



COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 10.30 am

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** to be held in **COMMITTEE ROOM 5 - WOODHILL HOUSE, WESTBURN ROAD, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB**(with virtual attendance), on **THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2023, at 10.30 am**

A recording of the public part of the meeting will be made publicly available at a later date.

Wednesday, 30 August 2023

Director of Business Services

To: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), H Powell (Vice-Chair), D Beagrie, A Evison, S Payne, J Adams, F Joji, E Durno, G Reynolds, H Smith, I Walker, N Baillie, S Brown and I Taylor.

Substitute Members: Councillors L Carnie, M Grant, L Knight, S Logan, J Nicol, G Owen, R Cassie, A Kloppert, G Lang, A Simpson, M Sullivan, J Whyte, R Menard and C Simpson.

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B U S I N E S S

1	Sederunt and Declaration of Members' Interests	
2(A)	Public Sector Equality Duty Consider, and if so desired, adopt the following resolution:-	5
	(1) to have due regard to the need to:-	
	(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;	
	(b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and	
	(c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	
	(2) where an Integrated Impact Assessment is provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching a decision.	
2(B)	Exempt Information	
	2B. Resolution:	
	Consider, and if so decided, adopt the following resolution: - That under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the Meeting for Items 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 of the business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.	
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PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY – GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

What is the duty?

In making decisions on the attached reports, Members are reminded of their legal duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:-

- (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- (ii) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (iii) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The “protected characteristics” under the legislation are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; and (in relation to point (i) above only) marriage and civil partnership.

How can Members discharge the duty?

To ‘have due regard’ means that in making decisions, Members must consciously consider the need to do the three things set out above. This requires a conscious approach and state of mind. The duty must influence the final decision.

However, it is not a duty to achieve a particular result (e.g. to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination or to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups). It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals.

How much regard is ‘due’ will depend upon the circumstances and in particular on the relevance of the needs to the decision in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact that a decision may have on people with protected characteristics, the higher the regard required by the duty.

What does this mean for Committee/Full Council decisions?

Members are directed to the section in reports headed ‘Council Priorities, Implications and Risk’. This will indicate whether or not an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals and, if so, what the outcome of that assessment is.

An IIA will be appended to a report where it is likely, amongst other things, that the action recommended in the report could have a differential impact (either positive or negative) upon people from different protected groups. The report author will have assessed whether or not an IIA is required. If one is not required, the report author will explain why that is.

Where an IIA is provided, Members should consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision. Members should also be satisfied that the assessment is sufficiently robust and that they have enough of an understanding of the issues to be able to discharge their legal duty satisfactorily.

For more detailed guidance please refer to the following link:-

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.equalityhumanrights.com%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Ftechnical_guidance_psed_scotland.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

HYBRID MEETING, 1 JUNE, 2023

Present: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), H Powell (Vice Chair), J Adams, N Baillie, D Beagrie, S Brown, E Durno, F Joji, A Kloppert (as substitute for A Evison) S Payne, G Reynolds, H Smith, I Taylor and I Walker.

Apology: Councillor A Evison.

Officers: Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services; Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership; Head of Communities and Partnerships; Head of Housing; Business Planning and Improvement Manager (Fiona McCallum); Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie, Police Scotland; Chief Inspector Chris Kerr, Police Scotland; Housing Manager (Housing and Building Standards); Service Manager (Live Life Aberdeenshire) (John Cornfield); Partnership Manager North, Health and Social Care Partnership; Mental Health and Learning Disability Manager (Vicky Henderson); Business Planning and Improvement Manger (Neil Watts); Business Project Officer (Lynda Firth); Service Development Officer (Housing) (Tracy Noles); Business Partner (Finance) (Rebecca Meiklejohn); Principal Solicitor (Governance) (Martin Ingram); and Senior Committee Officer (Niall David).

In attendance: Martin McCathie; Kirsty Ngala; and Elaine McLean, all Aberdeenshire Council Tenants Group (Item 10); and Councillors S Adams and R Cassie (Items 12 and 13)

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were declared.

2. RESOLUTIONS

A. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality and opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

- (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- (2) to consider, where an Integrated Impact Assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

B. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the items specified below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the undernoted paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Item No	Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
20	8 & 10
21	8 & 10
22	8
23	8
24	8

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE OF 30 MARCH, 2023

The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 30 March, 2023 had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record.

4. PROGRESS WITH ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There was circulated a report by the Director of Business Services which updated Members on the progress made against outstanding actions agreed at previous meetings of the Communities Committee.

The Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services provided updates and thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the position with regard to the outstanding actions from previous meetings and also those which had been completed since the last meeting.

5. COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - BUDGET 2023/24

There was circulated a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which provided details of the Revenue and Capital budgets pertaining to the services which fell under the remit of Communities Committee for the financial year 2023/24.

The report highlighted that the Communities Committee had responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and scrutinising of the Council's policy and making decisions on matters relating to the functions which fell under their remit. The report set out the financial information for these services to enable this process.

The report went on to remind Members that Full Council approved the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets at the meeting on 9 March, 2023 as part of agreeing

the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Appendix A to the report set out the budget information for the services for which the Communities Committee had responsibility, and the arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the financial performance of these services during 2023/24.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the Revenue and Capital Budgets pertaining to the Communities Committee for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix A;
- (2) to note the Financial Risks and Assumptions associated with these budgets;
- (3) to note the agreed Budget Savings associated with these budgets and to agree that updates on achievement of these would be reported to future Committees;
- (4) to note the Earmarked Reserves associated with this Committee and their use;
- (5) that Financial Performance reports relating to Revenue and Capital expenditure, achievement of savings and use of reserves for the financial year 2023/24 would be reported to the Communities Committee in accordance with Financial Regulations; and
- (6) that information be emailed to the Committee on the use so far in this financial year of the Risk and Inflation Reserve by the Council in response to any budgetary pressures arising from risks materialising which could not be mitigated by Services.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND – VERBAL UPDATE

Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie, North East Divisional Commander, provided a verbal update to the Committee on Police Scotland matters of relevance to the Aberdeenshire Council area.

In particular he drew attention to the recent announcement at the Scottish Police Authority board meeting on 25 May, 2023 when the Chief Constable, Sir Iain Livingstone, addressed the issue of institutional discrimination in policing. He highlighted that the Chief Constable was clear that publicly acknowledging these institutional issues existed was essential to Police Scotland's commitment to championing equality and becoming an anti-racist service. It was also critical to their determination to lead wider change in society. Other matters on which an update was provided included: Police Scotland budgetary and staffing issues; road user safety; violence in crime; rural partnership initiatives; Operation Protector, which was a multi-agency approach designed to target criminals involved in illegal waste activity; and the disclosure scheme for tackling domestic violence.

There followed a question and answer session.

The Committee concurred with the Chair in thanking Chief Superintendent Mackie for an informative update.

7. HOUSING VOIDS MONITORING

There was circulated a report dated 17 May, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which provided an update on the current position with Housing Voids, to obtain agreement to the performance targets set for 2023/24.

The report highlighted that it was recognised that a number of factors had influenced void relet times and void rent loss. Scottish local authorities had experienced a significant increase in average relet times since the beginning of the pandemic. Rent loss in Aberdeenshire was higher than other Local Authority providers, at 2.7% in Quarter 4 of 2021/22, compared with the Scottish average rent loss for the same period being 1.9%.

The report went on to explain that Aberdeenshire Council was following a similar trend until Quarter 3 of 2021/22, where rent loss in Aberdeenshire decreased while the national average continued to increase. This demonstrated that Aberdeenshire Council had improved how it performed in comparison to other local authorities. The variance between Aberdeenshire and the Scottish average increased to 1.3% in 2020/21, but by Quarter 3 (2021/22) this had reduced to 0.8% and remained at that level in Quarter 4 (2021/22). Void rent loss in Aberdeenshire had reduced substantially since the end of 2021/22. Scottish average results for 2022/23 were not currently available for comparison, but Aberdeenshire figures had improved to 2.1% in Quarter 4 of 2022/23, and were 2% for the year as a whole. This equalled a 25% improvement in performance in 2022/23, which was a significant achievement.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the update provided relating to processing housing voids (empty properties); and
- (2) the performance targets for 2023/24, as outlined in the report.

8. HOUSING FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE LINKED REPORT: QUARTER 4 2022/23

There was circulated a report dated 15 May, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which provided information on the Housing Service's performance in terms of finance and key performance indicators of service delivery.

The report explained that it was intended to support the Committee in their role of scrutinising performance related to the Housing Service, both in terms of performance by the Service related to the Council Priorities, and in terms of financial information regarding income and expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account. The reporting format combined information related to financial and service performance into a single document, to provide greater clarity and demonstrate the links between financial and service performance.

The report provided detail on Revenue Financial Performance, Capital Financial Performance and Reserves Financial Performance.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the performance and financial information provided;
- (2) to instruct the Directors of Environment and Infrastructure Services and Business Services to continue to report Housing Performance and Financial information to Committee on a regular basis; and
- (3) that future reports be provided to all Area Committee on the management of local Housing Revenue Account assets, such as garages.

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT: REVIEW OF GARDEN AND OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE

There was circulated a report dated 4 May, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which provided an update on the review of the maintenance of Gardens and Open Spaces held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report recommended that options be considered within the context of the HRA Business Plan Review to allow for detailed consultation with tenants, Committee and Stakeholders.

The report explained that the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan offered an opportunity to engage with tenants and service users in respect of future provision. A comprehensive consultation process would be delivered in conjunction with the Council's Survey and Research consultants. This process would be overseen by the Member Officer Working Group with tenant representative involvement. Final recommendations would be considered by the Communities Committee.

The Committee **agreed** that officers include options for the future maintenance of Gardens and Open Spaces in the Review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

10. REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATION APPLICATION

There was circulated a report dated 4 May, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which explained that the Housing Service had received an application from "Aberdeenshire Council Tenants Group" (ACTG) to become a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO).

The report explained that ACTG had formed a committee and had been working with the Housing Service on the basis of a recognised (unregistered) Tenant Group whilst completing work to apply for formal registration. ACTG and the Tenant Participation Team had worked together to ensure the constitution was comprehensive and covered all required aspects as required for RTO status to be granted.

Martin McCathie, Chair, Kirsty Ngala, Vice Chair and Elaine McLean, Treasurer, from ACTG took part in this item and in delivering a presentation to the Committee which explained that they proposed the following fundraisers: - donations via website; prize squares (advertised through their Facebook page); income from sales of items such as keyrings, pens, mugs, t-shirts, fridge magnets, coasters, etc; and applications for community funding through external organisations. ACTG proposed the funding would be used for activities such as: a peer led phone line; physical goods; and fees relating to booking of spaces for meetings. ACTG proposed to represent the whole of Aberdeenshire. They would do this by advertising via

Facebook, website, leaflet drops, in-person events, teaming up with Housing and other Council Services at events such as roadshows or community days.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the application request;
- (2) to approve the support of the Housing Service;
- (3) that ACTG be requested to approve that the Council check their constitution to ensure appropriate equalities measures and language were in place; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Communities Committee on the potential inclusion of 2 Tenant Organisation representatives as non-voting Members of the Communities Committee.

11. HOUSING AND BUILDING STANDARDS BUSINESS PLAN

There was circulated a report dated 10 April, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services which presented for consideration and approval the Heads of Service Business Plan for the Housing and Building Standards Service and detailed the direction each of the Services would take in support of the Strategic Priorities set out in the Council Plan 2022 to 2027.

The report explained that following approval of the Council Plan 2022 to 2027, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) agreed that Directorate Plans would be discontinued, and Head of Service Business Plans would be developed to set out the scope and standard of work the Service would deliver, along with clear work programmes which will achieve improvements against performance measures.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the Heads of Service Business Plans, detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) approve the performance measures detailed in each Business Plan; and
- (3) instruct the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services to present Business Plan performance reports to the Committee on a six-monthly basis, in line with the Performance Management Framework, evidencing progress and performance in support of the Council Plan 2022-27 commencing from Quarter 1 2023/24.

12. ANNUAL SCRUTINY AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT

There was circulated a report dated 10 May, 2023, by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services, which (1) advised that in terms of the Scheme of Governance, each Area and Policy Committee should be provided with an annual report outlining its scrutiny activity and asking the Committee to monitor its progress and consider the effectiveness of its scrutiny role for the previous financial year, and (2) outlined areas for inclusion in the scrutiny programme for the coming year.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee were in attendance and welcomed the consideration by the Committee of the scrutiny activity that had taken place during the last financial year.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to note:-

- (1) the activities detailed within the report; and
- (2) that the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services arrange a workshop with Members to identify a Scrutiny Improvement Programme for the 2023/2024 financial year; the workshop to include focus on “briefing notes”, in particular their purpose, appropriateness and recording of their outcomes.

13. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

There was circulated a report dated 27 April, 2023, by the Director of Business Services seeking consideration and comment on the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 prior to its submission to the Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 for final approval.

The report advised that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was a mandatory requirement on local government bodies and was published by the Council with its annual accounts and the draft Statement was presented to the Committee for consideration and comment, particularly around the Committee’s contribution to delivering good governance.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee were in attendance and the Chair provided an update on the work of the Audit Committee and how it could work together with the Communities Committee to achieve the best outcomes for communities, by ensuring that essential internal audit recommendations were progressed efficiently and closed off as quickly as possible, and that improvement actions were completed on time, and that the Committees were working collectively to provide assurance on compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance.

After consideration of the report, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the draft Annual Governance Statement (“the draft Statement”), attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) note that the draft Statement was a work in progress and further amendments would be made, as detailed in the report;
- (3) note that the draft Statement would be presented to all other Policy Committees and would be subject to change prior to presentation and sign off at Audit Committee meeting on 6 July, 2023;
- (4) note that the Annual Scrutiny Report formed an integral part of the review of annual effectiveness activities and would be included within the Statement;
- (5) confirm that it had complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and ensured that the Code was operating effectively in practice; and

- (6) equalities being incorporated more explicitly into the Statement, including a link to the Act.

14. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

There was circulated a report dated 16 May, 2023 by the Director of Business Services seeking consideration and comment on the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 prior to its submission to the Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 for final approval.

Members were advised that progress continued to be made across the Plan with the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2021/22 and the Best Value Action Plan 2022 having no overdue actions. There was one overdue action in the Best Value 2020 plan which related to Housing relets. The Housing Service had advised that due to subsequent external events including the cost of living crisis they would be seeking approval to extend the due date of this action when the Best Value Plan was considered by Full Council on 9 March 2023. 45 actions were complete, which was an increase from 41 when the Plan was last considered by the Committee. The number of overdue actions had increased to four, however, that work was progressing at pace in relation to the overdue actions and it was anticipated that those would be complete for the next reporting cycle in June 2023.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the Corporate Improvement Plan (“the Plan”), attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) note that the Plan had been considered by the meeting of the Audit Committee on 22 March, 2023;
- (3) receive six-monthly updates; and
- (4) percentage figures in the Plan to also, where appropriate and possible, include a monetary figure or value.

15. LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE FOR 2022/23

There was circulated a report dated 10 May, 2023, by the Director of Education and Children’s Services which presented for consideration Live Life Aberdeenshire’s Performance Update for the financial year 2022/23, demonstrating progress in delivery of the key priorities of the Council and the current Business Plan for Live Life Aberdeenshire 2021 to 2023.

The report explained that the Annual Performance Update demonstrated the vibrancy of Live Life Aberdeenshire’s service, including the fun and enjoyment delivered to improve health and wellbeing in Aberdeenshire communities and the economic return provided for the Council. It was a comprehensive overview of Live Life Aberdeenshire delivery in the past twelve months across culture and sport. There were some areas specifically highlighted in the covering report, namely Cycle Aberdeenshire, Live Life Essentials, Community Led Walks and the Summer of Play.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the Live Life Aberdeenshire Performance Update, as detailed in Appendix A to the report;
- (2) that a detailed report be submitted to a future meeting on halls; and
- (3) that reports be submitted to Area Committees with appropriate area specific information.

16. SCRUTINY REFERRAL – ASSURANCE REVIEW OF INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD GOVERNANCE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Audit Committee of 22 March, 2023 (Item 6), there was circulated a report dated 2 May, 2023, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which requested that the Committee consider the referral from the Audit Committee that the Committee Review Process be applied in respect of areas of service improvement on the matter of 'Assurance Review of IJB (Integration Joint Board) Governance', as detailed in Internal Audit report 2312.

The report explained that at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 22 March, 2023, an Internal Audit report was received and considered in relation to the 'Assurance Review of IJB Governance'. The report identified a Net Risk Rating of Major, with Limited Assurance provided, with improvement required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited. The relevant extract of the report and the minute of the Audit Committee meeting were detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of the matter of service delivery identified by the Audit Committee for improvement;
- (2) that the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership report to the Committee with the Stage 1 Report on 7 September, 2023; and
- (3) to instruct the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership to report to Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 with the Committee's decision.

17. SCRUTINY REFERRAL – INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Audit Committee of 22 March, 2023 (Item 6), there was circulated a report dated 2 May, 2023 by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which requested that the Committee consider the referral from the Audit Committee that the Committee Review Process be applied in respect of areas of service improvement on the matter of 'IJB Transformational Projects', as detailed in Internal Audit report 2212.

