

## Place

### Performance Report Quarter Two 2021-22

#### The Place Principle

***Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. The Place service ambition is to deliver joined-up, collaborative, and participative approaches to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enabling better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.***

We have endorsed the place principle because we are committed to strengthening the co-ordination and integration of all place based activity. The principle is a way of bringing together ideas about services, investments, resources and assets to achieve a shared vision. We are creating a shared understanding of what a place is for and what it wants to become with partners and communities collaboratively agreeing the joint actions required to make that happen and delivering these. This approach provides our key stakeholders with a way to exercise local or regional accountability over decisions taken about the way resources, services and assets are directed and delivered.

In implementing the place principle we:

- 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.

Over the past year, innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted to respond to the needs of our citizens at pace, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality. This has resulted in a complete transformation of how the Council works. Place services are continuing to build on this learning moving forward, harnessing the energy, flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our workforce, to embed a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across Place.

Hub and Spoke, one of Midlothian's key drivers for change, will see a Locality approach to service delivery adopted, developed in conjunction with community planning partners. The opportunity to review and redesign services that the pandemic has provided will result in a more efficient and effective operation of sites within local communities. This will improve service delivery, and ensure better outcomes for local communities. The continued rollout of enhanced ICT capabilities will strengthen cross service working, produce resource efficiencies and support the localisation of services.

## Successes this quarter

### Environmental

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues within the Place services to achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. 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.

A public consultation was launched during Q1 on Service Standards for Waste Services. Approximately 2,800 responses were received from the public. Setting service standards will allow us to better monitor and improve waste/recycling collection services and will better allow customers to hold us to account if targets for service delivery are not met. The outcome of the consultation will be presented to Council in December 2021.

Communication activities took place to promote Recycle week (20-26 September) and new soft plastic collection points are now available in some local retailers.

Three applications to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund were in scope for the fund and a decision is due on whether funding will be awarded in Q3.

We continue to achieve our ambition for access for all abilities to our parks and play areas. We received a Green Flag Award for the Dalkeith to Penicuik walkway and successfully delivered the Walking Festival through the Countryside Rangers team.

Town Centre Funding has been secured for park improvements, Saltersgate school playground refurbishment continues and Auld Gala Park Pump Track now completed and is being well utilised by the community.

6 Kickstart Land and Countryside Placements went well with positive attendance and attitude. Training was given on a range of small plant and machinery, and as a result maintenance standards were improved in several parks and feedback from the public was positive.

We continue to build on co-production with our communities and volunteers ensuring our parks and open spaces remain attractive and safe for use. During Q2 1,919 volunteer hours were delivered in countryside sites.

AECOM have been appointed as consultants to undertake a Roads Hierarchy Review & Road Safety Studies throughout Midlothian. A draft report is anticipated by the end of 2021, with the final version to be presented to Council by March 2022. The Midlothian Bus Alliance working with consultants WSP have prepared a draft bid for a new proposed Orbital bus route to the South of the Edinburgh City Bypass due for submission in October 2021. A briefing on this was presented to members in early October.

We were successful in applying for Transport Scotland's Local Authority Installation Programme (LAIP) fund and are to be awarded £75,000 to spend on public chargers. Work will now take place to implement this.

The Residential Streets programme commenced at the start of October. This is a two year programme to improve the condition of footways and roads across the county, and an example of a coordinated Neighbourhood Services works programme. Whilst these works are taking place, Land and Countryside will be attending to verges and overgrown foliage, whilst dropped kerbs are also being carried out and street lighting assessments taking place in each location.

### **Economic**

Midlothian Council approved a new Economic Renewal Strategy which sets 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. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster 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.

Locate in Midlothian, Midlothian's new website focussed on economic development, was launched during the pandemic, with supporting social media channels. The website continues to be a valuable tool for employability opportunities and support as well as showcasing the work of our local businesses. Each social channel is targeting different audiences and each is performing well in terms of audience growth and interaction.

The Carbon Charter was refreshed during Q1 and a marketing campaign developed with the aim of encouraging businesses to sign up and benefit from developing tailored action plans with our Business Gateway team to support the net zero agenda. This was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> of July and 10 local business have signed up the Pledge. More promotional work will be carried out with these businesses which should lead the way for others to follow.

