

## Midlothian Council Report



### Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

Midlothian and its communities have faced an unprecedented challenge in responding to a global pandemic with far reaching consequences. Across Midlothian Council, staff have rapidly adapted to working completely differently, delivering more services remotely and trying to maintain business as usual whilst supporting people through the crisis. Our #KindnessMidlothian campaign received an iESE Public Sector Transformation Award, alongside an iESE award for our Climate Change approaches, including our work towards being carbon neutral by 2030. The iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards celebrate and share the most innovative practice in transforming local public services.

Whilst this experience has been extremely challenging, it has also acted as a catalyst for change. The response from our Community Planning Partners including: council services, the NHS, our health and social care partners, the emergency services, the Armed Forces, businesses, community groups and volunteers, has been truly outstanding. The Listen and Learn programme shone a light on new collaborative partnerships and the value of working with communities.

Insights from the Listen and Learn programme, undertaken with staff, explored and identified what a future Midlothian could look like as we learn to live with and beyond Covid-19. This alongside Midlothian's drivers for change are informing and shaping Midlothian's future vision and Route Map through and out of the crisis.

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 Midlothian Community Planning Partnership continues to prioritise the available resources towards the delivery of the partnership's key priorities. The top three priorities for 2019-22 are:

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

During 2020/21 the Community Planning Partnership also identified Carbon Neutral by 2030 as an overarching aim.

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 and to reflect Midlothian Council's Route map and the Nesta recommendations. Service performance measures were reviewed and revised as part of this exercise.

**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 are enabled to lead longer and healthier lives by getting the right support, at the right time and in the right place."**

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. Many voluntary sector and independent providers work with the Partnership to deliver our objectives.

Throughout 2020-21 COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to all our community based activities with a large majority of them being suspended due to restrictions in place to prevent the spread of infection. Support continued but with reduced capacity and it was targeted, when needed, at those with the most critical care needs. Where possible alternatives such as online activities were introduced with some success although the limitations of such activities are recognised.

**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 impact of the COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges and much disruption to the Health and Social Care Partnership, its partners and the

communities it serves.

As a Partnership, the top priority was the safety of people, communities and staff. In response to the situation it was important to be innovative and support clients effectively and safely during this time. Staff continued to see people face-to-face where this was clinically essential, but in order to reduce face-to-face contact, where feasible, teams made a number of changes to how they delivered services throughout the pandemic.

As well as managing changes to existing services, the Partnership also provided care and treatment to people who had contracted COVID and their families. It provided support to partner agencies around changed provision, infection control and other requirements, including the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and staff testing. In addition, COVID related services had to be established, often at short notice as the pandemic escalated, such as the COVID Testing and Assessment Hub at Midlothian Community Hospital. Many staff across the Partnership were redeployed to other roles, assisting in care homes and PPE centres.

Partnership staff were very involved in the work of the Midlothian Care for People Group where members of the Community Planning Partnership and other partners coordinated a humanitarian response as a result of the UK moving to lockdown on 23rd March 2020.

**Inequalities** - Health and Social Care services are committed to reducing health inequalities and improving the health of people in Midlothian by working collectively with others to draw on our assets, activities and resources. There is emerging evidence that the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are affecting some groups disproportionately. These are arising from the direct and indirect effects of contracting the illness, as well as the lockdown measures put in place to control spread of the virus. Active, supportive communities are fundamental to a good quality of life for people vulnerable through age, illness or disability and Voluntary organisations, volunteers, neighbours and extended families were all vital to helping people who are vulnerable to stay safe and well. Support to people in homeless accommodation continued and was delivered in a different way, as did support to people engaged with mental health, substance misuse, and social work and justice services.

**Technology** - We continued to proactively engage with the emerging digital agenda in Scotland to maximise the value that technology, in all its forms, can add. COVID-19 brought forward the NHS Lothian rollout of NHS Near Me video conferencing 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.

**Learning Disabilities** - Implementation of a framework for providing positive behavioural support within Midlothian has been completed and continues to receive support from all stakeholders. The project to review and redesign day services to reduce costs including transport is being progressed as part of the Covid-19 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.