The report explained that at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 22 March, 2023, an Internal Audit report was received and considered in relation to 'IJB Transformational Projects'. The Audit Committee identified a matter of service delivery for improvement, the objective of the audit being to provide assurance that the IJB is continuing to make progress to ensure the success of its transformation agenda. The relevant extract of the report and the minute of the Audit Committee meeting were contained in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of the matter of service delivery identified by the Audit Committee for improvement;
- (2) that the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership report to the Committee with the Stage 1 Report on 7 September, 2023; and
- (3) to instruct the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership to report to Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 with the Committee's decision.

18. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP – COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS STAGE 2

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee of 16 February, 2023 (Item 6) and 30 March, 2023 (Item 16) there was circulated a report dated 6 May, 2023, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which provided an update on progress against the action plan arising from Internal Audit Report 2301 'Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Governance Arrangements', following previous discussion at meetings of the Communities Committee on 16 February, 2023 and 30 March, 2023, and the Stage 2 workshop held on 10 May, 2023, as part of the agreed framework of the Committee Review Process.

The report asked Members to consider recommendations and agree future improvement actions. An update on the status of all actions as at May 2023 was provided in Appendix 1 to the report. A copy of the slides as discussed at the Stage 2 Workshop was attached as Appendix 2.

The report concluded by explaining that should the Committee not be assured and agree to progress to a Stage 3 Investigation an investigation group would need to be identified. An investigation group could be the whole Committee, a smaller group of members or a member officer working group. This group would lead on the investigation and bring a report back for any decision to Communities Committee. The remit would be identified by the investigation group and a terms of reference would be agreed.

Following discussion, Councillor Reynolds, seconded by Councillor Baillie, moved that the report did not provide adequate assurance and that a Stage 3 Investigation take place to allow further exploration of the issues and identification of improvement actions.

As an amendment, Councillor Stirling, seconded by Councillor Walker, moved that the matter be deferred until the meeting of Committee on 7 September, 2023 for a

revised report, including information on the outcome of the ADP consideration of the draft Terms of Reference, and that in the meantime a report be submitted to the meeting of the Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 advising of this.

Members of the Committee voted:

for the motion	(5)	Councillors Baillie, Durno, Joji, Kloppert, and Reynolds.
for the amendment	(8)	Councillors Adams, Beagrie, Brown, Smith, Stirling, Powell, Taylor and Walker.
absent from division	(1)	Councillor Payne.

The amendment was carried whereby the Committee **agreed** that the matter be deferred until the meeting of Committee on 7 September, 2023 for a revised report, including information on the outcome of the ADP consideration of the draft Terms of Reference, and that in the meantime a report be submitted to the meeting of the Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023 advising of this.

19. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ABERDEENSHIRE COMMUNITIES: UPDATE

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee of 16 June, 2022 (Item 4) and 22 September, 2022 (Item 16) there was circulated a report by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which provided an update on Mental Health Services available to Aberdeenshire Communities.

The report aimed to reflect how Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Aberdeenshire Council and other key partners were continuing to work together for the benefit of people in Aberdeenshire communities to support and improve mental health and wellbeing. The report outlined services and supports that were available, in addition to the statutory services comprising Aberdeenshire Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) and Mental Health Officer service. The report highlighted some of the excellent work done in supporting people in their communities.

The report concluded by highlighting that many of the projects referred to in the report had been developed as a direct result of the Aberdeenshire Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 to 2024, which was approved by the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken by all partners in this regard and that an update be provided to Committee in 12 months.

20. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2017 TO 2022

There was circulated a joint report dated 4 May, 2023, by the Directors of Business Services and Environment and Infrastructure Services, which provided an update on the progress of the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme, taking into consideration factors impacting on the programme, and requested the Committee to acknowledge and consider the programme.

The report explained as background that four contractors were appointed to undertake multiple upgrades to the housing portfolio to deliver the overarching Housing Improvement Programme. The report also highlighted that the construction industry remained volatile, with supply chain issues and labour shortages impacting on the programme with significant consequences. This uncertainty in the market was anticipated to continue for the foreseeable future. Council officers therefore continued to monitor the situation regularly seeking deliverable solutions and taking all practical mitigation measures available to reduce disruption with contractors remaining agile in delivering a very fluid programme of work.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the current position with regard to progress on the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) for Year 3 and Year 4; and
- (2) note the estimated spend profile for the Financial Year 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 for the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP).

21. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME TWO 2024 TO 2028

There was circulated a joint report dated 3 May, 2023, by the Directors of Business Services and Environment and Infrastructure Services, which provided an update on the progress of the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme Two (HIP2) and sought approval for the cost estimate and for proceeding to tender for the works.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) endorse the position with regard to progress towards the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme Two (HIP2) for 2024 to 2028;
- (2) approve the cost estimates, inclusive of Property Costs, as detailed within the report in Appendix 2, and for proceeding to tender works for the period 2024 to 2028; and
- (3) that the final scope and resultant cost of the programme be subject to the outcome of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Review.

22. HARD FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (HARD FM) UPDATE

There was circulated a report by the Director of Business Services which requested that the Committee consider the performance of FES FM Limited, the term contractor, under the Hard Facilities Management contract and the introduction of the new Hard FM Minor Works Framework/Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the performance of FES Limited under the Hard Facilities Management contract; and
- (2) note the performance of the Minor Works Framework/Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

23. SUPPLEMENTARY LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE DIRECTORATE PROCUREMENT PLAN – PROCUREMENT APPROVAL

There was circulated a report dated 17 March, 2023, by the Director of Education and Children's Services requesting that the Committee consider a revised Procurement Approval Form (PAF) and spend plan for the improvement work planned for Stonehaven Leisure Centre, which had previously been agreed (at a lower cost level) by the Kincardine and Mearns Committee at the meeting on June 14, 2022, then in principle again at the meeting on May 16, 2023.

The Committee **agreed** to: -

- (1) approve the Supplementary Procurement Plan, detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, and the revised Procurement Approval Form, detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, which confirmed an increased project cost to a level detailed in the report.
- (2) note that, in the event that budget could not be identified, the Communities Committee may make recommendations to Full Council to agree an uplift in the Capital Plan to meet any deficit.

24. ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2023/24 – PROCUREMENT APPROVAL

There was circulated a report dated 19 November, 2023, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which requested that the Committee agree the detail of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) Procurement Work Plan 2023/24 and implement the Direction from the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to procure items included in the Procurement Work Plan.

The report explained that the Work Plan had been approved on behalf of IJB by the Chief Officer of AHSCP following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of IJB and the Chief Executives of Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. A direction to the Council to deliver the works laid out in the Work Plan was also approved.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the details included in the Special Urgency - Use of Specific Delegations to Chief Officer document approved on behalf of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 19 May 2023, which was detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) implement the direction from the Integration Joint Board to procure the items in the Work Plan (Social Care); and
- (3) not reserve the approval of Business Cases/Award Reports for items on the Work Plan with a value of £50,000 up to £1,000,000 and the award of contract with a value over £1,000,000.

PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

	Item Title	Date of Meeting	Action Agreed	Service Required to Take Action	Progress to Date
1.	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report 1 April, 2022 to 30 September, 2022	22 December, 2022	Thematic Report to future meeting of Committee on non-fire emergencies dealt with by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Future visit to Portlethen Training Centre to be arranged for the Committee.	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Thematic report will be on the agenda of a meeting later in 2023. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to arrange the visit in 2023.
2.	Scrutiny Referral from Audit Committee – Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Governance	1 June, 2023	At meeting on 1 June, 2023 agreed to defer until meeting of Committee on 7 September, 2023 for a revised report, including information on the outcome of the ADP consideration of the draft Terms of Reference; and report to Audit Committee meeting on 6 July, advising of this.	Health and Social Care Partnership	Report on agenda. Audit Committee were advised at meeting on 6 July, 2023.
3.	Police Scotland Performance Report: Quarter 2.	16 February, 2023	Thematic report to a future meeting on mental health issues and wellbeing issues faced by Police in dealing with the public, with input to	Police Scotland	Report on agenda.

	Item Title	Date of Meeting	Action Agreed	Service Required to Take Action	Progress to Date
			<p>the report from the Health and Social Care Partnership.</p> <p>Police Scotland to arrange a visit for Members of the Committee to the call centre in Dundee.</p>		Postponed due to holiday/recess period.
4.	Registered Tenant Organisation Application	1 June, 2023	Report back to Committee on the potential inclusion of 2 Tenant Organisation representatives as non-voting Members of the Communities Committee.	Environment and Infrastructure Services and Business Services	Surveyed other local authorities to establish how their tenants are involved directly in the work of Council committees; and Working through the governance steps with Legal and Governance. Meanwhile building capacity of our own tenant representatives.
5.	Annual Scrutiny and Improvement Report	1 June, 2023	Workshop to identify Scrutiny and Improvement Programme, to include focus on “briefing notes” – purpose, appropriateness & recording of outcomes.	Environment and Infrastructure Services	Workshop to be arranged.
6.	Live Life Aberdeenshire Annual Performance Update for 2022/23	1 June, 2023	Detailed report to future meeting on halls; & reports to Area Committees with appropriate area specific information.	Live Life Aberdeenshire	Report to be submitted to meeting on 2 November, 2023
7.	Scrutiny Referral – Assurance	1 June, 2023	Agreed to conduct CRP; Stage 1 Report to Committee on 7	Health and Social Care Partnership	Report on the agenda.

	Item Title	Date of Meeting	Action Agreed	Service Required to Take Action	Progress to Date
	Review of Integration Joint Board Governance		September, 2023; Report to Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023, advising of this.		
8.	Scrutiny Referral – Integration Joint Board Transformational Projects	1 June, 2023	Agreed to conduct CRP; Stage 1 Report to Committee on 7 September, 2023; Report to Audit Committee on 6 July, 2023, advising of this.	Health and Social Care Partnership	Report on the agenda.

ACTIONS COMPLETED SINCE LAST MEETING OF COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

	Item Title	Date of Meeting	Action Agreed	Service Which Took Action	Completed
1.	Tackling Poverty and Inequalities – Annual Progress Report	30 March, 2023	Briefing note to Committee on the number of employers in Aberdeenshire providing the living wage to their employees.	Business Services	Briefing note was issued to elected members at the end of June.

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 07 SEPTEMBER 2023

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides an update on the forecast financial performance pertaining to the services which fall under the remit of Communities Committee for the financial year 2023/24 as at 30 June 2023.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider and comment on the Revenue and Capital forecast position pertaining to this Committee for 2023/24 and the actions being taken to mitigate as set out in Appendix A;

1.2.2 Consider and comment on the progress of Budget Savings associated with these budgets;

1.2.3 Consider and comment on the Earmarked Reserves associated with this Committee and their use;

1.2.4 Agree the proposed revenue budget virements as detailed in Appendix B.

1.2.5 Recommend the drawdown of reserves to Full Council as detailed in Appendix B.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 Communities Committee has responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and scrutinising of Council's policy and making decisions on matters relating to the functions which fall under the Committees remit. This report sets out the financial information for these services to enable this process.

3 Discussion

3.1 Council approved the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets on 9 March 2023 as part of agreeing the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report in **Appendix A** sets out the forecast position in relation to these budgets as at 30 June 2023.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 The work and outcomes delivered through the various services reporting to Infrastructure Committee helps in the delivery of the following Council priorities:

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

4.2 This report helps deliver all six of the Council's Strategic Priorities and the key principle that underpins them of responsible financial planning.

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

4.4 The financial implications are inherent in the report. There are no direct staffing implications.

4.5 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. The report deals with the monitoring of expenditure against budgets which have been approved previously. There will be no differential impact as a result of the report on people with protected characteristics.

4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- Budget Pressures ([Corporate Risk Register](#)) – as detailed above the Council’s budget will be under increasing pressure due to rising inflation, energy prices and the ongoing pandemic recovery. This risk has been mitigated during the budget setting process by consultation with directorates to identify and incorporate pressures into the proposed budget to ensure services are adequately funded. This will be monitored throughout the year, with regular reporting to policy committees and Council. This will enable any in year pressure to be identified timeously to ensure action can be taken at an early stage.

4.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

- We live within our means and use public money to maximise outcomes for our communities([Directorate Risk Register](#)). This budget sets out the means to which the Council can deliver its services. The deliverability of the budget will be monitored regularly as detailed above.
- Our assets, property and land are managed to the best financial effect, supporting delivery of our priorities and service ambition in the medium to long term. ([Directorate Risk Register](#) This will be monitored throughout the year, with regular reporting to policy committees and to Council.

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation]

5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Sections D1.1 and 2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the scrutiny of financial performance information in respect of functions that have been delegated to the Committee.

Alan Wood – Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Rebecca Meiklejohn, Business Partner

Appendix A	Financial Performance 2023/24
Appendix A1	Budget Risk Register 2023/24
Appendix A2	Savings
Appendix A3	Reserves at 30 June 2023
Appendix A4	Detailed Capital Budget Forecast at 30 June 2023
Appendix B	Revenue Budget Virements

APPENDIX A

Financial Performance 2023/24

Report to: **Communities Committee**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council approved the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets on 9 March 2023 as part of agreeing the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS supports the delivery of the Council Plan and associated priorities by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council, in doing so, it incorporates all revenue and capital funding and use of reserves.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Communities Committee with an update on the forecast position for the services for which it has responsibility, to highlight recognised pressures which are impacting on these budgets and provide options on how these could be addressed, including identifying possible use of Reserves.

2. Forecast Revenue Position 2023/24

- 2.1 The revenue budget for Communities Committee was developed through consultation with services and members to identify the resources required to deliver on the Councils priorities. As set out in **Table 1**, the original total revenue budget for 2023/24 was **£170.204 m**, rising to **£170.546m** due to draw down from Reserves. The total forecast net expenditure for the year as at 30 June 2023 is **£2.388m over budget**.

Table 1: Forecast Outturn vs Revised Budget 2023/24

Budget Page	Original Budget 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget 2023/24 £00	Actual to 30 June 2023 £000	Forecast 2023/24 £000	Forecast Under/ (over) Budget £000
16.Administration & Management - Live Life Aberdeenshire	383	383	152	668	(285)
17.Arts Development	458	458	75	311	147
18.Macduff Aquarium	184	184	42	184	-
19.Grant Aid	104	104	-	104	-
20.Libraries	4,373	4,373	1,157	4,357	16
21.Museums	685	685	161	658	27
22.Outdoor and Adventurous Activities	249	249	79	309	(60)
23.Programming and Development	90	90	(3)	90	-
24.Halls	659	659	210	669	(10)
25.Sport and Leisure	5,006	5,006	2,056	6,337	(1,331)
26.Integration Joint Board	150,911	150,911	37,728	150,911	-
27.Affordable Housing	275	275	59	244	31
28.Homeless Persons	3,913	3,936	1,265	4,521	(585)
29.Improvement and Repairs Grants	937	937	232	1,449	(512)
30.Gypsies / Travellers	168	168	22	158	10
31.Sheltered Housing Support	351	351	123	187	164
32.Community Safety	403	403	107	403	-
33.Community Planning	55	55	(17)	55	-
34.Tackling Poverty and Inequalities	1,068	1,381	613	1,381	-
5.Procurement Efficiencies - Communities Committee	(68)	(68)	-	(68)	-
Community Resilience	-	6	6	6	-
Total Communities Committee	170,204	170,546	44,067	172,934	(2,388)

2.2 Services which fall under the remit of Communities Committee are forecast to be **£2.388m** over budget at 30 June 2023.

2.3 Live Life Aberdeenshire

Administration and Management £285,000 over budget

Admin and Management budget was transferred from Education & Children's Services during 2022-23. The budget available for transfer was not sufficient to meet the cost of the team in place after savings were applied. The service will continue to work to mitigate the pressure and realign budgets to team structures.

Arts Development £147,000 under budget

Arts Development is forecast to be £147,000 under budget due to staff vacancies which are offsetting in part the Administration and Management over budget position.

Sport and Leisure £1,331,000 over budget

Sport and Leisure is forecast to be £1,331,000 over budget. This is due to the cost of staffing facilities estimated at £521,000 over budget and the continued loss of income projected to be around £810,000. Facility opening hours have been curtailed with a summer timetable which will reduce the reliance on relief staff and help address the over budget position. A new membership scheme will be launched in September 2023 to attract additional members and the expansion of the learn to swim programme will improve the income forecast.

2.4 Housing

General Fund Housing is forecast to be £0.559m over budget. Details in relation to these budgets are included in a separate report to this Committee.

