

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 1 2024/25



Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

Individuals and communities in Midlothian will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

Our new [Single Midlothian Plan](#) focuses on three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In recent Census results, Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland with an increase of 16%. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas living a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new [Transformation Blueprint](#) 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success. The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5 year funding gap of £29.121 million outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. Follow the Money to ensure that the services we commission, contracts we manage and digital solutions we use deliver value for money.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring that all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce.
4. Design a workplace fit for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way as well as utilising our assets to maximise their potential.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in integrated service delivery which improve community outcomes.

Whilst a full update for the performance for each of the Council's Service areas is published separately, this report reflects an overview of the key service updates, against the thematic areas of the Single Midlothian Plan.

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier - Achievements

The Midlothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) plan and direct delegated health and social care services for the people of Midlothian. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) oversees the delivery of all the services delegated to Midlothian IJB. The aim of integrated health and social care is for the people to experience more joined up treatment and care.

This report brings together the priority actions of the seven main areas that plan and deliver integrated care and support:

- Adult Services
- Older People
- Justice Service and Protection
- Public Health
- Mental Health and Substance Use
- Midlothian and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP)
- Learning and Development.

Midlothian HSCP must make progress towards the aims of Midlothian IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan, work alongside the Community Planning Partnership, and contribute to the strategic aims of both NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council.

This quarterly update is provided in alignment with the four key themes of Service Actions & Indicators:

Prevention

Prevention is a key role of services within the HSCP. Social Work services in particular work with our most vulnerable populations and are crucial to ensuring people remain safe and well. Public protection is prominent and is key to what social workers do. Public health continues to work with key strategic partners across health and social care, the third and voluntary sector to influence improvements in outcomes.

Understanding Changing Needs

All services are working towards the establishment of feedback mechanisms to ensure that service planning and delivery meet the needs of people and communities.

Effective, efficient and quality (Best Value)

Financial Recovery templates continue to be monitored through the Finance and Performance Group. In addition, all Adult Health and Social Care services have attended two of a series of three Financial Recovery Workshops hosted by the HSCP with support from NHS Lothian's Sustainability & Value Team.

Improving Outcomes - socioeconomic, health and wellbeing, personal outcomes

Services continue to be supported to use OutNav software to capture their progress and contributions towards achieving improvements in outcomes. There is a strong commitment from the HSCP to having a more systemic approach to outcomes as it is acknowledged that this has been a gap.

Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements

This theme aims to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, working with a range of individuals and organisations within community justice. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 supported a redesign of the community justice system, transferring the responsibilities for reducing offending and reoffending to local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). A National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) and National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (2023) were published by the Scottish Government to outline the new model.

To ensure that people have access to timely support and treatment we provide early interventions, which do not require a person to have been convicted of their behaviour, to engage with services to support desistance from offending and/or anti-social behaviour. 'Your Chance to Change' is a perpetrator change programme which aims to address men's domestic abuse and increase the safety and wellbeing of women, and any children, impacted by the behaviour. Over Q1 there were 4 enquiries to the service and 50% were self-referrals from the man and the other 50% were from the partner or a professional involved with the family. To support the reduction in the use of remand 22 bail assessments were undertaken and 4 people placed on Supervised Bail.

The Justice Service has continued to increase the availability of trauma informed interventions and to ensure that those at risk of re-offending, or causing harm to themselves or others, can access timely support and intervention. This has included ensuring that staff are trained to the appropriate trauma level and delivering Survive and Thrive, a psycho-educational course for people affected by interpersonal trauma, to women as part of the Spring Service; 7 women attended Survive and Thrive in Q1.

Individuals become formally involved with Justice Social Work at the point of conviction when a Court makes a request for a Justice Social Work Report - requests for assessment and risk management planning are received from the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board. Between 1st April and 31st March 2024 the team received 171 requests for reports (162 from Court). Providing robust community based alternatives to custodial sentences is important as it enables individuals to remain in their community, maintain relationships, access resources and

ensures continuity of care. The main community-based sentence that the Justice Service supervise is a Community Payback Order, which can have a number of requirements attached to it. The most frequently used requirements are Supervision and Unpaid Work. During Q1 the Courts 40 Community Payback Orders, 12 had a Supervision requirement, 15 had an Unpaid Work or other activity requirement and 13 included both requirements.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child - Achievements

In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2020-2023, is a statutory three-year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. The plan is coming to an end and a new three-year plan 2023-2026 is currently being drafted.

The GIRFEC outcomes for the final year of the three-year plan for 2022-23 are:

1. More children and young people are safe, healthy and resilient
2. More children and young people receive timely and effective mental health support when they need it
3. Inequalities in learning are reduced

We are fully committed to realising a children's rights approach to all of our work and ensuring that we embed the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside our Promise commitments.

