

## Midlothian Council Annual Performance Report – 2019/20

Community Planning partners have previously agreed the following ambitious vision for Midlothian:

“Midlothian – a great place to grow”.

Midlothian Council delivers its priorities through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Single Midlothian Plan. The Council Change and Transformation programme and individual Service Plans outline how Midlothian Council will deliver its contribution to the Single Midlothian Plan.

The top three priorities for 2019-22 are:

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

The Single Midlothian Plan incorporates five overarching thematic groups which support the achievement of outcomes. This thematic approach is used for quarterly reporting, the themes are as follows:

- Adult Health and Social Care - *Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services*
- Community Safety & Justice - *Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in*
- Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child - *Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.*
- Improving Opportunities for Midlothian - *Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities.*
- Sustainable Growth in Midlothian - *Growing the local economy by supporting business growth and responding to growing demand for housing in a sustainable environment.*

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in June 2019. The public consultation visionary exercise supporting development of the MTFS highlighted the following key priorities for what Midlothian should be like in 2040!

- **A sense of belonging**  
Pride in communities, working in partnership, transparency in decision making and accessibility in service provision.
- **A balanced infrastructure**  
Manageable housing numbers, vibrant towns, protected green spaces, a clean, carbon neutral environment and improved community transport.
- **Learning and working together**  
High quality education and training, jobs close to where people live, a main provider of local food production, maximising technological solutions.
- **Intergenerational opportunities**  
Reimagined older people services, being able to grow old in the one community, with support and good access to health and social care.

In addition to the visioning exercise the following key themes were explored as part of the consultation programme:

- **Theme 1: One Council - Working with You, For You** - is underpinned by a commitment to deliver a one council strategy which reduces silo working within services, increases cross party working at a political level and uses holistic approaches which place individuals and communities at the heart of our work.
- **Theme 2: Preventative and Sustainable** - responds to Communities telling us strongly that they want to live in a clean, carbon neutral environment with protected green spaces and improved environmentally friendly community transport options.
- **Theme 3: Efficient and Modern** - recognises that Midlothian Council needs to adapt to change by doing things differently to get improved results and increasing financial sustainability by addressing inefficiencies.
- **Theme 4: Innovative and Ambitious** - recognises our ambition for Midlothian and to make sure it is a great place to grow, now and in the future.

### Best Value

Key actions from the Best Value report are progressing including the progression of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the ongoing implementation of rigorous financial discipline.

### City Deal

The City Region Deal is emerging as a sound basis for regional level working between the six Councils together with key partners in the further/higher education, business, and third sectors. This is particularly relevant at a time when policies, plans and projects are being developed at national level. The expectation is that the intended Regional Growth Framework will ensure that the collectively agreed strategy to address key issues affecting the region in order to drive sustainable inclusive growth is both documented and promoted.

### Senior Leadership Review

The next phase of the Senior Leadership Review is now complete with the appointment of Chief Officers and all appointments expected to be in post from 2 March.

### Key Drivers for Change – ‘Making a Difference’



The key drivers for change were approved by Council on June 2019 and are now being implemented. A key focus is moving from silo-based working to holistic working which has also been the basis of the rationale for the Senior Leadership Review. Also approved by Council, we are focussing on moving from mixed performance to continuous improvement by refocussing the work of the Performance Team and renaming it the Continuous Improvement team to ensure that we are data-driven and improve performance based on information gathered. There are excellent examples of improvement across the Council and we are preparing to implement the Customer Service Excellence Standard. As we progress through to quarter 4, each of the drivers will be embedded across the Council.

## Progress of Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2019/20

### Adult, Health and Care - Achievements

#### *Responding to growing demand for adult social care and health services*

The Adult Health and Social Care service continues to undergo ambitious redesign. The Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership 2019-20 Strategic Plan outlines a major programme of activity focused on prevention and early intervention; planned support, treatment and recovery; and unplanned treatment and support. We are achieving this by changing the emphasis of our services, placing more importance and a greater proportion of our resources on our key values.

**Integration:** Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership is progressing work to implement the ambitions of the Strategic Plan. Efforts to support people most vulnerable to health and other inequalities continues to progress. This includes specific programmes involving pregnant women who smoke, people living in homeless accommodation, people who use alcohol and drugs, carers, people/families who could benefit from welfare rights checks and others. In addition the Community Planning partnership work to tackle Type 2 Diabetes continues to progress well.

Several programmes of work are underway in order to best support people who are frail. The increasing prevalence of frailty is linked to our rapidly ageing population. People with severe and moderate frailty (3,500 people) accounted for 4% of Midlothian's population and 31% of unscheduled activity in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in 2019. Midlothian HSCP and Midlothian GPs have been working together to improve the quality of care (health and social care) provided to people with frailty.

