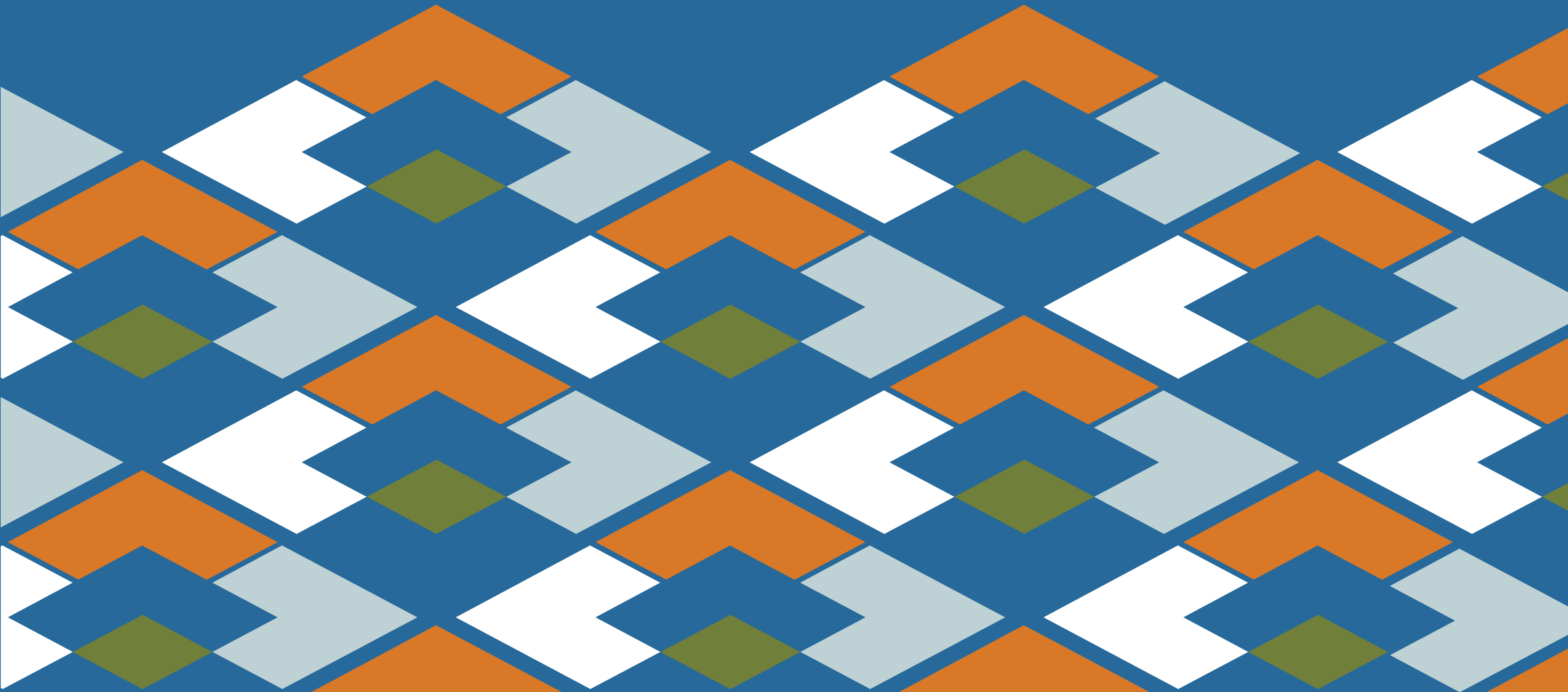


Midlothian Council

Planning Performance Framework



Annual Report 2020 - 2021



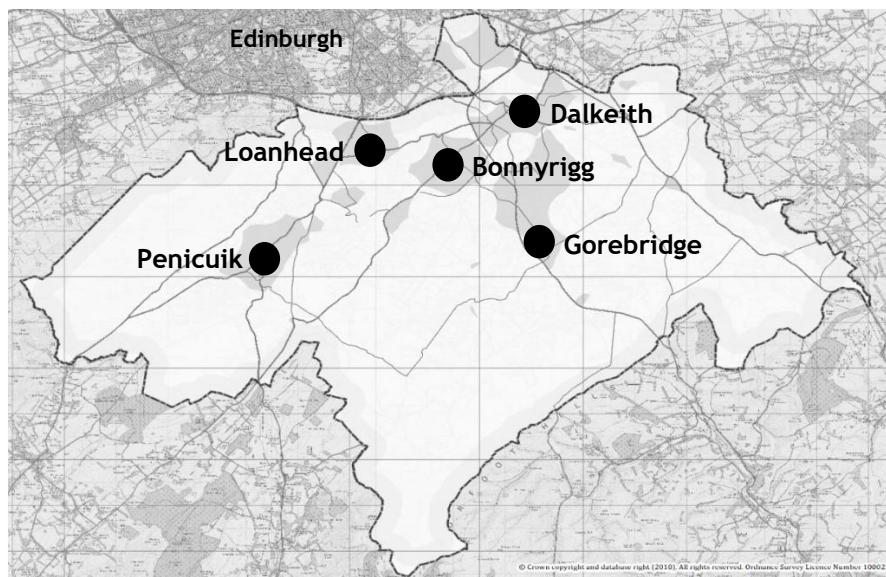
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1 Introduction

1 - Introduction

1.1.1 The Midlothian Council region lies to the south of Edinburgh, bordered by the Pentland Hills to the northwest and the Moorfoot Hills to the south. It is one of Scotland's smaller local authorities by area, ranking 21st out of 32 in this respect, but is an area of contrast. The southern portion comprises upland countryside, while the region's towns are found in the north, the largest of which are Bonnyrigg (18,500 residents) and Penicuik (17,000 residents). Dalkeith is home to around 14,000 people and is Midlothian's administrative centre. These and other towns have grown substantially in recent years and will also do so in the future, leading to a large population increase across the region. Latest estimates put Midlothian's population at 95,000. This represents an increase of 1,200 in a year, making the Council area amongst the fastest growing in Scotland in percentage terms.



Map of Midlothian and its main towns.

1.1.2 An increasing population presents opportunities and challenges for Midlothian Council. In the coming years we will work to maintain and support communities whilst promoting economic growth, the delivery of good quality housing and the provision of infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of residents. We are confident that we can meet these challenges and build on achievements made in recent years. This progress is reflected in the latest annual Scottish Household Survey which shows that 95% of the sample of Midlothian residents rate the area as a 'very good' or 'fairly good' place to live.



Loanhead town centre.

1.1.3 The Council's Planning Team and the Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) have key roles in maintaining a positive perception of the area. The Plan sets out a development strategy and a detailed policy framework to guide land use in the area. It forms the basis against which Planning Officers consider development proposals. The MLDP manages future change in the area by:

- Setting out a clear vision for the future of Midlothian's communities and countryside;
- Promoting sustainable growth and travel;
- Ensuring the availability of infrastructure to support such growth;
- Protecting environmental and cultural assets; and

1 Introduction

- Giving confidence to investors and communities with respect to the location of future development and investment.

1.1.4 This document shows how the Planning Team is working to achieve these aims. Covering the 2020/21 financial year, the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report highlights notable developments, gives background details on how the department operates and provides data on performance. This year it will also discuss the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic and how the service has responded to these. A further theme of this year's report is climate change and the work that the department and the wider Council is doing to mitigate and adapt to it.

1.1.5 The content of this report is used by the Scottish Government to score the department against 15 performance markers. These include the time taken to process planning applications, the use of effective working practices and engagement with applicants. This tenth PPF report shows how positive results for these markers can be achieved in future and how the Team is equipped to meet the expectations of Midlothian's communities and businesses.



Looking over Newtongrange towards the Pentland Hills.

2 Development in Midlothian

2 - Development in Midlothian

2.1 - Introduction

2.1.1 High quality development is the primary goal of the planning system and the Planning Team at Midlothian Council places a priority on negotiating with applicants and agents prior to and during the application process to achieve the best possible design solutions.

2.1.2 The developments highlighted here in section 2 demonstrate the Council's commitment to high quality projects of different scales. They are split into an initial overview and more detailed case studies. The overview takes a quick glance at some smaller-scale developments to give examples of the variety of work that the department does. These are then followed by case studies which take a more detailed look at larger and/or more complex projects and proposals that have been progressed since the last PPF.

2.2 - Overview of Selected Developments in 2020/21

2.2.1 The success of Straiton Retail Park is important to the A701 corridor and to wider Midlothian since it provides significant job opportunities and retail services that cannot be accommodated in the county's small town centres. The Planning Team therefore look to facilitate development there that furthers these aims. This includes a terrace of eleven new units at the Park that release 25,000ft² of retail space as part of a wider £13 million project which was completed in early 2021.

2.2.2 The Planning Team have since assisted prospective tenants with their plans by processing further advertising-related applications and proposals for the relocation of a major food retailer within the Park. Further masterplanning work is ongoing within the department in relation to major new proposals in the Straiton area for a development that would include business and employment uses, a hotel, retail and food & drink, and other infrastructure including Park & Ride facilities.



New retail units at Straiton.

2.2.3 Midlothian Council's last PPF report noted the completion of the final major residential component of Bonnyrigg's Hopefield housing development. This has seen 1,300 units, a new distributor road and a primary school built on land allocated in the 2003 Local Plan. 2020/21 saw the installation of a footbridge across the open space and burn at the south of the last area constructed. This was required in the Hopefield Masterplan and improves the network of footpaths in the area, helping to connect the whole site and its surroundings.

2 Development in Midlothian



New footbridge and path connections at Hopefield.



The Solar Farm at the Midlothian Science Zone.

2.2.4 Supporting the development of low carbon technologies is a key aim of the MLDP and the wider Council, particularly after the passing of a motion by Councillors which aims to make the area zero carbon by 2030. The Plan already has a strong policy framework for considering such proposals against environmental, community and cumulative impacts, however the motion strengthens this by requiring Officers to ensure that all planning decisions are in line with the goal to reduce emissions.

2.2.5 Midlothian is already home a range of renewable and low carbon energy developments including the Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre at Shawfair and a large photovoltaic array at Edinburgh College at Hardengreen. Another similar development is Edinburgh University's new solar farm at the Midlothian Science Zone. Approved by the department's Development Management staff in 2019, it was completed during the PPF reporting year. It has seen 5,000 panels installed on an area the size of five football pitches and will generate 15% of the electricity requirements of the University's Easter Bush Campus. This will complement existing facilities on the site which already generate 60% of its electricity and 30% of its heat from renewable or low carbon sources.

2.2.6 As well as expecting strong environmental credentials in applications put forward by developers, Midlothian Council is also leading the way in this respect. Its developments include those of the social housing programme and focus has recently turned to how the goal of building 1,000 units during this Council administration can be achieved in line with its ambitious climate change aims.

2.2.7 A solution is the 'Passivhaus' concept, which is a leading international low energy design standard that reduces a building's whole life carbon footprint, resulting in it requiring very little energy for heating or cooling. This is achieved through measures such as triple glazing, thermal bridge free design and high levels of insulation which are implemented through close monitoring of construction by an independent Passivhaus qualified certifier.

2.2.8 Planning Officers have already worked with colleagues in Housing Services to allow two such schemes for a total of 30 units to receive consent. These are precursors to the wider roll-out of more Passivhaus projects, as the Council's new Local Housing Strategy seeks to use it on all directly-commissioned social housing.