3. The Risks

- 3.1 As set out in the [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) the Council is facing unprecedented financial challenges due to events out with our control, including ongoing economic challenges, recovery from the pandemic and the global impact of Russia's war in Ukraine, all of which have contributed to rising inflation and interest rates, volatility in our supply chains and the Cost of Living crisis. Rising costs, increased demand for local services and reducing real term financial settlements from Scottish Government has created a challenging operating environment for 2023/24.
- 3.2 To respond to these challenges, the budget agreed by Council included significant assumptions and acceptance of risk to enable a balanced position, as well as agreement of a range of savings and efficiencies.
- 3.3 The budget risks relating to the services within Communities Committee are set out in [Appendix A1](#).
- 3.4 Local Government Pay Awards continue to be a significant risk to the Council's budget as a whole. Scottish Government have provided funding of £155m towards a revised pay offer, of which Aberdeenshire Council anticipate to receive £7.088m. £4.6m of this funding was assumed in the budget setting process and was transferred to an earmarked reserve. It will be recommended to Council that the additional funding is also transferred to the reserve pending agreement. The latest offer to Trade Unions which was within the Scottish Government funding envelope, of 5.5% was rejected. Any offer agreed above this level without additional funding will create a pressure on all services.
- 3.5 [Health & Social Care Partnership](#)

The Health & Social Care Partnership is forecasting to be £19.098m over budget for 2023/24. This is to be mitigated by Savings totalling £4.7m and the planned use of IJB Reserves of £3.050m as detailed in **Table 2**, leaving a revised out of balance position of **£11.348m**. If this forecast continues to materialise this may require to be funded by the partners. The Council's contribution would be 45% of the out of balance position creating a potential budget pressure for the Council of **£5.107m**.

Table 2: Health & Social Care Partnership Forecast Position

	NHS £000	Council £000	Total £000
Out of Balance Position	7,618	11,480	19,098
<i>Mitigated by:</i>			
Employment Savings	-	(500)	(500)
Vacancy Management Savings	(696)	(504)	(1,200)
Efficiency Savings	(1,739)	(1,261)	(3,000)
Total Savings	(2,435)	(2,265)	(4,700)
Planned Use of Reserves			(3,050)
Revised Out of Balance Position			11,348
Council (45%)			5,107
NHS (55%)			6,241
			11,348

- 3.6 The IJB Collaboration and Leadership Forum meet mid August to focus on the current position and the requirement to achieve savings as per the approved budget. There is an ongoing review of areas of material overspend and mitigations that can be applied to reduce the predicted overspend position.
- 3.7 Budget Development Workshops with IJB in August will be a continuation of work to look at the main areas of pressure and steps that can be taken to reduce them.
- 3.8 Future financial performance reports will provide updates on the monitoring of these risks and any envisaged impacts and mitigations.

4. Savings

- 4.1 Savings of **£0.245m** were agreed by Council in relation to services under Communities Committee. These are detailed in **Appendix A2**.
- 4.2 Of the £0.245m saving identified, £0.146m are on target to be achieved by the end of the financial year.

- 4.3 Included in these savings are £0.040m of Vacancy Management meaning that when posts become vacant, services be required to consider how to deliver services differently to avoid the need to recruit to the vacant post. Services are managing this carefully to ensure that delivery of services is not adversely impacted by reduced staffing numbers. To date, services look to be on track to achieve these.
- 4.4 Corporate savings of £2m were also agreed in relation to Voluntary Severance. Savings in relation to staff leaving the organisation under this scheme will be removed from the relevant budgets throughout the year as they are identified, and updates provided to committee. Should this target not be achieved through Voluntary Severance, services may be required to find alternative savings across the Council.
- 4.5 Monitoring of the achievement of these savings will continue to be undertaken throughout the year and reported to future Committees as part of the financial performance reporting. Should it become apparent during the year that these savings will not be achieved, this will be reported to Committee as part of future financial performance reports, with details of the services options to mitigate any resultant budget pressure.

5. Reserves

- 5.1 Reserves are an important resource for the Council and the level, purpose and planned use of these reserves was set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. [Appendix A3](#) details the Earmarked Reserves which specifically relate to the services which fall under Communities Committee. These are summarised in [Table 3](#) below:

Table 3: Reserves at 30 June 2023

Reserve	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000	Balance at 30 June 2023 £000
Aberdeenshire Farming Museum Purchase Fund*	(61)	(61)
Aberdeenshire Heritage Artefact Acquisition Fund*	(11)	(11)
Estate of the late William Paterson Beedie Bequest*	(20)	(20)
Tolbooth Restoration Fund*	(55)	(55)
Affordable Housing Reserve*	(7,868)	(7,868)
Additional Scottish Government Funding*	(156)	(97)
Earmarked reserve - government grants*	(7,124)	(6,970)
Local Authority Continued Economic Recovery Fund (LACER)	(5)	-
Health & Social Care Partnership Risk Reserve	(3,991)	(3,991)
Tackling Poverties and Inequalities Reserve	(3,447)	(3,329)
Community Resilience Fund Reserve	(43)	(37)
Total Reserves	(22,781)	(22,439)

**These reserves have legal or funding restrictions on their use*

5.2 The Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Reserve will focus on several elements.

- Digital Inclusion as there has been an increase in people requiring kits so a challenge fund is being considered.
- Wellbeing which will link in with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) that Aberdeen Voluntary Action is leading on.
- Children & young people focusing on activities, services and a winter challenge fund as there is an expectation that there will be a reduction in financial help available for low income households to help with the rising cost of living. Partners have seen an increase in the use of foodbanks and welfare rights over the summer especially from working households so a challenge fund will be required with a longer term solution being explored.

5.3 It should be noted that the balances available in reserves are provisional and may be subject to change until the annual accounts for 2022/23 have been reviewed by External Audit. Any changes will be reflected in future financial performance monitoring reports together with updates on the use of these reserves throughout 2023/24.

6. Capital

6.1 The Capital Plan forms part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and reflects the Council's capital priorities. The capital projects identified in the 2023/24 budget were agreed as part of the Council's Capital Plan on 9 March 2023 and those that specifically relate to Communities Committee are detailed in [Appendix A4](#) and summarised in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Capital Plan Forecast vs Revised Budget 2023/24

	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual to 30 June 2023 £000	Forecast at 30 June 2023 £000	Under/ (over) budget £000
General Capital Expenditure	4,081	338	4,054	27
Infrastructure Fund 1	2,526	190	2,526	-
Infrastructure Fund 2	1,706	1	1,714	(8)
Total Capital Expenditure	8,313	529	8,294	19

6.2 Whilst the general services capital plan for 2023/24 was presented in detail on 9 March 2023, a detailed review of the Capital Plan is being undertaken during 2023/24 to allow a comprehensive, affordable, and deliverable Capital Plan to be developed for the financial years 2024 to 2028.

6.3 The level of borrowing required to support the capital investments presents an ongoing challenge to the Council's financial sustainability. The repayment of borrowing used to fund

capital expenditure incurred today, creates a future revenue budget commitment over the entirety of the anticipated life span of the new asset.

APPENDIX A1
2023-24 Budget Risk Register - COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Risk Type	Risk <i>Threat to achievement of objectives</i>	Potential Consequences of Risk	Controls/Mitigations in place	Likelihood	Service	Budget Page
Vacancy Management	Additional Vacancy Management included for 23/24; Non-filling of vacancies may have impacts on service delivery and staff wellbeing;	Service Delivery requirements may limit the vacancies that can remain unfilled, resulting in pressures on staffing budgets	The Service is reviewing procedures and processes to maximise efficiencies.	MEDIUM	Environment & Infrastructure	ALL
Pay Award - Local Government	Pay Awards being agreed in excess of those assumed in the budget; Ongoing pay negotiations with Teaching Unions may influence the 23/24 negotiations for SJC staff taking the pay award above the 3% included in the budget assumptions. Every 1% increase will create a budgetary pressure of around £2.5m (General Fund incl IJB)	The Pay Award Reserve will be exhausted. Budget pressures will be required to be met through service savings and/or efficiencies	£4.6 million has been set aside in a Local Government Pay Award Reserve which would ensure funding available for a pay award 2.5% above budget. The base budget for 2024/25 has been increased to reflect this. Any additional award will need to be covered by Transformational savings and efficiencies. Update - The latest offer of 5.5% to Trade Unions has been rejected. Any further unfunded increase above 5.5% will create additional budgetary pressures.	MEDIUM	ALL	ALL
Legislation	Homeless prevention duty coming late summer 2023 has the potential to treble the workload of homeless teams	Service is staffed for current workload. Will be unable to cope with the change without additional resources. Unable to deal with legal duty. Increase in homelessness and use of high cost temporary accommodation.	Regular monitoring of impacts. Increasing staffing resources. Increase homeless budget. The prevention duty is currently delayed however we have been unable to get a new date - It is likely to be sometime in 2024.	HIGH	Housing	Homeless persons
Temporary Accommodation Income	Continue with sector leading performance resulting in less people in homeless emergency accommodation meaning a drop in income due to the way its accounted for	Less income to invest into services to keep making positive changes and savings for other parts of general fund. 10 years ago the service spent £1.5 million on Bed & Breakfasts compared to last year which was zero. Most of these savings were to finance and housing benefit. Breach of unsuitable accommodation order.	Place people in worse and more expensive temporary accommodation to maintain income. Breach the unsuitable accommodation order. Review of temporary accommodation ongoing. Recommendation within communities committee report in Sept 2023 that increased charges for temporary accommodation goes to full council with implementation in November 2023. This will increase income but important to note this will put pressure on housing benefit budgets as it will just move money from that budget to homelessness. Reviewing length of stay in hostels and the way they operate however this could lead to a breach of legislation and the service being legally challenged so we are being cautious around this.	HIGH	Housing	Homeless persons

APPENDIX A1
2023-24 Budget Risk Register - COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Risk Type	Risk <i>Threat to achievement of objectives</i>	Potential Consequences of Risk	Controls/Mitigations in place	Likelihood	Service	Budget Page
Resettlement schemes	Various refugee and asylum schemes place additional pressures on homeless services and housing stock. Potential for an increase of around 200 cases per year from various schemes in place increasing homelessness by 20%	Lack of accommodation, increase in temporary accommodation use. Pressure on wider general fund - A homeless case is estimated to cost wider general fund £10k minimum and can cost much more	Use other housing options. Increase homeless budget for bigger savings across general fund. Resettlement schemes are getting larger in Aberdeenshire and this is likely to increase pressure on homeless services and there may need to be consideration about passing some home office funding to homelessness in the future. Not likely to be a big impact in 2023/24.	HIGH	Housing	Homeless persons & wider general fund
Demand on Housing Support - Increased costs for commissioned services	Increasing homelessness along with inflation increasing costs to providing support services. Contracts in place for agreed number of homeless cases more than this will need to be paid for. Housing support to homeless people is a legislative requirement	Unable to meet legal duty, reduction in tenancy sustainment leading to increase in homelessness. Support partners unable to maintain services due to inflation which would cause significant increased costs to operate the service ourselves	Maintain support partner budgets, increase homeless budget to sustain tenancies and reduce homelessness to reduce costs across wider general fund. This is not yet being seen and support budgets remain within budget.	MEDIUM	Housing	Homeless person & wider general fund
Procurement	The ability to negotiate or renegotiate rates / prices for on and off contract expenditure is limited as current contracts and rates are viewed as good or best.	Either unable to meet the required saving or a reduction in service activity will be required.	Work specifically and closely with colleagues in the Procurement Team to seek their advice and action to pursue lower rates and prices.	MEDIUM	Environment & Infrastructure	All
Income from Fees & Charges	The recently approved increases in external income rates may not result in the same demand and consequently lower income.	Inability to meet the agreed budget.	Timely implementation of the revised rates together with close monitoring throughout the year.	MEDIUM	Environment & Infrastructure	All
Health & Social Care Partnership	Significant use of Reserves in 22/23 and 23/24. These are one off therefore once depleted, there is a risk that the Council will be asked for additional funding to fund pressures	In the event of an overspend within the Integration Joint Board that can not be recovered from the application of Reserves, the overspend will be required to be met from additional contributions from the Council and NHS	The IJB are looking at how to make savings through efficiencies, vacancy management and transformational work. Monthly monitoring of budgets for 23/24.	MEDIUM	HSCP	Contribution to IJB
Additional Income	Income receivable from increased Fees and Charges may have a negative impact on the numbers accessing Leisure Services.	Reduced Service, possible closures.				
Inflation Increases	Continued inflationary increases on supplies for catering, chemicals for pools, energy costs within Leisure facilities and Schools.	Pressures may arise if cannot absorb price increases.				

Appendix A2 : COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - SAVINGS

Budget Page	Saving 2023/24 £000	Detail	RAG	Progress Update
Grant Aid	(15)	Reduction in Grants provided to Third Parties	Green	Grants budget has been reduced by £15,000
Halls	0	Asset Rationalisation and Reduction in Estate	Yellow	
Sheltered Housing Support	(91)	Development of alternative model of sheltered housing support with Registered Social Landlords	Green	On Target
Improvement and Repairs Grants	(30)	Reduction of Small Repairs Budgets	Yellow	
Vacancy Management	(40)	Proactive management of all vacant posts through the year.	Green	On Target
Procurement Savings	(68)	Procurement efficiencies from Review of off-contract spend and existing contract arrangements	Yellow	To be allocated
Total Savings	(244)			

Appendix A3
Reserves - COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000	Balance at 30 June 2023 £000	Purpose of Reserve
Revenue Earmarked Reserves			
Aberdeenshire Farming Museum Purchase Fund*	(61)	(61)	Donations received to buy new artefacts for Aberdeenshire Farming Museum at Aden Park
Aberdeenshire Heritage Artefact Acquisition Fund*	(11)	(11)	Donations received to purchase new artefacts for all museums (excluding Aberdeenshire Farming Museum)
Estate of the late William Paterson Beedie Bequest*	(20)	(20)	Funds bequest to the Council by the late Mr Beedie to be used by the Museum service for heritage purposes
Tolbooth Restoration Fund*	(55)	(55)	Funds generated from the tea room at the Tolbooth to be used to reinvest in the Tolbooth which is now under community management.
Affordable Housing Reserve*	(7,868)	(7,868)	Scottish Government legislation requires that a proportion of income collected from Council Tax on second homes and long term empty properties is utilised to fund Affordable Housing. These funds are held in reserve until suitable Affordable Housing projects are identified within HRA or to provide funding to external Housing organisations
Additional Scottish Government Funding*	(156)	(97)	Scottish Government funding received during the Covid-19 pandemic to provide support to individuals at financial risk.
Earmarked reserve - government grants*	(7,124)	(6,970)	Grant Funding which the Council has received but have not yet spent are held in Reserves to ensure that the funding is available as determined by the conditions of the grant, or repaid if requested.
Local Authority Continued Economic Recovery Fund (LACER)	(5)	0	LACER Funding was received from Scottish Government in 2021/22 to be utilised to support economic recovery from the pandemic. Consideration will require to be given to any balance remaining at 31 March 2023.
Health & Social Care Partnership Risk Reserve	(3,991)	(3,991)	Reserve created in 23/24 to mitigate against potential budget risks within Health and Social Care which may result in a request for additional funding from the Council
Tackling Poverties and Inequalities Reserve	(3,447)	(3,329)	Reserve created to provide continued support to families and individuals impacted by Covid-19
Community Resilience Fund Reserve	(43)	(37)	Funding set aside to enable communities to prepare for emergency events such as Storms, Flooding etc.
Total Revenue Earmarked Reserves	(22,781)	(22,439)	

Note: These figures are provisional pending finalisation of 2022/23 outturn

** These reserves have legal or funding restrictions on their use*

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: 2022/23 GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PERFORMANCE - JUNE 2023

	Approved Budget Mar '23 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget Jun '23 2023/24 £000	Actual June '23 2023/24 £000	Revised Forecast 2023/24 £000	Projected Variance (Over)/Under 2023/24 £000
SUMMARY					
COMMUNITIES					
27 Affordable Housing	889	889	0	889	0
28 Disabled/Elderly Housing Adaptations (Private Sector Housing Grant)	750	750	300	750	0
29 Learning Disabilities - Adaptation Centres	70	76	33	36	40
30 Levelling Up - Macduff Aquarium	574	574	3	574	0
31 Live Life Aberdeenshire	485	626	2	639	(13)
32 Live Life Aberdeenshire Pitch & Outdoor Physical Activity Space Strategy	460	460	0	460	0
33 HSCP - Minor Works & LD Residential Improvements	706	706	0	706	0
Communities Total	3,934	4,081	338	4,054	27
Infrastructure Fund 1					
75 Live Life Aberdeenshire	2,500	2,526	190	2,526	0
Infrastructure Fund 1 Total	2,500	2,526	190	2,526	0
Infrastructure Fund 2					
77 Communities Projects	1,706	1,706	1	1,714	(8)
Infrastructure Fund 2 Total	1,706	1,706	1	1,714	(8)
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENDITURE	8,140	8,313	529	8,294	19

APPENDIX 3
Aberdeenshire Council
Communities Committee Virements for Approval
Financial Performance as at June 2023

Director Approved Budget Virements

Cross Service	Service Pages		Reason for Movement	Amount	Approver	Committee	Committee Date
	From	To					
				£			

Transfers to/from Reserves

Cross Service	Reserve	Service Page	Reason for Movement	Amount	£	Approver	Committee	Committee Date
No	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Homeless Persons	Drawdown from Reserves - Toward a mental health and wellbeing project post subject to a service level agreement	9,000		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023
No	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Homeless Persons	Drawdown from Reserves - Toward a mental health and wellbeing project post subject to a service level agreement	9,000		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023
No	Refugee Resettlement Programme	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Refugee Resettlement Programme - Reserve Drawdown - June 2023	113,515		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023
No	Ukraine Education Support Funding	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Ukraine Education Support Funding - Reserve Drawdown - June 2023	39,883		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023
No	Tackling Poverty Reserve Funding	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Tackling Poverty Reserve Funding - Drawdown - June 2023	99,857		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023
No	Tackling Poverty Reserve Funding	Tackling Poverty and Inequality	Tackling Poverty and Inequalities - Support for Individuals at Financial Risk 2020-21 - Drawdown of Reserves - June 2023	59,504		Full Council	Communities Committee	07/09/2023

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 07 SEPTEMBER 2023

HOUSING FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE LINKED REPORT Q1 2023-24

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides Communities Committee with information on the Housing Service's performance in terms of finance and key performance indicators of service delivery.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider the performance and financial information provided.

