

## 2023/24 SPIs

### 1. Commissioning

#### ALEOs

#### 01. LGBF – ALEO Sport and Leisure Management

Total number of attendances for indoor pool and dry sports facilities; schools and community education establishments	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,434,492	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,734,276	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,978,218
Total number of attendances for indoor pool sports and leisure facilities; schools and community education establishments	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 419,531	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 575,873	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 732,666
Total number of attendances for indoor dry sports and leisure facilities (excluding pools in a combined complex)– sports facilities; schools and community education establishments	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,014,961	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,158,403	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 1,245,552
Total number of attendances for outdoor sports and leisure facilities	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 414,238	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 372,507	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 385,328
<p>New systems were introduced which improves the accuracy of entrance figures. The Beach Leisure Centre and Bucksburn pool were closed, although the learn to swim programmes were transferred to Tullos and Northfield pools. Lochside had a significant increase in activity due to some activities being relocated from the Beach Leisure Centre and improved management of available space. Aberdeen Tennis Centre’s figures remained consistent however there was a move from indoor to outdoor activity. Ruthrieston tennis court being closed for refurbishment from November 2023 to March 2024.</p>						

City Growth

01. LGBF – Museum Services

Number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums – person; enquiries; outreach; virtual	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	1,190,854	2022/23	1,339,942	2023/24	1,380,916
<p>Aberdeen Maritime Museum was closed between October 2023 and February 2024 to undergo a programme of improvements Accessibility has been improved with the installation of a new passenger lift and the overall visitor experience has been enhanced with the installation of a new exhibition in the previously empty cafe space. Digital tours of both Aberdeen Art Gallery and Aberdeen Maritime Museum are now available on the Bloomberg Connects app with these tours attracting upward of 900 and 250 starts respectively each month. Development of a virtual tour for Provost Skene’s House is almost at completion. Digital files have been retrieved from physical media to ensure access is not lost in the future due to technological obsolescence.</p> <p>There were a number of young people events, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eighteen senior secondary learners undertook a practical workshop within a studio environment focussing on the Constructed Narratives exhibition. Learners were given a private view of the exhibition and engaged in a discussion with two of the artists. Feedback from the young people was hugely positive with 13 learners indicating that they enjoyed the session and learned something from it.</li> <li>• This is Northfield – What’s Your Treasure? was a collaborative project which saw S3 learners from Northfield Academy choosing artworks for display at Aberdeen Treasure Hub and supporting an open day in June 2023.</li> <li>• A collaborative project with Hanover Street Primary School to create a new trail highlighting weird and wonderful objects from our collections.</li> </ul> <p>We have an engaging programme of exhibitions, talks, workshops and concerts for 2024–25 and we will continue to support the City’s economic and tourism objectives. The service will also continue to promote digital engagement opportunities highlighting our collections through our website, virtual tours, podcasts and social media posts.</p>						

## 02. Employability

Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated / funded employability programmes	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	59.30	2022/23	9.30	2023/24	25.59
The percentage obtaining employment from each individual employability programme is monitored to ensure resources are most effectively deployed.						

## 03. Museums and Galleries, Events and Exhibitions

Events, exhibitions, museums and galleries
<p>The City Events team facilitated over 50 events through their application process and delivered a core programme of eight events including Highland Games, Armed Forces Day and SPECTRA. The team also planned an additional event for The King's Coronation.</p> <p>Aberdeen Archives, Gallery &amp; Museums hosted a programme of 12 special exhibitions and temporary displays at Aberdeen Art Gallery, one display at Aberdeen Maritime Museum and one at Aberdeen Treasure Hub. The programme featured major touring exhibitions and loans and partnership projects with local organisations and artists. It also highlighted a range of work from the collections of AAGM, which are recognised collections of national significance. This was our second year of full trading post Covid in which we saw audience confidence continue to rebuild and an increasing number of visitors came to our venues. The exhibitions programme at Aberdeen Art Gallery was well received. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Spring, we worked with Magnum Photos to bring the only Scottish showing of the exhibition, Where Ideas Are Born, to the city. It featured 70 photos portraits of internationally renowned artists by some of the world's best-known photographers.</li> <li>• Our Summer offer saw us host two exhibitions celebrating the unique talent of Quentin Blake, the UK's best-loved illustrator. A Quentin Blake Summer: Illustrating Verse and Book Covers attracted 8,200 visitors.</li> <li>• In Autumn we presented Constructed Narratives, a major exhibition of new work by three of Scotland's foremost artists - Lennox Dunbar, Ian Howard and Arthur Watson. The Aberdeen-born contemporaries attended Aberdeen Grammar School and as students were greatly influenced by weekly visits to the Art Gallery. A selected version of Constructed Narratives will be shown at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh in July 2024.</li> <li>• The exhibitions and display programme provided a platform for a wide range of events and activities within our venues including regular, talks and lectures, workshops, music and performance and tours for all ages including adults, young people and families plus a programme which supports visitors who have additional needs. We continue to review exhibition materials and transport with a commitment to low-impact graphics and low-carbon travel. This complements our approach to borrowing and lending artworks and objects using virtual couriering when possible.</li> </ul>

## 04 City Deal

City deal
<p>The Aberdeen City Region Deal is the 10-year agreement between the UK Government and the Scottish Government with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Opportunity North East (ONE) to boost the region's economy, competitiveness, and inclusive growth. The Aberdeen City Region Deal represents a significant investment in the future of the region, with the aim of driving economic growth, creating jobs, and supporting the transition to a net-zero economy. The progress made to date is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all those involved in the implementation of the Deal. Since it began the partnership ambitions have always remained the same: to provide the conditions for enterprise and businesses to invest and innovate, to access new markets, to maintain and grow the region's skilled workforce and provide work opportunities. Those will continue to be the Deal's focus, working in partnership in the coming year in areas to affect collective positive change.</p> <p>The key achievements and milestones of the various projects and initiatives supported by the Deal in 2023/24 include the ONE BioHub and Aberdeen South Harbour opening and continuous progress made in the innovation, transport, and digital themed projects.</p>

## Commercial and Procurement

### 01. Council expenditure with local suppliers

Percentage of council expenditure with local suppliers	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	38.4%	2022/23	35.7%	2023/24	32.6%
Percentage of local suppliers	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	22.8%	2022/23	23.5%	2023/24	21.2%

Local spend is calculated using suppliers' invoice payment addresses, which is generally the address of their credit control department. In some cases the supplier may have a local base, is an employer, pays business rates or contributes in various ways to the local economy. Using the invoice payment address allows consistent benchmarking between public bodies but assumes that a single postcode receives the entire economic development benefit from the spend.