Local Planning Groups have prepared their action plans in line with the Partnership values: prevention, recovery, co-ordinated care, supporting the person not just focussing on the condition.

**Inequalities:** Health and Social Care services remain committed to contributing to reduce health inequalities. Local people, the third sector, public sector and private sector created a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes. This includes supporting people to be healthy, active and engaged in community life. Having a healthy diet and physical activity are important to reduce risk of type 2 diabetes but so are environmental, financial and social barriers, not just individual lifestyle choices. Actions we are taking forward include increasing capacity of weight management services, training on eating well and moving more as well as strengthening links between services to ensure people are in receipt of all the welfare support they are entitled to.

**Technology** offers a range of tools to support pathway and service redesign in terms of both iterative improvements and transformative initiatives. We continue to proactively engage with the emerging digital agenda in Scotland to maximise the value that technology, in all its forms, can add. We await feedback on our Digital Maturity Assessment conducted in the summer. Our business intelligence and analytics project to deliver an integrated operational resilience dashboard is progressing slower than desired. We continue to progress the necessary and important data privacy impact assessment with the Council and NHS and seek support from Digital Services and Lothian Analytic Services respectively as we seek to automate (and ultimately virtualize) data supply. Our TEC Pathfinder project is progressing well. A Project manager has been recruited to support development further.

#### **Learning Disabilities**

Activity to establish positive Behavioural Support Services locally is making good progress and continues to revive support from all stakeholders. Work continues to progress plans in relation to housing, both short term by making best use of the property available and longer term by ensuring needs as considered as part of the Phase 3 Housing Programme.

#### **Self-Directed Support**

Recruitment progressing to the Practice Development Worker post. Once recruitment has been completed activity will be focused on setting priorities, and progression of the revised Implementation Plan.

#### **Older People**

Older people's services continue to develop and also to be challenged. Care at home delivers around 8000 hours a week but there are around 400 hours of unmet need of care at home each week. There are a number of initiatives ongoing to reduce the amount of unmet need. A piece of work underway to cross reference those waiting for a package of care with clients who have been identified on the frailty index to explore how we can support these individuals in a more proactive way. Discharge to assess continue to support people discharged from hospital in a more timely manner providing rehab where needed. The care home support team continue to support the care homes with all the care homes having either sustained good grades or improved grades. The commencement of care at home recommissioning is underway to develop a tender and contract that aims to increase the capacity for care at home and reduce timescales for those waiting for a package of care. Two staffing reviews have been completed –

one for the Extra care housing facility at Cowan Court and the other for the Rapid Response carers. The implementation of the new staffing structures hope to be in place by 1st April 2020. The Joint Dementia team is now fully staffed and managing an increasing number of complex cases and supporting people with advanced dementia in their own homes. Post diagnostic support is a highly valuable resource within the team and it is acknowledged to be part of the role of each professional in the team as well as the dedicated Post Diagnostic support workers. Plans are underway to hold a public consultation event for older people in April 2020 to provide information and seek feedback on older people's issues and experience of services and supports. A scoping exercise is being developed to assess the extent of people who are housebound requiring social engagement to reduce social isolation and loneliness – a number of initiatives are being explored including a “roaming model of day care”, increasing befriending opportunities and undertaking intergenerational work to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst older people in Midlothian.

**Carers:** Since implementation of the Carers Act in April 2018, there have been considerable changes in funding, service demand, and duties on Local Authorities and Health Boards. VOCAL, Midlothian's largest carer service provider recently reported an 18% increase in referrals from new carers; 20% of these being for Parent Carers. There is significant demand for VOCAL services, and for other carer support delivered by other partners. VOCAL are approaching the end of their current 3 year contract which has had additional tasks added/shared by the local authority in response to new duties and responsibilities from the Act. In light of the significant legislative changes and new duties, changes in funding from the Scottish Government, and VOCAL nearing the end of their contract, it was agreed that wider consideration was needed of carer services and spend moving forward. A report was submitted to the Contracts and Commissioning Group to propose a one year extension to the current contract to allow time for carers, stakeholder and providers to be involved in consultation and a review of carer supports and service provision. This process will begin in Q3 2019/20, with an invitation to tender for services taking place in Q2/3 of 2020/21, new contracts beginning April 2021.

