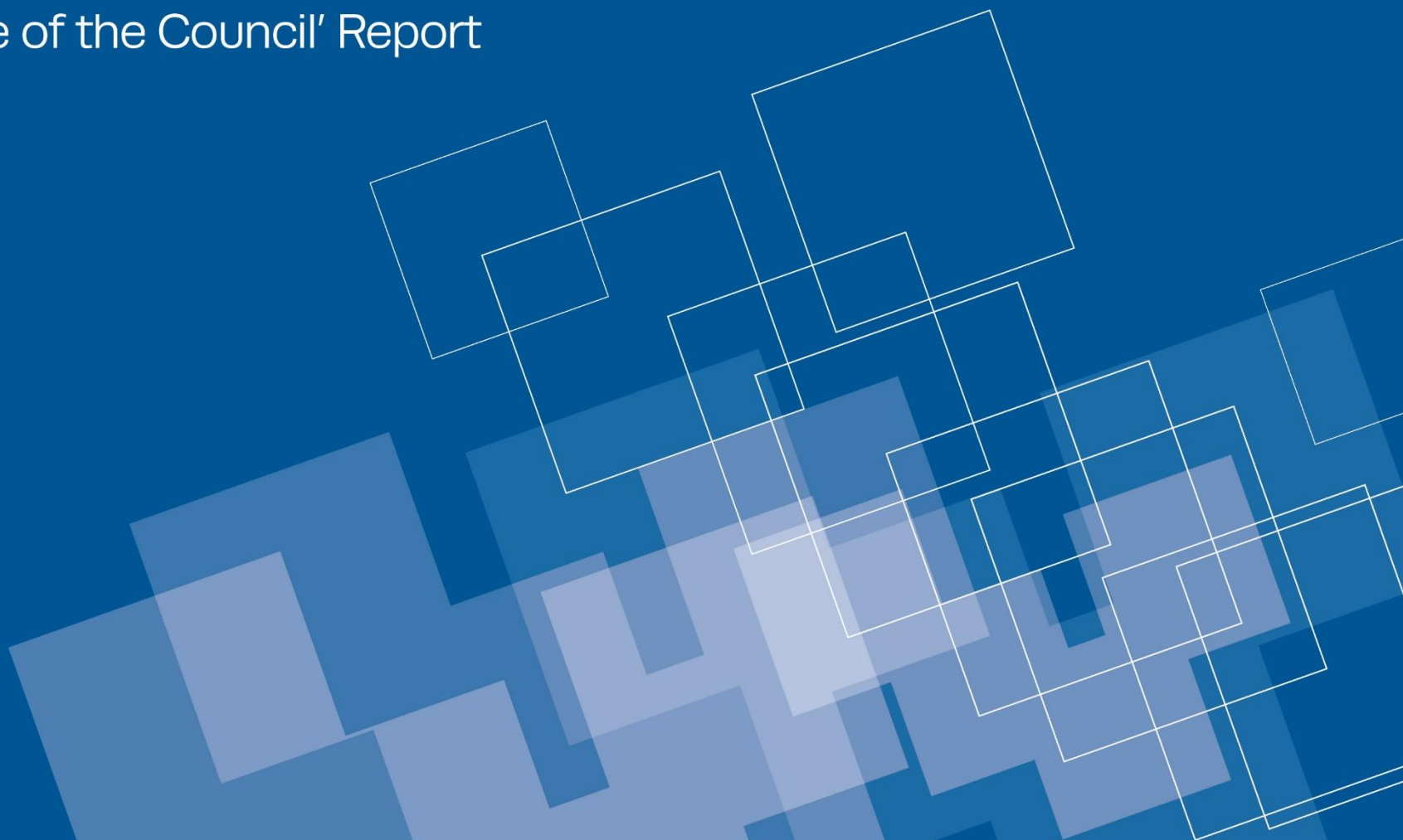


HOW GOOD IS YOUR COUNCIL?



2019 Annual Performance &
'State of the Council' Report



Welcome to East Lothian Council's 2019 Annual Performance and 'State of the Council' Report

In June 2017 East Lothian Council adopted a new five-year [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) that set out how it would strive to achieve the ambitious vision of *"An even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy, that enables our people and communities to flourish."*

This 2019 Annual Performance and 'State of the Council' Report provides an overview of how East Lothian Council is performing and shows the progress that has been made over the last year in carrying out the commitments made in the 2017-2022 Plan.

We are very pleased that the positive state of the council was validated by two external assessments carried out by the Accounts Commission, Scotland's spending watchdog, and Quality Scotland, which awarded East Lothian Council a 4-Star Recognised for Excellence award in June in 2018. The Accounts Commission's findings and the Recognised for Excellence award reflect the hard work and commitment of East Lothian Council employee to delivering the improvements to services and reducing inequalities across and within our communities.

We were also very pleased by the results of the latest 2019 East Lothian Residents' Survey, which generally shows a high level of satisfaction with the council and the services we provide.

[The Best Value Assurance Report](#) published by the Accounts Commission in November 2018 highlighted that East Lothian Council has improved significantly since the last Best Value audit, which was carried out in 2007. This is a very positive report, which highlights that the council has a good record of delivering services in the context of budget constraint and increasing local population. It recognises that governance arrangements, decision-making processes, leadership and scrutiny have all improved and that we are a self-aware council on a journey of continuous improvement with clear plans in place for further improvements. Other key points in the Best Value Assurance report included:

- The pace of improvement has increased in recent years, with education being a particular focus
- The council has planned for population growth, with a well-supported vision
- Financial management is effective with a budget-setting process focused on the council's priorities
- Strong links are in place with partners and the council works well and engages effectively with local communities
- Most local residents are happy with services provided by the council, with high overall satisfaction.

In continuing to strive to deliver the East Lothian vision we recognise that we need to continue the improvement journey. So the council has taken measures to implement the improvements recommended by Quality Scotland and the Best Value Assessment report. One of these is

the adoption of a suite of indicators to measure progress in achieving the commitments and outcomes set out in the Council Plan. These 'Top 50 Council Plan Indicators' form the basis of the Annual Performance Report.


The challenges to be met by the council, in particular the financial constraints we face at the same time as our population and the demand for high quality services continue to grow, means that the council needs to transform the way it delivers services. Over the next five years the council will need to increasingly become:

- **an enabling and empowering** authority that works with its citizens and communities, the business and third sectors and other public sector partners to deliver the solutions that work best for East Lothian
- **a more entrepreneurial authority**, developing new ways of ensuring services are provided in the most effective and efficient way possible
- **a 'digital' authority**, fully embracing and exploiting opportunities to use technology to deliver services.

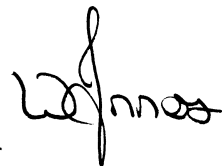
Perhaps the biggest challenge our society faces is the threat posed by Climate Change. This has been recognised by the council, which recently declared a Climate Change emergency. Much hard work has already gone in to reducing the council's carbon footprint in recent years and earlier this year we published a draft Climate Change Strategy. The public response to the draft strategy shows the level of concern East Lothian residents have about Climate Change. The final version of the strategy will be published soon. This will take on board the public's concerns and map out what more the council needs to do, but also what more we all individually and collectively could and should do to reduce our carbon emissions and give future generations a better chance.

We look forward to working with our partners and the people and communities of East Lothian to deliver the change that is needed to ensure East Lothian continues on the path to achieve its vision of being *even more prosperous, safe and sustainable, with a dynamic and thriving economy that enables our people and communities to flourish.*

Angela Leitch
Chief Executive



Willie Innes
Council Leader



October 2019

Contents

Introduction	5
1. The State of the Council 2019	7
2. 2018/19 Annual Performance Report	13
3. Growing our Economy	21
4. Growing our People	26
5. Growing our Communities	37
6. Growing our Capacity	48

Introduction

This is the first 'State of the Council' Report covering the period of the [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#). The Council Plan is based around the ambitious vision of '*an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian with a dynamic and thriving economy that will enable our people and communities to flourish.*' The Plan sets out how the council will strive to achieve this vision with an overarching objective to *Reduce inequalities within and across our communities* and four themes:

- **Growing our Economy** – to increase sustainable and inclusive economic growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian.
- **Growing our People** – to give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable adults and older people.
- **Growing our Communities** – to give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the housing, transport links, community facilities and environment that will allow them to flourish.
- **Growing our Capacity** – to deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources.

The council has set itself nine strategic goals, which will make the biggest impact in delivering these themes and objectives. These are:

- Reduce unemployment, and improve the employability of East Lothian's workforce.
- Reduce the attainment gap, and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people.
- Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society.
- Extend community engagement and decision making, and increase community and individual resilience.
- Deliver transformational change, and harness the opportunities that technology offers in the provision of services.

In addition, the Council Plan contains around 50 specific commitments and actions that will support the delivery of these objectives and strategic goals.

In this report, **Section 1** provides a general overview of the 'State of the Council' based on the findings and key messages of the Best Value audit carried out on behalf of the Accounts Commission by the council's external auditors, Audit Scotland.

Section 2 is the 2018/19 Annual Performance Report, which shows how the council is performing based on its key, strategic performance indicators.

Sections 3 – 6 outline the progress the council is making to deliver the Council Plan's strategic goals and commitments under the four themes – Growing our Economy, Growing our People, Growing our Communities and Growing our Capacity. The final section also provides a brief summary of how the council managed its finances in the 2018/19 financial year.

1. The 'State of the Council' 2019

This overview of the 'State of the Council' is based on the findings and key messages of the Best Value audit that was carried out in 2018 by the council's external auditors, Audit Scotland. The Best Value Audit, which was based on an extensive review of documentation on council policies, procedures and performance seeks to provide the Accounts Commission with assurance on how the council is meeting its statutory duty to deliver Best Value in accordance with the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.

This assessment of the 'State of the Council' is based on the key messages and findings which sought to answer the five key questions of [the Best Value Assurance Report](#):

- Does the council have clear direction?
- How well is the council performing?
- Is the council using its resources effectively?
- Is the council working well with its partners?
- Is the council demonstrating continuous improvement?