## 02. SME Expenditure

Percentage of council expenditure with small and medium enterprises	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 53.3%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 61.9%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 63.9%
Percentage of council expenditure with local small and medium enterprises	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 24.3%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 24%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 24.7%
<p>Local spend is calculated using suppliers' invoice payment addresses, which is generally the address of their credit control department. In some cases the supplier may have a local base, is an employer, pays business rates or contributes in various ways to the local economy. Using the invoice payment address allows consistent benchmarking between public bodies but assumes that a single postcode receives the entire economic development benefit from the spend.</p>						

## 03. Supplier Development Programme

Supplier development programme (positive procurement programme)
<p>The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) was established in 2008, and is a partnership of Local Authorities, Scottish Government and other public bodies that works together to bring free support in all aspects of tendering to Scottish-based SMEs. Commercial &amp; Procurement Shared Services including Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Highland Councils have participated in the below events and activities with the Supplier Development Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the Buyer National 2023 – EICC Edinburgh – 17 May 2023</li> <li>• Meet the Buyer North 2023 – The Music Hall Aberdeen – 12 September 2023</li> <li>• Share your views: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire &amp; Highland Council Procurement Strategy Email – 2 May 2023</li> </ul>

## Data and Insights

### 01. Data Led Organisation

Data led organisation
<p>We have well established approaches to ensuring the organisation is data led. Our annual commissioning cycle, which develops a whole organisation Delivery Plan and budget, is informed by an analysis of funding, demand, statutory obligations, service standards and performance. Our Local Outcome Improvement Plan, which was refreshed in 2023/24 has been developed on the basis of a city-wide "Population Needs Assessment". Our suite of strategies is informed by evidence reports and needs assessments. During 2023/24 we agreed a corporate approach to evaluation and this is being implemented widely in the current year. We have invested in a Central Data Platform to improve the ability and speed to gain insight from data. The Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen provides a focus for joint working with the NHS and local universities on the use of data and evidence in decision making. All of these developments are additional to strong fundamentals in data systems, processes and skills.</p>

### 02. Citizen Panel

Citizens panel
<p>The City Voice is an important tool for us and Community Planning Partners. It allows the different services to get a feel for and an understanding of what the public thinks about different policies, services and issues. It can show services the level of satisfaction with different services; but also where there might be room for improvement. It may also be used to provide data for Local Outcome Improvement Plan Improvement Projects. For example, the percentage of respondents who reported that they were worried they would not have enough food to eat or that they would not be able to heat their homes are used as indicators for Stretch Outcome 1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026. The City Voice is generally well received by panellists and question providers alike. It offers panellists an opportunity to give their views on a range of topics. Similarly, the reports provide detailed feedback to question providers, and allow them to see where there may be differences in responses/views by different characteristics e.g. locality or age group.</p>
<p>The City Voice is a useful tool for public engagement. We ask all question providers to give a service response once they have received the results from the questionnaire. In their response, services explain how they will use the information gained through this process. These responses are then included in the City Voice Reports and Newsletters and are important as they provide feedback to panellists on how their input contributes to policies and services.</p>
<p>In 2023-24 there were 3 City Voice surveys on the themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Empowerment</li><li>• Travel and Transport</li><li>• People</li></ul>

Strategic Place Planning

01. Sustainable Energy

Corporate carbon Emissions (tonnes) tCO <sub>2</sub> e	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	Value	26,159	Value	27,504	Value	27,636

Factors out with our control also contributed to an increase in emissions, which included a temporary change to management of some waste due to a fire at the Altens East Materials Recovery Facility and a change in the home working calculation method set by the Scottish Government. This was the third year of implementation of the Council climate change plan and key activities included:

- LED Street lighting replacement programme, which has helped to reduce our environmental impact by reducing energy consumption and will save an estimated 400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.
- The completion of 36 new ‘Gold Standard’ Council homes at the Cloverhill development in August 2023. Each property is installed with an Air Source Heat Pump and built to a high energy efficiency standard to reduce carbon emissions.
- Marischal College LED replacement project completed in Spring 2024, reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions from lighting.
- Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators which received Scottish Government funding to survey, plan, and design work to improve wetlands, ponds and create new and improve existing wildflower meadows and tree planting.
- Capabilities for climate change and nature loss were incorporated in staff annual appraisals for the first time in March 2024.
- A new staff training course, Taking Action on Climate Change, was piloted.
- New District Heating connections included to a replacement school, Greyhope School and Community Hub opened in November 2023 with a target Energy Performance Rating of A.

## 02. Sustainable Development

### Work done to encourage and support sustainable development

#### Key milestones and actions included:

- The Aberdeen Planning Guidance was approved to support stakeholders in the implementation of Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The new guidance consisted of a suite of guidance including Open Space & Green Infrastructure, Natural Heritage, Flooding, Drainage & Water Quality, Trees & Woodlands, Outdoor Access and a new Food Growing guidance.
- New food-growing spaces were created and recorded on the Aberdeen food-growing map which surpassed 180,000 views during this reporting period. Air quality improvement actions included: planning for the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) enforcement; implementation of committee approved bus priority measures on Market Street / Bridge Street / Guild Street.
- Work continued to install more electric vehicle charge points across the city.
- The NESS Energy from Waste facility started operating at full capacity in December 2023, processing around 150,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste per year from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray.
- The Aberdeen B-Lines-Buglife project secured funding from the Nature Restoration Fund and commenced during this reporting period creating, restoring and enhancing 20 hectares of wildflower habitats in the city for pollinators.
- The second Youth Climate Change President and four vice presidents were appointed from local secondary schools to engage with the city's climate and nature agenda through monthly meetings and contributions to the city's development.
- Aberdeen Fairtrade Community Status was renewed in July 2023 for its commitment to fair and sustainable trade. The Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge which allows organisations and members of the public to pledge their commitment to the city-wide climate goals, has increased to 102 signatories: 72 individuals and 30 organisations have signed the pledge. The Clean Up Aberdeen project mobilised 2,775 volunteers for 243 clean ups and collected 2,420 bags of litter from the streets, parks and beaches.
- The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub, a joint venture with BP, received planning approval in June 2023 for a hydrogen production and vehicle refuelling facility, a solar farm and an underground solar grid connection.
- The Greyhope School and Community Hub opened and has green spaces, district heating connection and solar panels. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan was developed mapping the Sustainable Development Goals.



### 03. Planning Applications Processing Time

Average determination times of major development planning applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	27.6	2022/23	87.3	2023/24	242
Average determination times of non-householder local planning applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	14.9	2022/23	10	2023/24	11.2
Average determination times of householder planning applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	8.8	2022/23	8.1	2023/24	9.4

There was a surge in planning applications for change of use of residential properties short term lets consequent upon legislative changes – with over 1000 queries. The approval of National Planning Framework 4, that gives significant weight to the global climate and nature crises, places emphasis of planning decision making even more strongly towards addressing the climate emergency.

