

Midlothian Council Planning Performance Framework Report 2022/23

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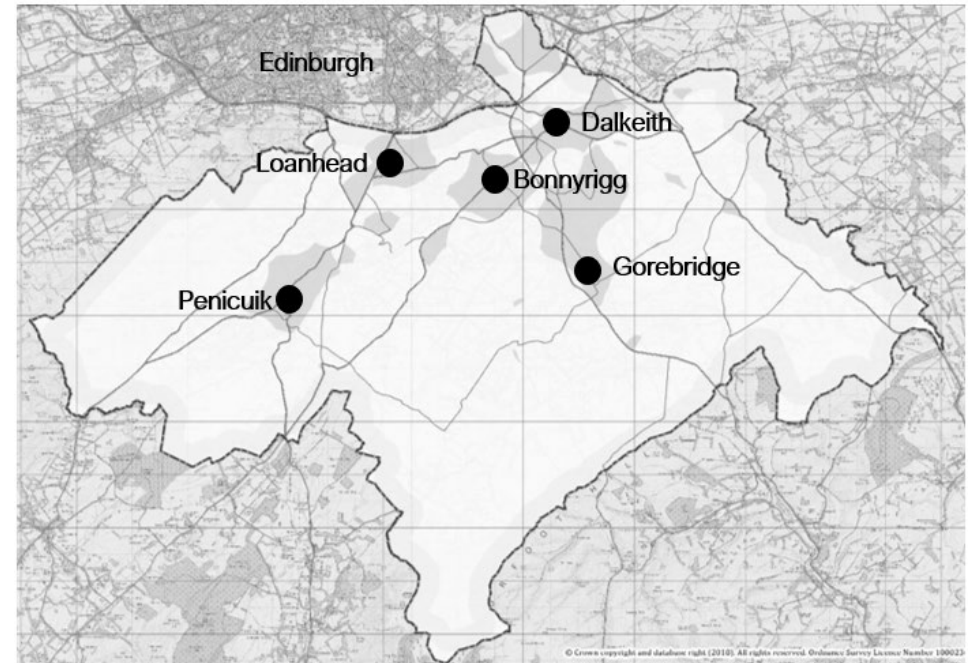


Part 1 – Introduction

1 - Introduction

1.1 The Midlothian Council region lies to the south of Edinburgh, bordered by the Pentland Hills to the northwest and the Moorfoot Hills to the south. It is one of Scotland's smaller local authorities by area, ranking 21st out of 32 in this respect, but it is an area of contrast. The southern portion comprises upland countryside, while the region's towns are found in the north, the largest of which are Bonnyrigg (19,000 residents) and Penicuik (17,500 residents). These and other towns have grown substantially in recent years and will also do so in the future, leading to a large population increase across the region. Latest estimates put Midlothian's population at 98,500, an increase of 2,000 in a year, making the area amongst the fastest growing in Scotland in percentage terms.

1.2 An increasing population presents opportunities and challenges for Midlothian Council. In the coming years we will work to maintain and support communities whilst promoting economic growth, the delivery of good quality housing and the provision of infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of residents.



Map of Midlothian and its main towns.





Loanhead town centre.

1.3 The Council's Planning Team and the Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) have key roles in achieving these aims. The Plan sets out a development strategy and a detailed policy framework to guide land use in the area. Together with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), it is the basis against which Planning Officers consider development proposals. The MLDP manages future change in the area by:

- Setting out a clear vision for the future of Midlothian's communities and countryside;
- Promoting sustainable growth and travel;
- Ensuring the availability of infrastructure to support such growth;
- Protecting environmental and cultural assets; and
- Giving confidence to investors and communities with respect to the location of future development and investment.

¹ Markers nine and ten were merged in 2021/22.

1.4 This document shows how the Planning Team is working to achieve these aims. Covering the 2022/23 financial year, the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report highlights notable developments, gives background details on how the department operates and provides data on performance.

1.5 This report is used by the Scottish Government to score the department against 15 performance markers¹. These include the time taken to process planning applications, the use of effective working practices and engagement with applicants. This twelfth PPF report shows how positive results for these markers can be achieved in future and how the Team is equipped to meet the expectations of Midlothian's communities and businesses.



Looking over Newtongrange towards the Pentland Hills.





Part 2 – Development in Midlothian

2 - Development in Midlothian

2.1 - Introduction

2.1.1 High quality development is the primary goal of the planning system and the Planning Team at Midlothian Council places a priority on negotiating with applicants and agents prior to and during the application process to achieve the best possible results.

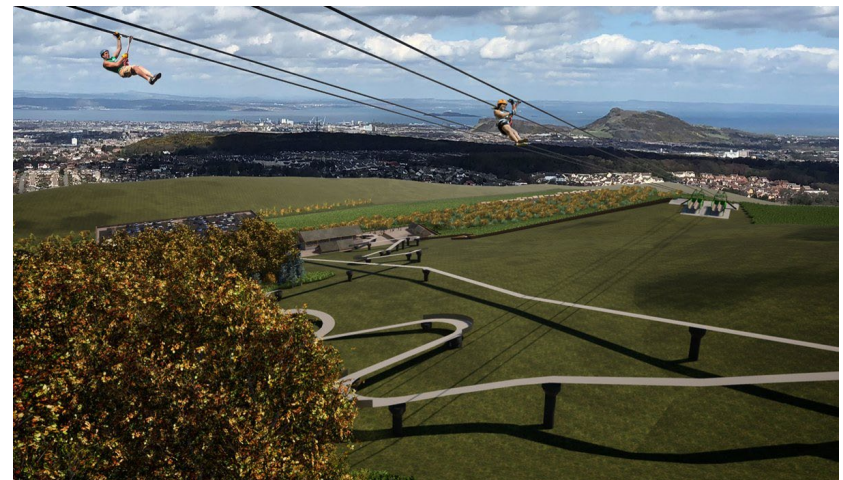
2.1.2 The developments and activities here in Part 2 show the Council's commitment to high quality projects of different scales. They are split into an initial overview which takes a quick glance at some smaller-scale work, followed by more detailed case studies.

2.2 - Overview of Selected Projects from 2022/23

2.2.1 Planning staff have continued to assist Council colleagues with progressing proposals for the development of the Midlothian Snowsports Centre into a major multi-activity leisure, retail and tourist attraction. 'Destination Hillend' will include:

- A new zip line, high rope activity and Alpine Coaster;
- A 'glamping' complex;
- Upgraded and modern facilities with enhanced snowsports storage;
- A new café with fine dining plus outdoor seating;

- A retail unit and function suite;
- A new soft play area and enhanced children's party rooms; and
- A carbon neutral main building.



Proposed zip line and alpine coaster at Destination Hillend.





Proposed new main building at Destination Hillend.

2.2.2 The project is expected to create between 55 and 80 full-time equivalent jobs directly with another 11 to 16 supported indirectly by the facility annually. Taking into account the approved capital spend of close to £25million, Destination Hillend is expected to cover its own costs and, when fully operational, will contribute around £700,000 per year to support other critical Council services.

2.2.3 Staff in the Planning Applications section of the Planning department who processed the original in principle consent in early 2021 continue to assist towards finalising the details of the two outstanding applications to discharge the conditions of that consent. This has included on biodiversity matters alongside the Council’s contracted specialists (The Wildlife Information Service), archaeology officers, Transport Scotland in relation to improved access from the busy A702 and other staff in Estates who are moving the project forward. Such collaboration

has already delivered a new fun slope, with work on the access junction, car park and landscaping having also begun in spring 2023.



From left to right at the new Hillend funslope: Duty Officer Mike Ronald, Cllr. Russell Imrie and Project Managers Paul Campbell and Andrew Souter.



2.2.4 The LDP includes requirements for developers to make contributions towards community facilities as part of their projects. This most typically involves payments towards education provision, but in 2022/23 it also entailed the construction of a new looping trail for bikers and skaters called a ‘pump track’. It is fast becoming a focal point for local people thanks to partnership working between Midlothian Council and the North Middleton community in the rural south of the area.

2.2.5 The council approached Moorfoot Community Council for help in deciding how best to spend £76,000 of developer contributions for children’s outdoor play equipment for the local area. Community councillors, along with residents Louisa Wilson and Sarah Anderson, asked local people who agreed a pump track for young and older children in the local park would be ideal.

2.2.6 Sarah Anderson said: ‘the pump track is a huge success. Come along most days after school and at weekends and you’ll find young people of all ages and often mums and dads having a catch up and a go on their mountain bikes. You don’t even have to have a bike, scooter or skates – some of the younger ones just love having a run around on it. Local people are just really enjoying the track because it’s been designed in such a way that it’s fun and challenging whatever your ability’.

2.2.7 Cllr. Dianne Alexander, Midlothian Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for green spaces, said: ‘it’s great to see the Council and the local community working to achieve a shared goal that benefits local young people. This is a fantastic addition to the park. The pump track means the park can be used by a greater number and a wider range of young people while supporting healthy lifestyles’.

2.2.8 The Council’s Landscape and Countryside Service specified what the work entailed and invited tenders. Architrail Velosolutions won the contract using its own local contractor based in Galashiels. A detailed design was agreed which allowed a wide range of bikers to enjoy the track, including those with a disability with the work taking six weeks to complete.



From left to right: Cllr. Dianne Alexander; Robert, 7; Sarah Anderson, Douglas, 8; Neil Wilson, Fiona, 6; Cllr. Connor McManus; Logan, 9; James Kinch of Midlothian Council; Chris Todd, Charlie, 7; and Kara, 9.



2.2.9 Climate change mitigation and adaptation are two of most prominent issues that both NPF4 and the MLDP seek to address, and the use of renewable energy systems is part of the solution to them. The Council has helped achieve this with its first new build homes heated by air source heat pumps.

2.2.10 The first 19 homes in Bonnyrigg were handed over to the Council’s Housing Service by homebuilders Springfield in August 2022, with others being completed later in the autumn. The two, three and four bedroom homes are heated using the clever technology that extracts heat from the air and concentrates it, meaning that it is a more environmentally-friendly solution than gas boilers.

2.2.11 Midlothian Council’s Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr. Stuart McKenzie, came for a guided tour of one of the homes. He said: ‘these will be lovely homes for families in Bonnyrigg and I do hope the new tenants enjoy them. The heat pumps eliminate the need to use gas to heat your home and the properties are all highly insulated making them really energy efficient, which is great news for tenants’. He added: ‘we’re really pleased private house builders, including Springfield, are supporting Midlothian Council’s commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and we would like to thank all of their team who worked hard on this’.

2.2.12 Springfield Partnerships Business Development Manager, Sandra Lindsay, said: ‘sustainability is at our core across Springfield and we’re regularly exploring new ways to make our homes more energy efficient. We’ve used air source heating at over 50 of our developments now and are pleased to offer it at our One Dalhousie development for Midlothian Council. The pumps are a great way to help reduce our carbon footprint and are more efficient than traditional heating systems too, which helps keep running costs low for residents’.