**Mental Health:** The Mental Health Strategic Planning group are developing the Mental Health Action Plan reflecting the priorities set out in the Midlothian Strategic Plan 2019-2022. Primary Care nurses are being rolled out in medical practices. Planning is underway for reviewing commissioned mental health and wellbeing supports currently provided by the third sector.

**Adults with Long Term Conditions, Disability and Impairment:** Work continues to develop a 1 year Physical Disability Action Plan to take forward actions from within the Midlothian Strategic Plan and issues identified at the Disabled People's Assembly. There is ongoing activity related specifically to sensory impairment which includes awareness training sessions for staff, the development of a third hearing aid maintenance clinic in Gorebridge (adding to Dalkeith and Penicuik) and Sensory Champions' direct referral pathway to Audiology.

## **Community Safety - Achievements**

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

### **Justice Service**

All teams are now present within the Number 11 Recovery Hub. A regular multiagency meeting at Number 11 where partners from the statutory and voluntary sector get together and discuss who will be leaving prison within the following three months has been introduced; this is to avoid people coming out of prison with no adequate resettlement plans and falling into crisis. Key staff in Midlothian Council are now provided with the names of individuals entering the prison system and release dates. This information is provided by the SPS.

Safe and Together continues to operate in Midlothian but there have been very few referrals to the Midlothian Families First project where staff can work with men involved in domestically abusive behaviour on a voluntary basis. There has been interest expressed by other professionals such as Health Visitors in referring to Midlothian Families First. A series of communication activities will then take place to raise awareness of the service.

Spring continues to go well and the involvement of Occupational Therapy has been very helpful in relation to moving women on in a positive way from the service.

The Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan has to be renewed by the end of March 2020 and a great deal of activity is planned. On 20th November a very successful Community Justice event was held. This included an address by the Chief Executive of Community Justice Scotland.

### **Substance Misuse**

The Mental Health Team and MELD, the main third sector partner have both relocated to No11 and are fully operational in the building. MELDAP continues to lead work in developing responses to changing drug trends. The “drop in” clinic to offer patients who find keeping appointments challenging continues to be a success. This is a partnership with Nurses, Peers and Social Work. The aim is to keep the chaotic population engaged and reduce unused appointments. A dedicated Women's Peer Support Worker has been recruited in Midlothian. A Health Needs Assessment is also underway to make recommendations for future use of our treatment and support provision. The draft is in the process of being finalised by February/March 2020.

## 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.

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

**Permanence and Care Excellence Programme (PACE):** The PACE programme is continuing with a further four aims now identified as detailed below. The main driver for continuing with these further aims is to ensure that we continue to be ambitious in our future planning for those children and young people who cannot remain living with their parents.

Scottish Government and the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children view the level of change and improvement for Midlothian's most vulnerable children as a great achievement and have requested that we continue to be part of the PACE programme, and continue to share our learning with other Councils. The independent evaluation of the introduction of the 2 week planning meeting evidenced the positive impact this small change in practice brought: 'earlier work with parents to discuss permanence, and set and agree care plans' & 'ensures clear permanence policy in place, providing clarity on responsibilities, deadlines and processes'.

The identified 4 further aims are:

**Aim 1** – Children who are looked after at home for more than 2 years will have a looked after review looking at their whole period of time being looked after at home.

**Aim 2** – Children who become looked after and accommodated will have a recommendation for Permanence (including a permanent return home) within 30 weeks of becoming looked after and accommodated.

**Aim 3** – Children who have had recommendation for permanence away from home will have the decision ratified by the Agency Decision Maker within 14 weeks of the LAAC review recommended permanence.

**Aim 4** – Court submissions will be lodged within 16 weeks of the Agency Decision Maker sign off.

With reference to Aim 2, in our first year we managed to refer 95% of accommodated children to a Permanence LACC Review. In our second year, this number dropped to 57%. The reasons for this drop off are varied but include: a baby being born 11 weeks prematurely and requiring to stay in hospital for a considerable period and a parent being admitted to a residential unit to detox. In summary, the delay in making permanence decisions for these children was unavoidable and in the large majority of cases entirely appropriate. Over the course of the two years and taking our aggregate percentage, we have managed to refer 78% of children to Permanence LAAC Reviews. Our permanence overview group (POG) continues to meet 6 weekly and we have broadened the remit of this group to consider those children waiting on section 11/kinship care orders.

Aims 1, 3 and 4 were all successfully achieved.

Going forward we have just began discussions with CELCIS around agreeing a timetable to evaluate the decisions we took in 2017/18 to find out if they were the right decisions and to assess if the child/young person remains in the same placement and identify if there has been a positive impact upon the child's wellbeing.