The council has clear strategic direction

The council has a clear and ambitious vision based on a good understanding of the challenges it faces as well as local needs and issues. The vision has driven the Council Plan and the adoption of the Plan's four themes and strategic goals. The vision and the Plan's themes, strategic goals and objectives are well understood throughout the council and act as a 'Golden Thread' and driving force behind the council strategic plans and service plans. Also, the vision is shared by the council's partners within the East Lothian Partnership and has helped to inform and shape the [East Lothian Plan 2017-27](#), the Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The council is self-aware of its strengths and weaknesses and of the challenges it faces. These are set out in some detail in the [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) but can be summarised as follows:

- continuing resource constraints, against a backdrop of increasing demand and rising public expectations about the quality of public services

- East Lothian has experienced the highest percentage rise in population compared to all Scottish councils. Between 1997 and 2017 East Lothian's population increased by 19.5% (the Scottish average was only 6.5%) and it is projected to continue to grow by about 1% a year for the next 20 years
- the implications of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union
- the increasing complexity of service delivery, such as the integration of health and social care, which is fundamentally changing the governance arrangements for significant areas of public service delivery.

Alongside the [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#), over the last two years the council has adopted strategic plans that set out how it will meet these challenges, including:

- a [5-year Capital Programme](#) that sets out the basis for future investment in infrastructure
- the revised [Economic Development Strategy](#) to drive sustainable economic growth
- the [Local Housing Strategy](#) that will deliver a substantial increase in new affordable housing over the next ten years
- the [Local Transport Strategy](#) that aims to create the transport infrastructure required to meet the needs of our growing population as sustainably as possible
- the delivery plan to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds and vulnerable 2 year olds
- the [Education Improvement Plan](#) that aims to drive up school exam results of all pupils
- the [Integration Joint Board's Strategic Plan](#) that plans the delivery of the vital services required to meet the ever growing demand for care services for elderly people and the most vulnerable in our society.

The council is performing well

[The Best Value Assurance Report](#) states that the council's performance compares favourably to other councils in most services and is improving. As is shown in below, the council's performance has improved in many service areas across the four themes both against its own targets and when benchmarked against other Scottish councils. However, the council recognises that there are some areas where performance has not improved, and further action is required to drive performance improvement across all services.

The Best Value audit found that the council's performance management is thorough, and elected members and officers make good use of reports to evaluate performance. The Best Value audit, as well as the Recognised for Excellence assessment carried out by Quality Scotland,

recommended that the council should monitor and report on a core set of strategic indicators that provide a more focussed approach to evaluating performance in achieving the Council Plan's priorities. In response to this recommendation the council has adopted a set of 50 Council Plan indicators (see Section 2 below) which form the basis of the Annual Performance Report and show clearly whether progress is being made in achieving the Council Plan goals and objectives.

The most recent [East Lothian Residents' Survey](#) carried out in June 2019 showed that a large majority of residents are happy with the services the council provides. Overall satisfaction with the council is high, and has remained at a similar level since the previous residents' survey that was carried out in 2017. From 2019, residents' surveys will be carried out every two years to monitor overall satisfaction with council services on a regular basis.

The council's arrangements provide an appropriate and effective framework for members to make and scrutinise decisions and performance. East Lothian Council has two committees that perform the 'scrutiny' function: the Audit and Governance Committee and the Policy and Performance Review Committee. A third scrutiny committee – the Police, Fire and Rescue and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee – focusses on scrutinising the performance of the Police and Fire & Rescue services in East Lothian.

Each Committee receives regular monitoring reports that highlight issues that might need further scrutiny. During 2018/19 the Audit & Governance Committee received around 20 internal audit reports that show the results of investigations conducted by the council's internal auditors, Risk Registers and reports from the council's external auditors.

Over the last year, the Policy & Performance Review Committee received regular reports on the performance of the council as a whole and of specific services including annual reports on Customer Feedback, Planning Performance and Roads Assets and reports on delayed discharge, parking charges, coastal parking charges, the Economic Development Strategy, major events and non-residential social care charges.

The council is using its resources effectively

[The Best Value Assurance Report](#) concluded that the council has a five-year Financial Strategy in place and its budget-setting process focuses on its priorities. It also highlighted that the council manages its finances effectively and has a good track record of delivering services within budget within the context of both reducing real terms Scottish Government revenue support and an increasing population. Whilst there were significant variations in spending against budget in different services, overall the council's spending in 2018/19 remained in line with its revenue budget.

Since December 2017, scrutiny of budget monitoring reports has not been limited to the Cabinet but extended to full council meetings, thus ensuring greater engagement and opportunity for scrutiny by all councillors. Quarterly financial reports to council flag up significant over and underspends on budgets, highlight areas of risk and any mitigation measures that have been put in place or are being considered to deal with these risks.

The council's external auditor's [2018/19 Annual Audit Report](#) stated that, "The council and its group financial position is sustainable in the foreseeable future although rising demand for services will continue to place a strain on the council's capacity to deliver services at the current levels." It went on to state that the council's five-year financial strategy "demonstrates how it will address future challenges." It concluded that "The council has made savings over the past few years. However, the size of the future funding gap and a reliance on non-recurring savings means that it will struggle to make the required savings in future years."

The council's 2018/19 capital budget was £8.8m under budget (19%) due to slippage principally arising from delays in major capital schools projects. To help support the growth agenda the council has prepared a Developers' Contribution Framework and is factoring the contributions into its longer term capital financial planning.

The council has a [Workforce Plan](#) with a detailed implementation plan to address 38 actions to deliver the workforce vision of the council being an employer of choice and ensuring that it has the right people with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours deployed appropriately to deliver the Council Plan.

The council is working well with its partners

The council has strong and positive links with its partners. The East Lothian Partnership is working to a shared vision and there are good relations between partners including NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the business and third sectors. The Health and Social Care Partnership and the Integration Joint Board are well established and there is good cooperation between the council and NHS Lothian.

The council has well-established methods for consulting with the public and a wide range of consultation routinely takes place. The council has been proactive in consulting and engaging with 'seldom-heard' groups using groups such as the Looker After Champions Board, Community Care Forums and the Youth Parliament.

The council engages effectively with communities – both geographic and communities of interest such as tenants and carers. It has continued to invest in empowering communities and this is beginning to having a positive impact. Six community led Area Partnerships are now well embedded and there are many examples of successful community-led initiatives in all six Areas. The council has put in place a structured approach to the new duties and responsibilities relating to Community Asset Transfer and Participation Requests as set out in the Community Empowerment Act. The council's positive approach to partnership working and community engagement was recognised by Quality Scotland, which awarded it a Good Practice award. The citation for the award stated: *"This organisation clearly has a culture of working in partnership that is deployed right across the organisation."*

The council can demonstrate continuous improvement

[The Best Value Assurance Report](#) concluded that the council's governance arrangements, leadership and corporate management have significantly improved since the last Best Value Audit of the council was carried out in 2007. The council's decision-making processes have also improved and are clear, open and transparent. The council's external auditors have concluded that "the council's governance arrangements are appropriate and effective and support good governance and accountability."

The council has a well-established [Improvement to Excellence](#) framework that drives continuous improvement across the council through self-evaluation at both council and service level and performance reporting and monitoring. Also the council responds positively to external scrutiny such as, inspections from national agencies such as the Care inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator and

the 2018 Best Value audit and has proactively engaged with and achieved external assessments such as Investor in People, Investor in Young People and Recognised for Excellence

The council's commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced by its adoption of a [Council Improvement Plan 2018-20](#) which is based on the recommendations made in the Best Value Assurance report and the Recognised for Excellence award assessment findings. By June 2019 all the actions in the Plan had either been completed or were on target for completion by March 2020.

The council has established a Transformation Programme to deliver a range of projects that aim to change the way it delivers services to address the financial and demographic challenges it faces and to meet the objectives of the council becoming a more enabling, entrepreneurial and digital authority.

Whilst the council continues on its improvement and transformation journey it has to continue to provide the essential high quality services that East Lothian's citizens and communities rely on. Over the last year the council has:

- educated just under 14,500 pupils in our improving secondary and primary schools
- provided almost 22,000 hours of care at home each week to vulnerable adults and older people and looked after just over 600 over 65 year olds in care homes
- looked after 234 vulnerable children in care homes, foster care and other care settings
- recycled over 53% of domestic waste from the total of over 50,000 tonnes of waste collected from 6.8m bins
- kept open 139 council buildings including 30 public toilets and 12 libraries
- maintained 276 parks, pitches, play areas and burial grounds, over 920km of roads, and almost 19,000 street lights.

The council's commitment to the investment required to fund the infrastructure required to meet the needs of the growing population is shown in the five-year capital programme adopted by the council in February 2018. This allows for record capital investment in schools, roads and other infrastructure funded in large part by 'developer contributions' linked to the new housing developments across East Lothian.

2. 2018/19 Annual Performance Report

The council monitors how well it delivers its services using a range of performance indicators. These indicators are reported to elected members on a quarterly or annual basis. Where relevant, these indicators have targets that help to provide context and assessment of how well the council is performing. Comparisons with other areas in Scotland are also available for many indicators through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Accurate, high quality, timely and comprehensive performance data is essential to the effectiveness of the [Improvement to Excellence](#) Framework. Performance data is generated for a range of purposes, which can be shown as a pyramid of indicators.



The council adopted a revised Continuous Improvement Framework ([Improvement to Excellence](#)) in March 2019; reflecting the recommendations made in the Vest Value Assessment Report and the Recognised for Excellence assessment. A key part of the new framework was the adoption of a suite of Top 50 Council Plan Indicators as the key indicators that monitor progress in achieving the council's strategic goals and key commitments. A sub-set of 10 of these indicators was identified to show at a glance how the council is performing in achieving the Council Plan.

[Analysis of the Top 50 indicators](#) shows that of the 45 indicators for which we have up-to-date 2018/19 data¹:

¹ Five indicators, including three that are taken from a national report on education performance, will not have final validated data until November

- thirty (67%) show positive trends from the 2017/18 or 2016/17 baseline and/ or are already at their target {green}
- three (7%) have not improved from their baseline and not made progress towards meeting their target {amber}
- twelve (27%) have declined {red}.