1.2.2 Advise of any improvements or changes that are required to the reporting format.

1.2.3 Instruct the Directors of Environment and Infrastructure Services and Business Services to continue to report Housing Performance and Financial information to Committee on a regular basis.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 This report is presented to support Communities Committee in their role of scrutinising performance related to the Housing Service, both in terms of performance by the service related to the Council Priorities, and in terms of financial information regarding income and expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account.

2.2 This reporting format combining information related to financial and service performance into a single document, to provide greater clarity and demonstrate the links between financial and service performance, was first presented to Communities Committee on the 9 December 2021. At the meeting on 16 June 2022, it was agreed that this format would be used for all future Housing performance reporting.

3 Discussion

3.1 Appendices 1-3 each focus on a particular area of Housing service delivery (such as Tenancy Services or Options and Homelessness), beginning with an overview of expenditure and budget, and any relevant contextual information and commentary to help explain the significance of this information to the performance being reported.

3.2 The second part of each appendix focuses on a principal performance indicator which is reported consistently in each Housing Finance and Performance linked

report to allow for monitoring and comparison of performance over time. Performance is presented against target and includes reference to national benchmarking information where available and relevant, to give a picture of how Aberdeenshire Council compares to other councils and/or social landlords.

- 3.3 In addition to the main performance indicator each appendix also contains additional contextual information to provide further explanation of the performance reported under the main indicator and identify key drivers of performance. These secondary indicators generally change between reports to highlight different areas of interest or flag up changing factors over time. However, if a consistent theme or driver is identified as being useful to scrutiny of service delivery this can be included regularly in future reports for as long as it is relevant.
- 3.4 The report for Quarter 1 of 2023/24 also includes an appendix 4, focused on progress towards our housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), as at the end of 2022/23. This indicator is reported later as there is a time-lag in gathering the required data and is reported less frequently for the same reason. The appendix does not contain the same variety of information as the others as yet, but we will expand upon this in future.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 relates to Tenancy Services and the key performance indicator reported for this is current tenant arrears as a percentage of total rent due. Current tenant arrears remained stable at the end of Quarter 1 and is consistent with the year-end position for 2022/23. It is however higher than comparative figures for the same period in 2022/23 continuing the trend of increased arrears highlighted in previous reports.
- 3.6 Appendix 2 relates to Options and Homelessness and the key performance indicator reported for this is the average time to resolve homelessness from date of initial presentation to the date the homelessness case is closed, also referred to as the average 'homeless journey time'. Average time to resolve homelessness remained within target for Quarter 1. After significant improvements over recent years and greater quarterly variation in 2022/23 performance in quarter 1 was stable and consistent with that in quarter 4 of 2022/23.
- 3.7 Appendix 3 relates to performance in relation to void properties and the key performance indicator reported for this is the percentage of rent lost due to void properties. The proportion of rent lost to voids has increased in Quarter 1 and is higher than our target. The main driver of this change is an increase in sheltered housing charges. In contrast, relet times have continued to improve, particularly for mainstream properties.
- 3.8 Appendix 4 relates to performance in relation to Asset Management and the key performance indicator reported for this is the percentage of Aberdeenshire Council housing stock which meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). 78.2% of our stock now meets the standard out of a current maximum possible of 85%. The main driver for Aberdeenshire properties not meeting the

SHQS is the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH), and work is ongoing to bring as many properties as possible up to this standard.

3.9 Financial Performance Revenue

- 3.9.1 Council approved the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets for the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund Housing Service in February and March 2023 retrospectively as part of agreeing the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report in **Appendix 5a** sets out the forecast position in relation to these budgets as at 30 June 2023.
- 3.9.2 The HRA total forecast net income for the year as at June 2023 is £15.140million creating a variance of £3.072million. The financial position is shown in detail in Appendices 5a and 5b. This means that the revenue funding available to support the HRA Capital Programme is below the budgeted amount of £18.212million.
- 3.9.3 Main variances are in Premises Costs which is forecast to be overspent by £6.960million due to increased contract costs. It is also anticipated that the housing bad debt provision on rent will be at a similar level as 2022/23 (£0.502million) due to the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis on Households income. Forecast overspend in Premises Costs and Supplies and Services are mitigated by forecast savings in financing costs of £4.967million leading to an overall deficit of £3.072million for the HRA Capital Programme.
- 3.9.4 As at June 2023, General Fund Housing Services is forecast to achieve an outturn of £6.962million against the agreed budget of £6.070million. Homeless Persons continues to see pressures in income and lost rents due to the need to hold empty properties to meet Scottish Government legislations relating to Unsuitable Accommodation Order and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. As a result, the forecast overspend in Homeless Persons is £0.585million. Additionally, there are also concerns about the Private Sector Housing Grant in Improvement and Repairs where the Service anticipates a spend of £1.200million against a budget of £0.750million creating an overspend of £0.450million. The on-going review of the Registered Social Landlords (RSL) contracts in Sheltered Housing Support could lead to savings of about £0.164million leading to an overall overspend position of £0.892 for Housing General Fund.

3.10 Financial Performance Capital

- 3.10.1 The HRA Capital Budget was approved on [9th March 2023](#) at £78.320million. This budget figure alters during the year, as and when changes to the profile of capital expenditure from one year to another are agreed and adjusted for. This is because the Capital budget is set over a long term, multiple year timeframe, as the projects will often take more than one financial year to

complete or will start in one financial year and end in the next. Consequently, there is the need to re-profile the capital expenditure on a continual basis.

- 3.10.2 The forecast expenditure as detailed in Appendix 5b for the HRA Capital Programme is £76.518million, which is £1,802million below the budgeted figure of £78,320million. The underspend is primarily due to unavailability of contractors to carry out work under the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) as well as extended lead times for materials which has impacted the delivery of the programme.
- 3.10.3 The General Fund Housing Service has £4.081million. Forecast expenditure for 2023/24 is £4.054million with an underspend of £0.27million. Variations are detailed in Appendix 5b.

3.11 Financial Performance Reserves

- 3.11.1 The HRA Working Balance Reserve is forecast to remain at £2.0million. An additional £0.300million reserves was created to offset the impact of inflation and pay award above the 3% already included in the HRA budget.
- 3.11.2 The Affordable Housing Reserve is available to support the Housing Service. This reserve is a revolving fund. It includes legally ring-fenced funds from 2nd homes council tax and long term empty properties that supports delivery of new builds. £0.820 million has been committed against three Council new build projects for 2023/24.

Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report relates to the delivery the priorities “Health & Wellbeing” and “Resilient Communities” within the pillars ‘Our People’ and ‘Our Environment’.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

- 4.2 This report also supports the delivery of actions set out in the [Local Housing Strategy 2018 –2023](#).
- 4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	

Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 4.4 This report provides information on how financial resources have been responsibly used to deliver the priorities of Aberdeenshire Council but there are no direct financial or staffing implications arising from any of the recommendations.
- 4.5 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. The paper is being provided for scrutiny and monitoring of performance, reporting on performance to date against established KPIs and providing Members with information on the year to date financial position against budget and projections. It contains no recommendations or advice on changing policies, procedures, or service delivery. No change in service delivery will result from Committee agreeing the recommendations of the paper, and therefore there will be no impact on any of the areas covered by the assessment.
- 4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to the financial information contained within this report on a Corporate Level: Budget Pressures (Corporate Risk Register) and on a Strategic Level: Balancing the Books (Directorate Risk Registers). Actions being taken to mitigate these risks are set out in the report.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 With regard to the financial information contained within this report, Communities Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to resource matters (within agreed budgets) that have been delegated to the Committee.

With regard to the performance information contained within this report, The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D 7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the

scrutiny of performance in relation to the Council Plan 2020-22 as agreed by Aberdeenshire Council in October 2020.

Alan Wood – Director of Environment and Infrastructure

Report prepared by:

Neil Watts – Business Planning and Improvement Manager, Housing

Elaine Lothian – Senior Information Analyst, Housing

Fiona Massie – Team Leader, Finance

Pearl Morrison – Accountant

10th August 2023

List of Appendices –

- Appendix 1 – Tenancy Services Report
- Appendix 2 – Options and Homelessness Report
- Appendix 3 – Void Performance Report
- Appendix 4 – Asset Management Report
- Appendix 5A – HRA and GF Financial Performance June 2023
- Appendix 5B – HRA Budget Risk Register
- Appendix 5C – HRA and GF Savings update June 2023
- Appendix 5D – Capital Performance June 2023

Appendix 1 - Tenancy Services Report

1 Budget Monitoring

Overall rent collected to the end of June is below budget at £15,425,823 against a budgeted figure of £15,569,600. This means that there is currently a shortfall in income of just under £200,000 compared to the expected budget. However, as has previously been mentioned, factors such as the timing of payments can have a significant impact on these figures. Similarly, the overall figure is made up of different areas of income, which are performing differently. Figure 1.1 below shows the difference between budget and actual income for the main income headings, and the overall difference.

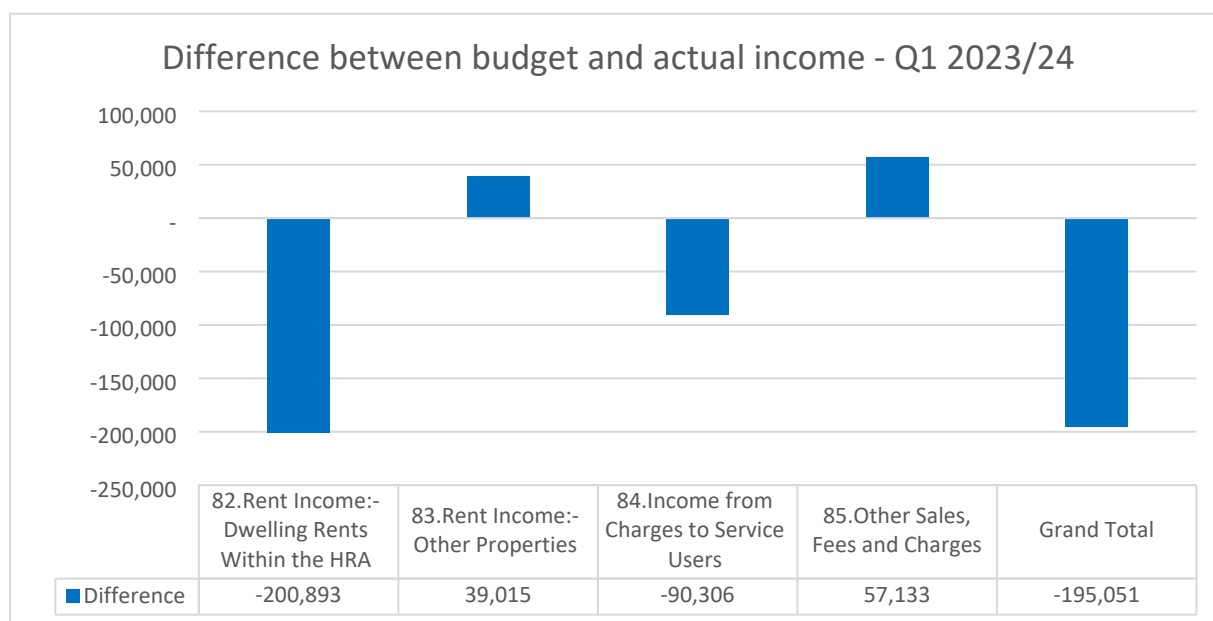


Figure 1.1 - Difference between budget and actual income, Q1 2023/24

Income for dwelling rents (i.e. council homes) shows the largest variation between budget and actual income, at just over £200,000. It is interesting to note that the shortfall identified here is very similar to the value of payments due falling just after the end of the period (identified in section 2 below), and there is a potential correlation between these two figures. In contrast, rental income from other properties (e.g. lockup garages) is above budget for the period, suggesting that tenants perhaps pay for these properties in advance.

When considering arrears, one area that is not regularly discussed is the writing off of tenant arrears. This usually applies to the arrears owed by former tenants where there is no realistic prospect of recovering the debt. In this case, the arrears are 'written off' as unrecoverable, and the debt no longer considered as arrears on the account (although debt can be written back on to an account if contact is made in future). The Scottish Housing Regulator collects the level of write-offs for each landlord as part of their annual return, and figure 1.2 below shows initial figures for the most recent year collected (2022/23).

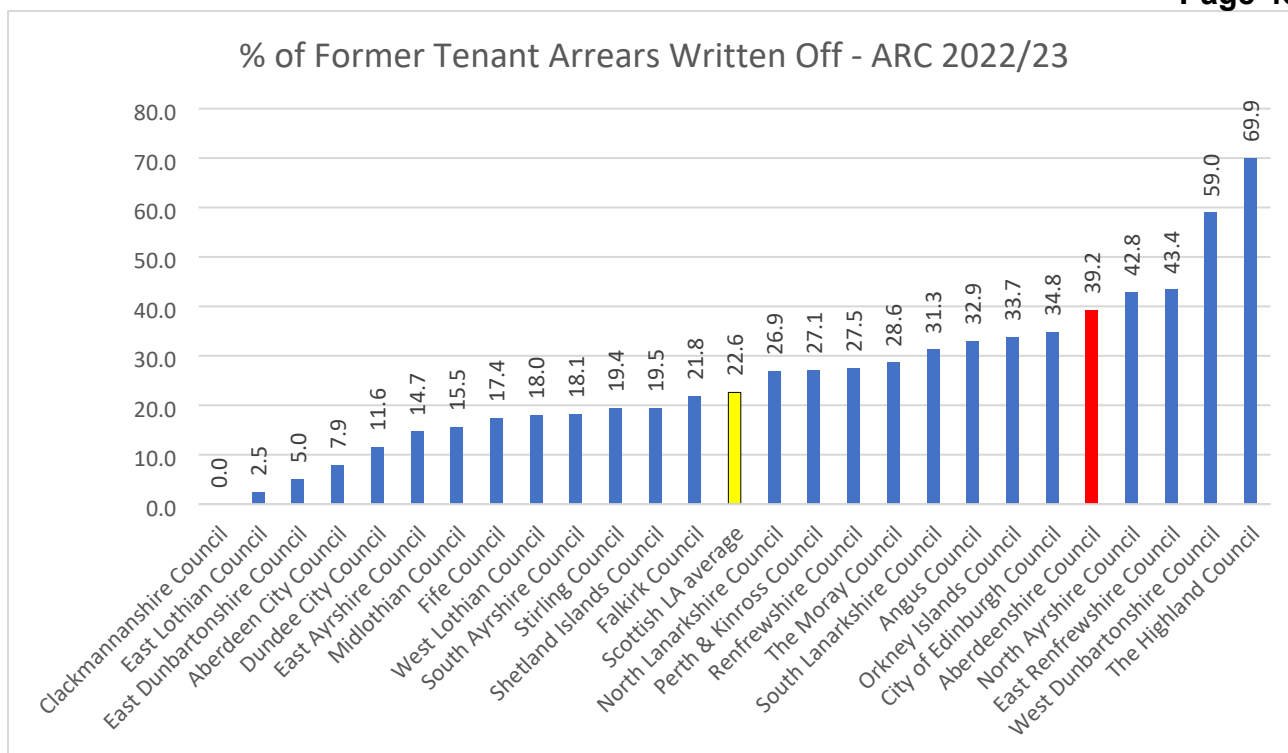


Figure 1.2 - Former Tenant Arrears written off by landlord, 2022/23

As this chart demonstrates, the proportion of former tenant arrears written off by each landlord varies significantly within the year, ranging from 0% for Clackmannanshire up to 69.9% for Highland. Aberdeenshire’s level of write-offs in 2022/23 is higher than usual, due to review of former tenant arrears by our debt collection agency.

While write-offs reduce a landlord’s arrears balance overall, they do not have a significant impact on performance on current tenant arrears (since they are almost always applied to former tenants). However, when a current tenancy closes, it is moved to former tenant arrears, which does take it out of the current arrears indicator reported below. Although individual accounts are unlikely to impact significantly on the total arrears owed, it is worth bearing in mind that arrears figures are influenced by this movement in accounts over time.

