

Place Q3 24/25 performance report

Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. The Place service ambition is to deliver joined-up, collaborative, and participative approaches to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enabling better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

Place Services encompasses Building Services; Housing Services; Neighbourhood Services; Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment; Property & Facilities Management; Protective Services and Sport & Leisure.

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.

Reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the Council's financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges and changes that we will face.

The strategic plan sets out our biggest 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 the fastest growing local authority in 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 of 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 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.

Environmental

Key achievements Q3 24/25

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero in line with the Scottish Government targets. 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.



This quarter 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. Council endorsed a 5 year business plan for Midlothian Energy Limited that includes future plans to supply low carbon heat to new homes in Midlothian through the MEL heat network and expansion into existing buildings and other areas of Midlothian. The first home is now connected to the heat network at Craighall Village (CALA) and Plot Connection Agreement is also in place with Robertsons in Shawfair.

Our new Active Travel Strategy '**On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034**' was approved this quarter 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, with funding bids and proposals already being prepared for the delivery of more safe, and properly lit routes to schools and towns, town centre cycle parking, improved active travel connections between Lasswade and Loanhead, and between Roslin and Penicuik, as well as the creation of a rural off-road connection between Penicuik and the Scottish Borders. The new strategy will lead the way in providing safe, convenient, well connected and well maintained active travel networks to encourage the use of active and public forms of transport, aiming to reduce our carbon emissions and car kilometres.

Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge on social media and in direct conversations with clients to increase education and awareness of climate change and suggest adaptations. Businesses signing up to the Pledge continues to rise each quarter with a total of 169 businesses now committed, 22 of those signing up during quarter 3. The team continue to work with pledgers to identify the best platform for group sharing. Through the LinkedIn group, pledgers share their experiences and the team continue to share a mix of green information from partners on learning opportunities, support and funding.

Road Services

Up to this quarter, under the combined Capital Works Programme and Residential Streets Programme, a total of 21.1km of carriageway and 2.22km of footway was resurfaced. Representing 3% and 0.32% of the carriageway and footway network respectively. Carriageway resurfacing has exceeded our target set out for the year with 13.4km of carriageway resurfaced during quarter 3. Although footway surfacing is slightly behind target, good progress has been made over quarters 2 and 3 and it is expected to meet the annual target.



676.76 tonnes of material was used in quarter 3 to fill potholes. 424.98 tonnes of material was used for temporary repairs and 251.78 tonnes for pothole pro permanent patching. The Pothole Pro project equated to 2,078m² of permanent patching, repairing 611 potholes this quarter. There has been reduction in the number of pothole repairs compared to the same period last year, this is due to more periods of adverse weather throughout quarter 3.

As part of the street lighting capital programme a target of 500 new lighting column replacements are planned for this year. The lighting column programme commenced towards the end of quarter 2 with 180 columns replaced up to the end of quarter 3. The remaining replacements will take place during quarter 4 and as such the annual target is expected to be made by the end of the year. In addition, a further 472 street light replacements are programmed for this year

which include LED upgrades. 203 upgrades were completed up to the end of quarter 3.

This quarter the upgrade of CCTV installation at Shawfair park and ride was completed and successful recruitment of a new Lighting Team Leader which will manage our Road Construction Consents and lighting projects.

Waste and Recycling

As part of a wider Neighbourhood Services review, a new management structure for the Recycling Team was implemented in quarter 1. This has resulted in the streamlined management of the service which has already seen an increase in productivity and time management of front line teams.

To further support the new management structure within the Recycling Team, the contract for the “digital depot” was awarded last quarter and the implementation of the digital in cab system began this quarter. This will provide digital in cab technology to all our roadside collection vehicles within waste services and transform the way the front line service is delivered, resulting in efficiencies and improved customer service.

The team have continued to improve the way the service engages with residents in relation to enquiries and complaints. A new way of working has seen a significant improvement to customer service, resulting in a more responsive and timely service to residents who contact the team.

During quarter 3, the service 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. The app features benefits such as earning ‘coins’ for every piece of recycling binned correctly that can be used to claim discounts and rewards. The app also uses advanced AI technology to recognise waste types, providing information on whether the Council can recycle items and which bin to use as well as offering tips on recycling items more effectively. This has been widely promoted on our social media platforms and it is hoped to see an increase in recycling which will provide environmental and financial benefits.



Neighbourhood Environment Team

This quarter, the new Neighbourhood Environment Team became fully established within the Recycling and Greenspace Service. The new 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. Across Midlothian, the Neighbourhood Environment Team has been carrying out the following works in our local communities:

- Ensuring our streets remain clear of litter
- Cleaning our bus stops so that they provide safe, clean shelter for residents
- Emptying street litter bins
- Spraying and removing weeds from footpaths and roads
- Mechanical sweeping of roads and pavements
- Ensuring pathways are clear of overhanging trees and shrubs
- Keeping Midlothian clear of fly tipping
- Edging back grass verges to reclaim overgrown footpaths
- Power washing of high streets and public areas



This has resulted in improvements to the quality of the local environment across Midlothian through increased litter picking, weed removal, deep cleaning and mechanical sweeping. The team are currently prioritising the removal of detritus which helps to prevent excessive weed growth throughout Midlothian during the growing season.

Play area improvements

The team are continuing to deliver the play area improvements programme funded by the Scottish Government grant, with further projects planned for the remainder 2024/25 in play areas across Midlothian. 23 improvements across our play areas, parks and green spaces were completed up to and including this quarter.

Village improvements

During quarter 3 the team carried out clean-ups in village areas including Cousland, Edgehead, Temple and Howgate. This programme will continue in quarter 4 ahead of the grass cutting season starting in March.

Working with the community

The Greenspace Team have continued to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian, supporting 6 volunteer groups who help manage our countryside sites. 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 the year. 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, 5,107 volunteer hours (851 days) were spent in countryside sites. This quarter the Park Ranger Service hosted a Christmas 'thank you' celebration for our volunteers and our ageing well volunteer leaders.

During quarter 3 the Ranger service delivered the Midlothian Outdoor Festival attracting over 1,500 participants to a wide range of outdoor activities including cycling shows, walks, talks and running events.



Greenspace improvement projects

In quarter 3 the Greenspace team have secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to invest in the following projects;

- **Vogie Country Park entrance barrier** - this investment will improve the parking experience for visitors to the site as well as increase income which is re-invested into the service.
- **Litter bin investment** - this funding will be used for the installation of 250 litter bins which will renew a quarter of the entire litter bin stock in parks and on our streets. The funding will be used to target damaged bins that detract from the aesthetics of the local environment.

Protective Services

Business Regulations and Trading Standards

Our Business Regulations Food and Safety team continue to prioritise proactive interventions at food businesses registered with Midlothian Council with the highest risk for food safety and standards. These include retailers and caterers with significant or sustained non-compliances in food law.

A Remedial Action Notice was served at a Dalkeith restaurant to stop the use of a vacuum packer to package both raw meats and ready to eat foods. This practice is at high risk of food cross contamination due to the complexity of the equipment that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected between these uses to ensure food safety.

A restaurant/takeaway in Gorebridge that has seen ongoing interventions from officers since May 2024 was served with an additional Remedial Action Notice during quarter 3 to stop food being stored within a shipping container on the site. Due to significant ongoing rat activity in the area and the poor structure of the shipping container, the Food Business Operator was unable to prevent the rats gaining access to the food storage area. A report has previously been sent to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service regarding previous serious non-compliances. In the meantime, officers continue to inspect the premises on a monthly basis and are working with the Food Business Operator to improve his understanding of food hygiene and get adequate procedures in place.



