

Midlothian Council Report Year End/Quarter 4 2024/25

Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

The Single Midlothian Plan focuses on three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

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

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success.

The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

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

Following approval from Council, this quarter saw the formal launch of our **Workforce Strategy 2024-34** and **Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29**. The strategies are a core elements of the council's Transformation Blueprint and will support the council's medium-term financial strategy (2023-2028).

Workforce Strategy 2024-34 is accompanied by a 3-year short-term action plan and the strategic aim are:

- **Plan:** deliver an evidence and outcome-based workforce planning framework that is an integral part of the council's approach to strategic planning.
- **Attract:** ensure the council becomes the employer of choice for the population of Midlothian, by deploying best practice in attracting the best staff.
- **Train:** enable the council to become a "Learning Organisation", providing staff with business-focussed training and development to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to deliver their best.
- **Employ:** ensure Fair Work principles continue to be at the heart of management practice, ensuring staff are, and feel, valued and rewarded.
- **Nurture:** create a workforce and leadership culture focusing on the health and wellbeing of a demographically balanced workforce that reflects the community it serves.

Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29 outlines the key priority areas the Council will focus on over the next 5 years, harnessing digital tools, technology and data. The key areas are:

- **Automate:** For an Efficient, Modern Council
- **Reimagine:** Transform Service Delivery
- **Data:** Deeper Insights and Preventative Operations
- **Secure and Sustain:** Protect and Preserve

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

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier – Achievements

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

Achievements include:

- **Learning Disability Team** – provides social work assessment and care management services to around 400 people with a Learning Disability. The Care Inspectorate have completed inspections of a number of services including, **Cherry Road Resource Centre which received ‘Very Good’ grades in four of the themes inspected and a ‘Good’ grade for one.** The inspection identified high standards of care being provided in the service with individuals being supported to engage in activities that were meaningful to them. The staffing in the service was seen as a key strength with the report noting ‘The manager and senior staff modelled the practice they expected, and this led to good outcomes’ ‘for the people using the service’.
- **Physical Disability Team** - The number of people with a physical disability who currently require support and receive a service from adult and social care in Midlothian is around 380. The 90% performance target for **referral screening** episodes to be concluded **within 3 working days** has been **consistently achieved** with an average achievement rate of 96% for the year. There has been an identified increase in the number of people with a physical disability who are being provided with support at home, of 24% across the year.
- **Older People’s Social Work Team** – The 60% performance target of all **initial care home reviews completed within 12 weeks of admission** has consistently been achieved with a **96% completion rate at year end.**
- **Hospital In Reach Social Work Team** – Assess the needs of people who need support relating to hospital discharge. The service priority for **referrals to be screened within 2 working days of allocation** achieved the 95% performance target with a **99% performance rate at year end.**
- **Newbyres Village Care Home** – The team provide 24 hours care and support for 48 residents. A **96% occupancy rate** was recorded at year end and has been achieved since Q3.
- **Care at Home** - In 2024/25, the service had an inspection where it received improved gradings which were predominantly grade 5/very good . The whole service including commissioned services and Self-Directed Support Option 2 delivers around **9000 hours per week.**
- The **Health Inclusion Team (HIT)** works with some of the most vulnerable populations, such as those affected by homelessness, substance use, community justice and carers. The service operates predominately on outreach work, mainly through the temporary accommodations throughout Midlothian. During the financial year the team has **supported 164 people with average referrals being 13 a month** and the **maximum wait time from referral to contact was 1 day.**

- **Adult Mental Health Service** - All adults referred to the Adult CMHT Midlothian Mental Health continue to **meet the waiting time directive** of 100% of all individuals referred to adult mental health are **seen within 18 weeks**. Neurodiversity continues to have increasing demand which impacts on the waiting times for neurodiversity screening and assessment. At year end, there were **440** people in Midlothian **waiting for an assessment for neurodiversity**. Post diagnostic support feedback gives the opportunity for individuals, carers and families to feedback, and share their experience of the service and this feedback is used to continuously learn, develop and strive to improve our service and the experience individuals, families/carers have when engaged with the service.
- **Midlothian SUS treatment service** – The Scottish Government HEAT target that **90% of all individuals will wait no longer than 3 weeks (21 days) from point of referral** to drug and/or alcohol triage has **consistently been achieved in 2024/25**. The service received 54 new referrals over Q4, and all individuals for both alcohol and drugs have been seen within 21 days.

