Midlothian Council Report Quarter 1 2026/27

Delivering through Transformation

Midlothian is the fastest growing mainland local authority in Scotland. Demand for services continues to increase while public finances remain constrained. The Council and its partners are therefore focused on delivering better outcomes through transformation, ensuring resources are directed towards the priorities that matter most to our communities.

The **Single Midlothian Plan** sets out three shared priorities for Midlothian's communities. These priorities provide the framework through which partners work together to improve outcomes for residents.

- **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**

The Council's **Transformation Blueprint** supports these priorities, and is underpinned by the **Medium Term Financial Strategy**, **Workforce Strategy 2024-34** and **Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29**. Together, these strategies help ensure that services remain sustainable, responsive and focused on improving outcomes for residents and communities.

Transformation Approach:

- **Delivering Financial Sustainability** - creating capacity to address future budget challenges.
- **Following the Money** - improving value for money and directing resources to priorities.
- **Building a Future Workforce** - developing skills, leadership and organisational capacity.
- **Modernising Services and Assets** - creating efficient and integrated ways of working.
- **Transforming with Partners** - delivering system-wide change through collaboration.

We will know we are making progress when:

- More people are healthy, skilled and independent
- Fewer children and families experience poverty
- Residents live in greener, more sustainable communities
- Services remain sustainable and accessible
- Staff are skilled, supported and empowered

Whilst detailed performance reports are published separately for individual service areas, this report provides a summary of Council performance against the thematic areas of the Single Midlothian Plan and demonstrates how transformation activity is supporting delivery. Further transformation activity is available on our Transforming how we work web page.

The following sections summarise key Council activity and performance during the quarter, organised around the thematic priorities of the Single Midlothian Plan.

Single Midlothian Plan Priority	Themes
Health & Skills	Healthier, Safer, GIRFEC, Employability & Communities
Reducing Poverty	Poverty, GIRFEC, Employability & Communities
Net Zero Carbon	Greener, Wellbeing Economy

Performance Against Single Midlothian Plan Themes

Midlothian will be Healthier – Achievements and Performance

This theme focuses on improving health, wellbeing and independence, helping people to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Physical Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions

During the quarter, **87% of Physical Disability and Long-Term Condition interventions achieved their intended outcome**, while **96% of referral screening episodes were concluded within three working days**. Staff continue to work hard to achieve client outcomes, although performance can vary according to the complexity of needs.

Care at home, assessments and reviews

Demand and capacity pressures continue to affect the timely provision and review of care. During the quarter, **89% of care packages were reviewed within 2 years**. At the end of the quarter, **67 people receiving a care package had not had a formal assessment or review completed for more than two years**, although most continued to have oversight or care management arrangements in place. Recent recruitment is enabling cases that have not been reviewed for over two years to be prioritised. For care packages of fewer than five hours, **52% were allocated within the target timescale**. Performance for packages exceeding five hours was **86%**, slightly above target. The service is working through referrals and the waiting list and regular monitoring, and service improvement should improve performance moving forward.

Older people, dementia and service transformation

Performance across Older People's Services was mixed. **79.81% of annual care home reviews were completed within the scheduled timeframe**, but **35.71% of initial care home reviews were completed within the required timeframe**. Staffing shortages result in higher waiting lists for assessment of need which continues to affect performance. Demand for dementia support has also increased, with **41 people currently awaiting allocation of a social worker**. However, people were being **seen on average within six to seven weeks**, within the agreed performance target. The CCA waiting list remains consistent with an average of **3 individuals on the waiting list** and individuals being seen **within 3-4 weeks**.

Preparations continued for the opening of **Midlothian Life in Bonnyrigg**, including workforce planning, staff training and service redesign. The development will support rehabilitation, intermediate care and new models of care.

Mental health and substance use support

Adult Mental Health Services continued to manage demand, with **78.95% of Adults with Incapacity reports allocated to a Mental Health Officer within 12 weeks**. Adult mental health bed occupancy was maintained at or below 100%. The Substance Use Service held an overall caseload of 367 and continued to perform **above the 90% for people being assessed or starting treatment within 21 days of referral**. Performance against Medication Assisted Treatment Standards 1 to 5 was assessed as Blue, indicating sustained delivery and embedded practice, while Standards 6 to 10 were rated Green, indicating full implementation of the required standards.

Prevention, inclusion, carers and community wellbeing

The Health Inclusion Team completed **54 health assessments** during the quarter, supporting vulnerable residents to access health and wellbeing support and reducing barriers to services. Support for unpaid carers remained strong in response to sustained demand for carer support in the community. VOCAL exceeded its target for Adult Carer Support Plans, completing 186, while HSCP completions remained below target at 23. Community-based activity also continued through the Newbattle Memories Group, supporting social connection, intergenerational engagement and reduced isolation.

