

***Corporate Solutions will “deliver forward looking services fit for a modern 21st Century organisation and put the citizen at the centre of Service Redesign”.***

Corporate Solutions encompasses Human Resources, Digital, Customer & Communication, Legal & Governance, Corporate Resources, Transformation PMO and Continuous Improvement.

Corporate Solutions supports the whole Council delivering services to internal and external stakeholders; playing a key role in the delivery of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and ensuring organisational compliance, developing the workforce, and advancing transformation.

## **Transformation and opportunities**

### **Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028)**

We are committed to building on the learning and new ways of working that were adopted during the pandemic and renewing our focus on delivering our key priorities at the most local level possible. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of our new 5-year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main aims:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes.
- No child or household live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The pandemic has accelerated the financial challenges that we are facing. Reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges, continued growth and unknown changes that we will face.

The Blueprint sets out key areas of concern that need to be addressed over the next five years. We will continue to work to address the inequalities that our communities face, respond to the demands of being the fastest growing local authority in mainland Scotland, and delivering our vision of being a great, green place to grow.

### **Transformation Blueprint Objectives**

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

The Council's transformation blueprint provides the framework for opportunities to change the way services are improved and delivered to be more efficient. Corporate Solutions has a particular focus on the delivery and acceleration of the Capital Programme, delivering digital first approaches, embedding automation to improve customer access to services and hybrid working.

## Challenges

### Financial position

Council approved the 2023/24 budget at its meeting on 21 February 2023. Delivery is reliant on a combination of savings and service reductions and includes the use of retrospective service concession savings and earmarked Covid recovery reserves. Whilst the 2023/24 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years will be embedded in the Council's Strategic Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Close working continues with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports for quarter two 23/24, presented to Council in November 2023. The team continue to provide in-depth financial input to key revenues and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### Growing Council

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

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

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

Midlothian's approved Capital Strategy sets out the infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Encompassing five main themes the City Region Deal will bring significant investment across the regions with total investment of circa £1.3 billion across:

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

Through the Data Driven Innovation strand the Deal will leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities in order that Easter Bush becomes a global location of Agritech excellence. The Easter Bush project includes significant investment in transport infrastructure along the A701/2 transport corridor. In addition, by improving on-site infrastructure at Easter Bush

and transport infrastructure, The University of Edinburgh expects commercial partners will be able to co-locate at scale to commercialise Agritech breakthroughs.

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme delivers new schools, a record investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and in innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

### **Economic pressures**

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

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

### **Cost of Living Crisis**

Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households is already being noted across the UK with 93% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in March 2023 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 10.4% is the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. The price rises will impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

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

### **National Care Service**

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

## Risk

The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is presented retrospectively to Audit Committee quarterly. The most critical risks to the Council are Financial Sustainability, Climate Change and the Change Programme. Corporate Solutions is key to the delivery of mitigating actions to these risks; through strategic planning and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and driving forward the Council's transformation programme to derive change and redesign services.

## Customer Engagement

**Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams below:**

### Short term:

- Continued rollout and implementation of Customer Service Platform
- Reviewing service delivery across all Contact Centre teams
- Increased use of eBooks
- Active promotion of library space for Council and partner services, and enable out of hours access for communities

### Medium term:

- Rollout of the Hub & Spoke model with libraries providing and facilitating increased local service provision
- Customer Engagement Strategy development including revised communications and engagement plan

### Long term:

- Increase income within Registrars through alternative ceremony offer
- Community and school library redesign; including the mobile library service

## Key achievements this quarter:

### Summer Reading Challenge

This quarter was a hugely successful year for the Summer Reading Challenge. The theme was Ready, Set, Read! based around the power of play, sport and games. Over 1,000 children signed up for the challenge (a 15% increase on last year) with 55% of those completing the challenge (a 4% increase on the numbers finishing last year). Nearly 130 events were attended by over 4,000 children and their families and over 21,000 items of junior stock were issued over July and August. Libraries saw 668 new child memberships which reflects the positive engagement of the Summer Reading Challenge.

*"Thank you for a lovely afternoon at the Summer Reading Challenge presentation. What an incredible turnout and a wonderful way to celebrate the children's reading achievements. It is so heartening to see Dalkeith Library being a central hub for the community; long may that continue. Well done to the team and thank you again."*

*"The Summer Reading Challenge is a family tradition now! We love it!"*

*"Was great coming to the library cause I get bored during the holidays, and loved collecting the stickers, and I won a prize for the most basketballs in the net"*

*"They (children) love seeing their name on the chart"*

## Lend and Mend Hub

August saw the official launch of Gorebridge Library's Lend and Mend Hub with 30 people attending the opening event. The Hub provides free access to sewing machines and other equipment to allow communities to repair, re-use and upcycle their own items. Gorebridge is one of nine library partners across Scotland in a project funded by the John Lewis Partnership's Circular Future Fund and managed through SLIC (the Scottish Library and Information Council).

Taking a co-design approach, the hubs have been developed with insight and expertise from local teams and library members to ensure services are tailored to community needs. Funding granted from The John Lewis Partnership's £1m Circular Future Fund has been used for the equipment, training and space upgrades needed to deliver the projects. Following their launch, each library hub will also introduce an education programme to support new skills development, helping to reduce inequality through equitable access to resources. The first focus will be on 'mending', and several workshops and sessions have already been held with groups such as the SHRUB Cooperative, to teach people the first steps of repairing and re-making.

This is an example of how the library service is transforming and thriving, responding to community needs and giving people access to resources that they may not otherwise have. In line with the Council's commitment to Net Zero by 2030 and the Climate Change Strategy, the promotion of circular economy activities can change the way we use and consume to make the way we live greener, as well as upskill residents and foster new social connections. It is anticipated that this pilot will help develop a long-term model for libraries to be a hub of circular economy activities and work is ongoing to identify external funding to roll out Lend and Mend in other locations within the county.

## Channel shift

Channel shift work continues with the introduction of the 'Contact Us' module and grit bin service request application. Several other service requests are in test phase and due to go live in the coming weeks focused around waste services. Data shows a slight decrease in telephone calls and a small increase in customer contact received digitally. Overall, customer contact volumes remain consistent compared to those figures for the same period last year. Call abandonment rate has improved to 5% this quarter from 9% in Q4. This abandonment rate calculates the total number of calls that come into the call queue and then leave the queue. There is no ability to ask why calls are abandoned - callers may choose to hang up because they would rather not wait, or they have called at an inopportune time. Front-end messages are updated on contact centre lines to provide information to the customer waiting, for example, if a whole street of bins had been missed, this would be reflected in the front-end message. Lines also have messages directing people online to carry out transactional activity.

## Communications and promotion

Our communication and marketing team continue to support services across the Council by promoting key initiatives on our social media platforms, news releases, website and community radio channel. Successes this quarter include:

**Encouraging eligible families to apply for free school meals and clothing grants** through a dedicated communications campaign. Short videos were created with school children and the Council's food nutritionist and posted across all social media platforms. Facebook and Twitter posts featured key messages pointing people back to the Free School Meals/Clothing Grant webpages to apply. As a result, in terms of the webforms being received, the majority of those were applications for these supports. The best performing Facebook post reached 8,077 views and 5,635 views via Twitter.

**Maximising participation of the annual summer reading challenge** in libraries. The best performing Facebook post reached 15,621 news feeds with 589 people engaging, and this year had a 15% increase in participation in the challenge as noted above.

**Increasing application rates for short term lets** through clear communication on our website and social media platform. The best performing Facebook post reached 7,719 news feed and 1,480 views via Twitter.

**Promotion of customer consultations and surveys** including:

- Fostering campaign (led externally and supported by the Council's communications service)
- Auchendinny to Rosewell stretch of Core Path (best performing social media post reached 80,468 news feeds with 7,824 engagements)
- Newtongrange former pool site (a series of scheduled Facebook posts publicising an in-person consultation event and signposting to an online questionnaire had a total reach of 112,814)
- Midlothian Local Development Plan engagement actions (Facebook posts for the development plan, with a total reach of 22,066, engagement rate 2825 (12%) and Facebook posts for open space strategy, with a total reach of 16,722, total engagement was 759 (4.5%)).

## Human Resources

To achieve the Council's strategic priorities, we recognise that people are our most important asset. Our workforce strategy highlights that we need to attract the best talent, grow our own talent ensuring there are clear progression pathways, ensure our workforce feel engaged, valued and motivated and importantly, empower our staff to enable them to reach their full potential.

Our workforce vision is to work as **One Council** using our knowledge, experiences and sense of shared endeavour to collaborate and think creatively and innovatively so that our people can deliver life-changing impacts for our communities. Our new ways of working mark a clear desire for cultural change and a shift towards a more agile and modern operating model.

**Our workforce are key to the delivery of the Transformation Blueprint. In order to ensure a thriving workforce areas of focus for 2023/24 will be:**

- Investment in Organisational Development through a focused programme of work
- Completion of workforce plans in all services, with a particular focus in at risk areas
- Rollout of the Wellbeing Strategy
- Delivery of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy

### Key achievements this quarter:

#### Wellbeing

Work continues on the development of our Wellbeing Strategy which will focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing.

The rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives continues this quarter to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff. Wellbeing events and initiatives including on-site visits, webinars, e-learning and training have been organised for the remainder of 2023. The coaching programme rolled out this quarter was well received and resource is being explored to build on this programme and provide additional support to managers.

During July to September 2023, 16 wellbeing events were held internally and externally covering cost of living supports, wellbeing and mental health awareness, health checks and coaching. 110 staff attended various events organised in house. Events included on site visits by Capital Credit Union, webinars from Money Advice Scotland, drop in sessions from Citizen Advice in Midlothian, Trauma Level 1 & 2 courses, SQA Coping Strategies Course, a Mindfulness course delivered by Health and Social Care Partnership, health checks from Sport & Leisure and the first tranche of our Edinburgh College Coaching Course.

The HR team have been working with procurement to renew the contracts for physiotherapy provision for staff and the non-financial benefits platform. Non-financial benefits will be relaunched during Q3 to enable savings for the Christmas period.

### 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce - workforce strategy, recruitment and retention

Activity is ongoing to develop and implement the work streams under our workforce strategy, and progress Blueprint theme 2 '21<sup>st</sup> century workforce'. A consultation has taken place with the Trade Unions on what potential changes needs to take place to disciplinary, resolution, maximising attendance at work, performance improvement policies and these will be included in the transformation workstream plan.

The introduction of shared cost additional voluntary contributions has been approved and work is now underway with procurement and Employment and Reward for implementation. When finalised, a communications plan will support the roll out to all staff to encourage take up to the scheme.

A new programme for welcome, induction, long service recognition and leavers has been developed. This includes a refreshed face to face induction programme for all new staff and existing staff in changed roles; and will be supported by a range of online resources provided at onboarding. 2024 will also see the introduction of long service recognition and a revised approach to learning from employees exiting the organisation, enabling us to learn from employee experiences, understand the reasons for leaving and promote Midlothian as an employer of choice.