**Older People** - Older Peoples services have seen an increase in referrals across most services as an impact of COVID19. The impacts of carer stress, isolation and lack of physical activity on older people's health and wellbeing continue to be of concern as restrictions ease. Mental health referrals have increased, along with Adult Support and Protection referrals relating to financial harm. As unpaid carers return to work there are an increasing number of referrals for urgent assessment for packages of care or admission to care. This is likely to increase further.

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 continues to review and explore improved pathways for individuals ensuring they receive the right care in the right place at the right time, implementing the Home First principles, as agreed by NHS Lothian. A Single Point of Access was set up on 2nd December, as requested by the Scheduling of Unscheduled Care Project Board. As of 31 March 2021 it has processed 162 referrals.

The third sector continue to support individuals and their families in the community through creative alternatives to

face to face support. This is continually reviewed through the older people's planning group.

**Carers** - During 2020/21 a significant service review, consultation and recommissioning process was undertaken for Carer Services. Q4 saw the culmination of this process, with the Tender for new services being shared in January, and submissions and evaluation being undertaken in February. In later March Providers were advised of new service awards, and more recently the TUPE process has begun. The new contracts will begin 1st July 2021 (3 years +1 +1).

**Mental Health** - The Mental Health Action Plan, developed by the Mental Health Strategic Planning group, reflects the priorities set out in the Midlothian HSCP Strategic Plan. Primary Care Mental Health Nurses are now in 12 practices and the role of OT is being recruited to supplement the service. Evaluation of the impact of primary care nurses is being developed. Recommissioning of community mental health and wellbeing supports currently delivered by Health in Mind has been concluded and new contracts will commence 1st July 2021.

**Adults with Long Term Conditions, Disability and Impairment** - In response to the closure to the public of the Audiology Department due to Covid restrictions, we recruited volunteers to uplift peoples' faulty hearing aids from their homes and delivered the aids to Midlothian Community Hospital for an Audiology technician to repair, and then return the repaired aids back to the individuals.

**Sport and Leisure** - Sport & Leisure Services resumed operations at all sites on a phased basis from 31st August in line with Scottish Government guidelines. However lockdown #2 during Q4 resulted in the closing of all Sport & Leisure sites and activities and the redeployment of staff to support critical services across the Council and Health & Social Care Partnership including Care Homes, Schools, Roads Services, IT Services, Housing and Homelessness, General Admin, Vaccination rollout, PPE Hub, and In School LFD testing pilot. .

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.

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.

### **Community Safety – Achievements**

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

Challenges continue 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** - Activity during Q4 continued with the theme for 2020-2021 in that the Justice team continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service delivery focused on managing individuals in the Justice system through a mixture of face-to-face and virtual meetings. This was based on dynamic assessments using risk and needs to determine levels of involvement. Further, scoping exercises are currently being undertaken to assess the impact on service design and delivery of alternatives to prosecution/Court disposals.

With regards to unpaid work, the Chief Medical Officer suspended Unpaid Work nationally in January 2021. In response, the team have been virtually delivering individual learning packs with clients as part of their 'other activity'. A new unpaid work supervisor post has been recruited to in response to addressing the backlog of unpaid work hours that the service will face once it is reopened.

The Justice specific Men's service is progressing in its development. The holistic trauma-informed group for men is awaiting Covid restrictions to lift prior to opening. Some of the work of this service mirrors the work being undertaken by Spring, our women's service. Spring continues to support women despite the group-work aspect being suspended.

**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 requiring this support within Scottish Government guidance. Despite Covid restrictions impacting service delivery the Midlothian Substance Misuse service instigated an outreach model to those individuals who were most at risk. This includes the trialling of Bupival [an injectable form of Buprenorphine].

MELDAP services are developing electronic and other versions of information highlighting the risks caused by poly drug use. MELDAP services continue to provide data packages, basic smart phones and tablets to those individuals who are impacted by isolation and are unable to receive one to one support as a consequence of Scottish Government Covid restrictions.