Table 1 (page 15) provides a breakdown of the performance of indicators in each of the four Council Plan themes.

As is shown in Table 2 (page 16) six of the nine 'Top 10 indicators' for which there is up-to-date data have improved and / or on target, one is amber, and two are red.

Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this Annual Report provide further detail and explanation of the indicators along with further details of how the council is striving to achieve the strategic goals and key commitments under each theme.

Table 1: Top 50 Council Plan Indicators: comparison of 2018/19 performance with 2017/18 or 2016/17 baseline; overall and by theme

Number and proportion of indicators where:		
Performance has improved or is at or above target	Performance has remained unchanged / may not reach target	Performance has declined
Overall		
30	3	12
67%	7%	27%
Growing our Economy		
9	0	2
82%	0	18%
Growing our People		
7	1	6
50%	7%	43%
Growing our Communities		
7	2	2
64%	18%	18%
Growing our Capacity		
7	0	2
78%	0	22%

Table 2: Top 10 Council Plan Indicators, September 2019

	Indicator	Baseline		2018/19	Target 2022
		2016/17	2017/18		
T.1	Job density – proportion of people of working age (16-64) in employment in East Lothian (incl self-employed)	0.55 (2016)	N/A	0.56	0.60
T.2	Business base – number of businesses	3,135 (2016)	N/A	3,180 (2018)	3,300
T.3	% of school leavers attaining 3 or more SCQF at Level six	50.4%	50.4% (S. Av: 50.3%)	Available Nov 2019	S. Average
T.4	The % of young people receiving After Care (for whom a destination is known) who are in a positive destination	N/A	49%	37%	53% (2020)
T.5	% of 65+ with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	63.5%	63.9%	60.9%	To be determined
T.6	% of citizens who 'Strongly Agree' / 'Tend to Agree' My Council is good at listening to people's views before it makes decisions (excluding Don't Knows)	47% (Feb 2017)	N/A	60% (June 2019)	50% (2021)
T.7	% of citizens who say their neighbourhood is a 'Very Good' / 'Good' place to live	98%	N/A	98%	Maintain levels
T.8	Number of affordable house completions and Open Market Acquisitions (OMAs)	628 (2012-2017)	294 (2017/18)	137 25 OMAs	945 (2018-2023)
T.9	Proportion of non-Direct Debit payments, including school payments, undertaken online (% as at end 31 st March)	27.2%	34.73%	51.53%	To be determined
T.10	% of citizens who 'Strongly Agree and 'Tend to Agree' that My Council does the best it can with the money available (excluding Don't Knows)	84% (Feb 2017)	N/A	84% (June 2019)	Maintain level

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework² (LGBF) was developed by the Improvement Service, on behalf of SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). Its core purposes are to help councils to gain greater insight into their performance in order to drive improvement, deliver better outcomes and to strengthen public accountability. This is done through the process of benchmarking and allows councils that are similar to compare performance, and to learn and understand why variances occur.

The latest LGBF data (National Overview Report 2017/18) was released by the Improvement Services on 6th February 2019 with detailed data available on the [MyLocalCouncil](#) online tool. It provides data for East Lothian from 2010/11 to 2017/18, and allows members of the public to compare performance between all 32 Scottish Local Authorities as well as performance within family groups.

The overall assessment of the Improvement Service was that councils have done a very good job in delivering essential services in light of the increasing challenges, such as budget pressures and increased demand for services. However, the report highlights that, whilst up until now, local government has been coping with these pressures it is now starting to show real signs of stress.

The report on [East Lothian Council's LGBF 2017/18](#) indicators showed that of the 72 indicators, 43 relate to the performance of services in delivering outputs and outcomes; 20 relate to the cost of delivering services, and the remaining 9 are indicators of satisfaction with services. As is shown in Table 3 below, overall between 2016/17 and 2017/18 (using a tolerance of + or – 4%), whilst 19 indicators (26%) improved; 29 (40%) remained roughly the same; and 24 (33%) declined. Four of the 20 cost indicators declined (increased costs) whilst 11 improved (lowered costs). Fourteen (from a total of 43) performance indicators declined, eight improved, and 21 showed less than 4% change. Six satisfaction indicators declined by more than 4%.

² The Local Government Benchmarking Framework covers seven service areas: children's services; corporate services; adult social care; culture and leisure; environmental; housing and economic development. The data is gathered from a number of sources including the Local Finance Return and the Scottish Household Survey.

Table 3: Number of indicators with improved / declined values (>4%) by Type

<i>Indicator type</i>	<i>Improved Status</i>	<i>No Change Status</i>	<i>Declined</i>
<i>Cost</i>	11	5	4
<i>Performance</i>	8	21	14
<i>Satisfaction</i>		3	6
Grand Total	19	29	24

Data for LGBF satisfaction rates are drawn from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). It should be noted that there has been a distinct national trend over the last few years in declining satisfaction levels across Scotland, as measured by the SHS, in particular in relation to satisfaction with schools, sports, libraries and museums. The results of the council's own 2019 Residents' Survey, which is based on a larger sample of East Lothian residents than the SHS, shows higher levels of satisfaction levels across most services. For example, the latest SHS (2018) suggests that 71% of East Lothian residents are satisfied with local schools and only 45% are satisfied with libraries, whereas the 2019 [East Lothian Residents' Survey](#) suggests that 92% are satisfied with schools and 93% are satisfied with libraries.

Comparison of the East Lothian LGBF indicators against the Scottish average shows that 39 (54%) of the indicators are performing better than the Scottish average. However, East Lothian Council's quartile performance when ranking indicators from 1 (highest performance) to 32 (lowest performance) reduced slightly during 2017/18 (see Table 4 below). Overall, 52% of the council's indicators in 2017/18 were in quartile 1 or 2 compared to 55% in 2016/17, and there was a commensurate increase in indicators in the 3rd and 4th quartile ranking.

Table 4: Count of LGBF indicators by quartile and year

Quartile	2016/17	%	2017/18	%
Quartile 1	17	23 %	15	21 %
Quartile 2	24	32 %	22	31 %
Quartile 3	24	32 %	22	31 %
Quartile 4	10	13 %	13	18 %

The following are some of the LGBF indicators that showed marked improvement in 2017/18.

- % of pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 improved from 60% to 64% which is above the Scottish average of 62%.
- The indicators for the costs of Trading Standards and Environmental Health services (per 1,000 population) showed a reduction in costs and were substantially lower than the Scottish average for these services.
- The Street Cleanliness Score improved for the second year running from 91.1% to 94.5%, and is now above the Scottish average and the ranking amongst 32 councils improved from 27th to 10th. It should also be noted that East Lothian Council continues to have the highest street cleaning satisfaction rate at 82.7% compared to the Scottish average of 69.7%.
- The average time (days) taken to complete non-emergency repairs improved from 12.8 days to 7.2 days and is now just below the Scottish average of 7.5 days.
- Although East Lothian's town vacancy rate increased from 5.6 to 6.1, this is well below the Scottish average of 11.5 and is the second lowest figure across all Scottish local authorities.

The following are some of the indicators that worsened in 2017/18.

- % of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD) declined from 35% to 31% (having fallen from 42% to 35% the previous year). The ranking has fallen from 6th in 2015/16 to 25th in 2017/18. It should be noted that this indicator is based on a very small cohort of pupils (less than 5%) so the data is susceptible to significant fluctuation over time.

- The average Total Tariff score for pupils in SIMD Quintile 5 (least deprived 20%) showed a decline from 1279 to 1176, which is below the Scottish average of 1221. This is the first decline in this indicator since 2011/12 and resulted in a fall in ranking from 6th to 16th. The average total tariff scores for pupils in SIMD Quintiles 2, 3 and 4 all increased, although there was a small fall in the average score for pupils in Quintile 1. All schools have put in place improvement plans to improve attainment and reduce the attainment gap.
- Support Services as a % of total gross expenditure increased from 5.1% in 2016/17 to 5.8%, against a Scottish average of 4.5%. The council now ranks 28th for this indicator. The main reason for the movement in this indicator is that since the creation of the Unified Business Support service the costs of these staff has moved from services to central support services.
- Sickness Absence days per employee (non-teacher) increased from 10.8 to 12.1 and our rank position declined from 13th to 24th. Following the implementation of a new Managing Attendance policy there may have been an increase in the reporting of absence and the incidence of absence due to mental health issues and flu increased in 2017/18. The council has increased the focus on health promotion, in particular mental ill health and there was a reduction in staff absence in 2018/19.

Further analysis based on comparing East Lothian Council's performance with that of other local authorities will be carried after publication of the 2018/19 LGBF report in February 2020 to identify areas which may require focussed improvement activity.

3. Growing our Economy – to increase sustainable economic growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian

East Lothian's [Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022](#)³ identified a series of strengths and weaknesses for economic development in East Lothian. Strengths include a diverse business base with some strong factors such as food & drink, tourism, East Lothian's proximity to Edinburgh and its quality of life. Weaknesses consist of a lack of large employers, pockets of socio-economic deprivation, limited availability of land for economic development and poor public transport infrastructure. The Strategy set out two primary goals to address the key issue of the East Lothian economy having proportionally fewer business and jobs than elsewhere in Scotland:

- Increase the number of business in East Lothian with growth potential and create an additional 350 businesses in East Lothian by 2022
- Increase the proportion of East Lothian residents working in and contributing to East Lothian's economy, creating an additional 7,500 jobs in East Lothian by 2022.

A review of the economic development strategy was carried out in 2017/18 and a refreshed strategy with new priorities was presented to, and approved by, the council and the East Lothian Partnership in November 2018. The refreshed Strategy reflects major strategic opportunities such as those offered by the council's purchase of the former Cockenzie Power Station site in April 2018, the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, and the allocation of substantial economic land within the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018.

As can be seen below, over the last year, nine of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators relating to the Growing our Economy theme and strategic goals have improved and only two have declined.

³ Delivering the Economic Development Strategy is the responsibility of the East Lothian Partnership's Connected Economy Group, which includes the Council, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Edinburgh College and representatives of the business sector.