## Digital Services

**Digital solutions underpin the Transformation Blueprint. Key work streams for 23/24 include:**

- Review and refresh of the Council's Digital Strategy, including reprioritisation of projects to enable change and transformation
- Development of a Data Strategy and pilot projects such as the secure sharing and analysis of collective, operational level NHS & Council data
- Continued rollout of compliance and cyber security protective measures, including attainment of PSN and Cyber Essentials certification, and actioning any related recommendations
- Implementation of Microsoft O365 capabilities and applications to enable organisational efficiencies, collaboration and data driven decision making
- Delivering service improvements in frontline teams through projects such as digital transformation of Neighbourhood Services
- Continue the roll-out of the Customer Services Platform to promote channel shift
- Equipped for Learning: upgrade classroom Audio Visual estate with interactive smart screens and support the pilot of Virtual Class delivery
- Upgrading Call Centre digital infrastructure elements
- Refreshing / improving quality and coverage of corporate WiFi network

- Ensure all digital aspects of Council operations are well supported and operational

### Key achievements this quarter:

The Office 365 rollout programme continues this quarter with core applications deployed to 50% of all council users after the delivery of multiple cross Council employee training sessions. The launch of the expanded MS teams functionality creates department and project channels for collaboration and file sharing. Efficiency tools have been launched including planner and whiteboard. Linkage (federation) of Microsoft account with NHS and other local authorities enabling chat, video-calling, and efficient calendar appointment scheduling (free/busy status visibility).

As part of the equipped for learning project, 182 panels (interactive smart boards) were upgraded across 12 schools this quarter.

**Cyber Security resilience:** Qualys scanning completed to identify and reduce vulnerabilities across the network.

### Core Infrastructure improvements this quarter:

- Education access and utilisation of the internet is now more secure via the *LightSpeed* roll-out which blocks inappropriate websites, and alerts staff to any potentially concerning internet searches/usage from pupils. As of Q2, 96% of devices across Education are now running Lightspeed.
- CITRIX environment fully upgraded to provide enhanced performance and security.
- Replacement of ageing air con units in the Fairfield and Midlothian comms rooms now significantly reduces the risk of critical outage due to over-heating server equipment.
- Replacement of the ageing and out of support WiFi hardware giving improved coverage and performance across Midlothian House and Fairfield House.
- Successful upgrade to new hyperconverged hardware (Corporate Nutanix) and migration of 130 servers.
- New switching technologies successfully installed to support the upcoming upgrade and hardware replacement for Commvault backup system.
- New modular units have been cabled for networking and telephony in Kings Park, Rosewell, Roslin and LWHSC.

## Corporate Resources

### Key priorities for the service in 2023/24

- Redesign of business processes to achieve efficiencies across all of Corporate Resources
- Making more use of current applications to enable self-service e.g., viewing Council Tax and rent accounts online
- Continued upgrade of applications

### Key achievements this quarter:

As part of the UK government's support to consumers with their energy costs this winter via the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) and Alternative Fuel Payments (AFP), Business Services successfully administered these schemes this quarter through verification of applications against the criteria set by UK government, approval/rejection of application and payments to successful applicants. Over 7300



direct payments were made for Free School Meals during holidays, Energy Bill Support Scheme, Ukrainian Host Payments and Business Covid Recovery Grants.

Work continues for the rollout of invoice approval processes. Fushiebridge Depot was the most recent high volume invoice service to fully onboard to invoice approval in Q2, and work to onboard Fleet Services and Property Maintenance is taking place now. Moving away from paper-based invoicing to invoice approval system management allows for a greater level of audit, performance management and data, leading to more up to date financial monitoring and real time reporting. The Business Applications Team continue to work with Scottish Government's e-commerce team on next steps for the e-invoicing programme and onboarding of suppliers to this service. Currently, the rate of invoices paid on time across the Council is an average of 92% each quarter (target is 95%). For Q2, over 41k invoices were paid in total and the average no of days an invoice was paid was 11.8 days.

This quarter the Operational Support team worked closely with Housing Services to review and enhance the information published on our website with the aim of improving customer access to information and reducing the volume of enquiry type calls received.

The Revenues and Benefits team continue to support the cost of living crisis. Requests for crisis funding continue to remain consistently high, with 49% of the revised Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget allocated in Q2. (90% of the original budget). 3,513 applications have been received for Crisis Grants this year (1,730 during Q2). 749 received for Community Care Grants (385 during Q2). This demonstrates the significant challenge faced by our communities. The newly approved SWF processing team will not only allow the team to respond and address the current backlog of other processing activities but also analyse the reasons for the high number of applications and refusals to identify preventative activity to mitigate people reaching this crisis point.

The percentage of current housing rent arrears sits at 11.77%, a slight increase from this period last year of 10.45%. In year Council tax collected year to date is 52.4% showing a decrease from collection rates this time last year of 54.8%.

## Legal and Governance

### Key priorities for the service in 2023/24:

- Delivery of the 2024 UK Government elections including voter Identity implementation
- Review of the Council's governance framework with revised Standing Orders and Associated Scheme(s)
- Implementation of the new Subject Access Request portal
- Development of the new Procurement Strategy, with a focus on social value, the introduction of a Council wide approach to Community Benefits, and an increased focus on local procurement
- Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, undertake a review of Contract and Grant Management

### Key achievements this quarter:

**Legal:** This quarter, legal services negotiated and concluded 3 settlement agreements via ACAS in respect of 3 Employment Tribunal complaints. Section 75 agreements were settled for Newbyres, Gorebridge for 96 homes and a small-scale housing development at Roberston Bank, Gorebridge with in house legal fee received. In addition, 3 land sales for garden sales were completed, 1 minute of

waiver, 1 tree preservation order, 1 charging order and the completion of 4 house purchases on the open market to support the Council's social housing programme.

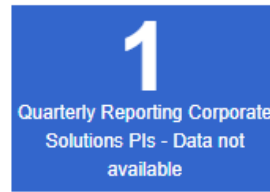
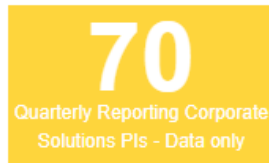
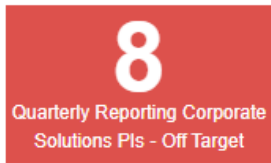
Attendance in court to protect Council's interests and to deliver suitable outcomes for children and vulnerable adults and input was provided to the Mental Health Law Review consultation.

**Procurement:** The Procurement Service welcomed a new Interim Procurement Manager to lead the team this quarter after almost a 12-month vacancy in this role. Significant work has been undertaken since this appointment was made including:

- An overhaul of the Contract Database
- Procurement have researched and investigated the use of a Concession contract, identifying and benchmarked a suitable tender and prepared all necessary tender documentation including suitable Terms and Conditions with support from legal services.
- The Council's standard Terms and Conditions for all other contracts have been updated with support from legal services.
- The procurement strategy peer review process has been streamlined to ensure audit trail and accountability.
- The Non-Competitive forms and templates have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with Regulations and Standing Orders.

A short life working group has been established to review contracts within Health and Social Care including the appointment of a dedicated Procurement Officer. A programme of work is being developed to bring all off-contract spend onto relevant frameworks. A key piece of work that has commenced with HSCP and Procurement is involvement in the development of the Scotland Excel (SXL) Care and Support Contract which SXL are retendering with a go live date of April 2024. This approach provides a route to compliant commissioning for almost £16.5m of social care expenditure. It is anticipated that this would reduce the resource that would need to be invested in commissioning and avoid costs associated with a recommissioning / tendering process and could potentially mitigate some of the inflationary budget risks associated with a recommissioning exercise. Programmes of work like this are part of the Transformation Blueprint 'Follow the Money' theme, looking at commissioning, contracting and identifying savings and efficiencies that can be made across the organisation.

## Quarter 2 - Corporate Solutions-





**Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Off Target**

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
<b>CORP.DIGITAL.11</b> % of IT helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours		49%	60%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CSE.LPI.03</b> Average processing time for new claims (internally calculated) (quarterly)		46 days	25 days	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CSE.LPI.04</b> Average processing time for change of circumstances (internally calculated)		17 days	8 days	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CORPS.MPI.01</b> Performance against revenue budget		£25.671m	£25.062m	Q2 2023/24	
<b>RHM.r.01.1</b> % of in-year Council Tax collected ytd (cumulative)		52.4%	95.2%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>RHM.r.02.1</b> % of current Housing Rent arrears (total)		11.77%	7.5%	September 2023	
<b>CORPS.SPSO.05.1</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		88.89%	95%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CORPS.SPSO.05.3</b> Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days		66.67%	95%	Q2 2023/24	



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# Corporate Solutions PI summary



## 01. Manage budget effectively

Priorities	Indicator	2022/2 3	Q2 2022/2 3	Q1 2023/2 4	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/2 4	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
01. Manage budget effectively	Performance against revenue budget	N/A	£22.75 1m	£24.75 9m	£25.67 1m		<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target £609,000 overspend.		£24.16 2m		

## 02. Manage stress and absence

Priorities	Indicator	2022/2 3	Q2 2022/2 3	Q1 2023/2 4	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/2 4	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
02. Manage stress and absence	Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)	8.28	4.30	2.35	4.35		<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence has slightly increased compared to this time last year. Of the FTE days lost, 12% was due to long term sickness, 73% self-certified, 15% short term absence. While there is no identifiable trends either in short term or long term absences work continues with each service area to review attendance levels and support those staff who are absent to be able to return to work.			Number of days lost	1,470.54
										Number of FTE in service	337.92

## 03. Process invoices efficiently

Priorities	Indicator	2022/2 3	Q2 2022/2 3	Q1 2023/2 4	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/2 4	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
03. Process invoices efficiently	% of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (Corporate Solutions) (cumulative)	94.4%	94.9%	97.8%	96.2%		<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target		95.0%	Number of invoices received	2,446
										Number of invoices paid within 30 days (cumulative)	2,354

#### 04. Improve PI performance

Priorities	Indicator	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
04. Improve PI performance	% of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target.	78.57 %	82.14 %	87.18 %	92.21 %		Q2 23/24: On Target		90%	Number on tgt/complete or Data Only	71
											Number of PI's in total

#### 05. Control Risk

Priorities	Indicator	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
05. Control Risk	% of high risks that have been reviewed in the last quarter	100%	100%	100%	100%		Q2 23/24: No high risks identified.		100%	Number of high risks reviewed in the last quarter	0
											Number of high risks

#### 06. Implement Improvement Plans

Priorities	Indicator	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
06. Implement Improvement Plans	% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete this quarter.	100%	100%	100%	100%		Q2 23/24: On Target All audit actions reviewed this quarter.		90%	Number of internal/external audit actions on target or complete	28
											Number of internal/external audit actions

# Corporate Solutions Complaints Indicator Summary

## 4. Outcomes and Customer Feedback - Commitment to valuing Complaints

Indicator	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend	
Number of complaints received (quarterly)	211	37	46	68		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of complaints closed in the year	173	31	33	60		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of complaints upheld (quarterly)	35	8	6	39		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of complaints partially upheld (quarterly)	26	3	15	14		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of complaints not upheld (quarterly)	24	4	10	6		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of complaints Resolved (quarterly)	77	11	2	1		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1	3.91	2.48	2.41	3.37		Q2 23/24: On Target		5
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2	6.42	2.5	0	0		Q2 23/24: On Target		20
Average time in working days for a full response for escalated complaints	0	0	12	10.17		Q2 23/24: On Target		20
Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days	86.34%	96.55%	100%	88.89%		Q2 23/24: Off Target 48 of 54 stage 1 complaints were complete within 5 working days.		95%
Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%		Q2 23/24: On Target		95%
Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working days	100%	100%	100%	66.67%		Q2 23/24: Off Target 4 of 6 escalated complaints were complete within 20 working days.		95%
Number of complaints where an extension to the 5 or 20 day target has been authorised (quarterly)	0	0	0	8		Q2 23/24: Data only		
Number of Compliments	8	1	6	2		Q2 23/24: Data only		

## Customer Engagement Priorities

### **Customer Services:**

#### Short term:

- Continued rollout and implementation of Customer Service Platform
- Reviewing service delivery across all Contact Centre teams
- Increased use of eBooks
- Active promotion of library space for Council and partner services, and enable out of hours access for communities

#### Medium term:

- Rollout of the Hub & Spoke model with libraries providing and facilitating increased local service provision
- Customer Engagement Strategy development including revised communications and engagement plan















#### Long term:

- Increase income within Registrars through alternative ceremony offer
- Community and school library redesign; including the mobile library service









### **Communications and Marketing:**













- Promotion and articulating the council's vision, strategy and plans such as, Great Place to Grow vision and longer term Wellbeing ambition, our route map through and out of the coronavirus crisis, Midlothian climate change strategy and carbon charter to both an internal and external audience.
- Supporting how public services operate by encouraging residents and stakeholders to take part in consultations such as Midlothian Local Development Plan, participatory budgeting, town centre regeneration projects, and catchment area consultations.
- Supporting service redesign and the delivery of change, e.g. supporting the shift to the new customer service platform which will enable citizens to do much more online via our website.
- Promotion of behavioural change, for example by encouraging residents of Midlothian to recycle more or travel more actively or improve their health and wellbeing.