2 Development in Midlothian

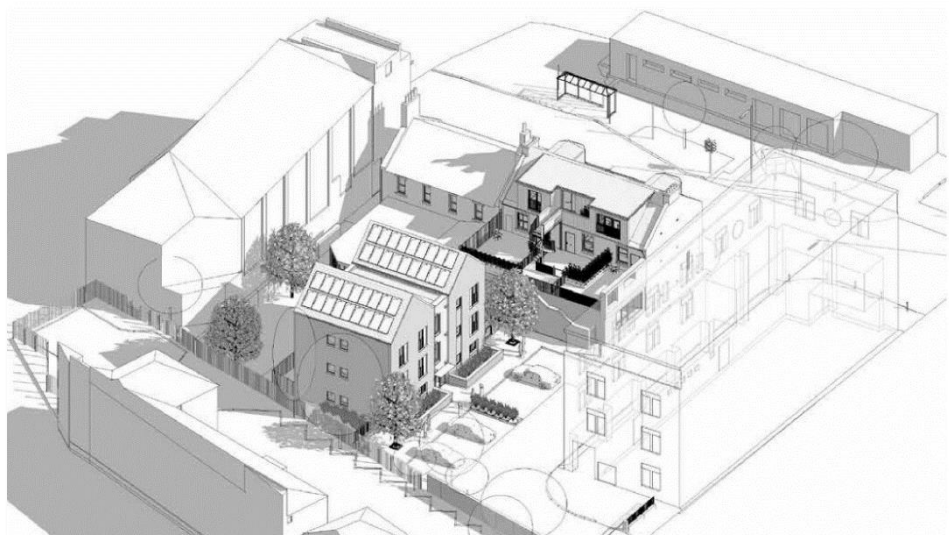


Illustration of the new Passivhaus social housing development in Dalkeith.

2.2.9 A notable proposal that the Planning Team have been involved with recently is in relation to a rocket developer's expansion plans. Skyrora are one of the UK's leading rocket developers. They have a production facility in Loanhead and submitted plans to grow further in Midlothian, having requested an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) 'Screening Opinion' from the Council in late 2020 for a rocket engine testing facility then submitted a full planning application in early 2021.



Skylark L rocket test fire. Picture © Skyrora Ltd.

2.2.10 The proposal is for the former Broad Law Quarry, a site included in the Scottish Vacant & Derelict Land Survey next to the boundary with the Scottish Borders. It is for an engine test rig in the area of former excavations (to allow screening from the quarry walls), two shielded areas which would house a control cabin and storage, upgraded access tracks and a drainage pond. Given that the site is within the picturesque Gladhouse Reservoir and Moorfoot Scarp Special Landscape Area, the proposals include bunding using site won materials to screen the area from low-lying farmland to the north and west, together with the use of scrub planting in two blocks at the northern edge of the former excavation area to integrate the development with the existing landscape.

2 Development in Midlothian



Rocket engine test. Picture © Skyrora Ltd.

2.2.11 Officers have liaised with colleagues at Scottish Borders Council and NatureScot on the plans and also determined that they are under the EIA footprint threshold and at sufficient distance from the nearby Moorfoot Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest. This meant that the agent could submit a detailed application, along with studies on potential noise, air quality matters, an ecological appraisal and a landscape & visual impact assessment. It was being assessed by Planning staff at the end of the reporting year.

2.2.12 Midlothian's Planning Team collaborate with many other Council departments. Some of closest working takes place with colleagues in Education Services to progress their Learning Estates Strategy. This involves early collaboration on policy and design matters or discussion with the department's Planning Obligations Lead Officer on income from developer contributions. Having the Learning Estate Strategy in place also means that it can be used in pre-application discussions to set out clear expectations for applicants.

2.2.13 This approach is delivering many projects, such as the new combined St. Mary's/Burnbrae Primary School in Bonnyrigg. It contains eight classrooms for the relocated St. Mary's and four primary one classrooms for Burnbrae, with nursery space being provided for both, and a multi-use games area with associated play space. The building is of a modern design with a two story wing at the northern corner to house St Mary's and a single storey element at the eastern corner to house Burnbrae early years. An assembly hall, expressive arts centre and dining hall connect the two elements.



New St. Mary's/Burnbrae Primary School.

2.2.14 Planning Officers have since worked on developing and assessing proposals for the re-use of the old Burnbrae site. Pre-application consultation activity started in early 2021 on plans for up to 44 extra care flats combined with a 40 bed home, 10 rehabilitation flats and a multi-purpose leisure hall. Local Developments staff will be ready to process a formal planning application later this year when the consultation is finished and proposals are formed based on the views received.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.2.15 Adaptations to working practices to follow Covid restrictions allowed the Local Developments Section of the Planning Team to continue to process and decide on a range of application types and sizes during 2020/21. These included socially-distanced site visits and video/remote consultations with applicants and key agencies.

2.2.16 One example was the approval of a rear extension to a symmetrical range of six farm-worker's stone houses, which has three cottages either side of a central arch, dating from 1885. Historic Environment Scotland were consulted on the proposed changes to this distinctive category B listed building in a conservation area in Crichton Village. This has led to a subservient and respectful contemporary addition to the property, the modern design and external finishes of which will add to the architectural interest of the house.



Front elevation of the farm worker's cottages in Crichton Village.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.3 - Case Study: Community Hubs Across Midlothian

Overview

Location: Millerhill, Rosewell and Bonnyrigg

Date: throughout 2020/21

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of outcomes

Key areas of work:

- Town centres
- Community engagement

Stakeholders involved:

- General public
- Authority Planning staff

Goals: to support the development of community hubs throughout Midlothian to further the Local Development Plan's aim of creating socially-sustainable, cohesive settlements.

Outcomes: three community hubs consented.

2.3.1 The land allocations within the MLDP are accompanied by requirements for new supporting infrastructure such as transport, education and play facilities for the region's growing settlements. Included as part of these is the need for community facilities to act as a focal point for a wide range of activities, from fitness classes to meeting spaces, to help create cohesive towns and villages. The Council's Planning Officers have been involved in helping to deliver these proposals, including during the past reporting year.

2.3.2 One example is the Millerhill Community Hub, which will serve the major planned expansion of Shawfair and is required as part of its Section 75 legal agreement. It was consented by Midlothian Council planners in April 2020 and will see the erection of two single storey buildings; one of which will be used as a community hub and the other is to be sub-divided into six retail units.

2.3.3 The site was previously host to a number of agricultural buildings which were demolished a few years ago. The Shawfair Masterplan and Design Guide originally required the facility to include their conversion, but since they had to be removed due to their unsafe condition, planners pursued the spirit of the guidance by ensuring that the new development would reflect their character.

2.3.4 This involved negotiations with the applicant to improve the design of the building. These resulted in altering the form of the roof of the community hub to a mansard roof, introducing gable features within the rear elevation, adding a link wall between the two buildings, altering the fenestration arrangement and the material finishes. Revised plans were then submitted that addressed the previous design concerns, including those raised by the local Community Council. This softened the impact on the appearance of the area, allowed the buildings to visually read as one development and to reflect the form of the original farm and steading that was on the site.



Former Longhorn Farm buildings on the site of the new Millerhill Hub

Picture: MJ Richardson, used under [this license](#).

2.3.5 2020 also saw the opening of the Rosewell Steading, a community hub on the site of redundant farm buildings delivered by the Rosewell Development Trust. It will provide a central focus for the village and opportunities for local job creation thanks to its multi-functional nature, with uses including:

- A café and kitchen facility;
- A multi-use gym hall with movable partitions;

2 Development in Midlothian

- A sensory room for people with learning disabilities;
- An arts and craft room;
- Office space for local businesses;
- An early years soft play and crèche facility;
- Conference facilities; and
- External monthly village market stalls.



Rosewell Steading. Photo courtesy of the Rosewell Development Trust.

2.3.6 The Hub itself is single storey in height, finished in a combination of facing brick, composite cladding and a zinc shallow pitched roof which vary the levels of the roof which add visual interest to the design. Its scale and mass have been designed so as not to dominate the streetscape, area or neighbouring properties and allow the building to read as a public facility. It is set back from Carnethie Street with parking and landscaping to the front, which softens its impact on the appearance of the area and helps to address possible noise issues raised by the Council's Environmental Health staff. They requested that an approval of planning consent should include a condition to protect neighbours

from potential noise impacts. This resulted in agreeing a precise and enforceable condition to ensure that the building was designed and insulated to guarantee that no airborne noises are audible from neighbouring properties. A further consent condition was that electric vehicle charging points should be put in the car park, to meet MLDP policy demands and raise the profile and possibilities of low emissions transport for users of this notable development.



Rosewell Steading. Photo courtesy of the Rosewell Development Trust.

2.3.7 Another similar application that Case Officers were involved with during the PPF reporting year was the change of use of Poltonhall bowling green and pavilion into a community facility at evenings and weekends and a children's nursery during the day. As part of this, the former green itself will be used as an external play area and the pavilion building will be extended, by infilling an open porch area, and a portable cabin will be sited there too. Both are clad with matching materials with a new path linking the two and a fence separating the play space from the buildings.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.3.8 Seeing as it had not been used since 2017, the development represents the premises resuming its longstanding role as a frequent destination for the local community. Sportscotland were consulted on the proposals and were satisfied that there is an excess of provision in the area. The consultation also led to the consent being conditioned on the use of a Green Travel Plan, which are commonly used by nurseries to reduce car use by parents, thereby improving pedestrian safety and encouraging children to adopt active travel habits from a young age.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.4 - Case Study: The Midlothian Science Zone

Overview

Location: near Penicuik

Date: throughout 2020/21

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service & engagement

Key areas of work:

- Economic development
- Design

Stakeholders involved:

- Local developers

Goals: continue to promote the Midlothian Science Zone as a key location for the bioscience sector by supporting development there in line with the aims of the City Deal, the Bush Framework Masterplan and the University of Edinburgh's Campus Vision & Masterplan.

Outcomes: several notable job-generating and economically important applications approved.

2.4.1 Biotechnology and bioscience are identified by the Government as having significant potential for economic growth and job creation. The development of this sector in Midlothian is focused around the Midlothian Science Zone (MSZ) in the A701 corridor where a specialised science, research and technology cluster incorporates six out of the eight science parks and research facilities that comprise the Edinburgh Science Triangle. The health of the sector there is locally, nationally and internationally important. It is therefore a priority of the MLDP to protect and promote growth there and Planning Officers regularly process and input on applications to assist in achieving these aims.

2.4.2 2021 saw the completion of an extension to the University of Edinburgh's Advanced Computer Facility (ACF) at Edinburgh Technopole. This estate is part of the MSZ and was established in the 1990s in parkland near to the category A listed Bush House. The ACF is to the south of it, having been first used as a computer facility in the 1970's and housing internationally significant supercomputer facilities. It has been extended and altered a number of times over the years from the original flat-roofed, rendered building.



Extension to the Advanced Computer Facility at the Edinburgh Technopole.

2.4.3 The development is a key part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal which is seeing the University partnering with local authorities, schools and employers across the region to create the workforce of the future by supporting a massive increase in the provision of data skills; this project is known as the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) programme. The expansion of the ACF will provide world class data infrastructure that will support the DDI and offer extremely powerful, high capacity and flexible computing which will help deliver a complex range of bespoke data and analytical services.

2.4.4 The ACF extension is joined to the existing building by a glazed link corridor, clad with black profiled aluminium panels. A further phase will be

2 Development in Midlothian

developed along with a new substation, the application for which was processed and consented by Planning Officers during 2020/21. The final development will result in the take-up of 3.2 hectares of allocated employment land at the Edinburgh Technopole.

2.4.5 Further work that took place at the Edinburgh Technopole during 2021 was the completion of a new office and laboratory building. It is one of three such facilities that will be constructed on a 1.9 hectare site near to Bush House and next to the existing Technopole Centre. Each building will be two storeys, with additional plant facilities in the roofspace and a gross external floor area of 2,000m² that will partly be met by demand from existing tenants in the park expanding their operations. The proposals were also accompanied by letters of support from two local businesses who are not currently tenants, indicating that they were considering re-locating there.



One of the new offices at the Edinburgh Technopole.

2.4.6 The offices are modern designs that are in keeping with the character of the existing buildings at the Technopole. They have large areas of glazing;

and a contemporary palette of finish materials including brick, aluminium-framed glazing systems, rainscreen cladding panels and standing seam roofs. While they are similar in scale to the other modern buildings, differences in ground heights mean that their floor level is somewhat higher than that of the neighbouring Technopole Centre. Therefore, in order to ensure that the buildings would not appear as unduly prominent features in the parkland landscape, conditions were applied to the consent to ensure that the western edge of the site is provided with effective landscaping. All three include arrays of solar photovoltaic panels and pedestrian footpath links to the existing network at the Technopole.