The **Near Me** programme, funded by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and the Scottish Government Technology-Enabled Care programme have supported the launch of **2 hubs in Midlothian** (in Dalkeith and Gorebridge Libraries) enabling people who lack digital access, digital skills or a confidential space at home to have a remote consultation with health and social care staff. This saves time and travel costs and increases equitable uptake of health services. Library staff are on hand to provide assistance if needed.

Tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of **5,349 memberships** up to the end of quarter 4. An increase of 15% compared to the same period last year. The Sport and Leisure mobile app makes it easier for customer to access and manage their account, book classes, get live pool updates, news and Active Schools information. As of quarter 4, the **mobile app** now has over **21,000 downloads**.

Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) is a sport and leisure physical activity referral programme, aimed at adults who are inactive and experience various health conditions. The programme offers a range of supported activities across Midlothian to help manage these health conditions. This year saw **6,431 Midlothian Active Choices attendees** with an increase of 18% in new referrals after completion of a MAC session. The activities offered by **Ageing Well** to 50 plus age groups has also increased this year with **3,045 activities** offered.

The rolling programme of **Wellness@Midlothian** initiatives continues to support the positive health and wellbeing of our staff. A total of **95 health and wellbeing events** held, an increase of 27% compared to last year with a total of **1,751 attending** events, an increase of 194% compared to last year's attendance.

Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements

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

Individuals become formally involved with Justice Social Work at the point of conviction when a Court makes a request for a Justice Social Work Report; requests for assessment and risk management planning are received from the Scottish Prison Service and the Parole Board. Between 1 January and 31 March 2025, the team **received 143 requests** for reports, **a reduction of 15%** on last quarter.

The main community-based sentence is a Community Payback Order (CPO), which can have several requirements attached to it. The most frequently imposed requirements are Supervision and Unpaid Work. The Courts have imposed **201 Community Payback Orders** during **2024/25**.

Since January 2025 the Justice service moved to Microsoft forms to gather feedback. Every person receiving a service completes an entry questionnaire as part of the assessment process. At the end of service, they are also offered the opportunity to complete an exit questionnaire; this is voluntary. Between 1 January 2025 and 2 April 2025, **36 people** completed an entry questionnaire. 83% of respondents were subject to a CPO, 2% were on post custodial licence or order and 13% were part of early intervention as part of Supervised bail or a Structured Deferred Sentence. During the same time period **16 people** completed an exit survey

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child – Achievements

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

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups:

1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

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

The Promise – Midlothian continues to progress towards the key foundations of The Promise Scotland Plan 2024- 2030. Committed to listening and acting on the feedback from the voices of our care experienced children and families, we secured a 3 year contact with Who Cares? Scotland to support delivery of a participation strategy and to re-fresh our 'champion's boards'. This work is currently being shared across the entirety of Midlothian and wider partnerships to raise awareness of The Promise and Corporate Parenting duties.

Child Protection and Looked After away from home population - The data evidences that our looked after population is fairly static. Overall, across the past year the data has had no significant change, generally fluctuating from 140 – 152 children. The number of children's names on the child protection register has also remained fairly consistent across the past year. This trend aligns with our ongoing efforts to provide support to families at an earlier stage and redirect referrals for families toward earlier intervention and support services via **Team Around the Child** and the **Family Wellbeing Service (FWS)**.

Family Group Decision Making – 28 family referrals were made to FGDM during quarter.

Hawthorn Family Learning Centre continues to be the only service of its kind in Midlothian, providing support to children, parents and carers in Midlothian via Early Years placements, groups, outreach, and other supports. Since January 2025, Hawthorn staff have teamed up with staff from FWS to deliver monthly supper clubs to families. These events are open to anyone in the community and are advertised widely. The March Supper Club had an Easter theme and included egg hunts, arts and crafts, community dinner and a visit from the Easter Bunny!

Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Service - Council recently approved permanent funding to recruit an additional Family Centred Care Team Leader and an additional Supervising Social Worker for the Family Centred Care Team to enable us to strengthen the Adoption and Kinship parts of the service. We have successfully recruited into both posts. A successful fostering recruitment campaign was launched in February and the team are currently following up interest generated. For Kinship Care week, the Family Centred Care team supported an activity evening which was well attended with very positive feedback. We also held a Foster Carers appreciation brunch in February which gave us an opportunity to say thank you and celebrate the ongoing commitment and hard work of our Midlothian Foster Carers.

Edge of Care Service - In recognition of an increase in young people who are at risk of being accommodated out with parental care, Council have approved funding to recruit four additional Children and Families Practitioners to establish an edge of care model of intervention within Children's services. A multi-agency working group has been established and this group are in the very early stages of giving consideration to how this service will develop over the coming months.

Disability Service – A discrete disability team is now in place for children's services. A focus upon improving practice and consistency continues, to ensure families are receiving a fair and equitable response to assessed needs. The team currently support **226 children** or young people with a package of care. The introduction of the team will support better tracking of our young people who will need support as they move into adulthood. Over the next 3 years we have identified over 200 young people will need varying level of post school support due to additional needs.

Trauma informed practice - In Total 283 Council staff have been trained in Trauma informed practice in 24/25.

The **Education Service Plan** is informed by and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board. Key priorities are to raise attainment and achievement to ensure that all children and young people in Midlothian achieve outcomes which lead to positive and sustained destinations. The Service Improvement Plan has four main workstreams:

- Learning, teaching, assessment & curriculum
- Attendance & engagement
- Relationships, wellbeing & care and
- Inclusion, equity & targeted supports

The raising attainment team continues to be prioritised to work in primary schools with the lowest attainment. The team works alongside teachers and school leaders to plan, teach and engage in Numeracy and Literacy CLPL.

Learning Technologists continue to work with class teachers to plan and co-deliver digital learning sessions for young people, based on a consistent core offer. 199 sessions have been completed since August 2024. 124 teachers have submitted feedback, with 98.4% agreeing

their knowledge had increased/improved and 91.4% reporting the learning will help pupils.

Attendance dashboard has been further developed, providing schools with data monthly and including tracking of numbers at different attendance bands to inform intervention. New tracking systems have ensured accurate tracking and monitoring of attendance for children supported by CLLE and Pathways.

The SHINE survey has been rolled out to all secondary schools with findings highlighting key areas of priority which will inform strategic planning in relation to wellbeing and mental health support. 1000+ teachers, learning assistants and early year practitioners have participated in Safe, Connected and Ready to Learn professional learning programme (equivalent to trauma level 2).

90% of key policies and guidelines to support schools have been developed/completed this session, providing clear guidance for schools and settings on inclusive practice and how to access additional resource, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. To date the Outreach Teams have supported a total of 961 learners. SEEMIS data recording for ASN is up to date and accurate

Active Schools Midlothian team continue to work in partnership with sportscotland, providing opportunities for our children to adopt healthy and active lifestyles throughout their school years and into adulthood by supporting and sustaining a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who, in turn, deliver extra-curricular physical activity and sport before, during and after school and in the wider community. Recent data shows that **388 activities** were delivered this year over quarters 1 and 3, an increase of 17% from 331 delivered during the same periods last year. **5,479 participants** attended Active Schools free extra curricular club across quarter 1 and 3 which is an increase of 19.5% compared to the same periods last year. The number of volunteer hours delivered in the Active Schools Programme during quarters 1 and 3 has also increased to **3,290** this year, an increase of 24% for the year.

This year saw the opening of a new Easthouses Primary School and the completion of Woodburn Primary School gym and kitchen extension. **62** improvements or new facilities were completed across our play areas and greenspaces.

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

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

The new **CLD Partnership Plan 2024 to 2027** was approved and endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board and approved by Midlothian Council on 17th December 2024.

In the last four quarters **5,779 people** have engaged with CLLE services across **510 opportunities**. **1,187 home visits** were carried out to help young people engage with our services, this is double the number last year. **451 people** accessing our services live in SIMD 20% and **2,271** in SIMD 40%. In addition, **48 community groups** have received support and advice from CLLE.