## Customer Engagement Measures

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	
CORP.CE.01	Channel shift - % of customer contact received digitally compared to telephone			14.1%	18.5%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only New indicator added to baseline online customer contact against telephone contact. Figure is based on total number of calls received via telephony for all services against total number of webforms received across all council services. Q2 shows an increase in the percentage of webforms being received with the majority of forms in this quarter applying for free school meals and the clothing grant.
CORP.CE.02	Number of Midlothian Council facebook followers (cumulative)			21,144	21,277			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only An increase of 133 from the previous quarter.
CORP.CE.03	Number of twitter followers (@midgov) (cumulative)			17,902	17,927			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only
CORP.CE.08	Number of emails handled via the Contact Centre (quarterly)	39,198		13,583	12,855			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The volume of emails handled by the contact centre remains high. Through the rollout of the Customer Service Platform, channel shift continues to promote the move away from email to more efficient service requests/transactions. This will be seen later this year with the launch of the 'General Enquiries' e-form which is in development. This will reduce email traffic and direct enquiries much more efficiently for customers.
CORP.CE.12	Number of library children's initiatives	3,415		892	961			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The increase in figures for children's initiatives is reflective of the additional activities that were delivered over the Summer Reading Challenge.
CORP.CE.14	Number of library customers supported with digital queries (quarterly)	2,265		596	478			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Customers are supported on a range of digital queries. These figures stay in line with previous years. There is always a seasonal dip on computer usage during the summer and Q1 figures were higher compared to Q2 as a result of the launch of the Garden Waste assisted service.
CR.CC.1	Overall Contact Centre Calls (quarterly)	163,113	38,943	39,201	36,784			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Call volumes remain steady with Q2 volumes for 23/24 similar to volumes from last year. There's been a slight decrease from Q1 which reflects the usual seasonal reduction in total calls.







PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Annual Target 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend		Note
CORP.CE.05	% of contact centre calls answered within 120 seconds (quarterly)			83%	78%			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been amended to be more reflective of call handling times. There is no comparative data at the moment but reflections can be made for future quarterly reports.</p> <p>The slightly lower percentage compared to last quarter reflects summer staffing levels with annual leave etc.</p>	
CR.CC.4	% of contact centre calls abandoned (quarterly)	7%	5%	6%	5%			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target The figure is consistent with the same period last year and is a reduction from Q1's figures reaching the target percentage.</p> <p>This figure looks at the total number of calls that come into the queue and for a variety of reasons then leave the queue. People may choose to hang up because they don't want to wait, or they've called at an inopportune time.</p> <p>Front-end messages are updated on contact centre lines to provide information to the customer waiting in queues. As an example, if a whole street of bins has been missed, the front end message would reflect this. We also have messages directing people online.</p>	5%
CR.EM.01	Number of web forms received via Contact Centre (quarterly)	12,391	2,710	3,106	2,588			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Contact via web-form remains consistent with figures for the same period last year. The reduction from Q1 reflects seasonal trends. Web forms are being replaced on a rolling programme with e-forms, through the Customer Service Platform implementation. This will be a more efficient way of working; as it will reduce duplication of effort in the contact centre (double keying of requests), will get to services to resolve quicker and will also allow for more accurate real time reporting of customer demand and behaviour to provide insight not currently available.</p>	
RHM.I.01.01	Total number of library memberships	33,569	33,016	33,384	34,668			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Library membership across the authority remain steady and is rising gradually each quarter.</p>	













PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	
RHM.I.01.04	Number of new child library memberships	473	949	442	668			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only This figure shows an increase on previous years and is reflective of a successful Summer Reading Challenge where we saw a 15% increase in those starting the challenge and a 4% increase in those completing.
RHM.I.03.0	Number of library events	5,714	1,373	1,435	1,447			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only This covers events for both adults and children and included regular events and activities such as book groups etc and stand-alone events such as Bookbug Week. This figure includes all events carried out for the Summer Reading Challenge.
CORP.CE.09	Total number of library visits	607,410	152,643	170,444	190,462			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only There has been an 11% increase in total visits from Q1 this year and a 22% increase from Q2 of the previous year demonstrating the need and demand for library services.
RHM.I.03.01	Number of Physical Library Visits	436,613	105,928	132,510	153,262			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only There has been a 37% increase in the physical visits compared to this quarter last year and a 15% increase from the previous quarter. There is usually a dip in footfall during the summer with the school holidays etc but this figure challenges that trend.
CORP.CE.11	Number of virtual library visits	170,797	46,715	37,934	37,200			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only As with physical visits, there is usually a fall in virtual footfall during the summer so the reduction of only 2% here is heartening to see. Virtual visit stats include all social media interaction, visits to the library website, catalogue and eService interactions. This year there has been a focus on the promotion of e-book and e-resources and this will contribute to drive traffic to the site.
RHM.REG.01.04	Number of births registered	564	131	153	138			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only
RHM.REG.01.16	Number of marriages registered	503	205	123	162			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Q2 shows an increase in the number of weddings reflecting the usual summer increase.

## Human Resources Priorities





- Investment in Organisational Development through a focused programme of work
- Completion of workforce plans in all services, with a particular focus at risk areas
- Rollout of the Wellbeing Strategy
- Delivery of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy

## Human Resources Measures

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note
BS.FIS.01	Percentage of staff turnover (including teachers) (quarterly)	10.36%	3.6%	2.4%	2.9%			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only</p> <p>We track our employee turnover rates on a half yearly basis by expressing it as a percentage of employees overall when taking account of all leavers. Consideration of the levels of turnover across services, locations and particular groups of employees helps to inform workforce planning and resourcing. Turnover varies through the year with an expected increase over the summer months. This reflects teachers and other school based staff retiring or moving to new roles at the start of the new academic year. Compared to Q2 of last year, staff turnover rates have decreased.</p>
CORP.HR.01	Number of staff wellbeing events held (quarterly)			19	16			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only</p> <p>In Quarter 2, wellbeing promotion signposted staff to cost of living supports, including 'Midlothian Cares – Worrying about money'. On site visits by Capital Credit Union organised at Midlothian House; Fairfield House; Cherry Road Resource Centre and webinars from Money Advice Scotland on various financial topics including mortgages and insurance. Drop in sessions from Citizen Advice in Midlothian were highlighted to staff for advice and information on dealing with the cost of living and debt crisis management. Social Security Scotland benefits, school uniforms grants and Access Point support sessions were advertised to staff and managers. Affinity Connect offered a new course to staff – 'Understanding your Pension Tax Allowance' and pre-retirement courses were run in quarter 2. These courses will continue in quarter 3.</p> <p>Wellbeing and mental health awareness courses were held in house, including Trauma Level 1 &amp; 2 courses together with an SQA Coping Strategies Course from CLLE for staff. A Mindfulness course from HSCP was offered to NHS and</p>

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Note
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	
								<p>MLC employees. Various links/quizzes and surveys were offered to staff on alcohol awareness/ blood pressure and cholesterol/ active travel/walk the line from Ageing Well as well as Carer information from Vocal/Alzheimer's Scotland and Care UK.</p> <p>Health checks from Sports &amp; Leisure were held in Midlothian House, providing 1-1 support on various wellbeing topics. Blood pressure, lung capacity, weight and height measurements were provided to staff with signposting and information provided. Very positive feedback received and the health checks will continue at different work sites in quarter 3 and 4.</p> <p>The Edinburgh College Coaching Course started in quarter 2 and will continue into quarter 3. The course was well received by attendees. All the courses were provided free of charge to staff.</p>
CORP.HR.02	Number of staff attending wellbeing events (quarterly)			124	110			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only It is difficult to quantify the number of staff impacted by the promotion/activities of events that are externally hosted. For those that are delivered in-house, 110 staff attended in the last quarter.</p>
CORP.HR.03	Number of staff accessing non mandatory e-learning courses			1,346	1,588			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only</p>
CORP.HR.04	Number of staff accessing mandatory e-learning courses			699	660			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only There are now 6 mandatory courses with Records Management course now added.</p>
CORP.HR.05	Number of ongoing long term absence cases			140	131			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 131 long term absence cases are being supported by Human Resources across all directorates. 39 cases within People and Partnerships, 54 cases within Health and Social Care and 38 cases within Place.</p>
CORP.HR.06	Number of HR cases in progress			20	28			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 28 employee disciplinary cases are currently supported by Human Resources Business Partners.</p>
CORP.HR.07	Number of Occupational Health referrals via OHIO (quarterly)			140	104			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 104 Occupational Health referrals made this quarter in support of our employees. OH referrals can be made for a number of different reasons, but the primary reason for referring staff to OH is to apply preventative measures to</p>

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Note
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	
								support their physical and mental health and wellbeing and identify any supports required to facilitate employees to remain in work.
CORP.HR.08	Number of Physical Health referrals via OHIO (quarterly)			307	253		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Physiotherapy services offer up to 4 free sessions which can be accessed by the employee to receive treatment and advice for Musculoskeletal injuries and various health conditions to improve movement and mobility.
CORP.HR.09	Number of staff with over 15 years of service			1,173	1,177		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 24% of employees have over 15 years of service with Midlothian Council.
CORP.HR.10	Number of staff aged 16-30			658	767		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 15% of our workforce are aged 16 to 30.
CORP.HR.11	Number of staff aged 31-50			2,327	2,346		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 48% of our workforce is aged 31 to 50.
CORP.HR.12	Number of staff over 50			1,921	1,774		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 36% of our workforce are over 50 years old.
CORP.HR.13	Number of leavers (cumulative)			129	293		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 164 leavers in quarter 2.
CORP.HR.14	Percentage of staff that are Midlothian residents			66%	65%		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only
CORP3c	Corporate Indicator - The gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female - all council employees (LGBF)	2.86%	2.84%	2.39%	2.22%		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The gender pay gap measures the average female pay versus average male pay within the organisation. The figures show that the Council has more male staff at higher rates of pay by 2.22%.
CORP6	Corporate Indicator - Sickness Absence Days per Employee (All employees)	11.04	4.81	2.97	5.17		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Sickness absence days have increased slightly compared to last year. There are no identifiable trends causing the increase, either in short term or long term absences and work continues with each service area to review attendance levels and support those absent to return to work.
CORP6a	Corporate Indicator - Teachers Sickness Absence Days (LGBF)	5.62 days	2.10 days	1.51 days	2.20 days		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Sickness absence days have increased slightly compared to last year. There are no identifiable trends causing the increase, either in short term or long term absences and work continues with each service area to review attendance levels and support those absent to return to work.