Physical activity, active ageing and healthier lifestyles

Sport and Leisure continued to support physical activity, prevention and community wellbeing during Quarter 1. Active Schools delivered **173 distinct activities**, involving **2,525 participants in free extracurricular clubs** and supported by **1,184 volunteer hours**. A total of **406 Primary 4 pupils** participated in a ten-week swimming block.

Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) recorded **2,559 attendances**, with 525 new referrals following completion of MAC sessions, while Ageing Well delivered **874 activities for people aged 50 and over**. Across the wider service, there were **97,312 attendances at sport and leisure facilities excluding pools** and **48,701 attendances at swimming pools** during the quarter.

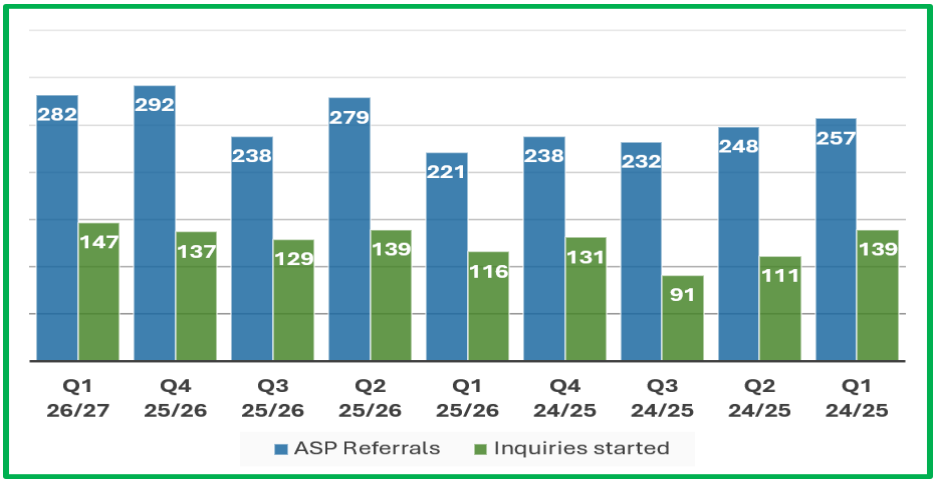
Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements and Performance

This theme focuses on creating safe communities, protecting vulnerable people and reducing the risk of harm.

Protecting adults at risk of harm

Adult Support and Protection activity remained significant during Quarter 1. The service received **282 referrals**, compared with 221 in Quarter 1 of the previous year, and **three new protection plans** were established to support adults assessed as being at risk of harm. The level of activity reflects the continuing importance of identifying risk, carrying out appropriate inquiries and coordinating protection where this is required.

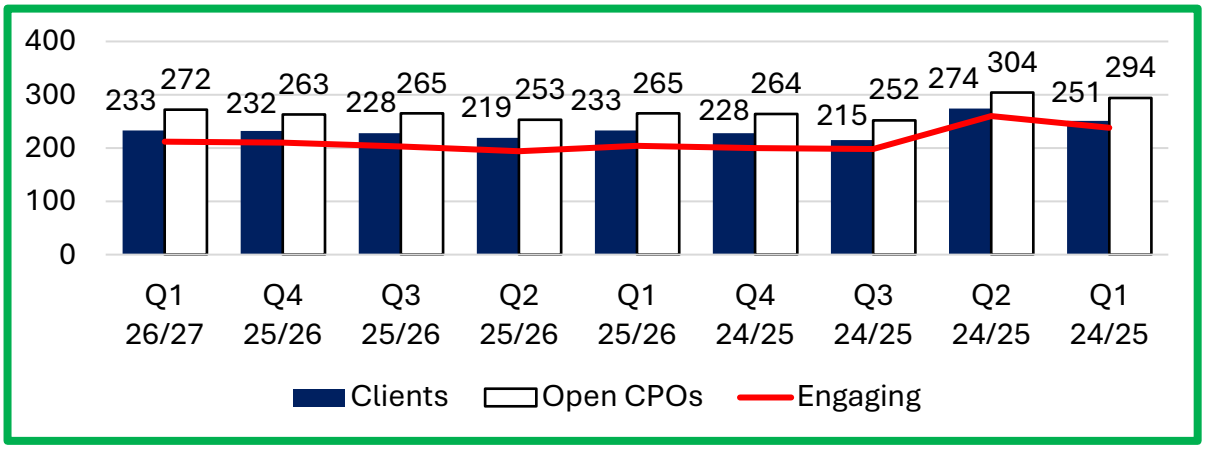
Figure 1: Adult Support and Protection referrals and inquiries started (Quarterly)



Justice, rehabilitation and community safety

Justice Social Work continued to manage a substantial community caseload while supporting rehabilitation and compliance with court orders. During the quarter, courts imposed **33 Community Payback Orders**. At the end of Quarter 1, the service was supervising **233 people subject to 272 open orders**, with **90% of individuals actively engaging with their order**. This work supports individuals to comply with court requirements, address offending-related needs and contribute to safer communities.