The Economic Development team, with other departmental support, continued to process the discretionary fund. During Quarter 2 the third phase of the fund was processed. As of 30<sup>th</sup> of September the balance on the fund was £87,462 with 9 applications currently in progress which should clear the fund by the end of October.

Work was undertaken with 5 clients this quarter who were new to the Social Enterprise model, as a result all 5 have expanded their initial ideas and set up as Community Interest Companies and continue to access advisor support as they develop their models.

### **Regeneration**

At its meeting in June 2021 the Planning Committee adopted a Roslin Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan which will provide a framework for the conservation and management of the Conservation Area. In August 2021 the Planning Committee determined to grant planning permission for two significant strategic planning applications which will result in the restoration of the Drummond Moor landfill site and its reuse as a self-catering tourist resort, leading to the provision of an exciting new tourist facility and significant investment and job creation.

**Town centre Capital Fund:** of the seven applications approved (£910,000) all projects, with the exception of Penicuik Town Hall project are now complete. 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. Two projects are now complete with work ongoing at Jarnac Court regeneration, and Newtongrange Welfare Park.

### **Housing and homelessness**

Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government on 30th June 2021. This sets out a vision that by 2024: an increased number of homeless households will obtain permanent accommodation, no homeless household will be accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation, and the average time taken for the Council to complete its homeless duty will have halved from 105 to 52 weeks.

The RRTP sets out how Midlothian Council will continue the work undertaken to deliver key actions during 2021/22 and explains how Midlothian Council will address the next phase of its approach to transforming the services provided to those in housing need, including compliance with the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020. Midlothian Council believes these activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. The plan also explains how Midlothian Council will address the next phase of its approach to transforming the services provided to those in housing need by developing other initiatives during 2021/22 and into 2022/23, with an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. Work continues on the delivery of key actions set out in the Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRTP).

During this reporting period, 118 households were assessed as homeless, with 233 households since 1 April 2021. 438 households were assessed as homeless during 2020/21 representing a 6% reduction compared to 2019/20. There has been a slight uplift in Q2 in the number of households provided with advice and assistance at 208, compared to 179 for Q1.

Emergency accommodation to provide fully furnished, self-contained, accommodation for up to four households with either children or a pregnant person was established in Gorebridge. This project became operational in July 2021. An on-site caretaker service during office hours provides basic support to residents as required, while also maintaining the security and cleanliness of the building and monitoring anti-social behaviour.

Proposals to introduce a Crisis Intervention Fund were approved by Midlothian Council last quarter. This fund will be accessible to front line officers allowing a more preventative approach to be taken when assisting those in housing need. The fund will operate as a two year pilot to enable its effectiveness to be fully evaluated with an interim review completed after 12 months. An annual budget of £30,000 has been committed to the fund for the duration of the pilot, making use of savings realised from ending the use of emergency B&B accommodation.

Equally Safe Housing and Homelessness Policy: A draft Policy has been developed with Midlothian Women's Aid and Mid and East Lothian's Public Protection Team taking into account the specific needs of those experiencing domestic abuse and upcoming legislative changes.

### **Capital programme**

Midlothian are taking a very positive and flexible approach to build momentum around the new supply recovery. 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. A full evaluation was carried out of all current and planned construction projects and resourcing reviewed. 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.

The Education Learning Estate Strategy programme has been developed and is subject to regular review meetings 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.

The Capital roads programme for carriageway and footway renewal/improvement schemes has commenced with progress to end of Q2, with approximately 38% of budget completed or in progress.

## Challenges

The challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery out of the pandemic, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings. Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all council areas in Scotland. From 2018 to 2028, the population of Midlothian is projected to increase from 91,340 to 103,945. This is an increase of 13.8%, which is in contrast to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole with a 40.9% increase in older people over 75. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas giving a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. This pace of growth demands additional capacity within the school estate to cope with the projected increase in pupil numbers. The general population growth forecast places additional pressure on our infrastructure, including the growth of the road network as new development roads are adopted, and increases the demand on essential services such as waste collection.

As part of work to address the issue of significant population growth and demographic changes within Midlothian, the key drivers of change in delivery of sustainable and transformational services and regeneration of our communities must be viewed 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
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## Service Performance

The COVID pandemic continues to have a direct impact on Place services during the quarter and this is reflected in some of the service performance indicators set later in this report.

