024) which can be viewed on the Council's website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1231/environment/290/biodiversity">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1231/environment/290/biodiversity</a></p> <p>This document is solely intended to promote and safeguard biodiversity in Midlothian.</p> <p>The Midlothian Local Development Plan (adopted by Midlothian Council in November 2017) provides the policy land use framework for growth in Midlothian and the policy framework against which development proposals are assessed. This includes a policy framework of how proposals should be assessed in relation to their impact on the natural environment, and biodiversity, The document can be viewed on the Council's website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/205/planning_policy/286/development_plans_and_policies">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/205/planning_policy/286/development_plans_and_policies</a></p>



The Local Development Plan also includes policies on green networks, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, flooding, tree and hedgerow protection, protection of peat and carbon rich soils and protection of river valleys.

In August 2018 Midlothian Council adopted Supplementary Guidance entitled the Midlothian Green Network to help deliver the policy framework of the Midlothian Local Development Plan (adopted November 2017). One of the purposes of this Supplementary Guidance is to promote wildlife connectivity. The document can be viewed on the Council's website:

[https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/205/planning\\_policy/286/development\\_plans\\_and\\_policies/3](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/205/planning_policy/286/development_plans_and_policies/3)



## SECTION 3: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>The mainstreaming of biodiversity is reflected in the following corporate documents. It reflects the status given to biodiversity matters that must be taken into account by council officers in carrying out their duties and work, and the Council's decision making:</p> <p><u>Service Plans</u></p> <p>Service plans for Midlothian Council's Land and Countryside Service, which includes the Ranger Service, identify work to be undertaken with direct and significant benefit to biodiversity. The Council's monitoring package, Covalent, monitors progress on actions and requirements. As with other parts of Land and Countryside Service, the Ranger Service demonstrates significant leadership in taking forward biodiversity conservation on the ground in partnership with organisations in and outside the Council. Details of this work are provided in this Biodiversity Duty Report.</p> <p>Planning's service plan has a direct relationship with biodiversity, through the Service's development management work, development planning and the production of policy and guidance intended, where relevant, to specifically promote and support biodiversity. Again the Council's monitoring package, Covalent, monitors progress on actions and requirements.</p> <p><u>Sustainability Impact Check</u></p> <p>The Council's corporate report template has a 'Supporting Sustainable Development' section and applying the check is encouraged to generate the necessary commentary, including in relation to biodiversity impacts. Guidance on the Council's intranet is provided on completing this section of the report. Application of the Council's Sustainability Impact Check is further intended to help with completing this part of Council reports.</p>
--	---





#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Biodiversity is one of the environmental issues referred to in the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Under the Act the Council is required to carry out a process of 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' ('SEA') when developing or updating certain policies, strategies, plans, programmes, etc. The process is intended to ensure a more thorough consideration of environmental impacts.

SEA and sustainable development information and resources have been brought together for staff on the Council's intranet. This guidance allows those producing reports to set out how a report relates to SEA requirements in terms of whether they represent "plans", "programmes" and "strategies". This will help complete the section of the Council report template entitled "Supporting Sustainable Development" which sets out that matters relating to SEA should be dealt with in that section.

#### Midlothian Council Ranger Service

The Ranger Service works to achieve or maintain Green Flag status on a three yearly basis for sites. Within the seven criteria for achieving green flag status are Criteria 4: Environmental Management and Criteria 5: Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage. The achievement of reaching green flag status recognises and requires that biodiversity is enhanced on the sites. The Ranger Service produces site management plans for Vogrie Country Park, Roslin Glen, Straiton Pond, Penicuik to Dalkeith Walkway and Springfield Mill to help deliver biodiversity enhancement. Additionally Roslin Glen, Springfield Mill and Gore Glen Woodland Park are designated local biodiversity sites.

#### Planning Service

The Council in carrying out its function as planning authority takes into account, and where appropriate, seeks to enhance biodiversity in carrying out this work. The assessment and decision making on planning applications and production of planning policy (i.e. the Local Development Plan) and guidance are the primary means by which this is done.

The Midlothian Local Development Plan (2017) sets out a framework of policies for the preservation of the natural heritage of Midlothian which includes protection for internationally, nationally, regionally and locally important nature conservation sites, species protected by law, and habitats outwith designated areas. It



contains a requirement for any development proposals to demonstrate compatibility with the aims and objectives of the MLBAP and related plans, by identifying appropriate measures to protect, enhance and promote existing habitats and/or the creation of new habitats, and provide for the effective management of these habitats. It also contains protection for local nature conservation sites, that includes local biodiversity sites, that have been accepted by Midlothian Council as proposed sites but have not been formally designated. The policies of the Plan are the basis for the assessment of planning applications submitted to the Council. The application of these policies helps to safeguard and enhance biodiversity value in Midlothian. As would be expected, the policy framework of the Local Development Plan is wide and varied. It includes matters such as open space, landscaping, trees/hedgerows, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, flooding, nature conservation designations. All of these have clear implications for biodiversity and its protection and enhancement.

In assessing development proposals, other material considerations will be taken into account. These include the Midlothian LBAP 2019-2024, where for example the LBAP's actions may directly relate to a development. Planning officers seek to assist with implementation of the LBAP actions through measures, such as requesting "homes for nature" in new developments or swift boxes which have resulted from having an up to date LBAP. Other material considerations include the green network supplementary guidance which seeks, as part of its role, to promote wildlife connectivity.

In late 2020 or early 2021 Nature Conservation planning guidance will be published. This document will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. It is aimed at providing information and guidance for planning officers assessing development proposals and applicants preparing development proposals.

The Council's Landscape Officers (a single job share post) work with planning officers and developers in the assessment and implementation of proposals. The incorporation of particular plant species and landscape schemes help to enhance the biodiversity value of a site and the wildlife connectivity of a site to adjacent areas. This is a particular feature of implementing the requirements of the Midlothian Local Development Plan (2017) and the Midlothian Green Network Supplementary Guidance (2018).



	<p>Screening of Planning Applications for Biodiversity Impact</p> <p>All planning applications received by Midlothian Council are screened by The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC), the local wildlife record centre, against a range of criteria to identify potential biodiversity issues in proposals. The screening criteria include designated nature conservation sites, wildlife records, existing land uses e.g. peat, carbon rich soil, grass lands. The report flags up for the planning officer dealing with the planning application potential issues and possible courses of action to consider. These screening reports are supplied to the planning officers dealing with the planning application to help them to assess the significance of impact on biodiversity from the proposal. The Record Centre also provides a service to interpret biodiversity information submitted in support of planning applications. This service is intended to supply information to help the planning officer dealing with the proposal understand the competency of the supporting information submitted and, potentially, what further information the planning officer might require to request from the applicant to properly assess the impact of the proposal. Since November 2017 after the second Biodiversity Duty Report, nearly 2250 applications have been screened by The Wildlife Information Centre. The Wildlife Information Centre provided comment on nearly 1250 of these applications.</p>
<b>Links to related resources</b>	<p>See web links in Section 2.</p>



## SECTION 4: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

How has your organisation integrated biodiversity into nature based solutions to the climate emergency and other socio-economic outcomes?

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p><u>Midlothian Community Planning</u></p> <p>The Single Midlothian Plan contains Environment priorities and actions. The 2020/2021 Single Midlothian Plan includes, amongst others, actions relating to the delivery of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 (pages 64-65). These can be seen on the Council's website: <a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single_midlothian_plan_2021">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single_midlothian_plan_2021</a></p> <p>Following Midlothian Council declaring a Climate Emergency at its 17 December 2019 Council meeting, on 16 January 2020 the Midlothian Community Planning Board meeting agreed that a community planning climate change group should be established to raise the influence and priority given to addressing the climate challenge, help achieve the goal of making Midlothian Council's activities net zero by 2030, achieving 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2030 and raise the priority given to addressing climate change to the highest level as a cross cutting theme for partners and Midlothian Council. The aim would be to reduce the carbon foot print of all partners in Midlothian.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Environment component of the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership's Sustainable Development Group become the Climate Change Partnership group required in the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration. The Environment component of the Sustainable Development Group had brought forward the biodiversity actions into successive Single Midlothian Plans. To reflect the Council's declaration, this climate change group has been called the Climate Emergency Group. It is made up of community representatives, Council staff, government agency staff, not for profit organisations and representatives from the private sector.</p> <p>The new Climate Emergency Group had its first meeting on 28 August 2020. It identified a number of topic groups for identifying targets and work to meet the 2030 Net Zero target of the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration. The topic groups cover the following areas, agriculture, housing, transport, renewable energy and community engagement. Biodiversity has key role to play in all of these topic groups.</p>
--	--



Midlothian Council Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

On 25 August 2020 the Council approved a new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. It was approved by Council almost at the same time as the inaugural meeting of the Midlothian Community Planning “Climate Emergency Group” on 28 August.

While all of its actions will have an impact on biodiversity, a number of the actions are perhaps more clearly identifiable as beneficial to biodiversity protection and promotion. These actions include:

- using organic fertiliser and planting bedding, and native biodiverse rich planting species in Council parks and controlled land to promote biodiversity;
- provide an exemplar pond project at the Council’s offices at Fairfield House, Dalkeith;
- where appropriate, introduce green roofs to new Council developments;
- implement the 2019-2024 Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan;
- develop a carbon offsetting scheme to mitigate the carbon impact of development;
- award and promote new developments with the highest standards in sustainability and climate change adaptability;
- identify and adopt accredited methodology and application to record and place financial value on trees and open space;
- aim to make the Dalkeith Penicuik Walkway Scotland’s first Green Flag cycle path – this is a cross Midlothian active route connecting a number of Midlothian settlements; and
- through the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2:
  - i) promote the concept of developing an ‘urban forest’ in Midlothian
  - ii) secure 21% tree canopy cover in new developments
  - iii) set a presumption against the loss of mature trees;
  - iv) replacement tree planting for all unavoidable tree loss; and



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>v) securing biodiversity net gain on all development sites.</li><li>vi) set the ambition that new development sites shall be carbon neutral</li><li>vii) investigate the feasibility of developing a Zero Carbon Development Zone</li><li>viii) climate change adaptation through the planning application process</li></ul>
<b>Links to related resources</b>	<p>The 2020/2021 Single Midlothian Plan, and the biodiversity related actions soon on pages 64-65 of the document, can be viewed on the Council's website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single_midlothian_plan_2021">https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/3925/single_midlothian_plan_2021</a></p> <p>These actions are also set out in section 1 of this report.</p>

**What steps has your organisation taken to incorporate biodiversity outcomes into partnership initiatives, wider strategies or initiatives of relevance to climate change?**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>The work associated with Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group incorporate biodiversity outcomes and clearly demonstrate partnership working. The actions and outcomes will promote and highlight the importance of biodiversity in the action against climate change. The Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group has just started its work, so the specific outcomes are not yet identified. It will involve significant partnership working and all the outcomes will be directed at making Midlothian NetZero Carbon by 2030.</p> <p>The Council has helped maintain the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Site System in Midlothian since 2009 through partnership working the Local Records Centre (The Wildlife Information Centre), Scottish Wildlife Trust, NatureScot and botanical experts in the Lothians. As indicated in section 3 of this report, designated and proposed local biodiversity sites have status as material considerations in the assessment of planning applications, where the proposal may affect the site. This support for the Local Records Centre supports the collection and distribution of wildlife data, which in turn can be used to support survey work and also be taken into account in the development and assessment of development proposals.</p>
--	--



<b>Links to related resources</b>	See links in sections 1 and 2 of this report.
-----------------------------------	---

**Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years?**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>The main challenges will be maintaining and getting extra resource to support measures that safeguard and enhance biodiversity. There will be reduced resource across all sectors and the necessity to safeguard and promote biodiversity will need to be made even stronger.</p> <p>The role of biodiversity in climate emergency will need to be strongly made also, as it may lose out if resource is diverted to reducing emissions in the built environment and in manufactured goods/processing. Biodiversity may not be supported as much in the process to reduce emissions and lose out in that regard.</p> <p>Over the next three years there is likely to be significant pressure to increase employment opportunities. While even if this did not have a direct local impact on biodiversity, it may divert resource from enhancing biodiversity and less attention may be given to it.</p> <p>Getting support over the next three years for undertaking large scale biodiversity support measures may prove challenging. This includes the getting the support, the resource – capital and revenue cost for ongoing maintenance, the land and getting the skills and knowledge.</p>
--	---



## SECTION 5: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Public Engagement

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>While the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency, and to a degree the Council's whole Planning service engage with the public on biodiversity matters, the main directly focused biodiversity engagement work has been led by the Council's Ranger Service. The highlights of this work are summarised below. It sets out the work the Rangers do with Midlothian schools helping roll out the biodiversity elements of the school curriculum and wider environmental education, the conservation/biodiversity work the Rangers do with volunteers, and also the outdoor activity events they organise to engage with all ages and parts of communities in Midlothian.</p> <p>Environmental Education Curricular Environmental Education The Ranger Service continues to organise and lead free curriculum based education for schools and groups, reaching 10,404 participants or 692 groups from 2017-20. The Rangers teach and inspire pupils about nature, their local environment and the world around them. This is based on the Curriculum for Excellence from the Early through to the Senior phase and includes:</p> <p>Nursery and Early Years education provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nature and history walks;</li><li>• exploring the seasons;</li><li>• identifying and using senses;</li><li>• mini-beast hunting; and</li><li>• naming basic plants and animals.</li></ul> <p>Primary School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pond and river system studies;</li><li>• woodland and invertebrate studies;</li><li>• habitat and biodiversity of school grounds and the local area;</li><li>• landscape studies (basic human and physical geography); and</li><li>• local history guided walks incorporating industrial and cultural heritage.</li></ul>
--	--





Secondary School and Tertiary:

- geography and biology field studies including techniques for covering land use and conservation management and river systems and woodland ecology.
- advice and assistance with Advanced Higher projects.

Self-led activities:

- the Ranger Service has three resource boxes which are free to borrow; these allow teachers to lead environmental activities themselves. They cover pond and river dipping, woodlands and mini-beasts, environmental games, and include bug boxes, nets, trays, ID keys books etc.

In-service training

- the Ranger Service can arrange training days to teachers interested in developing topics and activities based in the countryside. This is aimed at helping development of school staff skills in conservation and biodiversity.

These actions have sought to enhance biodiversity itself in Midlothian and increase understanding and involvement in it across different groups and age ranges in Midlothian and beyond.

For All – Learning About and Caring for Nature in Midlothian

Countryside Events programme – the Ranger Service runs an annual events programme of nature based activities for all throughout our Countryside Sites and Midlothian's wider countryside. 243 events took place between 2017 and 2020 reaching a diverse audience of 9997 visitors

Countryside Information – includes web based information, social media updates via facebook and site based interpretation, information and leaflets at all seven countryside sites run by the Ranger Service.

Countryside Volunteers – all seven Ranger Service run countryside sites have a group of volunteers to achieve biodiversity and access objectives. Ongoing maintenance and project work has involved over 31,374 hours of volunteer contribution from 2017-20. External groups of volunteers contribute to larger tasks.

The Midlothian Outdoor Festival is held in August every year, though it was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19. The festival has built over recent years into an incredibly popular multi-faceted outdoor festival stretching



	throughout August with a wide range of events. At its heart though remains the ethos of appreciation and developing understanding of nature and biodiversity. It is a major event on the calendar with events widely circulated on social media and the Council's website.
<b>Links to related resources</b>	See links in section 2 of this report.