2.4.7 In addition to the sites that form the MSZ itself, the wider Bush area also includes a small business park (the Midlothian Innovation Centre), land and buildings occupied by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the Forestry Commission. SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) also have premises there. It was already home to some of its avian research facilities however they decided to move their main operations in this field here from Ayrshire. This was in response to the Bush bioscience cluster being identified as a nationally significant area for avian research by The Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (CIEL), a UK wide research body that brings together funding and expertise from national government, academic institutions and the livestock industry.

2.4.8 Their new Avian Science Research Centre has been built on a 1.2 hectare site occupied by a complex of research buildings dating from the 1960s owned by SRUC, all bar one of which were demolished. They made way for a new development comprising:

- A Carcass Evaluation Unit - a small scale chicken processing facility;
- A Brooding House, Poultry House and Laying House - all agricultural style buildings housing birds;
- A storage building; and
- A staff hub - a building providing staff facilities, an office and a laboratory.

2.4.9 The facility houses 6,000 birds and will allow trials and research to be carried out on a much larger scale than would be possible in laboratories and so will provide results that are scalable to commercial facilities. Examples of the types of trials that could be carried out could include assessment of the impact of changes to diet or changes to conditions. The site also includes two plots for future expansion covering a combined area of 750m².

2 Development in Midlothian

2.4.10 The development was completed early in the PPF reporting year in an investment worth £5.5million. Supported by the Scottish Funding Council's Financial Transactions Programme, SRUC invested £3.6million with the remaining £1.9m coming from CIEL and Innovate UK. It has seen 30 to 35 more skilled jobs brought to the MSZ cluster, including several post-graduate training opportunities and has created the largest such facility of its kind in Europe.



The Avian Science Research Centre at the MSZ.

2.4.11 In addition to the specific developments that have been progressed in the last year at the MSZ, Council Planning staff are regularly involved in further ongoing work to pursue the University of Edinburgh's Easter Bush Campus Masterplan. This has previously seen highly distinctive and specialised facilities developed including the Roslin Innovation Centre & Campus Hub, the Large Animal Research & Imaging Facility and the Equine Diagnostic, Surgical and Critical Care Unit. Their development is supported by ongoing infrastructure and support works, with applications for district heating, drainage ponds, a new sub-station at the existing on-site Energy Centre, a children's nursery and a facilities building all being processed and consented by the Planning Team in recent years. These developments will help the University realise their

ambitions to build out the site by 2030 and progress will be documented in future PPF reports.



The Easter Bush Energy Centre - a £11m facility that reduces campus CO₂ emissions by 2,000 tonnes a year.



The Large Animal Research and Imaging Facility at Easter Bush in the MSZ.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.5 - Case Study: Brownfield Housing Development

Overview

Location: Loanhead, Bonnyrigg & Gorebridge

Date: throughout 2020/21

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service & engagement

Related PPF Performance Markers:

- 12 - corporate working across services
- 15 - developer contributions

Key areas of work:

- Regeneration
- Housing supply/affordable housing

Stakeholders involved:

- Local developers
- Other Authority Staff (Housing Services)

Goals: to bring brownfield sites back into productive use to assist Midlothian's housing land supply, reduce pressure on greenfield land and make efficient use of Council estate land.

Outcomes: numerous sites completed and occupied during 2020/21 including those that are part of the Council's affordable housing programme.

2.5.1 Sustainable place-making factors and the wider principles of sustainable development provide the basis for the environmental, social and economic objectives underpinning the policies and proposals of the MLDP. This includes prioritising the reuse of brownfield land over the development of greenfield (especially green belt) land and the efficient use of land generally. This principle is embedded within several parts of the Plan, including policy STRAT2 on windfall housing sites. This permits the reuse of buildings and the

redevelopment of brownfield land provided certain conditions are met. It thus assists in meeting Midlothian's housing needs whilst taking some pressure off the supply of new land.

2.5.2 2020/21 saw several brownfield housing sites completed. These include a development of 28 affordable units on the site of the former Loanhead Library and social work office - one of several past and future social housing projects on brownfield Council estate.

2.5.3 It includes 12 amenity flats, which are defined as being extra care housing for the elderly or ambulant disabled. As a result, they have been designed to help residents with mobility issues and have been made fully wheelchair accessible. Each one contains an open plan living room/dining room/kitchen, one bedroom and a bathroom. They front on to Clerk Street in a two storey design with a pitched and gabled roof and gable features projecting from the front and rear elevations. This design was based on an informal development brief produced by the Planning Team at the pre-application stage, and ensured that the site could accommodate residential development and that concerns regarding unit numbers, layout and drainage details were addressed.



Council social housing at Clerk Street, Loanhead.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.5.4 Elsewhere in Loanhead, work is nearing completion on the outskirts of the town where an upmarket development of nine homes have been built down a private lane on the site of the former Loanhead Hospital. This has seen highly energy efficient units erected as part of an environmentally-sound project. Measures in this respect entailed:

- The units surpassing building regulations to meet Passivhaus standards (see also section 2.2) including a highly airtight, well-insulated design with triple glazing;
- The manufacturing, delivery and construction methods being tailored to minimise the carbon footprint of the development;
- Construction times being reduced by 50% and the single delivery of materials to reduce transports costs;
- Installing air source heat pumps and under floor heating systems; and
- Amendments to the initial layout following discussions with Planning Officers to take account of significant trees on the site which needed to be retained.



Housing at the former Loanhead Hospital.

2.5.5 Work also finished during 2020/21 on the redevelopment of a site off the High Street in Bonnyrigg which saw land transformed from poorly surfaced, informal car parking and a weekly open air market to a well-designed and distinctive new development. Its layout creates an attractive courtyard feature that enhances the character and appearance of the High Street and includes the informal pedestrian links across the site that evolved during its use as a market. The density and appearance of the buildings have an urban character that reflects the site's town centre location. They include a block of four storey flats facing the High Street which mirror the higher density area adjoining that elevation, a new retail unit to maintain continuity with existing buildings flanking each side and lower density flats to the rear which transition the site into the existing single and double storey housing behind it. The buildings are good examples of contemporary design and add variety to Bonnyrigg town centre.



New housing facing Bonnyrigg High Street.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.5.6 A final example of working towards the LDP's aim of redeveloping brownfield land was the construction of a set of three storey townhouses. This took place on a site in Gorebridge which was essentially split into two and consisted of a relatively flat and sparsely landscaped area and a steeply sloping, more densely-wooded river bank. The latter was largely unaltered as retaining its trees ensured the stability of the bank, protected the amenity of residents on the opposite side and preserved this ancient semi-natural woodland. The buildings on the other portion, although three storey and therefore higher than nearby dwellings, make use of the lower levels between the site and adjacent land, thereby ensuring that they are not overbearing to neighbours or to the street scene.



New townhouses at Gorewater Gardens, Gorebridge.

2.5.7 These four projects also involved the payment of important developer contributions for local community facilities, made possible by clear expectations for them being set out in both the development plan and pre-application discussions. In the case of Gorewater Gardens, this involved working across the Council's Planning, Estates and Corporate Resources teams to secure money for play facilities, schools and Borders Rail. The Bonnyrigg Market site was consented some time later, after the introduction of targets for concluding legal agreements within six months of a minded to consent decision being reached. This timescale was achieved, partly due to infrastructure payments being clarified in pre-application discussions for a previous design that was revised into the final scheme, and also thanks to working between the Case Officer, the Lead Officer for Local Developments, the applicant and Council solicitors.

2 Development in Midlothian

2.6 - Case Study: Penicuik Heritage and Regeneration Scheme

Overview

Location: Penicuik

Date: throughout 2020/21

Related elements of a high quality planning service:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service & engagement

Related PPF Performance Markers:

- 3 - early collaboration with applicants & consultees on planning applications

Key areas of work:

- Regeneration
- Community engagement

Stakeholders involved:

- General public
- Hard to reach groups

Goals: to move the project on from the public realm improvement phase to restoring priority buildings and continuing community engagement by finding solutions to pandemic-related obstacles.

Outcomes: restoration work has begun or been approved for several high-priority target buildings and many community and training events were run online.

groups. Funding has been made available over a five year period to assist with restoring the historic fabric of the conservation area and for training and community engagement around the history of the town. Just under £1 million was awarded for the CARS part of the project in August 2018, which added to the £1.7 million that was announced in June 2018 as part of the TH element.

2.6.2 Although Covid-19 restrictions disrupted plans for the scheme during 2020/21 to an extent, several major aspects of it were progressed, including improvement works to Penicuik Town Hall worth around £700,000. This will see improvements to the stonework and roof, mortar repointing and restoring architectural details and rainwater pipes. Solar panels will be fitted on the rear roofs to supply renewable energy and a new combined heat and power plant will replace the existing boilers in the building. Wi-fi will also be provided throughout. Work on this began in late 2020.

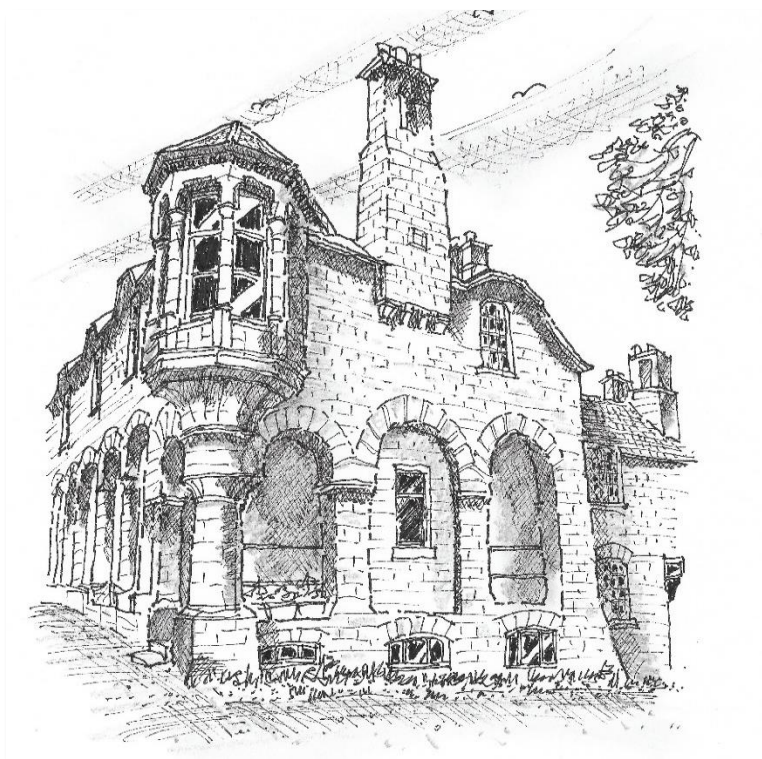


Restoration work at Penicuik Town Hall.

2.6.1 The Penicuik Heritage and Regeneration Scheme is part of a jointly-funded Townscape Heritage (TH) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) grant programme that helps to regenerate historic towns that are conservation areas and have seen economic decline. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland and Midlothian Council with support from the Penicuik Development Trust, Penicuik First and other local

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2.6.3 Like the Town Hall, the grade A listed Pilkington Buildings are historically and architecturally important and were a high priority for improvement as part of the Penicuik regeneration work. The Victorian architect F. T. Pilkington designed and built the distinctive properties in 1860, described by architectural historians as 'rogue gothic' tenements with a distinctive corner oriel. They are arranged in four blocks around a courtyard and were built for single female workers in the Penicuik paper mill owned by Charles Cowan.



The Pilkington Buildings as drawn by Rod Lugg, Penicuik Project Manager.

2.6.4 In summer 2020, an agreement was reached that will see the repair and restoration of their roof, chimneys, dormer windows, guttering and downpipes,

as well as to their stonework and traditional timber windows and doors. Nine owners applied for funding to help with the total cost of the work, which is £440,000. A grant of 75% has been awarded, amounting to £330,000. This will be split between the property owners in proportion to the amount of work required for each property.

2.6.5 Further major news from the Penicuik TH/CARS project before the end of 2020/21 PPF reporting year was the award of almost £200,000 towards the repair and restoration of the historic building at 1 - 7 Bridge Street. Known as the Pen-y-coe Press Building, and dating from the late-19th century, it is of traditional stone brick and render construction with a slate and tile roof. At ground floor level the property retains the original post office, printing works interior and a community stationery shop run by Penicuik Community Development Trust, together with a small heritage centre with an exhibition and artefacts explaining the history of paper making in the town. The upper floor houses four separate flats and all five property owners are contributing towards the cost of the work.