Table 5: Economic Growth Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome	Indicator		Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Reduce Unemployment (SG1)	1. (T.1)	Job density – proportion of people of working age (16-64) in employment in East Lothian (including self-employed)	0.55 (2016)	N/A	0.56	0.60
	2.	Claimants in receipt of out of work benefits (% of pop aged 16-64)	N/A	2.9% (Mar 2018) (S.av: 2.5%)	2.7% (June 2019) S. av: 3.1%	0.5% below S. average
	3.	Number of businesses accessing (assisted by) support services; including Business Gateway, East Lothian Works, SDI, and SDP	237	350	552	400
Improve the employability of East Lothian's Workforce (SG2)	4.	Number of people participating in EL Works operated or funded employability programmes	520	384	463	400
	5.	% of people that have participated in Council operated/ funded employability programmes who have progressed into employment	21.3% (111 from 520)	19% (67 from 384)	22.7% (105 from 463)	19%
Support the growth of East Lothian's economy	6. (T.2)	Business base – number of businesses	3,135 (2016)	N/A	3,180 (2018)	3,300
	7.	Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 pop	21.7 (236)	19.55 (210)	19.85 (210)	210
	8.	% of procurement spent on local small/ medium enterprises	23.1%	21%	19%	22%
	9.	Town Centre vacancy rate	5.6%	6.1%	8.4%	5%
Maximise use of land identified for business growth	10.	Land supply immediately available for business growth (sqmt)	55,000	55,000	103,000	155,000 as identified in LDP
Support the faster roll out of Superfast Broadband	11.	% of East Lothian properties with Superfast Broadband (30Mbps - National target)	85%	88%	91%	100%

The two indicators that declined are the ‘% of procurement spent on local small/ medium enterprises’, and the ‘town centre vacancy rate’.

The % of procurement spent on local small/ medium enterprises fell from 21% in 2017/18 to 19% in 2018/19. The overall spend on local businesses remained the same as in the previous year. However the total spend, which included a significant increase in capital expenditure, partly due to the new Wallyford Primary school, increased, which meant that the proportion of spend on local businesses fell. Benchmarking with other similar councils suggests that our performance is in line with these authorities (Midlothian – 18%; Clackmannanshire – 15.5%; East Renfrewshire – 9%). Further work is being undertaken to review the data including identifying companies which may have a base in East Lothian but are headquartered elsewhere so do not show up as ‘local’ businesses. The council is working with Scotland Excel on a procurement improvement strategy.

The town centre vacancy rate (proportion of vacant shops) increased from 6.1% to 8.4%; although this is still below the Scottish average. The increase reflects the difficulties faced by ‘high street’ shops and recent closures of some businesses, which have created vacancies that have not yet been filled.

Progress continues to be made against the two primary goals set for the Economic Development Strategy (see page 21). The Business Count data shows that from 2010 to 2018 the number of businesses in East Lothian has increased from 2,515 to 3,180, and is just 120 short of the 2022 target. The job density figure (proportion of people of working age (16-64) in employment in East Lothian, including self-employed) increased from 0.55 in 2016 to 0.56 in 2018 and is approaching the 2022 target of 0.60.

The indicators show that progress has been made in meeting the Council Plan’s two economic development strategic goals: reduce unemployment, and improve the employability of East Lothian’s workforce.

Over the last year the council has continued to work with its partners in the Connected Economy Group and local employers to implement the Developing East Lothian’s Young Workforce Strategy and Action Plan; maximising opportunities for young people through support for craft and modern apprenticeships, and school work experience within the council and in local businesses; and, through the continued use of Community Benefit clauses in council contracts.

East Lothian Works was successful in supporting substantial numbers of unemployed people to participate in employability programmes and in supporting around 1,000 school pupils gain the benefit of work experience placements. In addition, the council accessed external funding to support local businesses to take on young people with multiple barriers to employment and used existing budgets to create Modern

Apprenticeship opportunities within the council. The number of people participating in council operated or funded employability programmes increased from 384 in 2017/18 to 463 in 2018/19, and 105 of these (22.7%) have progressed into employment.

An important measure of the council's support for growing the local economy is the number of jobs created by start ups supported by Business Gateway. In 2018/19, 229 jobs were created by start-up businesses supported through Business Gateway, which was just under the target of 230.

The tourism sector remains one of the county's most important and buoyant sectors. Over the last year the council has supported several important events such as the Senior Open Golf Championship which contributed to visitors numbers staying stable between 2017/18 and 2018/19. The council has continued to work with Visit Scotland and local partners to revise and update the Tourism Action Plan.

Two key commitments in the Council Plan are to *'Maximise the opportunities presented by the City Region Deal, particularly in relation to Innovation and Inclusion, and supporting new jobs and growth at the QMU Innovation Park'* and to *'Maximise the use of land identified for business growth in the Local Development Plan'*. Significant progress has been made on both these commitments over the last year.

Plans for the new settlement at Blindwells and an Innovation Park adjacent to Queen Margaret University (QMU) at Musselburgh are projects supported by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Taken together with the re-development of the former Cockenzie Power Station site, these projects are East Lothian's most significant long-term inclusive growth opportunities.

The new town is a unique opportunity for East Lothian to provide a new sub-regional town centre, new strategic and local employment opportunities and a new community hub. An initial phase of development is underway, comprising 1,600 homes and 10 hectares of employment land.

The council and QMU are working in partnership, to bring forward the development of the Innovation Hub and the wider Edinburgh Innovation Park, which is a strategic project within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The Innovation Hub will build on existing expertise already in the University including Dietetics, Nutrition and Biological Sciences. It will support existing and new businesses to access a global market for healthy and functional food. The Innovation Hub will be the catalyst for subsequent phases of the wider Edinburgh Innovation Park, which will provide resources for national and global players who want to access the expertise available and develop new opportunities to drive company growth.

The council-owned former Cockenzie Power Station Site is defined in National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) as a National Development for thermal generation and carbon capture and storage. However, consideration is being given to how relaxation of this status could provide for a wider range of land uses that will generate more job opportunities and more sympathetic uses of this iconic site perhaps linked to regional collaboration through the Edinburgh and South East City Region Deal (e.g. Skills and Construction Innovation). The intention is to promote this ambition as a new national development within the Scottish Ministers' National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) as '*An area of Opportunity and Co-ordinated Action*'. The emerging Vision and Unique Selling Point for this sub-regional area is that it become an '*influential, innovative, healthy and low and zero carbon place*'.

4. Growing our People – to give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable adults and older people

Giving our children the best start in life

Improving education through raising the attainment levels (exam qualifications and achievements) of children and young people and reducing the (poverty related) attainment gap are two of the council's strategic goals.

The Top 50 Council Plan indicators include eight education related indicators. The three indicators of exam results have not yet been updated for 2018/19 as the validated data used to for these indicators is not published until November 2019. Another indicator relating to weight of primary school children is also not yet available.

Of the four education related indicators for which up-to-date data is available, two are shown as improving and two are shown as worsening.

- The school exclusion rates per 1,000 pupils has shown a significant improvement from 34.14% in 2017/18 to 16.8% in 2018/19.
- The % of children benefitting from physical education lessons/ activity in school (a measure of how the council is supporting the important objective of reducing child obesity) has remained at the 100% target. Data for the measure of child obesity (% of children in Primary 1 who are overweight or obese) is not yet available.
- The % participation rate for 16-19yr olds, which is a measure of positive destinations for school leavers fell slightly from 94.7% to 94%, although it is still above the Scottish average and only 1% below the target of 95%.
- The % of eligible 3 and 4 year olds accessing 600 hours of early learning and childcare, fell by 1%, from 99% to 98%.

Table 6: Education Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Reduce the attainment gap (SG3)	12	% of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5	35%	31%	Available Nov 2019	S. Average (42%)
Raise the attainment of our children and young people (SG4)	13.	% of school leavers attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 5 or above	63.2%	61.3%	Available Nov 2019	S. Average (67.1%)
	14. (T.3)	% of school leavers attaining 3 or more SCQF at Level six	50.4%	50.4%	Available Nov 2019	S. Average (50.3%)
	15.	School exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils – Secondary and Primary	35.9	34.14	16.8%	S. Average (26.8)
Meet stretching positive destination targets	16.	% participation rate for 16-19yr olds	93.1%	94.7%	94%	95%
Enable provision of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3 & 4 yr olds	23.	% of eligible 3 & 4 yr olds accessing 600 hours of early learning and childcare (1140 hours from 2020)	N/A	99%	98%	99%
Take concerted action to tackle obesity in children	24.	% of children in Primary 1 who are overweight or obese using epidemiological ('at risk') and clinical ('critical') measurements	At risk: 22% Critical: 15.6%	N/A	Available Nov 2019	At risk: 18% Critical: 13%
	25.	% of primary school pupils benefitting from at least 2 hours per week of physical education (PE) and % of secondary school pupils (S1 to S4) benefitting from two periods of PE per week	100%	100%	100%	100%

The 2019 exam results that were announced in August 2019 showed some improvement in overall attainment. Overall, a total of 11,051 awards were certificated for 2,354 candidates across East Lothian's schools, an increase on last year from 10,682 and 2,302. The number of young people in East Lothian achieving A-C grades in National 5 qualifications increased by 3% to 78% and is now in line with the national average of just over 78%. The pass rate in English was 90%, the highest level in 5 years and a 6.8% increase on the 2018 figure (and 4% above the national average). However, pass rates for Maths, which was also an area of focus remained steady from last year at 62%.

Raising educational attainment and achievement for all and reducing the attainment gap at all stages are the key priorities for the Education Service. Our vision and values within East Lothian Council align with the Key Priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (*Scottish Government, January 2016*) and Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education (*Scottish Government, June 2016*). The [Education Service Local Improvement Plan 2018/19](#) set out three key areas for improvement under Attainment and Achievement to:

- Develop a self-improving system to drive forward improvement and raise attainment
- Improve learning, teaching and assessment
- Close the poverty related attainment gap in the broad general education.