From left to right at the One Dalhousie site: Fiona Clandillon, Midlothian Council's Head of Development; Sandra Lindsay, Springfield Business Development Manager; Springfield Assistant Site Manager; Cllr. Stuart McKenzie, Cabinet Member for housing; Darren Brownridge, Springfield Site Manager; and Gillian McCusker, Midlothian Council's Senior Manager for Housing and Wellbeing.



2.2.13 Broomieknowe Golf Club in Bonnyrigg was founded in 1905 with its original 18 holes being extended in 1935 and then amended further following the construction of the A7 to the east in 1992. Its clubhouse dated from the course’s founding and had been progressively altered and

expanded from the small pavilion that existed there initially. Because of its age, design and the associated issues with heating and power it, the Club sought to replace it with a new facility. The funding for this came from the sale of land occupied by their former practice ground to a housing developer following its allocation in the LDP.

properties. The roof is hipped to the side to limit any visual or overbearing impact on them too. Discussions between a Planning Officer and agent also led to revisions in its design that limit the potential for overlooking. These included alterations to the external terrace and large window openings to incorporate a 1.8m high balustrade around the terrace and louvres within the window opening. These features were conditioned as part of the planning consent to ensure their retention.

2.2.15 The result is a new clubhouse that is more conducive to retaining and attracting members and which offers both them and the general public greater comfort and leisure opportunities. It is more efficient to heat and electricity consumption is reduced owing to its integrated solar photovoltaic panels. Its facilities are more suitable for function activities and the restaurant & bar offer some employment opportunities and act as additional revenue streams for the Club.



1st hole and part of the new Club House at Broomieknowe Golf Course © Broomieknowe Golf Club Ltd.

2.2.14 The site is within a predominantly residential area, however the golf course and club are successful and well-established there. The new clubhouse is positioned in the existing car park, which was expanded as part of the project with its access being repositioned to the north east. The building is two storeys high and finished in light grey and white brick with areas of glazing, timber cladding and zinc. The design is more considered and cohesive than the existing building, with a contemporary character, materials and detailing and does not detract from the appearance of the surrounding area. Although relatively large and high, its impact is reduced due to it being set off the road and neighbouring



South west elevation of Broomieknowe Golf Course Club House © Broomieknowe Golf Club Ltd.



Broomieknowe Golf Course Club House
© Broomieknowe Golf Club Ltd.



2.2.16 Planning staff at Midlothian Council worked alongside the Ranger Service and Land and Countryside Services in the delivery of new environmental initiatives paid for by the Council after it successfully secured £103,000 from the Scottish Government’s Nature Restoration Fund.

2.2.17 These include a new pond beside the Dalkeith to Penicuik cycle path at Rosewell, with the Council using part of the money to appoint landscaping and design firm Water Gems, based in South Queensferry, to complete a programme of pond maintenance and construction. Work started on the new pond in January 2023 and finished in March.

2.2.18 The project also included restoring the main pond and curling pond at Vogrie Country Park. This work, which included clearing vegetation and silt, increases the amount of open water and depth of the ponds, benefiting pond life. New platforms will be created at the curling pond, giving people easier access to the water for activities like pond dipping. Materials cleared from around the ponds were recycled to create safe places for insects and amphibians to live in and hibernate, further benefitting local wildlife.

2.2.19 Midlothian Council’s Cabinet Member with responsibility for green spaces, Cllr. Dianne Alexander, joined local residents from Rosewell and District Community Council, Keep Rosewell Beautiful and Nick Bengie from Water Gems to have a look at the new water feature. She said: ‘I live close by and am sure, like me, lots of local people will really enjoy looking at the pond life and surrounding meadow species. Nature sometimes needs a little bit of help to thrive, and these works will contribute towards the council’s commitment to increasing the number of managed ponds in Midlothian’.

2.2.20 The work builds on previous activities from 2021/22 where £81,000 of Nature Restoration Fund money was awarded and spent on:

- ‘Bug Hotels’ for biodiversity education in primary schools;
- A specialist grass cut trailer machine, lift & gator and accessory equipment to implement grass cutting regimes and management to foster greater habitat and wildlife biodiversity value on Council owned land; and
- Planting in Dalkeith, to promote and safeguard long-term biodiversity value in a public park. The selected species, hornbeam and rowan, were chosen for their biodiversity value and will eventually connect to adjacent wildlife corridors.

2.2.21 Such projects will help achieve the aims of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which the Planning Service at Midlothian Council co-ordinated and is a delivery partner for.



Back row, left to right: Helen Blackburn of Rosewell and District Community Council, Cllr. Dianne Alexander, Nick Bengé of Water Gems, Amy Fergusson of the Community Council and Keep Rosewell Beautiful and Midlothian Council Ranger Alan Krumholds. Front row, left to right are: Edith Cameron of the Community Council and Keep Rosewell Beautiful, her son Rory, and Midlothian Council Ranger Jo Cooke.

2.2.22 Staff from the Conservation and Environment Section of Midlothian Council's Planning department have worked for some years now to help secure the future of Mavisbank House, a category A listed historic building near Bonnyrigg. Designed by Sir John Clerk, it is architecturally renowned as one of the country's earliest neo-classic houses and the very first Palladian villa to be built in Scotland. It was heavily damaged by a fire in 1973.

2.2.23 The Council has worked with the Landmark Trust, a charity which rescues important historic buildings, on the project before. This included an unsuccessful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, but the Trust are still committed to the restoration of the house and are pursuing alternative funding sources.

2.2.24 The current ownership of Mavisbank House is uncertain, despite previous attempts to identify the owners. As a result, compulsory purchase is considered the best route to securing ownership and Planning staff are taking this route forward. This will involve ownership transferring from the Council to the Trust and the latter covering the costs incurred by the former.

2.2.25 The Landmark Trust are pursuing an application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for the financial support needed to purchase Mavisbank House and to carry out emergency repairs. A second stage in their plans would see the house restored with traditional craft skills for use as holiday accommodation and for people to visit on free public open days. They intend to submit a full application by the end of 2023.





Mavisbank House.

2.3 - Case Study: Community Council Planning Training Event

Overview

Location: Lasswade High School

Date: March 2023

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

Related PPF Performance Markers:

- 9 – stakeholder LDP engagement

Key areas of work:

- Community engagement
- Collaborative working

Stakeholders involved:

- Other (Community Council representatives)
- General public

Goals: to introduce the LDP review process to local community groups, including discussions and feedback opportunities on Local Place Plans and the Place Standard tool.

Outcomes: the majority of Community Councils in Midlothian were represented allowing them to gain an insight into how to be involved in LDP activities while staff collected valuable data which will feed into the Evidence Report and learned lessons for similar future events.

2.3.1 The approval of NPF4 in early 2023 has acted as the starting gun on several pieces of work that are part of drawing up a new Local

Development Plan for Midlothian. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced many changes in how LDPs come into being, including:

- NPF4 becoming part of the planning policy for an area;
- The removal of the requirement for Strategic Development Plans (that directed planning matters over regions of Scotland); and
- The introduction of Local Place Plans (LPPs) where community bodies can set out their ambitions for the development and use of land in their areas.

2.3.2 The overhaul of the planning system with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has included the requirement for planning to become more open and inclusive. This is encapsulated in the Ministerial Foreword to NPF4 where Tom Arthur MSP (Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth) states: 'I am committed to involving a wider range of people in planning. A fairer and more inclusive planning system will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to shape their future so that our places work for all of us'. Accordingly, Midlothian Council has had to carefully consider how it will implement this aim, particularly in its Development Plan Scheme (DPS), which sets out a timetable for preparing the new LDP and includes a participation statement describing how people can get involved in the process. The DPS outlines several activities which will bring about this aim, such as working with Community Councils and producing information to guide the public on the new system and how to best input into it.

2.3.3 Development Planning staff have been doing background work on this for some time prior to NPF4 being finalised and LDP2 work starting in earnest. They put that into practice with a Community Council Training Day at Lasswade High School in March 2023. Organised by colleagues in Communities, Lifelong Learning and Education, Planning staff took two of the three slots available for a workshop on NPF4 and the Local

Development Plan then another activity on LPPs and community engagement.



Slide from a presentation at the Community Council training event.

2.3.4 Following introductions to Planners that attendees would likely be in contact with over the coming months and years, the session got underway with an overview of NPF4's purposes and status, its relationship with Midlothian's current LDP and then moved on to LPPs. Since these are a new feature of development planning and since they are community led ventures, staff spent some time outlining their main features, including;

- The background and purpose of LPPs;
- Who prepares them and what constitutes a community body or group in terms of the legislation;
- What their content can or could be;
- How are they verified by the Council and what that means; and
- What happens to LPPs and how are they used.

2.3.5 Planning staff had already prepared materials to assist community groups get started with their work on LPPs. This included a formal invite and new web pages which explain the LPP process, a guide on information sources that community groups producing LPPs may wish to utilise and instructions on mapping tools, as LPPs must include a map of their boundaries.

2.3.6 Following a question and answer session, the meeting moved on to discussing the Place Standard tool. It is a survey template that is used to assess the opinions people hold of particular places, regardless of whether that place is planned for the future, is experiencing change, or has been established for considerable time. It provides a focused way of having conversations about these places and capturing views on the different components that determine whether places are successful or otherwise. In practice this involves participants being asked questions on 14 topics, including whether it is easy to walk and cycle around, whether it is well-served by public transport, the extent to which it has good quality green spaces and play opportunities, and perceptions of opportunities in the local economy for work, volunteering or training. Planning staff had prepared for this by adapting the topics the Place Standard tool to the context of the work on the Midlothian LDP and had created both paper and electronic versions. Midlothian Council had acquired access to a new platform to host the online Place Standard questionnaire, which also enabled access via a QR code and the option to complete it on mobile, tablet or computer.





Question and answer session at the Community Council training event.

2.3.7 The training event moved on to a mapping based exercise in the second workshop. Members of Community Councils formed groups and reviewed maps which showed their boundaries alongside existing housing and employment land allocations from the current LDP, together with selected community facilities. Participants were invited to think about what is good about the area and what assets it has, what the negatives and areas of concern about it are, then finally what they would change about it and what they would like it to be. As well as the observations and notes from the discussions, views were also captured by sticky notes placed on the map in relevant locations.

2.3.8 The mapping exercise had several benefits including allowing views held by people who know and live in these communities to be captured for the Evidence Report and for them to interact with the Council's Planning staff who could provide their professional opinion and technical input. Positive feedback was later received from the Improvement Service, the national improvement organisation for Local Government in Scotland. Materials presented have been shared further

to allow those that could not attend to benefit from what was discussed. Planning staff will also review those materials to adapt the content and learn lessons for the many other engagement activities that will take place later on as work on the new LDP progresses.



Mapping exercise at the Community Council training event.

2.4 - Case Study: Doors Open Days

Overview

Location: throughout Midlothian

Date: September 2022

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of service and engagement

Related PPF Performance Markers:

- 13 - sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

Key areas of work:

- Conservation
- Community engagement

Stakeholders involved:

- General public

Goals: in co-ordination with festival organisers, local building owners and community groups, to open up a range of local buildings and attractions to offer opportunities for people to learn more about Midlothian's historic built environment.