2.6.6 The building is an important part of the streetscape in the Penicuik Conservation Area and is also seen as a priority for the heritage regeneration project given its connection to the history of paper making and printing in the town. The work will complement that mentioned above on the historic Pilkington Buildings, which are opposite. It will involve repairs to the front façade, including exposing the original stonework, roof repairs and re-slating and shop front improvements. Window repairs and replacement will be carried out where necessary, with timber sash and case windows to match the originals.

2.6.7 Progress on the works involved in the Penicuik regeneration project is partly due to the early collaboration with applicants and consultees, Planning Officers and the project team on planning applications. The Project Manager has encouraged uptake of grants by contacting building owners then working with them on issues such as tendering, funding and grant applications. He and other staff have then liaised with Planning Officers, including during the pre-application stage to ensure that proposed repairs are compatible with policy and listed building considerations, making the process quicker for all and as smooth as possible for owners and applicants. For example, in relation to works on 3 - 4 The Square, there were regular pre-application meetings and email exchanges between these parties which resulted in the Planner's suggestions on

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issues like the general treatment of wings, parking provision and materiality being taken up. They and other elements of such applications were also reviewed in respect to Historic Environment Scotland's advice, such as their 'Extensions' guidance note in their 'Managing Change' series.

2.6.8 Beyond the ongoing work to Penicuik's built environment, the regeneration project has also involved a number of community events. Though the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on these more than other parts of the project, 2020/21 still saw several go ahead with modifications to take account of social-distancing and public health requirements. These included:

- The 'Heritage Heroes' initiative with pupils from Beeslack High School which saw an enthusiastic group learning about woodland crafts of the past and their significance, including learning safe fire lighting to make charcoal drawing sticks;
- Craft events, involving the art of pyrography, designing and creating unique Christmas tree decorations in wood as well as traditional embroidery; and
- An outdoor quiz and walking challenge for children on local history, called the Penicuik Explorer Trail.

2.6.9 In addition to the events involving working with the local community and schools to raise awareness of Penicuik's history, the regeneration project has also had training days in traditional construction skills. Though these too have been impacted by pandemic restrictions, they were moved online to avoid their cancellation. During 2020/21, these included:

- A training event on traditional roof slating delivered by Graeme Millar, past chairman of the National Federation of Roofing Contractors and current president of World Roofing Federation; and
- Supporting the Edinburgh Traditional Building Forum, of which The Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project is a member. This included information on energy efficiency improvements to traditional buildings and features about roof leadwork and timber sash & case windows.



Advert for children's activity as part of the Penicuik regeneration project.

3 Facilitating Quality Development

3 - Facilitating Quality Development

3.1 - Introduction

3.1.1 To most people living or working in Midlothian, development on the ground is the obvious result of what the Planning Team does. However, a range of tasks take place behind the scenes to ensure that the right development goes ahead in the right place. This section of the PPF report gives some examples of this work.

3.2 - Processing Agreements

3.2.1 Early collaboration with applicants is an important aspect of achieving the best planning outcomes in the most efficient way possible. One formal way to do this is through a Processing Agreement, which the Council supports for all major developments. They can have a number of benefits, all of which result in greater certainty for both parties:

- They allow a project plan to be drawn up which can include key dates for meetings, which are opportunities to provide regular and proportionate policy advice;
- They will include key contacts so that there are clear routes of communication between the Council and the applicant;
- They can initiate the Section 75/legal agreement process early so it can run in parallel with the application itself; and
- They can include a target date for reporting the application to the Planning Committee and for its determination.

3.2.2 Information on Processing Agreements is publicised on the Council's website. The relevant page includes:

- A link to the Processing Agreement form;
- Instructions for returning it and additional information, along with details on how this will be stored and processed;
- Expectations for what the Processing Agreement will involve; and
- Other relevant planning conditions, such as the need to agree heads of terms in relation to Section 75 legal agreements before applications are reported to the Planning Committee.

3.2.3 The Council web page further specifies how using a Processing Agreement relates to each stage of the planning process, from pre to post-application. Technical elements potentially involved in each part are outlined, such as the possible need for and results of EIA screening and scoping, whether other consents will be required as part of the application (e.g. listed building consent or works to trees applications) and identifying statutory and non-statutory consultees together with a timetable for communicating with them.

3.2.4 As well as the availability of Processing Agreements and guidance on them from the Council website, staff also encourage their use. Case Officers offer the option of using one when communicating with prospective applicants and also direct them to this website information. With the intended recruitment of another planner in the Major Developments Section of the department in 2021/22, the Lead Officer for this group also intends to further promote their use, allowing a more project managed approach to applications.

3.3 - The Duty Planner

3.3.1 The Planning Team continues to offer its 'Duty Planner' service, to ensure that a dedicated officer is available to provide regular and proportionate planning advice and guidance. They answer queries from members of the public, agents (architects, planning consultants etc.), community councils and community groups, other officers, other council departments and external agencies such as utility and telecoms operators. These cover a range of topics such as permitted development, fee enquiries, enforcement issues, freedom of information requests, how to comment on applications and information required to support them.

3.3.2 The benefits of the service include:

- It is a clear, single point of contact for members of the public, staff and agencies who approach the Planning Team;
- It is covered by a single, permanent Officer, meaning people get consistent advice;
- The Officer deals with more straightforward enquiries first-hand, freeing up time amongst other staff to work on specialised matters;
- They are often made aware of sites or buildings that come on to the market. This means that the Team can create a brief of sorts, outlining the relevant

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policies, potential acceptable uses and can discourage inappropriate uses to interested parties; and

- They act as an interface between the Planning Team and the wider Council, including the Admin Team, who register applications.

3.3.3 A particular benefit of the service is that the Duty Planner can direct applicants and agents to relevant planning policy and guidance. This means that they act as a point of early collaboration on policy advice, prior to or as part of the pre-application discussion stage. Their input at this point takes pressure off officer time later as it saves multiple pre-application enquires or applications that are unlikely to be supported.

3.3.4 The contact details of the Duty Planner are listed on many pages of the Council's Planning website, including those focused on Development Management matters. Where they are not, the details of the Development Plans or Conservation and Environment Teams are listed. This means that although the Team provides a range of policy advice online, if there are any questions that remain, an officer will be available nevertheless. When the regular Duty Planner is on annual leave, procedures are in place to cover her role, maintaining continuity for this valuable service.

3.3.5 The Duty Planner continues to field general enquiries from other parts of Scotland where an equivalent service is either no longer provided or is less accessible. This demonstrates that it is a valuable function and that the Planning Team's focus on customer satisfaction is appreciated. The service has been complimented for its accessibility and helpfulness by a range of customers.

3.4 - Early Collaboration

3.4.1 The Planning Team recognise the importance of early collaboration with applicants, agents and consultees. It enables Officers to provide an initial indication of the Council's position, can save time and money, and can identify any issues which should be addressed prior to a formal application, resulting in better quality developments. Accordingly, pre-application discussions are both available and promoted to prospective applicants.

3.4.2 There is a downloadable pre-application guide on the Council's website. This includes sources of further information on planning policy alongside a statement on the process, timescales it involves and what might be expected in a response. It also contains a Pre-Application Enquiry Form. This is a way of requesting clear and proportionate supporting information, such as the current and proposed uses of the site or initial layouts. Using this standardised template also allows staff to understand proposals quicker, helping both them and the other party.

3.4.3 Some aspects of pre-application advice may be provided by the Duty Planner (see section 3.3) but if not, engagement through the Pre-Application Enquiry Form is promoted by Officers. This may involve:

- Registering enquiries in the case log system to help track their progress;
- Consulting the pre-application procedure manual;
- Engaging with a range of consultees when considering pre-applications; and
- Providing guidance on the expected level of financial contributions so developers can assess the viability of schemes early on.

3.4.4 The Planning Team receives a relatively low level of pre-application enquiries in terms of the proportion of applications received. In 2020/21, around 7% of received applications involved a pre-application enquiry. We consider that this is a positive reflection on the clarity of the LDP's policies and established and consistent design expectations which developers and agents have become accustomed to without considering it necessary to enter in to a formal pre-application process. However, the ability to provide this early collaboration is in place for when it is required. The service is free for all scales and types of proposed developments.

3.4.5 The Planning Team also puts effort into early collaboration with applicants, agents and consultees asides from via the pre-app process. This includes a variety of guidance on the Council website, including on:

- When planning permission may be needed or when proposals are permitted development;
- Different types of consent, such as for listed buildings or advertisements;
- Matters relating to works to trees, including a map of Tree Preservation Orders and conservation areas, so people can see whether they need permission for felling or trimming; and
- The roles of the Local Review Body and Planning Committee.

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3.4.6 The Council has also produced a set of validation checklists that act as advice on information required to support applications. These cover 21 different developments, ranging from major developments, to wind turbines and solar panels, to dormer windows and driveways. The requirements for these vary depending on the type of application and they are available online. The Council registers a valid application within one working day of receipt. In 2020/21, 7% of applications were invalid upon receipt. This indicates that the validation process is working relatively well for the Council's customers.

3.4.7 The Duty Planner (see section 3.3) plays a key role in application validation and registration. This frees up time amongst Case Officers to progress proposals that are ready to be processed. They have a set of procedures and specific network file locations for this, which includes pre-registration sheets for both pre-application communications as well as the equivalent for actual applications together with details on registration and dealing with invalid applications.

3.4.8 Having the likes of validation checklists and guidance on the value of pre-application advice in place reduces the chances of information needed to support applications being omitted. However, where it is required, the Council ensures that such requests are clear and proportionate. These are often for further site plans, business cases or samples of materials, for example, but such requests from 2020/21 include for:

- Various design aspects of a social housing project in Dalkeith (application 19/01024/DPP) such as electric vehicle charging provision and areas of improved quality;
- Safety measures relating to A702 junction improvements for the redeveloped Midlothian Snow Sports Centre (application 19/01018/PPP); and
- A Biodiversity Report on the presence of and mitigating impacts on a European Protected Species at the Advanced Computer Facility (application 20/00378/DPP).

3.5 - Other Team Procedures & Services

3.5.1 A single point of contact is provided for all applications through a named Case Officer. They will be the point of contact throughout the pre-

application process, the assessment of the application and any post-decision discussions. They project manage the application, coordinate any input from third parties, provide policy advice and discuss cases with managers where appropriate. Regular one-to-one meetings are held between officers and their line managers in order to resolve any issues with applications and to ensure that there are no avoidable delays in determining proposals.

3.5.2 In order to more accurately reflect the time taken to process applications and to provide clarity to stakeholders, the Planning Authority has a formal 'stop the clock' procedure. In some cases it is appropriate to remove a length of time from the total determination period for an application in order to more accurately reflect the amount of time taken to decide it. This procedure is regularly reviewed in order to ensure that it accords with current guidance.

3.5.3 The Planning Team's GIS Technician also plays a key role in supporting the work of the wider department and beyond. The post's core tasks include:

- Plotting application sites for staff and the public-facing portion of the Council website, so residents and other users can keep track of proposals within Midlothian;
- Drawing site plans for the Planning Committee and Local Review Body;
- Purchasing and updating background maps and datasets to allow other GIS users within the Council to perform their mapping duties; and
- Acting as the principal contact for ESRI and Ordnance Survey within the Council. This involves jointly running the Council's ArcGIS Online portal with another GIS Technician from a separate department.

3.5.4 Beyond these more routine parts of the role, the GIS Technician is often called upon to assist Planning and other Council staff with one-off mapping jobs. In 2020/21 these included:

- School catchment mapping for Education Services in relation to a proposed closure and merging its catchment with those of other schools;
- Working with colleagues in the Conservation & Environment Section of the Planning Team and Countryside Services on updating the Open Space Assessment; and

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- Assisting Waste Services with their planning work relating to the new Code of Practice for Street Cleansing.

3.5.5 These tasks have continued to be performed despite the challenges posed by both the Coronavirus pandemic and a period of enforced leave. Others in the department have taken on additional tasks to maintain the continuity of these services. Examples of GIS work done to support Midlothian Council's Covid response are given in section 4.2.