2 Performance Monitoring

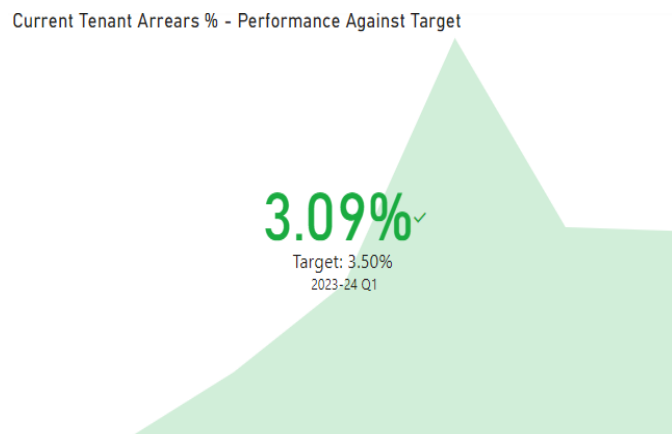


Figure 2.1 – Current Tenant Arrears vs Target (Aberdeenshire)

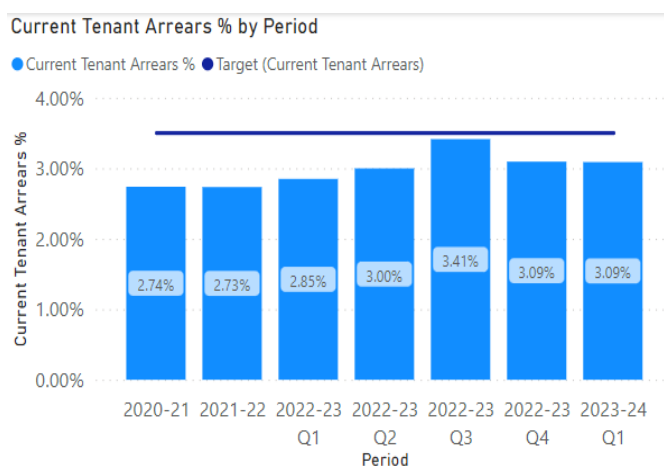


Figure 2.2 – Current Tenant Arrears (Aberdeenshire) by period

Discussion

Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the total rent due remained stable at the end of Quarter 1 in 2023/24 at 3.09%. This is consistent with the position at the end of 2022/23, and represents a reduction from the peak of 3.41% seen at the end of Q3 2022/23. While the figure remains within target, it is higher than for the same period last year, continuing the trend of increasing arrears highlighted in previous reports.

The actual arrears balance for current tenants was £2,167,070 at the end of Quarter 1 of 2023/24 (02/07/2023). However, £208,000 of this total was offset by monthly payments falling on the next day, leaving an effective balance of £1,959,251 at the end of the period. For comparison, the effective balance at the same point in 2022/23 was £1,752,896, meaning that current tenant arrears at the end of Q1 were roughly £200,000 higher than at the same time last year.

While this trend of increasing arrears is concerning, it is important to view our performance in the wider context. As figure 2.3 below shows, Aberdeenshire Council is the second-best performing council in Scotland on this measure (based on initial data from the Annual Charter Return for 2022/23), and is performing substantially better than the Scottish average of 6.55% (and the top quartile value of 4.05%). Aberdeenshire performance is highlighted in red, while the national average is yellow.

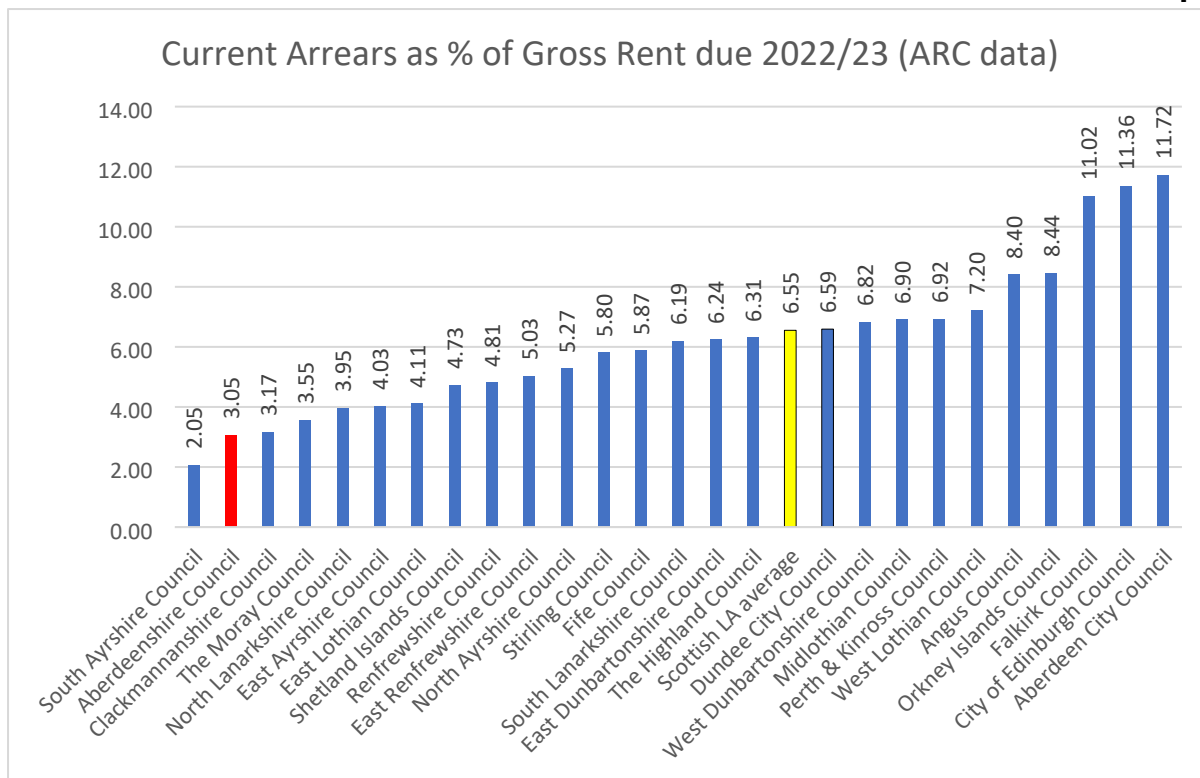


Figure 2.3 - Current Tenant Arrears % by Local Authority 2022/23

This demonstrates that arrears are an ongoing issue for all local authorities in Scotland, driven by the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. This is supported by a recent report from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), highlighting the challenges faced by tenants. More than half of respondents reported having difficulty heating their home in the first few months of 2023, compared to just under a third at the same time in 2022. Similarly, 40% of respondents said they had experienced difficulties in affording their rent in the past year.

Current Tenant Arrears % by Area

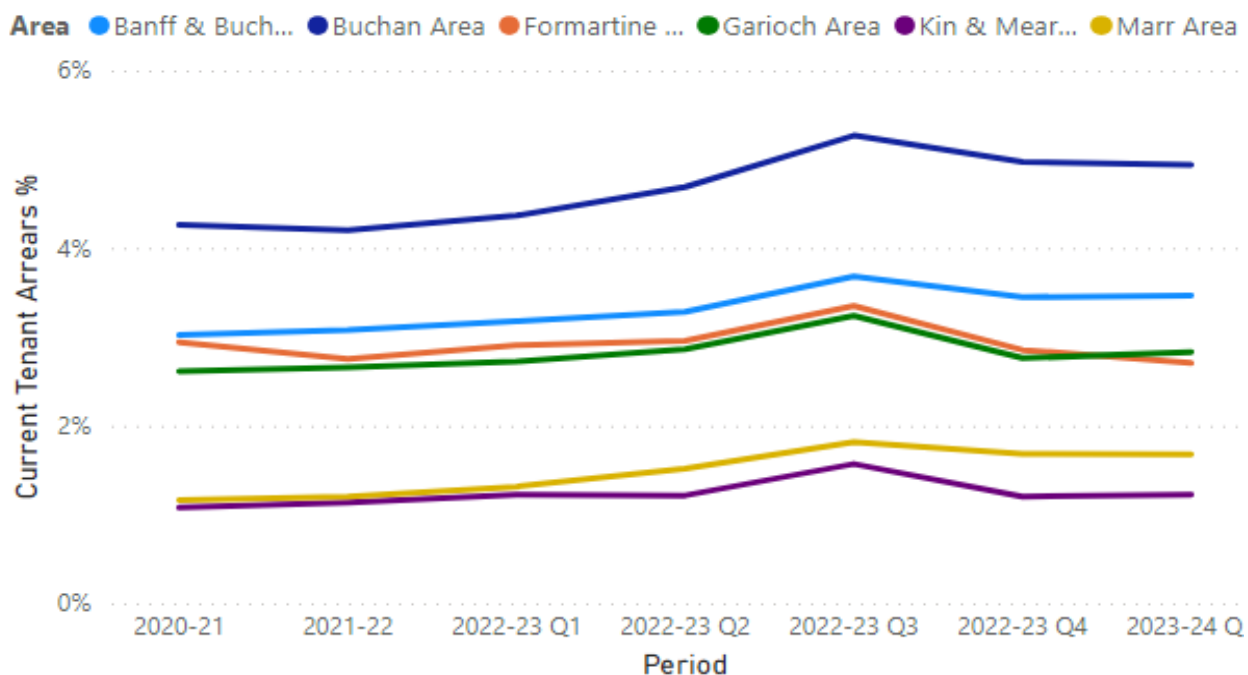


Figure 2.4 - Current Arrears over time by Area

Within Aberdeenshire, arrears levels vary significantly between areas, with higher arrears proportionally in Buchan and Banff and Buchan compared to other parts of Aberdeenshire. Figure 2.4 above demonstrates area performance on this measure over the last 3 years, highlighting the range of values between different parts of Aberdeenshire. As at the end of Q1 2023/24, the area with the lowest arrears level was Kincardine and Mearns at 1.22%, ranging up to Buchan at 4.94%. While arrears levels in Buchan are significantly higher than the rest of Aberdeenshire, they are still better than the national average by a fairly substantial margin. Therefore, while we do need to focus on managing arrears in Buchan, the wider context shows that our performance there is still relatively good.

Looking at arrears on an area level gives us useful information, but it is also worth considering performance at a settlement level to fit within a place-based approach. Arrears levels can vary considerably between towns within an area, and likely reflects the unique circumstances of each settlement. Figure 2.5 below demonstrates the relative level of arrears for settlements across Aberdeenshire, with larger circles representing a higher current arrears value. Please note that the data is limited to settlements with over 50 accounts for clarity.

Current Arrears % by Settlement (Q1 2023/24)

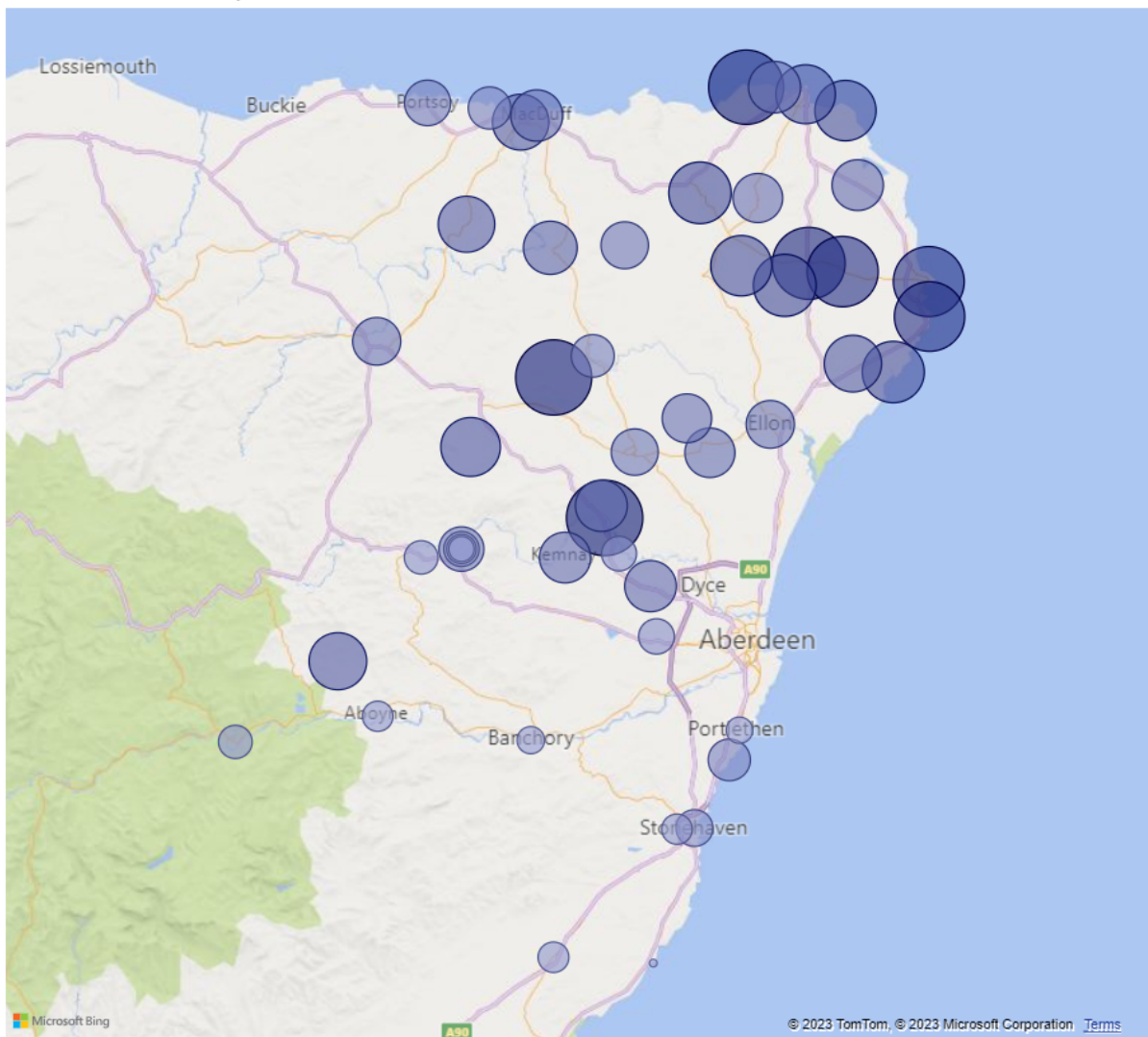


Figure 2.5 Current Arrears % by Settlement Q1 2023/24

Table 2.6 below shows a breakdown of the 10 settlements with the highest % of Current Tenant Arrears in Aberdeenshire at the end of Q1 2023/24, to complement the map above.

Settlement	Number of Current Tenancies	Current Tenant Arrears %
Port Elphinstone	94	6.59%
Rothienorman	74	6.55%
Rosehearty	145	6.36%
Mintlaw	212	5.95%
Longside	54	5.67%
Peterhead	1416	5.61%
Boddam	127	5.52%
Stuartfield	81	4.32%
New Pitsligo	146	4.25%
Cruden Bay	125	4.21%

Table 2.6 – Settlements with the highest Current Arrears %, Q1 2023/24

This highlights the point about differences within areas, since the two worst performing towns (Port Elphinstone and Rothienorman) both lie within areas that perform well overall. Both of these towns have a relatively small number of accounts, meaning that they are unlikely to influence our overall performance much, but the variation suggests unique circumstances are influencing the figures there.

Otherwise, 7 of these settlements are in Buchan, suggesting that the challenges in this area are consistent, rather than being limited to one or two settlements. In particular, arrears in Peterhead have a substantial impact on our overall performance, and any improvements here would likely serve to improve overall performance more than in other settlements.

As discussed at previous Communities Committee meetings, the Housing Service has started implanting a new software system, RentSense, which will highlight potential arrears cases to staff at the earliest opportunity, enabling early intervention and support for tenants. The software is being tested over the summer and full implementation should be complete before autumn. The use of this software will support a more targeted approach to managing tenancies and arrears.

Appendix 2 - Options and Homelessness Report

1 Budget Monitoring

The Homeless Persons Budget for 2023/24 approved by Council on 9 March 2023 amounted to £3.914 million. This has subsequently been revised to £3.936 million following drawn down requests from reserves in respects of LACER funding and a contribution from Tackling Poverities and Inequalities towards a mental health and wellbeing officer post. In the period to 30 June 2023 actual spend equates to £1.265 million. The forecast position to the end of the financial year is £3.979 million, which exceeds budget by £0.585 million.