### 04. Affordable Homes

Number of affordable houses developed	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	692	2022/23	481	2023/24	794
<p>The National Planning Framework 4, adopted February 2023, is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It emphasises the need for access to affordable, quality homes in better places as identified by the Local Development Plan which in turn is informed by the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. Affordable houses are registered complete when they are ready to be occupied. Working with external partners, delivery has remained consistent for the last few years. This is set to continue as major council projects progress and properties are delivered through Section 75 legal agreements but may be impacted by reductions in affordable housing supply programme budgets.</p>						

## 2. Customer

### Customer Experience

#### 01. Freedom of Information

Percentage of environmental information requests replied to within 20 working days	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 90.22%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 83.33%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 89.04%
Percentage of freedom of information requests replied to within 20 working days	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 88.52%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 84.5%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 86.25%
Percentage of FOI and EIR requests dealt with within 20 working days	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 89%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 84.31%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 86.88%

There have been specific challenges within some service areas. The pressures impacting performance include a conflict in priorities due to the delivery of major projects and resource challenges. This has impacted some teams' ability to answer requests in a timely manner. System and process changes have been put in place during 2023/24 to aid performance. This includes ongoing dialogue with services across the organisation to identify blockages and address performance; targeted training; verification of responding officers, ongoing reviews of internal processes and the promotion of proactive publication with services.

Further actions to be taken to maintain performance include:

- Targeted training and guidance to officers to ensure that requests are responded to fully and within the statutory timescales. Training will result in better quality responses which in turn will reduce the time spent quality checking responses and reduce the overall time spent handling requests.
- A continued proactive approach by the Access to Information Team to identify requests that can be answered out with the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations.
- Increased monitoring at a senior management level to encourage timely responses and address any issues within service areas.
- Continued focus on the quality control of responses by the Access to Information Officers to ensure that responses are as helpful and clear as possible. This is to improve the customer experience and to reduce the need for repeat contact.
- Introduction of a 'Training and Awareness' area within Customer Academy to provide easily accessible advice and assistance to Officers responding to requests.
- Further opportunities for Officers to proactively signpost customers to information that is already published on our website is to be explored and the Access to Information Team will work with services across the organisation to encourage further proactive publication.
- A new system for handling FOI requests is due to be implemented in 2024/25 and it is anticipated that the efficiency and ease of responding to requests will improve.

## 02. Benefit Administration Costs

Weighted private rented sector caseload	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>1,958.54</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>1,737.91</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>1,520.46</b>
Weighted registered social landlord caseload	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>3,141.34</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2,932.84</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2,767.16</b>
Weighted Council Tax Benefit caseload	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>22,053.3</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>20,550.02</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>21,188.92</b>
Gross administration cost per benefit case	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>£37.71</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>£36.46</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>£39.43</b>
Weighted rent rebate caseload	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>10,207.6</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>9,183.7</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>8,679.22</b>
<p>A review was undertaken to improve the speed of benefit claims and changes. This included filling the vacant posts within the Benefits Team. The vacancies being filled realised an increase in staffing costs. The outcome has been a dramatic improvement in reducing the number of days taken on average for processing benefit claims and changes to meet targets. As the caseload has also reduced this has realised an increase in the cost per case. The benefit caseload is anticipated to reduce during 2024/25 and a performance target of £40.00 has been set for 2024/25.</p>						

### 03. Benefits Claims and Changes

	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
Average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and change events in housing benefit	8.03		12.06		8.58	
Average number of days to process new benefit claims	17.41		33.05		16.55	
Average number of days to process change of circumstances	7.2		9.59		7.57	

During 2023/24, the benefits team have worked with the DWP Performance Team to look for any improvements in processes and procedures. This also has contributed to an improved performance. It is anticipated that the Housing Benefit caseload will commence to reduce during 2024/25 due to Universal Credit migration. A continued target is in place of 9 days for change of circumstances, 25 days for new claims and 12 days for Right Time Indicator are considered appropriate, which is above the Scottish average.

### 04. LGBF – Council Tax Collection

	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling	£7.25		£6.78		£6.25	

There was an increased in income from Scottish Water and reduced service costs, along with an increase in the number of Council Tax properties in Aberdeen City from 124,025 to 125,110. This produced a decrease in the cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling.

During 2023/24 a review of council tax administration took place including a benchmarking project to identify areas for improvement. The outcome of the review is to increase the staffing and explore digital opportunities. This will impact the cost of the service, therefore a performance target of £7.00 has been set for 2024/25.

05. LGBF – Council Tax Income

Percentage of income due from council tax for the year that was received by the end of the year	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	92.79%	2022/23	94.23%	2023/24	92.8%
Income due from council tax for the year net reliefs and rebates	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	131,942,512	2022/23	136,591,129	2023/24	146,380,981

Although our collection rate has decreased, we are still above the Scottish average. The reduced In Year Collection Rate is due to the current demand on the Council Tax. There is currently a backlog of council tax administration, e.g. change of address or application for discount/exemption.

This causes bills to take longer to be issued and payment from citizens therefore delayed.

Going forward into 2024/25, a further review of the operational model will take place with the aim of introducing more digital automation. Additional staff have been introduced to the Council Tax Administration Team with the aim of improving the speed of administration. An increase in the speed of processing will improve collection rates. A target of 93% has been set. These figures do not include surcharges/statutory penalties.

06. LGBF – Payment of Invoices

Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	84.83%	2022/23	87.5%	2023/24	90.89%

Invoice volumes have reduced by 15% due to the ongoing work on the one invoice for suppliers that cover the whole council which in turn has reduced the staff numbers too. The staff turnover has lessened in the last year which has helped the number of invoices being paid on time due to the continuity of experience within the team.

Work continues in system improvements where suppliers will be directed to our cloud and direct invoicing options for invoice submission to free up time in that area. One bill options have continued to be addressed in 2023/24 and will be rolled out further in collaboration with contract renewals with the procurement team with the aim of addressing demand and processing efficiency.

## 07. Complaints

The number of complaints closed at Stage 1 within 5 working days as percentage of total no of Stage 1 complaints	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	64.69%	66.06%	76.12%
The number of complaints closed at Stage 2 within 20 working days as percentage of total no of Stage 2 complaints	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	44.92%	37.14%	50.96%
Percentage of complaints resolved within time	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	61.47%	60.67%	73.99%
The number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as percentage of total number of escalated complaints	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	48%	38.03%	69.27%

The increase in performance is partly due to a change of process in relation to missed bins and an issue which impacted citizens' contacting the Contact Centre for a period of time, which has since been resolved. There continues to be a variety of channels open to customers that wish to complain. Whilst there has been an increase in the volume of complaints, the number of complaints responded to within timescale has improved. We are working to improve our compliance in relation to Stage 2 complaints and we will continue to explore the reasons for any delays in responding to complaints. Improved quality of responses had been noted towards the end of 2022/23 and continued into 2023/24. This meant that less time has been required on quality assuring and we are seeing the benefit of this. We hope that this will continue into 2024/25. There is still scope for further improvement and an action plan is in place. This includes:

- Ongoing interaction between senior management and the Customer Feedback Team regarding the nature of complaints and performance across service areas.
- The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed Child Friendly Complaints Handling Principles in 2023/24 and this is expected to launch in line with Scottish legislation in 2024/25. New online guidance for handling Child Friendly Complaints have been created and system updates will take place to ensure corporate awareness and support the changes.
- A new system for handling complaints is due to be implemented in 2024/25 and it is anticipated that the efficiency and ease of responding to requests will improve. Complaints will continue to be monitored to determine any reoccurring themes and lessons learned encouraged, in an effort to reduce similar complaints being raised.
- Operational practices within the Customer Feedback Team and wider organisation will continue in order to maintain the monitoring of responses.
- Work will continue across service areas where delays occur to explore the reasons for delays and to address performance issues.