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note
CORP6b	Corporate Indicator - Local Government Employees (except teachers) sickness absence days (LGBF)	13.20 days	5.92 days	3.55 days	6.37 days			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Sickness absence days have increased compared to that of last year. There are no identifiable trends in short term or long term absences and work continues with each service area to review attendance levels and support those absent to return to work.
CORP3bi	Total number of women employees in top 5%	120	109	108	113			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only

## Finance Priorities

- . Development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2028
- . Support the development of a financially robust transformation programme to achieve efficiencies
- . Inform the Capital Plan Prioritisation to ensure an affordable Capital Investment Strategy
- . Ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place











Finance Measures are all Annual Indicators included in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework

PI Code	PI
FINSUS1	Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue (LGBF)
FINSUS2	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue (LGBF)
FINSUS3	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund (LGBF)
FINSUS4	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account (LGBF)
FINSUS5	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure (LGBF)

















## Digital Services Priorities

- Review and refresh of the Council's Digital Strategy, including reprioritisation of projects to enable change and transformation
- Development of a Data Strategy and pilot projects such as the secure sharing and analysis of collective, operational level NHS & Council data
- Continued rollout of compliance and cyber security protective measures, including attainment of PSN and Cyber Essentials certification, and actioning any related recommendations
- Implementation of Microsoft O365 capabilities and applications to enable organisational efficiencies, collaboration and data driven decision making
- Delivering service improvements in frontline teams through projects such as the digital transformation of Neighbourhood Services
- Continue the roll-out of the Customer Services Platform solutions to promote channel shift
- Equipped for Learning: upgrade classroom Audio Visual estate with interactive smart screens and support the pilot of Virtual Class delivery
- Upgrading Call Centre digital infrastructure elements
- Refreshing / improving quality and coverage of corporate WiFi network
- Ensure all digital aspects of Council operations are well supported and operational

## Digital Services Measures

PI Code	PI	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note	
CORP.DIGITA L.01	Number of Customer Services platform implementations complete	4	4			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target Two new workflows went live on Council website in Q1: Contact Us and Grit Bins. Previously launched: Freedom of Information Requests and Replacement Certificates from Registrars.	10
CORP.DIGITA L.02	Number of Customer Services platform implementations in progress	5	6			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Currently in Development stage: Short Term lets. Replacement Bins. Missed Bins. SARs. Licencing (Private Hire Cars, Taxi Hire Cars, Processions).  At Analysis Stage: Free School Meals and Clothing Grants.	
CORP.DIGITA L.03	Number of Customer Services platform implementations planned	49	49			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only The CSP programme plan was refreshed in January 2023 and is due to be reviewed and refreshed at the beginning of Q3 again.	
CORP.DIGITA L.04	Number of Midlothian Council website visits (cumulative)	237,696	479,935			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 242,239 website visits this quarter. It should be noted that number of website visits is based on customers accepting analytics cookies therefore actual number of visits is suspected to be higher.	
CORP.DIGITA L.05	% of Office 365 (phase 1) digital project complete	60%	90%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Majority of users are now migrated. Planning for Phase 2 is underway with Business Case being developed.	100%















PI Code	PI	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note	
CORP.DIGITA L.06	% of AI pilot and information governance digital project complete	10%	10%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target OpenAI ChatGPT made available to Communications and Information Governance teams.	100%
CORP.DIGITA L.07	% of Customer services platform complete (includes IT work to implement foundations as well as services live)	30%	35%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target Base configuration complete and various workflows already live.	100%
CORP.DIGITA L.08	Number of classrooms Audio Visual upgraded as part of the equipped for learning phase 2 digital project	0	182			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Upgraded 182 panels (interactive smart boards) across 12 schools.	
CORP.DIGITA L.09	% of Neighbourhood services digital project complete	15%	20%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target CSP element of project scoped and initial prep work begun.	100%
CORP.DIGITA L.10	% of Data maturity digital project complete	5%	10%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target Initial kick off with SG & Data Orchard in September. Awaiting clarity on scope and resource required.	100%
CORP.DIGITA L.11	% of IT helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours	57%	49%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target The decrease in helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours can be attributed to the return of schools after the summer which resulted in a spike in helpdesk calls.  Due to some successful internal promotions and movements within the service, 60% of the Helpdesk team are new and are currently in their onboarding/training stage. This means that calls may be slower to be resolved but it is anticipated that this indicator will be showing higher Q3 into Q4.	60%
CORP.DIGITA L.12	% completion rate of cyber security training	20%	20%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target Minimal progress made this quarter.	80%
CORP.DIGITA L.13	Progress of Cyber Essentials and PSN implemented	100%	100%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> On Target Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus Certification fully attained. PSN Audit complete and certification achieved.	100%

## Corporate Resources Priorities

- Redesign of business processes to achieve efficiencies across all of Corporate Resources
- Making more use of current applications to enable self-service e.g. viewing Council Tax and rent accounts online
- Continued upgrade of applications

## Corporate Resources Measures

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Annual Target 2023/24	
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend		Note
CORP.CRES.01	Total amount granted from Scottish Welfare Fund for crisis grants (cumulative)			£90,376.00	£181,536.00			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only £181,536.00 granted. £91,160.00 granted in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date expenditure.</p>	
CORP.CRES.02	Total amount granted from Scottish Welfare Fund for community care grants (cumulative)			£149,197.20	£293,232.80			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only £293,232.80 granted. £144,035.60 granted in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date expenditure.</p>	
CORP.CRES.03	Number of Scottish welfare fund crisis grant applications received – (cumulative)			1,783	3,513			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 3,513 crisis grant applications received this year. 1,730 received in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>	
CORP.CRES.04	Number of Scottish welfare fund crisis grant applications awarded (cumulative)			817	1,635			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 47% of crisis grant applications have been awarded. 818 applications have been awarded in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>	
CORP.CRES.05	Number of Scottish welfare fund crisis grant applications declined (cumulative)			24	61			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 1% of crisis grant applications have been declined by the customer. 37 applications have been declined in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>	
CORP.CRES.06	Number of Scottish welfare fund crisis grant applications ineligible (cumulative)			942	1,817			<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 52% of crisis grant applications were ineligible. Grant applications deemed as ineligible are in general those that have exceeded the</p>	













PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24			Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	
								<p>maximum amount of 3 applications in a year or customers who do not meet the set criteria for the award. 875 applications were ineligible in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>
CORP.CRES.07	Number of Scottish welfare fund community care grants received (cumulative)			364	749		↑	<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 749 community care grants received this year. 385 were received in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>
CORP.CRES.08	Number of Scottish welfare fund community care grants awarded (cumulative)			138	279		↑	<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 37% of community care grants have been awarded. 141 grants have been awarded in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>
CORP.CRES.09	Number of Scottish welfare fund community care grants declined (cumulative)			0	6		↑	<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 1% of community care grants were declined by the customer. 6 grants have been declined in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>
CORP.CRES.10	Number of Scottish welfare fund community care grants ineligible (cumulative)			226	464		↑	<p><b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 62% of community care grants were ineligible. Grant applications deemed as ineligible are in general those that have exceeded the maximum amount of 3 applications in a year or customers who do not meet the set criteria for the award. 238 grants were ineligible in Q2.</p> <p>This is a cumulative figure showing year to date applications.</p>
CORP.CRES.12	% of customers paying by direct debit			77.88%	77.28%		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only
CORP.CRES.13	Number of customers receiving help/support via housing benefits (quarterly)			3,139	3,097		↓	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only
CORP11	New Indicator - The proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund Budget Spent (LGBF)			45%	49%		↑	<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only 49% of the revised Scottish Welfare budget spent up to and including Q2. (90% of original budget spent).

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note	
CSE.LPI.03	Average processing time for new claims (internally calculated) (quarterly)	48 days	45 days	40 days	46 days			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target Resource continues to be prioritised to process Scottish Welfare Funds as soon as these are received. This has meant that processing times for new benefit applications have experienced some delays. However, steps to recruit additional staff have been approved by Council.	25 days
CSE.LPI.04	Average processing time for change of circumstances (internally calculated) (quarterly)	11 days	17 days	12 days	17 days			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target Resource continues to be prioritised to process Scottish Welfare Funds as soon as these are received. This has meant that processing times for change in circumstances forms have also experienced some delays. However, steps to recruit additional staff has been approved by Council.	8 days
RHM.r.01.1	% of in-year Council Tax collected ytd (cumulative)	94.5%	54.8%	27.8%	52.4%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target 2.4% down of last year for September. This is due to the fact that there are no SCLA payments for this year for bands A to D and those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. The current figure is 0.3% down from September 2021/22 and is 0.2% down from 2020/21. However, at this point there is no indication that overall Council Tax collection across the year would not be achieved to target/expectation.	95.2%
RHM.r.02.1	% of current Housing Rent arrears (total)	10.78%		11.21%	11.77%			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Off Target Figure on 03/09/2023 is £2,626,310.15. Figures from the end of September are unavailable due to the new Housing Rent system.	7.5%
RHM.r.04.5	Number of Council Tax transactions received online (quarterly)	34421	8892	7584	3999			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Method of reporting has now changed, now extracting a detailed breakdown of payments from Web Public totals.	
RHM.r.04.6	Number of Rent transactions received online (quarterly)	9692	2415	2450	2551			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only	
RHM.r.04.8	Number of tenants receiving help with housing costs through Universal Credit.	31041		8184	N/A			<b>Q2 23/24:</b> Data only Information not available due to new Housing Rent system.	

## Legal and Governance Priorities

- Delivery of the 2024 UK Government elections including voter Identity implementation
- Review of the Council's governance framework with revised Standing Orders and Associated Scheme(s)
- Implementation of the new Subject Access Request portal
- Development of the new Procurement Strategy, with a focus on social value, the introduction of a Council wide approach to Community Benefits, and an increased focus on local procurement
- Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, undertake a review of Contract and Grant Management

## Legal and Governance Measures

PI Code	PI	2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24				Annual Target 2023/24
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note	
CORP.LEG.01	Number of Freedom of Information requests received (Council wide) (quarterly)	1,337	257	345	342			Q2 23/24: Data only	
CORP.LEG.02	% of Freedom of Information requests complete within Statutory timescale (20 working days)			70%	N/A			Q2 23/24: Data not available	100%
CORP.LEG.03	Number Subject Access Requests received (council wide)	171	44	37	49			Q2 23/24: Data only	
CORP.LEG.04	% of Subject Access Requests complete within Statutory timescale (30 calendar days)			100%	100%			Q2 23/24: On Target	100%
CORP.LEG.05	Number of regulated procurement exercises undertaken			22	3			Q2 23/24: Data only	
CORP.LEG.06	Number of legal commercial transactions			4	14			Q2 23/24: Data only	

# Published Local Government Benchmarking Framework – Corporate Solutions



## Corporate Services

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
CORP1	Corporate Indicator - Central Support services as a % of Total Gross expenditure (LGBF)	6.32%	4.45%	4.27%	4.09%	3.8%	3.79%		21/22 Rank 14 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 15 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 19 (Third Quartile) 18/19 Rank 15 (Second Quartile). 17/18 Rank 18 (Third Quartile) 16/17 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile).
CORP3b	Corporate Indicator - The Percentage of council employees in top 5% of earners that are women (LGBF)	47.0%	49.0%	49.2%	51.0%	55.1%	55.0%	56.9%	21/22 Rank 23 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 21 (Third Quartile) 19/20 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile) 18/19 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile). 17/18 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile). 16/17 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile).
CORP3c	Corporate Indicator - The gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female - all council employees (LGBF)	2.97%	2.32%	3.94%	3.06%	2.7%	2.52%	2.86%	21/22 Rank 14 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 16 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 18 (Third Quartile). 17/18 Rank 14 (Second Quartile). 16/17 Rank 14 (Second Quartile).
CORP4	Corporate Indicator - Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (LGBF)	£10.76	£10.17	£7.79	£6.43	£6.29	£8.54	£11.70	21/22 Rank 23 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 19 (Third Quartile). 17/18 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile). 16/17 Rank 19 (Third Quartile).
CORP6a	Corporate Indicator - Teachers Sickness Absence Days (LGBF)	4.94 days	4.59 days	5.15 days	5.80 days	3.47 days	4.61 days	5.62 days	21/22 Rank 6 (Top Quartile) 20/21 Rank 9 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 5 (TOP Quartile). 17/18 Rank 4 (TOP Quartile). 16/17 Rank 3 (Top Quartile).

