

Place

Quarter Three Performance Report 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 at pace 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.

The Residential Streets programme commenced at the start of October. The first phase of carriageway and footway resurfacing within some Bonnyrigg estates was completed during Q3 by our in-house resource. Residential Streets 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 the resurfacing works are taking place, Land and Countryside are attending to verges and overgrown foliage, whilst dropped kerbs are also being carried out and street lighting assessments taking place in each location.

Carriageway, footway reinstatements and drainage improvements were completed on the B7003 through Roslin Glen.

Successful delivery of the first half of winter service including a coordinated response to a number of storms. Very positive engagement with communities on Storm Arwen in particular on social media platforms. Land services/kick start staff have been bolstering roads staff numbers to ensure winter readiness. The winter service manual was revised in partnership with service areas and feedback from communities. Road Services have worked with Property Services to carry out a review and condition survey of all grit bins, as well as responding to individual community requests and this is now available to view via the Council's website, using the GIS platform public domain mapping system for assets to show locations and facilitate requests in real time.

Two applications to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund were successful. Funding has been received for an additional vehicle to operate kerbside food waste collection in rural areas, and for in-cab technology for all waste collection vehicles.

Contracts for glass and dry mixed recycling have been extended to allow the service to prepare for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme and plan for the implications of the forthcoming Extended Producer Responsibility.

Following discussions on reuse, plans are developing on a reuse service at Stobhill. The partnership opportunity was advertised for partners to take items from Stobhill Recycling Centre for refurbishment or reuse, with applications to be received mid-February. It is hoped that this service will be in place beginning of April 2022.

The Corporate Communications team lead on the promotion of work delivered by the University of Edinburgh and Waste Services staff on the carbon content of waste.

Landscaping project works: Tender documents for patchworks at Easthouses Park, North Middleton/Roslin Pump track have been prepared. Tender documents issued for Waterfall Park, Kings Park and grant aided pond restoration works at Vogrie.

Midlothian Outdoor Festival took place in October with 23 Covid compliant events. 428 participants attended which involved over 500 hours of volunteer and staff time. Evaluation rated the festival as 83% excellent and 17% good.

The ranger service continues to engage with communities and volunteers on various initiatives such as a restock of 320 native species at Jubilee Woods by a corporate volunteer group and all completing all tree works following tree surveys carried out in September. During Q3 3,549 volunteer hours were delivered in countryside sites.

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.

Tyne Esk LEADER Scottish Rural Parliament project got underway with Community Enterprise Ltd procured as delivery partner. Desk research, engagement with connector orgs, identification of lesser heard voices accomplished and engagement with Scottish Rural Parliament initiated. Project aims to develop new needs based funding strategy for Tyne Esk LEADER for funding allocation going forward. It does this using the Scottish Rural Parliament 21 recommendations.

The Carbon Charter was refreshed 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. 11 local businesses have now signed up to the Midlothian Business Carbon pledge. Two businesses have been working with our Digital Officer to develop a feature and both now have our Pledge logo on their website.

The Economic Development team, with other departmental support continued to process the discretionary fund. At the end of Q3 the full fund was allocated with two applications in progress.

Regeneration

At its meeting in October 2021 the Planning Committee determined to grant planning permission for a significant strategic planning application for the erection of a two storey intermediate care facility (30 bedrooms and 10 one bedroom rehabilitation flats); a three storey extra care housing building (39 one bedroom flats and 7 two bedroom flats); and the conversion of a single storey listed building to create a day care space on land to the south west of Bonnyrigg town centre, Polton Street, Bonnyrigg.

Funding has also been allocated to progress plans for the regeneration of Newtongrange village centre and Dalkeith town centre.

Town centre Capital Fund: of the seven applications approved (£910,000) all projects are now complete with Penicuik Town Hall completing this quarter. Further public realm works have also recently received funding through the Place Based Investment Fund.

Housing and homelessness

Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2021. To address the need for affordable housing, the SHIP details potential sites for 2,446 new affordable homes to be built between 2022/2022 and 2026/27. The RRTP 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.

There were 4,320 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this reporting period.

327 permanent homes have been provided to housing list applicants via the common housing register since 1 April 2021. 107 permanent homes were provided to housing list applicants during this reporting period.

8 new affordable council homes were completed at Bilston. The allocations were prioritised to local residents via Local Lettings Initiatives. 10 further properties were purchased from the open market.