Over the last year, priorities for improvements in education have included:

- Continuing to improve the attainment of Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Levels 5 and 6
- Improving the attainment of school leavers in breadth and depth measures
- Continuing to improve the attainment outcomes for young people in Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintile 1 (the bottom 20% of areas in relation to socio economic determinants), care experienced and with additional needs at higher levels of qualification (SCQF Levels 5 and 6).

The education service has also continued to work with the Scottish Government to enable provision of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year old children, by continuing to support the provision of suitable childcare and early years facilities such as the Red School in Prestonpans, and continuing to support initiatives such as Support from the Start, and the implementation of the new play strategy, within the context of the council's Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.

The growth in East Lothian’s population has necessitated significant capital investment in school buildings – building new schools and extensions to existing secondary and primary schools. The council’s capital programme includes commitments totalling around £100m, most of which is being funded through ‘Developer Contributions’ which pay for the additional schools required to accommodate the increase in school age population across the county. 2018 saw the opening of a new Primary School in Wallyford and commencement of building of a new primary school in Letham Mains, Haddington and several school extensions.

Vulnerable Children

Two of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators relate to our most vulnerable children – Looked After Children. One of these indicators, ‘the % of Looked After Children who feel settled where they live’, showed significant improvement from 72% to 92%. However, the other indicator, ‘the % of young people receiving After Care, for whom a destination is known, who are in a positive destination (i.e. Employment, Training or Education)’, fell from 49% to 37% (27 out of 73 in 2018/19, compared to 34 out of 69 in 2017/18).

Table 7: Vulnerable Children Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society – vulnerable children (SG5)	17. (T.4)	The % of young people receiving After Care, for whom a destination is known, who are in a positive destination (i.e. Employment, Training or Education)	N/A	49% (34 out of 69)	37% (27 out of 73)	53% (2020)
	18.	% of Looked After Children who feel settled where they live (8-17yr olds)	N/A	72%	92%	85% (2020)

2018/19 was a year of significant change and challenge for Children’s Services. This included a change to senior leadership; the departure of two very experienced managers through retirement, and the decision to re-structure the service and align it formally within an integrated education and children’s service. Within this context, the service faced a continued increase in referrals and in demand to support challenged and challenging young people that it was unable to meet from within its own resources.

Services for children and young people in East Lothian are facing increasing demands. The number of annual referrals to Children’s Services has risen from 1,768 in 2004 to 3,210 by March 2019 (up 9.4% from 2018). The introduction of Universal Credit, a growing population and greater public and multi-agency awareness about child safety and wellbeing have contributed to the increasing workload. Within this context, the rate of Looked After Children continues to be well below the Scottish average and provides evidence of the positive and effective engagement with families.

Table 8 shows the number and status of the 234 children who were ‘Looked After’ by the council as of 31st March 2019. This was a decrease of 7 on the total this time last year. Whilst this might appear a positive change, the placement makeup changed considerably mainly in relation to young people in residential care and the use of external residential placements. Although overall, fewer children and young people required to be accommodated in 2018/19 than the previous year, nineteen young people had needs of such significance and challenge that could not be met within East Lothian residential or fostering resources.

Table 8: Looked After Children as at 31 March 2019

	Number	Annual Change	Rate per 1,000*	Scotland Rate per 1,000*
Home Supervision	64	-2	3.0	3.7
Foster Care	93	-9	4.4	5.3
Formal Kin Care	39	5	1.8	4.0
Residential Care (including secure accommodation)	38	13	1.8	1.5
Total	234	7	11.0	14.5

Growing our People – Reducing Poverty

The East Lothian Poverty Commission reported its findings in 2017 to East Lothian Council and the East Lothian Community Planning Partnership. Their report [‘Challenging perceptions. Overcoming Poverty’](#) outlined a series of recommendations across nine key areas, which urged the council and its partners to do more to tackle poverty and empower local communities to tackle poverty in their communities. The council and the East Lothian Partnership fully endorsed the findings and recommendations of the Commission and the Commission’s work continues to impact on the work of all partners.

The [East Lothian Plan 2017-27](#) that sets out the strategic actions and direction of work we want to prioritise over the next few years, has been influenced by the Poverty Commission’s work. The Partnership’s focus is on:

- Reducing inequalities across our area
- Tackling poverty
- Working to prevent problems - and acting quickly when problems start

The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) reflects these themes also and sets a clear commitment to reducing poverty and inequality. The overarching objective of *‘reducing inequalities within and across our communities’* that was adopted in 2014 remains the overarching objective of the Council Plan. The Plan’s nine strategic goals, including reducing unemployment, reducing the (poverty derived) attainment gap and improving the life of the most vulnerable people in our society, reflect the priority of reducing inequalities.

The council and East Lothian Partnership have adopted a detailed action plan based on the recommendations of the Poverty Commission and have also agreed a [Child Poverty Action Plan](#) that sets out the actions that council services and the council’s partners, principally NHS Lothian, will take to tackle poverty and break the cycle of poverty in Easy Lothian.

Two of the Council Plan Top 50 indicators are high-level proxies for measuring poverty in East Lothian. They are based on two of the Scottish Government Child Poverty indicators, which were determined and set statutory targets in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. As is shown below, both these indicators show very positive trends and suggest that East Lothian is already, lower or around, the national targets set for 2023. However, it should be noted that the local breakdown of some of the data shows that levels of poverty vary significantly across the county and also within wards, with persistent pockets of high levels of poverty in some areas, sitting next to areas of relative affluence.

The data is based on national data sources and surveys, which may underestimate poverty in East Lothian, especially at a local/ ward level. Child poverty can often be hidden as parents strive to do the best they can for their children and also as national data sources and surveys underestimate the impact of factors such as in-work poverty, fuel costs, transport costs and lack of access to vital services, especially in the more rural parts of the county. Further work is being carried out to better understand the national data on poverty and provide reliable local data.

Table 9: Poverty Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Reduce Inequality/ Poverty	28.	% of children in families with limited resources 'living in a household whose income is less than 70% of median net household income and experiences material deprivation' (National targets: 8% by 2023; and, 5% by 2030)	N/A	8% (2014-16)	5% (2014-17)	6.5% (2023)
	29.	% of children living in households with less than 60% of median net household income after housing costs (National targets: less than 18% by 2023; and, less than 10% by 2030)	N/A	18.9% (Sept 2017)	17% (March 2018)	16% (2023)

Protecting Vulnerable Adults and Older People

Six of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators relate specifically to the strategic goals of improving the life chances of vulnerable adults and older people.

Two of these indicators are shown as being green. These are 'the % of under 65 year olds receiving care under Self Directed Support options 1, 2 and 3', which increased from 65% to 68.6%; and, 'the number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged', which fell from over 10,500 to under 8,000.'

The amber indicator is the number of 'emergency unplanned hospital admissions' for which the latest data (6,640 in Q1-Q3 2018/19) suggests that the full year figure may be lower than the 2017/18 figure but will be higher than the full year target of 7,268.

Two of the three indicators that have declined relate to 'the proportion of adult and older people care clients with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home' – proxies for the balance of care moving from residential care home settings to people living longer at home. Both these indicators showed a decline in the last year of around 3%. The other indicator that declined is the '% of over 65 year olds receiving care under Self Directed Support Options 1, 2 and 3', which fell from 21% to 18.5%.

Services for adults and older people are provided by the Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP), which brings together services previously run by the council or NHS Lothian. The Partnership is governed by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) with members appointed by the council and NHS Lothian along with representatives of the trade unions, carers, service-user, third and independent sector.

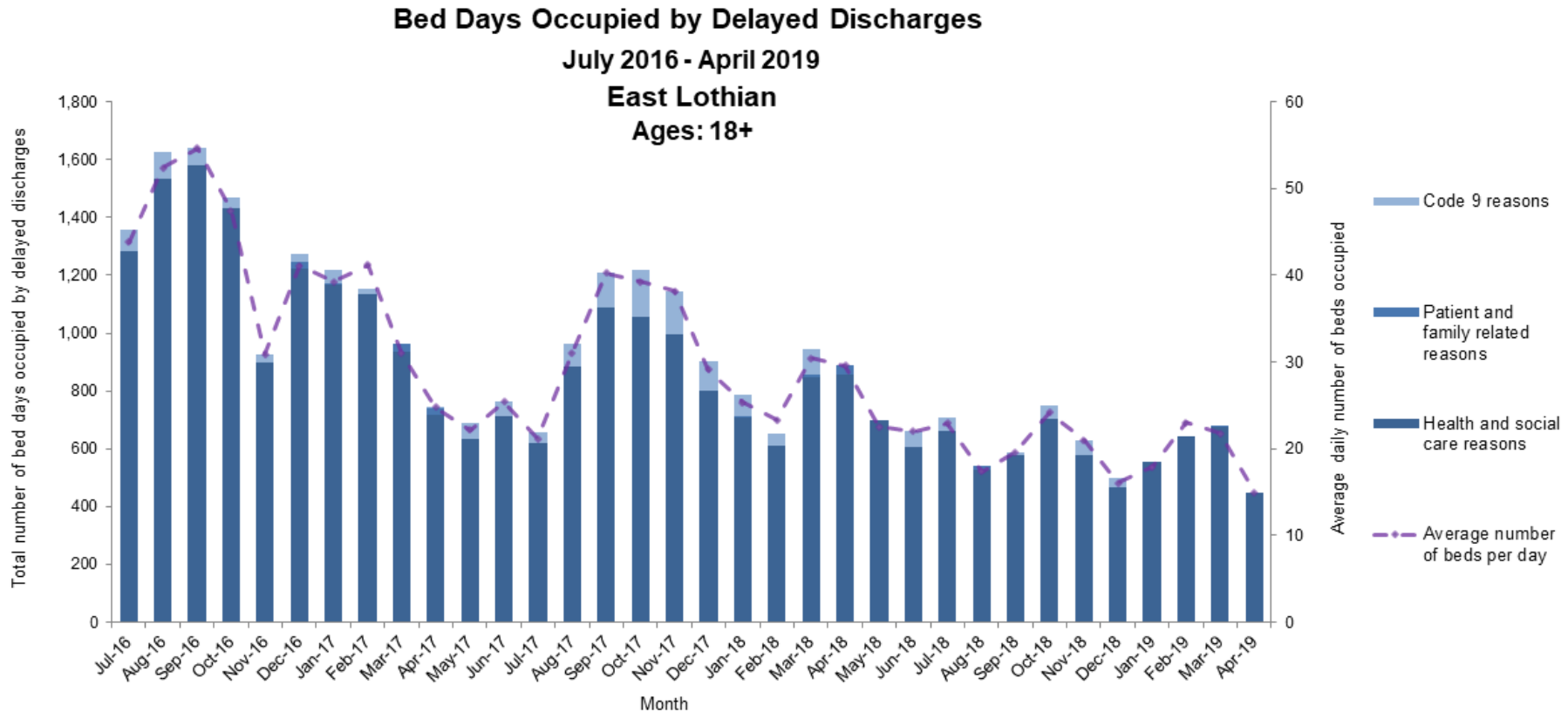
The East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) published its 2018/19 Annual Performance Report in September 2019. This highlights the H&SCP progress in meeting its strategic objectives and the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.