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
CORP6b	Corporate Indicator - Local Government Employees (except teachers) sickness absence days (LGBF)	9.64 days	8.59 days	9.86 days	11.19 days	8.76 days	11.22 days	13.20 days	21/22 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 12 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 4 (Top Quartile). 17/18 Rank 2 (Top Quartile). 16/17 Rank 7 (Top Quartile).
CORP7	Corporate Indicator - Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year % (LGBF)	94.5%	95.1%	95.1%	95.1%	94.2%	94.2%	95.0%	21/22 Rank 28 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 24 (Third Quartile) 19/20 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile) 18/19 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile). 17/18 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile). 16/17 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile).
CORP8	Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days (LGBF) (quarterly)	87.4%	93.1%	91.1%	89.6%	92.3%	93.1%	90.0%	21/22 Rank 18 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 19 (Third Quartile) 19/20 Rank 23 (Third Quartile) 18/19 Rank 22 (Third Quartile). 17/18 Rank 18 (Third Quartile). 16/17 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile).
CORP9	New Indicator - Percentage of Crisis Grant decisions within 1 day (LGBF)			98.75%	99.5%	99.75%	99%		21/22 Rank 5 (Top Quartile)
CORP10	New Indicator - Percentage of Community Care Grant decisions within 15 days (LGBF)			100%	100%	99.75%	99.75%		21/22 Rank 3 (Top Quartile)
CORP11	New Indicator - The proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund Budget Spent (LGBF)	95.92%	87.05%	83.07%	50.97%	67.67%	96.89%		21/22 Rank 21 (Third Quartile)
CORP12	New Indicator - Proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment Funding spent (LGBF)		99.8%	110.04%	92.13%	87.26%	90.7%		21/22 Rank 22 (Third Quartile)

## Culture and Leisure

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
C&L2	Corporate Indicator - NET Cost per library visit (LGBF)	£1.12	£1.38	£0.84	£1.20	£3.92	£3.08		21/22 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 5 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 3 (Top Quartile). 17/18 Rank 6 (Top Quartile). 16/17 Rank 3 (Top Quartile).
C&L5a	Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries (LGBF)	66.67%	66%	69.07%	62.4%	64.07%	66%	66%	21/22 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile) 19/20 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile) 18/19 Rank 28 (Bottom Quartile). 17/18 Rank 30 (Bottom Quartile). 16/17 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile). 15/16 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile). 14/15 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile).

## Economic Development and Planning

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
ECON4	Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises (LGBF)	12.85%	18.07%	15.44%	14.68%	16.81%	13.78%		21/22 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile) 20/21 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile) 19/20 Rank 30 (Bottom Quartile) 18/19 Rank 30 (Bottom Quartile). 17/18 Rank 26 (Bottom Quartile). 16/17 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile).



## Environmental Services

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
ENV5	Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population	£17,703.00	£17,837.72	£14,328.00	£13,704.00	£15,336.00	£21,106.36		21/22 Rank 17 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 6 (Top Quartile) 19/20 Rank 2 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 3 (Top Quartile). 17/18 Rank 6 (Top Quartile). 16/17 Rank 3 (Top Quartile).
ENV5a	Corporate Indicator - Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizen Advice per 1000 population (LGBF)	£6,309.00	£5,405.71	£5,193.00	£4,925.00	£6,357.00	£5,424.36		21/22 Rank 14 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 17 (Third Quartile) 19/20 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 13 (Second Quartile). 17/18 Rank 13 (Second Quartile). 16/17 Rank 16 (Second Quartile).
ENV5b	Corporate Indicator - Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population. (LGBF)	£11,394.00	£12,432.01	£9,135.00	£8,779.00	£8,979.00	£15,682.00		21/22 Rank 20 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 7 (Top Quartile) 19/20 Rank 4 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 3 (Top Quartile). 17/18 Rank 7 (Top Quartile). 16/17 Rank 5 (Top Quartile).

## Financial Sustainability

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
FINSUS1	Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue (LGBF)	34.1%	33.1%	34.7%	42.1%	57.7%	37.93%		21/22 Rank 4 (Top Quartile) 20/21 Rank 3 (Top Quartile) 19/20 Rank 3 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 4 (Top Quartile) 17/18 Rank 4 (Top Quartile) 16/17 Rank 4 (Top Quartile).
FINSUS2	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue (LGBF)	4.3%	2.1%	2%	2%	3.81%	2.46%		21/22 Rank 19 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 9 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 21 (Third Quartile) 18/19 Rank 22 (Third Quartile) 17/18 Rank 20 (Third Quartile) 16/17 Rank 10 (Second Quartile).

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
FINSUS3	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund (LGBF)	3.56%	3.17%	3.07%	2.69%	2.03%	1.08%		21/22 Rank 1 (Top Quartile) 20/21 Rank 2 (Top Quartile) 19/20 Rank 2 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 2 (Top Quartile) 17/18 Rank 3 (Top Quartile) 16/17 Rank 2 (Top Quartile).
FINSUS4	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account (LGBF)	36.1%	35.4%	37.3%	36.9%	37.5%	38.27%		21/22 Rank 24 (Third Quartile) 20/21 Rank 24 (Third Quartile) 19/20 Rank 24 (Third Quartile) 18/19 Rank 24 (Third Quartile) 17/18 Rank 22 (Third Quartile) 16/17 Rank 21 (Third Quartile).
FINSUS5	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure (LGBF)	101.55%	100.91%	100.24%	100.25%	99.81%	99%		21/22 Rank 16 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 5 (Top Quartile) 18/19 Rank 5 (Top Quartile) 17/18 Rank 2 (Top Quartile) 16/17 Rank 2 (Top Quartile).

## Housing Services

Code	Title	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
HSN1b	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year (LGBF)	6.39%	6.92%	7.16%	7.91%	8.29%	8.08%	9%	21/22 Rank 11 (Second Quartile) 20/21 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 19/20 Rank 13 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 11 (Second Quartile). 17/18 Rank 12 (Second Quartile). 16/17 Rank 13 (Second Quartile).
HSN2	Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids (LGBF)	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	21/22 Rank 5 (Top Quartile) 20/21 Rank 4 (Top Quartile) 19/20 Rank 12 (Second Quartile) 18/19 Rank 4 (Top Quartile). 17/18 Rank 6 (Top Quartile). 16/17 Rank 4 (Top Quartile).

# Corporate Solutions Q2 23/24 Performance report

***Corporate Solutions will “deliver forward looking services fit for a modern 21st Century organisation and put the citizen at the centre of service redesign”.***

Corporate Solutions encompasses Human Resources, Digital, Customer & Communication, Legal & Governance, Corporate Resources, Transformation PMO and Continuous Improvement.

Corporate Solutions supports the whole Council delivering services to internal and external stakeholders; playing a key role in the delivery of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and ensuring organisational compliance, developing the workforce, and advancing transformation.

## Transformation and opportunities

### **Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028)**

We are committed to building on the learning and new ways of working that were adopted during the pandemic, and renew our focus on delivering our key priorities at the most local level possible. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of our new 5 year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main aims:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes.
- No child or household live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The pandemic has accelerated the financial challenges that we are facing. Reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges and changes that we will face.

The Blueprint sets out our challenges that need to be addressed over the next five years. We will continue to work to address the inequalities that our communities face, respond to the demands of being one of the fastest growing local authorities in mainland Scotland, and delivering our vision of being a great, green place to grow.

## **Transformation Blueprint Objectives**

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

The Council's transformation blueprint provides the framework for opportunities to change the way services are improved and delivered to be more efficient. Corporate Solutions has a particular focus on the delivery and acceleration of the Capital Programme, delivering digital first approaches, embedding automation to improve customer access to services and hybrid working.

# Customer Engagement

Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams below:

Short term:

- Continued rollout and implementation of Customer Service Platform
- Reviewing service delivery all across Contact Centre teams
- Increased use of eBooks
- Active promotion of library space, for Council and partner services, and enable out of hours access for communities

Medium term:

- Rollout of the Hub & Spoke model with libraries providing and facilitating increased local service provision
- Customer Engagement Strategy development including revised communications and engagement plan

Long term:

- Increase income within Registrars through alternative ceremony offer
- Community and school library redesign; including the mobile library service

## Key achievements this quarter:

### Summer Reading Challenge

This quarter was a hugely successful year for the Summer Reading Challenge. The theme was Ready, Set, Read! based around the power of play, sport and games. Over 1,000 children signed up for the challenge (a 15% increase on last year) with 55% of those completing the challenge (a 4% increase on the numbers finishing last year). Nearly 130 events were attended by over 4,000 children and their families and over 21,000 items of junior stock were issued over July and August. Libraries saw 668 new child memberships which reflects the positive engagement of the Summer Reading Challenge.

*"Thank you for a lovely afternoon at the Summer Reading Challenge presentation. What an incredible turnout and a wonderful way to celebrate the children's reading achievements. It is so heartening to see Dalkeith Library being a central hub for the community; long may that continue. Well done to the team and thank you again."*

*"The Summer Reading Challenge is a family tradition now! We love it!"*

*"They (children) love seeing their name on the chart"*

*"Was great coming to the library cause I get bored during the holidays, and loved collecting the stickers, and I won a prize for the most basketballs in the net"*

## **Lend and Mend Hub**

August saw the official launch of Gorebridge Library's Lend and Mend Hub with 30 people attending the opening event. The Hub provides free access to sewing machines and other equipment to allow communities to repair, re-use and upcycle their own items. Gorebridge is one of nine library partners across Scotland in a project funded by the John Lewis Partnership's Circular Future Fund and managed through SLIC (the Scottish Library and Information Council).

Taking a co-design approach, the hubs have been developed with insight and expertise from local teams and library members to ensure services are tailored to community needs. Funding granted from The John Lewis Partnership's £1m Circular Future Fund has been used for the equipment, training and space upgrades needed to deliver the projects. Following their launch, each library hub will also introduce an education programme to support new skills development, helping to reduce inequality through equitable access to resources. The first focus will be on 'mending', and several workshops and sessions have already been held with groups such as the SHRUB Cooperative, to teach people the first steps of repairing and re-making.

This is an example of how the library service is transforming and thriving, responding to community needs and giving people access to resources that they may not otherwise have. In line with the Council's commitment to Net Zero by 2030 and the Climate Change Strategy, the promotion of circular economy activities can change the way we use and consume to make the way we live greener, as well as upskill residents and foster new social connections. It is anticipated that this pilot will help develop a long-term model for libraries to be a hub of circular economy activities and work is ongoing to identify external funding to roll out Lend and Mend in other locations within the county.

## **Channel shift**

Channel shift work continues with the introduction of the 'Contact Us' module and grit bin service request application. Several other service requests are in test phase and due to go live in the coming weeks focused around waste services. Data shows a slight decrease in telephone calls and a small increase in customer contact received digitally. Overall, customer contact volumes remain consistent compared to those figures for the same period last year. Call abandonment rate has improved to 5% this quarter from 9% in Q4. This abandonment rate calculates the total number of calls that come into the call queue and then leave the queue. There is no ability to ask why calls are abandoned - callers may choose to hang up because they would rather not wait, or they have called at an inopportune time. Front-end messages are updated on contact centre lines to provide information to the customer waiting, for example, if a whole street of bins had been missed, this would be reflected in the front-end message. Lines also have messages directing people online to carry out transactional activity.