## Digital and Technology

### Digital and Technology

The successful delivery of digital online services continues, supporting the achievement of our digital transformation aims. A key component of this transformation focuses on making it quicker, easier and more consistent for citizens to access our services digitally, enabling them to become more self-sufficient. The provision of online services gives citizens a choice of when and how they access our services and facilitates a reduced transaction cost compared to traditional channels of face to face and telephone. It also removes the need to complete paper forms and associated costs such as postage.

In 2023/24, focus has been on working towards a new online website and portal that will transform online service for our citizens. In addition, continued improvements are being made to existing online services to ensure they are efficient as they can be.

The digital solutions are enabling:

- A consistent experience for our customers when accessing our services.
- A consistent experience for our staff receiving and processing these applications, requests and reports.
- Convenience of 24/7/365 access to services e.g. don't need to wait until office hours to obtain a paper form.
- Reduced costs of printing paper forms.
- Faster service delivery such as applications, requests and reports are received more quickly leading to quicker turnaround.
- Intelligent forms that remove potential for error in manual handling and deliver mandatory information at the first point of contact, meaning a reduction in follow up calls required.

## Early Intervention and Community Empowerment

### 01. LGBF – Library Visits

Total number of library visits – in person and virtual	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	1,347,180	2022/23	1,648,447	2023/24	1,748,336
<p>The increase can be attributed to the varied programme of in-person events but also the continued cost-of-living crisis that has increased use of libraries as warm spaces and our high quality resources. A particular highlight is the Lend and Mend Hub located in the Media Centre in Central Library which has a varied programme of sessions from repairing items to upcycling. This was funded by the John Lewis Circular Future Fund through SLIC (Scottish Library Information Council) to help tackle the increased cost of living and Aberdeen were selected as one of the locations within Scotland.</p> <p>During exam period our study spaces are particularly well used to provide quiet or collaborative study opportunities for school pupils and Further Education/Higher Education students alike. There has been a small increase in the virtual visitor figure of just under 2% which is testament to the continued provision of high-quality resources. PressReader continues to be a popular resource with readers of e-newspapers and magazines.</p>						

### 02. Community Use of Libraries

Number of community participations generated by library and information service engagement and extensions activity	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	36,464	2022/23	33,861	2023/24	36,203
<p>We held a number of high-quality events that have been organised by library staff. Bookbug sessions continue to be popular and for this year's Bookbug Week, "Bookbug says hello" staff and volunteers were filmed singing or saying rhymes in Polish, Finnish and French which also promoted our dual language Bookbug sessions in French and English. For older adults, the Memories Scotland groups are growing in popularity within Central and Cove Libraries. The number of events held in libraries increased by 13%. While all libraries increased the number of activities, two libraries to note are Dyce and Old Aberdeen. Dyce Library moved to a new location which is attached to Dyce Primary School and the community Centre. There has been a 107% increase in the number of activities which has included visits from the Nursery and Primary School pupils. The Old Aberdeen Library is a satellite library that is mainly an open space within the Sir Duncan Rice Library at Aberdeen University however staff have begun to host school visits and Aberdeen Reads activities in the Library space.</p>						



### 03. Learning Centres / Access Points

Number of PC terminal and Wi-Fi access uses within libraries and library learning centres	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	36,866	2022/23	63,014	2023/24	70,073
<p>The Media Centre in Central Library has a suite of 31 public PCs which are used regularly, however all locations are reporting higher usage figures. In January 2024, the Lending Mezzanine floor in Central Library was refurbished with a new carpet and additional pcs added, which has led to an increase in public pc usage. In addition, Torry Library which is part of the Greyhope Community Hub has public pc access from 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday available over self service and staff hours. This has increased the availability and usage of the pcs by almost 7%, it is anticipated that this will grow in future years. Central Library received funding in 2022 to update the WiFi to ensure the library infrastructure could meet growing demands on digital access. The global shortage of components meant Aberdeen–City–Guest was installed in November 2023, but despite the delay the improved efficiency of access for library users has been beneficial. Anyone using the Lend and Mend Hub, the Maker Space or the wireless printing service Princh has benefited from a simpler, easier and more consistent connection. Overall WiFi usage has increased by 23% across all our WiFi access points in libraries. Most community libraries have Aberdeen–City–Connect for WiFi access however, Culter, Dyce and Torry libraries have also moved to Aberdeen–City–Guest. Culter has shown the biggest increase in WiFi usage of 106% and Central usage has increased by 31% on the previous year. As Torry and Dyce share their WiFi access with the local school(Greyhope and Dyce) it is not possible to identify the impact the new WiFi has had with the same accuracy.</p>						

### 04. Housing Rental

Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	14.02%	2022/23	17.41%	2023/24	18.25%
<p>Cost-of-living crisis and increase in fuel costs have both had a negative impact on tenant's incomes. Although we previously had a focus on avoiding legal actions, including evictions, we've reinstated that recovery process. Using digital case conferencing, we are ensuring all possible options have been attempted and exhausted before we take this action. Universal Credit continues to have an impact on rent recovered with the number of tenants claiming this benefit increasing. Escalation policies have been reset and through the development of a revised Rent Arrears Improvement Charter, monitored by the Performance Board, this will demonstrate joint and collaborative working approaches between the Corporate Debt and Housing Teams. Going forward into 2024/25, work is ongoing to continue to review and introduce new initiatives surrounding all rent escalation policies with the aim of reducing Rent Arrears. However, it is anticipated that there will still be negative impacts on tenants income through high inflation and rising costs.</p>						

Other initiatives implemented or planned include:

- A review of the Direct Debit process for tenancy signings. This has delivered an increase in Direct Debits as the payment of choice by over 10%, from 37.1% in 2022/23 to 41.2% in 2023/24.
- Ensuring that the availability of Discretionary Housing Payments are maximised.
- A programme of cross service staff training on Universal Credit.
- 'Self-serve' rent arrears translation service introduced.
- Design and delivery of a Rent Assistance Fund.
- Analysis to be undertaken to establish the differences between our processes and other council's write off processes.