**Mental Health:** The Midlothian Early Action Partnership (MEAP) project started in January 2019, to effect system change so that children, young people and young adults get timely and appropriate mental health support. The first year of the project has provided a learning journey, with opportunities to review and refine our approach to the project delivery. We have achieved several key milestones, which is summarised below.

We established the MEAP Steering Group, building a strong foundation of trust and respect between partners. We also recruited two project team members, namely the project lead and youth engagement officer. We commenced with three Tests of Change in January 2019, using a community-centred approach designed by Nesta, called the '100 Day Challenge'. This supported us to catalyse our efforts to test ideas around improving mental health and wellbeing for Midlothian's children and young people. As part of the wider project, Midlothian Sure Start is busy undertaking the Test of Change around embedding trauma-informed practice within primary schools. This will continue in earnest during 2020.

Partners undertook a scoping exercise for the larger mapping work, with support from consultants, which informed the tender specification for the commissioning of the mapping exercise itself. We have recently commissioned consultants Dartington, to carry out this mapping exercise.

In terms of an evaluation of the project, feedback from those who took part reported that relationships and connections between professionals have improved, the tests of change created more opportunities for cross-agency collaboration. Some young people and families have already reported feeling more included in decision-making processes through engagement and participation and feeling better able to influence the system; however, we have only touched the surface in this regard and we look forward to extending this to a wider population, through future Tests of Change. We have seen a small shift in planning and resources by CAMHS through taking a different approach to supporting kinship carers. This is a small yet significant step towards early and preventative action. Adults involved in the 100 Day Challenges and those attending training sessions have reported an increase in their confidence and knowledge, so that they can better support children, young people and families. To summarise, we have accomplished what we set out to achieve at this stage and have used our learning to update timescales and methods going forward. Our progress and learning to date supports our belief that our Partnership are in a strong position to deliver our objectives during the life course of this Early Action project. In order to ensure that the work MEAP is doing is not duplicated we are setting up a strategic wellbeing and mental health oversight group which shall ensure that all the different funding streams and work being undertaken across the community planning partnership around this area of work is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic oversight group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis.

**Participation:** The Champions board and the participation of the children and young people with staff from the local authority and with partner agencies (SCRA, Police, Health, Education & 3rd sector) continues to be a success. The Champions project participation assistant has now successfully launched a monthly lunch club in each of our 6 high schools for care experienced young people. The recent launch of the Midlothian Corporate Parent Strategy and Plan 2020-2023 highlights ambitious targets within the plan that promotes our ethos to ensure all care experienced children and young people have access to the right support at the right time.

**Kinship Care:** Midlothian's Kinship Carers continue to be a key resource for children and young people who can no longer remain with their parents. Children's services remain committed to supporting kinship carers both financially and emotionally to ensure that all placements are offered the right support when needed. The recent PACE statistics for 2018/19 illustrate that the majority of children (70%) who are unable to live with their birth parents, were provided with a secure and stable setting through a kinship arrangement. This is in line with our policy direction to secure children within an extended family arrangement wherever possible.

Our annual kinship carer event was held on 21st November 2019. The presentation from the kinship carers was around raising the profile and understanding what it's like to be a kinship carer and what they provide for their children. The event was well attended by 12 kinship carers and staff across children's services and was collaboratively developed and run by 3 kinship carers and a member of staff from our family placement team. The focus of this event was to develop understanding of the emotions involved for both children and carers when a child is placed in kinship care and how children's services can then support these placements effectively through such a difficult transition. The meetings with CAHMS following a request at the 100 Day Challenge is one form of support that has been developed. Children's services staff benefitted greatly from the first-hand accounts of kinship carers and clear suggestions around what may be helpful to others in the future. Recommendations from this event shall be taken forward by the Family Placement Team and the monitoring and reporting of their progress shall be taken to the quarterly Strategic Kinship Care group.

**Child Protection:** At the end of Q3 reporting we had 55 children (25 families) on our child protection register which equates to 3.1 per 1000 of the population compared with the national rate of 2.9. This figure has increased from the last quarter and is slightly above the national average. Nationally there has been a 3% increase in the number of child protection registrations from 2017 (latest figure). The implementation of the Safe and Together model continues with training of all staff being rolled out.

Our child protection statistics have remained relatively static over the year despite increased referrals into the service. The reasoning for this is as a result of the service review in 2017 where we front loaded the service to ensure we are able to respond to referrals at an earlier stage to prevent them escalating.