Based on the national Getting it right for every child wellbeing framework a set of priority actions has been developed which will make a significant contribution towards achieving the wellbeing outcomes. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) are fully committed to realising the children's rights approach and ensuring that the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded in plans taken forward.

- Outcome 1: Midlothian Children and Young People are Healthy, Active and Nurtured
- Outcome 2: Midlothian Children and Young People are Achieving and Responsible
- Outcome 3: Midlothian Children and Young People are Respected and Included
- Outcome 4: Midlothian Children and Young People are Safe and Nurtured

Over the past year the work we undertook to better ensure that referrals coming into social work were appropriate is paying off with a 50% reduction in referrals from Q1 last year. This said the number of child protection referrals remains high. Child protection is both complex and challenging and requires workers with experience to undertake assessments and manage and understand the risks. Given the ongoing workforce issues around being unable to recruit experienced workers, we continue to find it challenging with regard to the allocation of this work. The lack of experience across children and families social work practice is becoming more challenging. Newly qualified workers are unable to take child protection work although they can be a good support in helping out in very complex cases with an experienced worker taking the lead. We shall continue to review this position as a senior officer group to ensure workers are supported and to offer reassurance that we are managing risk.

The Promise work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.

Plan 24-30: was launched on 20 June 2024 on a dedicated website to partners. The plan is intended to be visual and interactive to make it accessible and easy to use. Partners are being asked to feedback on their experience of looking at this draft version before it goes live at the end of 2024.

The website is structure around the five foundations highlighted below:

- A Good Childhood
- Whole Family Support
- Supporting the Workforce
- Planning
- Building Capacity

Focus continues on the following 5 priority areas within Education:

Priority 1: Attainment and Achievement

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

Priority 3: Self-improving Systems

Priority 4: Life-Long Learning and Career-Ready Employability

Priority 5: Finance & Resources

Midlothian will Support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities - Achievements

The vision for this theme is to reduce the gaps in learning, economic circumstances and poverty.

Overall very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the CLD Three Year Partnership Plan which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building. CLLE also ensure we meet our statutory duty through our internal performance tracking measures for the CLLE service. There has been satisfactory progress in implementing Shared Prosperity Funded Projects. CLLE has played a key role in formulating the new Local Child Poverty Action Report, jointly with Public Health NHS Lothian.

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements

The Climate Emergency Group's and Community Planning Partnership vision is *significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030*. Our values are to get to net zero equitably, taking into account different people and communities capacities and abilities to get there. The Group consists of individuals and representatives of Midlothian Community Councils, Community Groups, national government agencies, Third Sector organisations, Midlothian Council, local chamber of commerce, landowners and Midlothian Energy Ltd.

The [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) forms part of the local development plan for Midlothian and will also be the strategic basis that future plans and applications will need to take into account.

The biggest sources of carbon emissions in Midlothian are still domestic uses (30.5%) and transport (27.5%). Therefore, this theme will concentrate on reducing carbon emissions in the areas of domestic heating/power and transport to get to Net Zero.

Thematic actions are designed to increase awareness, promote reflection and action on the key Climate Emergency issues of energy, food and travel. They will lead to a better understanding of carbon emissions and greater investment in greener travel, renewable heat, energy sources and heating efficiency in Midlothian. The actions will help inform and give people the opportunity to get involved to make a difference. Midlothian's future will be different through having more people aware and engaged in Climate Emergency issues, both consciously and subconsciously. This will make Midlothian more resilient to the effects of Climate Change and in addition help contribute more widely to Climate Change resilience.

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

Outcome 3: Low Carbon/Renewable Energy Development and Home Energy Saving is Increased

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge to increase education and awareness of climate change and suggest adaptations. A total of 126 businesses have now committed to the Pledge with 21 of those signing up during quarter 1. The team continue to work with pledgers to identify the best platform for group sharing. Through the LinkedIn group, pledgers share their experiences and the team continue to share a mix of green information from partners on learning opportunities, support and funding. Planning is taking place to hold an 'in-person' Green Pledger event for Climate Week in September 2024 which will provide collaboration, shared learning and an opportunity for our Pledgers to highlight the steps they have taken to progress on their net zero journeys.

Work is underway with our Net Zero Nation Programme which is supporting 13 diverse local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey. The businesses will take part in 12-month Net Zero Business Accelerators with funding support from Midlothian Council/Business Gateway Midlothian. In return, they must sign an agreement where they commit to approach their Net Zero strategy and credible carbon reduction plan with vigour, speak at physical and online events to encourage other business leaders to start their own transition to Net Zero. The companies will receive a 12-month carbon accounting software license, an expert partner providing 1:1 support over 12 months to help them produce their audited carbon accounts, their carbon reduction plan produced, an auditor to verify and certify their carbon accounts and carbon reduction plan. After completion in December 2024, the team will commence case studies on those outcomes in Q3 24/25 as the programme comes to a close.