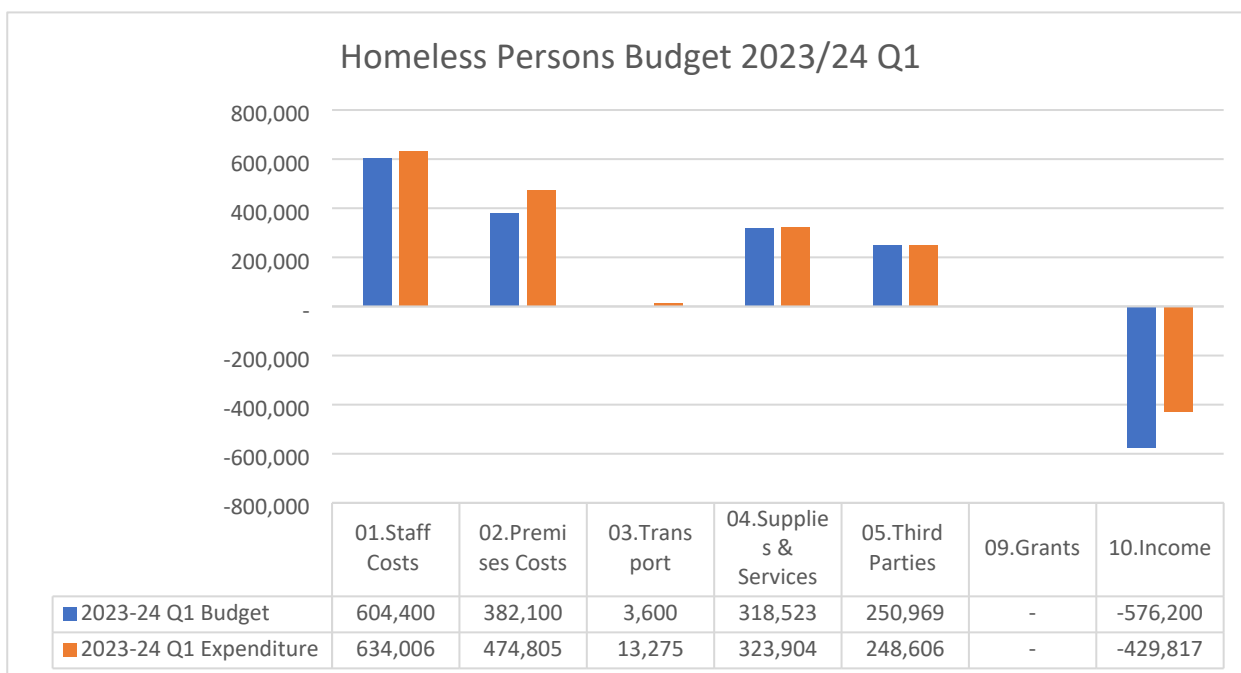


Figure 1.1 - Homeless expenditure against budget 2023/24 Quarter 1

The overspend position is attributed to a reduction in the levels of income being generated from the use of Temporary Accommodations Units (TAUs) and Hostels as Homeless Persons are being placed into mainstream housing a lot quicker than previous years in response to Government Legislation relating to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and Rapid Rehousing Plan. In addition to this, the Service requires to maintain a supply of empty rooms within Hostels and TAUs for emergency use. While these rooms/properties are not occupied, this results in lost revenue and contributes to the reduced income levels.

2 Performance Monitoring

Average Days to Resolve Homeless Cases

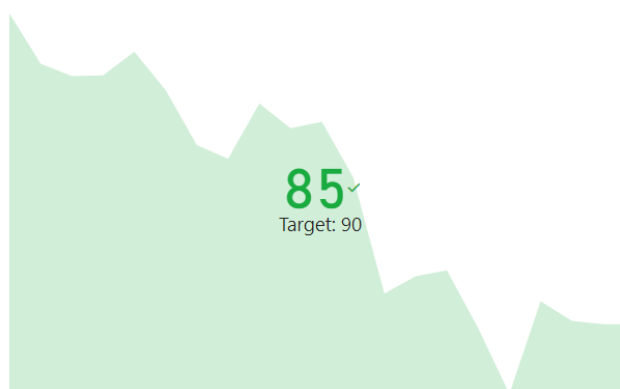


Figure 2.1 – Average Days to resolve Homeless Cases KPI trend from Q1 2018-19 to Q1 2023-24

Average Days to Resolve Homeless Cases - Changes ...

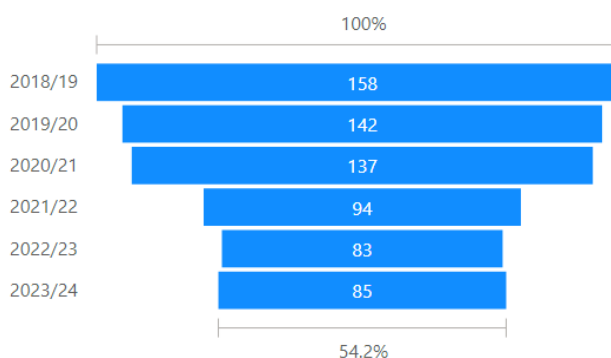


Figure 2.2 - Performance against target over time

Discussion

The average time taken to resolve homeless cases for Quarter 1 of 2023-24 was 85 days. This is consistent with the position in the latter half of 2022-23, following significant variation in the first 2 quarters of that year. This appears to represent a stabilisation of resolution times after the periods of significant improvement seen in recent years. The current target of 90 days starts at the point at which a household presents as homeless, and includes the period taken to assess their case and determine the council's duty to them (the Scottish Government allows for 28 days for this process). Current resolution times remain within target and while we are still awaiting publication of 2022-23 national Homelessness data we anticipate that, as for 2021-22, our performance will continue to compare positively to the majority of Scottish Local Authorities.

Resolution times are influenced by a number of factors, including initial assessment times and the availability of permanent accommodation which meets the needs of the homeless households. Permanent accommodation needs can be met in a variety of ways including a Council tenancy or a tenancy in Housing Association owned social housing. Increasing the number of households housed to other social housing helps to increase overall capacity, particularly when presentation numbers increase, as happened in 2022-23.

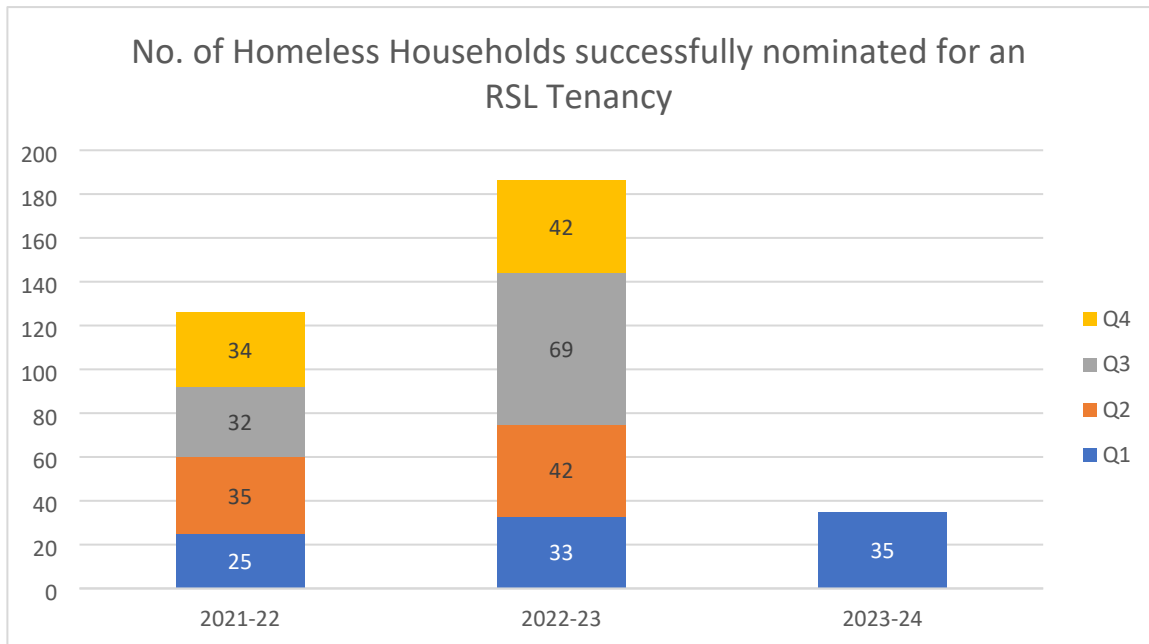


Figure 2.3 – RSL nominations over time

Our Homelessness team works alongside registered social landlords (RSLs) in Aberdeenshire to nominate homeless households for tenancies with them and has continued to refresh nomination agreements and improve communication to highlight on a weekly basis the properties required. This is reflected in an increase in homeless households housed through nominations to registered social landlords in 2022-23, with positive performance continuing in quarter 1 of 2023-24. However, the extent to which this can assist in resolving homelessness cases is limited by mismatches between RSL stock profiles (location and type) and the needs of our homeless population.

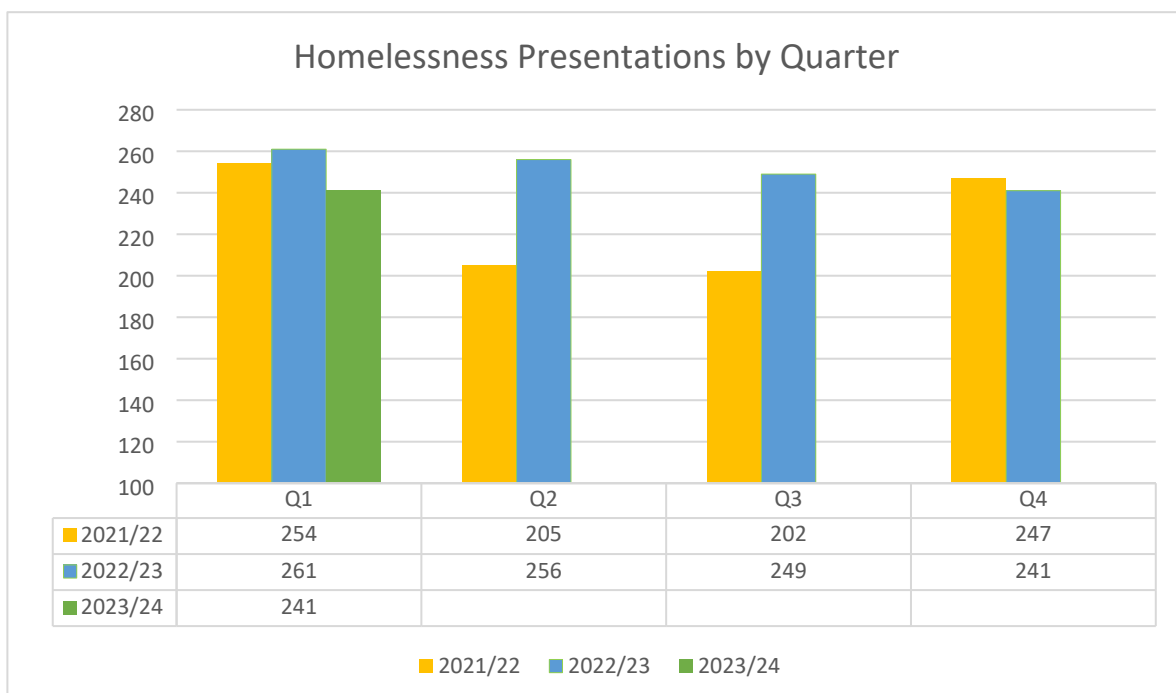


Figure 2.4 – Presentations by Quarter, 2021/22 onwards

Homelessness presentation levels in 2022-23 rose to 1007 presentations compared to 908 in 2021-22. Although presentation numbers still remain below pre-Pandemic levels this change could reflect the start of an increased demand for services over the longer term, increasing pressure on both staffing and housing stock resources. Homelessness presentation levels did reduce in Q1 of 2023-24 compared to equivalent quarters in recent years, as illustrated by figure 2.4 above, however, it is too early to say that this represents a definite reversal of this upward trend and presentation levels continue to be closely monitored. While overall presentation numbers were lower this quarter the percentage of presentations due to repossession or eviction for rent arrears has higher, with 4.1% of homeless presentations in quarter 1 of 2023-24 being for this reason, compared to this representing 2.5% of all presentations in 2022-23. While such presentations do clearly represent a small proportion of overall homelessness presentations this is still a concern and could be a driver of future increases in presentation levels, given the on-going challenges of the cost of living crisis.

Appendix 3 – Void Performance Report

1 Budget Monitoring

The void rent loss budget to the end of quarter 1 is £0.591 million. In the period to 30 June 2022 actual void rent loss equates to £0.531 million which is below budget by almost £60,000 and this is projected to increase further by the end of the financial year. Figure 1.1 below shows the pattern of void rent lost per month, with a split between Garages, Sheltered/Very Sheltered Housing and Mainstream properties.

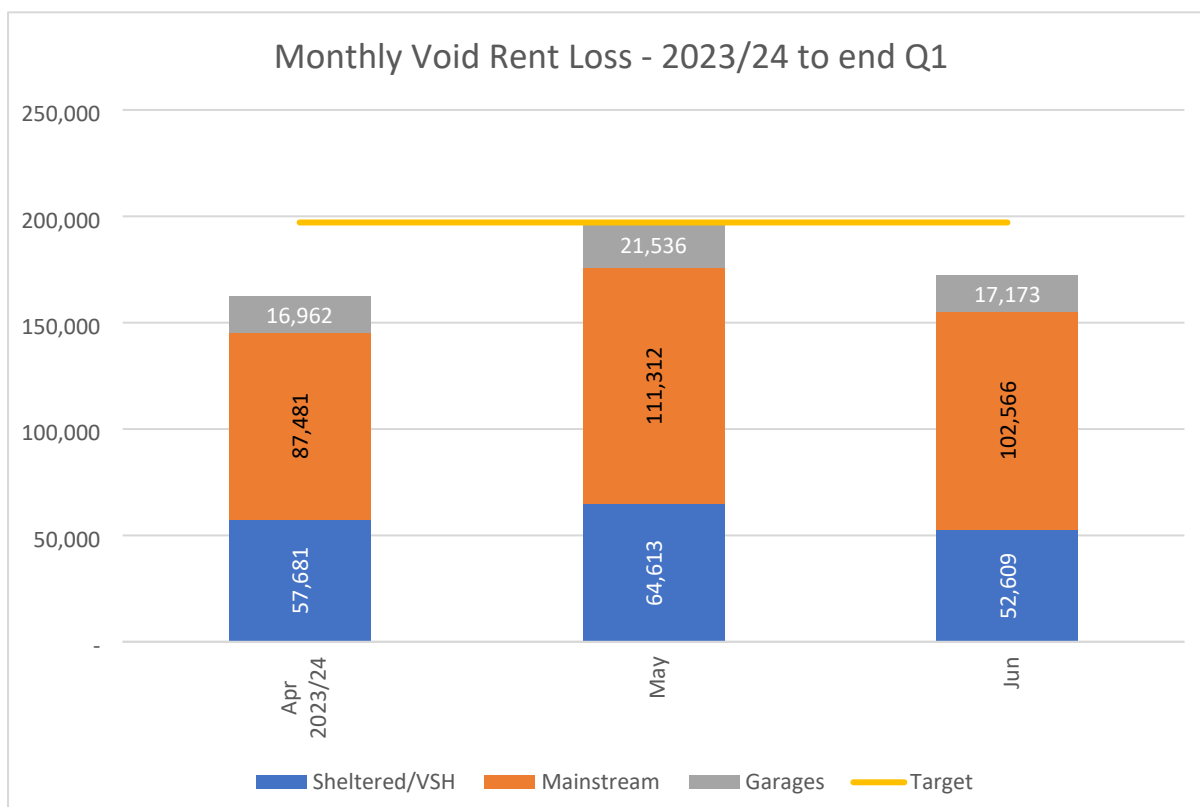


Figure 1.1 - Void Rent Loss against Target, 2023/24 YTD

This demonstrates the variation between months, with particular spikes in void rent loss in 5-week months such as May. However, even taking these months into account we can see that the average loss is lower than target for the year to date. As discussed in more detail in the performance section below, the void rent loss figure for sheltered and very sheltered housing includes service charges associated with these properties. This has a significant impact on the value of void rent loss for sheltered housing, meaning that more rent is lost per property than an equivalent mainstream property.

Figure 1.2 below shows a breakdown of void rent loss for sheltered housing between rent and service charges, demonstrating how much these charges add to the total value lost.