Outcomes: 19 venues took part in Midlothian in 2022 meaning the area contributed to the 85,000 total visitors across Scotland with an estimated expenditure of £1.5m nationwide.

2.4.1 Each year during September, buildings that are not normally open to the public or which involve a fee for entry, open free of charge to visitors as part of the Doors Open Days (DOD) festival in what is Scotland's largest, free architectural event. It aims to stimulate interest in and offer a

greater understanding of the architectural heritage, culture and enterprise within the area.

2.4.2 DOD takes place throughout Scotland and is co-ordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust (SCT), with support from Historic Environment Scotland and Archaeology Scotland, as it coincides with Scottish Archaeology Month. It first took place in Scotland in 1990 in Glasgow and Ayr where it formed part of the European City of Culture celebrations. Its success there encouraged other areas to participate the following year and it has now grown to cover almost every area of Scotland with Midlothian taking part since 1996. It is also part of European Heritage Days, which was launched in 1985 to mark European unity, share stories of common values and ensure that the past is not forgotten.

2.4.3 SCT undertake a variety of tasks as the lead organiser of the event. These include producing all the necessary forms like visitor/building owner surveys and guides, arranging additional insurance for venues running events, promoting the festival on their website and evaluating events afterwards. They have a supply of templates which organisers can make use of too, such as for press releases.

2.4.4 Area Co-ordinators create and manage local DOD schedules, and work for a variety of local authorities, civic trusts and heritage organisations. They and the SCT work alongside Local Co-ordinators who are then responsible for pulling together their individual programmes, with the SCT stepping in to act as a temporary co-ordinator for areas without one, if their resources permit.

2.4.5 Midlothian Council's Local Co-ordinator is part of the Planning Team and performs a variety of tasks as part of the festival. These include:

- Holding regular meetings with the SCT and other Local Co-ordinators, the frequency of which increases closer to September. These involve

sharing good practices and ideas between authorities, updating the SCT on local programmes and providing the SCT with details on events in particular areas;

- Liaising with venues that have previously taken part to invite them to participate again and provide text and photos for marketing materials;
- Promoting the events via social media pages and alongside the Council's Communications Team; and
- Assisting new venues on how to become involved.



Inside St Mary's Episcopal Church.

2.4.6 It is for venues themselves to decide what they offer for visitors when they open to them, but there is the expectation that they will have

something to enhance the visitor experience beyond only opening up, such as a talk, a recital, an exhibition, or just offering refreshments.

2.4.7 There has been a drop in the number of venues taking part compared to pre-Covid levels. Previously there were 30 buildings/events each year and in 2022 there were 19, but this is a recovery from the 13 that were involved in 2020. Participants in Midlothian include:

- Arniston House – the Palladian mansion home of the Dundas family which was begun in 1726;
- St Mary's Episcopal Church – an early English style church opened in 1845 with stained glass windows made in France and heraldic floor tiles;
- The National Mining Museum Scotland – one of the finest surviving examples of a Victorian colliery in Europe and twice winner of the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions 'Best Visitor Experience' Award;
- Midlothian Camera Club – a group of local photographers that provide opportunities for members to learn new techniques and to develop their skills through activities, presentations and the use of studio and darkroom facilities; and
- Cousland Smiddy and Heritage Hub – an early 18th century blacksmith's workshop and one of the last of its kind still working in Scotland.



Arniston House.

2.4.8 The primary aim of Doors Open Days is to improve the appreciation of our natural heritage, which has led to Midlothian's Planning Team organising it. It does this via demonstrating the connections between people and the buildings they spend time in - when visiting a venue, very often the person giving the tour is the building owner, a family member, or someone with professional experience of what they are telling visitors about, such as a firefighter, ex-miner or blacksmith. Audiences therefore get a very personal insight into these buildings creating a unique visitor experience for them. It is also a friendly and inclusive event that genuinely has something to offer all ages and interests and is a great way of introducing children to their local history. Nationwide feedback from the 2022 events indicate that it was very successful, with 18,500 volunteer hours facilitating 85,000 visitors across nearly 800 venues.



Cousland Smiddy.

2.5 - Case Study: Passivhaus Social Housing

Overview

Location: Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg, Newbattle

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Related PPF Performance Markers:

- 12 – corporate working across services
- 3 - early collaboration with applicants and consultees
- 15 – developer contributions: clear expectations set out in pre-application discussions

Key areas of work:

- Affordable housing
- Environment

Stakeholders involved:

- Authority – other staff

Goals: to pursue the Council’s target for social housing in a way that aligns with its carbon reduction commitments.

Outcomes: two sites under construction, both with retail units, consisting of 30 highly energy efficient affordable homes.

2.5.1 Midlothian Council declared a ‘Climate Emergency’ in 2019, following which the Planning Team led on drafting a new Climate Change Strategy to co-ordinate the Council’s response. One of its themes was carbon management, and an action stemming from it was adopting the ‘Passivhaus’ leading low energy principles for energy efficiency in buildings. These are now the default design for new Midlothian Council

housing developments in what has become the most ambitious scheme of its kind in Scotland. The standards incorporate:

- High levels of insulation;
- An air-tight building envelope;
- Thermal bridge free design and construction;
- Whole house mechanical ventilation with efficient heat/energy recovery;
- Well insulated, triple-glazed windows and door frames; and
- The use of an independent verifier for quality assurance.

2.5.2 These principles create ultra-low energy buildings that need little energy for space heating or cooling and therefore also address fuel poverty. This is achieved through the initial design which must meet the rigorous standards set and, critically, the exact implementation of that approved design. This involves close monitoring of construction and verification of the works by an independent Passivhaus qualified certifier. It will ensure that the Council’s goals for affordable house building do not conflict with its climate change aims.

2.5.3 During 2022/23, three Passivhaus projects were progressed. Buccleuch Street in Dalkeith used to comprise vacant shop units with upper floor accommodation and a central pend for access to a rear area including a derelict property. The buildings were generally in a poor state of repair. Six new flats are being built to the full Passivhaus standard on the land to the rear while those fronting Buccleuch Street have been remodelled and a further four flats have been developed to Enerphit Standard, which is the equivalent to Passivhaus for retrofit properties. It achieves carbon reduction and energy usage standards in excess of that achievable than current building regulations. The flats also have two electric vehicle charging points.

2.5.4 Taking the projects forward was a joint effort between the Council’s Planning Team and other departments, such as Property Assets and Housing Services. They worked together to overcome issues and provide advice in relation to the demolition of a building within a conservation area, the presence of water infrastructure on site, preserving access to the Council car park (as the site is next to its offices) and a suitable design that enhances the Dalkeith House & Park Conservation Area. It includes the pend of the existing building being infilled with a glazed screen to match the existing shopfronts, a new matching dormer on the front elevation and an external spiral staircase to access the flat in the roof space.



Visualisation of the Dalkeith Passivhaus project.

2.5.5 Burnbrae in Bonnyrigg is another Midlothian Passivhaus development. The Council’s Property Assets service acquired this formerly vacant site then appointed architects who engaged with the then

Local Developments Section of the Planning Team. The latter advised on the relevant LDP policies on access, parking, layout and materials as part of pre-application discussions. The Lead Officer for Developer Contributions also advised on infrastructure payments and how they related to a previous legal agreement for the wider Hopefield estate. This early collaboration with the applicant enabled the approval of a full application in 2021 with work on site well underway as of spring 2023.

2.5.6 The development consists of two parts. The north of the site faces the open space at the centre of the Hopefield estate and includes six flats and four houses with banks of solar panels on the roof. A retail element was required as part of the southern portion and the Council secured a national retailer to occupy the unit with ten apartments being built above it. Car parking with electric vehicle chargers, landscaping, bin and bike stores together with pedestrian links connect the two parts of the site.



Site section of the Burnbrae Passivhaus Project.

2.5.7 The Burnbrae and Buccleuch Street housing projects have provided the Council with opportunities to explore the feasibility and practicality of Passivhaus developments and now they are taking shape, this experience is being built on in larger developments elsewhere. Brownfield land on the site of the former Newbattle High School is an example. The north of this site will see a new primary school constructed. It will itself be required to contribute positively in the way of emissions

reductions and this is one criteria against which Council Planning Officers are assessing the outstanding application for it. The remainder of the site will be developed for further affordable homes, with a detailed application for 90 units having been approved in 2022 under the condition that the Passivhaus elements set out in the design and access statement submitted with it are implemented. Together with a more recent application for another 28 units on neighbouring land, this will help to ensure that progress is being made towards Midlothian Council's aspirations for affordable housing in a manner that is compatible with its environmental goals. A further major benefit is that the meeting these goals will also help protect future residents from high and volatile energy prices thanks to the ecological credentials of their new homes.

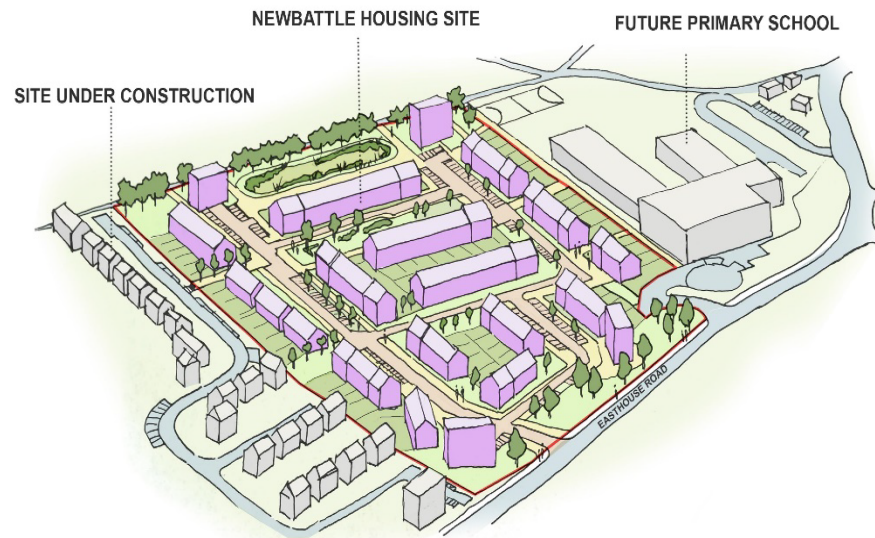


Illustration of plans for the site of the former Newbattle High School.



Part 3 – Facilitating Quality Development

3 - Facilitating Quality Development

3.1 - Introduction

3.1.1 To most people living or working in Midlothian, development on the ground is the obvious result of what the Planning Team does, but many tasks take place behind the scenes to ensure that the right development goes ahead in the right place. This section of the PPF report gives some examples of this work.