### Workforce skills and training

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	As described earlier in this section 5 of the report, the Ranger Service provides opportunities for training for school teachers. The planning service are made aware of and invited to biodiversity training/awareness events from a variety of sources.
--	---

### Identify any opportunities that are available to your staff to take part in practical actions

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	As above
--	----------

## SECTION 6: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

**Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken to help develop understanding and awareness of biodiversity**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>Midlothian Council does not undertake biodiversity research. However, it supports the biodiversity recording/monitoring work through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support for the Local Records Centre;</li> <li>• operation of the local biodiversity site system; and</li> <li>• monitoring of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan actions.</li> </ul> <p>The Local Record Centre provides data, including Midlothian data, to the National Biodiversity Network.</p> <p>The Council's Ranger Service does not undertake monitoring or recording of data, and instead leaves that to the groups and volunteers they works with. The Ranger Service also allows local groups and students undertake monitoring and biological recording.</p>
--	---

**What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this? If you do not carry out any monitoring activities, please explain why.**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	Efforts are concentrated on ensuring, where ever possible, that actions are delivered. That applies to delivery biodiversity related Service Plan actions and the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Feedback on and awareness of the impact of actions feeds into the creation of future actions.
<b>Links to related resources</b>	Intentionally Blank



**Does your monitoring show any significant trends or highlight any areas of concern?**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	In sufficient data is available to flag up trends or areas of concern that are not already highlighted in the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
--	--

**Have you added any data collected to the National Biodiversity Network or your Local Records Centre?**

<b>Text Field</b>	Yes. Information has been given to the Local Record Centre and the Local Records Centre has given information to the National Biodiversity Network.
-------------------	---

## SECTION 7: BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Describe your organisation's main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

<p><b>Guidance on completing this section</b></p>	<p>Below is a summary of the best and most proud of biodiversity achievements completed by Midlothian Council in partnership with others since November 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing seven very large countryside sites for public access, enjoyment and biodiversity education. These include Vogrie Country Park, Roslin Glen Country Park, Springfield Mill, Gore Glen Woodland Park, Straiton Pond Local Nature Reserve and both the Penicuik to Dalkeith and Roslin to Straiton Walkways;</li> <li>• Providing conservation/biodiversity educational learning and volunteering opportunities for all people in society and having large numbers of people take up these opportunities;</li> <li>• Undertaking woodland management for biodiversity at a 50 ha site in Cuiken Glen and Mauricewood Woodland, near Penicuik, at a cost of £400,000. The work involved improving the path network to increase public access to enjoy the woodlands;</li> <li>• Organising and running the very successful and Midlothian Outdoor Festival in 2018 and 2019. The 2020 event was cancelled due to Covid-19;</li> <li>• The production with partners and the adoption in February 2019 by Midlothian Council of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024;</li> <li>• Production and adoption in August 2018 by Midlothian Council of the Midlothian Green network Supplementary Guidance;</li> <li>• Continuing support for the Local Record Centre;</li> <li>• Continuing the operation of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Site System;</li> </ul>
---	--



- Production and adoption by Midlothian Council in August 2020 of the Midlothian Climate Change Strategy;
- Maintaining natural environment priorities and actions in successive Midlothian Single Plans; and
- Development of the Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group and its sub topic groups.

**Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?**

<b>Guidance on completing this section</b>	<p>The response to the section 4 question “Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years?” is equally applicable to this question. This is copied below for ease. In addition to this response, the biggest challenges in the next three years will be: supporting measures that enhance biodiversity, fully and properly contributing to partnership working, and contributing toward the Council's declared position of being Net Zero Carbon by 2030. However, these challenges must be met and dealt with.</p> <p>Response to section 4 question “Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years?”</p> <p>“The main challenges will be maintaining and getting extra resource to support measures that safeguard and enhance biodiversity. There will be reduced resource across all sectors and the necessity to safeguard and promote biodiversity will need to be made even stronger.</p> <p>The role of biodiversity in climate emergency will need to be strongly made also, as it may lose out if resource is diverted to reducing emissions in the built environment and in manufactured goods/processing. Biodiversity may not be supported as much in the process to reduce emissions and lose out in that regard.</p> <p>Over the next three years there is likely to be significant pressure to increase employment opportunities. While even if this did not have a direct local impact on biodiversity, it may divert resource from enhancing biodiversity and less attention may be given to it.</p>
--	---



	Getting support over the next three years for undertaking large scale biodiversity support measures may prove challenging. This includes the getting the support, the resource – capital and revenue cost for ongoing maintenance, the land and getting the skills and knowledge.”
--	--

# Adult Health and Social Care Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21



## 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

***"People in Midlothian will lead longer and healthier lives by getting the right advice, care, and support, in the right place, at the right time."***

The Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership 2019-22 Strategic Plan outlines a major programme of activity focused on prevention and early intervention; planned support, treatment and recovery; and unplanned treatment and support. We are achieving this by changing the emphasis of our services, placing more importance and a greater proportion of our resources on our key values.

Aligned to Midlothian Council's covid recovery route map the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership has put in place a 'Remobilisation Plan'. The plan sets out an ambitious four-phase approach and sets out our recovery priorities.

### 1. Integration

Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is progressing work to implement the ambitions of the Strategic Plan while managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Remobilisation Plan priorities in Q2 included reinstating care home visiting, continued support to people who were shielding, launch of a GP publicity campaign to encourage self-management, and increased digital options for people to access support and implementation of a detailed recovery action plan locally.

The scale of the pandemic resulted in Midlothian Council and the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership devoting much of their time and collective resources to responding to the welfare needs of the population. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership established a dedicated COVID Team that reported daily to its Senior Management Team. This team kept staff within the HSCP informed of developments and sources of advice and assistance on such matters as personal protection equipment.

A Working Group, involving representatives from Volunteer Midlothian, Communities and Life Long Learning Service, and the Midlothian HSCP, was established and it created a suite of guidance on volunteering for front-line community responders, and for distance volunteering (e.g. telephone befriending). Midlothian HSCP subsequently made a commitment to volunteering and agreed to recruit a Volunteer Service Manager.

The Shielding Team continued to support people until the end of August. This team was established to provide support and services to people who were shielding (approximately 3,000) as a consequence of underlying health conditions. This support included referring 'shielders' to the hubs and community groups for support with shopping, food and prescriptions.

### 2. Inequalities

Health and Social Care services remain committed to contributing to reduce health inequalities. Local people, the third sector, public sector and private sector created a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes.

Some programmes to support people most vulnerable to health and other inequalities continued during Q2, others were delayed as a result of the pandemic. Support to people in homeless accommodation was delivered in a different way but did continue, as did support to people engaged with mental health, substance misuse, and social work and justice services. Some programmes, such as the one involving pregnant women who smoke, and the Type 2 Diabetes prevention work was delayed in Q2 until early September.

### 3. Justice Service

The 2019/20 financial year saw a new approach taken to the delivery of unpaid work in Midlothian. The team work alongside community groups and organisations to undertake a variety of projects that have sought to promote clients' engagement in their communities whilst making reparation (payback) to those communities who experience the highest levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

This has been a significant change in the practice of the team and developing and maintaining the close working relationships with community groups has allowed the Justice team to support these organisations and communities as they started to deal with the impact of COVID19 in March 2020. The team supported the establishment of food



services providing hot food to the most vulnerable in the community and also assisted by delivering hot food and food parcels and in supplying food by transporting donated food from supermarkets.

There is now an established pathway created for people who do Peer Support Training and are interested in volunteering. Next steps include looking into providing Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ's) to support people into employment. Further, the Peer Support Development Worker is working in partnership with HMP Edinburgh to develop peer support in the prison for Midlothian men and women. The plan is to build a supportive relationship during their sentence, identify barriers prior to release (e.g. benefits, housing, bank account, photo identification, prescriptions), and aid a smooth transition back into the community. This service will also be available to those on remand who currently cannot access support services.

#### **4. Substance Misuse**

Key services based in Number 11 in Dalkeith continued to provide services including outreach treatment, injecting equipment provision [IEP], naloxone, information/advice and door step deliveries of Opiate Substitute therapy [OST] and other medication to those shielding or self-isolating through both the initial lockdown period and the subsequent months. Despite Covid restrictions impacting service delivery the Midlothian Substance Misuse service instigated an outreach model to those individuals who were most at risk both current patients in service and also offering support and treatment to those individuals identified who were not currently in service. This is over and above the patients normally seen through other aspects of service delivery.

In the early phases of lockdown, there appeared to be a potential risk that as normal drugs of choice became more scarce or expensive that people may turn to other available substances whether they are safe or not. As a consequence Midlothian and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP) issued information regarding a "Stick don't Twist" leaflet, advising people who use drugs to keep to known patterns of drug use.

In July/August, there were concerns about the availability in some communities of what would appear to be illicit Diazepam tablets and also Etizolam and Alprazolam [Xanax] whose quality is variable but would appear to be much stronger. These tablets are likely to be used in conjunction with other drugs [poly drug use] increasing the level of risk. Alerts and Intelligence were [and are] shared between Police Scotland, MELDAP and Drug Treatment and Support services to ensure that officers/workers had information to support harm minimisation information and support to people who use drugs. MELDAP created a specific multi-agency group which includes people with lived experience to examine a range of issues around the use of diazepam and illicit benzodiazepines.

#### **5. Technology**

Technology offers a range of tools to support pathway and service redesign in terms of both iterative improvements and transformative initiatives. We continue to proactively engage with the emerging digital agenda in Scotland to maximise the value that technology, in all its forms, can add. COVID19 brought forward the NHS Lothian rollout of NHS Near Me video conferencing and supported by a dedicated project team. Access to this channel is now widely available with multiple services signed up. Embedding the channel into the service TrakCare eWorkflow becomes the new challenge. This is a pan Lothian challenge and the central Trak team are seeking Board support for resources. We await notification from eHealth regarding next steps.

Issues securing resources to implement the necessary technical changes to enable safe data sharing from Midlothian Council to NHS Lothian (both eHealth and Digital Services) and finalising information security remain, but we have found an acceptable interim solution by sharing anonymised/ pseudonymised and/or aggregate data. We continue to pursue and explore options to progress incrementally.

COVID19 has changed priorities and pressures in the central Trak team in the development of improved informatics for MERRIT. The changes we would have been seeking are now needed across most services in Lothian and resourcing this is being considered by NHS Lothian eHealth Board. Our needs and aspirations have been voiced with the team and they are aware that we remain keen for these changes.

#### **6. Learning Disabilities**

Implementation of a framework for providing positive behavioural support within Midlothian has been completed and continues to receive support from all stakeholders. Implementation has been impacted by COVID19 but the steering group has now reconvened and the training subgroup will reconvene early November.

The project to review and redesign day services to reduce costs including transport was suspended due to COVID19. This is now being progressed as part of the Remobilisation Plan with a focus on re-establishing and building up centre based services within the restriction of current guidance and supplemented by home based, community based, and on line using new models of support.

Work continues to progress plans in relation to housing, both short term by making best use of the property available and longer term by ensuring needs as considered as part of the Phase 3 Housing Programme. Despite COVID there has been significant progress at the Bonnyrigg High Street site and Primrose Lodge in Loanhead.

## **7. Older People**

Older Peoples services have seen an increase in referrals across most services as an impact of COVID19. There has been an increase of around 15% to referrals to the Social Work duty team, an increase in the number of unpaid carers looking after an older person seeking support through VOCAL, and increase in demand for Care and Home services, and an increase in the number of crisis/emergency situations due to some older people's services still remaining closed. Day care and respite services remain closed, however plans are in place to attempt to re-establish these to provide some respite/short break to individuals and their unpaid carers.

The care home support team have commenced the flu vaccination programme with the residents in the care homes and once the residents are complete they will vaccinate all staff. This has been welcomed by the care homes and supported by the GP practices. The care homes have been highly effective and resilient in keeping Covid out of the homes in the second quarter. They are highly committed to work with all partners to maintain high standards of infection control and compliance while providing a homely and stimulating environment for all residents.

Plans for the development of extra care housing complexes across three sites in Midlothian is ongoing with Spring 2022 proposed for completion. A review of Intermediate care and rehab services is underway to review and explore improved pathways for individuals ensuring they receive the right care in the right place at the right time. The third sector continue to support individuals and their families in the community and have been creative in identifying other means of support through weekly telephone calls, meals delivery service, newsletters and technology enable care to keep people, connected as an alternative to face to face support that has been suspended due to Covid. This is continually reviewed through the older people's planning group which has been meeting on a 4 weekly basis and attendance has been particularly high.

## **8. Carers**

Since implementation of the Carers Act in April 2018, there have been considerable changes in funding, service demand, legislative requirements and duties on Local Authorities and Health Boards. Existing carer support contracts have been in place for a number of years, and it was assessed that in light of the significant changes in the unpaid legislative landscape combined with the contract of the main services provider coming to an end (March 2020), that a period of review and consultation leading to recommissioning of services was necessary to best serve carers moving forward. Agreement to this process was sought from and agreed by the Contracts and Commissioning Group; enabling a one year extension to existing contracts (due to end March 2020) to facilitate this process. Actions to follow through on this work began in Q4 2019/20, with a schedule of review, consultation and procurement through 2020/21; new contracts planned for April 2021. Due to the impact of the pandemic in early 2020, the timescale for completion of the work required to be adjusted, with timescales revised for new contracts to begin in July 2021. The consultation phase has recently ended and we are in the process of reviewing the data and drawing up the service specification of the new contracts. Tender will be opened at the beginning of January 2021 (Q4), with new services starting in July 2021.

## **9. Mental Health**

The Mental Health Strategic Planning group developed the Mental Health Action Plan reflecting the priorities set out in the Midlothian HSCP Strategic Plan. Primary Care Mental Health Nurses are in 11 practices and from the end of November all 12 practices will have a Primary Care Mental Health Nurse. Evaluation of the impact of primary care nurses is being developed.

Midlothian Access Point has now re-started and people can access the service directly via email and then will be allocated an assessment.

In September consultation on the recommissioning of community mental health and wellbeing supports currently delivered by Health in Mind started; this involved key stakeholders staff and third sector colleagues working across the HSCP, as well as consultation with people who use services through a paper questionnaire, online survey monkey, focus groups and individual interviews. The consultation for people who use services was facilitated by CAPS Independent Advocacy. A working group is developing the service specifications for commissioned mental health and wellbeing services and supports. The Invitation to Tender will be issued in January 2021.

## **10. Adults with Long Term Conditions, Disability and Impairment**

It has not been possible to progress the creation of Audiology clinics in the Midlothian Community Hospital due to the pandemic. This has however brought an opportunity to look at potential new technologies which could facilitate more local provision.

Awareness training sessions for HSCP staff, provided by Deaf Action and The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) have also not been possible due to the pandemic and training over Zoom or Teams cannot provide practical, hands on training.

In response to the current closure to the public of the Audiology Department due to Covid, we have recruited volunteers to uplift peoples' faulty hearing aids from their homes. They will deliver the aids to Midlothian Community

Hospital (MCH) for an Audiology technician to repair, and then return the repaired aids back to the individuals. This service is due to start on 27th October.

### **11. Sport and Leisure**

Sport & Leisure Services resumed operations at all sites on a phased basis from 31st August 2020 in line with Scottish Government guidelines. COVID19 restrictions are in place to protect the public and staff members, these include staggered activity start and finish times, all sessions are required to be booked and paid in advance online or by phone, limited capacities in each activity and the generic physical distancing, hand sanitising and use of face covering practices that are the norm in most public spaces. Community sport and activity clubs and other external lets have resumed where the current guidance, facility availability and reasonable Covid modifications has allowed. Newtongrange Leisure Centre has been utilised to accommodate Midlothian residents with pre-existing health conditions who access the Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) and Ageing Well programmes to provide safe, specific support to that vulnerable client group. Tier 2 weight adult weight management (Get Moving with Counterweight) and paediatric weight management (Get Going) courses are scheduled to resume at the end of October should Covid restrictions allow. Sport & Leisure Services has supported Midlothian HSCP colleagues in delivering Flu Vaccination clinics and Let's Prevent, the Type 2 diabetes prevention programme by accommodating and integrating those services within Sport & Leisure facilities and programmes. Sport & Leisure Services via its Ageing Well and MAC programmes is directly involved in the Falls Prevention strategy and pathways for those experiencing or at risk of falls.

Sport & Leisure services will continue to develop its digital capabilities including an expanded role out of online booking and advance payment for all activities, online fitness classes and activities as well as deploying digital platforms such as MS Teams for internal and external communication and workforce training and development.