	Value		Value		Value	
Rent loss due to voids	2021/22	3.66%	2022/23	5.7%	2023/24	7.91%

A Housing Board has been established to oversee progress in housing outcomes. The Board has agreed an iterative plan which will focus on a number of areas including data management, stock management and voids management. Significant time is currently being invested in establishing the data architecture we require to enable more effective real time monitoring, this will better enable the Council to take more timeous action based on emerging trends. Examples of actions identified at this time include:

- Clarification of role and responsibilities in decision making.
- Focus on using existing full set properties to accelerate the RAAC rehousing programme
- Continued focus on letting the new build developments which will positively impact on average relet times.
- Use of digital technologies to support more efficient processes.
- Review of void pathways and process mapping which will include additional and more robust inspection of properties to minimise properties returned in poor condition at termination.
- Earlier scheduling and programming of work, creating further efficiency within the overall process.
- Introducing demand led prioritisation of voids work

## 05. Equalities and Diversity

### Work done to encourage and support equalities and diversity within the city

We have worked with our employees, partners and communities to:

- Launch an upgraded Integrated Impact Assessment which ensures our proposals, policies or decisions consider the impact on different groups of people within our community and workforce. These assessments support us to evaluate the potential effects of our actions on equality, diversity and inclusion, human rights, health and wellbeing, and community engagement.
- Work is being progressed to include Climate impact and the Consumer Duty 2020 as part of this assessment.
- Consult with the British Sign Language (BSL) user community and the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to create a BSL Plan 2024–30, which aims to improve services and information for BSL users. We also developed our new Gaelic Language Plan 2023–2028 which reflects the national plan that seeks to maintain the status of Gaelic as part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life.
- Adopt a Modern Slavery Statement that outlined our commitment to work towards eliminating all forms of modern slavery as per the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We will present a follow-up report in 2 years to review our progress on the commitments.
- Hold a Leadership Forum and 6 training sessions on equalities and integrated impact assessments, with more sessions planned for the year ahead. We also carried out a landmark budget consultation, with more emphasis on engaging with people with protected characteristics and lived-in experience – this will be something that we will continuously do on a regular basis.
- Participate and lead various events to foster good relations with its citizens and were involved in several events that promoted diversity, inclusion and civic participation, such as Holocaust Memorial Day, Come and Network Festival, Black History Month and Year of the Black Worker, Elect Her, Aberdeen Mela and Grampian Pride.

## 06. Abandoned Vehicles

Percentage of reported vehicles meeting legal definition of abandoned vehicles	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		12.14%	20.72%
Percentage of legally abandoned vehicles requested for uplifted within 28 days	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
			80.53%
<p>In 2023/24 there was 917 cars reported as abandoned. Our City Wardens investigated each reported abandoned car, in conjunction with our partners and agencies including Police Scotland, Housing, Street Occupations, Trading Standards, the Community Safety team, the Fire Service and DVLA. 190 cars were deemed to be legally abandoned and 153 were requested to be uplifted within 28 days of being reported as an abandoned car. We have had recognition from members of the public and from various community council meetings that we attend, acknowledging the excellent response times for most vehicles that are reported to us.</p>			

## People and Organisation

### 01. LGBF – Sickness Absence

The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for teachers	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	5.56	6.85	7.19
The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for other local government employees	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	13.85	13.63	14.64
<p>Reducing sickness absence is a priority and we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided training to managers regarding their responsibilities.</li> <li>• Planned to review the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy.</li> </ul>			

- Reviewed the Absence Improvement Project and are working on a project plan.

## 02. LGBF – Equal Opportunities Policy

Percentage of council employees in top 5% of earners that are women	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	57.99%	2022/23	54.24%	2023/24	56.4%
We re-structured in 2024 and five Chief Officer posts held previously by males are now held by females. There has been turnover of posts and the successful candidates have been female. We continued to focus on improving diversity at senior leadership level with a range of proactive initiatives to attract, support and develop candidates with a range of protected characteristics in their career with the council.						

## 03. LGBF – Gender Pay Gap

Average hourly rate of pay (male)	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	£16.67	2022/23	£18.15	2023/24	£19.67
Average hourly rate of pay (female)	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	£17.29	2022/23	£19.27	2023/24	£20.81
The gender pay gap	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	-3.72%	2022/23	-6.17%	2023/24	-5.77%
There are proportionately more males than females in leadership position. The reverse is true in Education with many females in leadership positions and as Education makes up a significant proportion of the workforce, this impacts the pay gap reported with females having a higher average hourly rate. Large areas of the workforce which have lower rates of pay compared to teachers, such as our craft workers, are predominately made of up males.						

### 3. Children's and Family Services

#### Education

##### 01. Attainment

Percentage of senior phase pupil candidates achieving Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 5 at the end of S6 (based on S4)	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 62%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 69%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage of senior phase pupil candidates attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 at the end of S6 ( based on S4)	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 85%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 89%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at advanced higher grade	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 91%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 90%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at higher grade	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 87%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 81%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage difference in the attainment of literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 between the most and least deprived of senior phase pupil candidates	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 21.0%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 19.0%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage difference in the attainment of literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 5 between the most and least deprived of senior phase pupil candidates	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 43.0%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 39.0%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>
Percentage of S4 year group from areas defined as falling within the highest 20% of deprivation (SIMD Quintile 1) attaining 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 at the end of S6	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 43.0%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 48.0%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b>

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Percentage pass rate for all subjects at National Four	2021/22	Value 86%	2022/23	Value 89%	2023/24	Value
Percentage of S4 year cohort attaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 5 or better by end of S6	2021/22	Value 63%	2022/23	Value 70%	2023/24	Value
Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE level in literacy	2021/22	Value 63%	2022/23	Value 69%	2023/24	Value
Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE level in numeracy	2021/22	Value 72%	2022/23	Value 77%	2023/24	Value
Literacy attainment gap (P1,4,7 combined) – percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	2021/22	Value 31%	2022/23	Value 21%	2023/24	Value
Numeracy attainment Gap (P1,4,7 combined) – percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	2021/22	Value 28%	2022/23	Value 21%	2023/24	Value
Percentage of S4 year group from areas defined as falling within the highest 20% of deprivation (SIMD Quintile 1) attaining 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 at the end of S6	2021/22	Value 14%	2022/23	Value 17%	2023/24	Value
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at national five	2021/22	Value 86%	2022/23	Value 86%	2023/24	Value
Percentage of S4 year cohort attaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 6 or better by end of S6	2021/22	Value 37.0%	2022/23	Value 39.0%	2023/24	Value

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## 02. Positive Destinations

Percentage of school leavers from publicly funded schools in positive initial destinations by reporting year	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>93.6%</b>