Figure 2: Community Payback Orders (Quarterly)



Road and public infrastructure safety

The Council continued its programme of investment in roads, footways and street lighting. During Quarter **1, 1.31 kilometres of carriageway** and **1 kilometre of footway** were resurfaced. The proportion of the road network resurfaced was slightly lower than in the same period last year, while footway delivery was broadly comparable.

A total of **714.3 tonnes of material** was used for pothole repairs, including temporary repairs and permanent patching, compared with 1,251.09 tonnes during the same period last year. The reduction in pothole repairs reflects the Council's continued investment in improving road infrastructure and is a result of the significant carriageway resurfacing and renewal works being undertaken across the network.

Street-lighting maintenance performance remained strong, with **92.45% of repairs completed within seven days**. Preparations also continued for the replacement of 182 street-lighting columns and the upgrade of a further 1,034 units to energy-efficient LED technology during 2026/27.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child – Achievements and Performance

This theme focuses on ensuring children and young people are safe, supported and able to achieve their full potential.

Children's safety and protection

The number of Midlothian children on the Child Protection Register reduced to **38 at the end of Quarter 1**, compared with 41 in the corresponding quarter last year. The associated rate reduced from 2.2 to **1.8 per 1,000 children**. Children's Services reports that this follows a period of exceptionally high registration levels and may indicate some stabilisation in demand.

The service continues to focus on improving the quality and consistency of chronologies, sharing Child Protection Plans with children in an age-appropriate way, and reducing the time between Initial Referral Discussions and initial Child Protection Planning Meetings. Refreshed Child Protection and Looked After Children Practice Standards were introduced, supported by development sessions attended by more than 60 staff.

Performance information shows that **70% of Child Protection Plans were shared with children and young people**, compared with 31% in Quarter 1 last year. However, **69% of Child Protection Planning Meetings had a multi-agency chronology**, down from 96%, while 50% of initial Core Group meetings were held within 15 days, and 88% of subsequent Core Group meetings were held within the required eight-week period. These areas remain an improvement focus.

Table 1: Children's Safety and Protection Summary

Performance measure	Q1 2026/27	Q1 2025/26	Change
Children on the Child Protection Register	**38**	41	Lower
Child Protection Register rate per 1,000	**1.8**	2.2	Lower
CPPMs with multi-agency chronology	**69%**	96%	Reduced performance
Child Protection Plans shared with children	**70%**	31%	Improved
Initial Core Group meetings within 15 days	**50%**	69%	Reduced performance
Core Group meetings held within eight weeks	**88%**	100%	Reduced performance

Early help and supporting families to stay together

Children's Services continued to strengthen early help and preventative support during Quarter 1. The Family Wellbeing Service relocated alongside Hawthorn's Outreach Team at Hawthorn Family Learning Centre, bringing services together in a more accessible location and supporting closer multi-agency working and more coordinated help for families.

The RISE service received **31 referrals** during the quarter, including family-group referrals and requests to support transitions from external provision. Seventeen families engaged with the service and **15 children avoided progression to a care or accommodation pathway** following targeted support. Formal entry and exit measures are being developed to provide more consistent evidence of outcomes for children and families.

Family Group Decision Making also supported family-led solutions, with **12 family meetings**, including three emergency meetings, and **17 family plans** completed during the quarter.

At the end of Quarter 1, **105 children were living in kinship care**, compared with 76 in the same quarter last year.

Care, placements and local support

Demand for care and accommodation increased during Quarter 1. The number of children who were looked after and accommodated was **217**, while **27 children were placed in external residential provision**. Children's Services reports that external provision is used where assessed needs cannot be met safely or effectively through support at home or available internal provision. The increase creates operational pressures for children placed further from Midlothian and a continuing financial pressure for the Council.

Work continues to expand local support through RISE, foster care and internal residential provision. The number of children living in residential care in Midlothian at the end of Quarter 1 was 14. One child returned from external provision during Quarter 1, and planning work is continuing to increase local residential capacity.

Foster-carer recruitment activity during the quarter generated five enquiries. Two households were undergoing assessment and one short-break carer was approved. All foster-carer households have an allocated supervising social worker.