3.6 - Legal Agreements and Developer Contributions

3.6.1 During 2020/21, the Council continued its standard practice of requiring that when resolving to grant an application for which a planning obligation is necessary, that the agreement is completed within six months. The failure to do this would result in the application being refused due to a necessary obligation not being in place. This would mean that the proposed development would be contrary to the LDP.

3.6.2 The requirement for the conclusion of an agreement within six months is clearly stated in Committee/Delegated Reports as the first item after the recommendation/decision. The projects and infrastructure that the agreement must cover are listed alongside. This approach has brought a greater focus to the completion of agreements, the ability to issue permissions sooner and also reduces the likelihood of legacy cases. The following table gives examples from 2020/21 of where legal agreements were concluded for applications within six months of them being 'minded to grant', if not within six months of the application being received.

Development	Projects That Contributions Are For	Timescales
Redevelopment of Newbattle Home Farm, Newtongrange	Schools, Borders Rail, open space & play equipment	Minded to grant in Aug. 2020. Legal agreement secured in Dec. 2020
Social housing at the Former Dalkeith High School	Schools, Borders Rail, Dalkeith Town Centre, community facilities, children's play facilities	Application received Dec. 2019. Legal agreement secured May 2020
Brownfield housing, Lasswade	Schools, Borders Rail, A7 urbanisation, open space, all-weather pitch	Application received in Aug. 2020. Legal agreement concluded Dec. 2020
'Passivhaus' social housing, Dalkeith	Schools, play equipment, Borders Rail	Application received in Sep. 2020. Legal agreement concluded Dec. 2020
Hotel extension, Lasswade	A7 urbanisation	Application received in Mar. 2020. Legal agreement concluded in Jun. 2020

3.6.3 On the other hand, it is sometimes necessary to reconsider or refuse applications if negotiations for infrastructure payments are unsuccessful and do not secure sufficient funding for Council services. There was no need to do this during 2020/21, but it remains an option to ensure that legal agreements are completed within six months of a resolution to grant an application.

3.6.4 The timely conclusion of legal agreements is aided by clear expectations for developer contributions being set out in both pre-application discussions and the LDP.

3.6.5 As part of its pre-application service, the Council meets regularly with applicants, major developers and landowners to provide advice on its approach to future developments. This includes giving pre-application advice in relation to Planning Obligations. As part of these discussions, the Council engages with and professionally advises them and responds constructively to their

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submissions. This applies regardless of the type and scale of projects, with recent examples including:

- On what contributions may be required as part of a small change of use application in Penicuik, which helped to refine the proposal into its final design, consisting of flats and office space;
- Possible contributions to transport projects arising from new industrial units in Bonnyrigg; and
- Advising on required payments for the A701 Relief Road and consent conditions for an application in principle for holiday cottages.

3.6.6 In such examples, the relevant Case Officer contacts the Lead Officer for Developer Contributions. He is then able to identify the required contributions, for either a number of residential units or an area of commercial floorspace. The Case Officer passes this to the applicant to inform them at an early stage about infrastructure payments, allowing them to make decisions on the viability of their ideas. To give further clarity in pre-app talks, when required, the Lead Officer also provides advice where developer contributions issues overlap with possible conditions of planning consent.

3.6.7 Education provision forms a core part of pre-application discussions on developer contributions. These include information about pupil rolls, anticipated capacity solutions, the cost basis of these and likely pupil products from proposed new developments. Working across Planning and the Council's Education Services department feed into these talks, meaning they are informed by the latest information on the status of Midlothian's schooling facilities and needs. This allows them to proceed more efficiently. For example, plans for social housing on the former Dalkeith High School site were approved in March 2021, making a notable contribution to the Council's housing targets. This was partly made possible by pre-application discussions on education needs that the dwellings would give rise to and constraints and opportunities in existing facilities.

3.6.8 Processing Agreements also have a role in setting out clear and proportionate expectations for developer contributions. The Processing Agreement form has specific sections for how their use will influence the pre-application, application and post-application stages of proposals, and the implications for drafting legal agreements are included in each of them. This means that the application and developer contributions processes can run

together for maximum efficiency. It also means that Processing Agreements provide another route for setting out financial issues in pre-application discussions, then pursuing them as the proposal moves on.

3.6.9 Clear and proportionate expectations for developer contributions are set out in planning policy documents too. They are emphasised early in the LDP, which also includes details of:

- Policies to which developer contributions are relevant;
- Location-specific projects for which contributions will be required, e.g. community heating at Shawfair; and
- Issues regarding developer contributions for each particular allocated site.

3.6.10 Policies IMP1 and IMP2 are those in the LDP that are most relevant to developer contributions. They refer to new development and essential infrastructure respectively. They provide a full list of aspects of developments for which payments will be sought and direct readers to other parts and policies of the Plan that provide more detail.

3.6.11 The advice in the MLDP will sit alongside new Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Planning Obligations, which is currently in preparation, to provide an updated approach to future requirements when it is adopted. The current SG on the topic nevertheless gives a clear view of the Council's expectations, together with the LDP and more tailored advice from pre-application discussions.

3.7 - Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan

3.7.1 The current LDP was adopted in late 2017 and work is underway on its replacement, including engagement with stakeholders such as Councillors, industry, the Scottish Government and key agencies. In respect of the latter, a programme of regular meetings involving them was set up in 2019 and though these were somewhat curtailed at the start of 2020/21 as everyone moved to new ways of working, they continued with Scottish Water and SEPA. Their content is informing the next LDP and its Evidence Report, with discussions on: Feedback on possible policy changes or new draft policies for LDP2;

- Initial site selection work for LDP2, with the agencies providing input on specialised topics to assess those sites;

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- Flooding, SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) and biodiversity issues to take into account in LDP2; and
- Being updated on major work items that Scottish Water and SEPA are doing, including how they relate to general planning issues and specific LDP changes stemming from the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act.

3.7.2 As well as these meetings, key agency input into the next LDP has also been gained through other events that the Planning Team take part in with them. These include training events and seminars and other non-LDP work. In 2020/21, this included work with SEStran (the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership) and Sustrans (a walking and cycling charity). Climate change and addressing it through sustainable transport is likely to be a key theme of the next LDP and so these meetings have assisted in this respect. They involved:

- Work with Sustrans on designing and aligning Midlothian's strategic places with sustainable/active travel & public transport;
- Regional Transport Working Group meetings with SEStran;
- Meetings of the Transport Sub-Group of the Midlothian Community Planning Climate Emergency Group with both SEStran and Sustrans; and
- Addressing Shawfair green infrastructure requirements (which also included NatureScot and the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust).



Gilmerton to Shawfair cycle path.
Picture: Graeme Yuill, used under [this license](#).

3.7.3 Industry were also engaged in development plan preparation work in 2020/21. This included:

- Consulting with utility companies (Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) and Scottish Power Energy Networks) regarding their infrastructure in Midlothian and how it may influence LDP2 site selection;
- Communications with house-builders, developers and planning consultancies who were promoting sites then assessing their potential for housing, economic or retail use;
- Using industry insight to gain a greater understanding of Midlothian's renewable energy potential, such as by taking part in SGN webinars on biomethane/biohydrogen and working with Vattenfall and Greenspace Scotland on options for low carbon heat;
- Seminars and regular contact with Objective, the Council's LDP document software partner, on the latest functions of their products and how to use them to improve public engagement; and
- Consulting software developers and transport modelling companies on transport accessibility IT solutions to inform site selection and future active travel infrastructure development.

3.7.4 Taking advice from other Councils has always been beneficial in plan preparation, but with the need to adapt to new obligations under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and to Covid-related changes in working practices, this is now especially important. Midlothian's Planning Team therefore did the following in 2020/21:

- Learning lessons from West Dunbartonshire's new LDP, particularly its 'green' credentials and attending a webinar on their approach to preparing Local Place Plans;
- Taking part in a webinar run on how Highland Council used the 'Objective' software for LDP work, including public engagement;
- Learning from Moray Council's LDP Evidence Report and their electric vehicle charging policies; and
- Following the lead of Glasgow in looking at developing a 'digital dashboard' of planning and spatial information to enhance public engagement with Midlothian's next LDP.

3.7.5 As a result of these meetings and events, any major points are added to a list of emerging issues to consider in LDP2 and materials such as presentations are circulated more widely in the department. These are

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discussed at quarterly Development Plans Monitoring Group meetings alongside any outputs from the Scottish Government, such as those from the 'Transforming Planning' website, National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 updates like 2020's Interim Position Statement and reviewing/taking part in consultations such as that on mediation in planning. Planners in the Team also review and take part in discussions of these topics on the 'Knowledge Hub' website to share ideas and information, all of which is shaping the next LDP.

3.7.6 Planning authorities must write a Development Plan Scheme (DPS) annually to outline their intentions with respect to preparing, reviewing and consulting on their next LDP over the coming year - the DPS has the role of project planning its delivery to the timescales that it sets out.

3.7.7 Scottish Government guidance is that LDPs should be replaced every five years with the Planning (Scotland) Act changing this to every ten years. Midlothian's latest DPS, number 13, proposes that LDP2 will be published in its proposed form in spring 2024 and adopted in spring 2026.

3.7.8 This approach has been taken because of delays to do with the implementation of the new Act caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the surrounding uncertainties about the resources required to meet the requirements of the Act. Secondly, DPS13 proposes that the next LDP will be prepared using NPF4 to provide strategic guidance, which means waiting for it to be laid out in draft form in autumn 2021. This is a prudent way forward because:

- The rejection of the proposed Strategic Development Plan/SESplan 2 (SDP2) means that SDP1 remains the adopted SDP (from June 2013) and the evidence base underpinning the plan is increasingly out of date;
- There is no guidance in SDP1 as to how the housing land requirements for the period 2024 - 2032 should be distributed across the SESplan area;
- The declaration of a climate change emergency in Scotland (and by the Council) is likely to have land use planning policy implications and it would be advantageous to work with a strategic planning framework that takes this into account; and
- There is insufficient time to progress the review to Proposed Plan stage before the new regulations come into effect.

3.7.9 On balance, this approach as set out in the DPS seeks to embody the least risk and uncertainty in taking forward the MLDP review. Moreover, the Action Programme review process provides an additional opportunity to reassess the adequacy of the housing and economic land supply and/or address any other emerging issues if required using the measures described in the existing LDP.

3.7.10 The DPS will ensure that the replacement LDP is project planned and delivered to this timescale. This is evident from a number of activities that it identifies as contributing to the preparation of LDP2 which are complete or are underway. These include:

- Using the Development Plan Monitoring Group to consider the performance of existing policies and emerging issues (e.g. policy gaps, redundant policies and required modifications);
- A 'sites review' on the deliverability of existing housing and economic allocations and assessing possible new sites for the next LDP should NPF4 and/or the 2019 Act require this;
- Reviewing the NPF4 Position Statement and taking part in the consultation on the Scottish Government's work on its Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (including with SESplan partners) to prepare for how it will shape LDP2;
- Publishing updated Housing and Employment Land Audits;
- Taking part in an event with the Community Planning Team to explain the context of new Planning Act and changes in the approach to LDP2, especially Local Place Plans; and
- The ongoing collection of information to input into LDP2, including via internal Council service liaison and meetings with key agencies and other stakeholders.

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3.7.11 The DPS also goes into more detail in places to ensure that as well as its overall project plan for delivering the next LDP to the planned timetable, it also outlines ways forward for particularly important elements of it. These include:

- How the Council's Climate change Strategy (which the Planning Team produced in 2020) will shape LDP2¹;
- How Local Place Plans may be produced; and
- Possible routes of engagement on the Evidence Report and the Proposed Plan itself².

3.7.12 The updated DPS also played a key role in the engagement of Elected Members in the preparation of the next LDP and it contained a commitment to brief and involve them at key stages during this process, including reporting to Planning Committee. By outlining a proposed timetable for LDP2 it informed Councillors about which stages they could become involved at and when these were likely to be.

3.7.13 Given the changes brought about by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the DPS also focussed particularly on what this meant for the next LDP, so that Elected Members were aware of them. For example, it discussed the new requirement for Local Place Plans in detail along with the Planning Team's key duties in relation to them, as it was recognised that Elected Members may take a particular interest in this aspect of LDP2's preparation.