This quarter our Environmental Health Officers investigated two serious health and safety incidents that happened within Midlothian businesses. Investigations of this nature are resource intensive requiring two officers. At this time, one has concluded, and the other is ongoing.

Two Health and Safety Prohibition Notices were served on different businesses after defect reports were received from lift engineers highlighting serious deficiencies. Controls to prevent and remove the risk were put in place quickly and the notices were lifted.

The Canadian Food Safety Institute visited the UK to carry out an audit on UK food manufacturers who export to Canada, and Local Food Authority official controls in place at these premises. An officer from Midlothian Council's Food and Safety Team joined the Institute on their visit to one of Midlothian's largest manufacturers of meat products. Feedback was provided at the end of the initial visit to the business with a few minor points raised. A final visit to the premises during quarter 3 confirmed all works were completed to their satisfaction and the audit was closed.

Given the ongoing nationwide crisis regarding the lack of qualified Environmental Health Officers and Food safety Officers, our Food and Safety team have adopted a "grow our own" approach by recruiting a second trainee Food Safety Officer who will complete practical training and required reports before undertaking the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS) professional exams in September 2025. Two Environmental Health Officers have been contracted to assist with training of officers and tackling a backlog of inspections to bring our programmed food law inspections back on track; including working on some of our low-risk inspections from our 2024/2025 service plan.

Our Trading Standards team received 28 consumer complaints this quarter, a decrease from 44 during the same period last year. All consumer complaints were responded to within 5 working days and 96% fully completed within 14 days. Completion is not fully within service control and is dependent on traders and complainants responding to investigations. This year to date at least £48,395 has been returned to nine Midlothian consumers following Trading Standards involvement. These figures do not include refunds obtained by reporting cases to the Procurator Fiscal. In addition, an ATM cash machine in Bonnyrigg was restored to free use after Trading Standards contacted the provider who was charging £1.25 whilst still advertising free cash withdrawals.

Trading Standards prosecution cases continue this quarter with one case reaching a conclusion regarding a discount bathrooms company who was ordered to repay £10,875.75 to nine customers. The trader pleaded guilty to an offence under the Consumer Protection from the Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 of operating a fraudulent scheme. Another case, involving a trader from Penicuik, may be resolved after they provided a full refund to a Penicuik customer of £4,350 which had been charged for landscaping works that were not carried out. There are currently three other cases in various stages of legal proceedings:

- A trial is now to take place in May 2025 regarding alleged offences concerning 8,400 cigarettes and tobacco last year.
- A couple from Gorebridge and Bonnyrigg who allegedly sold fake goods on a Facebook private group boasting of over 3,000 members is pending.
- A Wishaw man, a repeated fraud offender, who did not return £3,000 to a Dalkeith woman after it was confirmed permission was required to replace roof tiles, faces charges brought by other authorities and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Illegal tobacco

This quarter Trading Standards were joined by Police Scotland and a tobacco detector dog as part of Operation CeCe Scotland (funded by HMRC), an operation which has been working to seize illicit tobacco since 2021. During November, 9,100 cigarettes and 9 tobacco packs were seized and in December, 480 cigarettes and 10 tobacco pouches were seized from the same shop in Dalkeith. The cigarettes and tobacco were not legal for the UK market and some brands are very likely to be counterfeit, possibly contain unsafe filler material. Packs were sold for £5 minimum. Trading Standards issued Sanction Notices at each visit which could result in HMRC imposing fines totalling £12,500. The property owner was also contacted by Trading Standards and an eviction is in process. This is the first local example of a national problem of a shop being a front for the sale of illicit tobacco. Two other shops were visited and on both occasions no illegal tobacco was found.

51 Trading Standards primary inspections took place this quarter, although off target, most inspections take place over quarters 3 and 4 so our overall annual target is expected to be met. Due to extensive inspections to farms and small holdings over the last year, only 8 small holdings/farms are required for inspection this year.

This quarter 37 intelligence logs were recorded on the national Trading Standards Intelligence database (IDB) by our Trading Standards team. Intelligence logging remains high from quarter to quarter this year and in comparison to other Scottish Councils, Midlothian continue to sit in the top quartile for logs created.

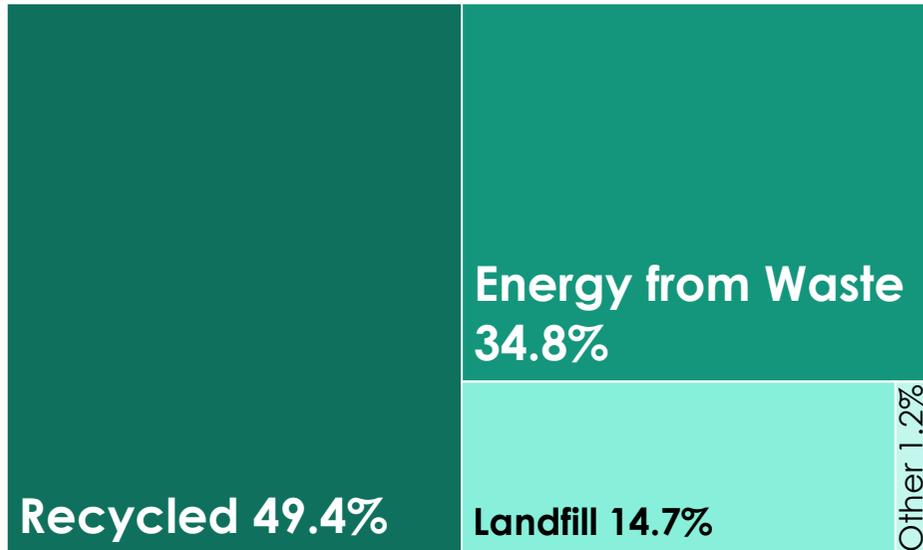
Our Public Health Environmental Protection team successfully recruited a Regulatory Services apprentice this quarter after being awarded college fee funding from Skills Development Scotland for two Regulatory Services Apprentice posts. This new pilot apprenticeship scheme is aimed at partially addressing the national shortage of regulatory services officers and is hoped to assist future staffing requirements by providing a new route into the field of Environmental Health.

The team received 313 public health service requests this quarter from Midlothian residents and businesses. A further 83 service requests were received from internal sources. Key activities for the Public Health Environmental Protection team this quarter included:

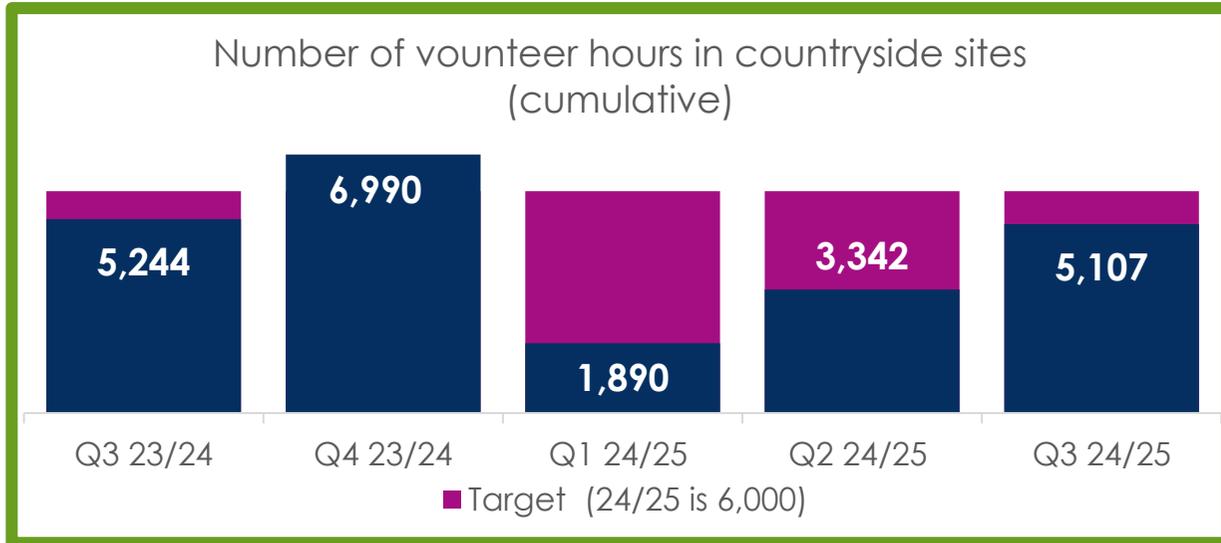
- A new Environmental Warden has taken up a part time post, principal duties include dog control, flytipping, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling. This post fills a vacancy created under the flexible working scheme.
- A number of statutory notices regarding a variety of matters including fly-tipping and vermin were served in quarter 3 and have been complied with.
- A renewed process for prescribed information checking under landlord registration commenced during quarter 3. 23 cases were raised during the remainder of the quarter, 17 of which have now demonstrated compliance and 6 remain ongoing.
- Updated licence conditions for commercial animal boarding establishments were approved by Council in December 2024. The approved licence conditions will provide authorised inspecting officers with improved scope for ensuring compliant premises operation and sufficient standards of animal welfare.
- By the end of quarter 3, the Public Health and Environmental Protection team had issued 98 Short Term Let Licences under the new scheme.

Neighbourhood Services – performance

% OF ALL DISPOSED WASTE*



*Data shows figures for Q2 24/25. Q3 24/25 not available until Q4.



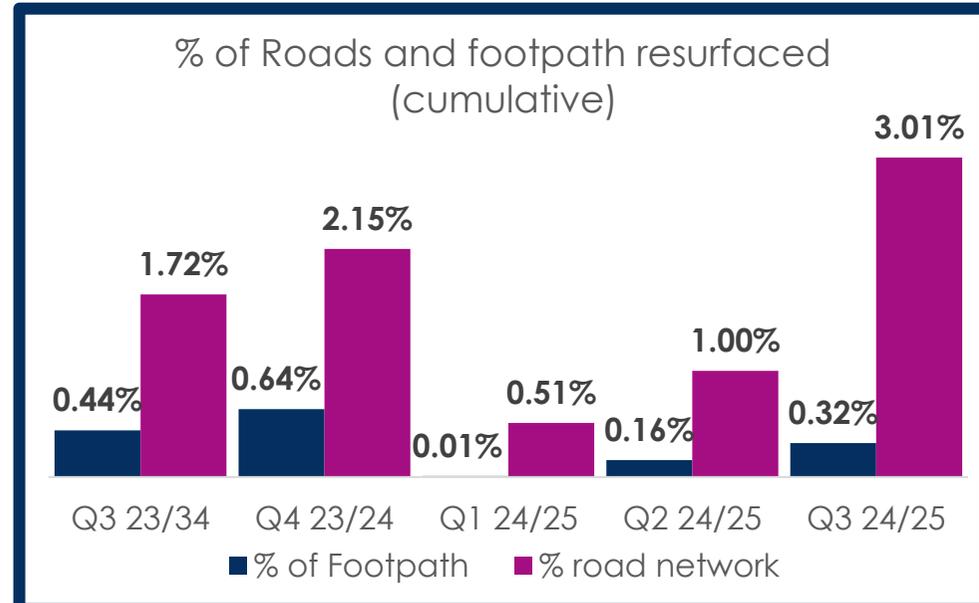
23 play area, parks and greenspace improvements completed this year to date.

676.76 tonnes of material used to fill temporary and permanent potholes this quarter.

2,078 m² of permanent patching achieved this quarter.

611 potholes were permanently repaired this quarter.

375 tonnes of carbon emissions saved from street lighting this quarter.



Protective Services – performance

Food Standards

94% of food related service requests from mid residents and Businesses responded to with target of 10 working days.

35 food law service requests received this quarter

63 food law interventions carried out (Hygiene/Food Standards)

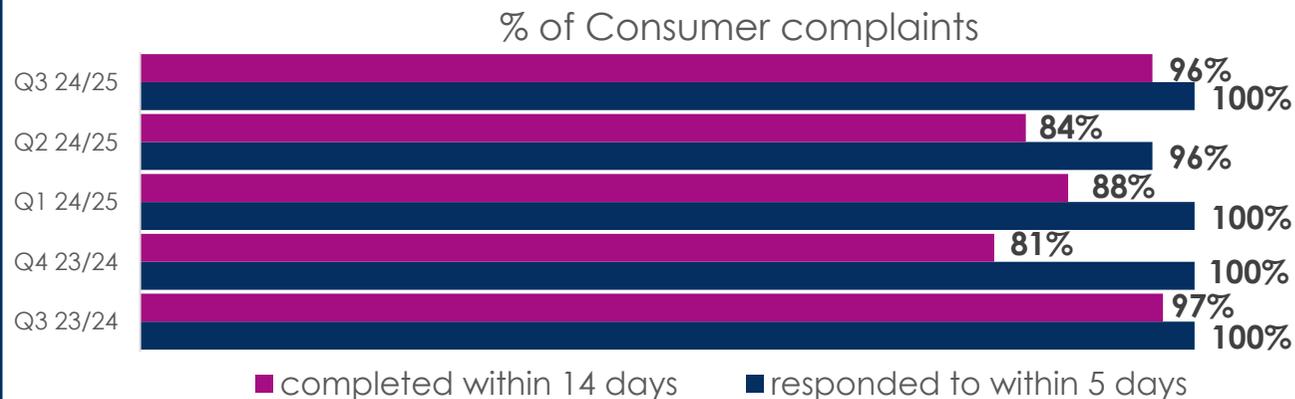
Public Health

313 Public Health service requests received from residents and businesses this quarter. (290 in Q2).

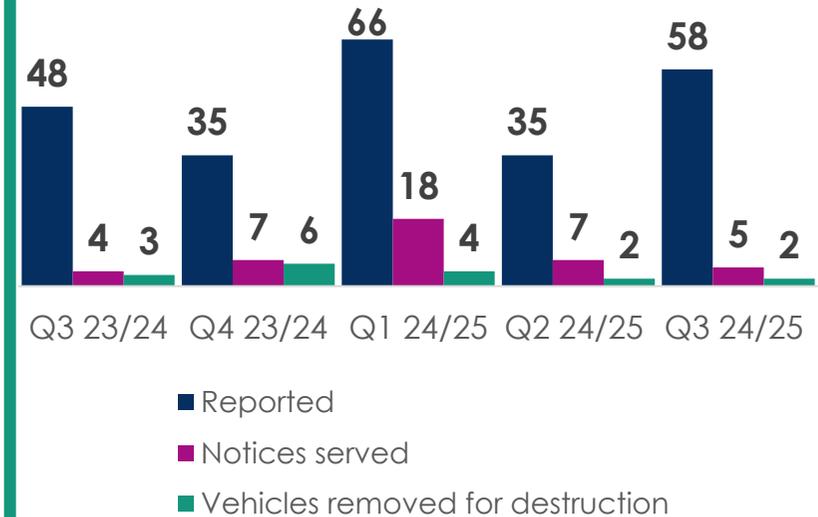
98% of public health complaints receiving first response within timescale this quarter.