## 03. Education Inspections

Percentage of positive evaluations of quality reference indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded early learning centres, primary, secondary and special schools per financial year	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>87.8%</b>

## 04. 4 Pre-School Inspections

Percentage of positive evaluations of quality reference indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded early learning and childcare per financial year	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>89.5%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>86.2%</b>

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#### 05. Pre-School Provision

Percentage of eligible population allocated ACC funded ante pre-school and pre-school nursery places in local authority and partner provider early learning and childcare settings	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 91.28%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 94.74%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 97.97%
Percentage of eligible ante pre-school child population allocated ACC funded part time nursery provision within local authority and partner provider settings	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 90.7%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 83.0%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 79.8%
Percentage of eligible pre-school child population allocated ACC funded part time nursery provision within local authority and partner provider settings	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 98.5%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 98.2%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 98.7%

#### Integrated Children's and Family Services

#### 01. Looked After Accommodated Children

Percentage of Looked After Children with 3 or more placements in the past year	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Value</b> 3.5%	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Value</b> 4.35%	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Value</b> 2.78%
<p>The decrease for children and young people having experienced multiple placements is positive despite an increase in the number of children/young people in placements away from home. The increase reflects the combination of young people arriving via the National Transfer Scheme and spontaneous arrivals who all have a looked after status.</p> <p>We are committed to reducing the number of placements children and young people experience. The number of moves in quick succession can be as a result of emergency unplanned admission, which is the case in a small number of placements. Sometimes emergency placements are helpful, such as keeping siblings together. Some children/young people experienced the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their overall well-being which contributed to the fragility of placements. Since then, our services and partner agencies have had to adapt and respond in a more trauma informed way. Investment in therapeutic and psychological support within Independent Fostering agencies have increased and supports are delivered timely to ensure that placements are afforded every opportunity to be stable and successful.</p>						

## 02. Families at Risk

Percentage of looked after children and young people supported to remain within their families (at home and within kinship care)	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>44.82%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>43.09%</b>
<p>The number of children and young people being cared for in family or kin placement has remained largely stable. This reflects the fact that more kinship carers are being supported to secure children and young people legally ( kinship carer orders) through court and as a result these children are no longer considered looked after. These children and young people and their carer(s) do however continue to receive multi-agency support. In line with the principles of the Promise, local support services have been reimagined to ensure they are community based, holistic, relational, flexible and responsive. The operational priority and emphasis over the coming year continues to be shifting the balance of care by supporting children remain with family and kin. For those in such placements, there has been clear evidence and sharing from families of feeling supported and included in decision making. In response to this feedback from children and families, we have invested in Family Group Decision Making and commissioned services that provide a whole family approach.</p>						

## 03. Child Protection Register Numbers

Number of children on Child Protection Register	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>237</b>
<p>The children whose names are recorded on the child protection register are at risk of abuse and neglect, as identified and supported by the children's social work service, in collaboration with agencies across Aberdeen city. By registering children deemed to be at risk of harm and through continuous evaluation of support and intervention put in place to reduce this, we can ensure provision in Aberdeen is as effective as possible.</p> <p>The number of children on the child protection register has remained stable, only slightly exceeding the national average rate of 2.3 per 1000 children, by sitting at 2.6. In previous years, half of all registrations have been for children under 4yrs, but this year this accounted for 32% of all registrations, with 41% aged between 5 and 11 years old. The primary reasons for registration in line with previous years, were neglect, parental mental health issues, domestic abuse, and emotional abuse. These reasons align with the national trends and reflect the priorities of the Child Protection Programme for 2021-2024.</p>						

#### 04. Child Protection Re-registrations

The number of children re-registering on the Children Protection Register within two years of being taken off the register	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>We strive to ensure that, through relevant interventions, children do not return to being at risk of significant harm and thereby requiring registration again. Re-registration affects a small number of children and also reflects that parental alcohol/drug use continues to feature prominently in the reasons for registration. We know that the cycle of recovery for adults with problematic alcohol/drug use often involves relapse which can result in child protection registration being required again. In 2023/24, 6% of children had previous registration history within a 2 year period. We are in line with the national average and with our closest local authority and faring better than the average across the three local authorities in the North East of Scotland.</p>						

#### 4. Resources

##### Corporate Landlord

#### 01. Public Access

Percentage of council buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>81.82%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>82.4%</b>
<p>The minor increase is primarily due to the opening of two new buildings which are designed to be fully accessible, whilst one accessible building and one inaccessible building have been closed this year. The buildings which are not accessible are predominantly historic or listed buildings which can't be easily upgraded due to budget or statutory constraints. Any improvement works undertaken to improve accessibility will also reflect Net Zero aspirations where possible. The total number of buildings assessed for accessibility stayed the same this year at 125 properties. The percentage of accessible buildings remain consistent which is in line with the target. There is limited benchmarking data available but what there is suggests that we perform reasonably well. The portfolio will continue to change as the Property &amp; Estates Strategy is implemented, which could have both positive and negative impact on accessible buildings. At this stage it is not possible to determine what that impact will be. As such the target for next year remains at 82%. Any works to the external fabric of a building to improve its accessibility, for example the replacement of access doors, should also improve the thermal performance of the building, contributing to our Net Zero aspirations.</p>						

02. LGBF – Asset Management

Percentage of internal floor area of operational accommodation that is in a satisfactory condition.	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	96.71%	91.21%
	2022/23	91.99%	91.21%
The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use.	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	75.9%	76.67%
<p>Ongoing surveys have identified a slight increase in the number of buildings at a satisfactory level of suitability and a slight decrease in buildings in satisfactory condition. However both figures remain above the targets set last year. A number of buildings have been moved from a B condition rating to a C condition rating this year, which has contributed to the slight decrease in the condition figure. There are two education buildings within the portfolio which have been found to contain Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and this is likely to affect their condition rating when they are next surveyed. Airyhall Community Centre and Denburn Car Park dropped from a B to C rating for suitability this year, while two assets rated C for suitability, Store 44 – 56 Portal Crescent, and Torry Library were removed, and one C rated asset was added at Garthdee Depot, giving a slight increase in the suitability figure. The addition of Greyhope School and Community Hub as a new educational asset with a considerably large floor area, has also contributed to the changes in this year’s figures. All assets added were A or B rated for both condition and suitability.</p> <p>The asset portfolio will continue to change, making predictions difficult. However, the Property &amp; Estates Strategy identifies a likely decline. Our service standards previously targeted a condition rating of B for all properties; this has reduced in 2024/25 to a C rating. This reflects a static repair and maintenance budget over a number of years and a policy to only undertake essential repairs. Taking all of this into account, the targets set for next year are 90% for condition and 75% for suitability.</p>			