The Adult, Health and Social Care Service Plan for 2020-21 was updated in September 2020 to reflect the Partnerships Covid Recovery Strategy. The HSCP Remobilisation plan is aligned to Midlothian Council's Route map and the Nesta recommendations. Our performance measures were reviewed and revised as part of this exercise. In summary the changes included:

#### **Service Priority: Health Inequalities**

PI target reduced for the number of people who will receive a health assessment from the Community Health Inequalities Team as this will now be done online.

#### **Service Priority: Carers**

PI target reverted back to data only for the number of Carers receiving an adult carer support plan of their care needs by Adult Social Care. Limited face to face contact impacted numbers for the foreseeable, and the move to critical service delivery only.

#### **Service Priority: Older People**

The action to develop and deliver a pilot for Roaming Day Care in partnership with Volunteer Midlothian has been removed. This pilot is currently on hold.

The PI target for the number of people attending activity groups hosted by Ageing Well was amended to reflect the operational return from Covid 19 restrictions to accommodate the months left to operate.

The Action and associated PIs to increase community awareness of extra care housing was replaced with an Action and PIs on consulting with extra care housing tenants re the impact of Covid-19 on their health and wellbeing and identify common themes of concern around future engagement in one to one, group or wider community settings to aid future extra care housing service planning.

#### **Service Priority: Mental Health**

PI target reduced for the number of people (per annum) in employment or education following intervention to accommodate change in practice.

PI target reduced for the number of stress control classes run in community venues to accommodate change in practice.

#### **Service Priority: Substance Misuse**

New action introduced to run a pilot of an online SMART recovery group for veterans to increase the range of treatment and recovery interventions.

#### **Service Priority: Adults with long term conditions, physical disabilities and sensory impairment**

PI target reduced for the number of people assessed by weight management triage to accommodate change in practice.

Action deleted to put in place a housing group to determine how to increase choice, numbers and accessibility to increase the availability of suitable housing. Given the current circumstances, this group has been put on hold. Contributions have been made however, to related consultations, both national and local, therefore, a new action has been introduced on the contribution to both national and local consultations to support an increase in the accessibility and availability of suitable housing.

#### **Service Priority: Digital**

Actions amended to reflect a change in priorities and pressures due to Covid19 which has brought forward and embedded a number of digital enhancements. Actions revised to focus on supporting NHS Lothian to continue channel shift and support services to maintain and adopt new digital working practices as part of remobilisation arrangements.

#### **Service Priority: Learning Disability**

Data only PI removed for the number of people with autism engaged in day activities due to Covid19 restrictions.

Data only PI removed for the number of practitioners trained on positive behavioural support as part of a programme of positive behavioural support in Midlothian as formal training has been postponed due to Covid19 restrictions.

## **02. Challenges and Risks**

### **COVID-19**

The impact, threat and uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic has become a significant challenge and will continue to be a challenge during 2020/21 and beyond. Collaboration and effective community and interagency working is fundamental, along with having in place a clear mobilisation and recovery programme to address the significant challenges faced in service delivery, addressing the wider health and care needs of the people of Midlothian, and ensuring workforce resilience and safety.

### **Funding pressures**

Continuing requirement to deliver a balanced budget by achieving major efficiencies despite the growing demand, particularly those with complex needs.

### **Capacity and Quality of Services**

Increasing demand on Care at Home services continues to be a major challenge to deliver the care and support needed. Since adopting a locality based model this has increased capacity and improved the efficiency of the service by 6%. However, the demand for care at home continues to exceed supply and an extensive recruitment programme and recommissioning exercise is underway.

Delays in hospital continue to challenge the partnership ensuring people are discharged timeously. One of the main challenges in facilitating timely discharges is the increasing demand on the Care at Home services and supporting people at home in the community who require increased care and support. Discharge to assess continues to facilitate earlier discharges and works closely with Care at Home services and the Flow Hub to support individuals to return home safely.

### **Absence Management**

Increasing levels of absence in service creates challenges for delivering effective and efficient service delivery. Work is targeted at teams with greater absence levels to maximise attendance and promote health and wellbeing in staff teams. Absence management monitoring is underway at local team and Head of Service level, working with colleague from HR. Managers are actively supporting individuals through the absence management process where required.

# Adult, Health and Social Care

## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

3 10 0 6

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

4 31 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

5 16 0 13

### Service Risks (latest)

12

### Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs 3

% of service priority Actions on target / completed, of the total number

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

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

### Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions 4

Improve awareness and understanding of sensory impairment among HSCP staff and partners by delivering 2 half days of training with RNIB and Deaf Action.

Reduce the waiting times for occupational therapy and social work services

Work with Building Services and Housing to seek and achieve planning permission for extra care housing projects at Gorebridge, Dalkeith and Bonnyrigg.

Enhance community resources for social prescribing by running a specific stress control classes in community venues.

### Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs 5

Number of people who received a health assessment from the Community Health Inequalities Team.

Average waiting time for occupational therapy services

Average waiting time for social work services

Number of stress control classes run in community venues.

Number of people supported with Cancer

### High Risks

Risks 3

Capacity of voluntary and private sector to meet Council's requirements in relation to quality and cost of services

Meeting growing demands with constrained /reduced budgets, especially from external funders

COVID 19

Key  
PIs

- Off Target
- On Target
- Data Only
- Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Actions

- Off Target
- On Target/Complete
- Data Not Yet Available

Key  
PIs

- Off Target
- On Target
- Data Only
- Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Risks

- High Risk/Medium Risk
- Data Not Yet Available



# Children's Services, Partnership and Communities

## Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21



### 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

'Our vision is to improve families' lives by giving them the support they need, when they need it'

Children's Services have shown improvement throughout 2020 despite the many challenges posed by Covid-19. The Joint Inspection of services for children in need of care and protection in Midlothian, highlighted many good areas of practice. An action plan addressing the identified areas for improvement shall ensure that our journey of continuous improvement is progressed thus improving the outcomes for the children, young people and their families within Midlothian.

Within Children's services and community and lifelong learning we have managed to adapt and respond to the challenges of Covid-19 during quarter 2. The vast majority of tasks undertaken by children's service staff have remained similar to pre-covid times with the safety and protection of children and young people very much at the fore front of everything we do. Within CLL staff were initially redeployed to support communities however as schools have reopened they have reverted back to their original tasks. A priority is to ensure that all the young people who were due to go to college or further education are supported to either stay on at school or to support them with their remote learning for their college course. The foundation apprenticeships and other funded projects to support young people into employability are being progressed, therefore Q3 shall see us reporting on the numbers undertaking the various different routes of learning and employment.

Between February and March 2020 the Care Inspectorate with its partners completed a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Midlothian with the following grades awarded;

- Leadership and Direction – GOOD
- Impact on Families – GOOD
- Impact on Children and Young People – GOOD
- Improvement in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people – GOOD

The report was very positive citing that the Inspection team were very confident that the partnership in Midlothian has the capacity to continue to improve.

Working collaboratively with partners in health, police, education, The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and the third sector, a partnership approach will now be taken to develop an action plan to meet the areas identified for improvement.

#### **Integrated Children's Services Plan:**

A new 3 year plan was completed and submitted to the Scottish Government in draft pending final governance approval by the NHS in September 2020.

#### **The Promise:**

Ongoing work around the planning to take the recommendations forward continues and Midlothian is represented at this strategic group. It is hoped by the beginning of 2021 a plan will be in place.

#### **Foster Carers and Adopters:**

We currently have 44 foster carers who currently look after 54 children and young people and therefore are at capacity and working hard to support vulnerable children and families, some have converted into adult carers to support Continuing Care placements. Though a number of foster carers also retired during 2019/20 though we have been fortunate to replace many of our fostering population. Though Covid-19 has had an impact on our ability to recruit in the way we normally would the team are using available technology and have already ran a number of Preparation Groups. Our foster carer input has been excellent during the pandemic and despite a number of anxieties, they continue to accommodate children as well as help and support family contact.

#### **Adoption and Permanence Planning:**

Despite the impact of Covid19 Midlothian Council continue to run a permanence service. The Care Inspectorate did an unannounced visit in February 2020 and the service received a very positive report where the evaluative Grades awarded were all 'Good'. The Care Inspectorate commented on the quality of our own internal mechanism for recruiting adopters (and foster Carers) and asked that this be continued.

#### **Residential Care Homes:**

Our care homes continue to provide residential care for up to 9 young people with one emergency bed. Our residential care staff have proved to be excellent during the pandemic and have gone above and beyond to support our most vulnerable looked after population. This includes working longer shifts, covering locum cover to reduce the footfall in our care homes and in some instances leaving their own family environment to provide a consistent high level of care to our young people.

#### **Kinship Care:**

Midlothian's Kinship Carers continue to be a key resource for children and young people who can no longer remain with their parents and we currently have 69 children placed in kinship care. Children's services remain committed to supporting kinship carers both financially and emotionally to ensure that all placements are offered the right support when needed. This was borne out in the recent increase in allowances which was also awarded to Kinship Carers. The Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) statistics for 2018/19 illustrate that the majority of children (70%) who are unable to live with their birth parents, were provided with a secure and stable setting through a kinship arrangement. This is in line with our policy direction to secure children within an extended family arrangement wherever possible.

#### **Youth Justice Strategy:**

The Midlothian Youth Justice Strategy, 2020-22 has been signed off by the Getting It Right For Every Midlothian Child (GIRFEMC) Board and will now be rolled out across all partner agencies. We continue to strengthen the positive links and networking with the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) and the Scottish Government to focus on priority themes;

- Advancing the whole system approach
- Improving life chances
- Developing Capacity and Improvement

#### **Mental Health:**

In order to ensure that the work that Midlothian Early Action Partnership (MEAP) is doing is not duplicated a strategic planning group for children and young people's mental health, has been established as a sub group reporting to the GIRFEMC Board to ensure that all the work undertaken across the community planning partnership is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic planning group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis.

Raising Attainment – This is a key improvement area identified as part of the findings from the recent joint children's services inspection. In order to progress this area of work a further sub group has recently been established which will report to the GIRFEMC board. This group will also ensure that all the work undertaken across the community planning partnership is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic planning group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis.

#### **Income Maximisation Project:**

Midlothian Council is working in Partnership with Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to improve the financial circumstances of families supported by the Children and Families Social Work teams. A dedicated Income Maximisation Worker based at Penicuik CAB will work with and receive referrals from Children and Families Social Work Department and work primarily with families where children are on the child protection register or are looked after.

The Income Maximisation Worker will develop a wraparound service through liaison with mental health projects, family support, AIM HI Project, specialist debt/money advice worker and linking with local organisations such as Health in Mind, VOCAL, Sure Start and Changeworks. The worker will aim to increase household income and improve the quality of life for the family, ensuring families experiencing difficulties are able to access the service.

#### **Family Group Decision-Making:**

We developed a pilot Family Group Decision-Making service (FGDM) to empower families and meet the recommendation set out in a number of policy documents which include recommendations of the Independent Care Review. The pilot commenced in October 2019 and currently consists of 0.5 FTE manager and 1.00 FTE social worker. To develop the various policies, systems and processes we established a steering group and were fortunate to have members of the City of Edinburgh's FGDM be part of the group. Due to relative small size of the service in Midlothian we have had to look at the areas that the service is able to focus on. We have chosen to concentrate our efforts on the following areas:

Pre- birth Family Meetings- all pre-birth children with a social work plan have the right to be offered a family meeting. Children aged 0-5 who have been referred for Initial child protection case conference.

Emergency family meetings and those on the cusp of care. To date the FGDM Service has received 43 referrals which include support to remain at home, to explore kinship options and sustain the kinship placement. Out of these referrals 13 did not proceed although the rest involved family meetings or significant pieces of work – this statistic is comparable with other FGDM services.

**COVID supporting vulnerable families** – People and Partnerships directorate including education, children's services and CLL worked together and shared resources during school closures to make sure that all vulnerable families were supported. A directorate wide gatekeeping process was introduced to review referrals for families in need and provide appropriate supports including 1:1 youth work, places at early years and school hubs. The council worked in partnership with Midlothian Sure start and After school clubs to provide similar support during the summer holidays. Over the period of school closures children and young people attended school hubs. Over the summer 765 children from 599 families attended early years or activity hubs.

#### **HFLC:**

HFLC was a key part of providing support to vulnerable families during lockdown and summer 2020. Over 18 weeks Hawthorn supported 121 children from 63 vulnerable families. Hawthorn gained approval from the Care inspectorate to temporarily change their registration to provide support from birth to 16 to ensure families could be supported together. As a consequence of the ongoing need for family group and sibling support Hawthorn has now had a permanent variation to provide day care for children from birth to the end of primary school.

While some of Hawthorn's normal activities and groups remain on hold due to COVID restrictions nursery placements have resumed and a number of families who were supported during lockdown have remained at Hawthorn. Hawthorn has also started providing 3-5 placements as part of Early Years expansion.

Given the new experiences prompted by COVID Hawthorn has sought further feedback from service users, staff and partners and is in the final plan for redesign and review will be shared in Q3 with a view to a formal review recommencing.

#### **Blended CLL and Employability Learning Offer for Adults and Young People:**

CLL staff have undertaken consultation with learners and stakeholders on their preferred learning models. Small socially distanced face to face groups were preferred by all as their first choice of learning. The team have developed and refined their Covid 19 learning offer to reflect the needs of both young people and adults offering 1;1 outreach, small group work and online learning including foundation apprenticeships, Nat 5 Maths, literacy and numeracy, wellbeing and targeted employability programmes. CLL have both created and are delivering a learning offer for 100 young people across the 6 secondary schools who had planned to leave school in June to seek work. The PAVE and PAVE 2 programmes for 56 young people have been revised with a new more direct referral route in place to support young people in S4/5, one to one support for vulnerable young people aged 16-19 has been expanded by additional resource transfer from Children and Families. Contracts have been awarded by the DYW to CLL for adult employability work delivering short courses in customer service and construction, The parental employability support programme funded by Scottish Government has been launched with staff recruited to the 2 posts and initial client referrals. The CLL service has taken over operation of Penicuik Town hall and is developing a user led management committee, similarly a user groups led management committee is being established for the Dalkeith Woodburn Community hub buildings (Aim High /MARC/Grassy Riggs).

## **02. Challenges and Risks**

#### **Impact of Covid-19:**

Whilst we continue to operate a rota for staff being in the office. The impact of not being physical around their peers and having access to their line manager as easily as they did pre-covid, is having an impact on staff morale and practice. Whilst home working has its benefits, when managing crisis situations in particular it does pose challenges. Being able to respond with a home visit with your line manager often results in the de-escalation of a situation, however this is not always possible if you are home working in another area as is your line manager. The ability to manage the situation requires a different approach and planning. In order to ensure that staff are fully supported across the services and in conjunction with Health and Social Care colleagues we are looking at how we can provide staff with opportunities for relaxation, wellness and mindfulness. This is as a result of what staff told us in the recent staff survey and from communication with staff directly.

#### **Young People with complex Needs:**

Children's Services budget continues to remain a significant and ongoing challenge. Some of this is in part as a result of several factors though we continue to discuss future planning with our Health and Social Care partners as well as external organisations.

Young people who require a high level of specialised care and have severe and complex needs. Whilst there is a lack of specialised resources for those young people who require this high level of support across Scotland, within Midlothian we have opened two additional houses to accommodate 5 young people. We have commissioned two different agencies to provide their packages of care and support. This good practice model allows the young people to remain within their communities, close to their families and attending Saltersgate School. Ongoing work around the transition from school into adult services continues

#### **Secure Care:**



Secure care is a very expensive resource and often children's services have limited input as to whether or not a young person is secured. We have invested in our local care homes to ensure the workforce has capacity and the skills to manage young people with challenging behaviours. The Positive Approaches to risk taking guidance has also proven to be beneficial to both the residential staff and the young people living in our care homes. Furthermore, the importance of having a multi-agency approach to young people who are at risk of secure is promoted via the Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol

**Mental Health:**

CAMHS (NHS) waiting list continues to be a challenge however within Midlothian we are keen to work together to identify other alternatives which could support the child/young person. A strategic mental health group is being established which shall report into the GIRFEC Board. We are keen to ensure that we have a good oversight of all the resources available and to capture the scale of need for wellbeing and specialised mental health services. We liaise regularly with our colleagues from CAMHS (NHS) in order to address any immediate concerns.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: (UNCRC)**

The UNCRC bill published on 1 September 2020 is being considered by the Equalities and Human Rights Committee. If enacted will require a significant piece of work for the local authority and beyond. Whilst we are already adhering to many of the requirements, there will be a requirement to report every three years on how we comply with children's rights.