Trading Standards

28 consumer complaints received this quarter (decrease from 44 in Q3 23/24)



Number of abandoned vehicles (quarterly)



109 liquor licence applications

received in Q3 with **100%** determined

90 Civic Government license applications received in Q3 with **78%** determined

Housing

Key achievements Q3 24/25



Meeting housing need

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.

From March 2024 to date we have received the completed handover for 119 new build homes (23 this quarter) in Conifer Road, Mayfield, St Cuthberts in Bonnyrigg High Street, Buccleuch Wynd, Pathhead and Danderhall.

There were 5,971 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this quarter, a 9% increase compared to the same period last year. 152 lets were made this quarter (averaging 50 lets per month), 4 houses were let through our Housing First model. 40 lets were made to new build and open market purchases.

This quarter the Scottish Housing Regulator conducted an assurance visit to evaluate our Temporary Accommodation service. Feedback received was positive and they were satisfied with the processes and improvements implemented so far highlighting our commitment to meeting regulatory standards and providing effective support to those in need.

Homelessness

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. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. The [Homeless Persons \(Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities\) \(Scotland\) Order 2022](#) gives people in housing crisis the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need and aims to help them integrate more fully into the local community and to reduce repeat homelessness. The removal of the necessity to have a local connection to an area under this legislation has seen a shift in persons now presenting to Midlothian and as result the total number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter 3 was 378, an increase of 5% compared to the same period last year. Although we did not experience immediate negative effects of this the changes to legislation, the impact is now changing and we continue to monitor the long terms effects.



Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan we see households moving through the homeless system more quickly. Officers take a proactive approach when allocating properties to place applicants in their area of choice where possible, increasing the opportunity to accept the property being flipped to permanency and allows for a more sustainable community.

Latest figures available from quarter 2 show the length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing outcome was 39 weeks, showing a continued downward trend from 106 weeks at quarter 1 of 2022/23 and 57.5 weeks for quarter 3 last year. It should be noted figures for quarter 3 are not currently available however we expect current figures to remain within target. Similarly, quarter 3 figures for the length of time homeless applicants spent in temporary accommodation is currently not available. The most recent available data for quarter 2 in 2024/25 shows that an average of 33.9 weeks was spent in temporary accommodation compared to an average of 89 weeks over the same period in 2022/23 and 39.5 weeks quarter 3 of last year. It is expected that figures will continue to remain within target.

The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was 53 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 196. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this quarter with 91.8% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

Building Maintenance

The total number of jobs completed internally by our Building Maintenance Service this quarter was 9,031. A total of 25,008 jobs have been completed so far this year. Jobs include all reactive, planned works, voids and inspections.

This year the Building Maintenance Service (BMS) Capital upgrade programme has been set at just over 3000 upgrades across our estate, continuing from achievements last year. These upgrades include the continuation of our new windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchen programmes helping Midlothian Council maintain its Scottish Housing Quality Standards. The service also aims to complete the remaining fire door installs to all our flats to ensure that we are also compliant with the latest fire regulations.



This quarter we have increased the percentage of Council Housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards criteria to 80.29%. Although this is still off target there has been a significant increase from 49.3% meeting standards at quarter 3 of last year. Due to changes in the Energy Efficiency regulations affecting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) criteria, 431 houses were identified as failing the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). We have reduced these failures to meet 2025 targets. However, with the Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's) now part of the SHQS we found that 4,733 were failing assessment. We have reduced this figure to 1,708 during quarter 2 and 1,436 this quarter resulting in 80.29% now meeting standard. Work is progressing to bring this indicator back on target. 100% of smoke alarms comply with current legislation.

In line with our Damp and Mould policy the service continues to roll out the environmental sensors throughout our portfolio. This year BMS are aiming to install around 2,000 monitors across 1,000 homes. This continued roll out will provide us with valuable information from within our homes, allowing us to achieve our targets set out in our Damp and Mould policy. The information collated by the monitors is sent through to a portal using a gateway system that also monitors our smoke alarms.

Building Standards

Although performance targets in relation to building warrant applications issued are off target this quarter, our Building Standards service continues to provide a high level of customer satisfaction against an increasing service demand.

The Building Standards service review has been agreed and the first phase now implemented. Outlined in the review is the proposal to increase the workforce to manage the increase in workload, as well as successfully managing the future of the service as it navigates through the expected changes due to succession planning.

Building Standards met with the Scottish Government in October 2024 and was given a positive review and welcomed the outcome of the Rational Report and the Council's commitment to the service re-structure.

Housing – performance

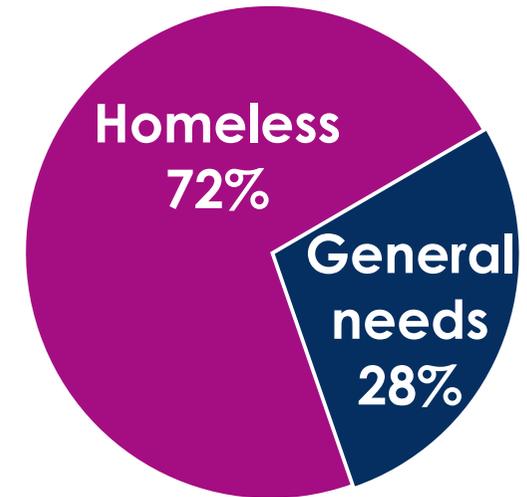
5,971 applicants on housing waiting list this quarter (General needs and Homeless) (increase from 5,481 in Q3 23/24).

152 housing lets this quarter.

40 Lets to new build and open market purchases this quarter.

4 Lets to Housing First applicants this quarter.

% of lets made to applicants

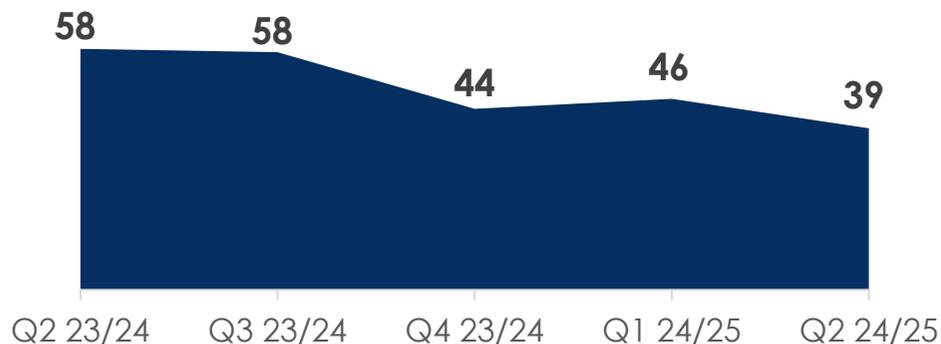


Time taken to re-let permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)

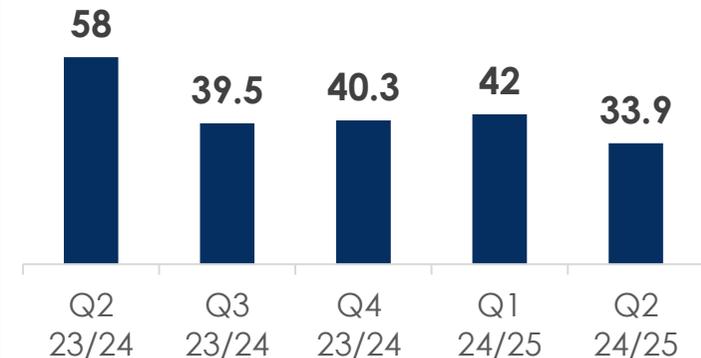


91.8% of Homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year.

Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants wait until receiving a permanent housing outcome

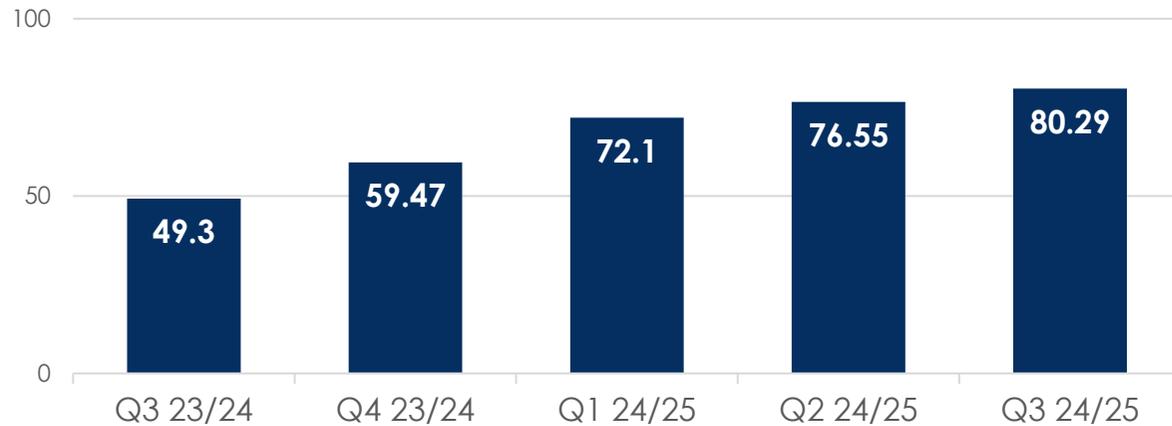


Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation



Building Services – performance

% of Council housing meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) (cumulative)



9,031 jobs completed this quarter by our Building Maintenance Service

25,008 jobs completed year to date

Building Standards

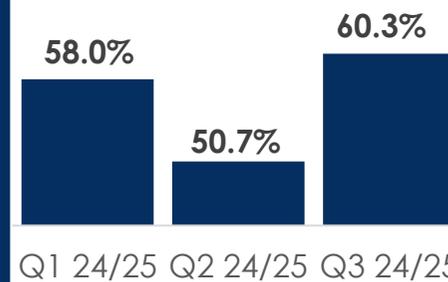
Percentage of housing repairs completed on time this quarter:

93.67%
of
emergency repairs
completed on time

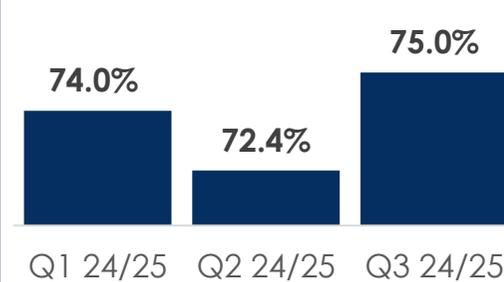
82.05%
of
priority 2 repairs
completed on time

83.01%
of
priority 3 repairs
completed on time

% of first reports for building warrant applications issued within 20 working days



% of building warrants issued within 10 working days, following receipt of satisfactory information



Building Standards customer satisfaction rate:

7.7 out of 10

Economy & Regeneration

Key achievements Q3 24/25

This quarter Council approved the Economic Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2025-2030. The new strategy aligns with the Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Prosperity Framework. Midlothian's vision is that:

“Midlothian’s wellbeing economy will support our communities, businesses and town centres to thrive, ensuring inclusivity and fair work for all. It will continue to be recognised as home to world leading clusters of science and innovation and be known as an area in which everyone can live, work and do business sustainably to generate wealth and wellbeing for its citizens”

This will be achieved in accordance with four pillars, principles that underpin the strategy's vision: **empowerment, partnership and collaboration, ambition** and **innovation** and sets out the following priorities to achieve our vision:

- 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.



Business gateway Service

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.

44 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received in quarter 3. Although 16 fewer enquires compared to this quarter last year, 152 enquires have been received this year to date which is similar to the year to date stats of 23/24. Enquiries are received from individuals that are considering setting up a business but need support to achieve this, these clients tend to have numerous sessions with their advisor covering areas such as business planning, access to finance, regularity compliance, routes to market and can take from 3 months to a year to reach the trading stage.

The total number of new Business start-ups this quarter was 17, creating a total of 23 jobs and an estimated contribution of £1,230,000 to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. This is a decrease compared to 24 starts over the same period last year however the 'Planning to Start' enquires over this quarter and last means the pipeline is still healthy. Business Gateway, as part of the 'Gateway to the Future' service redesign, are looking to engage with more existing and growing businesses. Pre-start micro-businesses and sole traders are still key to the service. The perception of how Business Gateway can support has to expand into growth and high growth client profiles in order to maximise the Economic Development potential, this is what has driven the launch and promotion of the 'Strengthen Your Business' enquiry tool which received 8 enquires this quarter.

Further to the above, and also part of the Business Gateway Service redesign, quarter 3 saw the launch of a new CRM tools; 'customer categories' and the 'progress tracker':

- **Customer categories:** the existing categories pre-start/new business/business base have been complemented by pre-start plus, new-business plus and local priority categories. Business Gateway local offices can now differentiate incoming planning to start businesses with more economic development potential across set metrics (premises, growth potential, exporting, minimum revenue, employee

numbers) by setting as 'pre-start plus'. If potential is realised and business starts, they will be 'new business plus'. One year after being 'claimed' as a start, if potential is still there, they can be categorised as a 'local priority'.

- **Progress Tracker:** where clients (due to potential economic development impact and scope) are requiring multiple interactions, across multiple themes, the progress tracker is a useful tool to retain all interactions in one place.

The set applicable themes include Human Resources, Carbon Reduction, Intellectual Property, Community Wealth Building, Innovation, Fair Work, Digital Maturity and Finance. This can be useful to see which outcomes have been achieved and is helpful where more than one person is providing support for a client. It also provides continuity where there is absence or staff turnover.

Business Gateway Expert Help Programme

Our second cohort of the Learn Ecommerce Expert Help programme went live in December with 14 local businesses enrolled. The programme will continue through January with one to one and group sessions with the Learn Ecommerce Expert Help provider.

The Net Zero Nation 12 month Programme which supported 13 diverse local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey finished in December 2024. An in-person meeting with the full cohort of businesses and the delivery team is scheduled in quarter 4, where the Business Gateway team will receive feedback from the businesses involved and start to develop case studies on the outcomes achieved.

The popularity of our HR Expert Help programme has meant the budget was fully allocated in November 2024. 21 local businesses took advantage of the support since launch in March 2023.

16 local businesses have benefitted from the Finance Expert Help Programme since its launch in February 2023, with budget remaining for up to 4 clients.