3.7.14 Elected Members were also consulted in 2020/21 in relation to approval of the SESplan Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy and how this would influence the next LDP, the possibility of setting up a dedicated Council committee on developer contributions (the output of which would partly be used to inform how these matters are dealt with in LDP2) and updating them in relation to the progress of Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal projects and their link to the LDP.

¹ Work has already begun in this area by taking part in the Midlothian Climate Emergency Group to place this issue at the heart of the next LDP.

3.7.15 The Development Plans Section of the department also discussed and planned what other materials would be put to Elected Members (via the Planning Committee) in 2021/22 to inform updating the LDP. These will include reports on a draft response to the NPF4 Housing Figures Consultation for them to review and an updated Action Programme which will detail key changes and achievements since the adoption of the MLDP and consider how some of these will influence the preparation of MLDP2. Together with the informal discussions that staff in the Team have with Councillors on the Planning Committee, including the Team Manager who briefs its Chair and that of the Local Review Body, this ensures that they will be sufficiently engaged in preparing it.

3.7.16 Previous parts of section 3 above outlined how regular and proportionate policy advice is provided by the Planning Team. This is supplemented by the following online advice:

- A dedicated page on what constitutes the Development Plan for Midlothian, with links to the MLDP, SDP and explaining text;
- An online proposals map showing the spatial extent of the MLDP's policies;
- The latest DPS with details on how to get involved in shaping the next LDP;
- Pages on approved and upcoming SG as well as planning advice on common developments, such as dormer windows and rear extensions; and
- A dedicated email address that the Development Plans Section monitor for LDP-related enquiries, such as landowners proposing sites for the next plan.

3.7.17 Staff from the Development Plans Section also provide planning and policy advice to developers and in relation to applications for other neighbouring Council areas. In 2020/21 this included:

- Giving evidence to appeals in relation to a housing proposal next to Midlothian in the City of Edinburgh Council area and a wind farm application in the Scottish Borders;
- Responding to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit on the Environmental Impact Assessment for the planned Greystone Knowe Wind Farm in the Scottish Borders;

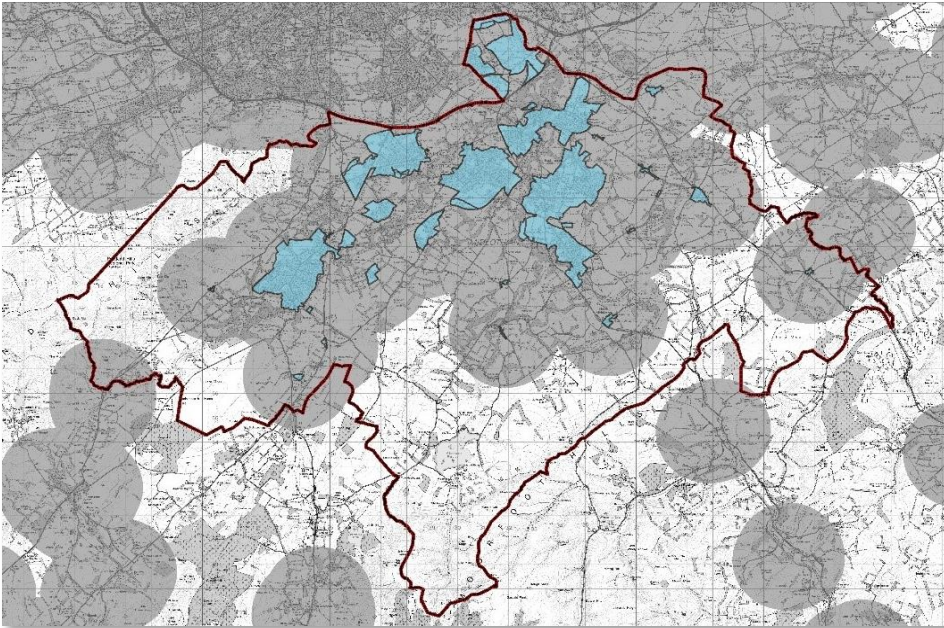
² This has been assisted by work that has already begun on reviewing how other authorities have approached replacing their LDPs, including Moray and West Dunbartonshire Councils.

3 Facilitating Quality Development

- Advising developers on planning policy matters for proposals for supermarkets, the re-use of a site for retail in Penicuik and potentially non-conforming development on employment land; and
- Liaising with colleagues from Education Services on planning policy issues to do with proposals for new schools at Gorebridge and in the A701 corridor.

3.7.18 Further policy advice was produced during the 20/21 reporting year in the form of:

- Nature Conservation Planning Guidance (adopted since the end of the year);
- Two Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans (for Roslin & Mavisbank) which went to the December 2020 Planning Committee then out to consultation; and
- Producing a draft of the SG on Wind Energy Development which is ready to be put to Planning Committee.



Map of settlements (blue) and 2km buffer zones (grey), produced as part of the draft Wind Energy Development SG.

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

4 - Service Improvement and Staffing

4.1 - Workforce Information

4.1.1 The information in section 4.1 is a snapshot of the position at 31/03/2021.

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service ³				✓

Staff age profile	Headcount
Under 30	1
30 - 39	7
40 - 49	10
50 and over	7

RTPI membership	Headcount
No. of chartered staff	16

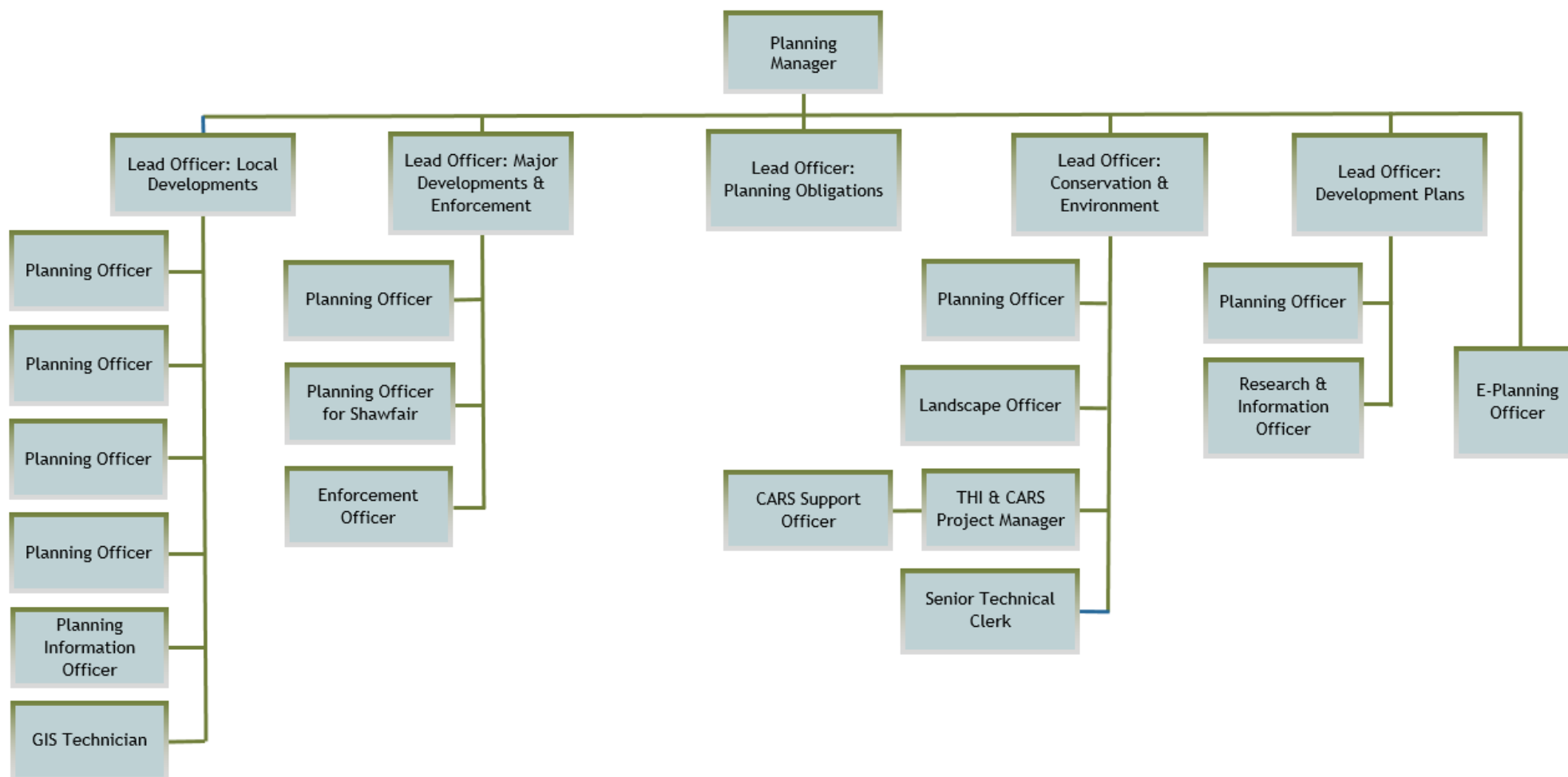
4.1.2 Midlothian Council's Planning Team contains five sections, each of which are headed by a Lead Officer. The Planning Manager sits above them in the structure and an E-Planning Officer sits alongside the department as a whole, separate from a particular section. The staffing structure (shown below) is conducive to flexible working, allowing officers to move between sections to respond to peaks in workload.

³ The Planning Manager runs a single Planning Team responsible for development plans, planning applications, enforcement and conservation. A new Council senior leadership structure was launched just prior to the start of the reporting year. It

sees the department become part of the 'Place' Directorate, with an Executive Director then a Chief Officer at the next two steps above in the management chain.

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

Planning Team structure as of 31/03/2021.



Note: it is intended that several new Officers will start with the Team in 21/22, in the Development Plans, the Local Developments and the Major Developments & Enforcement Sections. A further post is intended to be advertised in spring 2021: a Compliance Officer, who will work with the Lead Officer for Planning Obligations.

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

4.2 - Covid-19 Adaptations

4.2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic posed major challenges to the Planning Team during the 2020/21 PPF reporting year. These in turn required drastic and sudden adaptations to maintain the continuity of service, some of which are reflected in the 'service improvements' proposed as part of last year's report (see section 4.5).

4.2.2 Many challenges revolved around changes to digital practices, and the Planning Team, particularly its E-Planning Officer, worked with the Council's Digital Services Department to facilitate these. Examples included:

- The roll out of Zoom and then Teams, which allowed meetings to restart via video calls;
- Co-ordinating requests for equipment from staff and distributing it to them;
- Distributing guides and sharing advice on how to access files and use software & services remotely; and
- Maintaining remote access to specialist software installed on office PCs.

4.2.3 The most significant step in the move to remote and digital working was the roll-out of video call software across the department. This allowed Lead Officer group meetings to be restarted to maintain communication across the Sections of the Team and then on to staff line managed by these Officers. It was also used for recruitment, with video interviews becoming the standard format for them, as well as for external communication with developers and applicants. The Planning Committee and Local Review Body moved to remote video meetings in June 2020 and the department's Christmas gathering was held online given the restrictions on physical meetings.

4.2.4 Staff attended several online training events on adapting working practices around Covid-19 constraints. Important points from these were shared amongst Lead Officers then passed down to other staff or shared directly across the department. These events included:

- 'The Planning System - Coping with Covid' webinar;
- 'Public Perceptions of Climate Risk & Adaptation in the Context of Covid' from Adaptation Scotland;
- 'Digital consultation during Covid-19', an RTPI chapter event; and

- 'Digital Planning - Covid-19 Resilience', a workshop led by the Planning & Architecture Division at the Scottish Government.

4.2.5 Some staff in the Planning Team were also called upon to support the Council's public health functions during the early stages of the pandemic. This included:

- The GIS Technician mapping and creating tables of Council property, for Midlothian's emergency response planning; and
- The Research & Information Officer mapping out and creating a searchable database of Midlothian's postcodes, to enable the Home Care Team to deliver a geographically-targeted service.



Planning Committee meeting taking place via video conference.