**Looked after away from Home:** There are 169 children and young people looked after away from home both in and out-with Midlothian. This number is higher than the previous quarter (159 children & young people). The current rate per 1,000 of young people looked after in Midlothian is 8.7 which remains well below the national of 10.6. Nationally there has been a 1% decrease from 2017 to 2018 (latest figure) in the number of children and young people looked after away from home. Having undertaken an audit of all the children and young people who have come into care over the past quarter a high percentage have gone into kinship care. The reasons for accommodating children and young people remain around drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, domestic abuse and neglect.

**Looked after at home:** In Q3 there are 59 children and young people looked after at home. This is a decrease on Q2 (61). They have all been reviewed by the Interim Independent reviewing officer. The current rate per 1,000 of young people looked after at home in Midlothian is 3.0 which is lower than the national rate of 3.7. Nationally there has been a significant reduction of children looked after at home (26% reduction from 2008 – 2018 – latest figure) Within Midlothian this number has also decreased by 24% from December 2018.

Our Interim LAC reviewing Officer's post has now been extended for a further year which will help to continue to embed the LAC reviewing process into practice and ensure a consistent approach for all our LAC children in Midlothian.

The CEYP funding received from Scottish Government is continuing to support our LAC population's attainment and the recruitment of an Educational Psychologist to work specifically with this group alongside increasing outreach support capacity will help to support this priority area of work.

**Whole Systems Funding:** We have secured funding from Scottish Government to strengthen our existing early intervention approach to youth offending with a focus on training. The funding will also be used to continue to develop supports and interventions. Within Q3 we continue to hold multi-agency meetings for the ten most vulnerable young people who are coming to the attention of Police Scotland. By taking a holistic approach we identify who is the best person to work with the young person to try and prevent an escalation in their behaviours.

### **Priority 2 Closing the attainment gap between most and least disadvantaged children**

Our schools are making effective use of Pupil Equity Funding to enhance learning and teaching, recruit additional support and specialist staff and apply a range of interventions to support and raise the attainment and achievement of our more vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.

As a result of the range of interventions and strategies deployed by schools, children in receipt of FSM have shown an overall improving trend in achievement of CfE levels over the last 3 years resulting in the following percentage increases:

- . P1 - Listening and Talking +3%, Numeracy +9%, Reading +7% and Writing +16%.
- . P4 - Listening and Talking +28%, Numeracy +5%, Reading +6% and Writing +18%
- . P7 - Listening and Talking +15%, Numeracy +17%, Reading +9% and Writing +14%.
- . S3 - Listening and Talking +8%, Numeracy +1%, Reading +7% and Writing +10%.

### **Early Learning and Childcare and Family Learning**

Projects of note which have just opened or are opening shortly include Vogrie Outdoor Early Learning and Childcare Setting, Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare Setting and a new ELC setting at St David's PS. Vogrie Outdoor ELC is the Council's first fully outdoor nursery and has received considerable national and international interest. The ELC provision at Scots corner is developing in partnership with the MoD and this unique setting will work closely with families to develop our family learning approach and areas of practice in supporting Armed Forces families throughout their early learning journey and beyond. The setting will open in February 2020. The development of the ELC and the partnerships that have enabled it to progress are excellent examples of the Armed Forces Covenant in action in Midlothian. The ELC provision at St David's is in a refurbished area of the school with access to a newly created outdoor area. This will provide an additional number of places in the Dalkeith area and this setting will also open in February.

### **Good Time to Be 2**

An ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the opportunity for 2 year old places in ELC continues to ensure that we have families who take up this offer. The ELC service has introduced discretionary funding criteria, following a consultation with representative populations of parents, which means that discretionary funding will be targeted at children "in need" (CYP Act 2014). This criteria was introduced in September 2019 meaning that families that are above the income threshold could now be approved for the funding if they meet one or more of the identified discretionary criteria. By the end of Q3, a total of 121 eligible 2 year olds have accessed a funded place this year. This figure is slightly above the take up from last year (2018/19 Q3 was 115 children) but we expect it to continue to rise over the next quarter with the introduction of the discretionary criteria and our communication strategy.

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

### **Youth Work**

Communities and Lifelong Learning Youth Work programme is now fully operational for 2019/2020, and there is a youth work offer from age 8 to 18 in all school clusters. All youth clubs are offered at low or no cost, with programming and reviewing planned with the young people. Attendance in all of the youth clubs are at a very high level.

A very successful Midlothian Young People Awards Ceremony took place in September with over 50 young people being nominated, celebrating the contribution and achievements of young people. Schools have made good progress in taking into account the recommendations made by the Child Poverty Action Group, particularly in relation to the cost of the school day. Work is ongoing to embed consideration of the cost of the school day in the life and work of our schools and evidence of progress made will be reported within individual school PEF and Standards and Quality reports June 2020.