3.2 - Processing Agreements

3.2.1 Early collaboration with applicants is an important way of achieving the best planning outcomes in the most efficient way possible. One route to do this is through a Processing Agreement, which the Council supports for all major developments. They have many benefits, which all result in greater certainty for both parties:

- They allow a project plan to be drawn up which can include key dates for meetings, these being opportunities to provide regular and proportionate policy advice;
- They will include key contacts so that there are clear routes of communication between the Council and the applicant;
- They can initiate the Section 75/legal agreement process early so it can run in parallel with the application itself; and

- They can include a target date for reporting the application to the Planning Committee and for its determination.

3.2.2 Information on Processing Agreements is publicised on the Council's website. The relevant page includes:

- A link to the Processing Agreement form;
- Instructions for returning it and additional information, along with details on how this will be stored and processed;
- Expectations for what the Processing Agreement will involve; and
- Other relevant planning conditions, such as on agreeing heads of terms in relation to Section 75 legal agreements.

3.2.3 The Council web page further specifies how using a Processing Agreement relates to each stage of the planning process, from pre to post-application. Technical elements potentially involved in each part are outlined, such as the possible need for and results of EIA screening and scoping, whether other consents will be required as part of the application (e.g. listed building consent or works to trees applications) and identifying statutory and non-statutory consultees together with a timetable for communicating with them.

3.2.4 As well as the availability of Processing Agreements and guidance on them from the Council website, staff also encourage their use. Case Officers offer the option of using one when communicating with prospective applicants and also direct them to this website information.

3.3 - The Duty Planner

3.3.1 The Planning Team continues to offer its ‘Duty Planner’ service, to ensure that a dedicated officer is available to provide regular and proportionate planning advice and guidance. They answer queries from members of the public, agents (architects, planning consultants etc.), community councils and community groups, other officers, other council departments and external agencies such as utility and telecoms operators. These cover a range of topics such as permitted development, fee enquiries, enforcement issues, how to comment on applications and information required to support them.

3.3.2 The benefits of the service include:

- It is a clear, single point of contact for members of the public, staff and agencies who approach the Planning Team;
- It is covered by a single, permanent Officer, meaning people get consistent advice;
- The Officer can deal with more straightforward enquiries first-hand, freeing up time amongst other staff;
- They are often made aware of sites or buildings that come on to the market. This means that the Team can create a brief of sorts, outlining the relevant policies, potential acceptable uses and can discourage inappropriate uses to interested parties; and
- They act as an interface between the Planning Team and the wider Council, including the Admin Team, who register applications.

3.3.3 A particular benefit of the service is that the Duty Planner can direct applicants and agents to relevant planning policy and guidance. This means that they act as a point of early collaboration on policy advice, prior to or as part of the pre-application discussion stage. Their input at this point takes some pressure off officer time later as it saves multiple pre-application enquires or applications that are unlikely to be supported.

3.3.4 The contact details of the Duty Planner are listed on many pages of the Council’s Planning website. Where they are not, the details of the Development Plans or Conservation and Environment Teams are listed. This means that although the Team provides a range of policy advice online, if there are any questions that remain, an officer will be available nevertheless. When the regular Duty Planner is on annual leave, procedures are in place to cover the role, maintaining continuity of this valuable service.

3.3.5 The Duty Planner continues to field general enquiries from other parts of Scotland where an equivalent service is either no longer provided or is less accessible. This demonstrates that it is a valuable function and that the Planning Team’s focus on customer satisfaction is appreciated. The service has been complimented for its accessibility and helpfulness by a range of customers.

3.4 - Early Collaboration

3.4.1 The Planning Team recognise the importance of early collaboration with applicants, agents and consultees. It enables Officers to provide an initial indication of the Council’s position, can save time and money, and can identify any issues which should be addressed prior to a formal application, resulting in better quality developments. Accordingly, pre-application discussions are both available and promoted.

3.4.2 There is a downloadable pre-application guide on the Council’s website. This includes sources of further information on planning policy alongside a statement on the process, timescales it involves and what might be expected in a response. It also contains a Pre-Application Enquiry Form. This is a way of requesting clear and proportionate supporting information, such as the current and proposed uses of the site

or initial layouts. Using this standardised template also allows staff to understand proposals quicker, helping both them and the other party.

3.4.3 Some aspects of pre-application advice may be provided by the Duty Planner (see section 3.3) but if not, engagement through the Pre-Application Enquiry Form is promoted by Officers. This may involve:

- Registering enquiries in the case log system to help track their progress;
- Consulting the pre-application procedure manual;
- Engaging with a range of consultees when considering pre-applications; and
- Providing guidance on the expected level of financial contributions so developers can assess the viability of schemes early on.

3.4.4 The Planning Team receives a relatively low proportion of pre-application enquiries - 14% of applications involved one in 2022/23. We consider that this is a positive reflection on the clarity of the LDP's policies and established and consistent design expectations which developers and agents have become accustomed to without considering it necessary to enter into a formal pre-application process. However, the ability to provide this early collaboration is in place for when it is required. The service is free for all developments.

3.4.5 The Planning Team also offers early collaboration with applicants, agents and consultees through other routes. These include a variety of guidance on the Council website, including on:

- When planning permission may be needed or when proposals are permitted development;
- Different types of consent, such as for listed buildings or advertisements;
- Matters relating to works to trees; and
- The roles of the Local Review Body and Planning Committee.

3.4.6 The Council also provide a set of validation checklists online that act as advice on information required to support applications. These cover 21 different developments, ranging from major developments, to wind turbines and solar panels, to dormer windows and driveways. The requirements for these vary depending on the type of application. The Council registers a valid application within one working day of receipt. In 2022/23, 12% of applications were invalid upon receipt. This indicates that the validation process is working relatively well for the Council's customers.

3.4.7 The Duty Planner plays a key role in application validation and registration, which frees time amongst Case Officers to progress proposals. They have a set of procedures and specific file locations for this, which includes pre-registration sheets for both pre-application communications as well as the equivalent for actual applications together with details on registration and dealing with invalid applications.

3.4.8 Having the likes of validation checklists and guidance on the value of pre-application advice in place reduces the chances of information needed to support applications being omitted. However, where it is required, the Council ensures that such requests are clear and proportionate. These are often for further site plans, business cases or samples of materials, for example, but such requests from 2022/23 included for:

- Further information on the site selection process behind a proposed gym at Straiton and the 'sequential assessment' on its viability elsewhere (22/00219/DPP);
- Details of safety and inspection arrangements for Liquefied Petroleum Gas on a proposed storage facility at Millerhill (22/00888/DPP);
- Various retail statistics such as sales densities (£/m²) and trade diversion assumptions to determine the compatibility of a new shop with Penicuik town centre (22/00273/DPP); and

- Comments by a suitability experienced ecologist in relation to possible impacts on bats from external lighting at a proposed new sports facility (22/00721/DPP).

- Drawing site plans for the Planning Committee and Local Review Body; and
- Revising maps of Community Council boundaries.

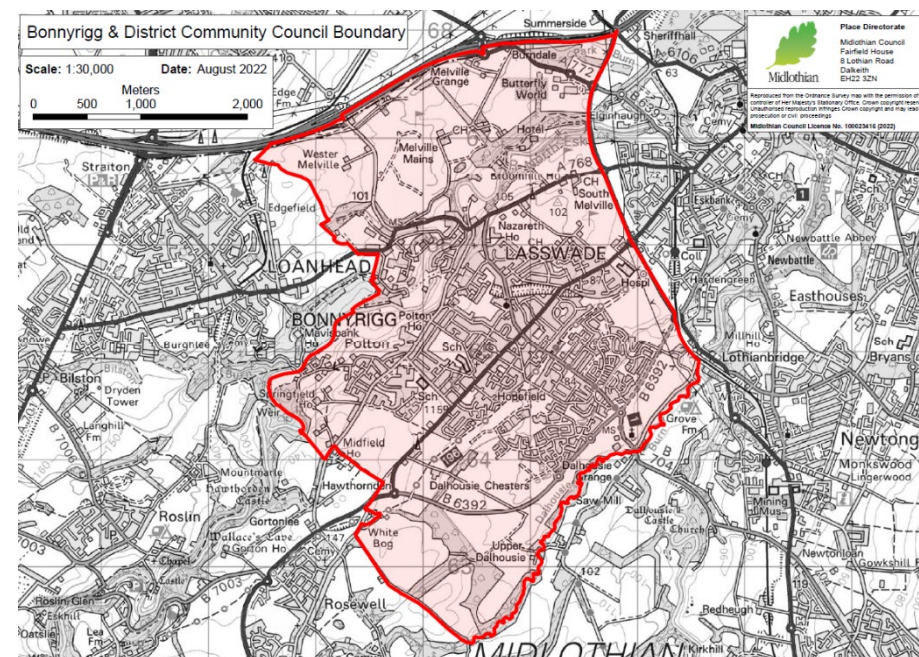
3.5 - Other Team Procedures & Services

3.5.1 A single point of contact is provided for all applications through a named Case Officer. They will be the Council’s correspondent throughout the pre-application process, the assessment of the application and any post-decision discussions. They project manage the application, coordinate any input from third parties, provide policy advice and discuss cases with managers where appropriate. Regular one-to-one meetings are held between officers and their line managers in order to resolve any issues with applications and to ensure that there are no avoidable delays in determining proposals.

3.5.2 In order to more accurately reflect the time taken to process applications and to provide clarity to stakeholders, Midlothian Planning have a formal ‘stop the clock’ procedure. In some cases it is appropriate to remove a length of time from the total determination period for an application to more accurately reflect the time taken to decide it. This procedure is regularly reviewed in order to ensure that it accords with current guidance.

3.5.3 Though the Planning Team currently has a vacant GIS Technician post, other Officers are fulfilling this function. This means that important mapping requests from both within the department and occasionally from the wider Council are fulfilled. These include:

- Plotting application sites for staff and the public-facing portion of the Council website, so residents and others can keep track of proposals within Midlothian;



Community Council Map produced for the Council’s Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability Team.

3.6 - Legal Agreements and Developer Contributions

3.6.1 During 2022/23, the Council continued its standard practice of requiring that when resolving to grant an application for which a planning obligation is necessary, that the agreement is completed within six months. Failure to do this would result in the application being refused due

to a necessary obligation not being in place. This would mean that the proposed development would be contrary to the LDP.

3.6.2 The requirement for the conclusion of an agreement within six months is clearly stated in Committee/Delegated Reports, often as the first item after the recommendation/decision. The projects and infrastructure that the agreement must cover are listed alongside. This approach has brought a greater focus to the completion of agreements, the ability to issue permissions sooner and also reduces the likelihood of legacy cases. The table below gives examples from 2022/23 of where legal agreements were concluded for applications within six months of them being ‘minded to grant’, if not within six months of the application being received.