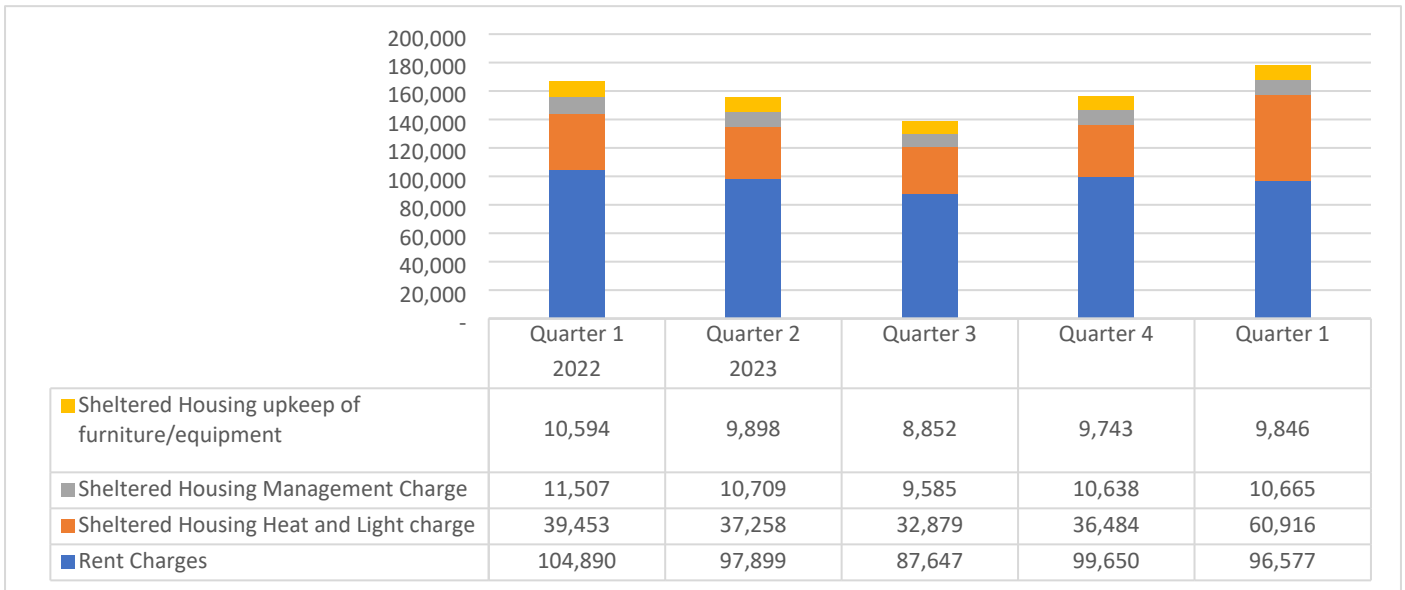


Figure 1.2 - Sheltered Housing void rent loss, split between charge types

Figure 1.2 also demonstrates how void rent loss has varied for sheltered housing in 2022/23 and quarter 1 of 2023/24. As can be seen, void loss for rent charges were lower in quarter 1 of 2022/23 compared to the end of 2022/23, and were on a par with void loss in quarter 2 of 2022/23. However, quarterly void loss against heat and light charges has increased significantly when compared to 2022/23, reflecting the substantial increase in these charges brought about by energy price inflation.

2 Performance Monitoring

Aberdeenshire - % Void Rent Loss by Quarters

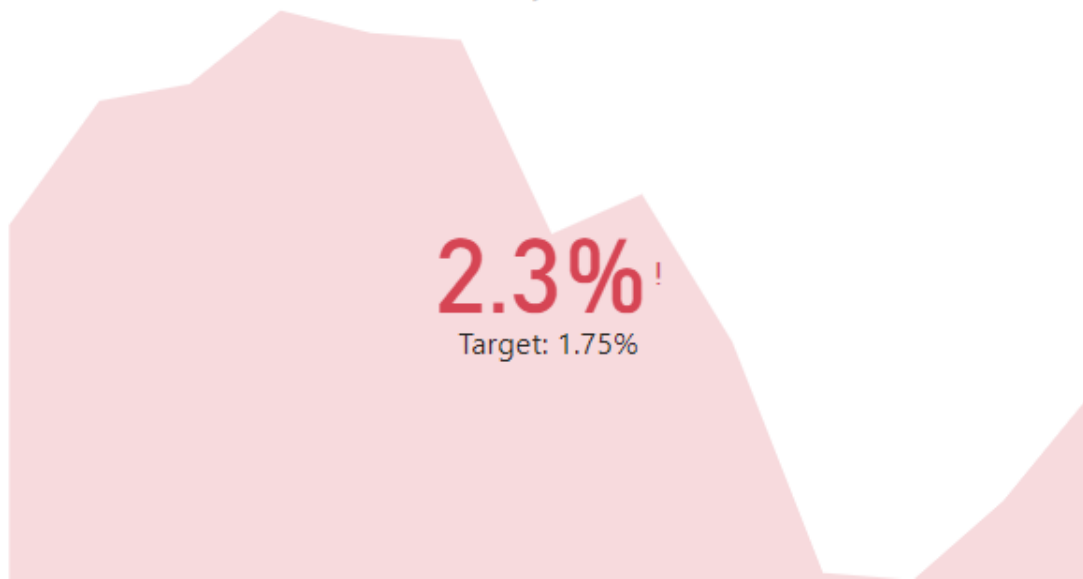


Figure 2.1 – Void Rent Lost as a Percentage of Rent Due Quarter 1 2023/24

% Void Rent Loss against Target

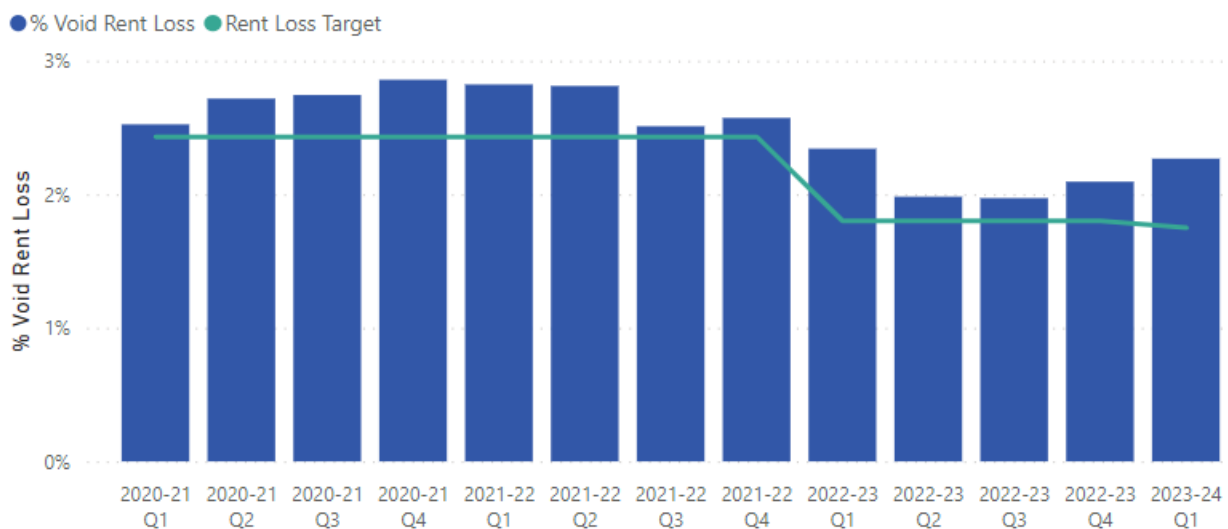


Figure 2.2 - Rent Loss over time against target

Discussion

As can be seen from figure 2.2 above, void rent loss has increased as a percentage of our total debit in the first quarter of 2023/24, and figure 2.1 demonstrates that it remains significantly above the target for the year. The main factor behind this increase in void rent loss as a proportion of rent due is Sheltered Housing properties.

Specifically, the main driver of increased rent loss is the increase in sheltered housing energy charges (Heat and Light charge) brought about by the cost of living crisis. This is because this indicator is based on the Scottish Housing Regulator definition, which includes service charges within void rent loss figures (as does our own void rent loss accounting). Since these charges were raised substantially for 2023/24 (by 75%) to account for the rising cost of energy, significantly more income is lost per void property than in previous years. In fact, void rent loss for other rental charges reduced by over £8000 for sheltered housing in Quarter 1 of 2023/24 when compared to

the same period last year, while heat and light loss has increased by over £21,000 for the same period.

Projections based on current void levels suggest that the total rent lost on sheltered housing properties this year will be around £80,000 higher than in 2022/23. While this is still lower than the peak in 2021/22, sheltered housing void rent loss on this measure is currently moving in the wrong direction. The only way to address this issue is to reduce the number of long-term void properties within our sheltered housing portfolio, either by letting properties or through the ongoing review of our sheltered housing stock.

Figure 2.3 below shows the number of void sheltered housing and very sheltered housing properties at the end of Q1, with their current status. As can be seen, 26 of these properties have subsequently been let (as at 07/08/2023), which is around 22% of the total. 52 of these voids are considered low demand (i.e. a small or non-existent waiting list, with no active interest in the properties), which is around 44% of the total. Low demand properties tend to be concentrated in the same schemes, with 7 at Renouard Court, 6 at Malcolm Forbes Court, and 5 at Invercairn and Cantlay Courts. There are also 5 very sheltered properties that are currently unlettable due to a lack of available care staff.

Number of SH/VSH voids at 30/06/2023, by status as at 07/08/2023

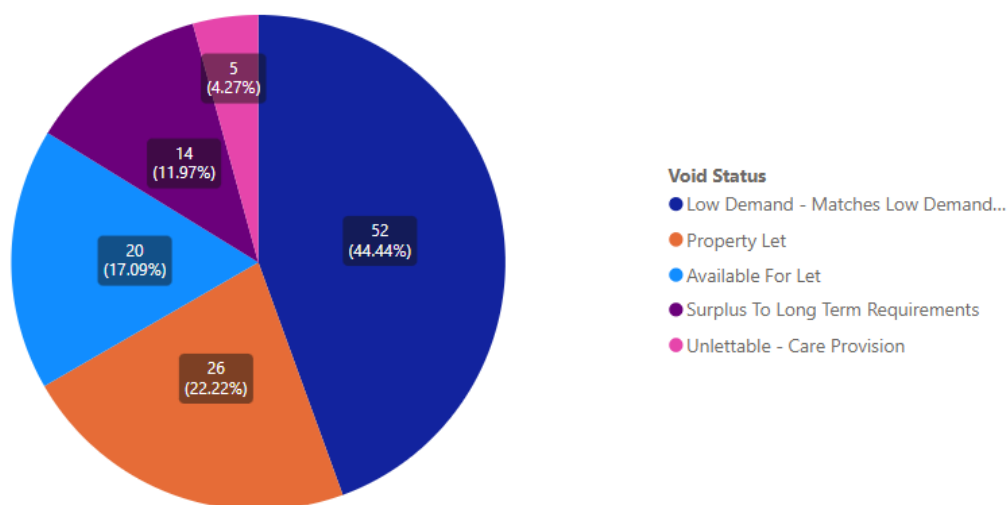


Figure 2.3 - Sheltered and very sheltered voids by status

In contrast, void rent loss for mainstream properties was lower in Q1 of 2023/24 than the same period of 2022/23, at 1.41% compared to 1.56%, and remains on par with the remainder of 2022/23. Void rent loss for mainstream properties will show a short-term increase in July and August, as the result of a large number of new build properties becoming available at the same time. While the turnover time for these properties will be short, the large number means they will have a noticeable effect on total rent loss.

While void rent loss has increased in Q1, the average time taken to relet properties continues to improve, with an average of 59.8 days in the first three months of 2023/24. This is slightly better than our target of 60 days overall, and compares very favourably with both the same period of 2022/23 (where the average was 90 days) and the average for 2022/23 as a whole, where the average was 76.24 days.

Similarly, turnaround times for mainstream properties continue to improve significantly, as demonstrated in Figure 2.4 below. This shows the downward trend in relet times for mainstream properties over the last year, and that this has continued into quarter 2 to date (as at 09/08/2023). In particular, performance on this measure in July was especially strong, with the average days to relet mainstream properties falling to 43 days in the month.

Average Days to Relet mainstream (SHR)

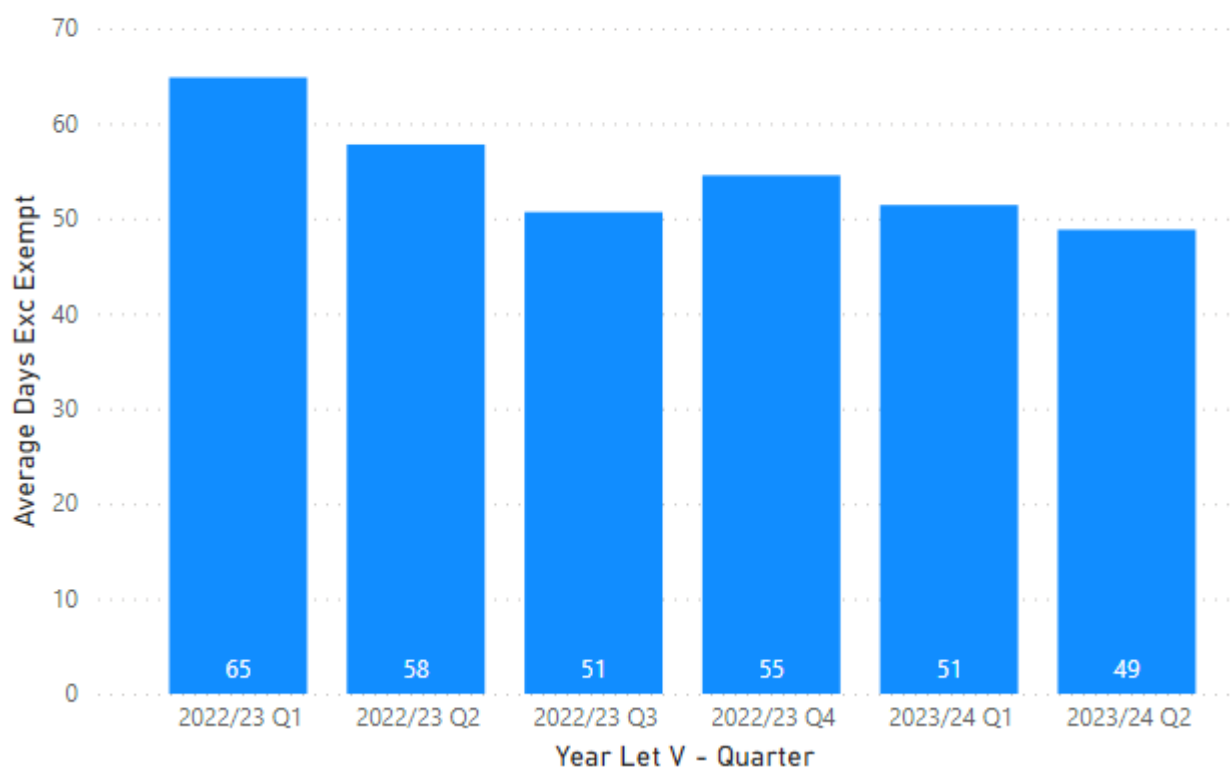


Figure 2.4 - Average days to relet mainstream properties by quarters, SHR definition

In summary, we can conclude that the increase in rent lost as a proportion of rent due in quarter 1 of 2023/24 was caused by changes in the total charges for sheltered housing, rather than a deterioration in void performance generally. Meanwhile, other aspects of void performance such as the average turnaround time have continued to improve, especially for mainstream properties. Making further improvements to our void rent loss for sheltered housing is likely to require a significant increase in applications from the public for schemes which are currently low demand, or depend upon the outcomes of the sheltered housing review. In contrast, while improvements have slowed for mainstream properties, performance continues to move in the right direction and has improved for linked measures (such as relet times). This suggests that changes to the void procedure and work by our teams will continue to drive improvement over the longer term.

Appendix 4 – Asset Management Report

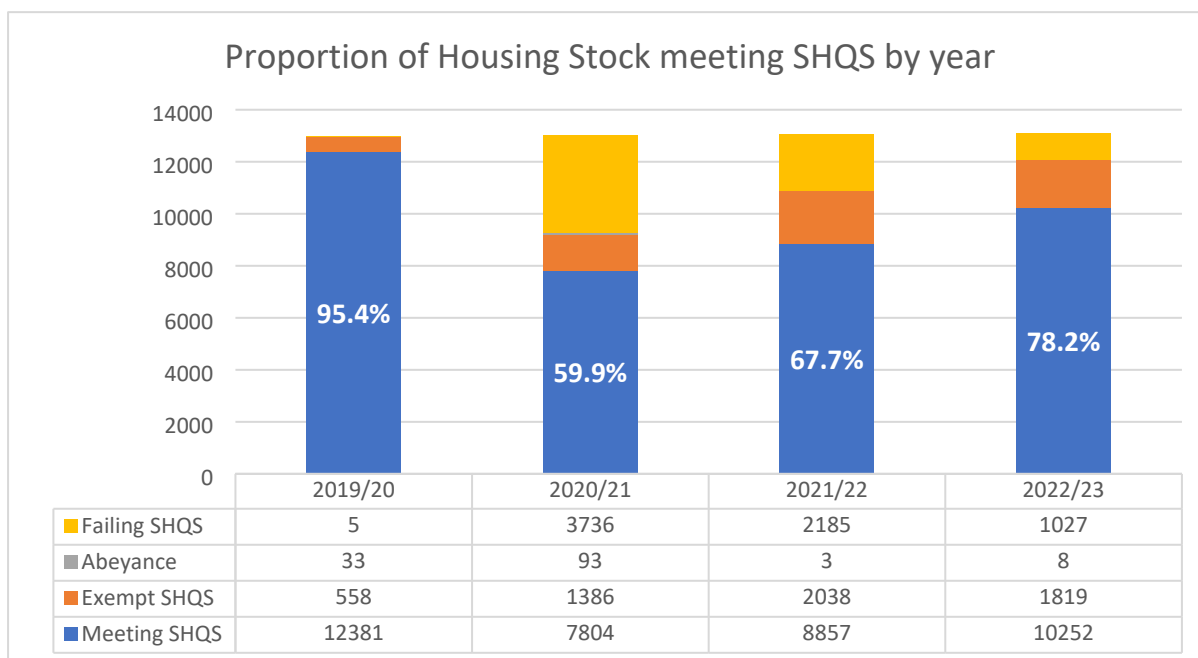


Figure 1.1 Proportion of Housing Stock meeting the SHQS, 2019/20 to 2022/23

As can be seen from figure 2.1 above, 78.2% of our council homes now meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The main driver of properties not meeting this standard is properties not meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH), with only 18 properties (0.1%) not meeting the standard for other reasons (of which 8 are in abeyance due to tenant refusals). In the 2021/22 Charter return, we estimated that 74.1% of council homes would meet the standard by the end of 2022/23, meaning that the number brought up to the standard exceeded expectations in 2022/23.

