

## Midlothian Council Report Quarter 2 2024/25

### Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

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

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

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 from Public Health include:

- The health inclusion team continue to provide outreach and have carried out a health assessment with 111 people since April 2024. Have mostly helped people with housing, substance use, and welfare rights issues this quarter.
- Chaired a group of stakeholders from East and Midlothian to scope a pilot looking at the feasibility of technology enabled care to help as a harm reduction measure to substance use. To help link this with national work and gain learning from other areas, attended a webinar hosted by Scottish Government sharing practice and learning on digital as a Human Right with Digital Lifelines Scotland and Drugs Research Network for Scotland.
- Reviewed and updated quarter 2 data for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment working alongside data colleagues in NHS Lothian Intelligence team and published on the Health and Social Care Partnership website. The updated data has been used to update the community justice needs assessment which was reported as helpful to give context to the offending we see in Midlothian and shows the complexities that our clients face. The data has also been used to update the NHS Lothian healthcare governance committee, specifically the inequalities data section in the annual report.
- Learning session planned with physiotherapists and wider HSCP staff to share findings of the Masters dissertation hosted in Midlothian, to explore views, improve processes and raise awareness of green health prescribing within the HSCP.
- Better ME (WSA): This project will help the people of Mayfield and Easthouses to have more access to healthy food options, keep physically active and have more money in their pockets. Currently have completed 6mth evaluation. One particular project has developed a cooking group for young men, they have reported an increase in confidence in cooking and also being able to try new foods.
- Developing weight stigma post that will focus on helping practitioners develop skills and confidence to talk about client's weight, it will also raise awareness of the bias and stigma professionals have with overweight and obese people.
- Promote a public health agenda and increase strategic partners. Members of various groups including trauma training steering group, Mid & East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership Group, Midlothian Suicide Prevention Group, Equally Safe Strategy Leadership Group, Midlothian will be Healthier Thematic Group, Lothian Green Health Network and the Third Sector Summit.

### 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 1st July and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the team **received 176 requests** for reports, **an increase of 3%** on last quarter.

Staff in the Justice Service work with men and women subject to Community Payback Orders who present with a wide range of presenting risk and needs. This includes individuals with **mental health, substance use, adverse childhood experiences, trauma and negative experiences** of education and or employment. Staff working within Justice Services require the appropriate level of support and training to enable them to effectively engage with people to progress **interventions towards positive changes** in behaviour. An important part of ensuring that men and women in the justice system have ease of access to services and resources is the provision of robust community-based alternatives to custodial sentences as it enables individuals to remain in their community, **maintain relationships** and ensures continuity of care.

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. During **Q2** the **Courts imposed 50 Community Payback Orders**.

The work undertaken by our Unpaid Work Team is underpinned by the ideals of **reparation, rehabilitation and reintegration** to support those who have been convicted of offences to achieve a positive destination and provide meaningful benefit to our local communities. Those undertaking unpaid work have the opportunity to gain a range of **skills**, experiences and opportunities to promote their rehabilitation and ability to **desist from offending**.

### **Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child – Achievements**

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

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

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

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

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

## Outcome 4: Midlothian Children and Young People are Safe and Nurtured

### 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 contract with Who Cares? Scotland to support delivery of a participation strategy and to re-fresh our current '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.

### Who Cares? Scotland Awards

In August Who Cares? Scotland held the first ever Corporate Parenting awards ceremony. The aim of the awards was to recognise and celebrate transformative and innovative practice from the past ten years and most importantly highlight how this has benefitted Care Experienced people. Young people in Midlothian had nominated the council for the Stable Foundations, and Outstanding Corporate Parent categories. We were thrilled to be awarded first place in both categories.

### Foster Carers Day out

In July Family Centred Care supported 19 children and 21 Foster Carers to attend a Family fun day at Blair Drummond Safari Park. The trip was a great chance for our care experienced children and carers to come together. The feedback was very positive and carers told us they felt valued. We are now planning for a Christmas event.

### Family Wellbeing Service

The Family Wellbeing Service is now well established and working hard to engage with schools and early learning centres to identify families who may require additional support. The team moved to Easthouses Primary School with the start of the new school year. The new facilities will benefit both the staff and more importantly the parents as they shall have rooms where they can do some 1:1 work and have meetings.

Team Around the Child (High School) has been tested and introduced to support more consistent and robust planning for high school aged children. This replicates the model that has been long established and successful for early years and primary schools. Team Around the Child (TATC) allows multi agency discussion about a child and their family's needs, to create a plan about which service within the council or third sector are best placed to provide support in a timely manner. It avoids families or professionals having to send multiple referrals and provides access to the Family Wellbeing Service and other supports funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.

## **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.

### Summer Funding/Supports

Over the Summer holidays, as part of reducing inequality and poverty Children's Services gave a total of 272 families vouchers to enjoy activities which included soft play, trampolining, zoo trips, swimming, cinema, camera obscura, restaurants/clothes shopping, mini golf and laser tag. Over 45 of these activity vouchers were shared with families affected by disability who are awaiting assessment for self-directed support.