Table 2: Care Placement Summary

Placement	Q1 2026/27	Q1 2025/26
Looked after and accommodated children	217	163
Children in external residential provision	27	9
Children living in Midlothian residential care	14	13
Children living in kinship care	105	76

Learning, attainment and attendance

Education reported that almost all learner attainment stretch aims were met for June 2026, with schools continuing to use tracking and monitoring information to identify where universal or targeted support is required. The latest Education quality information indicates that **85% of schools were judged Good or better for learning, teaching and assessment, 84% for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion, and 82% for raising attainment and achievement**.

The latest attainment information for June 2026 shows combined primary literacy increased to **78%**, compared with 73% in June 2025, while combined primary numeracy increased from **79%** to **81%**. At secondary level, the proportion of learners achieving literacy 3rd level increased from 88% to **90%**, while numeracy 3rd level reduced from 93% to **91%**.

Quarter 1 attendance was **93.60% in primary schools and 86.40% in secondary schools**. Primary attendance was slightly lower than the corresponding quarter last year, while the reduction in secondary attendance was more marked. Exclusion rates were **11.08 per 1,000 pupils in primary schools and 31.45 per 1,000 in secondary schools**. Education has therefore identified further work to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and strengthen aspects of senior-phase attainment.

Inclusive learning and additional support

Education continues to strengthen inclusive learning, teaching and assessment across schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings. Work during the quarter included updating the service's inclusive learning and curriculum approach, maintaining tracking and monitoring arrangements across Associated School Groups, and continuing professional learning for school staff. More than **90% of participants evaluated Education's professional learning offer positively**.

Growing numbers of children with complex additional support needs continue to place pressure on available provision, staffing and budgets. Work is under way to assess future capacity requirements and strengthen the way additional support needs are reflected in pupil projections and estate planning.

Children's Services also reports growth in both the number of children affected by disability and the complexity of support required. This is increasing demand across services and placing additional pressure on funded support and budgets. During the quarter, an Easter playscheme at Saltersgate supported up to **30 children each day**, while **12 young people transitioned from Children's Services Disability Service to Adult Services** using a more informed and streamlined transition approach.

Relationships, wellbeing and children's participation

The second year of the Relationships for Learning Policy is supporting a rights-based and relational approach across schools. Headteacher feedback has been used to identify further improvement action, guidance on physical intervention has been introduced, and schools have briefed staff on the associated principles and practice.

The new pupil leadership structure also continues to develop, with children and young people participating at school, Associated School Group and local-authority level. These arrangements allow learners to initiate change, contribute to wider developments and take part in national and local consultation.

Children's Services also strengthened its focus on participation, ensuring that children's voices and views inform assessment and planning. Work continues to improve child-friendly language, meeting formats and the collection of participation information. Six young people expressed an interest in contributing to staff recruitment, and questions suggested by young people have already been used in interviews.

Partnerships, curriculum and positive transitions

Schools continue to work with partners to widen curriculum and progression opportunities. All Associated School Groups have access to performance information to support collaborative improvement, while curriculum partnerships are expanding the range of courses and qualifications available to secondary learners. Links with Developing the Young Workforce are also being strengthened.

The latest available destination information shows that **95.35% of school leavers entered a positive destination**, while **78.57% of care-experienced school leavers entered a positive destination**.

Support for care-experienced young people was also developed during the quarter. A twice-weekly Aftercare drop-in was launched for young people who have left care, providing access to practical support with housing and health referrals, alongside wider personal support. The service recorded **58 young people allocated to or engaging with Aftercare** at the end of Quarter 1.

Libraries, play and supporting resources

Libraries provided **“That’s Not My…”** tactile books to the Early Years ASN Team as part of nursery-to-school transition activities. Additional tactile books were also supplied to the Outreach Communication Team, supporting children across Deaf Education, Neurodiversity and Wellbeing, English as an Additional Language (EAL), and Speech, Language and Communication services.

Children and young people's library memberships **increased by 27%** compared to the same period last year, supported by initiatives such as **Every Child a Library Member (ECALM),** 149 sign-ups during the quarter, and **Bookbug Week**. Midlothian’s work on this universal offer for children’s library membership in Scotland is the gold standard across the country.

12 improvements across our play areas, parks and green spaces were completed this quarter, consisting of landscaping schemes and the installation of benches and street litter bins, as well as deep cleaning projects, which enhance the local environment.

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

This theme focuses on helping people develop skills, access opportunities and participate fully in community life.

Community learning and skills

Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability engaged **1,759 people** across **267 learning and development opportunitie**s during Quarter 1. Participation included **151 residents from the 20% most deprived SIMD areas and 810 from the 40% most deprived areas**, supporting the Council's focus on reducing inequality and improving access to learning. CLLE participants **achieved 244 qualifications**, while **24 community groups** received support with governance, planning or funding.