In Q4 the **No One Left Behind (NOLB)** All Age Employability team have continued to provide support to **211 people**, with **61 new starts** this quarter. The team has continued to support **231 existing parents** on our caseloads from the year 24-25 and a further **96 new parents** started in quarter 4.

Youth Work - Up to and including Q4 - **2,664**, young people have accessed CLLE services over **175 different opportunities**, **156** from SIMD 20% and **1,033** from 40% SIMD. **151** received one to one youth work support.

375 local people have enrolled in the paid for **adult learning programme** which is offering a variety of courses including Nat 5 Maths. There are also a variety of community-based adult learning and family learning activities on offer.

The Welfare Rights Team support people to maximise their income by offering welfare advice and benefits checks, helping to apply for benefits, support with benefit appeals and tribunal representation, and debt and housing advice. The total benefit generated during 2024/25 is **£4,463,000.46**. This is an **increase of £68,625.20** from the previous year.

External Funding - Modern Apprenticeship contract has been confirmed for 25/26 with training element funded support for **40 apprentices** worth £87,193. UKSPF Transition funding has been confirmed for 2025/26. A total of **£1,116,951** has been allocated with it split between £330,884 for capital expenditure and £836,067 for revenue expenditure.

The **Community Planning Partnership** Board and Working Group recently completed a self-evaluation through the Improvement Service's National Community Planning Self-Assessment. Twenty CPPs from across Scotland have undertaken the self-assessment, with Midlothian CPP scoring strongly in the categories for Community Engagement and Capacity Building (2nd place), Making an Impact (2nd place), and Shared Leadership (3rd place). We have two areas that the board have prioritised for further improvement which are sharing resources and data.

Library services continue to transform and thrive in responding to the needs of our communities. Figures for the year show:

- library **visits** remain high with a total of **770,877**, a 4% increase in total visits compared to last year and a 27% increase from 22/23.
- **605,003 physical** library visits were made, an increase of 12% from last year and a 40% increase from 22/23.
- **165,874 virtual** library visits were made, an 8% increase compared to last year.
- **7,874 events**, clubs, activities and workshops were held across libraries, a 29% increase compared to last year.
- **102,001 event attendees**, an increase of 26% from those attending last year
- Book Week Scotland was celebrated this year with a number of free events held across our libraries. Overall, **79 events** were held with **586 adults** and **2,159 children** attending, a 20% increase from last year.

Library services were nominated in the Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) Library Service Excellence Award and announced as the **Regional and Country Winner for Scotland** in the Bookseller Library of the Year Award.

Continued to support our communities with the Cost of Living crisis by relaunching our four **Warm and Well Hubs** in Danderhall, Lasswade, Loanhead and Newbattle Libraries this year. The 'Ask for Alex' promotion, coat collection points in Dalkeith and Loanhead Libraries offering coats and warm clothing to those who need them and the provision of information and services made our hubs One-Stop Shops in the community. Working in partnership with a number of other services including Community Lifelong Learning & Employability, Citizens Advice Bureau, Ageing Well and Changeworks, to host workshops and drop-in sessions providing advice on benefits, home energy efficiency, household budgeting and Cost of Living support and advice.

Throughout the year Libraries worked with colleagues in the Community Learning Disabilities Team to make libraries more accessible to adults with communication and/or learning challenges. Aiming to offer a relaxed activity for people who can be often socially isolated, this was a series of **'chatty library' events** monthly at different libraries, offering relaxed chat and support over a cup of tea on the chatty cafe model.

The new **Library Natter** Project launched this year. Our aim is to create a safe space for people to sit, relax and chat and meet other library users while learning about and engaging with wider Council services and community organisations that would benefit them. Since its launch in December 2024 the Library Natter Corner has hosted a series of events and activities for the community. To date we have **hosted six targeted events** that have seen over **70 attendees**.

Libraries play a crucial role in supporting communities with **digital access**, learning and support and in preventing digital exclusion. A further 978 customers were supported with digital queries this quarter including general IT help, assisting customers to access services online such as job searches, benefits, universal credit and assist in making payments online. The total figures across the year show a 15% increase in support given.