## Communications and promotion

Our communication and marketing team continue to support services across the Council by promoting key initiatives on our social media platforms, news releases, website and community radio channel. Successes this quarter include:

**Encouraging eligible families to apply for free school meals and clothing grants** through a dedicated communications campaign. Short videos were created with school children and the Council's food nutritionist and posted across all social media platforms. Facebook and Twitter posts featured key messages pointing people back to the Free School Meals/Clothing Grant webpages to apply. As a result, in terms of the webforms being received, the majority of those were applications for these supports. The best performing Facebook post reached 8,077 views and 5,635 views via Twitter.

**Maximising participation of the annual summer reading challenge** in libraries. The best performing Facebook post reached 15,621 news feeds with 589 people engaging, and this year had a 15% increase in participation in the challenge as noted above.

**Increasing application rates for short term lets** through clear communication on our website and social media platform. The best performing Facebook post reached 7,719 news feed and 1,480 views via Twitter.

### Promotion of customer consultations and surveys including:

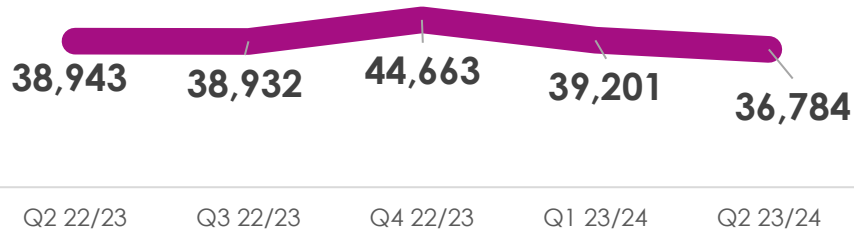
- Fostering campaign (led externally and supported by the Council's communications service).
- Auchendinny to Rosewell stretch of Core Path (best performing social media post reached 80,468 news feeds with 7,824 engagements).
- Newtongrange former pool site (a series of scheduled Facebook posts publicising an in-person consultation event and signposting to an online questionnaire had a total reach of 112,814).
- Midlothian Local Development Plan engagement actions (Facebook posts for the development plan, with a total reach of 22,066, engagement rate 2,825 (12%) and Facebook posts for open space strategy, with a total reach of 16,722, total engagement was 759 (4.5%)).



# Customer Engagement – performance measures

## Customer contact

Number of Contact Centre calls



**78%**  
of calls in Q2  
answered within  
120 seconds

## Social Media

21.2k Midlothian  
Council Facebook  
followers

17.9k @midgov  
twitter followers

**18.5%** Customer  
contact received **digitally**  
(webform versus telephone)  
from 14.1% in Q1

**12,855**

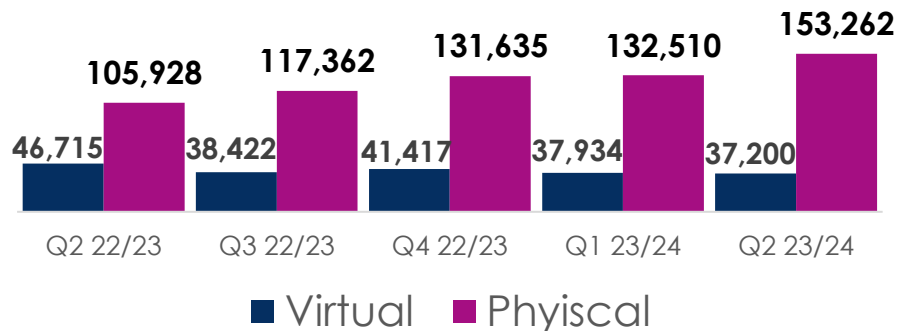
Email contact handled in  
Q2 (decrease from 13,583 in Q1)

**2,588**

Contact Centre  
Webforms received  
(decrease from 3,106 in Q1)

## Library services

Number of Library visits



**1,447** Library events held in Q2

Number of Library memberships



**961** Children's library initiatives taken place in Q2

**478**

Library customers supported with digital queries in Q2

# Human Resources

To achieve the Council's strategic priorities, we recognise that people are our most important asset. Our workforce strategy highlights that we need to attract the best talent, grow our own talent ensuring there are clear progression pathways, ensure our workforce feel engaged, valued and motivated and importantly, empower our staff to enable them to reach their full potential.

Our workforce vision is to work as **One Council** using our knowledge, experiences and sense of shared endeavour to collaborate and think creatively and innovatively so that our people can deliver life-changing impacts for our communities. Our new ways of working mark a clear desire for cultural change and a shift towards a more agile and modern operating model.

**Our workforce are key to the delivery of the Transformation Blueprint. In order to ensure a thriving workforce areas of focus for 2023/24 will be:**

- Investment in Organisational Development through a focused programme of work
- Completion of workforce plans in all services, with a particular focus in at risk areas
- Rollout of the Wellbeing Strategy
- Delivery of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy

## Key achievements this quarter:

### Wellbeing

Work continues on the development of our Wellbeing Strategy which will focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing.

The rolling programme of Wellness@Midlothian initiatives continues this quarter to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff. Wellbeing events and initiatives including on-site visits, webinars, e-learning and training have been organised for the remainder of 2023. The coaching programme rolled out this quarter was well received and resource is being explored to build on this programme and provide additional support to managers.

During July to September 2023, 16 wellbeing events were held internally and externally covering cost of living supports, wellbeing and mental health awareness, health checks and coaching. 110 staff attended various events organised in house. Events included on site visits by Capital Credit Union,

webinars from Money Advice Scotland, drop in sessions from Citizen Advice in Midlothian, Trauma Level 1 & 2 courses, SQA Coping Strategies Course, a Mindfulness course delivered by Health and Social Care Partnership, health checks from Sport & Leisure and the first tranche of our Edinburgh College Coaching Course.

The HR team have been working with procurement to renew the contracts for physiotherapy provision for staff and the non-financial benefits platform. Non-financial benefits will be relaunched during Q3 to enable savings for the Christmas period.

### 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce - workforce strategy, recruitment and retention

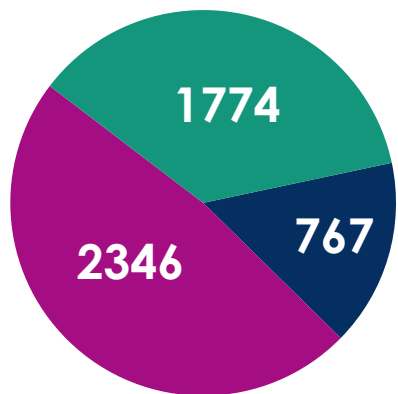
Activity is ongoing to develop and implement the work streams under our workforce strategy, and progress Blueprint theme 2 '21<sup>st</sup> century workforce'. A consultation has taken place with the Trade Unions on what potential changes needs to take place to disciplinary, resolution, maximising attendance at work, performance improvement policies and these will be included in the transformation workstream plan.

The introduction of shared cost additional voluntary contributions has been approved and work is now underway with procurement and Employment and Reward for implementation. When finalised, a communications plan will support the roll out to all staff to encourage take up to the scheme.

A new programme for welcome, induction, long service recognition and leavers has been developed. This includes a refreshed face to face induction programme for all new staff and existing staff in changed roles; and will be supported by a range of online resources provided at onboarding. 2024 will also see the introduction of long service recognition and a revised approach to learning from employees exiting the organisation, enabling us to learn from employee experiences, understand the reasons for leaving and promote Midlothian as an employer of choice.

# Human Resources – performance measures

## Workforce demographics



No. of staff by age group

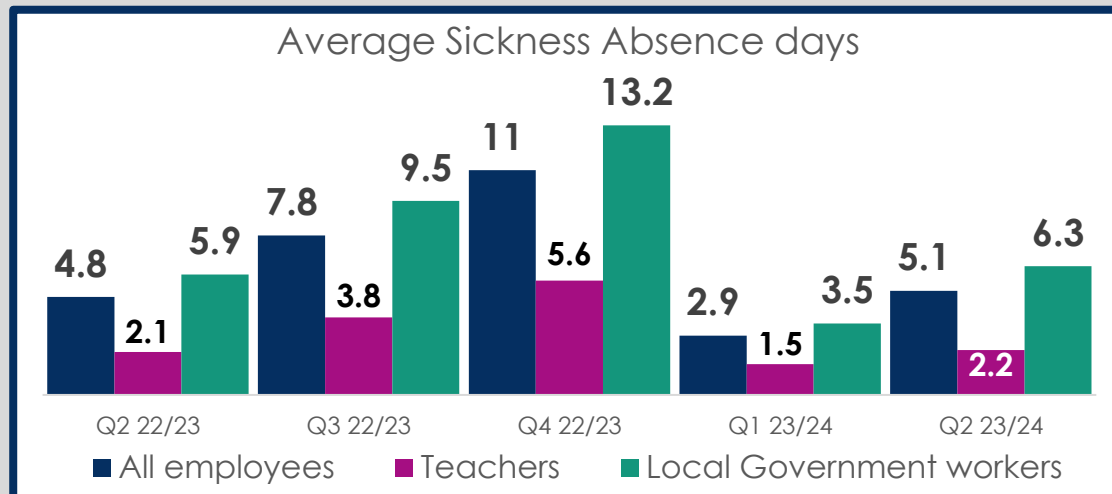
■ 16-30 ■ 31-50 ■ over 50

**65%**  
of employees are  
Midlothian Residents

**1,177 (24%)**  
Employees with over  
15 years of service

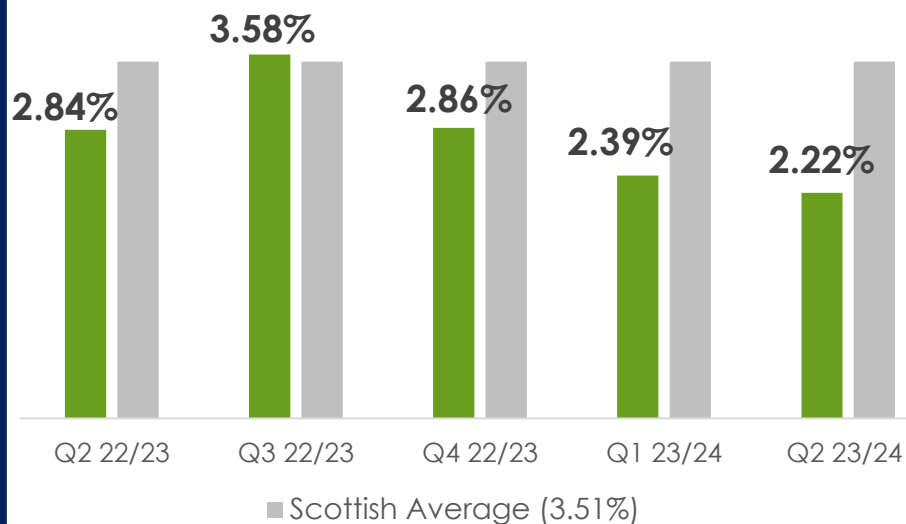
**293**  
Leavers by Q2  
(cumulative figure)

## Employee Health and Wellbeing



**113** female employees in top 5% (108 in Q1 23/24)

Gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female (all employees)