**COVID supporting vulnerable families:**

As schools returned the gatekeeping groups has been put on hold. Across the county and directorate we continue to see the impact of COVID on children, young people and families. There is an acceptance that this shared resource group may be resumed at a later date.

**CLL learning offer requires to be fleet of foot and flexible:**

To meet the changing landscape of learners needs for both adults and young people with a strong focus on employability and addressing poverty. This is challenging with the restrictions on access to venues and technology for those digitally excluded but is being actively progressed. Covid restrictions make face to face employer engagement and work experience particularly challenging. We are working with partners in the Employability and Learning CPP group to develop virtual on line work experience offers. The return to a more restrictive lockdown will require CLL staff to revert back to community resilience support roles.

# Childrens Services, Partnerships and Communities



## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 3 ✓ 10 ? 0 📊 6

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

▲ 6 ✓ 17 ? 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 0 ✓ 6 ? 16 📊 10

### Service Risks (latest)

▲ 4

### Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs ● 3

% of service priority Actions on target / completed, of the total number

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

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

### Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions ▲ 6

Deliver the actions in the child poverty plan to meet the requirements of the Child Poverty Act

CLL will continue to operate the school work experience programme working with schools and employers

STEM CLL will continue to support STEM activities including, Midlothian Science Zone Graduate apprenticeship, teacher STEM work experience placements, STEM ambassadors and P7 inspiration programme

Continue to increase number of Modern Apprentices supported by CLL

Support learning and development opportunities in the community for people from underrepresented groups

Develop new learning activities to respond to the challenges of community empowerment, community cohesion, peer support and new planning legislation

### Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs ● 0

**There are no PIs Off Target**

### High Risks

Risks ▲ 0

**There are 4 Medium Risks and no High Risks**

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
✓ On Target  
📊 Data Only  
? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Actions  
▲ Off Target  
✓ On Target/Complete  
? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
✓ On Target  
📊 Data Only  
? Data Not Yet Available

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

# Corporate Solutions

## Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21



### 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

Corporate Solutions ethos is to embrace the delivery of a high performance culture focused on creativity, innovation, performance, quality and outcomes. Ensuring that services are of the highest quality and meet Elected Member and public aspirations, whilst achieving Best Value and making the best use of resources.

The service, encompassing Finance, Human Resources, Employment and Reward, Legal, Procurement, Customer Services and Libraries, Revenues, Digital, Business Services and Communications, has a strategic focus on the delivery of the Midlothian route map for recovery through and out of the pandemic.

The teams are supporting the recovery and the retention of the best elements of transformation that took place in response to the pandemic and also securing permanent changes to the way the Council delivers its services in order to build back better. This approach is based on the creation of a wellbeing economy and it is designed to achieve wellbeing and fairness for our people and the rest of nature. The redesign of services and the changes to build back better are predicated on the overarching principle in delivering services, whether commissioned internally or externally, that we will keep our communities, our employees and our environment safe, minimising exposure to Covid-19, or any other viruses, at the same time as meeting our commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.

The vast majority of tasks undertaken by Corporate Solutions staff have remained similar to pre-covid times with staff across the teams undertaking a range of additional work, to directly support the Council's response to the pandemic, to facilitate the rapid deployment of remote working and to undertake a range of additional activity including for example provide a range of guidance to employees, the rapid assessment of the financial impact of the pandemic on Council services and importantly providing a central point of contact for citizens as part of The Kindness @ Midlothian campaign.

At the onset of the pandemic it was recognised that the swift shift to remote working, coupled with an increasing range of expenditure pressures in services would require changes which not only needed to be implemented swiftly but which also required to comply with the Council financial regulations framework and give assurance that the internal control framework was being maintained. Accordingly an overview of the Financial Governance arrangements that would be of most relevance during the pandemic was provided to Corporate Incident Management Team (CIMT) in April 2020 and subsequently presented to the Group Leaders meeting. These arrangements were designed to; Support the maintenance of strong and effective financial control; Provide effective financial oversight; Allow for both efficiency and completeness in determining the financial impact on the Council; Supporting the development of effective mitigation to maintain financial sustainability; Supporting reporting and or lobbying for additional funding from Scottish Government; and aid the recovery phase.

In line with the route map at the end of the lockdown phase, we were able to begin reopening of stand-alone libraries, with Dalkeith, Newtongrange and Penicuik now open and with a revised mobile library service helping to service our communities where libraries remain closed to the public. We have also set out a range of quick and easy ways to pay Council Tax and House Rents. Highlighting that it is now easier than ever to pay both and saving our customers the time and trouble of making unwanted journeys or waiting in a queue.

Building on our nine drivers for change, the Service has a particular focus on the key elements of the route map encompassing the delivery and acceleration of the Capital Programme, delivering digital by default and remote working.

These elements of the Midlothian route map for recovery through and out of the pandemic are also captured in the recommendations from the NESTA Listen and Learn Report and having embraced both the Corporate Solutions teams have a key role in progressing the following strands of work

- **Valuing Communities:-** Being well together, using social media to engage with communities; meaningful local engagement, strengthen and build upon emerging ties with communities and work in partnership to deliver local, Place based services.
- **Remote/Flexible Working:** - Local and flexible placed based working; working smarter; sustainable futures; and a tailored approach.
- **Digital First:** - Access to wifi; technical capability; making things easier; digital by default.

The key activity which underpins this work and which the service is focused on includes:-

- Securing the financial sustainability and maintaining strong financial management across the Council through the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) incorporating Capital Strategy and Capital Investment plans, Reserves Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy;
- Nurturing a highly motivated and effective workforce through the delivery of the Workforce Strategy and the development of Service Workforce Plans;
- Digital first and embracing data insight and analytics by developing and implementing a refreshed Digital Strategy and Digital Learning Strategy;
- A refresh of the Customer Services Strategy and implementation of the online payments and services (OPAS) platform;
- A refreshed Procurement Strategy and Contract Delivery Plan.

Whilst remote working has brought a range of new challenges it has also by necessity brought about the accelerated adoption of a range of business tools and systems developments which are supporting our staff to effectively continue to deliver services. These developments also providing an effective and efficient means to progress and monitor work and teams performance. The adoption of electronic workflows for example has removed reliance on paper and wet signatures and provides an electronic record of what has been carried out by whom and when. Managers and colleagues are using all of the new technology available to them to maintain contact with colleagues, work collaboratively to deliver outcomes and to support colleagues continued personal development and learning.

### **Growing Council**

Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all council areas in Scotland. Between 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 on contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole.

This brings the opportunity to support the Council vision of being 'A Great Place to Grow'. The opportunity to redevelop parts of Midlothian, improve infrastructure with a focus on area targeting, improving economic opportunities, improving education and health outcomes.

This growth creates the opportunity to meet the housing need with 25% of new homes being built in the affordable housing bracket, in addition to the expansion in Council House building. This construction will directly support employment in construction and will see a steady increase in the value of Council Tax received over time.

The approved, Capital Strategy sets out infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

The extent of the population growth brings with it specific funding challenges and a key element of securing continued financial sustainability will be to secure a fair funding deal for the Council and its community planning partners. Securing a funding settlement from government which recognises and supports growth, growth which is central to the Scottish economy as a whole.

### **1: Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The core objective of the MTFS is to secure the Council's financial sustainability during an ongoing period of financial constraint coupled with acute service demand pressures and increasing customer expectations.

The MTFS is not only about balancing the budgets, it provides a means to ensure as far as possible that the limited resources available to the Council are targeted on delivery of improved outcomes, particularly against the key priorities of:-

- Reducing the gap in learning outcomes
- Reducing the gap in health outcomes
- Reducing the gap in economic circumstances

The MTFS is central to ensuring that the resources available to the Council is directed towards the priorities set out in the Midlothian Single Plan.

### **Achievements**

- a) Against the backdrop of COVID 19 successful completion of the draft audited accounts for 2019/20 with an unqualified opinion and some very positive auditor comment;
- b) Completion of the full suite of 2019/20 Financial Monitoring reports for Council in August 2020 as part of the robust scrutiny of financial performance, and which included an updated assessment of the financial impact of Covid on the Council;
- c) Securing a green rating for financial management as detailed in EY's 2019/20 annual report;
- d) Finalisation of the strategic review of the Loans Fund which provides the Council with the option of a corporate solution to the remaining years of the MTFS;
- e) The development of a corporate solution to secure financial balance for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which was presented to BTB on 7 October 2020 and which was unanimously endorsed by BTSG on 26 October 2020 and will be presented to Council in December 2020;
- f) Maintaining financial governance and internal control despite the overnight shift to remote working. Removing reliance on wet signatures and imbedding controls within workflows as detailed in a report to CMT on 14 October 2020;
- g) Maintaining Council Tax collection rates and administration of SWF and a range of Covid grant schemes.

## **2: Workforce Strategy**

The purpose of the Workforce Strategy is in essence quite simple, but nevertheless of critical importance, and will ensure that the Council continues to have a workforce that is able to deliver positive outcomes for the people of Midlothian. It sets out an approach to supporting, developing and reshaping the workforce now and in the future in response to changes whether as a consequence of national or local issues. It is underpinned by the Council's values and vision.

The Workforce Strategy is important as it outlines the organisation's approach to articulating how workforce issues will be managed to ensure the Council has the people and skills to manage change and deliver service. The strategy will ensure we have the right people at the right time and who have the right skills, knowledge and attitude to provide services confidently and competently.

## **Achievements**

- a) In very rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working was swiftly adopted and subsequently a Remote Working Policy has been endorsed by CMT which will support the continuation of remote working through and out of the pandemic. Successful deployment of scores of existing staff to posts into frontline services in response to the Council's first responder status;
- b) Continuation of a rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives to ensure we continue to support the wellbeing of our staff during these difficult times;
- c) Significant number of detailed communications issued to both staff and managers in terms of updates, directives, and most importantly supports available during the COVID emergency;
- d) Facilitation of the sustainable and safe return to work of over 150 staff previously on COVID-19 paid special leave due to underlying health condition;
- e) Continuation of robust and collegiate relations with our trade union colleagues;
- f) Successful joint working with Nesta on the 'Listen and Learn' report continuing to ensure staff engagement continues to be a priority particularly during and out of the COVID crisis;
- g) Implementation of an all-staff engagement survey to measure current engagement levels and ensure tailored interventions are implemented via service-level action plans, in response;
- h) Successful re-tendering for Physiotherapy Service to ensure our staff continue to receive the highest quality of care.

## **3: Digital Strategy and Digital Learning Strategy**

The current Digital Strategy has provided ICT infrastructure and facilities that have supported the rapid transition to new ways of working demonstrating that they effectively and efficiently underpin delivery of Council Services and align with the Single Midlothian Plan and the National ICT Strategy for Scotland.

Midlothian's current Digital Learning Strategy is central to the Council's aim of delivering a world-class education system. It is closely aligned with Scottish Government's policy and advice on digital learning and it also articulates with key national and local priorities.

Embracing the Digital First strand of the Nesta report presents an ideal opportunity to refresh the Council's Digital Strategy. This refreshed digital strategy will support the Council's stated objectives in both the route map and Nesta recommendations and will also embrace the opportunities to embrace the power of data insight and data analytics to support service redesign and the implementation of preventative interventions. As such the Council is entering an exciting phase where it can not only continue to embrace use of digital technologies in the workplace and schools but also harness the power of the data it collects to drive innovative and forward looking service redesign for the benefit of all citizens.



## **Achievements**

- a) Significant achievement by in the response and deployment of a range of digital solutions and technologies to support the pandemic response. Implemented a number of transformational projects Council wide (migrated 2,200 user mail accounts, implemented MS Teams, deployed in excess of 500 hundred digital and mobile devices (Laptops, Smartphones and Tablets). Delivered a range of digital solutions that allowed users to work remotely with access to Council applications and services;
- b) Continuous improvements and changes to Customer and Contact Centre operation to improve Council response and services and to swiftly shift to a remote Contact Centre operating model:- Phase 3 – Implemented and redesigned the Scottish Welfare Fund – now live. Phase 4 - Deployment of payment capabilities for Council services via remote working solution;
- c) Provided a totally different model of support for staff who are working remotely and who needed access to critical Council services along with maintaining business critical systems and applications with the Corporate and Education environment.
- d) Digital enabled projects: a number of new business applications have been implemented and these continue to improve the overall digital end user customer experience e.g. Planning, Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards along with associated public registers and Social Work application has just been successfully migrated to software as a service;
- e) CyberSecurity resilience: number of improvements made to the Council Cyber defences implemented enhancements to firewalls and the regular review and maintenance of ongoing threats and risks. Implement Scottish Government CyberSecurity action plan. Compliance: Preparation and planning of for PSN accreditation – certification now confirmed until April 2021.

## **4: Customer Services Strategy**

The Customer Service Strategy defines the key drivers that will enable Midlothian Council to deliver 'customer service excellence' to our communities. It outlines the commitment to provide choice to the customer in the way services are accessed and provided. This includes innovation, partnership working and optimising the use of technology within resource constraints. The Strategy will help us to change the way we deliver services utilising the latest technologies and linking to national frameworks.

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.

Customer self-service and new automated processes can help deliver some key services without customers dealing directly with a member of staff and could truly transform the way the Council deliver services. We already have a well-managed public facing website with SOCITM awarding our site four stars. Midlothian is one of only four Councils in Scotland to achieve this accolade. Our Web Team, 50 Content Editors and Council employees, generally 'get it' and already we have been able to transform how our customers interact with the Council. During 2020/21, increasing the pace of digital transformation, particularly in front-facing customer services, will be a service and corporate priority, for Midlothian Council – one that can deliver the required efficiencies without negatively affecting customer experience.

## **Achievements**

- a) Working closely with colleagues in the Revenues Team amongst others, service re-design of the Scottish Welfare Fund resulted in an online form being launched to provide greater options for applicants and help those facing in-work poverty;
- b) The Customer Services Platform (OPAS) has been approved and contractual discussions are continuing;
- c) The extended Contact Centre staff continue to provide support for core Contact Centre calls in addition to kindness and shielding calls;
- d) Libraries have provided online services throughout the summer and worked closely with colleagues in Education to promote eBooks, eAudiobooks and eComics to families provided with Council Chromebooks. The Summer Reading Challenge was run online and Midlothian recorded the 6th greatest number of children who interacted with the challenge and the 7th greatest number of children who completed the challenge. Two library branches have re-opened offering Reserve and Collect, a returns service, PC access along with NEC enquiries amongst other things;
- e) Registrars have maintained service and have provided assistance to Edinburgh and East Lothian colleagues for birth registrations.

## **Procurement Strategy**

The procurement function has a central role in supporting the Council to achieve its strategic priorities within a constrained financial envelope. Procurement allows the Council to use its spending power to drive our key strategic priorities and to secure the best possible value and outcomes for Midlothian. Effective procurement can maximise the value of every pound spent in terms of jobs, skills and supply chain opportunities in the local community. We will aim

to address economic, social and environmental considerations at all stages of the procurement cycle within the rules of open, fair and transparent competition.

The procurement team in conjunction with Economic Development are working to develop an SME Strategy to support and assist local businesses to win contracts fairly and transparently on a competitive market. We will further develop our collaborative and commercial relationships with key partners as part of our strategic category management approach, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the citizens of Midlothian.

The team has utilised framework agreements with Scotland Excel and Procurement for Housing (amongst others) which not only provides an easier route to market but also delivers value for money. The Procurement team is currently working with Scotland Excel to review the service to ensure it remains fit for purpose. We have also explored with neighbouring Council's albeit with limited success opportunities to collaborate on the joint delivery of procurement services and so will continue to engage with Scotland Excel to help support service development.