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements

The Climate Emergency Group's and Community Planning Partnership vision is *significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045*. Our values are to get to net zero equitably, taking into account different people and communities' capacities and abilities to get there. The Group consists of individuals and representatives of Midlothian Community Councils, Community Groups, national government agencies, Third Sector organisations, Midlothian Council, local chamber of commerce, landowners and Midlothian Energy Ltd.

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

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

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

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

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

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy which sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage, and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate. Focus continues within Place services to achieve

future emissions targets. This quarter Council were asked to consider the findings of the Climate Action Support Report (CASR) prepared by Aether consultants relating to climate emission reduction trajectories for the Council's estate. A refresh of our Climate Change Strategy and underlying action plan is in development to support the Council and wider local authority partners in their collective journey to net zero across Midlothian.

New **Neighbourhood Environment Team** became fully established within the Recycling and Greenspace Service this year. The team combines elements of the former street cleaning service with specialist elements of the greenspace team to create a new service that aims to improve the quality of the local environment for our residents.

This year saw the official opening of **Midlothian Energy Limited (MEL) Centre** which will capture low carbon heat from the Millerhill Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre and use this heat to supply 1,000s of homes, education and retail properties at Shawfair.

Our new **Active Travel Strategy 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034'** was approved at December Council. The strategy will allow Midlothian Council to continue to seek further funding from 2025/26 onwards for active travel projects throughout Midlothian. The new strategy will lead the way in providing safe, convenient, well connected and well maintained active travel networks.

Economic Development continues to promote the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** with businesses signing up to the Pledge continuing to rise each quarter with a total of **179** businesses now committed.

The **Greenspace Team** have continued to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian, supporting volunteer groups who help manage our countryside sites. Our volunteer groups provide added value to the work that we do with litter picking, gardening and fund raising to brighten our local areas. Up to and including this quarter, **6,642 volunteer hours** (1,107 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers continue to remain high this year ensuring our sites are attractive, safe and welcoming for all to enjoy. In addition, **222** Ranger events were undertaken.

This year, **waste services** launched the recycling app (**LitterLotto**) which encourages residents to recycle at home for the chance to be entered into a free prize draw for £100 each month as well as a £1,000 UK wide free prize draw. Food waste collection service was expanded to include a further **2,500 properties** in rural areas. From quarter 1 to quarter 3, an average of **48% of household waste was recycle** and **36% of waste used to generate heat and electricity**.

The **Lend and Mend Hubs** in Midlothian Libraries have had a positive impact on the community, offering inclusive and creative spaces for individuals to learn new skills and connect.

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

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

The **Midlothian Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2025-2030**, a comprehensive plan aimed at fostering a wellbeing economy that supports local residents, communities and businesses was approved by Council. The strategy aligns with the Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Prosperity Framework.

The strategy aims to create an economy that benefits all residents, ensuring opportunity and fair work for everyone through collaboration, inclusivity, innovation, and ambition. The strategy aligns with Local and National Plans, including the Single Midlothian Plan 2023-2027, and focuses on the following strategic priorities:

- Develop Midlothian's proposition within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region
- Enhance skills and employability opportunities in Midlothian, to meet the challenges and opportunities of inclusive Green Growth with entrepreneurship recognised as valuable career pathway
- Maximise the potential of Midlothian's key sectors to support a Just Transition
- Capitalise on the strengths of Midlothian's strategic partners to embed community wealth across all services to realise a wellbeing economy
- Re-imagine our town centres, ensuring they meet Midlothian's economic, social, cultural and environmental needs
- Deliver infrastructure enhancements that will support Midlothian's transition to a Wellbeing Economy

The **Business Gateway Midlothian Service** continues to offer consistent levels of activity across various support services, from pre-start to start-up and existing business growth support. **198 'Planning to Start'** enquiries were received this year. The total number of **new Business start-ups** this year was **131**, which should realise a forecasted creation of **171 jobs** and an estimated contribution of **£6.245M** to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading.

The **Alpine coaster** at Midlothian Snowsports Centre opened successfully on the 14th of September. This quarter a further **22,868 tickets** were sold, an increase in ticket sales of 22% compared to last quarter. The total ticket sales since the opening up to the end of quarter 4 is **46,774**.