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out its aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within the entire building stock in Scotland by 2045, including addressing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. As part of this Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

- set out how each section of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

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- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

Last year work progressed at pace to complete the LHEES methodology stages 1-4. This quarter, Council approved the LHEES Strategy and delivery plan. Overall, Midlothian Council's LHEES sets out a strategy to provide low carbon heat that is affordable to as many households and buildings as possible. Driving low cost, low carbon heat over expensive and challenging fabric retrofit approach will enhance the likelihood of achieving our net zero targets, whilst abiding by our six LHEES outcomes:

1. For Midlothian's communities and property decision makers to be engaged and empowered to deliver Net Zero heating targets, including making homeowners and tenants aware of funding and support available to them.
2. Working with Midlothian Energy Limited to find low/zero carbon heat solutions to meet the Council's climate change targets.
3. Work to alleviate fuel poverty by bringing forward solutions that move people out of fuel poverty or prevent them falling further into fuel poverty.
4. Make Midlothian's homes and buildings as energy efficient as possible using a fabric first approach.
5. Ensure that Midlothian Council will have an awareness of investment and grant funding opportunities and seek to secure these opportunities to deliver heat decarbonisation projects.
6. Work to whenever possible to create and keep jobs and revenue from heat decarbonisation projects within the Midlothian economy.

Following publication of the final LHEES strategy and delivery plan, an engagement campaign will take place over the next quarter.

In quarter 1, the Greenspace service launched the new Neighbourhood Environment Team as part of the wider review of the Recycling and Greenspace Service. The new team combines elements of the former street cleaning service with specialist elements of the greenspace team to create a new service that aims to improve the quality of the local environment for our residents. As part of the Greenspace service, the Neighbourhood Environment Team will carry out the following works in our local communities;

- Ensuring our streets remain clear of litter

- Cleaning our bus stops so that they provide safe, clean shelter for residents
- Emptying street litter bins
- Spraying and removing weeds from footpaths and roads
- Mechanical sweeping of roads and pavements
- Ensuring pathways are clear of overhanging trees and shrubs
- Keeping Midlothian clear of fly tipping
- Edging back grass verges to reclaim overgrown footpaths
- Power washing of high streets and public areas

Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected - Achievements

A wellbeing economy aims to deliver increased economic opportunities for all, providing meaningful and fair work, better outcomes for young people, sustainable places, improved health outcomes, reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

To develop a wellbeing economy we will use Community Wealth Building (CWB) which is based around five interconnected pillars that centres on People, Place and Planet. Community Wealth Building changes the way local economies function by redirecting wealth into local economies, creating opportunities for the benefit local people. We have embedded three of the pillars into our delivery over the past two years and will continue to build on this work.

The Business Gateway service continue to promote the Social Enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model. Contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives, the team support projects from the Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. The service supported 23 Social Enterprise organisations and 1 school based social enterprise in quarter 1, of these 2 were registered as new starts with a projected income of £180k and 4 jobs in year one.

Support provided included:

- 1 Charity receiving in depth support to develop a social enterprise (Community Interest Company) as a trading subsidiary to generate unrestricted funds to support the core work of the charity to reduce reliance on grant funding.
- 1 private sector organisation creating a social enterprise to take their current sport offer and extend it to support community wellbeing.
- 1 collaboration of East Lothian private sector businesses creating a green construction social enterprise after being inspired by The Energy Training Academy (ETA) model and choosing Midlothian to locate in due to the support ETA have received for the Economic Development Service.

The [Regional Prosperity Framework \(RPF\) 2021](#) guides and integrates public, private and Third Sector decisions, actions, collaborations, strategies, policies and investments and sets out 3 key areas to support the rebuilding of the economy:

- people – to access fair work, to learn and develop new skills and to live happy and healthy lives
- places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work in and where enterprise thrives
- planet – meeting our needs in a way that will allow future generations to meet theirs, with a focus on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (sustainability).

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our ambitious approach to managing the transition from pandemic 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. Work is ongoing to

refresh the Economic Strategy and will be presented for approval to Council later in the year.

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). The team actively encourage businesses to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers. This quarter discussions took place between Economic Development and Procurement proposing the creation of action groups to take key areas of work. Proposed areas of focus are:

- Refresh of the Local Procurement Strategy, supporting Community Wealth Building.
- Managing change – the need for better understanding throughout the Council to increase the local spend and to minimise unregulated spend.
- Creation of sessions hosted by procurement and economic development to encourage services to direct spend to the local supply base.