Adult and family learning activity included **84 participants in paid learning programmes**, **295 participants across 67 community adult-learning courses**, **52 ESOL learners**, **13 literacy learners**, and **27 participants across four digital-skills courses**. A further 79 children and adults participated in family-learning activity.

Employability and progression

No One Left Behind supported **224 people**, including 87 new participants. During the quarter, **19 people moved into work**, three progressed to a Modern Apprenticeship, 32 achieved work-related qualifications and four began volunteering. Support remained flexible and person-centred, combining face-to-face, telephone, digital and outreach delivery.

Parental Employability Support assisted **262 parents**, including 40 new starts. Outcomes included **21 parents entering employment or self-employment**, 78 qualifications achieved by 23 parents, six volunteering starts and one work placement.

Youth work and targeted support

During Quarter 1, **954 young people participated in 132 youth-work opportunities**, with 103 receiving individual support towards positive destinations. Activity included youth clubs, targeted programmes, support for young people experiencing homelessness, and new local provision. Participants also achieved 9 Dynamic Youth and 12 Hi5 Awards, while 79 overnight Duke of Edinburgh expeditions took place between April and June 2026.

The service reported **122 referrals from schools for young people requiring intensive employability support**, including support before some young people were ready to begin their No One Left Behind journey.

Table 4: Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability Key Data Summary

Q1 CLLE reach	Employability	Parental support	Youth work
1,759 people engaged	**224** people supported	**262** parents supported	**954** young people involved
267 opportunities	**19** entered work	**21** entered work / self-employment	**103** received 1:1 support
244 qualifications reported	**32** work-related qualifications	**78** qualifications	**21** youth awards

Libraries and community participation

Our **library service** continues to transform and thrive in response to the needs of our communities. This quarter overall figures for library visits continue to grow with a **10% increase** in total visits (both physical and virtual) compared to the same period last year and an **11% increase** compared to quarter 1 of 2024/2025, demonstrating sustained growth and engagement across our library network. This quarter, a total of **1,670 events**, clubs, activities and workshops were delivered across library locations.

Strong participation levels achieved through **Bookbug** Week and the **Bookbug Library Reading Challenge** contribute positively to early literacy outcomes by encouraging regular engagement with books, storytelling and language-rich activities from an early age.

Through the **Mid Mouse project**, **1,300 children** received a knitted mouse to support their transition from nursery to primary school, helping children feel confident, connected and excited about starting school.

Rangers delivered **107 events** and school sessions involving **2,801 participants**, more than double the number of events delivered during the same period last year.

Supporting businesses and community wealth

Business Gateway supported **17 new business start-ups** during Quarter 1, creating **22 jobs** and contributing an estimated **£735,000** to the local economy.

Planning-to-Start enquiries increased from 45 to **57** compared with the same quarter last year.

At the end of quarter 1, the **Locate in Midlothian** Business Directory featured **203 business listings**, including **30 new businesses** added during the quarter. The directory continues to provide a valuable platform for promoting local businesses, enhancing visibility and supporting business-to-business connections across Midlothian.

Work has continued during quarter 1 to prepare for the development of a Midlothian-wide **Community Wealth Building Action Plan**. Activity has focused on planning and engagement ahead of the establishment of Community Wealth Building pillar groups, which will be delivered in quarter 2.

Workforce development

Delivery of the Workforce Strategy continued through targeted wellbeing programmes, recruitment modernisation, workforce planning and investment in employee learning and development, helping to support Midlothian Council as a major local employer and provider of career opportunities.

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements and Performance

This theme focuses on tackling climate change and creating a greener, more sustainable Midlothian.

The EESSH2 programme has delivered particularly strong outcomes in support of the Council's sustainability and net zero ambitions. Funding bids were successfully submitted to the Scottish Government for both the Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes (EES:ABS) and the Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) for 2026-2027.

Under the Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) programme, substantial improvements have been completed in **Roslin**, including the replacement of heating systems with air source **heat pumps in 28 properties** and the installation of **solar photovoltaic panels with battery storage across 66 homes**. These achievements represent a significant contribution towards reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and supporting residents with lower energy costs.

At the end of Quarter 1, the Newton Church Road Passivhaus development was progressing towards planned completion in September 2026.

Midlothian Libraries achieved **Carbon Literate Organisation accreditation***,* recognising its commitment to raising awareness of climate change and supporting environmental sustainability within both the library service and the wider community.