#### **Achievements**

- a) High value contracts awarded, including:
- Domestic Gas Inspection services
  - Residual Waste and associated services
  - Morris Road Housing Construction
  - Architectural Services, High Street, Bonnyrigg
  - Semi-permanent street barrier systems
  - Various vehicles purchased through Scotland Excel
  - Passive House Certifier contracts awarded for Polton Street and Newbattle new build housing projects
  - Perimeter fencing at Cornbank Primary School and Hawthorn Children's Centre
  - Northburn Culvert repairs
- b) Roll out of Cenefits system to assist the Council in obtaining community benefits from contracts;
- c) Hosted meet the buyer events held remotely;
- d) Roll out of contract variations for all National Care Home Providers contracts;
- e) Worked to protect the supply chain and ensured Council was able to access necessary items during the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### **5: Other Service Improvements**

- a) In response to COVID-19 pandemic BACS payments issued for Free School Meals, Self Employed Grants, Bed & Breakfasts and Transition Fund for Nurseries;
- b) Successful implementation for the electronic submission and payment of Gas Safety Inspection invoices and associated Gas Safety Certificates;
- c) Total Repairs upgrade completed including the replace of TotalMobile services completed in conjunction with Digital Services;
- d) Upgrade to Kirona DRS (BMS appointments software) completed.

## **02. Challenges and Risks**

The most significant challenge facing all services is continued impact of and response to the COVID 19 pandemic. This has presented new and unique challenges through the first half of the year and continues to bring new challenges into quarter three.

#### **Financial Sustainability**

Given the divergence from budget as a result of the pandemic the expectation of continuing challenging grant settlements representing a real terms reduction in core funding together with the impact of a rapidly growing population and greater demand for services, the Council will need to maintain a focus on securing a sustainable and deliverable Medium Term Financial Strategy. Delivery of service redesign and savings is key and this needs to continue to be monitored closely through the Business Transformation Board and Steering Group and through the dedicated CMT Financial Monitoring arrangements. Values attached to proposals in the MTFS were reviewed further to ensure they sat correctly within a detailed delivery plan which was reflected in the final 2020/21 budget recognising that it is important for the Council that the measures in the MTFS are fully developed (where necessary) at pace and also proceed to implementation at pace.

As touched on earlier a corporate solution to securing financial balance for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets, the two remaining budgets which fall within the term of this Council, was considered by BTSG on 26 October 2020. The adoption of a corporate solution will avoid the need for service cuts at an already challenging time and will in turn enable the leadership team to develop a MTFS for consideration by the next term of Council after the 2022 local government elections.

## **UK Decision to leave the EU**

All Council services have been kept abreast of the risks associated with the UK leaving the EU and in particular the risks for a no deal scenario. Services have been directed towards UK Government guidance on how to prepare for a no deal and have been tasked with assessing the potential impact and identifying appropriate risk responses. A Council Cross Service Brexit Working Group is in place and is directing preparation for a potential No Deal exit from the European Union.

### **1: Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The need to continue to strengthen financial sustainability and financial management by:

- a) Continue work on developing cost projections and the corporate solution to achieve financial balance for the remaining period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- b) Prepare financial monitoring reports for Q2 reflecting the impact of COVID 19 on the Council's finances and continue to work with budget holders to maintain effective control over expenditure and with Chief Officers to develop plans which address and mitigate against overspends;
- c) Mitigating the financial impact of COVID 19 and securing further financial support from Scottish Government and the application of financial flexibilities as part of the MTFS;
- d) Continued financial support for the range of service redesign and change programmes and delivery of savings measures. Help shape and lead all strands of the programme, continue to revise savings profiles. Oversight of investment to support transformational change;
- e) Review of the Capital Strategy and the affordability of investment plans principally to reflect the ongoing review of the Learning Estate Strategy and recognising the role our investment plans have in supporting economic recovery;
- f) Continue to strengthen financial stewardship in a climate of reducing budgets and increasing service pressure;
- g) Review and update financial directives and associated documentation;
- h) To ensure that the Capital Plan and Asset Management Board provides adequate scrutiny and oversight of capital projects to ensure projects are delivered as planned and so, minimise reported slippage in the capital plan;
- i) In partnership with colleagues in Place and Education secure funding support for the Learning Estate Strategy from the Phase 2 awards from the LEIP;
- j) The additional pressures presented by Welfare Reform are monitored in relation to income disruption to housing rent payments and Council Tax Reduction scheme, evident in increased arrears and increased demand for crisis grants from the Scottish Welfare Fund. DWP introduced a number of Covid-19 measures in April 2020, including an increase in Universal Credit and Tax Credit payments of £20 per week and increasing Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for private tenants to the 30th percentile measures (previously 50th percentile);
- k) DWP commenced the move to Universal Credit (UC) pilot scheme in Harrogate in July 2019 and state that the pilot will end in 2020, with full migration to be achieved by the end of 2023. Due to the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak across the UK from March 2020, work on the pilot is suspended until further notice. From November 2020, it had been expected that more people would be moved across to UC through the managed migration process until completion. In early 2020, the expected completion of the full move over to UC was put back from December 2023 to a revised completion date of September 2024. There has been no update on these dates from DWP due to the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak, as staff were diverted to deal with the large increase in Universal Credit claims with 1.5 million claims made between 13 March and 9 April, six times more than in the same period last year;
- l) The number of Midlothian Council tenants receiving UC housing costs increased from 1600 in March 2020 to 1,960 in September 2020. During the migration period the accurate and secure administration of Housing Benefit remains with Midlothian Council Revenues Services as required service provision for citizens across Midlothian. Demand and budget expenditure will continue to be monitored and priorities updated, if required, in relation to the number of applications received to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

### **2: Workforce Strategy**

Alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/3 we will continue to implement the Workforce Strategy 2017-2022. This includes a focus on the identified themes over the next five years. The Service Workforce Plans will need to be updated to align to the MTFS, the new leadership structure and detail the projected workforce actions over the medium term.

- a) Identifying alternative service delivery approaches and the impact on service delivery with pressure on available resource;
- b) Securing the improvement in flexibility and productivity throughout the workforce;
- c) Continued development of the Workforce Strategy action plan;
- d) In light of the implementation of the senior leadership review revisions to the F&ISS workforce plan are no longer appropriate. A new service workforce plan and associated actions will be required for Corporate Solutions which also reflects the Medium Term financial Strategy (MTFS);
- e) Continue to support our leadership community so that they are able to perform to a high standard and deliver on the Change Programme adopting the route map and NESTA principles, particularly challenging in the new context we find ourselves working within;
- f) Ensuring the adoption of the principles of the new Remote Working Policy to support the Council's position of 'remote working by default';



- g) Absence levels are increasing as a direct result of COVID-19 and increased support is required in service areas with high or increasing absence levels to deliver interventions to support their service workforce strategies and;
- h) Staff absence due to COVID-related absence continues to pose a significant risk to service delivery.

### **3: Digital Strategy and Digital Learning Strategy**

- a) Progressing the refresh of these strategies and ensuring the Council has the capacity and skills to take forward the associated investment and delivery plans. We have engaged SOCITIM Advisory to support this work. SOCITIM bring a welcome external perspective and challenge;
- b) Pursuing the transformation of and innovation in service delivery by pursuing digital opportunities, including automation, artificial intelligence and Introduction of new ways of working supported by modern technology solutions etc;
- c) The pandemic response has changed a large part of Midlothian's digital foundation and how Council staff and citizens now use Council services as a result. There is still work to be done to ensure the changes that were made at speed to underlying business applications, technologies and processes are reviewed and consolidated to ensure wider stability and resilience can be maintained. Remote workforce also introduces different security, compliance and support challenges;
- d) Increased threat of cyber/security attacks, e.g. denial of service, ransomware/hackers is heightened at this time and is an ongoing challenge to mitigate risk and minimise service disruption;
- e) Maintaining the integrity and compliance of Public Services Network (PSN) ensuring that the digital estate and associated technologies inclusive of business applications are all up to date and pass rigorous penetration testing is ongoing;
- f) Ensuring sustainable investment in digital foundations and assets at a time of financial constraints to allow delivery of the Asset Management Programme:- Microsoft Exchange/Office 365 / Windows 10 upgrade which is currently in the preparation and planning stage;
- g) Regulatory changes proposed will impact on Council activities if not planned for – for example New Data Protection laws (GDPR) and other compliance requirements such as Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS).

### **4. Customer Services Strategy**

- a) The resumption of services, sometimes working in a different way than before has led to additional work and pressure for the Contact Centre to respond to;
- b) Although there are still redeployed staff providing support they will return to their original services in time and there is an increased workload overall.

### **5. Procurement**

- a) Completing and implementing a review of the procurement arrangements across the Council including continuing to explore options for joint working with neighbouring councils;
- b) Completion of the Annual Procurement report;
- c) To deliver and demonstrate savings through procurement by continuing to review and monitor performance;
- d) Completing the Purchase to Pay project;
- e) As the next stage of the Council's procurement journey, and similar to most other councils the aim is to deliver a robust contract and supplier management tool by rolling out guidance and training to contract owners.

### **6. Business Services**

- a) Continuing to change the way we work to sustain remote working and minimise the requirement for office based working;
- b) Migration of processes which are still predominately paper based to electronic solutions.

### **Emerging Challenges:**

The emerging challenge is addressing the financial impact of COVID 19 on the Council and as part of that to increase the pace in which change, improvement and transformation is being delivered. Ensuring that there is clarity on priorities and that strategic outcomes are clearly defined and articulated. Maintaining forward momentum amid a period of fundamental change and focusing resources on the delivery of the route map through and out of the pandemic and delivering on **Valuing Communities, Remote/Flexible Working and Digital First**.

Having secured the unanimous endorsement of BTSG for the corporate solution to the remaining years of the MTFs to set out updated budget projections to Council in December 2020 and secure Councils agreement to the corporate solution recommended by BTSG for 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets.



# Corporate Solutions

## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 5 ✓ 7 ? 0 📊 7

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

▲ 0 ✓ 14 ? 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 2 ✓ 2 ? 0 📊 5

### Service Risks (latest)

▲ 17

### Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs ● 5

% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete this quarter.

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

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

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

### Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions ▲ 0

**All Actions are On Target**

### Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs ● 2

Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days (LGBF)

All recovery overpayments - as a % of all HB overpayment debt

### High Risks

Risks ▲ 0

**There are no High Risks**

Key  
PIs

- Off Target
- ✓ On Target
- 📊 Data Only
- ? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Actions

- ▲ Off Target
- ✓ On Target/Complete
- ? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
PIs

- Off Target
- ✓ On Target
- 📊 Data Only
- ? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Risks

- ▲ High Risk/Medium Risk
- ? Data Not Yet Available

# Education

## Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21



### 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

#### Education Service Improvement Priorities 2020/21

To note that the timeframe for the delivery of the identified priorities has been amended to take account of other priorities related to the impact of the pandemic. The Education Service continues to fulfil its statutory duty to provide a high-quality education provision, provide support to both staff and learners to improve their wellbeing and support schools to assess and address gaps in learning experienced by learners as a result of the pandemic.

#### Midlothian Single Plan Priority Reducing the gap in learning outcomes

##### Priority 1: Attainment and Achievement

1.1 Improve attainment within the broad general education stages:

- Improvements in planning, tracking and assessment and curriculum design and progression
- Innovative pedagogical approaches and enhanced use of digital technology to support learning
- Pedagogy, play and progression across Early Level

CfE attainment data was not gathered or reported on at a local or national level due to the impact of the pandemic and the closure of schools. The education service has gathered in estimated data and although this cannot be used for accountability and reporting purposes we will use the data to track progress towards future achievement.

Supported by professional learning opportunities through the South East Improvement Collaborative, we will support and challenge schools to develop robust tracking and monitoring systems including links to longitudinal progress over time for year groups. A minimum data set will support this work. A larger and more representative group of QAMSOs will support planning, moderation and holistic assessment in localities, based on use of the Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks.

The creation of curriculum frameworks will ensure a consistent focus on progression across the BGE.

A number of pilot projects on the pedagogy of play across early level are being developed in some of our schools. Due to the pandemic early years team pedagogues have been placed in settings to develop work across the early level and the continuum of experiences from ELC to P1.

Teaching staff have demonstrated an increased use of digital technology in their classroom practice since re-opening of schools, based on their experiences of delivering learning remotely. The Digital Learning Team are working with a number of target schools to provide targeted support for practitioners and are offering a catalogue of professional learning opportunities, available to all Midlothian staff.

1.2 Improve attainment within the senior phase by maximising opportunities through curriculum planning, consortium arrangements and partnership delivery, including addressing the ASN Senior Phase Gap

ASN Strategic group established to take forward strategies to improve the attainment of children and young people with additional support needs. The group will analyse data from early level to senior phase to identify where intervention is required to close the gap prior to the senior phase. Discussions held with secondary headteachers regarding the curriculum offer and aligning the school day to enhance opportunities within the senior phase, including through digital solutions.

1.3 Reduce the attainment gap between the most and least deprived children, including care-experienced children. Insight data for school leavers

GIRFEMC Board has now established a multi-agency group to provide robust performance management and quality improvement, bringing together partners to share resources, planning and operational delivery of additional support for children and young people enrolled at Midlothian schools. Key targets will include:

- Reducing exclusions
- Increasing attendance
- Ensuring joined up support for pupils with physical / learning disabilities, autism spectrum needs, behavioural needs or other additional support requirements
- Improving/ speeding up referral processes for additional support services delivered by all partners for pupils
- Ensuring joint forward planning of such services working arrangements takes account of all partners systems and structures

#### Midlothian Single Plan Priority Reducing the gap in health outcomes

## **Priority 2: Included, Involved and Engaged: Wellbeing & Equity**

### **2.1 Develop a Nurturing Authority**

A 3 year plan has been developed. During 2020-2021 the Nurturing Authority Strategic Group will establish the vision, decide 'entry level training and universal nurturing schools training, establish a readiness and evaluation framework, share with Children and Family Services an effective implementation toolkit for nurturing schools and support schools to engage with the toolkit and training.

### **2.2 Develop and improve the Health and Wellbeing curriculum to support the wellbeing of all children and young people, from Early Level to Senior Phase.**

A job specification for an ESO is being created to take the lead on this priority area.

To continue our support to families with nutrition and healthy lifestyles, the Early Years GIRFEMC subgroup have successfully bid for funding to pilot an innovative tier 1 intervention across the Mayfield area through the NHS Board. This will allow the development of a consistent messaging and approach around early intervention for healthy lifestyles within early years settings. This project is focusing on improving the knowledge, skills and confidence of workers who support families within the community settings around good nutrition, eating well and good conversations. Practitioners from different agencies will receive training in HENRY including Hawthorn FLC, Midlothian Sure Start, Mayfield Nursery School, Homelink and Health Visitors.

### **2.3 Support schools and ELC settings to provide high quality EY services, which focus on early intervention and prevention**

Almost all eligible 2,3,4 year old children will have an 1140 hours place by the end of October. The aim of the expansion programme is to support the development of children and contribute towards reducing the gap in learning outcomes and to enable parents and carers to take up education, training and work opportunities.

Targeted support is planned for settings achieving less than good.

### **2.4 Support schools to implement a range of mental health and wellbeing strategies for children, young people and staff.**

Our Educational Psychology Service has provided ongoing support to schools to implement the education health and wellbeing recovery programme. A weekly bulletin is sent to all schools providing guidance and advice to staff to support their own wellbeing and that of their pupils.

The Midlothian Schools Counselling Service, delivered by MYPAS is now being rolled out across our schools. This is a new service that will be available for 10-18 year olds living in Midlothian. The new school-based service is in addition to the community based support for young people that MYPAS has delivered for over twenty years. This school-based counselling pilot, running until September 2021, will embed high quality counselling support into schools. It recognises that supporting healthy emotional wellbeing in young people is a collective effort and that schools can benefit from having mental health professionals regularly available to their community to support school well-being and resilience, beyond 1:1 intervention. The service will be dynamic, with a partnership between school staff and named counsellors providing services in each setting.

Supported self-referrals by young people to the service will be managed by guidance teams in secondary schools. For P6 & P7 pupils, referrals will go through their head teachers.