Business Gateway Midlothian Events

A Business Gateway Midlothian Coffee Morning was held on the 8th of November 2024 at the Energy Training Academy with a focus on sustainability. Presenters at the event were Midlothian Energy Limited and CRD The Workforce Mobility Project outlining sustainable developments in Midlothian and how businesses in the area can get involved. 23 businesses attended the event. The outcomes were:

- Business based in Loanhead Industrial Estate working with Vattenfall to explore an estate wide transition to Green Energy.
- Businesses keen to be involved in the workforce mobility project, a video will be created to highlight the benefits to businesses of involvement to encourage wider participation in the data capture.



The next Coffee Morning is scheduled for Friday 24th of January at the [Midlothian Innovation Centre](#).

The speaker is Mark Blair from Effective Now, a Midlothian based consultancy. He will focus on how small businesses can best manage young people in the workplace.

UKSPF Local Business Support

A total of £374,813.36 of grant funding was allocated to 3 themes, Community Wealth Building, Tourism Culture & Heritage and Exporting with the final tranche of funds allocated this quarter. Over the course of the programme we have distributed 31 grants:

- Community Wealth Building - 14 applications
- Exporting – 8 applications
- Tourism Culture & Heritage – 9 applications

The Tourism Culture and Heritage funding included £25,000 to Economic Development to create 5 marketing videos and the procurement process awarded this work to local business Fifth House Design.

The Green Skills programme (fund value £100,000) continues to recruit and upskill local plumbers, heating engineers and electricians in the installation of Heat Pumps and Solar Panels/Battery Storage, this programme includes the Managed Learning Programme (MLP) which takes an individual with no experience of the trade to fully qualified gas and heat pump installers. In quarter 3 four unemployed individuals commenced on the MLP programme, each will participate in a work placement with a local installation company for the duration of the programme. The Solar Panel and battery storage programme has been popular we have so far approved 21 electricians for places within quarter 3 and they will progress to complete the course with Energy Training Academy. The Air Source Heat Pump element of the Green skills programme has been less popular but we have allocated 10 places so far and continue to work with local businesses to access the training.

The Economic Development team and our delivery partner The Energy Training Academy has been actively promoting the Green Skills programme via various online channels such as Locate in Midlothian, Facebook and LinkedIn, we have also reached out to non-Business Gateway registered businesses and converted them to clients in addition to supporting them to access the training.

Social Enterprise

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 service supported 13 Social Enterprise organisations in quarter 3. Support provided included:

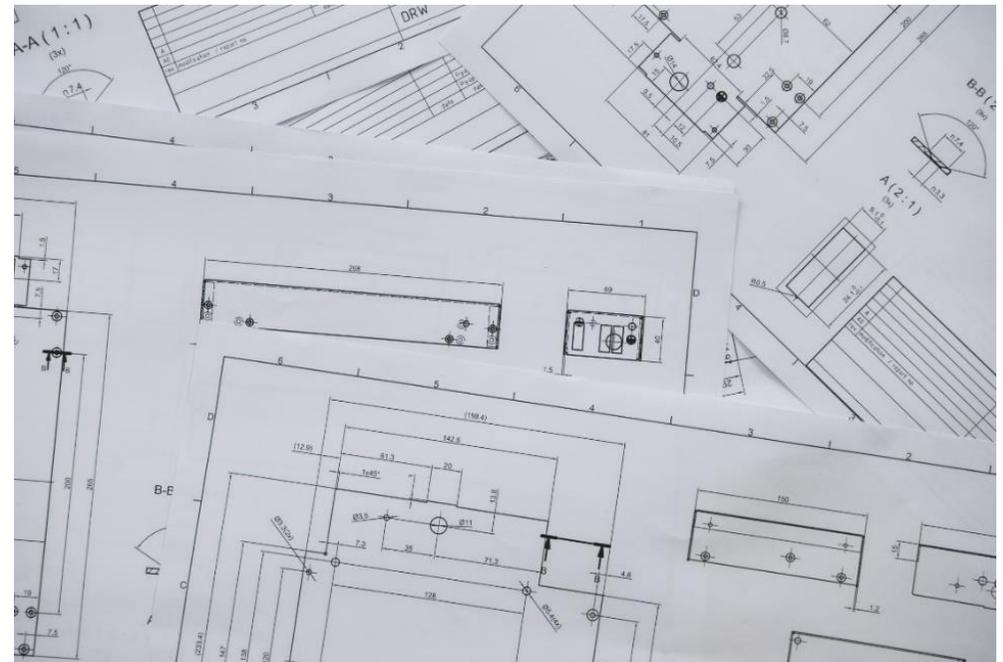
- 3 pre-start social enterprises have been provided with support to develop their idea and been given advice on support available and the current social enterprise landscape.
- 2 pre-start business associations have been provided with support and advice to set up structure and begin trading.
- 1 pre-start development Trust has been provided with support with planning and developing its organisational structure.
- 2 Social Enterprises have been provided with support to successfully secure grant funding.

Land and Property

Property enquiries are specific premises enquiries and sign ups to the property mailing list. We had a total of 31 enquiries from local businesses in quarter 3 of which 6 were from businesses outside of Midlothian, these could be considered Inward Investment enquiries however they are all smaller businesses looking to relocate from Edinburgh or surrounding areas. 2 inward investment enquiries were received in quarter 3, 1 from Heckmondwike in England with the potential to bring 60 jobs and one from Musselburgh in East Lothian with potential to bring 20 jobs to the area.

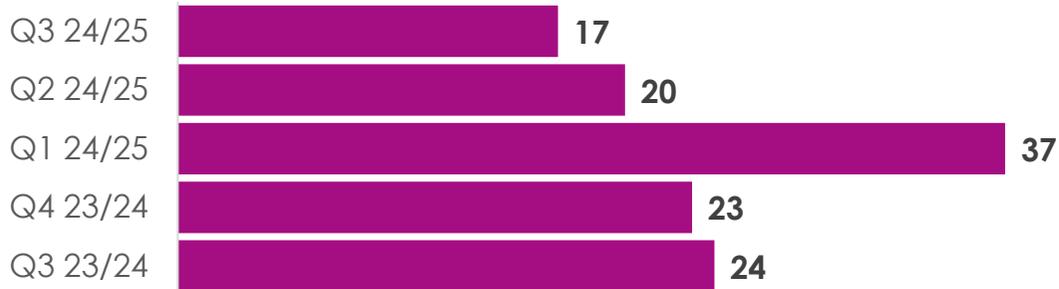
Planning

Following the adoption of the National Planning Framework No.4, the Planning Service formally commenced its review of the Council's adopted spatial strategy this year, the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2 (MLDP2). The first phase consisted of engagement with community groups, key agencies, the development industry, local residents and elected members. This engagement was ongoing throughout 2023/24 and continues into 2024/25. At its meeting in June 2024 Council approved the MLDP2 Evidence Report, including setting a Local Housing Land Requirement at 8,851, for submission to the Scottish Government for 'Gate Check'. This is the first major milestone in the MLDP2 process. The Evidence Report has now cleared the 'Gate Check' process, the second Council in Scotland to clear this process. The outcome of this process was reported to Planning Committee at its meeting in October 2024.



Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment-performance

Number of new Business start ups (quarterly)



Social media

1,749 Locate in Midlothian followers.