Following implementation of the **Twin Stream recycling service**, Quarter 1 presented a number of operational and technical challenges. These included staff shortages, vehicle availability issues and difficulties associated with introducing new collection routes and working practices. Collection performance improved significantly during June, with **98.79% of scheduled collections completed**. Contamination rates for **paper and card recycling averaged 7.8%**, performing better than the initial target of 10%. Contamination levels within the plastics and cans recycling stream (blue bin) remain significantly higher and continue to present a challenge.

Work continues on the refresh of the Council's **Climate Change Strategy**, including development of a cross-service action programme aligned to new statutory climate change guidance.

A total of **216 businesses** have now signed up to the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge**, supporting climate action and sustainable business practices.

Electric vehicles continue to represent **14.25% of the Council's fleet**, an increase from 8.2% at the same point last year.

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

This theme focuses on supporting inclusive economic growth, thriving communities and improved connectivity across Midlothian.

In June, Council approved the **Midlothian Local Development Plan 2 (MLDP2)** for public consultation. The statutory 12-week consultation period is now underway, providing residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders with the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed strategy for future growth and development across Midlothian.

Digital access and customer experience

The Council expanded digital access through the **Customer Services Platform** during Quarter 1, introducing additional online processes and progressing service automation and integration. This work is intended to make services easier to access and improve the customer experience.

Education continued to strengthen digital skills and responsible technology use. The **Digital Skills Framework** is being updated to include AI literacy and digital-habits content, while work is progressing to develop an AI-literate education workforce. The service is also continuing its use of digital tools to support accessible and inclusive learning. The wider Equipped for Learning programme reports that hundreds of teachers and school leaders have taken part in AI-related pilots and research activity, alongside continued digital support for pupils and support staff.

The rate of **invoices paid on time** across the Council this quarter was **95.6%,** exceeding our target of 95%.

New **school transport management software** and a new transport framework have strengthened route planning, provider allocation and operational efficiency.

Connectivity and sustainable transport

Council approved the **Local Transport Strategy 2026-2035**, providing a framework to support sustainable growth, connectivity, active travel and access to employment and services.

Local economy, procurement and community wealth

Work continues to develop a Midlothian-wide **Community Wealth Building Action Plan** following implementation of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026.

A revised **Procurement Strategy** is in development and will be presented to Council for approval this year. The strategy will continue to focus on supporting the local economy and encouraging participation from small and medium sized enterprises, delivering wider social outcomes and community benefits, while ensuring that procurement practices deliver best value for the council and its communities.

Midlothian completed its **Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan** and secured design-stage funding to progress improvements at Vogrie Country Park.

This quarter the average timescale for determining local development **planning applications was 10.4 weeks**, compared with the target of 10 weeks. This represents a small increase from 9.2 weeks recorded during the same period last year. In addition, **72% of planning applications were determined within the statutory target timescale**, marginally below the service target of 80%, but broadly consistent with performance during the same period last year of 73%.

Investment in assets and regeneration

Across Regeneration and Development, the Council has secured substantial external funding and maintained strong delivery momentum. During Quarter 1, the Council secured **£2.5 million** in Salix funding to support the **Midlothian House refurbishment** programme. A further Salix funding application for £500,000 was submitted for the Gorebridge Library Relocation project.

The final handover of **90 new affordable homes** in Newtongrange was successfully completed in May. This landmark development is the largest affordable housing project delivered by Midlothian Council to date and showcases the Council's commitment to sustainable housing delivery, with all homes built to the internationally recognised Passivhaus standard.