Table 10: Vulnerable Adults and Older People Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target
<i>Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society – vulnerable adults (SG5)</i>	19.	% of under 65 with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	N/A	78%	74.64%	Target to be agreed by IJB
	20.	% of all under 65 non-residential service users receiving care under SDS Options 1, 2 and 3	N/A	65%	68.6%	Target to be agreed by IJB
<i>Improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in our society – older people (SG5)</i>	21. (T.5)	% of 65+ with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	63.5%	63.9%	60.9%	Target to be agreed by IJB
	22.	% of all 65+ non-residential service users receiving care under SDS Options 1, 2 and 3	N/A	21%	18.5%	Target to be agreed by IJB
Continue to develop services that aim to reduce hospital admissions and delayed discharge of older people	26.	Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged (18+) The published information by ISD for 2018/19 is provisional as a result of information not being fully verified. As the information is verified, this information will be updated in due course	14,762	10,688 (Target: 9,677)	7,839	7,381 (Proposed 2019/20)
	27.	Emergency/ Unplanned hospital admissions (18+)	7,650	8,242 (Target: 7,268)	6,640 (Q1-Q3 2018-19) Data for Q4 still not complete	7,268 (Proposed 2019/20)

Living independently at home or in your community

Progress has been made in reducing unscheduled care and providing care closer to home which has had a positive impact in reducing hospital bed (days) occupied by delayed discharge, as shown in the graph below.



Initiatives that have helped to improve this performance and contributed to the objective of assisting people to live independently at home or in the community included; the Discharge 2Assess team (D2A); the Short Term Assessment and Rehabilitation Team (START); Technology Enabled Care (TEC); and, the Scale-Up BP Project.

Maintaining or improving the quality of life

Self-Directed Support (SDS) is Scotland's mainstream approach to social care. SDS puts the person at the centre of the support planning process. It enables people, carers and families to make informed choices about what their social care support is and how it is delivered. SDS aims to ensure that people who are eligible for support are given the choice and control over how their individual budget is arranged and delivered to meet their agreed health and social care outcomes. In East Lothian, we are making good progress in encouraging people to explore all SDS options.

In January 2019, the H&SCP introduced the SDS pre-payment card, which is a more efficient way of providing service users with their SDS payment. The payment card will mean that SDS recipients will no longer have to make quarterly submissions, and will be able to check their balance online at any time. There will no longer be any need for people to open special bank accounts for Direct Payments, so it will be much quicker to set Direct Payments up. The pre-payment card will be an added incentive for people thinking about or currently using SDS, as it will make finances much easier for service-users to control.

East Lothian H&SCP was one of six Scottish councils to take part in a Care Inspection Thematic Review of the Implementation of SDS in Scotland. The Care Inspectorate visited East Lothian during September 2018 and worked with service-users, carers and staff to establish how well SDS is being implemented in the county. They had some very positive insights to share. They thought that the way that H&SCP supported people to experience positive personal outcomes through the implementation of SDS was good in East Lothian.

Extensive community consultation has taken place throughout 2018 on proposals for the future of services provided at the Belhaven and Edington Community Hospitals and the Abbey and Eskgreen Care Homes. In December 2018, the East Lothian IJB approved the re-provisioning of Belhaven and Edington Community Hospitals and the Abbey and Eskgreen Care Homes through the development of extra care housing or equivalent alternatives and charged the H&SCP with taking this work forward. Early in 2019, HUB South East agreed to work with the H&SCP on developing a business case and work is about to begin with each of the three communities on provision that is tailored to local need.

5. Growing our Communities – to give people a real say in decisions that matter most and provide communities with the housing, transport links, community services and environment that will allow them to flourish

This section of this report and the Growing our Communities part of the Council Plan, cover a wide range of council services and areas of activity including community engagement, community resilience, housing, transport, the environment and Climate Change.

Seven of the 12 indicators relating to the Growing our Communities theme have improved, whilst two have remained the same and two have declined. The data for the remaining indicator, which measures the council’s carbon emissions, come from a national report that will not be published until after this report has been finalised.

Extending community engagement and participation

Extending community engagement and decision making is one of the Council Plan’s strategic goals. The indicator that provides a proxy measure for this goal is ‘the % of citizens who ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Tend to Agree’ that ‘My council is good at listening to people’s views before it makes decisions’. The [2019 East Lothian Residents’ Survey](#) showed a significant increase in citizens who agreed with this statement from 47% in 2017 to 60% in 2019 (excluding those who responded ‘Don’t Know’).

Table 11: Community Engagement Top 50 Council Plan Indicator

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Extend community engagement and decision making (SG6)	30. (T.6)	% of citizens who ‘Strongly Agree’ / ‘Tend to Agree’ My Council is good at listening to people’s views before it makes decisions (excluding Don’t Knows)	47% (Feb 2017)	N/A	60% (June 2019)	50% (2021)

The council is committed to ensuring that services are built around people and communities and has developed a range of ways in which to engage effectively with East Lothian's people and communities. The council recognises the importance of people having a voice and that voice being heard. It has produced a [Guide to Community Participation Opportunities](#) that sets out the many ways in which communities and individuals can engage with the council; including, participating in Community Councils, Area Partnerships, Tenants and Residents Associations, and the Citizen's Panel, involvement in users and stakeholder groups, and responding via the [Consultation Hub](#) to the many consultation exercises held by the council and its partners.

The [2019 East Lothian Residents' Survey](#) carried out for the council and the East Lothian Partnership is one of the principle ways in which the views and experience of our citizens is measured on a regular basis. The survey which seeks the views of a representative sample of around 1,600 citizens is to be carried out every two years. The results of the 2019 survey form the basis of data used for some of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators analysed in this report.

[A report](#) summarising the results of the survey, which includes questions on Neighbourhood and Quality of Life, Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing, Perceptions of the Council / Public Services; and Local Priorities, was presented to the August 2018 council meeting and the [full results](#) were lodged in the council's Members' Library.

The council has a Citizens' Panel of around 700 active members, who are invited to complete at least two questionnaires a year. Topics covered in Panel questionnaires have involved transport, community safety, health and wellbeing, recycling and satisfaction with council services. Panel members have also been invited to get involved in other consultation and engagement activities; for example, Panel members took part in focus groups that looked at the public's appetite for change in how the council delivers service.

The [Consultation Hub](#) featured a wide range of consultation and engagement exercises throughout the year. The results of some of these consultation exercises are summarised the [You Said...We Did](#) section of the hub.

East Lothian's six Area Partnerships have been a ground breaking and successful innovation in devolving decision-making and budget to local communities. The Area Partnerships, which have all agreed Area Plans setting out their local priorities and how they propose to reduce inequalities in their area, have responsibility for deciding how a total of just under £2m of council funding and resources is spent in their area to support the implementation of their plans.

The list below, from Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership, illustrates the range and breadth of activities, projects and initiatives supported by the Area Partnerships.

- Young people's counselling service
- Haddington Skate Park
- Footpath from Gifford to Sandyford Burn
- Garvald and Haddington Youth Shelters
- Gifford Lunch Club
- Improvements to town lighting
- Athelstaneford Hall refurbishment
- Improved disabled access to local parks and gardens.

The council has continued to provide support to Community Councils and other community bodies through the Partnership Fund.

In June 2018 the council published its first [annual report on Participation Requests and Asset Transfer Requests](#) under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This shows that in the first full year of the duties relating to participation requests and asset transfers the council had not received any formal participation requests. Two asset transfer requests were received, one relating to a piece of land at Lime Grove, North Berwick and the other relating to a building in Dunbar High Street. Both these requests were considered in 2019 and were rejected. The Lime Grove request has been appealed by the applicants.

During 2018, the council took a proactive approach to encouraging asset transfer by offering six under-used community assets up for transfer to their communities. Discussions are ongoing on possible interest in two of these assets.

The council has started a major review of the use of Common Good Funds and assets to ensure they are aligned with community and council priorities and are used for the maximum benefit of the community they serve. The results of this review will be considered by the council in late 2019/ early 2020.

Customer Feedback

Customer feedback in the form of complaints and compliments is one of the ways in which the council monitors how it is performing in the eyes of the people that matter most – the users of council services. The council complies with the model Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) for local authorities introduced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

- **Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution)** – Complaint dealt with at point of service within 5 working days
- **Stage 2 (Investigation)** – Complaint investigated; acknowledged within 3 working days and response provided within 20 working days

If complainants remain dissatisfied after completing this process then they have a legal right of appeal to the SPSO.

As is shown in Table 12, below, the [2018/19 Customer Feedback Annual Report](#) reported a significant reduction in the number of complaints received by the council and an increase in compliments and comments.

Table 12: Comparison of Customer Feedback 2017/18 – 2018/19

Stage	Complaints		Compliments		Comments	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
1	761	634	178	244	79	109
2	161	83	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Of the 634 complaints received in 2018/19, 59% (376) were not upheld, 19% (125) were partially upheld and 13% (83) were upheld. Just under 5% (30) were escalated to Stage 2. The services receiving the highest volume of Stage 1 complaints were: Property Maintenance (171); Waste Services (89); and, Roads Services (55).