**Environmental Health** - Increased demands placed on Environmental Health have been met as they provided a comprehensive response to test and protect, identification of locations associated with positive cases and adopted revised working practices to reflect regulatory changes

**Land and Countryside and Road Services** - We continue to achieve our ambition for access for all abilities to our parks and play areas. Work has concluded at a number of sites including Scots Corner early learning and childcare centre in Penicuik. Landscape installations were completed at three new social housing sites.

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. The Capital roads programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes commenced at the end of June 2020, following easing of the Covid-19 first lockdown restrictions. 16 of 25 individual carriageway schemes completed equating to 3.71km of carriageway resurfacing, and 6 of 19 individual footway schemes completed equating to 2.7km of footway resurfacing.

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

***“All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.”***

Children’s Services and Communities and Lifelong Learning have continued to adapt and respond to the challenges of COVID-19. 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 placed at the fore front of everything. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Children’s Services have continued to show improvement throughout 2020. People and Partnerships directorate which includes education, children’s services and CLL have continued to work together and share resources during school closures to ensure all vulnerable families were supported.

**Equity and Inclusion** - The new Equity and Inclusion GIRFEC subgroup is now established and partners have been confirmed for the group. The group have invested time in developing a new vision which has now been adopted as the Directorate wide vision –

*All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This will be achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning.*

This vision and approach were shared at the first Directorate wide conference in February and will remain a focus of the future conferences. The draft plan for 2021/2022 will be presented to the GIRFEC board in May and focuses on 6 themes: the development of an equity and inclusion strategy; a review of Additional Support needs; attendance and engagement in education; nurture; poverty and attainment and family learning.

**Reducing Poverty** - The income maximisation project remains in its one year pilot phase with a remit to work with parents of children who are on the child protection register and those looked after at home. The first evaluation of the work achieved highlights that between October 2020 to the end of March 2021, 30 referrals were received which led to 18 direct contacts with parents. Outcomes of these referrals have evidenced an encouraging start with an

evidenced service user financial gain of £29,877.18. A number of parents were also signposted onto other services for additional support i.e. fuel poverty, employment etc.

**Mental Health** - A range of strategic groups are in place to review and develop the local supports for mental Health. The Mental Health strategic group is now established and developing a plan for 2021/2022. MEAP planning is progressing to explore new tests of change to address early action and the Community Mental Health Fund has now reviewed further applications to support new initiatives for this financial year.

**Family Group Decision Making** – The Family Group Decision Making service will be part of our core business going forward. We are currently negotiating the composition of the service. While the project was originally attached to the Family Placement Team, it is more appropriate the services sit within the auspices of early intervention going forward.

**5-12 Residential Provision** - 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. Children's services have seen a marked reduction in children and young people being placed externally. However, our recent data suggests that there is a real change in the age and profile of the few children who have been placed externally, mainly due to the level of distress and trauma these children aged 5-10 present. Funding has been agreed for a local therapeutic environment for a small number of children to help them heal and recover from their previous experiences and in doing so be able to be reintroduced into family living.

**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. 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. We have noted an increase in the number of kinship placements made over the past year and believe this is due, in part, to the ongoing success of the Family Group Decision Making service.

**National Housing Project** - The National Housing Project was officially launched in Midlothian on 1 July 2020. Between this date and 30th September 2020, 10 young people were successful in gaining a place on the project. The young people are all care experienced and come from a range of placement/care backgrounds.

**Raising Attainment** – This is a key improvement area identified as part of the findings from the previous joint children's services inspection. In order to progress this area of work a further sub group has been established which reports to the GIRFEMC board. This group will 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

As 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 GIRFEMC 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 GIRFEMC subgroup received funding for an innovative tier 1 intervention pilot across the Mayfield area through the NHS Board. The 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. Almost all eligible 2, 3, 4 year old children now have an 1140 hours place. 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 securing funding from the 2nd phase of Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme for the Mayfield School Campus and Penicuik High School projects. The statutory consultation on Glencorse Primary School has concluded and the school will close at the end of June 2021.

An ambitious plan to transform the digital learning tools available to young people in Midlothian schools has been articulated, an updated digital strategy agreed and funding for its roll-out approved by council.

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. Recommendations from the Nesta: Listen and Learn report have been 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.

### **Improving Opportunities Midlothian - Achievements** *Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities*

Communities and Lifelong Learning have continued to offer support to adults and families who required additional support and also offered one to one sessions with young people who were unable to attend school or college but were in need of additional input. In addition the volume of grants that have been on offer to young people and adults to support them into further training or employment has taken up a significant amount of time.

**Blended CLL and Employability Learning Offer for Adults and Young People** - The learning offer has been blended online and face to face in small groups or gate visit when permitted. We have supported vulnerable individuals throughout specifically young people, families seeking employment and those accessing support through our literacy, numeracy and ESOL Service. Our family learning offer has been recognised as having significant impact on participants by Education Scotland. CLL has provided one to one support to 473 adults and young people over the course of the last year in a variety of settings.

Significant funding (over £1.5 million) has been secured for employability programmes including: Foundation Apprenticeships, No One Left Behind, Modern Apprenticeships, third sector Kickstart partnership, Parental Employability Support and the young persons guarantee. School Leaver Destination figures published in Feb 2021 was encouraging at 94.7% and ninth across Scotland despite challenging circumstances.

In addition the Communities, Lifelong learning and Employability Service (CLLE) have been supporting communities in partnership with the Red Cross to provide support with prescription delivery and shopping. The team have been a key partner in the delivery of the vouchers for the Midlothian Food and Key Essential Fund delivering 4613 vouchers and fuel support.

### **Sustainable Growth - Achievements**

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

*sustainable environment*

Council approved the Climate Change Strategy 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.

**Locality Place Service Delivery** - As a consequence of the recent pandemic emergency a Locality approach to service delivery continues to be developed in conjunction with community planning partners for localised support, and the incorporation of enhanced ICT capabilities that 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 were successful in their application for £20,000 of funding from Zero Waste Scotland to implement social distancing measures at Midlothian's two Recycling Centres, allowing Penicuik Recycling Centre to re-open with a one way traffic system. Community waste activities have focussed on promoting the reuse cabin at Stobhill recycling centre and continued support for community clear ups and litter picks.

**Homelessness and Housing Services** - Ending the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation was achieved in December 2020. This was principally achieved by expanding the shared accommodation project detailed in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and the utilisation of shared accommodation services. This resulted in an increased number of properties that would normally be let as permanent tenancies being transferred to the temporary accommodation letting stock. This was partly offset by flipping over temporary occupancy agreements into permanent Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements at the request of households, reducing the time households spend in temporary accommodation, in accordance with the revised Housing Allocation Policy. The council's Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020. To address the need for affordable housing, the SHIP details potential sites for 2,602 new affordable homes to be built during 2021-26. New council housing developments were completed at Loanhead, Penicuik and Danderhall. The allocations were prioritised to local residents via Local Lettings Initiatives.

**Economic Development** - Midlothian Council approved a new Economic Renewal Strategy (an addendum to the Council's Strategy for Growth 2020-25) in June 2020, in response to the pandemic. Setting out its ambitious approach to managing the transition from lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face, the strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19.

**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 Single Midlothian Plan.

**Workforce Strategy** – The Workforce Strategy 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 Strategy 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 that we have the right people at the right time and who have the right skills, knowledge and attitude to provide services confidently and competently.

**Digital Strategy** - Embracing the Digital First strand of the Nesta Listen and Learn report presented an ideal opportunity to refresh the Council's Digital Strategy. The refreshed digital strategy supports 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.

**Customer Service 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.

**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.

## Challenges and Risks

**COVID-19 Pandemic** - The impact, threat and uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic is a significant challenge and will continue to be a challenge during 2021 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.

**Health and Social Care** - There was increased anxiety and pressure on many service users, unpaid carers and staff. While challenges may have changed over 2020, they will continue into 2021. Covid will continue to influence how the HSCP delivers core services, works with partners and communities and develops the workforce. In addition the Partnership will adapt to deliver Covid related services, such as vaccination clinics.

The incidence of mental health issues in Midlothian, while similar to the rest of Scotland, is a concern. Living in poverty increases the likelihood of mental health problems but also mental health problems can lead to greater social exclusion and higher levels of poverty.

**Impact of Remote Learning** – Provision of 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.

**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.

**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  5  4  1  7