## **Priority 3: Self-improving System**

### **3.1 Develop a quality improvement framework to support schools to achieve Good or better in inspection QIs through:**

- Empowerment of leaders at all levels, leading to an empowered system
- Improve quality of leadership at all levels
- Deliver a minimum data set and supporting data literacy professional development sessions to improve self-evaluation.

During the emergency response period an Education Strategic Group was established to co-ordinate critical childcare and support for our more vulnerable children. The Education Strategic Group is now well placed to take forward our ambition to develop an empowered system with decision-making and improvement being driven by those working closest to our children and young people. The Scottish Government Insight Professional Adviser is assisting the local authority in the delivery of data literacy professional development sessions to improve self-evaluation.

## **Midlothian Single Plan Priority Reducing the gap in economic circumstances**

### **Priority 4: Life-Long Learning and Career-Ready Employability This priority area and associated PIs is reported within the CLL Q2 report and SMP.**

#### **4.1 Improve the number of young people entering further and higher education**

#### **4.2 Improve the number and type of positive destinations for young people with ASN and care-experienced young people**

#### **4.3 STEM: Continue to support STEM activities to increase uptake in related qualifications and progression into STEM**

#### **4.4 Preparing children and young people for the world of work**

## Priority 5: Finance & Resources

### 5.1 Deliver Best Value through:

- Reviewing and implementing the learning estate strategy taking cognisance of the ASN learning estate
- Robust workforce planning

Good progress has been made with the implementation of the Learning Estate Strategy, including the submission of our bid to the Scottish Government for Phase 2 Learning Estate Programme funding. The Glencorse PS statutory consultation is ongoing and public consultation process draws to a close 13 November at which point the education service will prepare a report for council.

### 5.2 Implement the Education Digital Asset Strategy, ensuring that digital learning tools are high quality and support excellence in learning and teaching

An ambitious plan to transform the digital learning tools available to young people in Midlothian schools has been articulated in report format and delivered as a presentation to the Education Cross Party Group and to stakeholders within Education. Next stages to progress this area include ensuring full consultation with Digital Services colleagues and identifying a funding route to support the delivery of this outcome.

**NESTA report:** The following recommendations are included in Service Priority 1 Innovative pedagogical approaches and enhanced use of digital technology to support learning and Service Priority 5 Implement the Education Digital Asset Strategy, ensuring that digital learning tools are high quality and support excellence in learning and teaching. The Education Service has surpassed the actions set out in the Routemap through and out of the Crisis given the change in national guidance published by the Scottish Government July 2020.

Insights from NESTA interviews recommended actions:

- Work in partnership with school staff, pupils and families to consolidate what they have learned from the pandemic and co-design an approach to taking this forward.
- Work with professionals, children, families and carers to iteratively test ideas to help overcome the barriers to children and young people accessing learning support remotely.
- Draw upon evidence and best practice at a local and national level and support teachers to build skills and capacity in remote teaching e.g. using resourced peer support
- Work with schools to establish access to consistent tools and platforms, alongside remote access to schools systems to enable education staff to work to full capacity
- Midlothian should consider following other local authorities and adopt BYOD or providing devices to all of its students so that teachers can consistently design lessons that all children can engage with using tech.

## 02. Challenges and Risks

- Impact of the school closures on children and young people's progress and attainment within the BGE.
- Impact of the school closures on attendance and absence, particularly our more vulnerable children and young people.
- Impact of the school closures on young people's attainment in the senior phase and the ongoing uncertainty regarding the delivery of qualifications in 2020/21.
- Impact of the school closures on post-school destinations given the more limited post-school pathways available to young people.
- Ensuring good financial management and real-time information to ensure spending is accurately forecast and monitored within the year at both school and central points.
- Impact of school closures on progress with service improvement priorities and transformation projects
- Planned further reduction in Devolved School Management (DSM) for schools which was implemented from April 2019 which will further reduce teacher numbers. This will impact on the choices for curricular options in Senior phase at Secondary schools and on absence cover. The reduction in teacher numbers may also have a detrimental impact on our Teacher: Pupil ratio.
- Impact of school closures on delivery of instrumental music service added to the ongoing low uptake of music instruction which could mean further financial issues going forward for the education budget as we continue to have a significant shortfall in income.
- Impact of instrumental music service efficiency target as an unachievable target for the service to achieve.
- Vacancy control within the central team to protect frontline services leading to less direct support to ensure that schools are improving outcomes for learners and possible weaker inspection outcomes.
- Ensuring the reduction in Communities and LLE (now merged and called Communities and Lifelong Learning) still meets the statutory requirements of delivering an adequate and efficient service.
- Rate of demographic growth particularly in the early years and primary school rolls. Keep on track with the learning estate strategy across the council which is challenging due to fewer staff.

- Increase in the number of children and young people with additional support requiring more specialist provision.
- Ongoing work to re-start and prepare for the implementation of 1140 hours by 2020. The population projections used by Scottish Government differ from the populations projections used by the Council when submitting our financial forecast in 2017. Consequently, the Council will receive less funding from Scottish Government than was expected. Challenge will be to align delivery model with funding received limiting ability to flex the choice for parents.
- The potential impact from Brexit could affect employability funding which supports elements of Education especially the third sector.
- The potential impact of Brexit on aspects of such as free school milk, European Social Fund for employability. The potential impact of the proposed UK Internal Market Bill on the professional standards expected for teaching in Scotland.



# Education

## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 3 ✓ 10 ? 0 📄 6

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

▲ 0 ✓ 10 ? 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 0 ✓ 0 ? 15 📄 0

### Service Risks (latest)

▲ 7

### Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs ● 3

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

Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

### Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions ▲ 0

There are no Actions Off Target

### Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs ● 0

There are no PIs Off Target

### High Risks

Risks ▲ 1

School Capacities/Catchment Areas/Demand for Pupil Places

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
✓ On Target  
📄 Data Only  
? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Actions  
▲ Off Target  
✓ On Target/Complete  
? Data Not Yet Available

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
✓ On Target  
📄 Data Only  
? Data Not Yet Available

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



# Place

## Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21



### 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes and emerging challenges

The key drivers of change in delivery of sustainable and transformational services and regeneration of our communities must be treated holistically. The positive relationships established by Midlothian Council with our partners, private house builders, voluntary sector and the other partnerships are essential in developing a shared will to deliver on these outcomes.

Midlothian are taking a very positive and flexible approach to build momentum around the new supply recovery, as while there is a clear recognition that there will be a delay in starting and completing projects in the current five year programme and speculation about medium and long term impacts of the pandemic including the implications for the design of infrastructure we have progressed a quick review rather than a complete redraft to be able to progress this work through making changes to the Capital programme in Education, Housing and our strategic sites to take advantage of off the shelf opportunities or second hand purchases directed at meeting recovery objectives and supporting economic activity. This construction will directly support employment and wherever possible, new housing will be located close to good community facilities, shops and employment opportunities, with efficient and high quality public transport connections. New development shall be of high quality, balancing a desire for good contemporary design with respect for the area's heritage. The established community will benefit as much as possible from growth, through new affordable homes, enhanced employment prospects, improved education facilities and the development of green networks with opportunities for leisure and recreation.

Midlothian Council approved a new Economic Renewal Strategy, setting out its ambitious approach to managing the transition from lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face. The key aims are to protect jobs, preserve business and mitigate the adverse economic impact of COVID-19. Taking a partnership approach, the strategy will encourage entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery

#### Locality Place Service Delivery

As a consequence of the recent pandemic emergency a Locality approach to service delivery is being developed in conjunction with community planning partners for localised support, and the incorporation of enhanced ICT capabilities will bring opportunities for improved cross service working and efficiencies in the use of resources, localisation of services essential for future service delivery resilience. The rapid and reactive changes forced upon the Council as a result of the COVID pandemic has resulted in greater use of technology and a review of service requirements which in the medium to longer term will see a more rapid move towards improved performance and enhanced outcomes than was envisaged prior to the pandemic. The opportunity to review and redesign services that the pandemic has provided will result in a more strategic review of operational sites within local communities in order to better meet both service delivery requirements and efficiencies and local community and resilience planning needs over and above pre – pandemic.

Population growth over the next 10 to 15 years will see Midlothian remain the fastest growing Council in Scotland. A 0-15 population increase is projected at 20% and 75+ population increase is projected at 100% between 2014 and 2039. The impact of this means increased capacity within the school estate to cope with the projected increase in pupil numbers. General population increase placing additional demand on infrastructure and therefore increased pressure on services e.g. waste collection and growth of road network as new development roads are adopted.

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

- consider the benefits of planning, investment and implementation activity at the regional level of place - where that focus could drive faster rates of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

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

In addition the vision for the Place is supported by the following key strategies;

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

## Outcomes

During Quarter 2, the Council approved the Climate Change Strategy at its meeting in August 2020. The Strategy incorporates an Action Plan with number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. Focus continues within the Place services to achieve future emissions targets.

There has been continued progress made towards ending the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households. This is principally being achieved by expanding the shared accommodation project detailed in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and utilisation of shared accommodation services. This has resulted in an increased number of properties that would normally be let as permanent tenancies being transferred to the temporary accommodation letting stock. This has partly been offset by flipping over temporary occupancy agreements into permanent Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements at the request of households, reducing the time households spend in temporary accommodation, in accordance with the revised Housing Allocation Policy.

New build site opportunities are currently being considered at Shawfair (2 sites) and Roslin providing an additional 100 affordable rented properties. These sites are not currently included in the Council's affordable housing programme and will be included in the revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan to be submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020.

The Education Learning Estate Strategy programme has been developed and is subject to regular review meetings planned with Education and stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring, reporting and delivery of improvement and expansion of the Education estate including early year's provision. This currently covers approximately 30 projects at various stages of development.

A full evaluation was carried out of all current and planned construction projects and resourcing reviewed, to take advantage of off the shelf opportunities or second hand purchases directed at meeting recovery objectives and supporting economic activity, and ensure appropriate resourcing remains in place to progress all construction projects effectively (comprising approximately 70 projects).

Town Centre Capital Fund: A total of seven applications were approved totalling awards of £910,000. 2 projects are complete, 3 are in the final administration phase and the Penicuik Town Hall project, the largest grant awardee has completed the installation of publicly accessible WIFI in the Town Hall. The major works will commence on site in October 2020 and will be completed prior to the September 2021 deadline.

On 21st September 2020 Midlothian Council accepted a further £331,000 from the Scottish Government's £30 Million capital contribution into regeneration in 2020/21, part of the £230 million economic recovery stimulus package. Expenditure should be complete by 31st March 2021.

The Capital roads programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes commenced at the end of June 2020, following easing of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. At the end of Q2, 25% of 24 individual carriageway schemes were completed equating to 1.64 km of carriageway resurfacing.

Improvement works to ensure access for all abilities to our Towns parks and play areas continue to progress with work completed for Scots Corner early learning and childcare centre in Penicuik. Ongoing works for various other sites are ongoing including a consultation phase with primary schools throughout the area. In partnership with volunteers the landscaping team remains focused on developing and maintaining walking and cycling routes, taking opportunities to publicise and promote co-production with communities.

Waste Services successfully applied for £20,000 of funding from Zero Waste Scotland to implement social distancing measures at the two Recycling Centres which will allow Penicuik Recycling Centre to re-open in quarter 3. This

quarters community waste activities have focussed on supporting the reuse cabin at Stobhill recycling centre and continued support from community clear ups and litter picks.

### **Challenges**

The challenge across Place services continues to grow, particularly when we are also faced with managing the COVID response and with a growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this will bring. So far, we have reshaped council services and made changes to the way we work. These changes are evidenced in the delivery of new affordable homes, new schools, improved positive destinations for school leavers and the arrival of the Borders railway as well as new initiatives such as Energy from Waste Plant, Destination Hillend and reducing our offices and other property assets.

Quarter 2 has continued to bring challenges with the COVID pandemic and much resource has been required in many areas in response, such as Environmental Health as the test and protect system begins to identify locations associated with positive cases as well as the changes to the regulatory position and associated guidance. Similarly our Health and Safety team have been supporting the challenges of workplace risk and contingencies. Additional cleaning services have been implemented to carry out touch point cleaning throughout the day and sanitising/fogging of classrooms within schools where positive Covid cases are reported. In support of businesses, Economic Development administered the Newly Self Employed Hardship Fund and Covid Business support packages delivered between April and August 2020, with new packages coming forward for quarter 3 with £161,000 of funding being awarded in total.

# Place



## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

6 6 0 7

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

3 5 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

11 12 1 14

### Service Risks (latest)

67

### Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs 6

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

Performance against revenue budget

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

% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete this quarter.

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

### Service Plan Actions Off Target

Actions 3

Designate housing for particular needs with existing and new build stock

Complete survey and report into EESH compliance of Midlothian social housing.

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

### Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs 11

Percentage of consumer complaints completed within 14 days.

% of the footpath network resurfaced (cumulative)

Number of social housing completions

Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites

Number of property reviews implemented (cumulative)

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

Measure satisfaction relating to key areas in Building standards including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access and the quality of customer service

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

Percentage of housing units provided for particular needs with existing and new build stock.

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

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

### High Risks

Risks 0

There are no High Risks

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

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

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

Key  
Risks  
High Risk/Medium Risk  
Data Not Yet Available

# Midlothian Council Report Quarter Two 20/21



## Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

Community Planning partners have previously agreed the following ambitious vision for Midlothian:

“Midlothian – a great place to grow”.

Midlothian Council delivers its priorities through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Single Midlothian Plan. The Council Change and Transformation programme and individual Service Plans outline how Midlothian Council will deliver its contribution to the Single Midlothian Plan.

The top three priorities for 2019-22 are:

- Reducing inequalities in learning outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in health outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in economic circumstances

The Single Midlothian Plan incorporates five overarching thematic groups which support the achievement of outcomes. This thematic approach is used for quarterly reporting, the themes are as follows:

- **Adult Health and Social Care** - Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services
- **Community Safety & Justice** - Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in
- **Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child** - Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- **Improving Opportunities for Midlothian** - Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities.
- **Sustainable Growth in Midlothian** - Growing the local economy by supporting business growth and responding to growing demand for housing in a sustainable environment.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in June 2019. The public consultation visionary exercise supporting development of the MTFS highlighted the following key priorities for what Midlothian should be like in 2040:

- **A sense of belonging** Pride in communities, working in partnership, transparency in decision making and accessibility in service provision.
- **A balanced infrastructure** Manageable housing numbers, vibrant towns, protected green spaces, a clean, carbon neutral environment and improved community transport.
- **Learning and working together** High quality education and training, jobs close to where people live, a main provider of local food production, maximising technological solutions.
- **Intergenerational opportunities** Reimagined older people services, being able to grow old in the one community, with support and good access to health and social care.

In addition to the visioning exercise the following key themes were explored as part of the consultation programme:

- **Theme 1: One Council - Working with You, For You** - is underpinned by a commitment to deliver a one council strategy which reduces silo working within services, increases cross party working at a political level and uses holistic approaches which place individuals and communities at the heart of our work.
- **Theme 2: Preventative and Sustainable** - responds to Communities telling us strongly that they want to live in a clean, carbon neutral environment with protected green spaces and improved environmentally friendly community transport options.
- **Theme 3: Efficient and Modern** - recognises that Midlothian Council needs to adapt to change by doing things differently to get improved results and increasing financial sustainability by addressing inefficiencies.
- **Theme 4: Innovative and Ambitious** - recognises our ambition for Midlothian and to make sure it is a great place to grow, now and in the future.

**Best Value**

Key actions from the Best Value report are progressing including the progression of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the ongoing implementation of rigorous financial discipline.

### City Deal

The City Region Deal is emerging as a sound basis for regional level working between the six Councils together with key partners in the further/higher education, business, and third sectors. This is particularly relevant at a time when policies, plans and projects are being developed at national level. The expectation is that the intended Regional Growth Framework will ensure that the collectively agreed strategy to address key issues affecting the region in order to drive sustainable inclusive growth is both documented and promoted.