Development	Projects That Contributions Are For	Timescales
Food store in Penicuik	A701 Relief Road and associated works	Minded to grant in November 2022. Legal agreement concluded in March 2023
Council social housing project in Danderhall	Schools, community facilities, Borders Rail, Sheriffhall roundabout	Application received in July 2022. Legal agreement concluded in January 2023
Erection of four houses in Dalkeith	Schools, play equipment, town centre improvements	Minded to grant in June 2022. Legal agreement concluded in July 2022
Food store in Loanhead	A701 Relief Road and associated works	Minded to grant in June 2022. Legal agreement concluded in August 2022

3.6.3 On the other hand, it is sometimes necessary to reconsider or refuse applications if negotiations for infrastructure payments are

unsuccessful and do not secure sufficient funding for Council services. There was no need to do this during 2022/23, but it remains an option to ensure that legal agreements are completed within six months of a resolution to grant an application.



3.6.4 The timely conclusion of legal agreements is aided by clear expectations for developer contributions being set out in both pre-application discussions and the LDP.

3.6.5 As part of its pre-application service, the Council meets regularly with applicants, major developers and landowners to provide advice on its approach to future developments. This includes giving pre-application advice in relation to Planning Obligations. As part of these discussions, the Council engages with and professionally advises them and responds constructively to their submissions. This applies regardless of the type and scale of projects, with recent examples including:

- The proposed new A701 corridor school and community facilities and their influence on possible developer contributions towards solutions to traffic issues at Bush Loan;
- Whether the expansion of existing office and storage space of a local industrial facility would require developer contributions;
- Advising on infrastructure payment thresholds for several small residential proposals involving the change of use, demolition and construction of units to allow the applicant to review their options; and
- The potential for developer contributions to local roads infrastructure due to additional trip-generation arising from a new research facility at the Midlothian Science Zone.

3.6.6 In such examples, the relevant Case Officer contacts the Lead Officer for Developer Contributions. He is then able to identify the required contributions, for either a number of residential units or an area of commercial floor space. The Case Officer passes this to the applicant to inform them at an early stage about infrastructure payments, allowing them to make decisions on the viability of their ideas. To give further clarity in pre-app talks, when required, the Lead Officer also provides advice where developer contributions issues overlap with possible conditions of planning consent.

3.6.7 Education provision forms a core part of pre-application discussions on developer contributions. These include information about pupil rolls, anticipated capacity solutions, the cost basis of these and likely pupil products from proposed new developments. Collaboration between Planning and the Council’s Education Services department feed into these talks allowing them to proceed more efficiently. Examples from 2022/23 include clarifying education payments needed resulting from a council social housing development in Danderhall and how age-related occupancy restrictions may influence this, and also residential proposals that fall in the catchment area of the new Easthouses Primary school.

3.6.8 Processing Agreements also have a role in setting out clear expectations for developer contributions. The Processing Agreement form has specific sections for how their use will influence the pre-application, application and post-application stages of proposals, and the implications for drafting legal agreements are included in each of them. This means that the application and developer contributions processes can run together for maximum efficiency. It also means that Processing Agreements provide another route for setting out financial issues in pre-application discussions, then pursuing them as the proposal moves on.

3.6.9 Clear expectations for developer contributions are set out in planning policy documents too. They are emphasised early in the LDP, which also includes details of:

- Policies to which developer contributions are relevant;
- Location-specific projects for which contributions will be required, e.g. community heating at Shawfair; and
- Issues regarding developer contributions for each particular allocated site.

3.6.10 Policies IMP1 and IMP2 are those in the LDP that are most relevant to developer contributions. They refer to new development and essential infrastructure respectively. They provide a full list of features of developments for which payments will be sought and direct readers to other parts and policies of the Plan that provide more detail.

3.6.11 The advice in the MLDP will sit alongside new SG on Planning Obligations, which is currently in preparation, to provide an updated approach to future requirements when it is adopted. The current SG on the topic nevertheless gives a clear view of the Council’s expectations, together with the LDP and more tailored advice from pre-application discussions.

3.7 - Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan

3.7.1 The current LDP was adopted in late 2017 and although work on its replacement was well underway, the approval of NPF4 in early 2023 has been a catalyst for further activity. This includes appropriate engagement with Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish government through all the key stages of its development.

3.7.2 In respect of Elected Members, this work has involved:

- Reporting to Planning Committee to request their approval for formally commencing work on LDP2 and to brief them on related tasks (e.g. approval of NPF4 and Local Place Plan work);
- Producing the ‘Scottish Planning System: A Handbook’ following the 2022 Council Elections to guide Members on topics including the legislative context of LDP2 production and LDP2’s functions;
- Reporting the new Housing Land Audit to the Planning Committee in November 2022 and commenting on how the land supply situation relates to NPF4 and will help shape LDP2;
- Preparing a series of workshops for 2023/24 with Councillors to further inform them of the implications of NPF4 and to capture their ambitions for LDP2; and
- Informing Councillors and seeking their approval of Development Plan Scheme 15 including its proposed timetable for LDP2 production and the participation statement on engagement activities; and
- Informal discussions on future development plan matters that staff in the Team have with Councillors on the Planning Committee as part of other work, including the Team Manager who briefs its Chair and that of the Local Review Body.

3.7.3 Industry were also engaged in development plan preparation work in 2022/23. This included:

- Meeting with Homes for Scotland in early 2023 to discuss housing targets from NPF4, their implications for Midlothian and input on possible LDP2 policies;
- Regular meetings with major landowners or developers in the area, e.g. Buccleuch, the Crown Estate and Shawfair LLP;
- Taking part in the A701 Relief Road & A702 Link Road Steering Group alongside Scottish Water, Scottish Power, OpenReach, the Coal Authority and Edinburgh University;

- Discussions with energy companies such as National Grid, Midlothian Energy Ltd (with Vattenfall) and Scottish Power on how their aims can be embedded into LDP2; and
- Seminars and regular contact with providers of software and data - such as Ordnance Survey, Objective and Delib - that will be used in LDP engagement work.

3.7.4 In respect of engagement with key agencies on the new LDP, the long-standing regular programme of meetings with Scottish Water, SEPA and NatureScot continued throughout 2022/23, with additional meetings involving Transport Scotland, SEStran and NHS Lothian (via the Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership).

3.7.5 Key agency input in 2022/23 included on the following topics:

- Discussions with SEStran on various ongoing transport projects in Midlothian, including strategies for active travel and electric vehicles, as well as parking standards;
- Updates from Scottish Water on sewer modelling in the Esk Valley, sewer flooding prevention and growth projects to serve Midlothian’s settlements;
- The scope of transport modelling possibly required for LDP2 and its relation to possible new housing land allocations;
- The release of new SEPA flood risk maps and new data on rainfall combined with the effects of climate change; and
- NatureScot’s input into NPF4 and it’s implications for how biodiversity and climate change issues are addressed within LDPs, including opportunities for using Nature Recovery Funds.

3.7.6 As well as with Elected Members, industry and key agencies, engagement on LDP preparation also took place with the Scottish Government. This included:

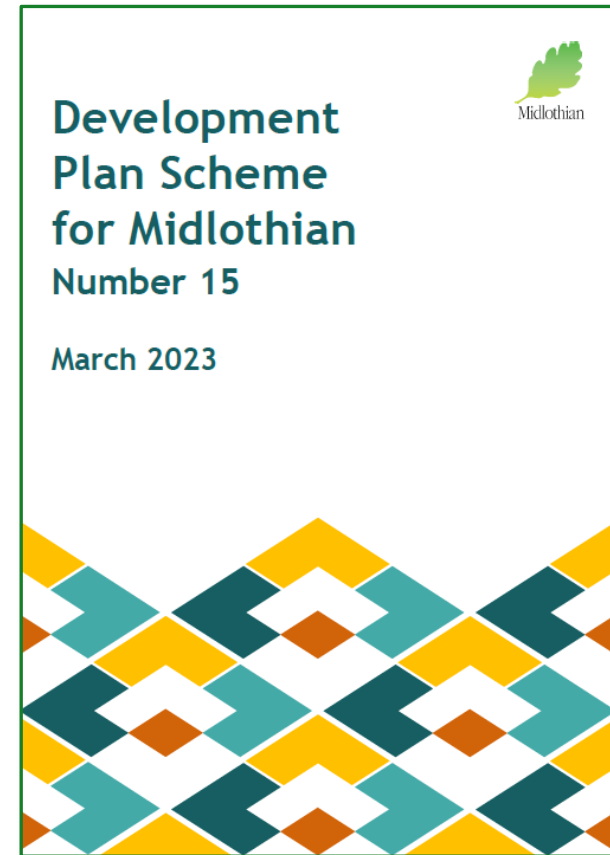
- On requirements for consultations on Development Plan Schemes;

- Meeting with a contact at their Planning Division to discuss the implementation of NPF4 Policy 3 (on Biodiversity); and
- NPF4 implications for the format of Housing Land Audits and how this will influence the way that LDP2 addresses Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement targets;

3.7.7 Engagement with the public on development plan preparation is primarily done via the Development Plan Scheme and the engagement activities involved with it, which are discussed below. This was promoted in 2023 with a review of our public and consultee database, all of whom were emailed regarding news of LDP2 work starting and a timetable for forthcoming engagement opportunities. The LDP pages of the Council website were also reviewed and updated to ensure that those not on the database were also made aware of how they could provide their input. Finally, Planning Officers continue to field questions on the LDP process, via either the Duty Officer or the LDP mailbox, which is advertised on many development planning web pages and documents.



3.7.8 Planning authorities must write a DPS annually to outline their intentions for preparing and consulting on their next LDP over the coming year - the DPS has the role of project planning its delivery to the timescales that it sets out. Midlothian’s latest DPS, number 15, was approved by Planning Committee in February 2023.



3.7.9 The system introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 envisages LDPs being updated every 10 years, with them adopted within 5 years of NPF4 being approved. The timetable set out in DPS15 would see a new LDP for Midlothian adopted well within less than 5 years of NPF4 approval, by the end of 2026.

3.7.10 The DPS is ensuring that the new LDP is project planned and delivered to the timetable included within it. The timetable maps out the key stages of Plan preparation, their links with each other and proposed time scales. Midlothian Council has also previously front loaded work to inform the preparation of the new LDP. This helped to ensure that items that were not dependent on NPF4 or further regulations from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 proceeded right away. Other DPS-related activities that have since been progressed to ensure that the LDP is project planned and expected to be delivered to the planned timescale include:

- Publishing updated Housing and Employment Land Audits;
- Using the Development Plan Monitoring Group to consider the performance of existing policies (e.g. policy gaps, redundant policies and required modifications);
- Gaining access to and being trained on a new online survey tool for general public and more targeted consultations relating to LDP2;
- Establishing contacts with other Council services and key external parties to get the input of groups with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010;
- Reviewing and discussing the implications for the new LDP of published and emerging documents such as the LDP Regulations;
- Planning and progressing related early-LDP2 work other than the Evidence Report, such as obligations related to the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment; and
- GIS training to enable extensive mapping for the Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment to begin, partly alongside colleagues in Land & Countryside Services.

