

## Midlothian Council Annual Report 2023/24

***Individuals and communities in Midlothian will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030.***

***No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.***

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

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

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

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new [Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028](#). Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success. The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

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

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

# Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

## Midlothian will be Healthier - Achievements

### **Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes**

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

### **Justice, Duty Social Work and Adult Protection – Prevention**

Social Work continue to ensure that individuals referred to the service are supported and supported in crisis, this includes signposting to appropriate services, undertaking assessments and direct interventions.

Work continues to ensure that staff have the relevant skills, competence and knowledge to work effectively, and that they are trauma informed and able to engage with service users using a range of approaches. The Midlothian Trauma Training Programme was launched in July 2023 and incorporates both open access training sessions and bespoke service support events.

Social Work undertake a range of duties to identify, minimise and manage risk and ensure that all suspicions, disclosures or actual harm are acted upon. Measures to protect adults need to be considered in the context of wider range of support services and an investigation may highlight gaps in support. In these instances, an assessment of need would be undertaken to identify and develop an outcomes focused care plan.

### ***Understanding Changing needs***

The Justice Service have increased access to services for perpetrators of domestic abuse and to victims and children who may have been impacted by the behaviour. .

### ***Learning and Development***

A wide range of training to ensure all social work staff are skilled and competent in their role. The service has funded 10 social workers across Adult services and Children service to undertake post grad qualification in Leadership and Management, Practice Education, Mental health officer Training and Child Welfare and protection.

### ***Care at Home***

The Care at home continues to be challenged with increasing demand for people to live safely at home in the community. There are approximately 7,200 hours of care at home delivered every week across Midlothian from our in house service, the external providers and through SDS Option 2 pathways. The commissioned providers and the in house service have all recently been inspected by the Care Inspectorate and received positive grades relating to service delivery.

## Midlothian will be Safer - Achievements

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

The Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) has been approved and we are working on the actions agreed in the plan. The Community Justice Service was onboarded to OutNav, the digital platform used to capture contributions and report on progress towards improved outcomes at personal, service and strategic levels.

Research continues to show that community-based sentences are more effective in reducing offending than short prison sentences; they enable those convicted of offences to retain connections with local supports and family relationships. Community Payback Orders (CPO) have a number of requirements but Supervision and/or an Unpaid Work or Other Activity Requirement are those most often used by the Courts.

## Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child Achievements

**All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This will be achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning.**

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, as amended 2016, placed new duties on education authorities. As a result, the Education Service Improvement Plan not only reflects the key priorities in the Midlothian Single Plan but also aligns closely with the key priorities in Education – Achieving Excellence & Equity: National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2023:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

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

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

1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

**The Promise** work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.

Priority Areas in the 21-24 Plan:

- A Good Childhood
- Whole Family Support
- Supporting the Workforce
- Planning
- Building Capacity

**Referrals:** Work has been progressed over the past year to allow us to have a clearer overview and understanding on how referrals come into the service. There is much greater confidence that those referrals coming into children's services are appropriate and for those referrals which relate to early support to prevent escalation, these are directed to the Family Wellbeing Service. This has been a significant piece of work and the impact on the service is that social workers are only involved in working with families who require a certain level of intervention and support.

## **Midlothian will support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities - Achievements**

Overall very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the Community Learning and Development Three Year Partnership Plan which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building with zero red actions, 10 amber and 23 green

**Employability Highlights:** The Parental Employability Project has supported 298 parents over the last 12 months, 186 new parents and 114 existing parents.

80 entered employment or progressed within their employment to more hours or a higher paid job. 80 parents entered self-employment or progressed within their self-employment to increase their income levels.

36.78% of parents achieved a work-related accredited qualification totalling 275 qualifications. 9 parents started Further or Higher Education.

**Youth Work:** 3422 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months by young people accessing youth work provision across a range of provisions for example Croft Street Hub, Feel Good Friday, Dungeon and Dragons, Youth Platform, Soup Group, Lady Wood Youth Club, Young Carer's Projects, Duke of Edinburgh, and Youth Participation Focus Groups

**Adult and Family Learning:** 1525 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months in our community based and adult learning programme. CLLE's contribution to Education Scotland's 'Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 has included an increase in Gaelic courses on offer as part of our Adult and Family Learning Programmes. We have offered a Beginners Gaelic Class, Post Beginners Gaelic Class and a Family Gaelic class. This ensures there is a learning pathway for individuals and families to explore and learn together. Through this offer we are encouraging the increased use of Gaelic, promoting the acquisition and learning of Gaelic and also promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

## Midlothian will be Greener - Achievements

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 carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues to achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage, and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. Climate change actions included "*delivering the Shawfair low carbon community heating system and looking to develop heat networks across the county.*" Works started on site in February 2023 with concentration on the back up energy centre and main spine pipe network. Ground works on the Zero Waste Site, including grouting mine shafts for the energy centre, is now complete and the energy centre is constructed with the internal fit out of the back-up energy centre with E boilers and thermal stores included, to be completed early 2024/25.

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out its aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within the entire building stock in Scotland by 2045, including addressing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. As part of this Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

- set out how each section of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

This year work has progressed at pace to review the findings of the previously reported Stage 4 LHEES study, the outcome of which has provided a good foundation for the remaining stages. There has been positive and good engagement with internal stakeholders' business and community representatives, and regular engagement with Joint Venture Partners Midlothian Energy who will be an essential partner in delivering an effective and viable plan. The LHEES Strategy and covering report is complete and approved by the Scottish Government for compliance and subject to Council approval this year.