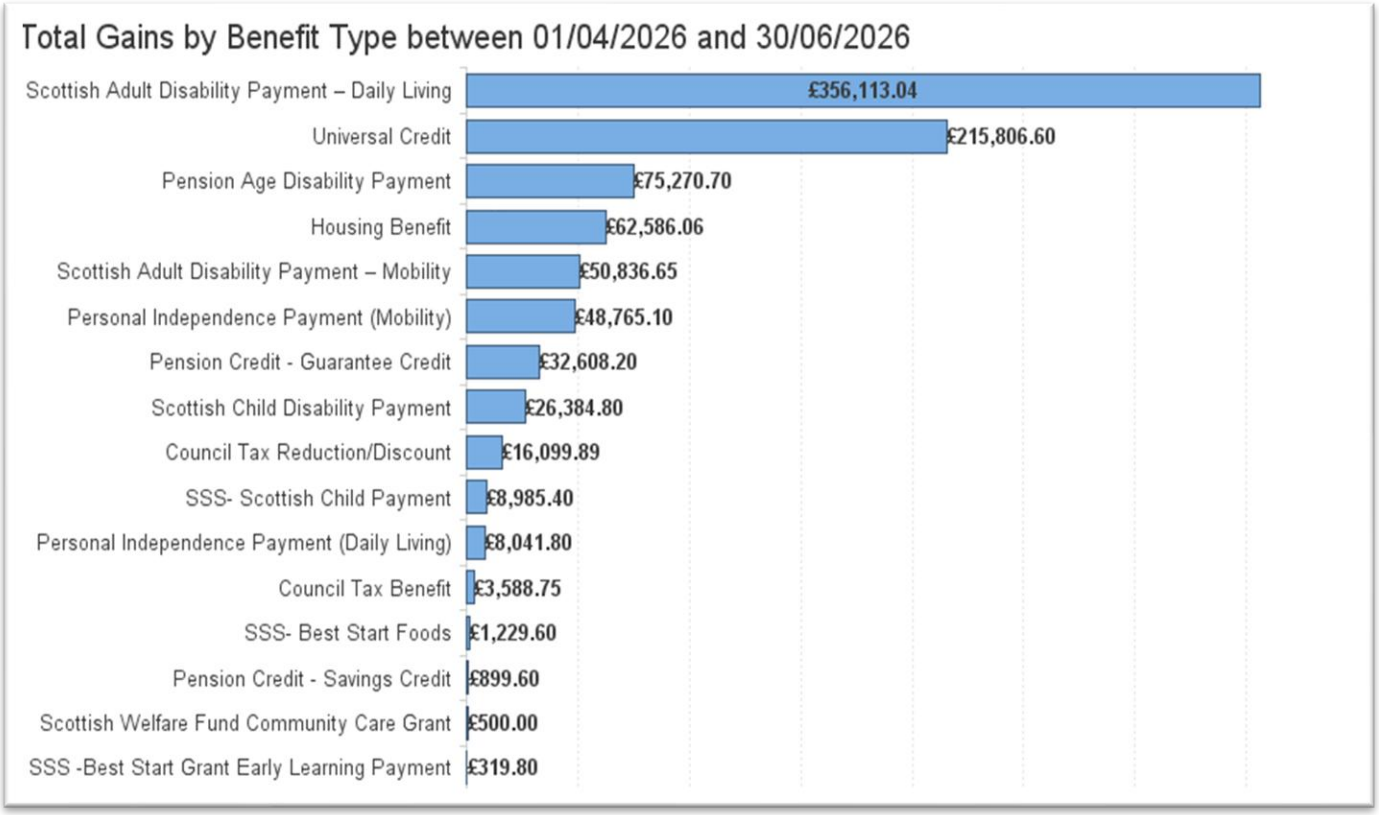
Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty – Achievements and Performance

This theme focuses on reducing poverty and inequality, improving financial wellbeing and supporting those most in need.

Maximising household income

The **Welfare Rights Team** received approximately **227 new referrals** during Quarter 1, alongside almost **90 calls** to the advice line and **56 email** enquiries. Support included direct intervention, advice and signposting. The team generated more than £908,000 of additional income for Midlothian residents through benefits advice, applications and advocacy. A breakdown is shown below:

Figure 3: Welfare Rights financial gains by benefit type, 1 April to 30 June 2026



Improving learning and employment outcomes

Education and employability services are addressing the longer-term causes and effects of poverty by improving attainment, skills and access to employment. Parental Employability Support **assisted 262 parents** during Quarter 1, with **21 entering employment or self-employment** and **78 qualifications achieved by 23 parents**. CLLE also **engaged 151 residents from the 20% most deprived SIMD areas and 810 from the 40% most deprived areas**.

Children's Services-funded income-maximisation projects supported **71 families** involved with Children's Services during Quarter 1, generating a collective financial gain of **£53,403**. The service intends to reinforce awareness of the support and referral route among staff to ensure eligible families are consistently offered assistance.

Crisis support and benefit administration

Scottish Welfare Fund demand remains high and almost half of the annual allocation is already committed. Officers continue to analyse application trends to inform early intervention and preventative support activity.

The average time taken to process **Housing Benefit changes** of circumstance was **15 days** during the quarter, an increase from 8 days in the previous quarter and above the service target of 8 days. Performance for new **Housing Benefit claims** has continued to improve. The average processing time reduced from **59 days** last quarter to **55 days** during this quarter. Although this remains above the service target of **25 days**, the reduction represents a positive improvement and indicates that actions being taken to address processing backlogs are beginning to have an impact.

Supporting residents facing financial pressure

At the end of quarter 1, current housing **rent arrears** were **14.3%,** representing a slight increase compared to 13.49% at the same point last year. The increase reflects the continued financial pressures faced by some tenants, and the service continues to work proactively with households to provide advice, support, and early intervention to help prevent arrears from escalating and to sustain tenancies.