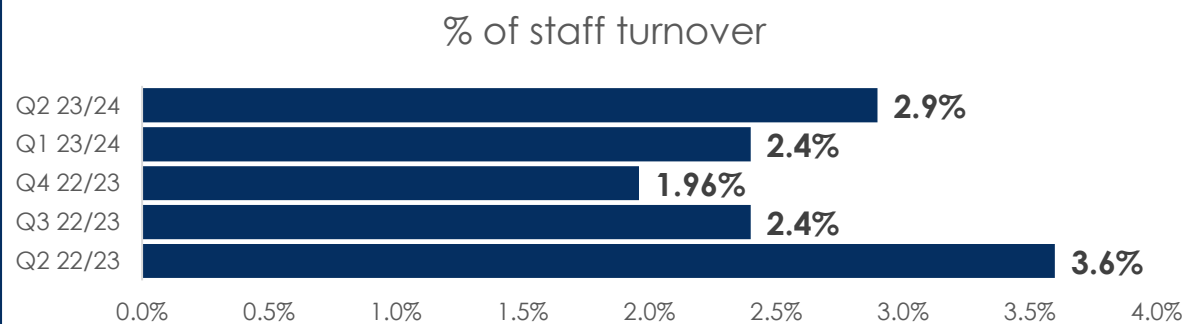
**131**  
Long term  
absence  
cases  
ongoing

**104**  
Occupational  
Health referrals  
via OHIO  
(decrease from  
140 in Q1)

**28**  
HR cases in  
progress

**253**  
Physiotherapy  
referrals made  
(decrease from  
307 in Q1)

- **16** wellbeing events held this quarter with 110 attendees
- **660** employees accessing **mandatory ELearning courses**
- **1,588** employees accessing **non-mandatory ELearning courses**



# Digital

## Digital solutions underpin the Transformation Blueprint. Key work streams for 23/24 include:

- Review and refresh of the Council's Digital Strategy, including reprioritisation of projects to enable change and transformation
- Development of a Data Strategy and pilot projects such as the secure sharing and analysis of collective, operational level NHS & Council data
- Continued rollout of compliance and cyber security protective measures, including attainment of PSN and Cyber Essentials certification, and actioning any related recommendations
- Implementation of Microsoft O365 capabilities and applications to enable organisational efficiencies, collaboration and data driven decision making
- Delivering service improvements in frontline teams through projects such as digital transformation of Neighbourhood Services
- Continue the roll-out of the Customer Services Platform to promote channel shift
- Equipped for Learning: upgrade classroom Audio Visual estate with interactive smart screens and support the pilot of Virtual Class delivery
- Upgrading Call Centre digital infrastructure elements
- Refreshing / improving quality and coverage of corporate WiFi network
- Ensure all digital aspects of Council operations are well supported and operational

## Key achievements this quarter:

The Office 365 rollout programme continues this quarter with core applications deployed to 50% of all council users after the delivery of multiple cross Council employee training sessions. The launch of the expanded MS teams functionality creates department and project channels for collaboration and file sharing. Efficiency tools have been launched including planner and whiteboard. Linkage (federation) of Microsoft account with NHS and other local authorities enabling chat, video-calling, and efficient calendar appointment scheduling (free/busy status visibility).

As part of the equipped for learning project, 182 panels (interactive smart boards) were upgraded across 12 schools this quarter.

**Cyber Security resilience:** Qualys scanning completed to identify and reduce vulnerabilities across the network.

**Core Infrastructure improvements this quarter:**

- Education access and utilisation of the internet is now more secure via the *LightSpeed* roll-out which blocks inappropriate websites, and alerts staff to any potentially concerning internet searches/usage from pupils. As of Q2, 96% of devices across Education are now running Lightspeed.
- CITRIX environment fully upgraded to provide enhanced performance and security.
- Replacement of ageing air con units in the Fairfield and Midlothian comms rooms now significantly reduces the risk of critical outage due to overheating server equipment.
- Replacement of the ageing and out of support WiFi hardware giving improved coverage and performance across Midlothian House and Fairfield House.
- Successful upgrade to new hyperconverged hardware (Corporate Nutanix) and migration of 130 servers.
- New switching technologies successfully installed to support the upcoming upgrade and hardware replacement for Commvault backup system.
- New modular units have been cabled for networking and telephony in Kings Park, Rosewell, Roslin and LWHSC.

# Digital – performance measures

## Key Digital projects

**90%**

of Office 365 (phase 1)  
project complete

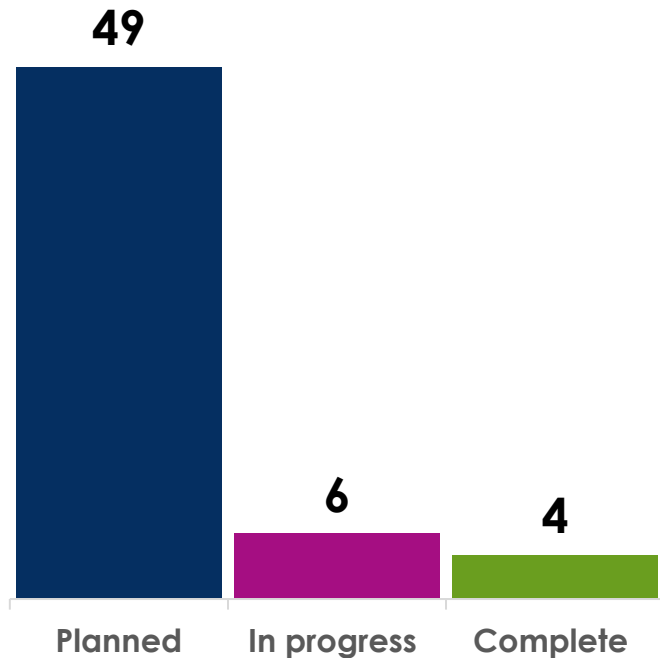
**35%**

of total CSP (IT foundation  
and service modules)  
complete

Equipped for Learning

**182** panels (interactive smart boards) were upgraded across 12 schools this quarter.

Progress of total number of Customer Service Platform modules



## Service and Cyber security performance

**242,239**

Midlothian Council  
**Website visits** this  
quarter (increased by  
4,543 since Q1)

% of IT helpdesk incidents  
complete within 48 hours

**57%**

**49%**

Q1 23/24

Q2 23/24

**20%** of cyber security  
training complete

**100%**

of Cyber Essentials and PSN  
implemented

# Corporate Resources

## Key priorities for the service in 2023/24

- Redesign of business processes to achieve efficiencies across all of Corporate Resources
- Making more use of current applications to enable self-service e.g. viewing Council Tax and rent accounts online
- Continued upgrade of applications

## Key achievements this quarter:

As part of the UK government's support to consumers with their energy costs this winter via the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) and Alternative Fuel Payments (AFP), Business Services successfully administered these schemes this quarter through verification of applications against the criteria set by UK government, approval/rejection of application and payments to successful applicants. Over 7300 direct payments were made for Free School Meals during holidays, Energy Bill Support Scheme, Ukrainian Host Payments and Business Covid Recovery Grants.

Work continues for the rollout of invoice approval processes. Fushiebridge Depot was the most recent high volume invoice service to fully onboard to invoice approval in Q2, and work to onboard Fleet Services and Property Maintenance is taking place now. Moving away from paper-based invoicing to invoice approval system management allows for a greater level of audit, performance management and data, leading to more up to date financial monitoring and real time reporting. The Business Applications Team continue to work with Scottish Government's e-commerce team on next steps for the e-invoicing programme and onboarding of suppliers to this service. Currently, the rate of invoices paid on time across the Council is an average of 92% each quarter (target is 95%). For Q2, over 41k invoices were paid in total and the average no of days an invoice was paid was 11.8 days.

This quarter our Operational Support team worked closely with Housing Services to review and enhance the information published on our website with the aim of improving customer access to information and reducing the volume of enquiry type calls received.

The Revenues and Benefits team continue to support the cost of living crisis. Requests for crisis funding continue to remain consistently high, with 49% of the revised Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget allocated in Q2. (90% of the original budget). 3,513 applications have been received for Crisis Grants this year (1,730 during Q2). 749 received for Community Care Grants (385 during Q2). This demonstrates the significant challenge faced by our communities. The newly approved SWF processing team will not only allow the team to respond and address the current backlog of other processing activities but also analyse the reasons for the high number of applications and refusals to identify preventative activity to mitigate people reaching this crisis point.

The percentage of current housing rent arrears sits at 11.77%, a slight increase from this period last year of 10.45%. In year Council tax collected year to date is 52.4% showing a decrease from collection rates this time last year of 54.8%.