There are currently 98 modern apprentices on our apprenticeship programme, including 55 on Midlothian Child Care as part of the early year's expansion. In year one of the Foundation apprentice offer, there are 44 young people engaging in this programme. In the Employability Fund, there are 8 participants in the sector based academy which is a full time 6 week programme for learners who were previously unemployed. This programme provides them with learning, work experience and a guaranteed job interview. We have secured funding for 20 places for Sector Based Academies this year.

**Customer Services:** Following on from the telephony upgrade, a Queuebuster system has been introduced which offers a call back to customers during periods of high demand. Phase 3 of the Customer Services Review has been concluded. The new library opening hours commenced from the 1st October 2019 delivering efficiencies and savings. There have been a number of national and local events in libraries for Book Week Scotland and the Midlothian Science Festival with some highlights including erupting volcanoes, author visits and a teddy bear's sleepover. The Online Payments and Services (OPAS) project solution has been through the procurement process and next steps are in progress.

### **Economic Development**

**Town centre Capital Fund:** A total of seven applications are now underway; ranging from community facilities to enhancing links to town centres. Projects total £910,000 and will be fully spent by March 2020 and will complete by September 2020.

**MBTAG (Midlothian & Borders Tourism Action Group):** Scotland Starts Here Website launched to raise the area's profile as a year-round tourism destination as well as encouraging more visitors to the area. Supported by a digital marketing campaign, mobile app, podcasts, eBooks, videos, blogs and social media advertising.

**Economic Development Strategy:** The Council's Strategy for Growth 2020-25 was formally endorsed by members in December 2019 and its progress will be monitored through annual review through the Community Planning Partnerships Sustainable Growth theme.

**Tyne Esk LEADER:** Last project passed: Rosewell Nursery & Additional Needs Service for LASC Childcare Services Ltd. £95,115.99 granted, which completes the funding package for the project. As the programming period reaches completion, all Tyne Esk LEADER monies are now fully allocated.

### **Landscape and Countryside**

The Council's first Early years outdoor setting opened 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.

### **Sport and Leisure**

The first ever Regional Walking Netball tournament took place at the Oriam Sports Complex, Edinburgh. Seven teams took part and the Midlothian Hotshots team came up tops winning tickets to the first Sirens netball game in Glasgow in March 2020.

Active Schools Midlothian are working with Yoga partners to offer Children & Family Yoga Sessions. Yoga can help with coordination, agility and injury prevention. The sessions are being held twice a week and research has shown that children who practice yoga can:- Perform better at school,- Be more calm in class, Improve concentration levels, Be more compassionate and caring with peers and help Improve sleep patterns.

GP practices in Midlothian have agreed to come on board with a new scheme to recommend Ageing Well activities to patients who would benefit from getting more active and meeting new people. The "fit-scription" pads are available in all GP practices now with details of all Ageing Well walking groups and contact details to find out more about Ageing Wells other activities.

Sport and leisure Ageing Well walking football in Midlothian held its seventh annual Player of the Year award last week at Loanhead Miners Club.

A New Age Kurling Tournament took place this quarter at Newbattle Community Learning Centre with players taking part from Penicuik, Lasswade, Gorebridge, Rosewell and Newtongrange.

A new walking group started in the Mayfield area of Midlothian. The walk will take place every Wednesday morning from 11 am.

Tonezone Memberships for quarter three was 5,281 which has increased by 130 members since the previous quarter. Promotion for Tonezone during November and December included a £5.00 joining fee and a 12 days of Christmas for £12.00. The uptake of the Christmas promotion was 202 people.

Tonezone November joining was 143 and December join was 120. Totalling 263 new members.

## **Sustainable Growth - Achievements**

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

**Homelessness and Housing Services:** Good progress has been made in respect of the 4 strategic outcomes set out in Midlothian's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019 - 2024:

The supply of permanent accommodation for homeless household's increases. Bed and breakfast accommodation is no longer routinely used as emergency accommodation for homeless households and the time households spend in temporary accommodation reduces. Homeless households with support needs are supported to access and maintain permanent accommodation. Housing options and support are in place to prevent homelessness.

Examples of work to achieve these strategic outcomes are detailed below for information.

A Revised Housing Allocation Policy was agreed by Council in December 2019. This places a renewed focus on addressing homelessness, with a significant increase in the proportion of lets to homeless and increased flexibility in the properties being allocated which will reduce waiting times. The impact of these changes will also begin to reduce the demand for bed and breakfast accommodation during 2020/21 and beyond.