4.3 - Planning Committee Information

4.3.1 Meetings of Midlothian's full Council take place on a six weekly cycle and comprise all 18 Elected Members. In relation to planning matters, it delegates its regulatory responsibilities to its Planning Committee, but can make planning policy decisions, such as regarding the area's LDP. It may also make decisions regarding work streams which are implemented by the Planning

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

Service, for example heritage and regeneration projects or matters related to developer contributions.

4.3.2 Midlothian Council's Planning Committee is responsible for determining planning applications, enforcing planning legislation, confirming Tree Preservation Orders and other related matters. The Committee comprises all 18 Elected Members of the Council, with a Chair selected from its composition. It normally meets on a six weekly basis, with a rolling annual schedule of meetings and requires a minimum of six Elected Members to be in attendance.

4.3.3 Midlothian Council's Local Review Body is responsible for looking at appeals against decisions made by an appointed Officer on planning applications. It comprises ten Elected Members, with a Chair determined by the membership of the Committee. It normally meets on a six weekly cycle with a rolling annual schedule of meetings and requires a minimum of three Elected Members to be in attendance.

4.3.4 The schedule of Planning Committee and Local Review Body meetings are listed on the Council's website alongside an agenda for each, documents discussed at them and minutes of previous meetings. Video recordings of Planning Committee meetings are viewable via the Council website.

Committee & Site Visits	Number in 2020/21
Full Council meetings	8
Planning committees	4
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body meetings	6
Local Review Body site visits	0

Note: meeting schedules were impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, particularly the Planning Committee and Local Review Body. Typically they meet more often each year than shown in the table above. Pandemic restrictions also prevented site visits, which were instead replaced with photo and video presentations.

4.4 - Culture of Continuous Improvement

4.4.1 The department recognises that training and professional development is necessary for the continued effective delivery of services and furthering staff skills. It is also a requirement for RTPI members and is encouraged within the Council's own appraisal system. Given this, and despite Covid restrictions, staff within the Planning Team took part in many training events this year, including:

- Scottish Water's Annual Forum, which included updates on their key activities, such as their pre-application engagement service and new remote inspections app;
- An event on how to integrate environmental issues such as biodiversity, decarbonisation and agriculture into Regional Spatial Strategies;
- Various workshops held by The Wildlife Information Centre on topics such as bats, wildlife recording, 'backyard biodiversity' and giant hogweed;
- Viewing the University of Edinburgh's presentations on building preservation as part of their Architectural Conservation Masterclass series;
- Taking part in a training session run by the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis on their Housing Needs & Demand Assessment Tool;
- An RTPI engagement event on NPF4, looking at best planning practice around the world, such as a case study on carbon neutrality in Finland;
- Participating in events on 'The Future of the High Street' to better understand what current and ongoing challenges are for high street businesses and the built environment, and to explore, test and pilot what possible solutions might be; and
- Various GIS events on issues such as data sharing and licensing, e.g. the ESRI Scottish Conference.

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

4.4.2 The Planning Team recognise that working across corporate services can deliver improved outputs and benefits for customers. This interdisciplinary working is therefore encouraged and widely practiced. Some examples are provided in the table below.

Planning Team Section	What other Council services did they work with?	What did they work together on?
Enforcement	Environmental Health	Houses in Multiple Occupation, hot food premises, licensing, noise
	Housing	Breaches of planning control
	Trade Waste	Fly-tipping
	Estates	Land ownership issues
	Land Resource Services	Rights of way, core paths access
Developer Contributions	Policy & Road Safety	Developer contributions to transport projects such as the A7 urbanisation
	Finance and Integrated Service Support	Attending the Capital Plan & Asset Management Board to inform it of developer contributions finance
	Education Services	Implementing the Council's Learning Estates Strategy
Development Plans	Housing Services	Developing the Council's latest Local Housing Strategy and implications from housing matters in NPF4
	Environmental Health, Policy & Road Safety	Working on a masterplan for a mixed use development at West Straiton
	Property Assets (Estates)	Proposals for using greenspaces to generate renewable heat
	Surveying Services	Tendering for the new A701 Relief Road
Conservation & Environment	Communities & Lifelong Learning	Taking part in the Community Planning Working Group
	Policy & Road Safety, Housing Services	Pursuing Midlothian's climate change goals as part of the Community Planning Climate Emergency Group
	Economic Development	The Borders Rail Economic Development Group
	Land Resource Services	Updating the Council's Open Space Strategy
	Digital Services	Penicuik Heritage Project work - Town Hall wi-if installation.
Development Management	Building Standards, Environmental Health	Migration of the 'Uniform' records system to a hosted platform
	Land Resource Services, Landscape Services	Developing a Community Planning Partnership map.
	Property Assets (Estates)	Plans for redeveloping the snowsport centre at Hillend
	Education Services	The new education campus at Shawfair
	Midlothian Energy Services Company	District heating links into the Millerhill Recycling & Energy Recovery Plant

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

4.4.3 With many other Council areas near to Midlothian, planning matters often involve sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with neighbouring Authorities. The Planning Team also recognise the benefits of working with Councils throughout Scotland as a whole. Some examples of this from 2020/21 include:

- Learning from other Scottish Councils as part of Heads of Planning Scotland via its sub-groups on Development Plans and Developer Contributions;
- Using West Lothian's Nature Conservation Planning Guidance as a basis for Midlothian's, as it was created with NatureScot as a model for other councils;
- Working with SESplan partner Councils as part of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 team and the South East Scotland Housing Forum;
- Taking part in the working group on Securing Positive Effects for Biodiversity in NPF4 alongside Orkney, Glasgow and Loch Lomond Councils;
- Reviewing Supplementary Guidance on wind energy produced by other councils (including Stirling, South Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire) to inform Midlothian's own guidance;
- Taking part in workshops with staff from other Councils, including SEStran's Forth Freight Strategy and on the Planning Scotland Act 2019's requirements for Open Space Strategies & Play Sufficiency Assessments;
- Working with local partner Councils on infrastructure challenges and business case development as part of the City Region Deal project; and
- Working with neighbouring Councils as part of the Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Natural Heritage Planning Group to promote natural heritage and biodiversity issues through both planning policy and development management.

4.5 - Progress on Service Improvements for 2020/21

4.5.1 Midlothian's PPF report for last year included nine service improvements for 2020/21 (shown in *italics* below). Substantial progress has been made on almost all of these actions.

4.5.2 *Utilise online technologies to enable effective remote working with internal and external customers, thereby also helping to reduce staff transport to support the Council's ambition to reach net-zero carbon by 2030.*

This has been achieved. All department staff have been offered Council laptops to allow remote working. Teams is available for video meetings with internal and external customers and the Council's Digital Services Team provided guidance on its use. Staff have also been offered other equipment to enable remote working. This has greatly reduced staff transport needs.

4.5.3 *Work with the Communications and Marketing Team to develop an online 'Communications Plan' to promote wider engagement in the development plan process, particularly key stage participation.*

This has not been achieved. The emergency response to Covid-19 has unavoidably delayed this, with the Communications and Marketing Team deployed to prioritise support for/response to the pandemic and two phases of lockdown only easing after the end of the reporting year. Planning Committee has formally restarted following lockdown restrictions and with approval of the DPS13 in February this year, we will hopefully be in a position to revisit this task in 2021/22, aligning with the continued rollout of Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and kick-starting the review of the MLDP.

4.5.4 *Establish a joint working group with the Communities and Lifelong Learning Team to manage the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requirements to widen community engagement in the development plan process and to support the preparation of Local Place Plans.*

This has partly been achieved. One such meeting took place in 2020 to discuss our approach to collaborating on the next MLDP and the

4 Service Improvement and Staffing

requirements/implications of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Further sessions have also been held since the end of the PPF reporting year to discuss, prepare and agree a response to the Scottish Government consultation on Local Place Plan regulations.

4.5.5 *Develop templates in Uniform for Heads of Terms and Heads of Terms Authorisation Reports to create efficiencies and save time in relation to developer contributions procedures.*

This has been achieved. The Uniform templates have been devised and are fully operational, bringing the time saving benefits envisaged.

4.5.6 *Work with the Landmark Trust and Historic Environment Scotland to develop and submit a stage 1 application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the restoration of the category A listed Mavisbank House.*

This has been achieved. The stage 1 application was submitted in early 2021 to the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Horizons programme. A decision is expected in summer 2021 on whether they will support the project going forward to the 'development phase'. If this happens, this phase will run from July 2021 for two years, with the final submission after that. If the National Lottery Heritage Fund supports that final application the project is expected to commence in December 2023.

4.5.7 *Work with the other local authorities in the Lothians and also Scottish Borders Council in a newly-established network to share best practice on and investigate means of biodiversity enhancement.*

This has been achieved. Meetings of the group were moved online, took place every quarter and included representatives from Edinburgh, West Lothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils. They involved sharing knowledge on a range of topics including Habitats Regulations Assessments, biodiversity aspects of National Planning Framework 4 and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

4.5.8 *Reinstate the Planning Lead Officer Group to co-ordinate department activities remotely as staff work from home during the Coronavirus outbreak.*

This has been achieved. The group was reinstated shortly after the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. It meets every Tuesday and Lead Officers pass on news and resulting actions in meetings with staff that they line manage.

4.5.9 *Update applicants, agents and other stakeholders on the implications for the planning service of the Coronavirus outbreak, for example by releasing website updates and/or writing to them directly.*

This has been achieved. The Planning page of the Council's website has been updated with the latest news specifically on the service while the overall Council website contains more general updates. Existing applicants were written to and new applicants are informed of changes (e.g. requests for extra time to determine applications) by an acknowledgement letter that goes out once the application is registered. This also contains details on how site visits are being approached.

4.5.10 *Recruit new staff for the vacant posts within the Major Developments & Enforcement Section of the department, to assist in freeing up resources of other Sections who covered these since the departure of former staff.*

This has been achieved. Two new Planners joined the Major Developments & Enforcement Section in 2020/21, with one being dedicated to progressing planning issues for the new town of Shawfair. They have also been assisted by the recruitment of another Landscape Officer elsewhere in the department to advise on this aspect of major applications.

4.6 - Intended Service Improvements for 2021/22

4.6.1 Despite the challenges and uncertainties posed by the ongoing Coronavirus situation and the general resource and financial constraints facing councils, Midlothian's Planning Team intend to take an ambitious approach

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regarding targets for the next PPF reporting year. This is reflected in the following 12 service improvements:

- To maintain the Planning Team's mapping service during the essential medical leave and phased return of its GIS Technician. This will involve training the Research & Information Officer and E-Planning Officer on essential tasks to assist with mapping/GIS requests from both within the department and external sources.
- To go beyond the regular updates of the Midlothian's Enforcement Charter by reviewing a range of other Council's charters and then update and amend our own so that it is modernised, streamlined and has national best practices embedded in it;
- Recruit a further new Planning Officer for the Major Developments & Enforcement Section, including an induction on a range of local developments to familiarise them with the Midlothian area and departmental procedures;
- Perform further work on tree protection, to support a goal of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. This will involve undertaking more Tree Preservation Orders in 2021/22 and using 'i-Tree' software to assess possible LDP2 sites for tree cover and their benefits for sequestering emissions;
- Take on an a high school student from Midlothian as a paid intern through the 'Career Ready' programme, to assist with the work done by the Conservation and Environment Section as part of the Penicuik heritage regeneration project during summer 2021;
- To maintain the 'Duty Planner' service during a period of maternity leave. This will involve co-ordinating cover across the department and potentially training staff who have not performed the role before to continue offering this useful publically-facing service⁴;
- Set up a Development Management Officers Working Group to ensure a consistent approach to planning applications by Case Officers and to further their knowledge of emerging issues and specific topics (such as by inviting others in the department or wider Council to speak on matters like flooding, noise or site contamination);
- Develop protocols, processes and training in relation to the role and involvement of Elected Members with planning obligations & developer contributions, as part of a widened remit of the Planning Committee;
- To take forward the Council's work on climate change (a function which sits largely within the Planning Team) including by producing a module on the topic for staff training and a Climate Change Risk Assessment;
- Co-opt a representative from the Council's Communities & Lifelong Learning Team onto the Project Board for progressing the replacement LDP as well as obtaining their input for the plan itself.
- Successfully implement and review the concordat and joint working group with the University of Edinburgh for delivering the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal-funded Easter Bush Agri-Tech Project. This includes the proposed A701 Relief Road and A702 Link Road which is necessary to support the city deal investment as well as wider planned development in the A701 corridor.
- Produce a site Masterplan/Planning Guidance for the mixed use land allocation at West Straiton, including working with colleagues from other Council services such as transport, to guide future development around issues such as access and site layout.