### 03. Operational Assets Required Maintenance Costs

The required maintenance cost of operational assets per square metre	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	£93.77	2022/23	£132.67	2023/24	£132.47
<p>The overall floor area has increased significantly by 6,565sqm, primarily due to the opening of a new school. The continued decline in condition of many properties has been identified during the condition survey programme. Construction costs continue to rise with impact of inflation. Planned investment figures represent a number of large scale projects which in the longer term will help to improve the overall condition of buildings and impact positively on the figures, however these are unlikely to be completed within the next year, so the target for next year has been kept unchanged at £130 per square metre.</p> <p>It is important to note that the figures above capture a specific point in time, in terms of the information currently held on required works and likely costs. It is acknowledged that the actual cost of all required works is subject to ongoing survey work, and likely to be significantly higher than the figure shown above. The Condition and Suitability Programme will continue to allow for targeted capital spend. This will result in improvements to specific buildings but buildings not included in the programme will decline. Projects within the capital programme such as refurbishment / improvements for Harlaw Academy, Ferryhill School and the replacement Hazlehead Academy will positively contribute over the next 2 to 4 years.</p>						

### 04. Carbon Reduction Commitment

Building and street lighting carbon emissions	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	21,968 tonnes	2022/23	21,793 tonnes	2023/24	22,134 tonnes
<p>2023/24 was on average 5% colder than 2022/23 based on degree day data and there was a 1% increase in gas emissions. The increase in gas usage due to colder temperatures was partially offset by building closures and some buildings being disconnected from gas heating and connected to district heating. Emissions from district heating increased mainly due to new connections at Tullos school and Greyhope school along with the first full year of use at Muirfield School and Len Ironside centre along with an increase in heat usage due to the colder weather. There has been a reduction in the emissions from street lighting due to the ongoing LED replacement project. There has been a 6% reduction in electricity usage in buildings due to the removal of consumption from Electric Vehicle charge points, energy efficiency measures and the closure of some buildings.</p>						

## Finance

### 01. Efficiencies Achieved

Council-wide efficiencies as a percentage of revenue budget	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	6.36%	2022/23	6%	2023/24	8.24%
<p>Since the budget was approved in March 2023 there have been significant changes to the financial environment. The enduring implications of the COVID-19 pandemic placed pressure on achieving service income targets, while the additional demand to meet the needs of an increasing population, particularly in respect of education services, was a direct consequence of resettlement schemes to support over 1,300 Ukrainians and Afghans during 2023/24, at the same time as an increased number of families in the city following admission to the city universities. In 2023/24, we achieved a balanced budget. We continue to set balanced budgets annually and model the financial challenges that lie ahead through the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>						

### 02. Accountancy Costs

Cost of overall accountancy function per £1,000 of net expenditure	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	£3.26	2022/23	£3.3	2023/24	£3.1
<p>Finance expenditure has increased mainly due the Scottish Government Pay award for 2023/24, leading to an increase in salary costs, and the cost of overall Council Operations have increased by £37.696m to £562.299 million.</p>						

Operations and Protective Services

01. Street Light Repairs

Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	79.47%	2022/23	93.19%	2023/24	96.06%
<p>By introducing LED technology, we have reduced emissions and promoted sustainability providing energy efficiency, lower maintenance costs, and improved quality of lighting for public spaces. We are committed to reducing wastefulness in all its forms in order to contribute to a more sustainable future. The installation of LED street lights significantly reduced our carbon footprint and it is estimated that over 350 tonnes of CO2 has been saved each year of the replacement process with carbon over 60% less than before the project commenced. We invested £9 million over a 6 year period to convert all the streetlights to LED. Previously we were spending around £3 million a year on energy use for street lights and by converting to LED technology we have seen a reduction of 65% less energy.</p>						

02. Street Lighting Lamps

Percentage of LED Lamps installed	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	89.38%	2022/23	93.42%	2023/24	99%
<p>The seven year rollout program of replacing the old inefficient and expensive street lighting with more efficient and cost-effective LED lighting continues. The rollout has been progressed during 2023/24 and we are on the final stages of works with only a small percentage of lamps remaining. Rollout figure has increased to 99% with remaining being completed over financial year.</p>						

### 03. Road Network Restrictions

Percentage of council and private bridges assessed that failed to meet the EU standard of 40 tonnes	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	1.84%	2022/23	3.33%	2023/24	3.17%
<p>Of the bridges failing the EU standard of 40 tonnes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of the Milton of Drum Bridge is desirable when funds become available.</li> <li>• Footway protection to be installed on rail bridges with weak footpaths when resources become available.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to the bridge stock as a whole, the key issues are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The backlog of maintenance and repairs remains high. Resource has been put into the development of a prioritised 5 year capital programme with a view to maintaining the backlog at a steady state.</li> <li>• The pre-construction services contract for scour protection at the Bridge of Dee has been completed and works are now underway. This major work will be carried out over financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 using a sum of money transferred to Aberdeen City Council for this particular purpose.</li> </ul> <p>Major projects included on the 5 year capital plan are: refurbishment of Cults Square bridge, scour protection at Parkhill bridge, resurfacing and waterproofing of Queen Elizabeth bridge, painting of Maryculter bridge, painting of Union Bridge, concrete repairs at King George VI bridge and strengthening of Milton of Drum bridge. These are required in order to maintain security of the network.</p>						

### 04. Pothole Repairs

Potholes category 1 and 2 – percentage of defects repaired within timescale	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	84%	2022/23	93%	2023/24	90.59%
<p>The number of reported category 1 and 2 potholes almost doubled from 2022/23. The number and severity of pothole repairs vary dramatically with the weather and time of year. The highest volume of repairs occurs during the winter period or following extended periods of rainfall and this volume can affect repair timescales. Additionally, there were significant supply chain issues and although the material supply was rectified, the backlog led to a longer period of decreased performance. However, considering the significant increase in potholes reported and the supply issues, our performance is high. We continue to work with our suppliers to ensure material remains in stock and available throughout the year.</p>						



05. LGBF – Refuse Collection

Number of premises for refuse collection (combined domestic, commercial, and domestic bulky uplift)	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>124,369</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>125,372</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>126,359</b>

07. LGBF – Noise Complaints

Barking dogs and domestic Environmental Protection Act complaints received during the year requiring attendance on site, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site.	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>57.2</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>42.5</b>

There are two Dog Wardens in the team who deal with dog barking complaints. Management expectation is for both domestic EPA complaints and barking dog complaints to be visited within 48 hours, excluding weekends and public holidays. However where an appointment has been made, the visit may be greater than 48 hours. The dog wardens have reported carrying out a greater number of visits in conjunction with Housing Officers to improve the customer experience and assist resolving complaints.