### Income Maximisation

As part of our effort to reduce Child Poverty Children's Services fund three income maximisation projects. These projects support families subject to Child Protection processes or those engaged with Hawthorn Family Learning centre and the Family Wellbeing Service. The three projects continue to support families to access their entitled benefits, grants and reduce debts. Over Q2 the projects collectively generated **£186,175 income for 39 families**

### **Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements**

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

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) forms part of the local development plan for Midlothian and will also be the strategic basis that future plans and applications will need to take into account. The biggest sources of carbon emissions in Midlothian are still domestic uses (30.5%) and transport (27.5%). Therefore, this theme will concentrate on reducing carbon emissions in the areas of domestic heating/power and transport to get to Net Zero.

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

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

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

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

In quarter 2 the food waste collection service was expanded to include a further 2,500 properties in the rural area. Initial figures show that this has been a great success with 2 tonnes of food waste collected in the first week alone. This is potentially 100 tonnes of food waste recycled rather than going into the residual bin. The expansion of the food waste collection service is the latest phase of the plan to transform the waste collection service as part of the move to twin stream recycling in 2025.

The Greenspace Team have continued during quarter 2 to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian. The work we carry out jointly has a huge impact on the quality of the local environment and we are determined to strengthen these partnerships over the rest of 2024. 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, 3,342 volunteer hours (557 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers continue to remain high.

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

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

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

The Business Gateway service continue to promote the Social Enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model. Contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives, the team support projects from the Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop.

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

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

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our ambitious approach to managing the transition from pandemic lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face. The strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place-based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery. Work is ongoing to refresh the Economic Strategy and will be presented for approval to Council by the end of 2024.

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). The team actively encourage businesses to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers.

Work continues with our Net Zero Nation Programme which is supporting 13 diverse local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey. The businesses will take part in 12-month Net Zero Business Accelerators with funding support from Midlothian Council/Business Gateway Midlothian. In return, they must sign an agreement where they commit to approach their Net Zero strategy and credible carbon reduction plan with vigour, speak at physical and online events to encourage other business leaders to start their own transition to Net Zero. The companies will

receive a 12-month carbon accounting software license, an expert partner providing 1:1 support over 12 months to help them produce their audited carbon accounts, their carbon reduction plan produced, an auditor to verify and certify their carbon accounts and carbon reduction plan. After completion in December 2024, the team will commence case studies on the outcomes for businesses.

Our first Learn e-Commerce Expert Help programme commenced last quarter in April. 18 businesses enrolled for the digital course, with 6 going on to receive 121 expert help guidance from the trainers. The feedback from clients has been extremely positive with tangible improvement to their businesses immediately felt. A second round of this programme has received a good level of interest with 13 businesses applying and now approved for programme with an estimated launch date during October.

The Business Gateway service continue to provide expert help consultancy in financial management and Human Resources to support the Fair Work Policy to Business Gateway clients on an as needed basis. 30 businesses have been supported since the programme began, with budget left for another 20 interventions.

### **Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty – Achievements**

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

Our refreshed vision for the service is that individuals and families will be able to access housing that is affordable and of good quality in sustainable communities. Housing Services are currently exploring a new approach to deliver services and are trialling new team set ups consisting of a community housing team, aiming to ensure every tenant and resident has their individual needs and rights recognised and is treated fairly with respect to enable tenancy sustainment. A core housing team, improving quality and turnaround of our properties, ensuring residents are informed of housing options and homeless applicants are provided temporary accommodation and a Homelessness team focused on preventing and supporting homelessness.

From March 2024 to date we have received the completed handover for 96 new build homes in Conifer Road, Mayfield, St Cuthberts in Bonnyrigg High Street and Buccleuch Wynd. This quarter 8 golden share applicants for low cost home ownership were reviewed and accepted. The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was 74 this quarter, reducing the need for multiple moves before being permanently housed, allowing for links established within the local community to be maintained.

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 quarter was 222. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this quarter with 97% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

The percentage of Secondary School meal uptake this quarter has increased to 40.5% and

continues to sit above the APSE average of 36.23%. This is due to changes made to the menu offered to secondary schools to attract pupils back into the dining room. The percentage of Primary School meal uptake for quarter 2 was 54.02% and again remains steady compared to previous quarters. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24%. The percentage of school meal food waste has decreased to 4.35% from 5.74% compared to the same period last year. In addition, our Catering Service were awarded the Bronze Food for Life Award and the Pro-veg School Plates Bronze award.

## Challenges and Risks

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

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

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

**Growing Council:** Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%. In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. In addition, Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

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

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

**National Care Service:** The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Service (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 Council, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.

**Cost of Living Crisis:** Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 (Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. Recent data shows the annual inflation rate was 4.0% in December 2023, up slightly from 3.9% in November. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short-run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty). As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities

# Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q2 24/25



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>	92.3%	95.0%	Q2 2024/25	<div></div>
●	BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...	<div></div>	86.09%	95%	Q2 2024/25	<div></div>
🔒 ●	BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...	<div></div>	94.12%	95%	Q2 2024/25	<div></div>

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