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty – Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty. There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented.

The Council's **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 to 2029/30** was submitted to the Scottish Government in October 24. The SHIP identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5-year period. The delivery of more affordable housing remains a high priority for Midlothian, as reflected by our ongoing and ambitious housing development programme.

This year housing received the completed handover for **152 new** build homes extending our housing stock to **7,677** by end of 24/25. The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was **170** this year.

There were **6,006 active housing applicants** placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of quarter 4, a 5% increase compared to the same period last year and a 30% increase from 22/23. **586 lets** were made this year, **15 houses** were let through our **Housing First** model. **177 lets** were made to new build and open market purchases. Homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year continues to be high **92.77%**.

The percentage of current housing rent arrears sits at **12.67%** by the end of quarter 4 and is consistent with last year's figure of 12.77%. In year Council Tax collected year to date is **94.3%** showing a similar rate of collection compared to the same time last year of 93.8%.

Homelessness prevention assists around 20 households with advice and assistance about homelessness prevention per week. This is rental assistance advice, financial awareness advice and mediation. The number of homeless cases provided with advice and assistance this year was **881**. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

Midlothian House Project – The fifth cohort of young people to be supported by the project started in Q3. There are currently **forty-six young people** involved with the project. Only two young people have disengaged from this support since the team began and we continue to have no tenancy breakdowns or evictions for young people supported by the team. This work has been well supported by positive working relationships with partners.

Across the year, over **1.16 million school meals** prepared and served. The percentage of **Secondary School** meal uptake for the year was **37.22%** and continues to sit above the APSE average of 36.23%. The percentage of **Primary School** meal uptake was **59.96%** and again remains steady compared to previous year (58.84%). Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24%. The percentage of school meal **food waste** has decreased slightly this year to **4.38%** from 5.73% last year. Catering Services received the Bronze Food for Life Award and the Pro-veg School Plates Bronze award this year.

Income maximisation - as part of the efforts to reduce child poverty, children's services fund three income maximisation projects, including one dedicated to the Family Wellbeing Service. There has been an increase in the families reached by the projects and financial gains for individual families continue to be significant. Across Q4 the 3 Income Maximisation Projects cumulatively generated a total of **£123,546.71** income for 56 families.

Cost of Living Crisis: **100%** of our total Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget was allocated during quarter 3 this year. A further **£260,000** was granted by the Scottish Government in December. A total of **7,168** applications for **Crisis Grants** and **1,351** for **Community Care Grants** were received this year. **£421,090** granted from Scottish Welfare fund for **crisis grants** and **£450,709** granted for **community care grants** in 24/25. This demonstrates the continued significant financial challenges faced by our communities.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2025/26 budget at its meeting in February 2025. Whilst the 2025/26 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges. Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council.

NI Contribution: Ongoing engagement with commissioned providers regarding the impact of the increase in National Insurance Contributions. There are some risks that service delivery may be impacted.

Economic pressures: Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction

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

Capital Investment Strategy: Sets out the infrastructure required to meet demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The 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 aims to deliver new schools, investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

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

Growing Council: The recent 2022 Census results have now been published. Between 2011 to 2022 data shows that Midlothian had an increase in population of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

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

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 (Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. After this peak in inflation, rates have continued to decline, dropping to 2.0% in May 2024. Over the three years between May 2021 to May 2024 food prices rose by 30.6%. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation forecasted that absolute poverty will increase by 300,000, from 11.7 million in 2023/24 to 12 million in 2024/25.

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 in 2022, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities.

Workforce Challenges: There are workforce challenges across a range of services including health and social care, social work and regulatory services due to on-going pressures in the wider workforce availability which impacts on recruitment.

Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q4 24/25

Midlothian Council - How we are Performing



PI Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
●	CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...	<div></div>	92.5%	95.0%	Q4 2024/25	<div></div>
●	BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...	<div></div>	78.33%	95%	2024/25	<div></div>
●	BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...	<div></div>	90.24%	95%	2024/25	<div></div>
●	BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...	<div></div>	91.11%	95%	Q4 2024/25	<div></div>

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