08. Food Hygiene

Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1A 18 months –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		DIV/0	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1B 12 months –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		100%	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1C 6 months –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		100%	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1D 3 months –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		DIV/0	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1E 1 month –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		DIV/0	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 2D 3 months –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		93.02%	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 2E 1 month –	<b>Value</b> 2021/22	<b>Value</b> 2022/23	<b>Value</b> 2023/24
		100%	100%

The food law landscape has significantly altered over the last few years. In 2019 the risk rating scheme changed combining the once separate inspection activities of food hygiene and food standards into one food law intervention. There has also been disruption to service delivery following the COVID-19 pandemic and after a period of recovery the service is gradually returning to normal, albeit constrained by the availability of qualified officers. We are addressing this shortfall through a training program and during the year two trainees were employed; they will be ready to sit their professional exams in Autumn 2024. After they qualify, they will be able to carry out food law interventions.

We have inspected 100% of our trading premises in these Groups on time. Our officers also undertake inspections of new and other lower risk businesses where resources allow. They are multifunctional and deal with several other areas of work in addition to undertaking food law inspections. Available staffing resource is allocated to matters that present the greatest public health risk which has an impact on the capacity to undertake food law inspections.

#### 09. High Priority Pest Control

Percentage of high priority pest control responded to within 2 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	98.4%	2022/23	98.9%	2023/24	95.1%

100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the number of complaints received each month and staffing levels. A pest control officer left the organisation in March 2023 which meant there were only 2 officers available to cover the busy June–October period. Along with volume of requests received during this period, there was a failure to respond to 30 requests within 2 days. The vacant pest control post was filled in January 2024 and assuming a full complement of officers is maintained, it is anticipated performance will improve in 2024/25.

#### 10. High Priority Public Health Complaints

Percentage of high Priority Public Health responded to within 2 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	99.2%	2022/23	96.3%	2023/24	95.6%

100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the nature and number of complaints received each month. Lower staffing levels through annual leave, training and staff vacancies can also make compliance more challenging. An Environmental Health Officer (EHO) and an Authorised Officer (AO) left the organisation in September 2023. While the AO post was filled in January 2024, the EHO post remains vacant with the duties of the post distributed across the team. The reduction in staff numbers has placed additional stress on the team and makes compliance with our timescale more challenging, particularly when staff are on leave or otherwise absent.

11. Trading Standards – Complaints and Advice

Percentage of trading standards consumer complaints that were dealt with in 14 days	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		74.37%	84.63%
Percentage of trading standards business advice requests that were dealt with in 14 days	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		68.97%	81.25%
<p>We have increased the proportion of complaints and enquiries closed within 14 days in the last year. However, the number of complaints and enquiries received in total has fallen from 1369 in 2022–23 to 1229 this year, and the number requiring our intervention has fallen from 515 to 462. We had hoped that complaint levels would pick up in the years after the COVID–19 pandemic but this suggests the opposite. We intend to discuss this with colleagues across Scotland to determine if they are experiencing the same drop in complaint levels. If this is a more general trend, we will seek engagement with Advice Direct Scotland to determine if there are reasons why, and what can be done to address them so that consumers are not left at a disadvantage. Similar to the situation found with consumer complaints, although the percentage of requests closed within 14 days has increased, we have seen an overall drop in the number of businesses approaching us for advice. We had hopes that with our increased visibility during the COVID–19 pandemic, where we were engaging with businesses on a daily basis as they struggled to cope with the constantly changing regulations, that we would see increased business engagement. These figures suggest this is not the case.</p> <p>It is important to note that these figures do not reflect the full picture of our engagement with city business as these figures only relate to those businesses who have sought us out, not those we have approached to engage with them. Some of those engagements are reported under high risk inspections but approaches to medium and low risk businesses are not.</p>			

12. Trading Standards Inspections

Percentage of visits to high risk premises achieved	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value</b>
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		98.96%	97.14%
<p>Our service continues to prioritise visiting and inspecting businesses which we assess as high risk. These are cosmetics producers, food and goods packers, petrol station, and weighbridges, for example, making sure these businesses produce goods that are safe, are packed to the correct quantities to be sold all over the country, accurately determine the quantity of goods for the calculation of tax or disposal costs, or accurately measure the quantities of high volume or high value goods which the consumer can't do for themselves. We continue to achieve this only missing 3 inspections as scheduled this year for reasons beyond our control. This degree of success may be difficult to replicate in 2024–25 because the consortium of local authorities led by Fife Council which provided the Weighbridge Test Unit has come to an end and this equipment will no</p>			

longer be available to us. This means we will have to find an alternative supplier from the open market which will be more expensive. Effectively, this will mean that with the same budget we will have less time to do the same number of inspections, although we will explore the possibility of sharing the costs of bringing a Unit north from the central belt or England with neighbouring authorities.

### 13. Fleet Vehicles

Percentage of council fleet – alternative powered vehicles	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
Vehicles under 3500Kg under 5 years of age	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>65.23%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>67.65%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>65%</b>
Vehicles over 3500Kg under 7 years of age (Heavy Goods Vehicles)	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>72.44%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>77.39%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>54.81%</b>
Low emission vehicles	<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>		<b>Value</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>95.97%</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>88.91%</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>93.93%</b>

We are committed to reducing carbon emissions both within fleet operations and across the city as part of the Climate Change Energy Plan. Reducing emissions from transport remains a challenge as it involves the need for increased funding together with behavioural change in relation to previous funding attitudes, refuelling requirements, vehicle selection and involves consideration around moving to the use of new vehicle technology.

Vehicle “life” depends on a number of criteria and operating life may range from 5 to 7 years, or longer depending upon usage and the vehicle type – small LGV vehicles or HGV vehicles over 3.5 tonnes. There is an optimum time for vehicle replacement which is 5 years or 7 years (light and heavy) and it is likely that the older the vehicle the greater the cost of repairs and maintenance and the increased possibility of vehicle downtime. The vehicle’s life may be extended, where appropriate, depending on mileage, condition and utilisation with consideration to any specialist features, intended to provide best value and optimum availability to all Services.

14. Traffic Light Repairs

Percentage of all traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours	Value		Value		Value	
	2021/22	96.56%	2022/23	93.23%	2023/24	97.03%
<p>Lamp faults and Detector faults decreased but Push Button faults and All Dark faults increased. The severe winter weather were directly responsible for 61 traffic signal faults. Climate change may result in Aberdeen experiencing more frequent severe weather events in the future, it is appropriate to record the impact of these events to assist with emergency planning in future years. Damage due to Road Traffic Collisions remained the same as 2022/23 and every effort is made to trace those parties responsible for this damage so that the costs can be reclaimed, unless the Police attend the incident, or there are witnesses present at the time, it is extremely difficult.</p> <p>Reasons for missing the repair target are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most damage due to Road Traffic Collisions require a significant amount of replacement parts and/or assistance from the Council's Roads Services Unit which is longer than 48 hours.</li> <li>• Further investigation due to intermittent faults.</li> <li>• The volume of faults during stormy weather and the availability of spare parts or configuration.</li> </ul>						