Slight reduction in the number of Public Health requests responded to from Q1. The service has been impacted by the diversion of Environmental Health resources to proactively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The requirements of the Scottish Government and the NHS Pan Lothian Asymptomatic testing regime for Midlothian Council to provide mobile LFD testing continues to demand significant resources to meet expectation.

Enhanced cleaning and janitorial services continues during Q2 in all schools resulting in continued increased weekly hours:

*Primary schools – Budgeted weekly hours are 2105, currently 2825 hours used per week due to Covid measures.*

*Secondary schools – Budgeted weekly hours are 1392, currently 1632 hours used per week due to Covid measures.*

*Janitorial services – Budgeted weekly hours are 1140, currently 4130.5 hours used per week due to Covid measures*

In Trading Standards, a total of 135 consumer complaints have been received this financial year with 127 completed. Of those, 101 were completed within 14 days, 79.5%. It should be noted that completion is not always within service control as responses from complainants and traders can cause delay. In addition, the team were proactive in accepting 41 notifications from Advice Direct Scotland this financial year with 33 completed; 29 of them within 14 days, 87.9%.

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services. A potential key challenge for Q3 2021/22 will be an increase in homelessness as the financial measures put in place to protect households during the Covid pandemic are now withdrawn, alongside the recent increase in energy costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2021/22.

Re-let time for permanent properties has increased to 50 days this quarter due to 11 properties requiring extensive works due to property condition and delays with utility connections.

Although the length of time homeless applicants wait until receiving a permanent housing outcome is off target this quarter, the amendments made to the Housing Allocations Policy will ensure homeless households are able to access settled accommodation more quickly. Improved position this quarter is 103 weeks compared to Q1 of 127 weeks. The Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan set a target of 52 weeks by 31 March 2024. Similarly, the length of time spend in temporary accommodation is off target this quarter (66 weeks) however continued downward trend from 71 weeks in Q1.

Building standards continue to receive a sustained demand on its services. Service provision in the form of site inspections and building warrant application processing has remained high where processing targets aim for 10 working days rather than the nationally adopted target of 20 working days. The loss of the agency building standards inspector has resulted in a reduction in performance.

Average time to complete non-emergency repairs continues to remain off target (7 day). Whilst suppliers are reporting that they are getting closer to pre-pandemic production levels, there are supply chain issues

that are being seen now through reduced delivery capacity. These restrictions in resource and materials have been challenging although there are some improvements from 17.95 days in Q1 compared to 14.27 days in Q2.

Work to bring the percentage of Councils housing stock that meets Scottish Quality Standards criteria back to 100% will commence at the start of Q3 after Covid related delays.

Limited progress with annual Capital Works Programme for footway resurfacing due to focus on carriageway works but it is hoped that the team can catch up on footway works in Q3 and Q4. There has been a focus on delivery of Capital works moving to external works contractors due to commencement of in-house Residential Streets Project at start of Q3. This is likely to result in reduced rate of progress with the capital programme due to additional procurement activities and limited available resources for additional contract administration and site supervision duties. Replacement of street lighting columns is off target this year to date due to Covid related staff absence.

Domestic residual waste collection tonnages remain high. This is likely to impact the household waste recycling rate for 2021.

Number of Business starts ups remain low after impact from Covid. Initiatives in place to promote and encourage businesses where possible in the current climate.

# Place



## Successes and Challenges

**Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)**

● 6 
 ✔ 5 
 ? 0 
 ? 9

**Service Plan PIs (latest)**

● 8 
 ✔ 21 
 ? 3 
 ? 18

**Corporate PIs Off Target**

PIs ● 6

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

Performance against revenue budget

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

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2

Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

**Service Plan PIs Off Target**

PIs ● 8

Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants wait until receiving a permanent housing outcome

Re-let time permanent properties (calendar days)

Percentage of consumer complaints completed within 14 days (cumulative).

Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (LGBF)

Percentage of Building warrant assessments processed within 10 days (rather than nationally adopted target of 20 days), fast tracking applications which provide economic benefit to the Midlothian area or people living with disabilities circumstances.

Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites

Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation

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

**Service High Risks (latest)**

▲ 0

**All Risks - Place**

Risks ▲ 45 ✔ 88

Key

PIs

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

Key

PIs

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

Key Risks

- ▲ High Risk/Medium Risk
- ✔ Low Risk