Of the 83 Stage 2 complaints received in 2018/19, 64% (53) were not upheld, 28% (23) were partially upheld and only 7% (6) were upheld. The services receiving the most Stage 2 complaints were: Education (31); Property Maintenance (10); and, Planning (7).

The following services received the highest number of compliments from service users: Adult Wellbeing (46); Customer Services (46); and, Property Maintenance (41).

Increasing community and individual resilience

One of the Council Plan Strategic Goals is to increase community and individual resilience so that our communities and citizens have a better quality of life and are well placed to deal with concerns and problems that may affect them.

The [2019 East Lothian Residents' Survey](#) showed that three significant indicators of resilience stayed at very high positive levels or improved.

- The % of citizens who said their neighbourhood is a 'Very Good' and 'Good' place to live, remained at the very high level of 98% between the 2017 and 2019 Surveys.
- The % of citizens who said they 'Strongly Agree' and 'Tend to Agree' they can rely on a friend or neighbour to help, increased from 85% in 2017 to 94% in 2019, with a significant increase particularly with those who 'Strongly Agreed' from 51% to 64%.
- The % of citizens who feel 'Vary Safe' and 'Fairly Safe' walking alone in their local area after dark, increased from 85% to 94% between the 2017 and 2019 Surveys.

The two other indicators of community and individual resilience are also showing positive trends and should meet their targets.

The council has been working with Community Councils to support the development of Community Resilience Plans, which communities can use to ensure they are better placed to deal with difficult or life-threatening situations such as severe weather incidents. To date, eight Community Councils have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, Community Resilience Plans, and the council's Emergency Planning Officers will continue to work with others to encourage and support them to adopt plans.

Anti-social behaviour can blight the lives of individuals or whole communities and is therefore a good proxy for the quality of life or resilience of our communities. The council and police work very closely to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour and in most serious and persistent cases will take concerted and focused action. The total number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the police and the council fell 6,850 in 2017/18 to 6,711 in 2018/19.

Table 13: Community and Individual Resilience Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Increase community and individual resilience (SG7)	31. (T.7)	% of citizens who say their neighbourhood is a 'Very Good' / 'Good' place to live	98% {VG: 74.3% G: 23.6%} (Feb 2017)	N/A	98% {VG: 73.3% G: 24.6%} (June 2019)	Maintain levels
	32.	Proportion of Community Councils with local Community Resilience Plans	10%	25%	40%	75%
	33.	% of citizens who 'Strongly Agree' and 'Tend to Agree' they can rely on a friend/ neighbour to help	91% (Feb 2017)	N/A	92% (June 2017)	Maintain levels
Support initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	40.	% of citizens who feel 'Very Safe' and 'Fairly Safe' walking alone in their local area after dark	85% {VS: 51% FS: 34%} (Feb 2017)	N/A	94% {VS: 64% FS: 30%} (June 2019)	Maintain levels
	41.	Number of anti-social behaviour complaints reported to Police Scotland and the council	N/A	6,850	6,711	7,625 (2018/19) 2% reduction each year

Housing

The Top 50 Council Plan indicators includes three indicators of how the council is meeting its objective of maximising opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing whilst also improving the quality of service it provides to it over 8,500 tenants.

The indicator of the number of affordable house completions is shown as amber. In 2018/19, the number of affordable house completions, 137, was just below the 2018/19 target of 147 due to a delay in handover of 10 units due to factors not in the council's control. With the start of work on these delayed sites and projected house building starts in the next two years, the five-year (2018-2023) target of 945 should be met.

Table 14: Housing Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Maximise opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing	34. (T.8)	Number of affordable house completions and Open Market Acquisitions	628 (2012-2017)	294 (2017/18)	137 + 25 OMAs (2018/19)	945 (2018-2023)
	35.	Average number of days taken to re-let properties	N/A	28.1	39.9	24
	36.	Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	12.8	7.2 days	9.0	7.2 days (2018/19)

The two indicators relating to the quality of service provided to tenants showed a downward trend. The average number of days to re-let properties increased from 28.1 days to 39.9 days. Community Housing and Property Maintenance teams have been reviewing the Voids Policy and associated procedures and took measures to reduce the number of long-term voids. The letting of properties that had been vacant for a long period of time contributed to the increase in the average days to re-let properties in 2018/19. The full implementation of these changes, continued operational improvements and closer scrutiny of voids will see improvements in turnaround time going forward.

The average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs increased from 7.2 days to 9 days. The number of non-emergency repairs increased by 8% (to 19,639) and there staff vacancies and absences that contributed to the reduction in performance. The last quarter of 2018/19 showed improvement in performance, which, if carried forward into 2019/20, will see this indicator reverting back to an underlying norm below the Scottish average. The average time taken to complete the 2,739 emergency repairs carried out in 2018/19 fell to 2.1 days (from 3 days in the previous year).

The Landlord Report to Tenants 2018/19⁴ provides further detail and commentary on the council’s performance as a housing provider and landlord. The positive achievements highlighted by the report include:

- 20 new build properties delivered and 25 properties acquired through open market acquisitions. The council now owns 8,740 properties

⁴ This summary of the 2018/19 Landlord Report is based on the draft report. The final report will be published following publication of this report.

- improvement in in-year rent collection and improved rent arrears performance. In 2018/19 the council collected just over 100% of rent due in-year as it managed to collect some rent arrears from former tenants. The number of former tenants with rent arrears has fallen 539 in 2016/17, 420 in 2017/18 to 312 in 2018/19
- 509 properties let and a reduction in tenancy refusals
- 102 major adaptations were carried out to assist tenants with mobility issues
- 886 homeless households offered temporary accommodation; although meeting the demand from homeless applicants is still to be increasingly challenging for the council.
- The average length of time spent in temporary accommodation, which increased from 192 days in 2016/17 to 216 days in 2017/18 fell back to 189 days in 2018/19.
- 460 new bathrooms and 406 new kitchens were delivered and 129 houses were rewired.

The council carried out extensive consultation with tenants on rent levels and budget plans prior to setting the 2018/19 housing budget. Following the consultation, which supported proposals to increase rents, council house rents were increased in April 2018 by 5%. The additional income is being invested in continuing the modernisation programme.

Transport

Following an extensive public consultation exercise including public workshops in each of the main towns and an on-line consultation the council adopted a detailed [Local Transport Strategy and associated plans](#) in October 2018. The Local Transport Strategy has an important role to play in providing for East Lothian as an excellent place to live, work and invest. Growing the county through the Council Plan, the City Region Deal and the Local Development Plan will require the provision of improved and new infrastructure, integrating transport systems, quality and reliable public transport, choice of transport modes and a safer transport network.

The council recognises that the promotion of healthier travel options is key to providing safer, sustainable, low carbon environments and the adoption of the Strategy through the Active Travel Improvement Plan, aligned with the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and investment for improvements in physical activity enables this. The Strategy has been developed around five main themes reflected in four action plans:

- Active Travel Improvement Plan (ATIP)
- Parking Management Strategy
- Road Asset management Plan
- Road Safety Plan.

Several changes were made to the draft Strategy following the consultation. For example, in the policy on ‘Encouraging Sustainable Travel’ the section on Improving Buses was strengthened with the addition of the following sentences. *‘In this regard the council will prioritise limited resources to support the services, which will deliver the greatest benefits. However, it is recognised that accessibility to local facilities, particularly hospitals and amenities can be challenging and the council will work with partners to provide regular reliable services, where possible.’*

One of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators reflects and monitors the commitment to supporting the provision of bus services that deliver the greatest benefit. In 2018/19 the council was able to continue to support 36 such routes across the county.

Table 15: Transport Top 50 Council Plan Indicator

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Better and more effective public transport	37.	Number of bus service routes and timetabled journeys	N/A	36 routes and 2,949 timetabled journeys	36 routes and 2,949 timetabled journeys	Maintain number of routes and journeys

During the consultation on the draft strategy, the option of introducing car parking charges for on-street and off-street parking drew considerable public response. The draft Strategy was amended to include the following statement: *‘The council will assess the demand on town centre parking supply and appraise, where appropriate, the introduction of charging for off-street car parks and/or for on-street parking places. The introduction of restrictions and charging has the potential to boost the financial viability and community/ business prosperity of an area by increasing turnover. All parking regimes would require annual monitoring.’*

Sustainable transport is a key priority for the Transport Strategy. So as well as supporting the development of more active travel links one of the council’s priorities over the last year has been to increase the number of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) across the county. In 2017/18 four (EVCP) were installed bringing the total number of council publicly available EVCPs to 15. By September 2019 the council, working with Transport Scotland, has increased the number of public EVCPs to 43 across 16 locations⁵.

⁵ [Update on EVCPs; report to Cabinet, September 2019](#)

The Environment and Climate Change

The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) reflected the concern about the environment and the dangers posed by Climate Change. It included a commitment to ‘Develop a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan, which will give strategic direction to continuous improvement in relation to energy efficiency, climate adaptation and sustainable transport’.

It also committed the council to continue to ‘Work closely with partners to meet our commitment to Climate Change targets, embedding sustainability principles into decision making and translating them into tangible actions, protecting and enhancing open spaces and habitats.’

During 2018/19 the council developed a detailed [draft Climate Change Strategy](#) which was issued for public consultation in May 2019. The consultation attracted a very high level of public interest and the comments and suggestions for quicker and further action will be reflected in the final version of the Strategy.

In response to the growing public concern about Climate Change, the August 2019 council meeting approved the following motion:

“There is a global climate emergency. The evidence is irrefutable and the science is clear. Warnings have been issued about the damage human beings are causing to the planet and how that damage has accelerated over the past 50 years. The impacts of climate change are having a serious effect on our communities. We believe that it’s not too late for us to turn things around but to do so requires transformative change and action now.

“East Lothian Council therefore resolves to “Declare a Climate Emergency that requires urgent action to make all our council services net Zero Carbon as soon as reasonably practicable or in any case by 2045 and to lobby, support and work with all relevant agencies, partners and communities to fulfil this commitment. East Lothian Council will also commit to work with our communities and partners towards making East Lothian a carbon neutral county as well as enabling the county to deliver its part of wider national and international commitments.”