The in-year **Council Tax collection** rate at the end of quarter 1 was **27.2%,** which is broadly consistent with the performance reported for the same period last year (27.3%). This indicates that collection levels have remained stable despite ongoing economic challenges. The Council will continue to monitor performance closely and undertake recovery and support activities to maximise collection while assisting residents experiencing financial difficulty.

Demand for crisis support through the **Scottish Welfare Fund** remains consistently high, reflecting the ongoing financial pressures experienced by many individuals and families across our communities. During quarter 1, a total of **1,881 Crisis Grant applications** were received, unchanged from the same period last year. This sustained level of demand highlights the continued impact of the cost of living crisis and the importance of accessible emergency financial assistance. In contrast, **208 Community Care Grant applications** were received during the quarter, representing a **34% decrease** compared with 316 applications received in the same period last year. By the end of quarter 1, **46.87% of the annual Scottish Welfare Fund budget had been committed**, demonstrating the significant demand being placed on the fund at an early stage of the financial year.

Supporting children and families

New nursery and primary school menus were introduced during Quarter 1. Primary school meal uptake was **57.62%**, above the target of 50.8%, while uptake in secondary schools was **27.9%** and free school meal uptake for P1 to P5 was **67.92%**, both below target.

Housing supply and access

Demand for **social housing** continues to rise. At the end of the quarter, there were **6,704 active applicants** on the Common Housing Register, representing an **increase of 441 applicants (7%)** compared with 6,163 at the same point last year.

During Quarter 1, **88 new council homes** were completed across Newtongrange, Gorebridge and Danderhall, helping to increase affordable housing supply and improve access to settled accommodation.

Housing and Legal Services work together to reacquire former local authority properties for social housing for rent, helping to increase supply and reduce pressure on the housing waiting list. This quarter the team completed the **purchase of 4 properties**.

171 permanent lets were completed during the quarter, including **94 allocations to homeless households**, supported by a significant increase in available new-build housing, with **94 Council new build homes** and **2 open market purchase properties** allocated to applicants, compared with 13 new build allocations during the same period last year.

Preventing and responding to homelessness

A total of **165 households** presented as homeless during the quarter, representing a **19% decrease** compared with the 203 presentations recorded during the same period last year. Despite the decrease in homelessness presentations, pressure on temporary accommodation remains substantial. At the end of the quarter, **366 households** were living in **temporary accommodation**, an increase of 39 households (12%) compared with the 327 households recorded at the same point last year. **183 households** received homelessness prevention advice and assistance during the quarter, with **14 households prevented** from becoming homeless.

Healthy and sustainable homes

360 additional environmental sensors were installed to support proactive damp and mould management, bringing the total deployment to **5,823 monitors** across council housing.

Challenges and Risks

Financial constraints: rising service delivery costs and uncertainty over future funding from the Scottish Government are placing significant strain on the council's budget.

Economic pressures: the ongoing cost of living crisis is affecting residents and businesses, increasing the need for council funded support. Inflationary pressures on goods, services, and energy are also significantly increasing the cost of delivering council services.

Growing service demands: Midlothian's sustained population growth and changing population needs continue to increase demand across education, social care, housing and infrastructure. Key pressures include adult social care capacity, increasingly complex additional support and disability needs, growth in external residential placements, rising demand for social housing and continued pressure on temporary accommodation.

Workforce capacity and wellbeing: Recruitment, absence and workforce capacity continue to affect delivery across several services. Targeted recruitment and workforce-development activity are helping to strengthen capacity, while continued attention is required to support employee wellbeing and service resilience.

Cyber security: continues to be a key area of focus, with further investment in cyber resilience, staff awareness training and the implementation of a Security Operations Centre to strengthen the Council's ability to prevent, detect and respond to emerging cyber threats.

Risk: The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is reviewed on a retrospective basis and presented to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. This process provides regular oversight of the most significant threats to the Council's objectives and operations.

Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q1 26/27

Off target	On target	Data only	No data
8	1	9	1

Off target indicators:

PI Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
	BS.MC.MPI.01 Performance against revenue budget		£324.847m	£319.836m	2025/26	
	CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		94.2%	95.0%	2025/26	
	BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		63.84%	95%	Q1 2026/27	
	BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		60%	95%	Q1 2026/27	
	BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		65.18%	95%	Q1 2026/27	
	MC.SPSO.04.1 Average time in working days for a full response at stage 1		5.137	5	Q1 2026/27	
	MC.SPSO.04.2 Average time in working days for a full response at stage 2		24.467	20	Q1 2026/27	
	MC.SPSO.04.3 Average time in working days for a full response for escalated compl...		21.107	20	Q1 2026/27	

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