### Route Map through and out of the crisis

Midlothian and its communities are facing an unprecedented challenge in how we respond to a global pandemic with far reaching consequences for thousands of people locally. Across Midlothian Council, staff have adapted to working completely differently, delivering more services remotely and trying to maintain business as usual whilst supporting people through the crisis. At the same time, many of our staff were forced to shield and isolate, unable to work, or having to undertake reduced duties. Whilst this experience has been extremely challenging, it has also acted as a catalyst for change. There are things we 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.

The introduction of Midlothian's Route Map through and out of the crisis seeks to both support recovery and to retain the best elements of the transformation which took place in response to Covid-19. 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 Route Map builds on our 9 drivers for change which were approved by Council in June 2019 and are shown in table 1 and also identifies priority interventions to support recovery

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

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

### Midlothian: Listen and Learn Report

Working in partnership with Nesta, an innovation foundation, we interviewed staff from across the council who shared their experiences during the pandemic and the Midlothian: Listen and Learn Report was created. The report sets out a really ambitious future and is split into the following main themes which all contribute to our commitment to being Carbon Neutral by 2030:

- Valuing community (building on #kindnessmidlothian)
- Remote/flexible working
- Digital first
- Leading new ways of working.
- Education



The Service Plans for 2020-21 were updated in September 2020 to reflect our recovery from Covid. The Plans now reflect Midlothian Council's Route map and the NESTA recommendations. Service performance measures were reviewed and revised as part of this exercise.

## **Progress of Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2020/2021**

### **Adult, Health and Care - Achievements**

*Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services*

**"People in Midlothian will lead longer and healthier lives by getting the right advice, care, and support, in the right place, at the right time."**

The Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership 2019-22 Strategic Plan outlines a major programme of activity focused on prevention and early intervention; planned support, treatment and recovery; and unplanned treatment and support. We are achieving this by changing the emphasis of our services, placing more importance and a greater proportion of our resources on our key values.

Aligned to Midlothian Council's covid recovery route map the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership has put in place a 'Remobilisation Plan'. The plan sets out an ambitious four-phase approach and sets out our recovery priorities.

#### **Integration**

Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is progressing work to implement the ambitions of the Strategic Plan while managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Remobilisation Plan priorities in Q2 included reinstating care home visiting, continued support to people who were shielding, launch of a GP publicity campaign to encourage self-management, and increased digital options for people to access support and implementation of a detailed recovery action plan locally.

The scale of the pandemic resulted in Midlothian Council and the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership devoting much of their time and collective resources to responding to the welfare needs of the population. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership established a dedicated COVID Team that reported daily to its Senior Management Team. This team kept staff within the HSCP informed of developments and sources of advice and assistance on such matters as personal protection equipment.

A Working Group, involving representatives from Volunteer Midlothian, Communities and Life Long Learning Service, and the Midlothian HSCP, was established and it created a suite of guidance on volunteering for front-line community responders, and for distance volunteering (e.g. telephone befriending). Midlothian HSCP subsequently made a commitment to volunteering and agreed to recruit a Volunteer Service Manager.

The Shielding Team continued to support people until the end of August. This team was established to provide support and services to people who were shielding (approximately 3,000) as a consequence of underlying health conditions. This support included referring 'shielders' to the hubs and community groups for support with shopping, food and prescriptions.

#### **Inequalities**

Health and Social Care services remain committed to contributing to reduce health inequalities. Local people, the third sector, public sector and private sector created a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes. Some programmes to support people most vulnerable to health and other inequalities continued during Q2, others were delayed as a result of the pandemic. Support to people in homeless accommodation was delivered in a different way but did continue, as did support to people engaged with mental health, substance misuse, and social work and justice services. Some programmes, such as the one involving pregnant women who smoke, and the Type 2 Diabetes prevention work was delayed in Q2 until early September.

#### **Learning Disabilities**

Implementation of a framework for providing positive behavioural support within Midlothian has been completed and continues to receive support from all stakeholders. Implementation has been impacted by COVID19 but the steering group has now reconvened and the training subgroup will reconvene early November.

The project to review and redesign day services to reduce costs including transport was suspended due to COVID19. This is now being progressed as part of the Remobilisation Plan with a focus on re-establishing and building up centre based services within the restriction of current guidance and supplemented by home based, community based, and on line using new models of support.

Work continues to progress plans in relation to housing, both short term by making best use of the property available and longer term by ensuring needs as considered as part of the Phase 3 Housing Programme. Despite COVID there has been significant progress at the Bonnyrigg High Street site and Primrose Lodge in Loanhead.

### **Older People**

Older Peoples services have seen an increase in referrals across most services as an impact of COVID19. There has been an increase of around 15% to referrals to the Social Work duty team, an increase in the number of unpaid carers looking after an older person seeking support through VOCAL, and increase in demand for Care and Home services, and an increase in the number of crisis/emergency situations due to some older people's services still remaining closed. Day care and respite services remain closed, however plans are in place to attempt to re-establish these to provide some respite/short break to individuals and their unpaid carers.

The care home support team have commenced the flu vaccination programme with the residents in the care homes and once the residents are complete they will vaccinate all staff. This has been welcomed by the care homes and supported by the GP practices. The care homes have been highly effective and resilient in keeping Covid out of the homes in the second quarter. They are highly committed to work with all partners to maintain high standards of infection control and compliance while providing a homely and stimulating environment for all residents.

Plans for the development of extra care housing complexes across three sites in Midlothian is ongoing with Spring 2022 proposed for completion. A review of Intermediate care and rehab services is underway to review and explore improved pathways for individuals ensuring they receive the right care in the right place at the right time. The third sector continue to support individuals and their families in the community and have been creative in identifying other means of support through weekly telephone calls, meals delivery service, newsletters and technology enable care to keep people, connected as an alternative to face to face support that has been suspended due to Covid. This is continually reviewed through the older people's planning group which has been meeting on a 4 weekly basis and attendance has been particularly high.

### **Carers**

Since implementation of the Carers Act in April 2018, there have been considerable changes in funding, service demand, legislative requirements and duties on Local Authorities and Health Boards. Existing carer support contracts have been in place for a number of years, and it was assessed that in light of the significant changes in the unpaid legislative landscape combined with the contract of the main services provider coming to an end (March 2020), that a period of review and consultation leading to recommissioning of services was necessary to best serve carers moving forward. Agreement to this process was sought from and agreed by the Contracts and Commissioning Group; enabling a one year extension to existing contracts (due to end March 2020) to facilitate this process. Actions to follow through on this work began in Q4 2019/20, with a schedule of review, consultation and procurement through 2020/21; new contracts planned for April 2021. Due to the impact of the pandemic in early 2020, the timescale for completion of the work required to be adjusted, with timescales revised for new contracts to begin in July 2021. The consultation phase has recently ended and we are in the process of reviewing the data and drawing up the service specification of the new contracts. Tender will be opened at the beginning of January 2021 (Q4), with new services starting in July 2021.

### **Mental Health**

The Mental Health Strategic Planning group developed the Mental Health Action Plan reflecting the priorities set out in the Midlothian HSCP Strategic Plan. Primary Care Mental Health Nurses are in 11 practices and from the end of November all 12 practices will have a Primary Care Mental Health Nurse. Evaluation of the impact of primary care nurses is being developed.

Midlothian Access Point has now re-started and people can access the service directly via email and then will be allocated an assessment.

In September consultation on the recommissioning of community mental health and wellbeing supports currently delivered by Health in Mind started; this involved key stakeholders staff and third sector colleagues working across the HSCP, as well as consultation with people who use services through a paper questionnaire, online survey monkey, focus groups and individual interviews. The consultation for people who use services was facilitated by CAPS Independent Advocacy. A working group is developing the service specifications for commissioned mental health and wellbeing services and supports. The Invitation to Tender will be issued in January 2021.

### **Adults with Long Term Conditions, Disability and Impairment**



It has not been possible to progress the creation of Audiology clinics in the Midlothian Community Hospital due to the pandemic. This has however brought an opportunity to look at potential new technologies which could facilitate more local provision.

Awareness training sessions for HSCP staff, provided by Deaf Action and RNIB have also not been possible due to the pandemic and training over Zoom or Teams cannot provide practical, hands on training.

In response to the current closure to the public of the Audiology Department due to Covid, we have recruited volunteers to uplift peoples' faulty hearing aids from their homes. They will deliver the aids to MCH for an Audiology technician to repair, and then return the repaired aids back to the individuals. This service is due to start on 27th October.

### **Community Safety – Achievements**

*Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in*

Quarter 2 has continued to bring challenges with the COVID pandemic and much resource has been required in many areas in response such as Environmental Health as the test and protect system begins to identify locations associated with positive cases as well as the changes to the regulatory position and associated guidance. Similarly our Health and Safety team have been supporting the challenges of workplace risk and contingencies. Additional cleaning services have been implemented to carry out touch point cleaning throughout the day and sanitising/fogging of classrooms within schools where positive Covid cases are reported. In support of businesses,

### **Justice Service**

The 2019/20 financial year saw a new approach taken to the delivery of unpaid work in Midlothian. The team work alongside community groups and organisations to undertake a variety of projects that have sought to promote clients' engagement in their communities whilst making reparation (payback) to those communities who experience the highest levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

This has been a significant change in the practice of the team and developing and maintaining the close working relationships with community groups has allowed the Justice team to support these organisations and communities as they started to deal with the impact of COVID19 in March 2020. The team supported the establishment of food banks providing hot food to the most vulnerable in the community and also assisted by delivering hot food and food parcels and in supplying the food banks by transporting donated food from supermarkets.

There is now an established pathway created for people who do Peer Support Training and are interested in volunteering. Next steps include looking into providing SVQ's to support people into employment. Further, the Peer Support Development Worker is working in partnership with HMP Edinburgh to develop peer support in the prison for Midlothian men and women. The plan is to build a supportive relationship during their sentence, identify barriers prior to release (e.g. benefits, housing, bank account, photo identification, prescriptions), and aid a smooth transition back into the community. This service will also be available to those on remand who currently cannot access support services.

### **Substance Misuse**

Key services based in Number 11 in Dalkeith continued to provide services including outreach treatment, injecting equipment provision [IEP], naloxone, information/advice and door step deliveries of Opiate Substitute therapy [OST] and other medication to those shielding or self-isolating through both the initial lockdown period and the subsequent months. Despite Covid restrictions impacting service delivery the Midlothian Substance Misuse service instigated an outreach model to those individuals who were most at risk both current patients in service and also offering support and treatment to those individuals identified through who were not currently in service. This is over and above the patients normally seen through other aspects of service delivery.

In the early phases of lockdown, there appeared to be a potential risk that as normal drugs of choice became more scarce or expensive that people may turn to other available substances whether they are safe or not. As a consequence MELDAP issued information regarding a "Stick don't Twist" leaflet, advising people who use drugs to keep to known patterns of drug use.

In July/August, there were concerns about the availability in some communities of what would appear to be illicit Diazepam tablets and also Etizolam and Alprazolam [Xanax] whose quality is variable but would appear to be much stronger. These tablets are likely to be used in conjunction with other drugs [poly drug use] increasing the level of risk. Alerts and Intelligence were [and are] shared between Police Scotland, MELDAP and Drug Treatment and Support services to ensure that officers/workers had information to support harm minimisation information and support to people who use drugs. MELDAP created a specific multi-agency group which includes people with lived experience to examine a range of issues around the use of diazepam and illicit benzodiazepines.

**Road Services** - The Capital roads programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes commenced at the end of June 2020, following easing of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. At the end of Q2, 25% of 24 individual carriageway schemes were completed equating to 1.64 km of carriageway resurfacing.

Improvement works to ensure access for all abilities to our Towns parks and play areas continue to progress with work completed for Scots Corner early learning and childcare centre in Penicuik. Ongoing works for various other sites are ongoing including a consultation phase with primary schools throughout the area. In partnership with volunteers the landscaping team remains focused on developing and maintaining walking and cycling routes, taking opportunities to publicise and promote co-production with communities.

### **Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child - Achievements** *Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families*

**Foster Carers and Adopters** - e currently have 44 foster carers who currently look after 54 children and young people and therefore are at capacity and working hard to support vulnerable children and families, some have converted into adult carers to support Continuing Care placements. Though a number of foster carers also retired during 2019/20 though we have been fortunate to replace many of our fostering population. Though Covid-19 has had an impact on our ability to recruit in the way we normally would the team are using available technology and have already ran a number of Preparation Groups. Our foster carer input has been excellent during the pandemic and despite a number of anxieties, they continue to accommodate children as well as help and support family contact.

**Adoption and Permanence Planning** - Despite the impact of Covid19 Midlothian Council continue to run a permanence service. The Care Inspectorate did an unannounced visit in February 2020 and the service received a very positive report where the evaluative Grades awarded were all 'Good'. The Care Inspectorate commented on the quality of our own internal mechanism for recruiting adopters (and foster Carers) and asked that this be continued.

**Residential Care Homes** - Our care homes continue to provide residential care for up to 9 young people with one emergency bed. Our residential care staff have proved to be excellent during the pandemic and have gone above and beyond to support our most vulnerable looked after population. This includes working longer shifts, covering locum cover to reduce the footfall in our care homes and in some instances leaving their own family environment to provide a consistent high level of care to our young people.

**Kinship Care** - Midlothian's Kinship Carers continue to be a key resource for children and young people who can no longer remain with their parents and we currently have 69 children placed in kinship care. Children's services remain committed to supporting kinship carers both financially and emotionally to ensure that all placements are offered the right support when needed. This was borne out in the recent increase in allowances which was also awarded to Kinship Carers. The PACE statistics for 2018/19 illustrate that the majority of children (70%) who are unable to live with their birth parents, were provided with a secure and stable setting through a kinship arrangement. This is in line with our policy direction to secure children within an extended family arrangement wherever possible.

**Hawthorn Family Learning Centre** - was a key part of providing support to vulnerable families during lockdown and summer 2020. Over 18 weeks Hawthorn supported 121 children from 63 vulnerable families. Hawthorn gained approval from the Care inspectorate to temporarily change their registration to provide support from birth to 16 to ensure families could be supported together. As a consequence of the ongoing need for family group and sibling support Hawthorn has now had a permanent variation to provide day care for children from birth to the end of primary school.

While some of Hawthorn's normal activities and groups remain on hold due to COVID restrictions nursery placements have resumed and a number of families who were supported during lockdown have remained at Hawthorn. Hawthorn has also started providing 3-5 placements as part of Early Years expansion. Given the new experiences prompted by COVID Hawthorn has sought further feedback from service users, staff and partners and is in the final plan for redesign and review will be shared in Q3 with a view to a formal review recommencing.

**Mental Health** - In order to ensure that the work MEAP is doing is not duplicated a strategic planning group for children and young people's mental health, has been established as a sub group reporting to the GIRFEMC Board to ensure that all the work undertaken across the community planning partnership is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic planning group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis

Raising Attainment – This is a key improvement area identified as part of the findings from the recent joint children's services inspection. In order to progress this area of work a further sub group has recently been established which will report to the GIRFEMC board. This group will also ensure that all the work undertaken across the community planning partnership is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic

planning group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis

## **Education**

The Education Plan sets out 5 key priorities aligned to the key strategic priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan to reduce inequalities in learning outcomes, health outcomes and economic circumstance:

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

CfE attainment data was not gathered or reported on at a local or national level due to the impact of the pandemic and the closure of schools. The education service has gathered in estimated data and although this cannot be used for accountability and reporting purposes the data will be used to track progress towards future achievement. Schools will be supported and challenged to develop robust tracking and monitoring systems and a minimum data set will support this work. The creation of curriculum frameworks will ensure a consistent focus on progression across the BGE. Due to the pandemic early years teams pedagogues have been placed in settings to develop work across the early level and the continuum of experiences from ELC to P1.

The established ASN Strategic group will analyse data from early level to senior phase to identify where intervention is required to close the gap prior to the senior phase. The GIRFEC Board has established a multi-agency group to provide robust performance management and quality improvement with key targets including; reducing exclusions; increasing attendance and ensuring joined up support for pupils with additional support requirements, improving referral processes for additional support services and ensuring joint forward planning.