3.7.11 The DPS also goes into more detail in places to ensure that as well as its overall project plan for delivering the next LDP to the planned timetable, it also outlines ways forward for particularly important elements of it, particularly LPPs (as these will be community-led rather than Council-

led) and engagement activities, as the new Act places extra responsibilities on the Council in this respect. LPP work that has since commenced includes issuing invites to community groups to produce them and supporting them in doing so by compiling procedures and sources of supporting information. Such work is ensuring that the ambitious project plan of DPS timetable is being delivered.

February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPF4 adopted • LDP review triggered
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue invites to prepare Local Place Plans • Evidence gathering starts
March - June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement events to raise awareness and gather views
March - September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with key agencies, businesses, Councillors and other Council services
August - December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Evidence Report, to provide the information on what to plan for in the new LDP
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Evidence Report to Scottish Ministers for 'Gate Check' approval
January 2024 - March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare new Proposed LDP, informed by a 'Call for Ideas' stage - open to all
March - July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult on Proposed Local Development Plan
July - November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Proposed Local Development Plan following consultation
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers for Examination
January - September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of Proposed LDP • Make changes to LDP in line with Report of Examination
December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Midlothian Local Development Plan 2

LDP project timeline as stated in DPS15.

3.7.12 Previous parts of section 3 above outlined how regular and proportionate policy advice is provided by the Planning Team. This is supplemented by the following online advice:

- A dedicated page on what constitutes the Development Plan for Midlothian, with links to the MLDP, SDP (Strategic Development Plan, now replaced by NPF4) and explanatory text;
- An online proposals map showing the spatial extent of the MLDP’s policies;
- The latest DPS with details on how industry and the public can get involved in shaping the next LDP;
- Pages on approved and upcoming SG as well as planning advice on common developments, such as dormer windows and rear extensions; and
- A dedicated email address that the Development Plans Section monitor for LDP-related enquiries, such as landowners proposing sites for the next plan.

3.7.13 Given the significant step of gaining formal approval at the February 2023 Planning Committee to commence work on LDP, these pages were reviewed, updated and added to. This included testing links, ensuring documents were uploaded (also in accessible form) and developing them with extra content on matters such as key policy issues for LDP2.

3.7.14 Further work on producing relevant and up-to-date policy advice during the 22/23 reporting year consisted of:

- Producing the ‘Scottish Planning System: A Handbook’ guide for new and returning Councillors after the 2022 local elections, then subsequently publishing it online to provide policy and procedural advice to a wider audience;
- Commencing work on the Fala Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan;

- Formally adopting the Low Density Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance, which was drafted in the prior reporting year;
- Developing and providing planning policy input (e.g. on active travel measures) to the layout/masterplan for the ‘Ec3’ mixed use site at Straiton; and
- Planning policy advice for groups producing Local Place Plans, including how they link to other planning policy documents such as NPF4, the LDP and Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requirements.

3.7.15 As well as providing planning policy advice through the documents and web pages outlined above, staff from the Development Plans Section also provide planning and policy advice to groups including developers, other internal Council services and to neighbouring Council areas where proposals may have impacts for Midlothian. In 2022/23 this included:

- Policy input to a consultation response for Edinburgh City Council on a residential application (22/01531/AMC) that adjoins the Midlothian’s border;
- Providing advice to South Ayrshire Council on their rural housing policy and its relation to NPF4 and Midlothian’s own policy position on it;
- Taking part in the Edinburgh & Lothians Strategic Drainage Partnership to develop and implement planning policy on surface water issues;
- Liaising with colleagues from Scottish Borders Council on the planning policy implications of NPF4’s housing numbers and directions;
- Drafting a detailed consultation response for development management colleagues on both the current housing and employment land supply positions to inform a residential proposal that overlaps with an employment land site (22/00597/PPP); and
- Policy input in relation to open space, active travel and transport considerations for a residential development adjacent to the Midlothian boundary near Loanhead (22/02912/FUL).

3.7.16 Providing relevant and up-to-date planning policy advice going forward was facilitated by a review in 2022 of topic categories and allocating these to specific Officers in the Development Management part of the Team. This is ensuring clear lines of communication and responsibility for such work. It is also aided by having one named officer responsible for reviewing the lists of weekly applications to Scottish Borders and East Lothian councils and another for West Lothian and Edinburgh. This means that staff are aware of proposals on Midlothian's boundaries and can anticipate any requests for policy advice and consultations on them.



Part 4 – Service Improvement and Staffing

4 - Service Improvement and Staffing

4.1 - Workforce Information

4.1.1 The information in section 4.1 is a snapshot of the position at 31/03/2023.

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service ²				✓

Staff age profile	Headcount
Under 30	2
30 - 39	10
40 - 49	8
50 and over	6

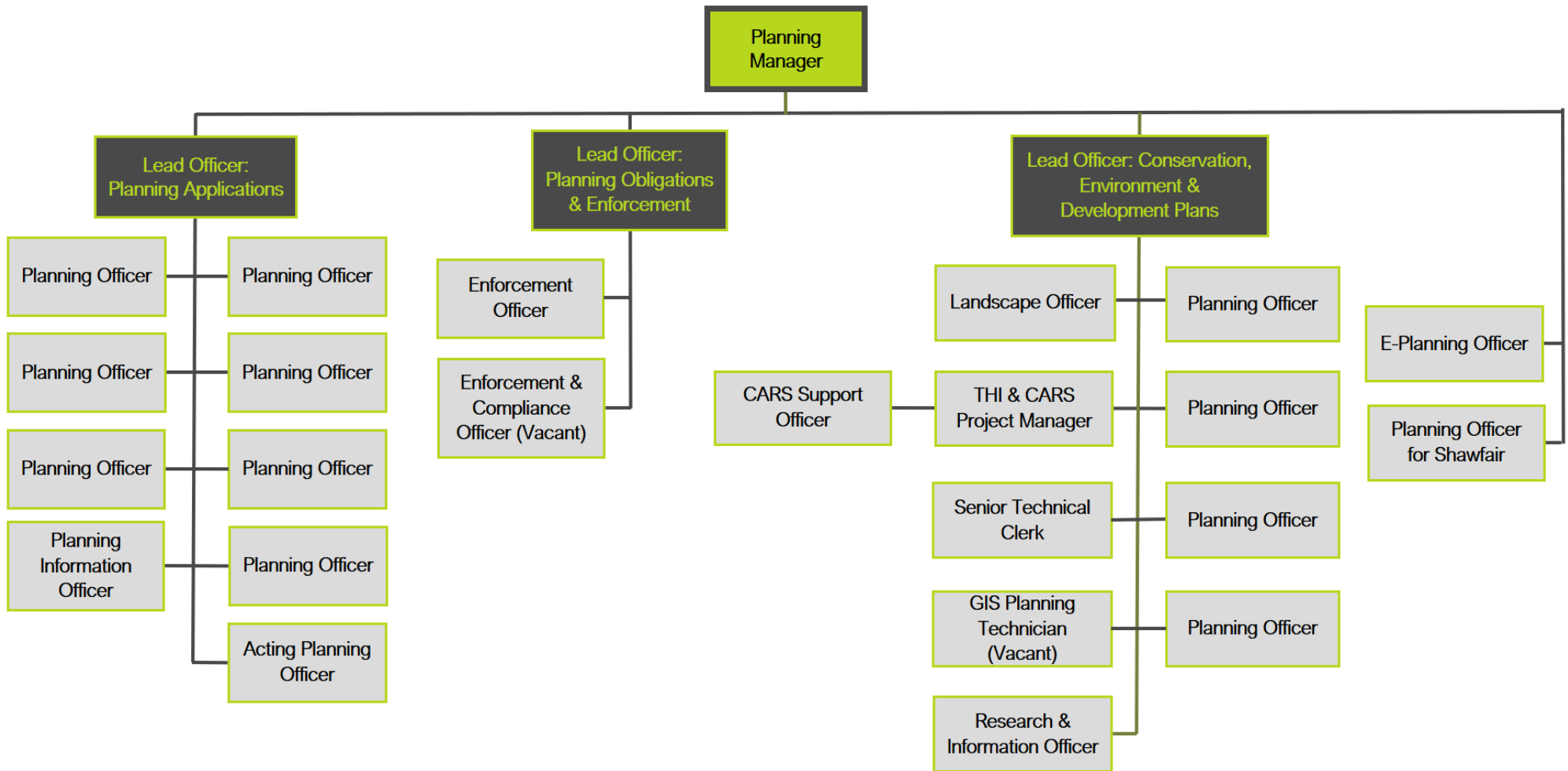
² The Planning Manager runs a single Planning Team responsible for development plans, planning applications, enforcement and conservation. During the reporting year, the Planning Team was merged with economic development staff to form one single department called the 'Planning, Sustainable Growth and Investment Service'.

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) membership	Headcount
No. of chartered staff	18

4.1.2 Midlothian Council's Planning Team contains three sections, each of which are headed by a Lead Officer. The Planning Manager sits above them in the structure and an E-Planning Officer and a Planning Officer for Shawfair sit alongside the department as a whole, separate from a particular section. The staffing structure (shown below) is conducive to flexible working, allowing officers to move between sections to respond to peaks in workload.

The information here in section 4.1 refers only to Planning staff within it. Since the end of the reporting year, a further team has been added to the department: they cover active travel and transport projects.

Planning Team Structure as of 31/03/2023.



Notes:

- i) The above diagram refers exclusively to the Planning staff in the Planning, Sustainable Growth and Investment Service.
- ii) THI: Townscape Heritage Initiative, CARS: Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.
- iii) The Landscape Officer and Senior Technical Clerk positions are job-shared roles.

4.2 - Planning Committee Information

4.2.1 Meetings of Midlothian's full Council take place on a six weekly cycle and comprise all 18 Elected Members. In relation to planning matters, it delegates its regulatory responsibilities to its Planning Committee, but can make planning policy decisions, such as on the area's LDP. It may also make decisions regarding work streams which are implemented by the Planning Service, for example heritage and regeneration projects or matters related to developer contributions.

4.2.2 Midlothian Council's Planning Committee is responsible for determining planning applications, enforcing planning legislation, confirming Tree Preservation Orders and other related matters. The Committee comprises all 18 Elected Members of the Council, with a Chair selected from its composition. It normally meets on a six weekly basis, with a rolling annual schedule of meetings and requires a minimum of six Elected Members to be in attendance.

4.2.3 Midlothian Council's Local Review Body is responsible for looking at appeals against decisions made by an appointed Officer on planning applications. It comprises ten Elected Members, with a Chair determined by the membership of the Committee. It normally meets on a six weekly cycle with a rolling annual schedule of meetings and requires a minimum of three Elected Members to be in attendance.

4.2.4 The schedule of Planning Committee and Local Review Body meetings are listed on the Council's website alongside an agenda for each, documents discussed at them and minutes of previous meetings. Video recordings of Planning Committee meetings are viewable via the Council website.