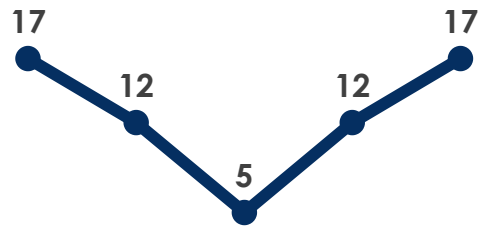


# Corporate Resources – performance measures

## Revenues and Benefits

### Average processing times (days)

Change of circumstances



New claims

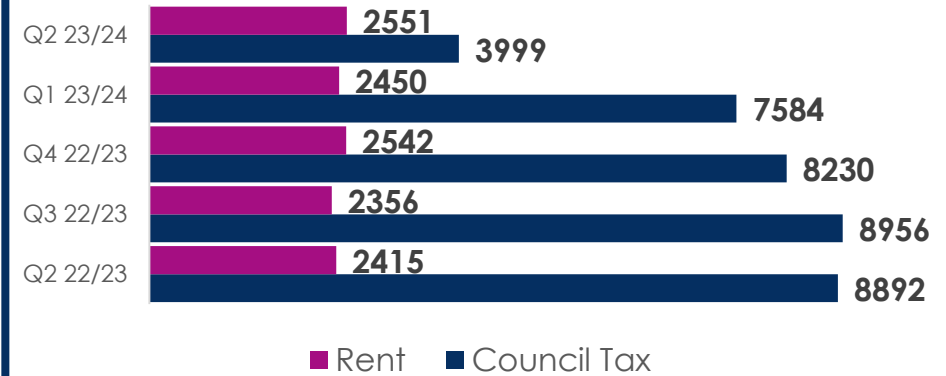


Q2 22/23 Q3 22/23 Q4 22/23 Q1 23/24 Q2 23/24

Q2 22/23 Q3 22/23 Q4 22/23 Q1 23/24 Q2 23/24

**77.28%** of Revenue and Benefits customer paying by **direct debit**

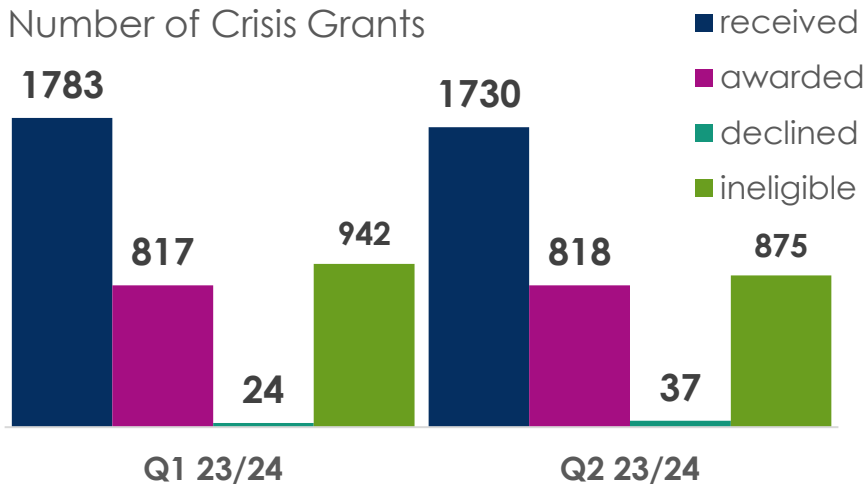
Number of online transactions



## Scottish Welfare Fund

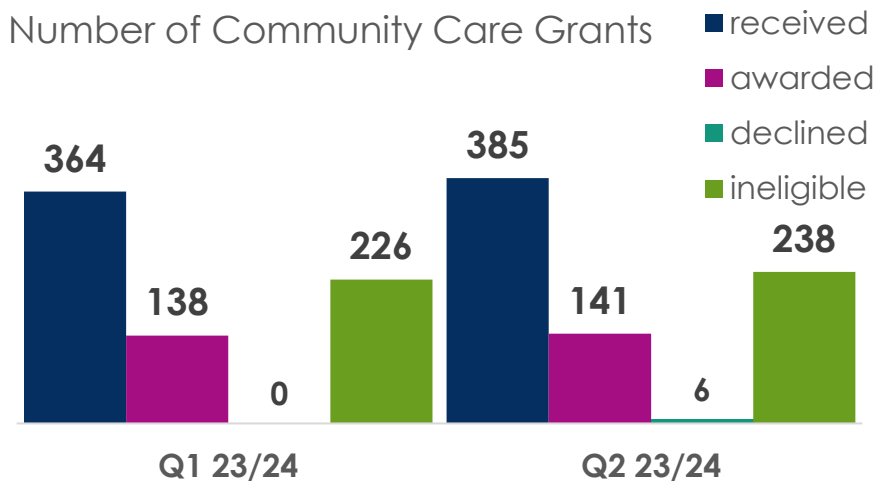
**£181,536** granted from Scottish Welfare fund for **crisis grants** **£293,232** granted for **community care grants** up to Q2.

Number of Crisis Grants



**49%** of Scottish Welfare Fund budget spent this year.

Number of Community Care Grants



Grant applications deemed as ineligible are in general those that have exceeded the maximum amount of 3 applications in a year or customers who do not meet the set criteria for the award.

# Legal and Governance

## Key priorities for the service in 2023/24

- Delivery of the 2024 UK Government elections including voter Identity implementation
- Review of the Council's governance framework with revised Standing Orders and Associated Scheme(s)
- Implementation of the new Subject Access Request portal
- Development of the new Procurement Strategy, with a focus on social value, the introduction of a Council wide approach to Community Benefits, and an increased focus on local procurement
- Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, undertake a review of Contract and Grant Management

## Key achievements this quarter:

**Legal:** This quarter, legal services negotiated and concluded 3 settlement agreements via ACAS in respect of 3 Employment Tribunal complaints. Section 75 agreements were settled for Newbyres, Gorebridge for 96 homes and a small-scale housing development at Roberston Bank, Gorebridge with in house legal fee received. In addition, 3 land sales for garden sales were completed, 1 minute of waiver, 1 tree preservation order, 1 charging order and the completion of 4 house purchases on the open market to support the Council's social housing programme.

Attendance in court to protect Council's interests and to deliver suitable outcomes for children and vulnerable adults and input was provided to the Mental Health Law Review consultation.

**Procurement:** The Procurement Service welcomed a new Interim Procurement Manager to lead the team this quarter after almost a 12-month vacancy in this role. Significant work has been undertaken since this appointment was made including:

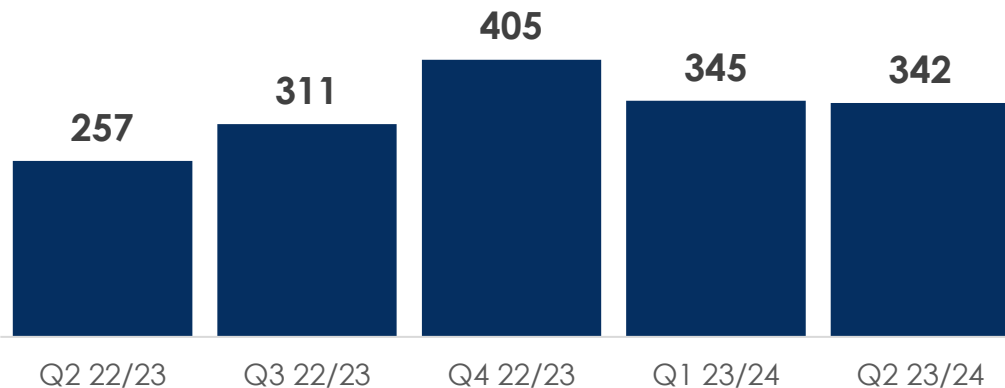
- An overhaul of the Contract Database
- Procurement have researched and investigated the use of a Concession contract, identifying and benchmarked a suitable tender and prepared all necessary tender documentation including suitable Terms and Conditions with support from legal services.
- The Council's standard Terms and Conditions for all other contracts have been updated with support from legal services.
- The procurement strategy peer review process has been streamlined to ensure audit trail and accountability.
- The Non-Competitive forms and templates have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with Regulations and Standing Orders.

A short life working group has been established to review contracts within Health and Social Care including the appointment of a dedicated Procurement Officer. A programme of work is being developed to bring all off-contract spend onto relevant frameworks. A key piece of work that has commenced with HSCP and Procurement is involvement in the development of the Scotland Excel (SXL) Care and Support Contract which SXL are retendering with a go live date of April 2024. This approach provides a route to compliant commissioning for almost £16.5m of social care expenditure. It is anticipated that this would reduce the resource that would need to be invested in commissioning and avoid costs associated with a recommissioning / tendering process and could potentially mitigate some of the inflationary budget risks associated with a recommissioning exercise. Programmes of work like this are part of the Transformation Blueprint 'Follow the Money' theme, looking at commissioning, contracting and identifying savings and efficiencies that can be made across the organisation.

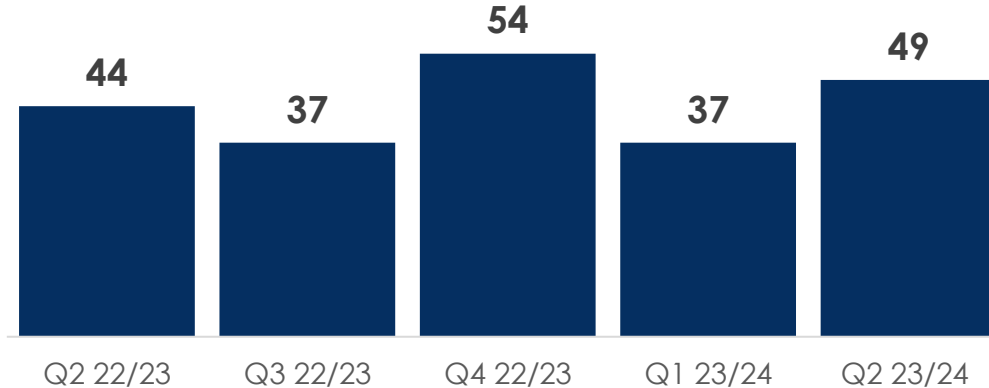
# Legal and Governance – performance measures

## Access to information

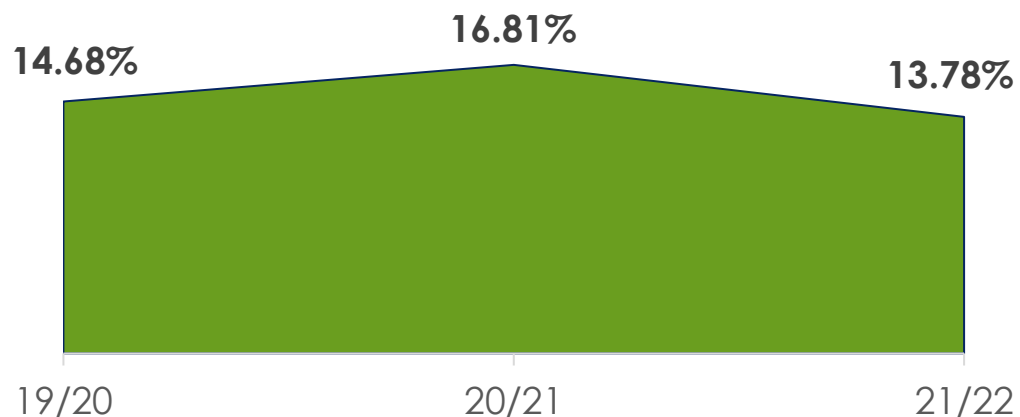
Number of Freedom of Information requests received (quarterly)



Number of Subject Access Requests received (quarterly)



% of procurement spent on local enterprises (LGBF)



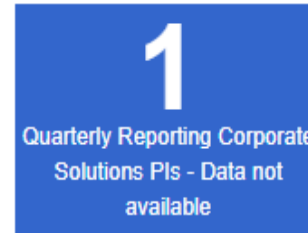
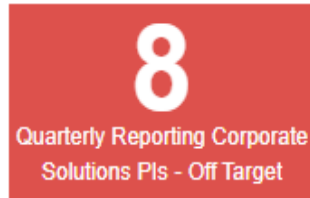
**3** regulated procurement exercises undertaken this quarter

**14** legal commercial transactions undertaken this quarter

# Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - <https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login>)

## Quarter 2 - Corporate Solutions-



### Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
<b>CORP.DIGITAL.11</b> % of IT helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours		49%	60%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>C.SE.LPI.03</b> Average processing time for new claims (internally calculated) (quarterly)		46 days	25 days	Q2 2023/24	
<b>C.SE.LPI.04</b> Average processing time for change of circumstances (internally calculat...)		17 days	8 days	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CORPS.MPI.01</b> Performance against revenue budget		£25.671m	£25.062m	Q2 2023/24	
<b>RHM.r.01.1</b> % of in-year Council Tax collected ytd (cumulative)		52.4%	95.2%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>RHM.r.02.1</b> % of current Housing Rent arrears (total)		11.77%	7.5%	September 2023	
<b>CORPS.SPSO.05.1</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working ...		88.89%	95%	Q2 2023/24	
<b>CORPS.SPSO.05.3</b> Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 wor...		66.67%	95%	Q2 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

## Challenges and risks

### Financial position

Council approved the 2023/24 budget at its meeting on 21 February 2023. Delivery is reliant on a combination of savings and service reductions and includes the use of retrospective service concession savings and earmarked Covid recovery reserves. Whilst the 2023/24 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years will be embedded in the Council's Strategic Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Close working continues with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports for quarter two 23/24, presented to Council in November 2023. The team continue to provide in-depth financial input to key revenues and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### Growing Council

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

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

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

Midlothian's approved Capital Strategy sets out the infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Encompassing five main themes the City Region Deal will bring significant investment across the regions with total investment of circa £1.3 billion across:

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million

- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

Through the Data Driven Innovation strand the Deal will leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities in order that Easter Bush becomes a global location of Agritech excellence. The Easter Bush project includes significant investment in transport infrastructure along the A701/2 transport corridor. In addition, by improving on-site infrastructure at Easter Bush and transport infrastructure, The University of Edinburgh expects commercial partners will be able to co-locate at scale to commercialise Agritech breakthroughs.

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme delivers new schools, a record investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and in innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

### **Economic pressures**

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

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

### **Cost of Living Crisis**

Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households is already being noted across the UK with 93% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in March 2023 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 10.4% is the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. The price rises will impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

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

### **National Care Service**

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

### **Risk**

The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is presented retrospectively to Audit Committee quarterly. The most critical risks to the Council are Financial Sustainability, Climate Change and the Change Programme. Corporate Solutions is key to the delivery of mitigating actions to these risks; through strategic planning and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and driving forward the Council's transformation programme to derive change and redesign services.