A large number of sites now have planning permission and are under construction as part of the council's new build housing programme. Areas with sites under construction or due to go under construction during 2020 include: Bilston, Bonnyrigg, Dalkeith, Danderhall, Gorebridge, Loanhead, Mayfield, Newtongrange, Penicuik and Pathhead. There has also been significant numbers of open market acquisitions undertaken with 45 purchases undertaken in 2019/20.

Additional temporary accommodation services are progressing which will reduce reliance on using bed and breakfast accommodation. These are: Mayfield Family Service (operational from April 2020); Jarnac Court, Dalkeith; and the former Loanhead Police Station (both operational from October 2020).

The Housing First programme will commence in May 2020 providing 20 secure council and housing association tenancies per annum targeted at hard to reach and vulnerable homeless households. Many of these households

have previously spent lengthy periods living in emergency accommodation. A tender process is currently underway to appoint a specialist support provider as these household's will require intensive support in order to sustain their accommodation.

The use of shared temporary accommodation (2 people sharing a two bed flat with own bedroom) as an alternative to B&B will be rolled out in Spring 2020.

A service provider has been appointed to manage the supported accommodation services and deliver a tenancy support service. The significant tender exercise was concluded in December 2019. This service will commence as from 1st April 2020.

Discussions have commenced with Women's Aid to review the existing Nomination Agreement and to propose an increase in the number of nominations made per annum to household's experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, discussions are also taking place with East Lothian Council to develop a Nomination Agreement which will complement the existing Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements to safeguard household's affected by domestic abuse.

Discussions are ongoing with Children's Services to develop a homeless prevention pathway for care experienced and looked after young people providing sustainable homes and a community of support that enables young people to have confidence in themselves and their future. It is proposed the National House Project will commence later this year.

A review of the rent model for temporary accommodation commenced in line with the recommendation from the Scottish Government's Homelessness Strategy that rents should be set at a level in order to provide a more equitable system and provide a clearer path for people to move on from Temporary Accommodation.

### **Environmental Health**

100% of the permanent residential caravan sites have been issued with their new 5 year licences.

Having been reported to the Procurator Fiscal by the Food and Safety team the operator of a food takeaway pled guilty to six offences relating to lack of hygiene and not complying with legal notices. The court levied a fine of £1K even though this is the second occasion on which the proprietor had been prosecuted.

Midlothian Rural Crime Partnership was set up in October 2019 to bring partner agencies, including police, Scottish water and SEPA together to tackle rural crime, with official launch date for the Midlothian Partnership against Rural Crime taking place on 25 February 2020.

A review of the air quality monitoring locations within Midlothian is complete. This was following an undertaken given by Midlothian Council in the 2019 Air Quality Report which was supported by Scottish Government and SEPA. The new locations will include monitoring levels of NO2 (main source is traffic pollution) close to schools near busy roads and in the wider Shawfair area and incorporated suggestions by members of the CAFS Working Group.

Following intervention by Environmental Health, a private water supply serving a private rented property with elevated lead levels and high bacterial contamination, including E Coli has been satisfactorily improved. Major works were carried out by the owner and supported by a grant via Scottish Government.

A long standing problem with hoarding and infestation of vermin has been successfully improved through joint agency working, a combination of providing support and assistance to the property owner and her family and through enforcement work. The property is now considered habitable, pest proofing works are complete and the fire safety and smoke detection has been improved following a home visit by the Fire Officer.

### **Building Standards**

Building Standards continue to provide a high level of customer satisfaction against an increasing demand upon the service and local development. In August the Building Standards service were awarded with a CSE (Customer Service Excellence) award for **Exceeding their 90% target for Timeliness, Level of Information, Staff attitude and Satisfaction with the Service Waste Services**

### **Additional Areas of Interest**

Internal Council actions/activities supporting the delivery of agreed outcomes

### **Financial Sustainability**

Given the continuing challenging grant settlements, representing a real terms reduction in core funding together with the impact of a rapidly growing population and greater demand for services, the Council has shifted to a Medium Term Financial Strategy. This complements the existing forward plans for HRA, Capital and Reserves.

Delivery of savings plans, both within the MTFS and relating to previous slippage is key and this needs to be monitored closely. Values attached to proposals in the MTFS are being reviewed further to ensure they sit correctly within a detailed delivery plan which can be reflected in the final 20/21 budget. It is important for the Council that the measures in the MTFS are fully developed (where necessary) at pace and also proceed to implementation at pace.