The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) also includes commitments to support an increase in recycling so that we can meet the recycling national target of 70% by 2025. The number of bins that are collected has continued to grow as the population and number of domestic properties increases, so that in 2018/19 the council collected rubbish from a total of 6.8million bins. The number of visits to our Recycling Centres increased yet again in the last year to over 470,000.

The Top 50 Council Plan indicators include two environment and Climate Change indicators. The data for the indicator, relating to the council's carbon emissions, comes from a national report that will not be published until after this report has been finalised.

The ' % of total household waste that is recycled ' is shown as amber, since it did not improve from the 2017/18 figure of 53%. Although this is still above the Scottish average, it did not make any progress towards meeting the national target of 70% by 2025.

The council is committed through our signature to the Household Recycling Charter, a joint Scottish and Local Government initiative to transform council's waste management services, to improve recycling collection rates and to ensure the collection of high-quality material for recycling. The Scottish Government has made a subsequent commitment to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for Scotland, which will impact on the way in which Local Government recycling services are delivered in the future and the council will look to review our service provision in step with national policy developments.

Table 16: Environment and Climate Change Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Increase waste recycling to meet the 2025 target	38.	% of total household waste that is recycled (national targets)	51.8%	53.1%	53.1%	70% (2025)
Work closely with partners to meet our commitment to Climate Change targets	39	East Lothian Council's corporate annual carbon emissions (tonnes CO2e) Note this dataset does not include Fleet data which will be added in future years	17.610 tonnes CO2e (Does not include Fleet data)	17,204 tonnes CO2e (Does not include Fleet data)	Available Nov 2019	To be confirmed in the Climate Change Strategy

6. Growing our Capacity – to deliver excellent services as efficiently and effectively as possible

The challenges faced by the council, in particular the financial constraints it faces at the same time as our population and the demand for high quality services continues to grow, means that the council needs to transform the way it delivers services. The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) reflects this priority and states that over the next five years the council will need to increasingly become:

- **an enabling and empowering** authority that works with its citizens and communities, the business and third sectors and other public sector partners to deliver the solutions that work best for East Lothian
- **a more entrepreneurial authority**, developing new ways of ensuring services are provided in the most effective and efficient way possible
- **a 'digital' authority**, fully embracing and exploiting opportunities to use technology to deliver services.

The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) includes two strategic goals relating to transformational change and several key commitments relating to the efficient and effective use of resources.

Delivering transformational change and harnessing the opportunities technology offers

The Top 50 Council Plan indicators include three that assess how far the council is progressing with meeting its two transformational change strategic goals. These relate to the development of on-line, digitally enabled services.

- The proportion of non-Direct Debit payments undertaken on line has increased substantially over the last year from just under 35% to 51.5%. This reflects the continued push to provide and promote on-line payment options over the last year.
- The number of on-line form transactions completed on the website has also increased substantially over the last year as more on-line forms to request council services have been made available on the council website. The council is developing a new Online Customer Portal which will begin to be rolled out in early 2020. It is anticipated that as more and more services are made available through the new portal the number of on-line, as opposed to face-to-face or telephone transactions, will increase significantly in future years.

- The number of care at home clients with Community Alarm, telecare, or stand-alone telecare devices is a key indicator showing the increased utilisation of digital and telecare services that support people living independently at home or in the community. Since this is a new indicator, information is only available for this year.

Table 17: Transformational Change Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Deliver transformational change (SG8)	42. (T.9)	Proportion of non-Direct Debit payments, including school payments, undertaken online (at 31 st March)	27.2%	34.73%	51.53%	To be determined
Harness the opportunities technology offers in the provision of services (SG9)	43.	Number of on-line form transactions completed on council website	N/A	6798 (Apr-Dec 2018)	11,034 (Apr 2018 – Mar 2019)	To be determined
	44.	Number of care at home clients with Community Alarm, telecare or standalone telecare devices	N/A	N/A	2,715 (Jan 2019)	Target to be agreed by IJB

Council finances and resources

The [2017-2022 East Lothian Council Plan](#) commits the council to take a strategic approach to its overall financial planning process through implementing the financial strategy to set balanced three-year budgets avoiding the use of reserves by the third year, to maximise revenue funding and to invest in and fund an ambitious, appropriate capital programme. It includes commitments to:

- maintain a rigorous approach to controlling expenditure, ensuring that it continues to ‘live within its means’ by operating as efficiently as possible to ensure that investment is protected and is focused on key priority areas and protecting frontline services wherever possible
- keep East Lothian’s Council Tax as low as is reasonably possible within the current economic climate and will the Council Tax will only be increased where it can be demonstrated as necessary and provides protection to existing services, or introduces new ones

- adopt a Workforce Plan, incorporating a Workforce Development Plan that will ensure that it has the right people with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours deployed appropriately to deliver the Council Plan
- continue to work in partnership with the trade unions representing council staff. This will include improving attendance management of employees through the implementation of the Council's Managing Attendance Policy and continued support for the Healthy Working Lives agenda.

The Top 50 Council Plan indicators include six indicators related to these key commitments. Four of these are shown as green, whilst two are red.

There are two workforce related indicators.

- The % of employees agreeing that the council is a great place to work, fell by 1% from 77.6% in 2017 to 76.7%. The results of the next employee engagement survey (November 2019) will be monitored to see whether the small decline is a long term trend or has been reversed.
- The % of days lost due to absence per full time equivalent employee, improved from 10.57 in 2017/18 to 10.2 in 2018/19.

In June 2018, the council adopted the [2018-2022 Workforce Plan](#) based on the vision that:

'East Lothian Council will be an employer of choice and our staff will:

- *have the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to deliver the highest quality services*
- *be flexible and adaptable around our changing organisational needs*
- *be resilient to change and instigate, as well as adapt to, changes in service delivery*
- *be satisfied and engaged and feel safe at work*
- *work in partnership across all services and with the council's partners and communities to effectively deliver essential services and outcomes*
- *feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make to achieving the council's vision and objectives*
- *be supported, empowered and trusted*

- *take personal responsibility and ownership to be effective in their jobs.'*

The Plan has three key objectives to:

- Sustain a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce;
- Support and initiate transformational change; and,
- Build and sustain leadership and management development.

In September 2018, a detailed action plan with 45 actions was adopted to deliver the Plan. By September 2019, just under half of the actions have been completed and progress has been made on the remaining actions. The timescales for completion of several actions have been extended but all uncompleted actions are still on schedule for being completed before March 2022.

Four of the Top 50 Council Plan indicators relate specifically to council finances and how the public perceive the council is using its/ their money.

- The % of income due from Council Tax received by the end of 2018/19 was just 0.1% lower than in the previous year and at 96.9% was within 0.1% of the 97% target.
- Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due for the reporting year, fell from 9.3% to 7.7%, reflecting the positive action that has been taken by the council's Revenues and Community Housing Services to reduce rent arrears and support tenants who are now on Universal Credit.
- The % of citizens who 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' with the statement that 'My council does the best it can with the money available' (excluding those who responded 'Don't Know') in the June 2019 Residents' Survey was 84%, the same as in the 2017 survey.
- The budget out-turn in 2018/19 was an underspend of 1.37%, which was slightly higher than the target of being 1% within budget (further information on the 2018/19 budget outturn is provided below).

Table 18: Finance and Resource Top 50 Council Plan Indicators

Strategic Goal/ Outcome		Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2022
Adopt a Workforce Plan / improve attendance management (reduce staff absence)	45.	% of employees agreeing that the council is a great place of work	77.6% (Feb 2017)	N/A	76.7% (Oct 2018) {next survey Oct 2019}	80%
	46.	Days lost due to absence (FTE)	9.74	10.57	10.2	9.5
Maintain the current rigorous approach to controlling expenditure, ensuring that it continues to 'live within its means' by operating as efficiently as possible	47.	% of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year	97.6%	97%	96.9%	97%
	48.	Gross rent arrears (<i>all tenants</i>) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	9.4%	9.3%	7.7%	9%
	49. (T.10)	% of citizens who 'Strongly Agree and 'Tend to Agree' that 'My council does the best it can with the money available' (excluding Don't Knows)	84% (Feb 2017)	N/A	84% (June 2019)	Maintain level (2021)
	50.	Budget out-turn within 1% of budget	N/A	0.2% underspend	1.37% underspend	1%

One of the most significant risks faced by the council in 2018/19 was the UK Parliament's decision to take the UK out of the European Union by March 2019. Consequently, the council established a cross-service working group which reviewed the possible implications of 'Brexit' for the council and East Lothian and put in place various measures to mitigate the impacts. The working group continued to meet through 2019.

Financial performance for 2018/19 and financial outlook

The [2018/19 Annual Accounts](#) highlight that the council continues to operate within an extremely challenging financial environment, and regular quarterly financial review reported that during 2018/19 have demonstrated the ongoing challenges faced by services. Work has continued with senior managers to mitigate the financial pressures and deliver planned efficiency savings.

The net cost of service provision in 2018/19 was £255.082m, which was £11.875m higher than in 2017/18, predominantly due to an increase in the net retirement benefits. Relative to approved budget plans service expenditure was overspent by around £1m, equivalent to around 0.4%. Within this context, the key financial results for the year ending 31 March 2019 are:

- improvement in overall reserves relative to approved spending plans
- delivered capital investment of around £60m; c.£22m related to spend on the council's housing stock, and c.£38m on General Services including in schools, roads and wider assets to support East Lothian's communities
- delivery of an additional £4m recurring efficiencies; a cumulative total of around £30m since 2012.

The five-year [Financial Strategy 2019-2024](#) approved by the council in December 2018, outlines the economic and financial context under which the council is operating under, and sets out how it aims to continue to develop sustainable three-year revenue budgets avoiding the use of reserves by year three.

We'd love to hear from you...

We always want to hear what the people of East Lothian think about our services.

Was this report easy to read?

Did it inform you about council services?

Did it allow you to judge out performance?

How could we improve the report next year?

If you want to provide feedback on this report or would simply like further information or to make a comment about the council, email our Policy & Performance Team at: **policy@eastlothian.gov.uk**



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