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

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased

Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased

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

Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

Work continues to engage with businesses regarding their own climate change commitments via the 'climate change pledge' programme and there is increasing awareness in the Council and

across communities on the back of communications from the Council and the working progressed by the Community Planning Climate Change Emergency group.

The street lighting capital programme was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements. A further 1,164 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming. In addition, our lighting team delivered 5 Traffic signal renewals this year and upgraded CCTV system was completed in Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik.

New waste service standards and waste collection policies were approved by Council. The development of these policies will ensure services operate transparently and fairly, encouraging householder participation, maximise the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling and improve operational efficiencies. Work is being undertaken to communicate changes to our customers via our website pages and other promotional activities. Going forward, monitoring these standards will help us communicate more effectively with our customer when complaints arise, giving a clear understanding of the levels of service that can be expected. In addition, £2.2m was awarded from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund which allow the Council to fully transition existing waste and recycling collection services to meet the recommendations in the Charter for Household Waste Recycling.

A new service excellence model and Recycling and Green space voluntary pledge for front line teams was launched this year. The work carried out as part of the model will help to create a more positive culture with the overall aim being to deliver excellent services to our Midlothian residents. As part of this culture change programme and ongoing service reviews, a pilot was developed to provide staff with additional support and advice on issues such as mental health and wellbeing. This will be ongoing throughout 24/25.

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

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

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

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

- people – to access fair work, to learn and develop new skills and to live happy and healthy lives
- places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work in and where enterprise thrives
- planet – meeting our needs in a way that will allow future generations to meet theirs, with a

focus on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (sustainability).

Localised procurement with is promoted to clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). Businesses are encouraged to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers. The creation of action groups to take forward key areas of proposed work to focus on are:

- Refresh of the Local Procurement Strategy, supporting Community Wealth Building.
- Managing change – the need for better understanding throughout the Council to increase the local spend and to minimise unregulated spend.
- Creation of sessions hosted by procurement and economic development to encourage services to direct spend to the local supply base.

The Economic Development priorities for the 2023/27 Single Midlothian Plan align to the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the wellbeing economy with people focussed outcomes that will also deliver local economic benefit.

Outcome 1: Develop a Midlothian Community Wealth Building Action Plan to guide future economic activity across the partnership

Outcome 2: Increase economic opportunity to maximise income, empowering individuals and communities

Outcome 3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship, increasing business knowledge, for current and future generations

The total number of new Business start-ups this year was 103 forecasting to create a total of 142 jobs for the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. Most of these businesses are sole traders/owner operators and do not have employees.

The Council has had continued success in letting a number of properties within the existing PIA estate including two at the recently acquired Hardengreen Industrial Estate. Letting of office space at Hardengreen Business Centre and the newly acquired Hardengreen Business Park. Letting of an industrial unit in Mayfield and one unit at Buccleuch Street. Successful tender and disposal (subject to planning) of the Orchard Centre.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant 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 327 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.

## **Midlothian will work towards Reducing Poverty Achievements**

***This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.***

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach. 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.

Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing transition plan we are seeing households moving through the homeless system more quickly. A proactive approach is taken when allocating properties to place applicants in area of choice where possible, increasing the chances to accept the property being flipped and allows for a more sustainable community.

**The Scottish Housing Regulator** reviewed our Homelessness practice and showed an understanding of the local issues we face, providing positive feedback to Housing Services for the work completed during this challenging period.

**The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 to 2028/29** was submitted to the Scottish Government. 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.

**Midlothian Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)** sets out key actions for delivery this year and addresses the next phase in transforming the services provided to meet housing need. These activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has brought significant change for homelessness over the last 4 years in ending the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation and developing better quality temporary accommodation, developing nomination agreements for people experiencing domestic abuse, and leaving the armed forces to enable access to permanent housing, preventing the need for a homeless assessment. Midlothian Council also adopted a model of Housing First which finds suitable properties before inviting nominations from a multi-disciplinary core group. Through the last award of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) monies this year, Housing Services have commissioned the Rock Trust for a two year contract to support our young tenants, helping them to move on from homelessness or avoid it altogether.

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

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force in 2022, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities.

#### **Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty**

- 58 groups in the last 12 months have received direct community capacity building support.
- The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model till June 2024, with a further report being prepared jointly by CLLE and Place Directorate regarding future Cost of Living Supports.



- The excellent work of the Federation of Community Councils through the MTRaP group on Roads, Paths and Footways supported by CLLE was recognised in the recent CLD Partnership Plan Progress Visit.

## Challenges and Risks

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

Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council. The team continues to provide in-depth financial input to revenue and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and successful delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy with Midlothian's Loans Fund Interest rate now the lowest in Scotland.

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

**Growing Council:** The draft 2022 Census results have now been published. They show Midlothian 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. Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

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

**Poverty:** As families continue to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis this is expected to lead to an increase in the number of families experiencing poverty. This also applies to workers on low incomes. We are assessing all claims that come into children and families from the Scottish Welfare Fund for early identification of families who may need additional support. We also have income maximisation officers within the service who offer support to families. This has been a very positive approach to supporting families, ensuring they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

**3**  
Midlothian Council On Target

**5**  
Midlothian Council Off Target

**1**  
Midlothian Council No Data

**10**  
Midlothian Council Data Only

PI Off Target



Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
<b>CORP8</b> Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		92.6%	95.0%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
<b>BS.MC.SPSO.05.1</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		82.3%	95%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
<b>BS.MC.SPSO.05.2</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		58.67%	95%	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	
<b>BS.MC.SPSO.05.3</b> Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		77.3%	95%	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	
<b>MC.SPSO.04.2</b> Average time in working days for a full response at stage 2		22.747	20	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	