### **Financial Strategy - Achievements**

- a) Successful recovery of the £3 million projected 2018/19 budget overspend. Positive outcome for the 2018/19 End of Year Financial reports an underspend of £495,000 which was achieved by everyone working together, demonstrating strict financial discipline. The action taken to address the overspend was also noted positively in the Best Value Assurance Report;
- b) Successful completion and submission of the 2018/19 audited accounts in accordance with the statutory deadline with an unqualified audit opinion;
- c) Completion of Quarter two 2019/20 Financial Monitoring reports for Council as part of the robust scrutiny of financial performance and subsequent submission of a recovery actions to arrest the projected in year overspend within services;
- d) Update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23 presented to Council 1 October 2019 which provided an update on the progress of the recommendations since the last report on 25 June 2019, and which has been delegated to the Business Transformation Steering Group to develop the next phase of the strategy and identify further measures to address the remaining budget gaps for 2021/22 to 2022/23.

## **Emerging Challenges**

**Growing Council:** Population growth in Midlothian over the next 10-15 years will see Midlothian become the fastest growing Council in Scotland. 0-15 population increase, projected at 20% and 75+ population increase projected to increase by 100% between 2014 and 2039.

This brings the opportunity to support the Council vision of being 'A Great Place to Grow'. As a growing Council this brings the opportunity to redevelop parts of Midlothian, improve infrastructure with a focus on area targeting, improving economic opportunities, improving education and health outcomes.

This growth creates the opportunity to meet the housing need with 25% of new homes being built in the affordable housing bracket, in addition to the expansion in Council House building. This construction will directly support employment in construction and will see a steady increase in the volume of Council Tax received over time.

The approved, Capital Strategy sets out infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

**Homeless:** There continues to be a significant demand on the homeless service set against an ambitious and challenging legislative environment. Some examples of current work to mitigate these challenges are highlighted above.

Delays accessing self-contained temporary accommodation due to lengthy void timescales have resulted in increased demand for emergency accommodation for family households and longer periods of time spent in such accommodation. An external voids contractor has now been appointed which will assist in reducing the time that both council housing and temporary accommodation properties are empty. A 'Test of Change' experiment has also commenced including front line staff which will report findings and lessons learned in early March 2020.

**Welfare Reform:** The additional pressures presented by Welfare Reform are monitored in relation to income disruption to housing rent payments and Council Tax Reduction scheme, evident in increased arrears and increased demand for crisis grants from the Scottish Welfare Fund. The impact in Year 3 of Universal Credit Full Service in Midlothian, has demonstrated that although there continues to be an impact on rent arrears, the impact has been reduced by the slower pace of new claimants applying to Universal Credit. DWP commenced the Move to UC pilot scheme in Harrogate in July 2019 and state that the pilot will end in 2020, with full migration to be achieved by the end of 2023. During the migration period the accurate and secure administration of Housing Benefit remains with Midlothian Council Revenues Services as required service provision for citizens across Midlothian. Demand and budget expenditure will continue to be monitored and priorities updated, if required, in relation to the number of applications received to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

### **Capacity and Quality of Services for Care at Home**

Increasing demand on Care at Home services continues to be a major challenge to deliver the care and support needed. This is heavily impacting on assisting hospital discharges and supporting people at home in the community who require increased care and support. This is supporting a shift in the balance of care, and keeping people safely at home for as long as is safely possible. The Care at Home team are developing a vision for the future, as well as considering appropriate structures for the teams moving forward.

### **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.

### **Children's Services**

Children's Services budget continues to remain a significant and ongoing challenge. This is as a result of several factors, such as secure care, young people who require a high level of specialised care and who have severe and complex needs and those young people who are 16+ and require somewhere to live. These 3 work streams are complex and difficult to plan for and all of them require significant amounts of funding.

Young people with severe and complex needs often come into care around 14/15 years of age when their parents despite their best intentions can no longer offer them adequate care due to their increased needs. To date we have opened two additional houses to accommodate 5 young people who cannot live independently and shall require ongoing support. We have commissioned two different agencies to provide their package of care and support. As a result of continuing care legislation this means that the 5 young people will have the right to reside in these houses until the age of 21

### **Embedding of new Higher qualifications**

There is a risk that Higher results will be affected next year as a result of new SQA Examination arrangements for Highers at S5 and S6. This will need to be mitigated through close monitoring of pupil progress in schools and work with Curriculum PT and SQA coordinators to gain intelligence of any issues around changes to coursework and the effect of increased exam content.

# Midlothian Council

## How we are performing

Corporate Performance Indicators (Latest)

 6  5  6  0

 Off Target  On Target  Data Only Indicator  The Data is not available yet