Committee & site visits	Number in 2022/23
Full Council meetings	10
Planning Committee meetings	7
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	1
Local Review Body meetings	8
Local Review Body site visits	25

4.3 - Culture of Continuous Improvement

4.3.1 The department recognises that training and professional development is necessary for the effective delivery of services and furthering staff skills. It is also a requirement for RTP1 members and is encouraged within the Council's own appraisal system. Given this, Planning Team staff took part in many training events this year, including:

- 'SPEED (Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) - A Practical Guide to Better Engagement in Planning', in preparation of forthcoming LDP2 engagement work;
- A session for local authorities from SEPA covering their updated guidance on required allowances for climate change that must be used for flood risk assessment following the adoption of NPF4;
- Peatland restoration for planners training by NatureScot;
- A Local Authority Urban Development Forum event on sharing examples of 20-minute neighbourhoods being applied in Scotland, and explaining varying uses and whole-place collaborative approaches in the Scottish context;
- A webinar from SEPA covering their guidance on climate change allowances for flood risk assessment in land use planning;
- Training on the 'Citizen Space' survey platform to allow it to be used for LDP2 consultation activities such as employing the Place Standard tool;

- A series of three workshops organised by the Improvement Service and Heads of Planning Scotland to familiarise staff with NPF4, covering its 'Liveable Places' policies, its 'Sustainable Places' policies and its 'Productive Places' policies;
- Attending Public Health Scotland's 'Place and Wellbeing Alliance' event on developments of the 'Place Standard' survey tool;
- Sessions on digital planning including the Scottish Government's eDevelopment Webinar Series and one on the IDOX 'Cloud Connector Framework Management Console' from the Improvement Service;
- The Scottish hub of 'UrbanbyNature's' capacity building and knowledge-sharing programme to support the integration of nature-based solutions into both national, regional and local communities; and
- The 'Our Place in Time' engagement workshop by the Building Environment Forum Scotland on strategic input on the priorities for the future of the refreshed strategy for Scotland's historic environment.

4.3.2 The Planning Team recognise that working across corporate services can deliver improved outputs and benefits for customers. This interdisciplinary working is therefore encouraged and widely practiced. Some examples are provided in the table below.

Planning Team's area of work	What other Council services did they work with?	What did they work together on?
Enforcement	Environmental Health	Houses in Multiple Occupation, hot food premises, licensing, noise
	Housing Services	Breaches of planning control
	Estates	Land ownership issues
	Legal & Procurement Services	High hedge notices
Developer Contributions	Communities, Lifelong Learning & Education / Legal & Procurement Services	The transfer of ownership of publicly owned assets to community bodies
	Financial Services	Funding for new community facilities at Shawfair
	Housing Services	Provision of affordable housing at Shawfair
	Education Services	Developer contributions funding of the Council's Learning Estates Strategy
Development Plans	Communities, Lifelong Learning & Education	Co-ordinating work and taking advice on Local Place Plans, including presentations and a training session at a Community Council Training Day
	Business Services	Accessing and getting trained on the Citizen Space online consultation tool
	Housing Services	Taking part in the Local Housing Strategy Housing Association Forum, LDP2 housing targets and specialist housing provision
	Economic Development	Developing the Shawfair Town Centre Strategy and reviewing the content of the Employment Land Audit
Conservation & Environment	Communications & Marketing	Training staff to become editors and administrators of content on the Planning pages of the Council's website
	Land and Countryside Services	Potential biodiversity projects for Nature Restoration Fund monies
	Neighbourhood Services (Travel & Fleet)	Shawfair and green network active travel links and funding
Development Management	Environmental Health	Licensing of short-term lets
	Business Services	Training on Freedom of Information requests and the Environmental Information Regulations
	Digital Services	Systems and firewall testing for new arrangements on email and file access
	Neighbourhood Services (Travel & Fleet)	Use of Transport Scotland's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund awards
	Project Development	Development of Newtongrange town centre
	Midlothian Energy Ltd.	Renewable energy developments at Shawfair, especially district heating

4.3.3 With many other Council areas near to Midlothian, planning matters often involve sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with neighbouring Authorities. The Planning Team also recognise the benefits of working with Councils throughout Scotland as a whole. Some examples of this from 2022/23 include:

- Reviewing the approaches to evaluating Midlothian's 20-Minute Neighbourhoods based on work done on this topic by Fife, Highland and West Dunbartonshire Councils;
- Sharing knowledge and good practice on built heritage and conservation with other local authority participants in the Building Environment Forum's Conservation Officers Group;
- Being advised by Aberdeen City Council in relation to 'Health in All Policies' for cross-sectoral working to promote health and reduce health inequalities;
- Learning about using the 'Citizen Space' platform for LDP consultations from Scottish Borders Council;
- Working alongside the City of Edinburgh Council as members of the A701 Relief Road & A702 Link Road Steering Group;
- Discussing various planning topics with other Scottish local authorities by participating in discussions on the Scottish Government's 'Knowledge Hub' platform;
- Meeting with Fife and Glasgow City councils on the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment to the new Local Development Plan process.
- Collaborating with Fife, East Lothian and West Lothian Councils on regional strategic planning matters such as work stemming from the City Region Deal and Regional Spatial Strategy; and
- Promoting natural heritage and solving biodiversity issues via work with both neighbouring Councils as part of the Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Natural Heritage Planning Group and other Councils across Scotland as part of the Scottish Local Biodiversity Network.

4.3.4 Offering customers the opportunity for feedback and learning from this is a part of the culture of continuous improvement within Midlothian's Planning Team. This involves sending out feedback forms to applicants and agents, which are often used by them to compliment the service on its work. Examples from 2022/23 are:

- *'I was happy with the service I received and the Planner Officer was very helpful';*
- *'Planning Officers always available to offer advice, answer questions';*
- *'The service provided was much better than I have witnessed at the majority of other [Planning Authorities] across Great Britain';*
- *'Happy with the service provided. [The Case Officer] was excellent / very helpful / very fair and clear with her assessment';*
- *'Process and the planning permission result was far easier than we had been lead to believe. Communication during the process was good';*
- *'Received prompt correspondence by email. Really found use of application website easy';*
- *'[Planning Officer] took us through the process and showed extreme patience with us';*
- *'Too often in our experience with other Councils it is very difficult to get the Officer to pick up the phone to discuss and resolve issues. Timeframes often rumble on unexplained awaiting consultee responses, the Officer in this case was proactive in securing the*

relevant responses from consultees in an efficient manner and communicated delays to us'.

4.3.5 The work of work of planning staff was also recognised in the form of a nomination in the conservation and regenerations category of Edinburgh Architectural Association awards. This was in response to the restoration of Penicuik Town Hall, which was detailed in last year's PPF report.



Penicuik Town Hall after restoration © Ashwood Scotland Ltd.

4.3.6 PPF reports are used to score Councils against 15 performance markers. The charts on the following page shows how Midlothian Council has performed on these since this began in 2013/14. Last year, in 2021/22, the Council received 'green' ratings for every marker.



4.4 - Progress on Service Improvements for 2022/23

4.4.1 Midlothian's last PPF report included eleven service improvements for 2022/23 (shown in italics below). Substantial progress has been made on almost all of these.

4.4.2 *To work with Digital Services, including on an equipment refurbishment and update, to implement a 'hybrid working' model that will allow staff to work remotely or in the office.*

This has been achieved. Planning Staff co-ordinated this with colleagues in Digital Services, leading to the installation of hot desk 'docking stations' and arrangements for PCs with specialist software installed on them.

4.4.3 *Work with internal consultees on planning applications, e.g. Environmental Health, in order to streamline, standardise (where possible) and speed up consultation interactions between service areas in the Council.*

This has been partly achieved. Work here is ongoing but managerial changes elsewhere in the Council have made it difficult to achieve continuity in planning consultation responses. However, the planning authority has experienced some small but noticeable improvements on the timescales related to consultation responses when services that are being consulted have had a fuller compliment of staff over the last year.

4.4.4 *To deliver a training session for new Councillors (following the 2022 elections) on planning matters and procedures, including a focus on developer contributions.*

This has been achieved. The Planning Manager delivered it as part of a series of briefings to new Elected Members in spring 2022.

4.4.5 *To develop materials, particularly a set of maps, for briefing the new Councillors on development matters across Midlothian, including past & future housing, employment and school developments and implications for National Planning Framework 4.*

This has been achieved. A set of maps were drawn by the Research & Information Officer with direction from the Planning Manager, allowing Councillors to get a visually-intuitive insight into past and future development in Midlothian.

4.4.6 *To implement a GIS-based system to allow Development Plans Section Officers to do post-adoption Strategic Environmental Assessment monitoring of the environmental & physical impacts of the LDP.*

This has been achieved. A series of maps were created using the ArcGIS Online platform. Using these and a methodology note, staff interpreted them and reported their findings to the Development Plans Monitoring Group.

4.4.7 *To update Midlothian Council's Planning Enforcement Charter including to incorporate the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 brought into place via secondary legislation.*

This has been achieved. The updated Enforcement Charter was approved at the October 2022 Planning Committee.

4.4.8 *To recruit a GIS-Technician to work across the Development Plans and Development Management Sections of the department.*

This has not been achieved, due to other work priorities and funding constraints. The post will be advertised in 2023/24, therefore this target has been carried over into next year. Training of existing Planning staff in early 2023 has nevertheless expanded the department's GIS capabilities.

4.4.9 *Review the Scheme of Delegation in order to simplify and streamline the processing of applications received by the planning authority, helping to ensure that this work can be progressed as quickly and efficiently as possible.*

This has been achieved. The Scheme of Delegation was reviewed and then approved by Councillors at the June 2022 Planning Committee, then approved by the Scottish Government the following month.

4.4.10 *Identify, purchase then be trained on transport modelling software to allow us to complete the accessibility to facilities analysis as part of the LDP2 'Sites Review' process.*

This has been achieved. The 'TRACC' programme from Basemap was identified from several options and was then bought and set-up in July 2022 with training taking place shortly after.

4.4.11 *In conjunction with staff from Communications, nominating then training several staff on web editing rights and skills to enable them to update planning pages on the Council website.*

This has been achieved. Several staff from the Conservation & Environment and Development Plans sections of the department were identified and trained on this in summer 2022.

4.4.12 *Produce a 'Handbook' document on 'An Overview of the Planning System', for applicants, agents and new Councillors, to supplement the existing guidance on the Council website.*

This has been achieved. A Planning Officer from the Development Plans section of the department produced this, both for newly-elected Councillors and for the general public, with it being available on the Council's Planning website pages.

4.5 - Intended Service Improvements for 2023/24

4.5.1 Midlothian's Planning Team intend to take an ambitious approach to targets for the next PPF reporting year. This is reflected in the following nine service improvements:

- To work alongside colleagues in the Web Content and Communications Teams to develop then implement a range of engagement methods and activities to advertise LDP2 evidence gathering;
- To hold a series of seminars to discuss the content of NPF4, its implications for development management decision making, collectively agree solutions to any issues and note implications for LDP2;
- To recruit a GIS-Technician to work across the Development Plans and Development Management Sections of the department;
- To arrange a series of workshops with Elected Members to further inform them of the implications of NPF4 and to capture their ambitions for MLDP2;

- Assisting owners to restore key historic buildings identified as priorities as part of the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project;
- To hold further community engagement, training and educational events as part of the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project;
- To complete a GIS-based accessibility analysis of possible LDP2 land allocations to determine their potential for satisfying the requirement of NPF4 for creating 20-minute neighbourhoods;
- To provide feedback on both the revised Shawfair Town Centre Strategy scope and its indicative schedule to allow developers to progress this significant workstream in 2023/24; and
- To implement the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications) (Scotland) Regulations 2022, including by drafting a Planning Fees Charter, gaining approval of it from Elected Members at Planning Committee and working with Council administrative staff on procedures for taking payments.