2,502 Business Gateway followers

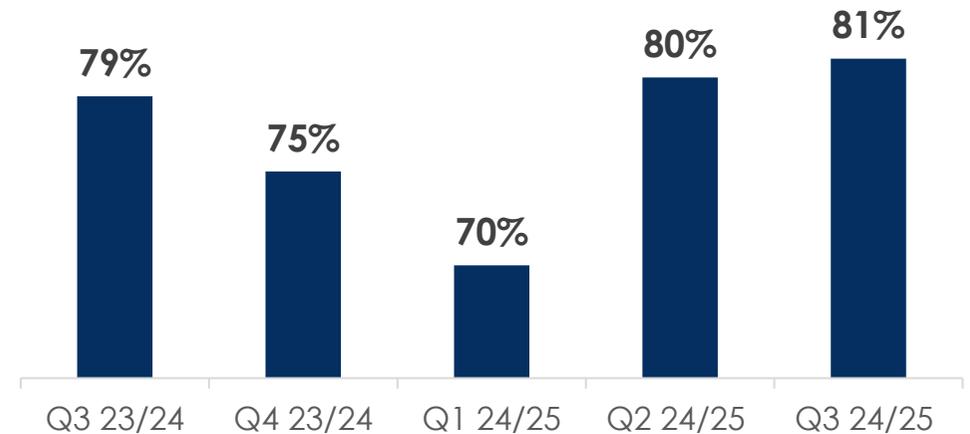
8 'Strengthen your business' enquiries this quarter

22 Businesses signed up to the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** this quarter (increase from 16 in Q3 23/24)

13 Social enterprises supported this quarter (17 in Q3 23/24)

44 'Planning to Start' enquires/submissions this quarter (decrease from 60 in Q3 23/24)

% of planning applications completed within target of 80%



67 weeks

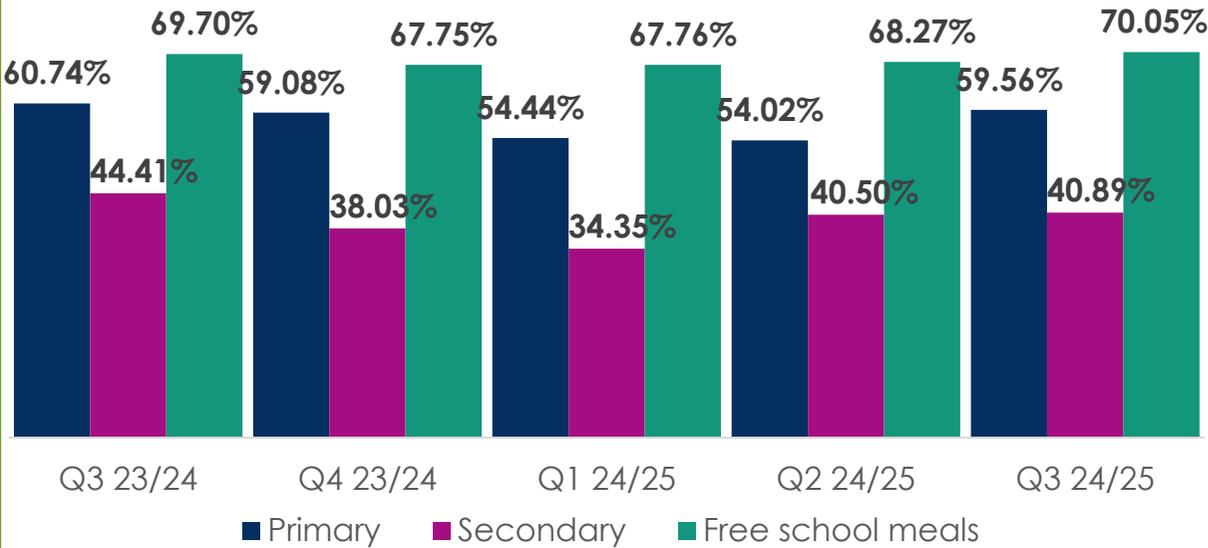
Average time to determine planning applications for **major** developments.

12 weeks

Average time to determine planning applications for **local** developments.

Property and Facilities – performance

% of school meal uptake



Percentage of school meal food waste

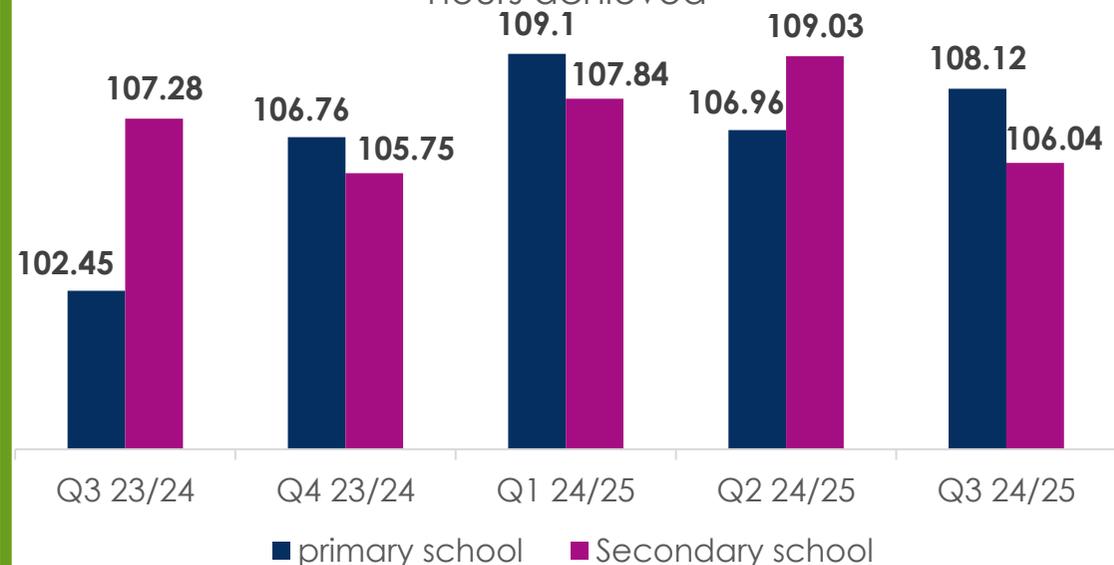


6.85 nursery and primary school meals prepared per hour this quarter (7.48 compared to last year Q3 23/24)

TARGET: APSE national average 8.84 meals prepared per hour

9.27 secondary school meals prepared per hour this quarter (8.23 compared to last year Q3 23/24)

Percentage of cleaning hours against budgeted hours achieved



Health and Wellbeing

Key achievements Q3 24/25

Facility Services

The percentage of Secondary school meal uptake this quarter was 40.89% 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 3 increased to 59.56% and again remains steady compared to previous quarters. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) average of 41.24%. The percentage of school meal food waste has decreased to 4.24% from 5.15% compared to the same period last year.



Across our cleaning and janitorial functions, the percentage of cleaning hours against our budgeted hours achieved in both Primary and Secondary schools remain on target with productivity levels above APSE averages, based on the APSE national average of cleaning 192m per hour. This quarter Facility Services contributed to the smooth transition of Mayfield Primary to Easthouses Primary, completed the October holiday works programme across our schools and ensure the smooth opening of the new Woodburn Primary School extension.



Across Sport and Leisure services, our Tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of 4,872 memberships up to the end of quarter 3. An increase of 7.6% compared from last quarter.

Towards the end of quarter 1, a new Sport and Leisure mobile app was launched. The new app makes it easier for customer to access and manage their account, book classes, get live pool updates, news and Active Schools information. The app had 500 downloads within the first week of launch. By the end of quarter 3 the app now has over 8,000 users. Our app can be found on the Apple and Google store.

Primary 4 free swimming lessons continue this quarter after an effective system was put in place from our programme development officer. Two swimming blocks were delivered during the quarter delivering 18 classes per week, totalling 4,633 attendances over both the 7 and 4 week block.