A 3 year plan has been developed and will be taken forward by the Nurturing Authority Strategic Group. The Early Years GIRFEC subgroup have successfully bid for funding to pilot an innovative tier 1 intervention across the Mayfield area through the NHS Board to continue support to families with nutrition and healthy lifestyles. Almost all eligible 2, 3, 4 year old children will have 1140 hours in place by the end of October. Ongoing support has been provided to schools by the Educational Psychology Service to implement the education health and wellbeing recovery programme and the Midlothian Schools Counselling Service, delivered by MYPAS is now being rolled out across our schools.

During the emergency response period an Education Strategic Group was established to co-ordinate critical childcare and support for our more vulnerable children. The Education Strategic Group is now well placed to take forward our ambition to develop an empowered system with decision-making and improvement being driven by those working closest to our children and young people. The Scottish Government Insight Professional Adviser is assisting the local authority in the delivery of data literacy professional development sessions to improve self-evaluation.

Good progress has been made with the implementation of the Learning Estate Strategy, including the submission of our bid to the Scottish Government for Phase 2 Learning Estate Programme funding. The Glencorse PS statutory consultation is ongoing and public consultation process draws to a close 13 November at which point the education service will prepare a report for council.

An ambitious plan to transform the digital learning tools available to young people in Midlothian schools has been articulated in report format and delivered as a presentation to the Education Cross Party Group and to stakeholders within Education. Next stages to progress this area include ensuring full consultation with Digital Services colleagues and identifying a funding route to support the delivery of this outcome.

**Early Years** - An ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the opportunity for 2 year old places in ELC ensured that we have an increasing families who take up this offer. The ELC service has introduced discretionary funding criteria, following a consultation with representative populations of parents, which means that discretionary funding will be targeted at children "in need" (CYP Act 2014). This criteria was introduced in September 2019 meaning that families that are above the income threshold could now be approved for the funding if they meet one or more of the identified discretionary criteria. There is an increased number of eligible 2s receiving pilot 1140 hour places. In addition to numbers increasing, children also received more funded hours. From January 2020, children were able to access 1140 hour placements. Multi agency working was key to success in increasing take up. We were also involved with a Pan Lothian working group with health and neighbouring authorities to share ideas that have helped increase take up overall.

The council has now completed the fifth phase of piloting expanded hours places and by the end of this quarter, 1,205 expanded hour places were available in Midlothian. This works out to be 43% of the places available which

is slightly above Scottish Government expectations (40% in August). Almost all settings are providing 1140 hours provision across the council. Projects of note which have opened this session include Vogrie Outdoor Early Learning and Childcare Setting, Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare Setting and a new ELC setting at St Davids PS. Vogrie Outdoor ELC is the Council's first fully outdoor nursery and has received considerable national and international interest. The ELC provision at Scots corner is developing in partnership with the MoD and this unique setting works closely with families to develop our family learning approach and areas of practice in supporting Armed Forces families throughout their early learning journey and beyond.

Due to Covid all settings closed in mid-March and the Scottish Government decided to put the legislative duty for implementation of 1140 hours on hold. Staff continued to make contact with families throughout this time and lunches were provided for families who were entitled or challenged by the circumstances. Vulnerable families with children aged 2-5 years were allocated support through a Gatekeeping process at Midlothian Sure Start or Hawthorn Children and Family Centre.

### **Improving Opportunities Midlothian - Achievements**

*Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities*

#### **Blended CLL and Employability Learning Offer for Adults and Young People**

CLL staff have undertaken consultation with learners and stakeholders on their preferred learning models. Small socially distanced face to face groups were preferred by all as their first choice of learning. The team have developed and refined their Covid 19 learning offer to reflect the needs of both young people and adults offering 1;1 outreach, small group work and online learning including foundation apprenticeships, Nat 5 Maths, literacy and numeracy, wellbeing and targeted employability programmes. CLL have both created and are delivering a learning offer for 100 young people across the 6 secondary schools who had planned to leave school in June to seek work. The PAVE and PAVE 2 programmes for 56 young people have been revised with a new more direct referral route in place to support young people in S4/5, one to one support for vulnerable young people aged 16-19 has been expanded by additional resource transfer from Children and Families. Contracts have been awarded by the DYW to CLL for adult employability work delivering short courses in customer service and construction, The parental employability support programme funded by Scottish Government has been launched with staff recruited to the 2 posts and initial client referrals. The CLL service has taken over operation of Penicuik Town hall and is developing a user led management committee, similarly a user groups led management committee is being established for the Dalkeith Woodburn Community hub buildings (Aim High /MARC/Grassy Riggs).

**Sport and Leisure** - Sport & Leisure Services resumed operations at all sites on a phased basis from 31st August 2020 in line with Scottish Government guidelines. COVID19 restrictions are in place to protect the public and staff members, these include staggered activity start and finish times, all sessions are required to be booked and paid in advance online or by phone, limited capacities in each activity and the generic physical distancing, hand sanitising and use of face covering practices that are the norm in most public spaces. Community sport and activity clubs and other external lets have resumed where the current guidance, facility availability and reasonable Covid modifications has allowed. Newtongrange Leisure Centre has been utilised to accommodate Midlothian residents with pre-existing health conditions who access the Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) and Ageing Well programmes to provide safe, specific support to that vulnerable client group. Tier 2 weight adult weight management (Get Moving with Counterweight) and paediatric weight management (Get Going) courses are scheduled to resume at the end of October should Covid restrictions allow. Sport & Leisure Services has supported Midlothian HSCP colleagues in delivering Flu Vaccination clinics and Let's Prevent, the Type 2 diabetes prevention programme by accommodating and integrating those services within Sport & Leisure facilities and programmes. Sport & Leisure Services via its Ageing Well and MAC programmes is directly involved in the Falls Prevention strategy and pathways for those experiencing or at risk of falls.

Sport & Leisure services will continue to develop its digital capabilities including an expanded role out of online booking and advance payment for all activities, online fitness classes and activities as well as deploying digital platforms such as MS Teams for internal and external communication and workforce training and development.

### **Sustainable Growth - Achievements**

*Growing the local economy by supporting business growth and responding to growing demand for housing in a sustainable environment*

During Quarter 2, the Council approved the Climate Change Strategy at its meeting in August 2020. The Strategy incorporates an Action Plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint.

#### **Locality Place Service Delivery**

As a consequence of the recent pandemic emergency a Locality approach to service delivery is being developed in conjunction with community planning partners for localised support, and the incorporation of enhanced ICT capabilities will bring opportunities for improved cross service working and efficiencies in the use of resources,



localisation of services essential for future service delivery resilience The rapid and reactive changes forced upon the Council as a result of the COVID pandemic has resulted in greater use of technology and a review of service requirements which in the medium to longer term will see a more rapid move towards improved performance and enhanced outcomes than was envisaged prior to the pandemic. The opportunity to review and redesign services that the pandemic has provided will result in a more strategic review of operational sites within local communities in order to better meet both service delivery requirements and efficiencies and local community and resilience planning needs over and above pre – pandemic.

All services continue to contribute to environmental responsibilities, providing opportunities for young people through positive destinations work placements, supporting the economic growth of Midlothian and working in partnership with Communities and Voluntary Organisations.

The council will address the demographic growth and the future demands of a growing and ageing population by maximising its use of assets, whilst changing service design and delivery through a Transformational approach, where we become more efficient and at the same time deliver changes to improve the way we work, the services we deliver and the quality of life experienced by local people.

**Waste** - Waste Services successfully applied for £20,000 of funding from Zero Waste Scotland to implement social distancing measures at the two Recycling Centres which will allow Penicuik Recycling Centre to re-open in quarter 3. This quarters community waste activities have focussed on supporting the reuse cabin at Stobhill recycling centre and continued support from community clear ups and litter picks.

**Homelessness and Housing Services** - There has been continued progress made towards ending the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households. This is principally being achieved by expanding the shared accommodation project detailed in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and utilisation of shared accommodation services. This has resulted in an increased number of properties that would normally be let as permanent tenancies being transferred to the temporary accommodation letting stock. This has partly been offset by flipping over temporary occupancy agreements into permanent Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements at the request of households, reducing the time households spend in temporary accommodation, in accordance with the revised Housing Allocation Policy.

New build site opportunities are currently being considered at Shawfair (2 sites) and Roslin providing an additional 100 affordable rented properties. These sites are not currently included in the Council's affordable housing programme and will be included in the revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan to be submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020.

**Economic Development** - Administered the Newly Self Employed Hardship Fund and Covid Business support packages delivered between April and August 2020, with new packages coming forward for quarter 3 with £161,000 of funding being awarded in total.

#### **Additional Areas of Interest**

*Internal Council actions/activities supporting the delivery of agreed outcomes*

#### **Growing Council**

Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all council areas in Scotland. Between 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 on contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole.

This brings the opportunity to support the Council vision of being 'A Great Place to Grow'. The opportunity to redevelop parts of Midlothian, improve infrastructure with a focus on area targeting, improving economic opportunities, improving education and health outcomes.

This growth creates the opportunity to meet the housing need with 25% of new homes being built in the affordable housing bracket, in addition to the expansion in Council House building. This construction will directly support employment in construction and will see a steady increase in the value of Council Tax received over time.

The approved, Capital Strategy sets out infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

The extent of the population growth brings with it specific funding challenges and a key element of securing continued financial sustainability will be to secure a fair funding deal for the Council and its community planning partners. Securing a funding settlement from government which recognises and supports growth, growth which is central to the Scottish Economy as a whole.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The core objective of the MTFS is to secure the Council's financial sustainability during an ongoing period of financial constraint coupled with acute service demand pressures and increasing customer expectations.

The MTFS is not only about balancing the budgets, it provides a means to ensure as far as possible that the limited resources available to the Council are targeted on delivery of improved outcomes, particularly against the key priorities of:-

- Reducing the gap in learning outcomes
- Reducing the gap in health outcomes
- Reducing the gap in economic circumstances

The MTFS is central to ensuring that the resources available to the Council is directed towards the priorities set out in the Midlothian Single Plan.

### **Achievements**

- a) Against the backdrop of COVID 19 successful completion of the draft audited accounts for 2019/20 with an unqualified opinion and some very positive auditor comment;
- b) Completion of the full suite of 2019/20 Financial Monitoring reports for Council in August 2020 as part of the robust scrutiny of financial performance, and which included an updated assessment of the financial impact of Covid on the Council;
- c) Securing a green rating for financial management as detailed in EY's 2019/20 annual report
- d) Finalisation of the strategic review of the Loans Fund which provides the Council with the option of a corporate solution to the remaining years of the MTFS;
- e) The development of a corporate solution to secure financial balance for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which was presented to BTB on 7 October 2020 and which will be considered by BTSG on 26 October 2020.
- f) Maintaining financial governance and internal control despite the overnight shift to remote working. Removing reliance on wet signatures and imbedding controls within workflows as detailed in a report to CMT on 14 October 2020.
- g) Maintaining Council Tax collection rates and administration of SWF and a range of covid grant schemes

## **Challenges and Risks**

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

The impact, threat and uncertainty of the emerging coronavirus pandemic became a significant challenge during Q4 and will continue to be a challenge during 2020/21 and beyond. Collaboration and effective community and interagency working is fundamental, along with having in place a clear mobilisation and recovery programme to address the significant challenges faced in service delivery, addressing the wider health and care needs of the people of Midlothian, and ensuring workforce resilience and safety.

### **Capacity and Quality of Care at Home Services**

Increasing demand on Care at Home services continues to be a major challenge to deliver the care and support needed. Since adopting a locality based model this has increased capacity and improved the efficiency of the service by 6%. However, the demand for care at home continues to exceed supply and an extensive recruitment programme and recommissioning exercise is underway.

Delays in hospital continue to challenge the partnership ensuring people are discharged timeously. One of the main challenges in facilitating timely discharges is the increasing demand on the Care at Home services and supporting people at home in the community who require increased care and support. Discharge to assess continues to facilitate earlier discharges and works closely with Care at Home services and the Flow Hub to support individuals to return home safely.

### **Financial Sustainability**

Given the divergence from budget as a result of the pandemic the expectation of continuing challenging grant settlements representing a real terms reduction in core funding together with the impact of a rapidly growing population and greater demand for services, the Council will need to maintain a focus on securing a sustainable and deliverable Medium Term Financial Strategy.. Delivery of service redesign and savings is key and this needs to continue to be monitored closely through the Business Transformation Board and Steering Group and through the dedicated CMT Financial Monitoring arrangements. Values attached to proposals in the MTFS were reviewed further to ensure they sat correctly within a detailed delivery plan which was reflected in the final 20/21 budget recognising that it is important for the Council that the measures in the MTFS are fully developed (where necessary) at pace and also proceed to implementation at pace.

**UK Decision to leave the EU**

All Council services have been kept abreast of the risks associated with the UK leaving the EU and in particular the risks for a no deal scenario. Services have been directed towards UK Government guidance on how to prepare for a no deal and have been tasked with assessing the potential impact and identifying appropriate risk responses. A Council Cross Service Brexit Working Group is in place and is directing preparation for a potential No Deal exit from the European Union

**Digital Strategy and Digital Learning Strategy**

Covid pandemic response has changed a large part of Midlothian's Digital foundation and how Council staff and citizens now use Council services as a result of the Covid response. There is still work to be done to ensure the changes that were made at speed to underlying Business applications, technologies and processes are reviewed and consolidated to ensure wider stability and resilience can be maintained

# Midlothian Council - How we are Performing



## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

PIs ● 7 ✓ 3 ? 0 📊 7



# Minute of Meeting

Cabinet  
Tuesday 1 December 2020  
Item No 6.1



## Education Appointment Committee

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday 24 September 2020	3.00 pm	Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor Muirhead	Chair
Councillor Alexander	
Councillor Janet Lay-Douglas	
L. Black. Headteacher	
J. Philips	School Parent Council
Dr N. Hulton	School Parent Council

In attendance:

Andrew Sheridan	School Groups Manager
-----------------	-----------------------

## 1 Apologies

---

None

## 2 Report

---

Report No.	Report Title	Presented by:
4.1	Appointment of Depute Head Teacher, Beeslack Community High School	Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships.
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
The Committee interviewed A.Clark and J. MacWhirter.		
<b>Decision</b>		
Following consideration, the Committee agreed that the post of Depute Head Teacher, Beeslack Community High School be offered to J. MacWhirter.		
<b>Action</b>		
Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships		

# Minute of Meeting

Cabinet  
Tuesday 1 December 2020  
Item No 6.2



## Education Appointment Committee

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 25 September 2020	9.30 am	Virtual Meeting

### Present:

Councillor Muirhead	(Chair)
Councillor Alexander	
Councillor Janet Lay-Douglas	
J. Prandslatter	School Parent Council
C. Humphreys	School Parent Council
M. Murphy	School Parent Council

### In attendance:

Nicola McDowell	School Groups Manager
-----------------	-----------------------

## 1 Apologies

---

None

## 2 Report

---

Report No.	Report Title	Presented by:
4.1	Appointment of Head Teacher, Gore Glen Primary School	Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships.
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
The Committee interviewed A. Milne in connection with the appointment to the post of Head Teacher, Burnbrae Primary School.		
<b>Decision</b>		
Following consideration, the Committee agreed that the post of Head Teacher, Gore Glen Primary School be offered to A. Milne.		
<b>Action</b>		
Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships		

# Minute of Meeting

Cabinet  
Tuesday 1 December 2020  
Item No 6.3



## Education Appointment Committee

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 14 October 2020	3.00 pm	Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor Muirhead	Chair
Councillor Alexander	
Councillor Janet Lay-Douglas	
E Stables	School Parent Council
L Burnett	School Parent Council
H McBroom	School Parent Council

In attendance:

Nicola McDowell	School Groups Manager
-----------------	-----------------------

## 1 Apologies

---

None

## 2 Report

---

Report No.	Report Title	Presented by:
4.1	Appointment of Head Teacher, Mayfield Primary School	Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships.
<b>Outline of report and summary of discussion</b>		
The Committee interviewed L Walker.		
<b>Decision</b>		
Following consideration, the Committee agreed that the post of Head Teacher, Mayfield Primary School be offered to L Walker.		
<b>Action</b>		
Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships		