

## Commercial Operations Performance Report Quarter Three 2019/20

Midlothian 

### Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

The Place Principle builds on a shared understanding of place. Place helps to build momentum and increase the pace of collaborative actions to achieve better outcomes for people, with a particular emphasis on those experiencing disadvantage. The Place Principle encourages better collaboration, resource utilisation and community participation in trying to change the culture of public service delivery so there is a presumption in favour of place-based approaches centred on communities and encourages local flexibility.

A Place approach provides all partners with a simple mechanism by which to encourage accountability over decisions taken about the way resources, services and assets are directed and delivered. It builds upon the Christie Commission report on the Future Delivery of Public Services which highlighted that in order to deliver good public services with positive outcomes for people and communities, there must be a reform process and new ways of working which have empowerment at their heart to ensure maximum impact of resources and strategic action in reducing inequalities.

Commercial Operations continues to consider how it can transform in order to improve outcomes for our communities by contributing to the Council's short to long term priorities whilst taking into account the financial challenges ahead.

To enable us to deal with future service demands of an increasing population the council will cut costs and redesign services. Progress in delivering outcomes across the key service areas that follow continue to be informed by applying the 'Delivering Excellence' continuous improvement approach with a focus on priorities and considering what could be changed or done differently.

In support of the Council's strategic approaches Commercial Operations are progressing the following transformational activities aimed at maximising the use of assets and creating flexibility across the workforce:

- . Development of the Street Scene/neighbourhood model for service delivery to involve local communities and/or the criminal justice teams.
- . Maximising the utilisation of the Council's fleet and passenger transportation arrangements (including third sector providers) by reducing costs and contributing to the environmental agenda in reducing the travel carbon footprint.
- . Changing the way that Council Staff travel on behalf of the Council.
- . Seeking commercialisation opportunities and trading with a wide range of organisations including the Private Sector and public sector partners.
- . Reducing the volume of waste managed and maximise recycling from all sectors with a clear focus on Municipal Premises as detailed within a developed waste strategy.
- . Developing community participation opportunities with local organisations and groups, particularly in our parks and open spaces.

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.

Co-location to one depot site is planned for a leaner management team and a workforce where job profiles will be more generic in nature allowing greater flexibility and cross skilling at all levels. It is recognised that there are significant challenges in terms of recruiting into other skilled and professional positions particularly within the road services, vehicle maintenance and land service areas.

Delivery of the Waste Management Strategy will influence future direction of Waste Services as reviewed in the programme of cross party, cross cutting meetings. The Strategy ensures that Waste Services has sufficient plans in place to meet legislative and policy requirements to achieve landfill reduction targets. Long term disposal outlets for residual, food and dry recycle waste streams are secured although the dry recycle market in particular continues to be volatile.

We will continue to explore options for future service delivery through partnerships (e.g. waste facilities with City of Edinburgh and work through the Edinburgh, Lothian, Borders, and Fife (ELBF) for Road Services, shared services (e.g. Health and Safety with East Lothian) and co-production with community partners (e.g. grounds maintenance, and winter service).

## **Landscape and Countryside**

In partnership with Education we developed Midlothian's Councils first Early years outdoor setting at Vogrie and other locations utilising our current facilities and staff resources. The section is also involved in progressing a further site at Alderbank in Penicuik.

Contributing positively to the council's improved health outcomes with several play areas installed at St David's Primary school and Nursery. The works completed at Mayfield Nursery extension are being used as an exemplar by the Care Inspectorate and included in the best practice guide.

School and Nursery improvement are planned in quarter 4 for Scots Corner, Lawfield Primary, Moorfoot PS, Kings Park PS, Bilston PS, Burnbrae PS Sacred Hart PS & Newtongrange PS.

Rosewell Park wheeled sport facility ground investigations have been completed. The tender for this project has been issued. This project is being funded from developer contributions. A draft design for a wheeled sports facility in Auld Gala Park has been prepared.

The Outdoor Walking Festival had approximately 2017 attendees. The main directory, which had a landing page and then all 72 events behind that, was viewed just over 7,600 times, the moving motion graphic 'advert' created was viewed 2,926 times and 2,923 people engaged with the 25 social media posts created by the Communications Team by either clicking in to find out more, using the link through to the web page etc. The events were also promoted on radio and in print media. According to VisitScotland, the average domestic day visitor spends £40. If that was replicated by the 2000+ visitors we had then the Rangers team would have boosted the local economy by more than £80,000.

Another successful Woodland Dance Project Event took place in Vogrie Country Park in October with more than 1,500 attendees.

The Ranger Service has generated a total of 7,946 hours of volunteer time to maintain areas across the county.

All the Galas and Events have now been successfully been completed and Remembrance day events were supported by the section.

## **Waste Services**

The pilot for a reuse cabin located at Stobhill recycling centre has been extended to the end of the financial year. The 'Making a Difference' idea submitted by a member of the waste team offers local charities the chance to reuse furniture and other bulky items left in our recycling centre.

SEPA have verified the Midlothian 2018 recycling rate at 58.2%, which was the third highest performing Local Authority area in Scotland.

## **Travel and Fleet Services**

Grant funding was secured from Edinburgh ULEZ Fund to purchase four electric cars, install a further two rapid Chargers at Sheriffhall Park and Ride and £500,000 towards installation and replacement of bus shelters in Midlothian.

Utilising external funding from the Scottish Government, a new post of Sustainable Transport Project Officer has been appointed this quarter. The project officer will deal with Electric Vehicle infrastructure and implementation of Electric vehicles into the Council Fleet to meet 2025 Deadline set by the Scottish Government to decarbonise Local authority Fleet.

## **Road Services**

The Roads team continue to make good progress in quarter 3 with the capital programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes. Of the 33 individual schemes programmed, 23 have been completed by the end of Q3, representing a total of 4.55km and 2.90km of carriageway and footway resurfacing respectively.

Flood risk associated with the partially collapsed privately owned culvert carrying the Loanburn in Penicuik has been removed, following repairs to the damaged section undertaken during Q3 on behalf of the tenant. Service personnel continued to monitor flood risk during the repairs, and liaised with the works contractor to ensure that no flooding occurred due to the impact of the repair works.

A bid was successful for £863,000 of LEZ (Low emission zone) Funding from Transport Scotland. Funding has been allocated against 5 projects that must be completed and claimed for end of financial year.

Dalkeith High School have obtained their Cycle Friendly Secondary School Award.

### **Health, Safety and Civil Contingencies**

The reviewed Council's Health and Safety Policy and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy covering the next 4 year period was presented to CMT on 16 October where they were approved. A revised audit/review programme for management arrangements were also presented and approved. Publication of both will be on the Council's intranet.

The Health and Safety team delivered a programme of training which includes driver CPC training to meet a training need for the Council and to avoid having to purchase this training from external suppliers at cost to the Council. The team have been providing a lead to the preparations for a no-deal exit from the European Union. This has been supported by the full time Contingency Planning Officer and a Risk, Safety and Health Adviser supporting preparatory arrangements.

## **Challenges and Risks**

### **Landscape and Countryside Services**

Develop Customer Service Excellence systems and processes in conjunction with staff and other sections of the Council.

Resourcing monumental safety work required this winter. The recording system will also need to be upgraded to meet the new burials memorial legislation as there has been limited progress to date.

Ensuring a more holistic approach to tree safety issues for the Council going forward. The urban trees have not been inspected since 2011 due to staff reductions.

Improve the Playground inspection system and the knowledge of play inspectors.

Updating Grounds Maintenance recharging schedules for tasks and improvements to invoicing information. Burial income is well down on the budget forecast as there are less burials and lair purchases than last year.

An increase in weed complaints have been received from customers and residents due to the impact on the environment after weed killer restrictions were implemented and the weed growth is evident. Alternative control methods are being trialled to evaluate cost and effectiveness.

A challenge managing the change required to meet savings and communicating changes to Councillors, Staff and the Public, managing the closure of Vogrie Golf Course and seeking businesses to take over the running and marketing of the Golf Course and the redeployment of staff and increasing Vogrie Country Park income by £70,000. Further to this, the bottom up review has resulted in a number of changes within the service which will require the support of staff and communities alike.

The service is continuing to work closely with local communities in an effort to mitigate some of the changes which will impact on the visual amenity of Midlothian. This includes floral displays, grass cutting, allied to the positive work carried out by various groups in the parks around Midlothian. At the start of the financial year the majority of communities have taken on some floral maintenance in their communities. The maintenance of Floral displays at war memorials has been continued at previous levels which will result in an estimated overspend of £25,000. In addition, grass maintenance standards have also been continued at previous levels which will result in an estimated overspend situation for the section in the region of £75,000.

Continued challenges with the general lack of suitably skilled labour is impacting the work in the hard landscape squad. The team have had challenges in recruiting suitable staff this year and have lost two staff early in 2019.

Difficulties in delivering the core path plan review with a reduction in staffing and dealing with community asset transfer requests and their implications consulting with Fields and Trust.

Dealing with the impact of Ash die back on the Midlothian Tree stock as current advice suggests that 75% of Ash tree stock may be lost.

Work with the Easthouses community to develop proposals for Easthouses Park and secure funding for these proposals.

### **Waste Services**

Absorbing the increasing number of new build housing and the impact of capacity on all collection routes as indicated in the outcome of the recent service review where no additional savings were recognised.

Non target materials being presented in the blue bins continues to impact on the additional processing cost charged for these materials.

Midlothian Council is required to have litter zoned all council's land according to the revised methodology. However it has been put on hold until clarification on the use of OS maps and licencing agreement with Scottish Government for use of Ordinance Survey data and derived data.

The delay beyond the 5 day target for removal of fly-tipping was as a result of a lack of access to equipment to complete the removal. The Service are exploring the opportunity to source alternative equipment for the Service to be able to respond and complete removals more quickly.

Sickness Absence and staff reductions are challenging along with the Medium term Financial Position.

### **Travel and Fleet Services**

Recruitment of vehicle technicians is still a challenge to ensure maintenance of fleet. Challenge to reduce revenue spend across the whole of the services provided by the Travel Team and assist other services to reduce transport and vehicle operating costs.

### **Road Services**

Ongoing pressure on Midlothian's existing road and footway network as housing development and population increase continues. Ongoing constraints on the road maintenance budget will prove a significant challenge to maintain the network at current condition levels. Currently 35% of the road network in Midlothian is deemed to be in need of maintenance treatment.

Ongoing adoption of new legislation and government requirements, specifically the new Transport Act, a One Scotland Gazetteer from the Improvement Services, and a new version of the Scottish Road Works Register, for improved coordination of all roadworks. This will require updating and replacement of existing internal systems as appropriate to be progressed in Q3, and training for relevant staff to follow, whilst maintaining Service level provision. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 will have significant financial requirements to implement. New parking responsibilities (including pavement parking) as a result of the Transport Bill will require additional staff and financial resource.

Continued provision of key statutory functions, particularly routine and safety inspections (roads, footways and structures), and coordination and supervision of works, following introduction of new Business Travel & Subsistence Policy. Presently there are insufficient arrangements for appropriate alternative transport to maintain previous levels of service provision without the use of own vehicles.

Progression of Flood Studies and Surface Water Management Plans.

Production of Road Asset Management Plan (SCOTS Project) and updating of procedures to accord with new CoP (RBA approach).

Submission of annual performance reports to APSE and SCOTS.

Action internal Audit Report recommendations to make "better use" of CONFIRM Software for recording of inventory and updating network details.

### **Health, Safety and Civil Contingencies**

The capacity of the team to deliver against all of our priorities have been impacted as a result of a need to increase capacity in CPC driver training beyond the original programme in order to meet a greater element of the demand than had been envisaged at the outset of setting the team up to take on this new area of training.


The team re-established the EU exit working group with the purpose of planning Council responses, in the event of a no deal on 31 October 2019 following the UK Governments extension to article 50. The group had been meeting weekly from August onwards as the countdown to the 31 October continued.

The level of resourcing within the team presents an ongoing challenge to provide the desired income stream, adequately monitor health and safety performance and provide the range of support services provided by the team. A revised audit programme and management arrangement review programme have been developed to help manage workload and respond to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy highlighted above.

Managing these services and providing adequate Risk Management support to Midlothian Council and Midlothian's Integrated Joint Board can prove challenging at times with completing demands.



# Commercial Operations

Midlothian 

## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 9 ● 4 ? 0 6

### Service Plan Actions (latest)

▲ 1 ● 17 ? 0

### Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 6 ● 10 ? 1 0

### Service Risks (latest)

▲ 16

### Corporate PIs Off Target as at 31st January 2020

PIs ● 9

Performance against revenue budget

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

Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)

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

% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target.

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

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days

Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
● On Target  
? Data Only Indicator  
? Data is not yet available

### Service Plan Actions Off Target as at 31st January 2020

Actions ▲ 1

Develop additional workstreams to achieve income for the Council

Key  
Actions  
▲ Off Target  
● On Target/Complete  
? Data is not yet available

### Service Plan PIs Off Target as at 31st January 2020

PIs ● 6

Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days (cumulative)

Income secured by sourcing third party opportunities through Land and Countryside working on hard and soft landscaping

Income achieved by providing additional training courses to external organisations (cumulative)

Income achieved by Commercialisation

Reduce by £150,000 expenditure on Travel costs

Proportion of fly tipping incidents removed within 5 working days (quarterly)

Key  
PIs  
● Off Target  
● On Target  
? Data Only Indicator  
? Data is not yet available

### High Risks as at 31st January 2020

Risks ▲ 0

16 Risks at Medium and 0 Risks are high

Key  
Risks  
▲ High Risk / Medium Risk  
? Data is not yet available