Our **Alpine coaster at Midlothian Snowsports Centre** opened successfully on the 14th of September. After a successful communications campaign the coaster was fully booked since its opening weekend to the 13th of October with 11,479 tickets being sold. This quarter a further 18,779 tickets were sold.

Our 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. 225 activities were delivered this quarter, an increase from 197 delivered during quarter 3 last year. 3,013 participants attended Active Schools free extra curricular club which is an increase of 7.5% compared to the same period last year. The number of volunteer hours delivered in the Active Schools Programme has also increased from this time last year with 2,128 volunteers compared to 1,972 during quarter 3 of 23/24.



Our October and December holiday programme was well attended generating income and resulted in a good base to build on for future years. In addition, this quarter Newbattle High school won the School Sport Award at the Scottish Sports Awards 2024.

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 quarter saw 1,307 Midlothian Active Choices attendees with 364 new referrals received after completion of MAC sessions showing an increase of 7% compared to the same period last year.

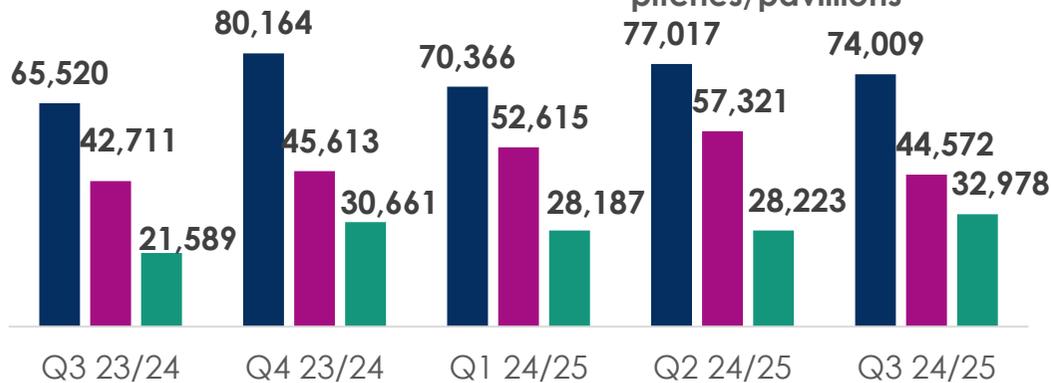
Sport and Leisure - performance

Number of attendances at Sport and Leisure facilities (quarterly)

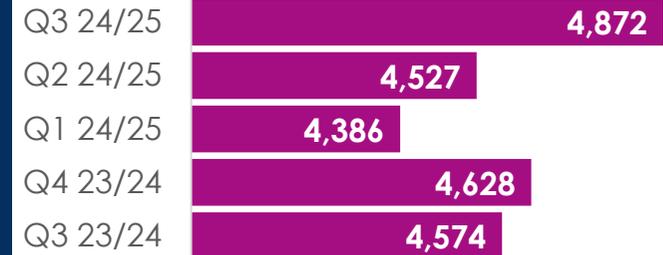
■ All facilities (excl pools)

■ Swimming pools

■ Outdoor facilities - pitches/pavillions



Number of Tonezone memberships (cumulative)

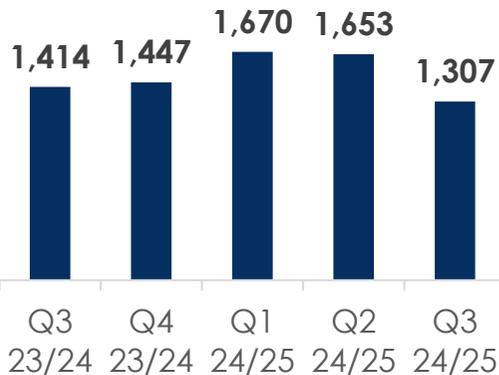


Total income generated from Tonezone memberships

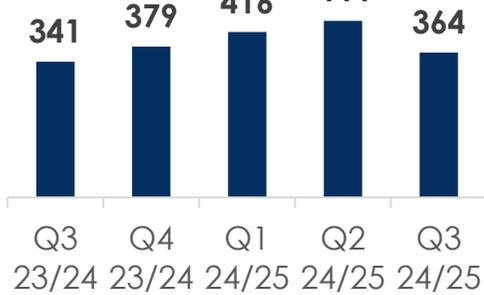


Midlothian Active Choices (MAC)

Number of MAC attendees (quarterly)



Number of new referrals after completion of MAC sessions (quarterly)



Ageing Well

Number of activities offered by Ageing Well to 50+ age groups (quarterly)



Capital Investment Programme

As Scotland's fastest growing local authority area, it is critical to delivery that investment in community infrastructure, such as housing, the learning estate, economic investment and green infrastructure, is in the right place at the right time. This will help our communities to live well, live locally and prosper. How we invest in community infrastructure must also respond to changes in our working and living patterns brought about by the pandemic. Communities need to be able to readily access the services they require. Capital investment is also an opportunity to support our local economy through job creation and skills enhancement, particularly in relation to supporting a transition to a green economy as we invest in sustainable, highly energy efficient buildings.

As a growing Council, we have the opportunity to transform parts of Midlothian in a way that reflects how we live now. We will invest in community infrastructure with a focus on place-making, reducing inequalities, improving economic opportunities and improving education and health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Capital Investment Strategy brings together many strands of the Council's activities to build upon our past successes and drive forward innovation in a co-ordinated and achievable manner for the benefit of Midlothian and its citizens.

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 innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

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

The Education Learning Estate Strategy programme continues and is subject to regular review meetings with Education and stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring, reporting and delivery of improvement and expansion of the Education estate including Early Years provision. This covers a number of projects at various stages of development.

The delivery of more affordable housing remains a priority for Midlothian Council. As part of our housing programme phase 1 provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at

1134, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 645 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress continues with 645 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. An additional 297 homes are funded for delivery in phase 5. This included the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 191 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents. At present any further Passivhaus developments are paused for a cost benefit analysis exercise.

Construction and Development

Key achievements Q3 24/25

- Nomination for 2 Scottish Property Awards (Regeneration and Education) for Buccleuch St passivhaus housing and Easthouses Primary School.
- Completion of Contract 1 and 2 at Midlothian Snowsports Centre (Hillend) with parking and service infrastructure now in place and Alpine Coaster fully operational since September 2025.
- Woodburn Primary School 9 class, STEM and gym extension was delivered to budget and 2 weeks early in November 2024. The new expanded kitchen also completed.
- Entered into a contract for 20 homes on site of former leisure centre in Danderhall, at Newton Church Road. On site as of January 2025 with homes being built to Passivhaus standard.
- Passivhaus development progressing well on site at former Newbattle High School, part of Scotland's largest Passivhaus housing programme. The first handovers are programmed for summer/autumn this year.
- Replacement Highbank Intermediate Care on site with extra care housing progressing well on site with Ogilvie in Bonnyrigg, which is currently 40% complete.
- Newbyres Gorebridge replacement housing site is progressing well and on programme with the construction of 79 new homes.



Challenges and risk

Over recent years, innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted at pace to respond to the needs of our citizens, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality. Our services are continuing to build on this learning moving forward, harnessing the energy, flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our workforce, to embed a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across Place.

Growing Council

In addition to the financial sustainability challenges, other challenges for Midlothian continue in the cost of living crisis, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings.

The recent Census results 2022 highlights that Midlothian remains the fastest growing local authority in 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.

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

The 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.

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 drive change and redesign services.