The Economic Development priorities for the 2023/27 Single Midlothian Plan align to the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the wellbeing economy with people focussed outcomes that will also deliver local economic benefit.

Outcome 1: Develop a Midlothian Community Wealth Building Action Plan to guide future economic activity across the partnership

Outcome 2: Increase economic opportunity to maximise income, empowering individuals and communities

Outcome 3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship, increasing business knowledge, for current and future generations

The successful launch of the Business Gateway portal and the new 'strengthen your business' client enquiry tool has 15 enquiries received so far. This is designed for existing businesses that are not registered with Business Gateway and are already trading. The introduction of this tool has reduced the level of data input required of local Advisory teams. National and local marketing will take place over the next quarter to increase awareness with existing businesses that can be supported.

We have maintained the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award for over 9 years and work has commenced on the development of our Wellbeing Strategy which will focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing. The rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives continues this quarter to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff.

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty - Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. Our refreshed vision for the service is that individuals and families will be able to access housing that is affordable and of good quality in sustainable communities. Housing Services are currently exploring a new approach to deliver services and are trialling new team set ups consisting of a community housing team, aiming to ensure every tenant and resident has their individual needs and rights recognised and is treated fairly with respect to enable tenancy sustainment. A core housing team, improving quality and turnaround of our properties, ensuring residents are informed of housing options and homeless applicants are provided temporary accommodation and a Homelessness team focused on preventing and supporting homelessness.

The percentage of Secondary school meal uptake this quarter remains steady at 34.35%, an increase from 20.36% in quarter 1 of last year. This is due to changes made to the menu offered to secondary schools to attract pupils back into the dining room. The percentage of Primary school meal uptake for quarter 1 was 54.44% and again remains steady compared to previous quarters. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24% with quarter 1 uptake for Midlothian at 54.44%. The percentage of school meal food waste has decreased to 4.98% from 6.86% compared to the same period last year.

From Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Funding, two additional new Lend and Mend hubs were launched this quarter in Danderhall and Loanhead libraries. Midlothian is the first authority in Scotland to expand

the Lend and Mend offer. The Hubs provides free access to sewing machines and other equipment to allow communities to repair, re-use and upcycle their own items. The Loanhead library site has also started a new Sewing Repairs Club to help people learn to sew, mend and make new clothes. Each library hub introduced an education programme to support new skills development, helping to reduce inequality through equitable access to resources.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2024/25 budget at its meeting on 27 February 2024. Whilst the 2024/25 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council.

The team continues to provide in-depth financial input to revenue and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and successful delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy. This quarter the draft of the 2023/24 accounts were completed in line with statutory requirements. Calculation and presentation of the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy projections alongside planned actions to address the financial challenge were presented to Council.

Economic pressures: Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction industry in Scotland. The UK is experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. The pandemic has also accelerated financial challenges, and the growth from being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland places significant pressure on Midlothian to be able to deliver high quality services to its citizens.

In response to all these pressures, a range of reprioritisation activity is taking place, with a revised Capital Plan being considered by the cross-party Business Transformation Steering Group, and options to review what and how services are delivered as part of the savings measures to reduce the funding gap recommended to Council.

Growing Council: Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. In addition, Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

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

To ensure Midlothian is 'building back better', this investment is also creating new jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, opportunities for businesses and communities and families hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic. These new opportunities help lead the way towards a better future for Midlothian.

National Care Service: The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Services (Scotland) Bill. If enacted, the bill would have fundamental implications for the community and for Local Government itself. The wide reaching changes in the bill aim to deliver a National Care Service by the end of the parliamentary term, which will impact on all aspects of the work of the Corporate Solutions team, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. Recent data shows the annual inflation rate was 4.0% in December 2023, up slightly from 3.9% in November. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities

Quarterly Reporting - Midlothian Council - How we are Performing-



PI Off Target 1

| Code & Title | Gauge | Value | Target | Next Update Due | Last Update | History |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| ● BS.MC.MPI.01 Performance against revenue budget | | £319.220m | £316.124m | 01 Oct 2024 | Q1 2024/25 | |
| ● CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day... | | 94.6% | 95.0% | 01 Oct 2024 | Q1 2024/25 | |
| ● BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d... | | 73.04% | 95% | 01 Oct 2024 | Q1 2024/25 | |
| ● BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ... | | 81.25% | 95% | 01 Oct 2024 | Q1 2024/25 | |
| ● BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work... | | 86.67% | 95% | 01 Apr 2024 | Q1 2024/25 | |

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