⁴ See section 3.3 for more on the role of the Duty Planner.

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5.1 - National Headline Indicators for Development Planning

Local and strategic development planning	2020/21	2019/20
Age of LDP at the end of the reporting period	3 years, 4 months	2 years, 4 months
Age of SDP at the end of the reporting period	7 years, 9 months	6 years, 9 months

5.1.1 Will the LDP be replaced by its 5th anniversary according to the DPS?

No, see Section 3.7.

5.1.2 Will the SDP be replaced by its 5th anniversary according to the DPS?

No. The proposed new SDP was rejected by Scottish Ministers during the previous reporting year. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 proposes abolishing the need for SDPs, with Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) being required instead. In 2020, SESplan co-ordinated preparation of the first interim RSS for Edinburgh and South East Scotland with Midlothian inputting to this as required.

5.1.3 Has the expected date of submission of the LDP to Scottish Ministers in the DPS changed over the past year?

Yes. The current DPS (number 13) proposes an expected date of submission of the next LDP to Scottish Ministers in early 2026, compared to a date of early 2025 as stated in the previous DPS. The change is associated with factors outside the control of the Council, including delays to NPF4, the implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

5.1.4 Were DPS engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?

They were partly met during 2020/21. Full compliance with the planned programme was not achieved due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Preparation of LDP2 itself has been delayed, in part due to the pandemic but also due to the decision to prepare a plan under the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, where NPF4 forms part of the development plan. During the year, the following engagement and consultation activities were undertaken:

- Publishing information online and encouraging interested parties to register on our consultation database;
- Carrying out engagement activities with key agencies, the Community Planning Partnership and other Council services;
- Contributing to the Scottish Government's 'Transforming Planning' process and NPF4;
- Working with neighbouring Councils on the area's RSS and City Region Deal projects;
- Taking part in Midlothian's Climate Emergency Working Group with (amongst others) Community Councils, NatureScot and Sustrans to discuss how climate change matters can be integrated in the next LDP;
- Preparing an up to date Housing Land Audit with consultation with Homes for Scotland; and
- Preparing an updated Employment Land Audit.

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Effective land supply and delivery of outputs	2020/21 ¹	2019/20 ²
Established housing land supply	13,072 units	13,581 units
Five-year effective housing land supply programming	5,496 units	5,341 units
Five-year effective housing land supply total capacity	8,693 units	9,017 units
Five-year housing supply target	4,102 units ³	4,410 units
Five-year effective housing land supply	6.7 years	6.1 years
Housing approvals ⁴	965 units	2,157 units
Housing completions over the last five years	3,125 units	3,175 units
Marketable employment land supply ⁵	228.8ha	215.2ha
Employment land take-up during the reporting year ⁶	0.1ha	0.6ha

Notes:

- ¹ Figures are based on the finalised 2020 Housing Land Audit (HLA).
- ² Figures are based on the finalised 2019 HLA.
- ³ Due to SDP2 being refused by Scottish Ministers, the relevant housing supply target is set in SDP1. This, however, only provides a Midlothian-specific target for the next three years (882 units per annum until 2023/24) while its target for 2024 - 2032 is not distributed amongst SESplan Councils. The figure calculated here is based on the assumption that the 2024 - 2032 target is distributed using the same share as SDP1's earlier housing targets, which cover 2009 - 2019 and 2019 - 2024.
- ⁴ The figure quoted here includes units consented from *all* applications. It therefore includes detailed planning consents for sites already with approval in principle, and amendment applications for sites already with consent. This can lead to double-counting between years. For example, a consent was issued in 2020/21 for 33 units in Newtongrange. This was an amendment to a consent for 28 units that was counted in a previous PPF reporting year. This approach is used as it is the most literal interpretation of yearly 'housing approvals' - the PPF Guidance Notes do not specify a methodology for calculating this number.
- ⁵ This figure is the combined total of net vacant immediately available employment land and net vacant employment land with minor constraints. It is taken from the updated Employment Land Audit published in March 2021, which recalculated the land supply.
- ⁶ This figure only includes take-up due to construction starting and not applications approved during the year, or development of existing premises and that within their curtilage. It can therefore mask the true extent of economic activity.

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5.2 - National Headline Indicators for Development Management

Project planning	2020/21		2019/20	
	No. of applications	% of applications	No. of applications	% of applications
Applications subject to pre-application advice	48	6.7	64	11.4
Major applications subject to processing agreements	6	46.1	0	0.0

Decision-making	% of applications	
	2020/21	2019/20
Application approval rate	90.8	90.6
Delegated rate	98.4	97.7
Validation	93.1	95.0

Decision-making timescales	No. of weeks to decision	
	2020/21	2019/20
Major developments	94.9	71.6
Local developments (non-householder)	10.6	17.2
Householder developments	7.1	6.6

Legacy cases	No. of applications	
	2020/21	2019/20
Number cleared during reporting period	3	20
Number remaining	13	15

Enforcement Activity	No. of cases	
	2020/21	2019/20
Complaints lodged and investigated	126	135
Potential breaches identified - no need for further action	76	98
Cases closed	80	99
Notices served	2	13
Direct action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

5.2.1 Time since enforcement charter was published/reviewed: 3 months. The enforcement charter was reviewed during the PPF reporting year by the Lead Officer of the Major Developments & Enforcement Section, with updates being made where appropriate to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Its cover, as displayed on the Council web page (link in section 5.6) has not been updated, however the document itself has been.

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5.3 - Scottish Government Official Statistics

Type of development	2020/21		2019/20	
	No. of applications	Average timescale (weeks)	No. of applications	Average timescale (weeks)
Major developments	5	94.9	9	71.5
Local developments (non-householder, less than 2 months)	55	7.0	101	6.7
Local developments (non-householder, more than 2 months)	35	16.2	63	23.7
Local developments (householder, less than 2 months)	257	6.7	257	6.4
Local developments (householder, more than 2 months)	59	13.9	20	10.5
Housing (major)	4	111.2	7	70.6
Housing (local, less than 2 months)	11	7.3	17	7.3
Housing (local, more than 2 months)	12	21.6	33	27.8
Business & industry (major)	0	0.00	0	0.0
Business & industry (local, less than 2 months)	5	5.9	18	6.3
Business & industry (local, more than 2 months)	2	8.3	5	39.5
EIA developments	0	0	3	82.7
Other consents	42	7.3	79	7.9
Planning/legal agreements (major)	3	88.3	5	60.3
Planning/legal agreements (local)	5	31.3	6	57.7

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	Total no. of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2020/21		2019/20	
		No. of decisions	% of decisions	No. of decisions	% of decisions
Local reviews	15	1	6.7	13	61.5
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	0	0	0	1	100

5.4 - Case Study Checklist Table

Case study topic	Relevant section(s) of report
Design	Section 2.4
Conservation	
Regeneration	Section 2.5, Section 2.6
Environment	
Greenspace	
Town centres	Section 2.3
Masterplanning	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	
Housing supply	Section 2.5
Affordable housing	Section 2.5
Economic development	Section 2.4
Enforcement	
Development management processes	
Planning applications	
Interdisciplinary working	
Collaborative working	

Case study topic	Relevant section(s) of report
Community engagement	Section 2.3, Section 2.6
Place-making	
Charrettes	
Place Standard	
Performance monitoring	
Process improvement	
Project management	
Skills sharing	
Staff training	
Online systems	
Transport	
Active travel	
Other	

Note: there is no requirement for Councils to cover all the topics listed in the table above.

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5.5 - Performance Marker Map

5.5.1 National oversight of the performance of the Scottish Planning System is taken by a High Level Group, chaired by a Scottish Government Minister. It agreed a set of 'Performance Markers' in 2013 which allow the Scottish Government a consistent basis on which to consider performance. These markers are listed below alongside directions as to where they are discussed in this document.

Performance marker	Relevant parts of report*
1	Sections 5.2 and 5.3
2	Section 3.2 Paragraph 3.6.8
3	Section 3.4 Section 3.3 Section 3.6 Paragraph 2.2.12 Paragraph 2.6.7
4	Paragraphs 3.6.1 to 3.6.3 Section 5.3 Paragraph 2.5.7
5	Paragraph 5.2.1
6	Section 4.5 Paragraph 4.4.1 and bullet points Section 4.2 Sections 5.1 and 5.2
7	Section 5.1 Paragraph 3.7.1
8	Paragraphs 3.7.6 to 3.7.11 Section 5.1
9	Paragraphs 3.7.12 to 3.7.15

Performance marker	Relevant parts of report*
10	Paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.5 Paragraph 3.7.10
11	Section 3.3 Paragraphs 3.7.16 to 3.7.18 Paragraph 3.2.1 Paragraph 3.5.1
12	Paragraph 4.4.2 and table Paragraph 3.5.4 Paragraph 2.2.12 Paragraph 2.5.7
13	Paragraph 4.4.3 and bullet points Paragraph 3.7.5 Paragraph 4.5.7
14	Section 5.2 Paragraph 3.6.2
15	Paragraphs 3.6.4 to 3.6.11 Paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 Paragraph 3.4.3 Paragraph 2.5.7

* listed for each marker in approximate order of relevance.

5.6 - Supporting Evidence

5.6.1 There has been input from across Midlothian's Planning Team in compiling this report. Lead Officers were contacted to provide possible service improvements for 2021/22 and progress updates on those from the previous PPF report. They also provided guidance on notable projects for inclusion this year, which the staff member responsible for producing the report itself wrote up.

5.6.2 Other staff were contacted to provide input that related to their specific roles. For example the Duty Planner for section 3.3, the E-Planning Officer for the statistics in section 5 and the relevant Planning Officer for

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information relating to the DPS and progress on the next LDP. Additional information, particularly that in section 2, was recorded throughout the year during reviews of the weekly lists of applications that the department received. Staff calendars were reviewed to compile a list of training events that were attended throughout the year as well as examples of working with other services in Midlothian Council and other councils in Scotland. The Planning Manager reviewed the report prior to submission and raised it during Lead Officer's group meetings to raise awareness and generate thoughts as to its content.

5.6.3 The following web links were used during the production of this report and are considered as supporting evidence. Click on the links to go to the relevant web page.

- [Midlothian Council Planning and Building Homepage](#)
- [Planning Applications](#)
- [Conservation](#)
- [Development Plans and Policies](#)
- [MLDP Proposals Map](#)
- [Planning and Building Standards Portal](#)
- [Processing Agreements](#)
- [Planning Committee](#)
- [Local Review Body](#)
- [Pre-Application Advice](#)
- [Planning Application Checklists](#)
- [Various Downloadable Documents on Planning Applications](#)

- [Supplementary Guidance](#)
- [Midlothian Council's 2019/20 Planning Performance Framework Report](#)
- [Enforcement Charter](#)
- [Scottish Household Survey](#)

All photographs included in this report were taken by Midlothian Council except where noted.

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We are happy to translate on request and provide information and publications in other formats, including Braille, tape or large print.

如有需要我們樂意提供翻譯本，和其他版本的資訊與刊物，包括盲人點字、錄音帶或大字體。

Zapewnimy tłumaczenie na żądanie oraz dostarczymy informacje i publikacje w innych formatach, w tym Braillem, na kasecie magnetofonowej lub dużym drukiem.

ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰੇਲ, ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ।

Körler için kabartma yazılar, kaset ve büyük nüshalar da dahil olmak üzere, istenilen bilgileri sağlamak ve tercüme etmekten memnuniyet duyuyoruz.

اگر آپ چاہیں تو ہم خوشی سے آپ کو ترجمہ فراہم کر سکتے ہیں اور معلومات اور دستاویزات دیگر شکلوں میں مثلاً بریل (تاجیافرا کے لیے) بھرے ہوئے حروف کی کھائی (میں) ٹیپ پر یا بڑے حروف کی کھائی میں فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