95% of new tenants were very satisfied with their new council home and experience with the Housing Team. 100% of new tenancies were sustained after 12 months.

The Equally Safe Housing and Homelessness Policy was approved this quarter and is currently being implemented. It 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.

During this reporting period, 75 households were assessed as homeless, with 282 households assessed since 1 April 2021. It is anticipated there will be a decrease in the overall number of homeless households assessed during 2021/22 as compared to 493 households assessed during 2020/21. Since 1st April 2021, 571 households have been provided with advice and assistance compared to 515 for 2020/21.

To comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework, the Council approved the Annual Assurance Statement providing full assurance that it is meeting legislative and regulatory standards.

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.

Good progress with annual Capital Works Programme for carriageway resurfacing, despite ongoing impact of Covid-19 on available resources and increased restrictions due to the Omicron variant, and the use of external contractors only to deliver the remainder of the programme from the start of Q3.

The latest review of progress on Midlothian Council's affordable housing programme indicates that the Council is on track to have 1000 affordable homes either built or under construction in the five years of this administration by the end of March 2022. Most recently, Midlothian Council has signed contracts with Dandara and Barratt, who are already on site delivering 18 affordable homes in Shawfair and 53 affordable homes in Roslin respectively.

Works are now underway at Polton Street in Bonnyrigg, where Midlothian Council is working closely with the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership to build 46 homes with onsite care, as well as an Intermediate Care Facility providing interim and respite care for up to 40 short term residents and a new Day Services facility to support older people in the refurbished former Bonnyrigg Infant School. All of the new build elements of this development will be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, ensuring exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents.

Other sites due to have works being on site before March at Conifer Road, Mayfield (72 homes), Newbyres Crescent, Gorebridge (75 homes), Burnbrae Road, Bonnyrigg (20 homes), Bonnyrigg High Street (20 homes) and the former Newbattle High School site where 92 homes are to be built. All of these homes will be for social rent. Homes at Burnbrae Road and the former Newbattle High School are also built to a Passivhaus standard.

Midlothian Council's programme of homes to be built to the Passivhaus standard is the largest in Scotland and one of the largest in the UK.

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:

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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 this quarter compared to 75.45% in Q1 and 72.38% in Q2. The Environmental Health team has been impacted by the diversion of resources to proactively deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enhanced cleaning and janitorial services continues during Q3 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

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services. A potential key challenge for Q4 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, food and fuel 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 52 days this quarter and temporary re-lets has increased to 40 days. This has been due to properties requiring extensive works, delays with utility connections and some delays with furnishing contractors and 1 property held for a sensitive let.

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 99 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 spent in temporary accommodation is off target this quarter (77 weeks). To date, an average of 71 weeks spent in temporary accommodation compared to 93 weeks for 2020/21.

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 14.38 days in Q3 and contrasts with local authorities where full repairs and planned maintenance services have not yet resumed from the pandemic.

Due to changes in the Energy Efficiency regulations affecting the SHQS criteria we now have 431 houses failing EESSH which is reflected in the figures in the trend table above. House surveys are being carried out and work to bring the percentage of Councils housing stock that meets Scottish Quality Standards criteria back up to target will commence in Q4.

Limited progress with annual Capital Works Programme for footway resurfacing due to focus on carriageway works. 2.44km of footway resurfaced to end of Q3. Focus to date is mainly on carriageway schemes. We aim to complete 7 footway schemes in Q4 using external contractors plus the Residential Streets Programme footways. Our annual target has been increased from 0.56% to 0.76% to include the Residential Streets Programme work which started this quarter.

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, however the total number of start-ups for the year to date 2021/2022 represents an increase of 68% for the same period in 2020/2021. 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)

11 18 3 17

Corporate PIs Off Target

PIs 6

Performance against revenue budget

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

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

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 escalated and complete within 20 working days

Service Plan PIs Off Target

PIs 11

Re-let time permanent properties (calendar days)

Percentage of the Councils housing stock meeting the 'Modern facilities & services' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria

% of the footpath network resurfaced (cumulative)

Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Councils housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria (LGBF)

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

Number of volunteer hours in countryside sites

Achieve 5% reduction in transport costs (cumulative)

Number of intelligence logs made (quarterly)

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).

Re-let time temporary accommodation properties (days)

Service High Risks (latest)

0

All Risks - Place

Risks 38 87

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