Part 5 – Appendices

5 - Appendices

5.1 - National Headline Indicators for Development Planning

Local and strategic development planning	2022/23	2021/22
Age of LDP at the end of the reporting period	5 years, 4 months	4 years, 4 months

5.1.1 Will the LDP be replaced by its 5th anniversary according to the DPS?

No. Midlothian Council waited until NPF4 was adopted rather than prepare a new LDP based on the 2013 SDP. NPF4 was subsequently delayed, but besides from this, that approach was taken because:

- The rejection of the proposed SDP2 meant that SDP1 (from 2013) remained valid and the evidence base underpinning it was out of date;
- There was no guidance in SDP1 as to how the housing land requirements for 2024 – 2032 should be distributed across the SESplan area;
- The declaration of a climate change emergency in Scotland (and by the Council) was likely to have land use planning policy implications

and it would be advantageous to work with a strategic planning framework that takes this into account; and

- There was insufficient time to progress the review to Proposed Plan stage before the transition arrangements end and new regulations come into effect; and
- Delays to do with the implementation of the new Act caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirements stemming from it were yet to be finalised, such as the adoption of regulations on LPPs and Open Space Strategies.

Midlothian Council will use the Action Programme process to review the implementation of the current Plan and in particular to assess the adequacy of the housing land supply (as described in paragraph 2.3.9 of the MLDP).

5.1.2 Will the SDP be replaced by its 5th anniversary according to the DPS?

Not applicable. The proposed new SDP was rejected by Scottish Ministers in 2020/21. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 abolished the need for SDPs, with Regional Spatial Strategies required instead and the approval of NPF4 in early 2021 means the SDP is no longer operative.

5.1.3 *Has the expected date of submission of the LDP to Scottish Ministers in the DPS changed over the past year?*

No. The expected date of submission of the LDP to Scottish Ministers is still the final quarter of 2025.

5.1.4 *Were DPS engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?*

Substantial progress was made on almost all these actions during 2022/23. Where they were not this was due to new obligations from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and NPF4 being delayed. The following engagement and consultation activities were undertaken:

- Elected members were briefed on NPF4, the new DPS and the LDP2 timetable to formally launch LDP2 work;
- Publishing then distributing the DPS to libraries and Community Councils, with it providing 'have your say' opportunities and specifying how to get in contact;
- Key agency and public engagement to collect data for the Evidence Report (see section 3.7);
- Briefing Community Councils on the timetable and procedures for LDP2 production, especially how they can get involved in LPPs;
- Updating the visually intuitive and accessible online maps for both the Housing and Employment Land Audits;
- Continuing to respond to enquiries from both the public and developers received to the LDP mailbox;
- Seeking and building contacts for future engagement, such as with infrastructure providers, key internal Council contacts and groups with 'protected characteristics' or of particular importance such as children and young people; and
- Developing consultation activities using the Place Standard tool.

Effective land supply and delivery of outputs	2022/23	2021/22
Housing approvals ¹	790 units	1,549 units
Housing completions over the last five years	3,570 units	3,267 units
Marketable employment land supply ²	296ha	299ha
Employment land take-up during the reporting year ³	2.8ha	2.0 ha

Notes:

- ¹ The figure quoted here include units consented from *all* applications. It therefore includes detailed planning consents for sites already with approval in principle, and amendment applications for sites already with consent. This approach is used as it is the most literal interpretation of yearly 'housing approvals' - the PPF Guidance Notes do not specify a methodology for calculating this number.
- ² This figure is the combined total of vacant immediately available employment land and net vacant employment land with minor constraints. It is taken from the updated Employment Land Audit published in March 2023. A figure for *net* land was provided in past years, but gross land has been entered here, to align this response with that of the Council's annual Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development group return.
- ³ This figure only includes take-up due to construction starting and not applications approved during the year, or development of existing premises and that within their curtilage. It can therefore mask the true extent of economic activity.

5.2 - National Headline Indicators for Development Management

Project planning	2022/23		2021/22	
	No. of applications	% of applications	No. of applications	% of applications
Applications subject to pre-application advice	49	14.4	55	9.4
Major applications subject to processing agreements	6	40.0	4	50.0

Decision-making	% of applications	
	2022/23	2021/22
Application approval rate	90.0	92.2
Delegated rate	98.4	99.0
Validation rate	88.4	91.8

Decision-making timescales	No. of weeks to decision	
	2022/23	2021/22
Major developments	36.3	44.6
Local developments (non-householder)	11.7	10.5
Householder developments	7.2	8.2

Legacy cases	No. of applications	
	2022/23	2021/22
Number cleared during reporting period	2	2
Number remaining	7	9

Enforcement activity	No. of cases	
	2022/23	2021/22
Complaints lodged and investigated	103	95
Potential breaches identified – no need for further action	130	121
Cases closed	156	176
Notices served	55	22
Direct action	1	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

5.2.1 Time since enforcement charter was published/reviewed: six months. The enforcement charter was reviewed during the PPF reporting year by the Lead Officer of the Planning Obligations & Enforcement Section.

5.3 - Scottish Government Official Statistics

Type of development	2022/23		2021/22	
	No. of applications	Average timescale (weeks)	No. of applications	Average timescale (weeks)
Major developments	5	36.3	8	44.6
Local developments (non-householder, less than 2 months)	59	7.5	69	7.4
Local developments (non-householder, more than 2 months)	28	20.7	37	16.2
Local developments (householder, less than 2 months)	186	7.0	258	7.0
Local developments (householder, more than 2 months)	14	10.4	24	11.5
Housing (major)	2	50.2	4	49.9
Housing (local, less than 2 months)	12	7.4	4	8.1
Housing (local, more than 2 months)	13	30.4	10	24.6
Business & industry (major)	0	0	0	0
Business & industry (local, less than 2 months)	0	0	0	0
Business & industry (local, more than 2 months)	0	0	0	0
EIA developments	1	114.1	0	0
Other consents	44	9.1	69	10.2
Planning/legal agreements (major)	1	44.6	4	35.1
Planning/legal agreements (local)	4	45.2	10	31.6



	Total no. of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2022/23		2021/22	
		No. of decisions	% of decisions	No. of decisions	% of decisions
Local reviews	25	9	36.0	5	38.5
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	0	0	0	1	33.3

5.4 - Case Study Checklist Table

Case study topic	Relevant section(s) of report
Design	
Climate change	Section 2.5
Conservation	Section 2.4
Biodiversity	
Regeneration	
Environment	
Greenspace	
Town Centres	
Masterplanning	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	Section 2.3
Housing Supply	Section 2.5
Affordable Housing	Section 2.5
Economic Development	
Enforcement	

Case study topic	Relevant section(s) of report
Development Management Processes	
Planning applications	
Interdisciplinary Working	
Collaborative Working	
Community Engagement	Section 2.3, Section 2.4
Placemaking	Section 2.3
Design Workshops / Charrettes	
Place Standard	
Performance Monitoring	
Process Improvement	
Project Management	
Skills Sharing	
Staff Training	
Online Systems	
Data and Information	
Digital Practice	
Transport	

Note: there is no requirement for Councils to cover all the topics listed in the table above.

5.5 - Performance Marker Map

5.5.1 National oversight of the performance of the Scottish Planning System is taken by a High Level Group, chaired by a Scottish Government Minister. It agreed a set of 'Performance Markers' in 2013 which allow the Scottish Government a consistent basis on which to consider performance. These markers are listed below alongside directions as to where they are discussed in this document.

Performance marker	Relevant parts of report*
1	Sections 5.2 and 5.3
2	Section 3.2 Paragraph 3.6.8
3	Section 3.4 Section 3.3 Section 3.6 Paragraph 2.5.5
4	Paragraphs 3.6.1 to 3.6.3 Section 5.3
5	Paragraph 5.2.1
6	Section 4.4 Section 4.3, especially paragraph 4.3.1 and its bullet points Section 4.5
7	Section 5.1 Paragraph 3.7.1

Performance marker	Relevant parts of report*
8	Paragraphs 3.7.8 to 3.7.11 Section 5.1
9	Paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.7 Paragraph 5.1.4 and bullet points Section 2.3
10	Marker no longer applicable – gap kept for data continuity
11	Paragraphs 3.7.12 to 3.7.16
12	Paragraph 4.3.2 and table Section 2.5 Paragraph 4.4.2 Paragraph 4.4.11
13	Paragraph 4.3.3 and bullet points Section 2.4 Paragraph 3.7.15
14	Section 5.2 Paragraph 3.6.2
15	Paragraphs 3.6.4 to 3.6.11 Paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 Paragraph 3.4.3

* Listed for each marker in approximate order of relevance.

5.6 - Supporting Evidence

5.6.1 There has been input from across Midlothian's Planning Team in compiling this report. Lead Officers were contacted to provide possible service improvements for 2023/24 and progress updates on those from the previous PPF report. They also provided guidance on notable projects for inclusion this year, which the staff member responsible for producing the report itself wrote up.

5.6.2 Other staff were contacted to provide input that related to their specific roles. For example the Duty Planner for section 3.3, the E-Planning Officer for the statistics in Part 5 and the relevant Planning Officer for information relating to the DPS and progress on the next LDP. Additional information, particularly that in Part 2, was recorded throughout the year during reviews of the weekly lists of applications that the department received. Staff calendars were reviewed to compile a list of training events that were attended throughout the year as well as examples of working with other services in Midlothian Council and other councils in Scotland. The Planning Manager reviewed the report prior to submission and raised it during Lead Officer's group meetings to increase awareness and generate thoughts as to its content.

5.6.3 The following web links were used during the production of this report and form supporting evidence:

- [Midlothian Council Planning and Building Homepage](#)
- [Planning Applications](#)
- [Conservation](#)
- [Development Plans and Policies](#)

- [MLDP Proposals Map](#)
- [Planning and Building Standards Portal](#)
- [Processing Agreements](#)
- [Planning Committee](#)
- [Local Review Body](#)
- [Pre-Application Advice](#)
- [Planning Application Checklists](#)
- [Various Downloadable Documents on Planning Applications](#)
- [Supplementary Guidance](#)
- [Midlothian Council's Planning Performance Framework Reports](#)
- [Enforcement Charter](#)
- [Midlothian Planning Handbook](#)

5.6.4 All photographs included in this report were taken by Midlothian Council except where noted. Map in Introduction section: © *Crown copyright and database right (2023). All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence Number 100023416.*

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