It is important to note that both the SHQS and ESSH allow for properties to be exempt from the standards for various reasons, and specify that these properties should be treated as neither passing nor failing the standards. In Aberdeenshire, around 1800 properties are considered to be exempt from the standards because they cannot currently meet them, meaning that 90.9% of our eligible stock meets the standard.

Overall, this means that only 85% of our homes can currently be brought up to the standard, which is our long-term target for this indicator. In Aberdeenshire, the majority of ESSH exemptions are due to technical issues that prevent properties meeting the standard, such as the local electricity grid not supporting photovoltaic panels. Where it is not currently possible for a property to meet the standard, we still make it as energy efficient as possible. We will continue to review properties that are currently exempt, and will reconsider this exemption where improved technology or other changes allow them to be brought up to the standard.

It is also important to be aware that the drop in compliance between 2019/20 and 2020/21 is the result of the Scottish Government changing the rules on SHQS to incorporate ESSH – there was no actual change in the quality of our existing

housing. The Scottish Government introduced further changes to the SHQS in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to include inter-linked fire detection and electrical safety (EICR) respectively. Due to these changes, many landlords have experienced a reduction in properties meeting the SHQS. In contrast, Aberdeenshire Council has managed to meet these challenges, and has demonstrated a steady increase in properties meeting the standard.

Figure 2.2 below demonstrates Aberdeenshire Council's performance against other landlords in 2022/23, based on first-look Charter data collected by Scotland's Housing Network (SHN). This data may be subject to change until August 2023, but should be an accurate reflection of the national picture. Aberdeenshire Council's performance is highlighted in red, with the national average in yellow.

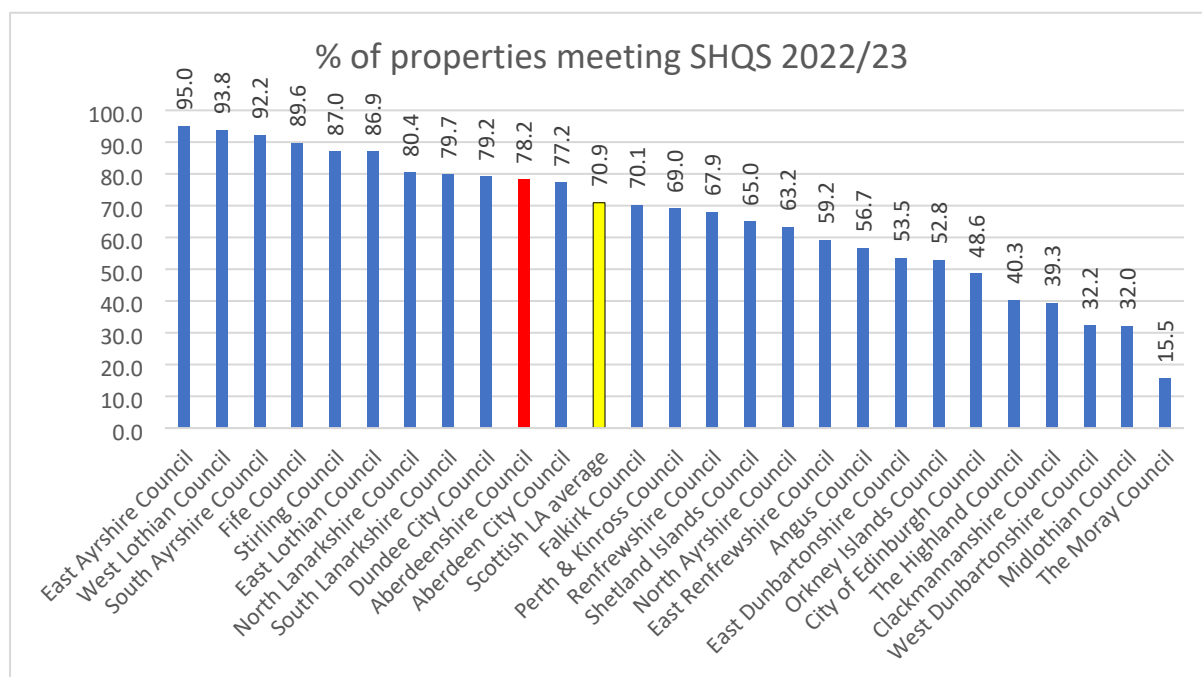


Figure 1.2 - Proportion of properties meeting SHQS by Landlord 2022-23

If we consider performance in the way described by the Scottish Government by excluding properties that are considered exempt from the standard from the calculation, Aberdeenshire Council's position nationally changes substantially, as demonstrated by figure 1.3 below. Although our position does move slightly higher in the table, the main change is how our figure compares to the national average.

Specifically, our compliance rate by this measure is 15.2 percentage points better than the average for Scottish local authorities, compared to 7.3 percentage points when looking at the Regulator's interpretation, demonstrating how significantly we are impacted by technical issues.

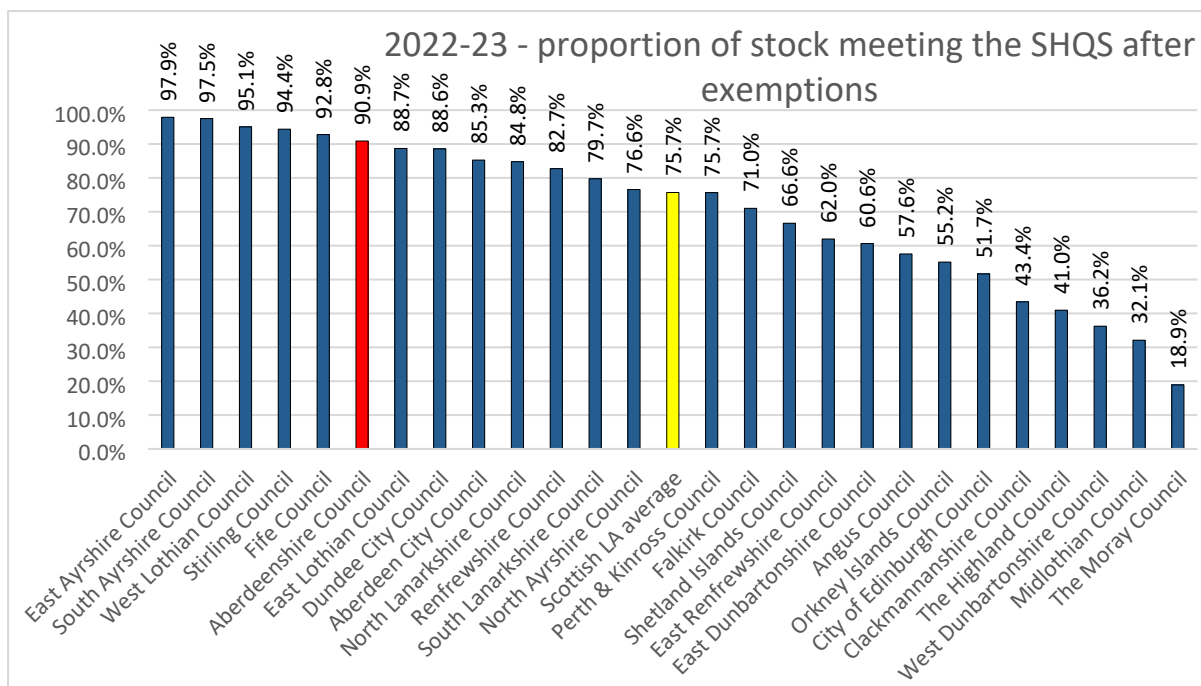


Figure 1.3 - proportion of properties meeting SHQS by landlord, excluding exemptions

The Scottish Government is currently reviewing the next stage of energy efficiency targets (ESSH2) and intend to announce an updated definition and targets later this year. Once this information is available, Aberdeenshire Council will review our housing stock to evaluate how we can ensure maximum compliance with the updated standard.

A study conducted in 2022 concluded that 26% of our housing stock would meet the ESSH2 standards based on the guidance at that time, compared to a national average of 7%. This demonstrates the benefits of the approach we have taken to ESSH so far. However, it is likely that we will not be able to bring all of our stock up to the desired standard and will maintain exemptions for stock where it is not possible.

Furthermore, the Scottish Government currently has a Net Zero target for housing by 2045. Again, information is not yet available on the specifics of what this will look like, but the Housing and Building Standards service will be assessing our stock over the next 2 years to identify the work required to meet this standard and the likely costs involved.

Appendix 5A – HRA and GF Financial Performance June 2023

Housing Financial Performance 2023/24

Report to: **Communities Committee**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council approved the 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund Housing Services Revenue and Capital budgets on 9 February 2023 and 9 March 2023 respectively as part of agreeing the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS supports the delivery of the Council Plan and associated priorities by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council, in doing so, it incorporates all revenue and capital funding and use of reserves.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Communities Committee with an update on the forecast position for HRA and General Fund Housing Service for which it has responsibility, to highlight recognised pressures which are impacting on these budgets and provide options on how these could be addressed, including identifying possible use of Reserves.

2. Forecast Revenue Position 2023/24

2.1 Housing Revenue Account

- 2.2 The revenue budget in respect of the HRA was developed through consultation with services and members to identify the resources required to deliver on the Councils priorities in relation to provision of Council housing. As set out in **Table 1**, the HRA had budgeted income of **£70.468m** for 2023/24, of which **£52.256m** supported the delivery of its core functions, leaving the remaining **£18.212m** available to fund the HRA Capital Plan (CFCR).

Table 1: HRA Forecast Outturn vs Revised Budget 2023/24

Type of Spend	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual to 30 June 2023* £000	Forecast 2023/24 £000	Forecast Under/ (Over) Budget £000
Staff Costs	10,265	2,417	10,058	207
Premises Costs	20,957	5,172	27,917	(6,960)
Transport Costs	230	48	205	25
Supplies & Services	3,864	825	4,537	(673)
Third Parties	181	30	133	48
Central	2,965	767	3,068	(103)
Financing Costs	13,794	-	8,827	4,967
Total Expenditure	52,256	9,259	54,745	(2,489)
Income	(69,268)	(17,090)	(69,065)	(203)
Other	(1,200)	-	(820)	(380)

Total income	(70,468)	(17,090)	(69,885)	(583)
Net Income	(18,212)	(7,831)	(15,140)	(3,072)
Capital Funded from Current Revenue	12,381		9,309	3,072
Payment to General Fund – Capital Pay Award Funding	5,531		5,531	-
Transfer to HRA Risk and Inflation Reserve	300		300	-
Total Capital Funded from Current Revenue	18,212		15,140	3,072
Net Revenue Budget	-		-	-

**Note, actual to date figures may not be representative of the year to date position due to timing of expenditure and income*

- 2.3 The total forecast net income for the year as at 30 June 2023 is **£15.140m, £3.072m under budget**. The main variances being as follows:
- 2.4 Premises costs are forecast to be over budget by **£6.960m**. Approximately £2.2m of this is due to increased contract costs and changes to the scope of the Hard FM contract with more Sheltered Housing complexes being included in the contract. Reactive repairs costs have also increased significantly due to inflationary pressures with average prices seeing rises of around 40% for new repairs and maintenance quotes during 2022/23.
- 2.5 Supplies and Services are forecast to be over budget by **£0.673m** which is a result of the anticipated housing bad debt provision on rent. This is forecast to be at a similar level to 2022/23 (£0.502m) due to the on-going cost of living crisis impacting on tenants ability to pay rents and charges.
- 2.6 Financing costs are expected to be within budget by **£4.967m** due predominately to the Loan's Fund Review impacting the loan charges breakdown. This forecast is indicative and subject to change due to the ongoing risks associated with interest rates rises, timing of HRA borrowing requirement and surplus cash balances available for investments etc.
- 2.7 Ordinarily the total net income of £18.212m would be used to fund the HRA Capital Programme as CFCR. However, in 2023/24 the Scottish Government provided the Council with £5.531m of Capital Funding towards the Local Government Pay Award, as in 2022/23. As Capital funding is not permitted to be used to fund revenue expenditure, Local Government Finance Circular 11/2022 allowed temporary flexibilities to enable this funding to be applied to the HRA Capital Programme, and in its place, the equivalent amount would be transferred to the General Fund from the HRA CFCR to fund the pay award costs.
- 2.8 The impact on the HRA is to reduce the amount of CFCR funding available to fund the Capital Programme, but in its place, the Capital Programme will receive £5.531m of the Capital Grant, therefore the net impact is £nil. This arrangement will not be repeated in 2024/25 as the funding will be baselined into the Revenue Settlement.
- 2.9 **General Fund Housing Services**
- 2.10 For other housing services that do not relate to Council-owned housing, the forecast for the year is **£6.962m** against a revised budget of **£6.070m**, therefore expenditure is anticipated to be over budget by **£0.892m** as set out in **Table 2**.

Table 2: General Fund Housing Service Forecast Outturn vs Revised Budget 2023/24

Budget Page	Original Budget 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual to 30 June 2023* £000	Forecast 2023/24 £000	Forecast Under/ (over) Budget £000
Affordable Housing	275	275	59	244	31
Homeless Persons	3,913	3,936	1,265	4,521	(585)
Improvement and Repairs Grants	937	937	232	1,449	(512)
Gypsies / Travelers	168	168	22	158	10
Sheltered Housing Support	351	351	123	187	164
Community Safety	403	403	107	403	-
Total General Fund Housing	6,047	6,070	1,808	6,962	(892)

**Note, actual to date figures may not be representative of the year to date position due to timing of expenditure and income*

2.11 Homeless Persons

The over budget position within the Homelessness service is attributed to a reduction in the levels of income being generated from the use of Temporary Accommodations Units (TAUs) and Hostels. This is due to Homeless Persons being placed into mainstream housing a lot quicker than previous years in response to Government Legislation relating to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and Rapid Rehousing Plan. In addition to this, the Service requires to maintain a supply of empty rooms within Hostels and TAUs for emergency use. While these rooms/properties are not occupied, this results in lost revenue and contributes to the reduced income levels.

The Service is currently undertaking a review of temporary accommodation with a recommendation in a separate report to this Committee to increase charges for temporary accommodation. This will increase income in Homeless Persons however it is important to note that this would have a detrimental impact on the Housing Benefit budget. The financial impact of the proposed charging changes on the Housing Benefit budget are complex due to the interaction of Housing Benefit entitlement, eligible and ineligible services and subsidy. There is also the issue of affordability of the charges for those not eligible for Housing Benefit. The financial impact on the Housing Benefit budget is being assessed and will be reported through the Business Services Committee as part of the Finance budget.

The Service is also reviewing the hostels, specifically the length of stay and the way these hostels operate. A cautious approach is required as any proposed changes could lead to a breach of legislation and increased risk of litigation against the Service.

2.12 Improvement and Repairs Grants

Improvement and Repairs Grants are forecast to be over budget by £0.512m. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide this service which is funded by the Capital Plan. The current year capital allocation of Private Sector Housing grants is £0.75m against an anticipated demand of £1.2m. The Capital Plan is currently being reviewed corporately to address pressures with an increase to this allocation being unlikely. In addition to

pressures on demand for this service, repairs have seen a 20% inflationary increase to costs. The service are considering how to manage the demand for this service, with any reduction in spend potentially impacting on service users ability to remain in their homes and consequently having a knock on impact on services within Health and Social Care and the NHS. The team are looking at ways to mitigate the impact of the budget pressures with on-going discussions with Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AH&SCP) on how to manage the service and budgets. A paper will be presented to the Housing Management Team and shared with the Capital team to consider options on how to manage the service going forward. Additional work has been carried out to retender contracts and look for more competitive pricing for the works required.

2.13 Sheltered Housing Support

An under budget position within Sheltered Housing Support is being forecast due to historic contracts with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) being reviewed, and as a result are in the process of being terminated. This will result in a recurring saving of £0.351m in 2024/25 which is over and above the £0.091m saving agreed for 2023/24. This will help mitigate pressures elsewhere in the Housing Service Budgets.

3. The Risks

- 3.1 As set out in the [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) the Council is facing unprecedented financial challenges due to events out with our control, including ongoing economic challenges, recovery from the pandemic and the global impact of Russia's war in Ukraine, all of which have contributed to rising inflation and interest rates, volatility in our supply chains and the Cost of Living crisis. Rising costs, increased demand for local services and reducing real term financial settlements from Scottish Government has created a challenging operating environment for 2023/24.
- 3.2 To respond to these challenges, the budget agreed by Council included significant assumptions and acceptance of risk to enable a balanced position, as well as agreement of a range of savings and efficiencies.
- 3.3 Budget risks refer to potential threats or uncertainties that could impact on the Council's ability to meet its objectives within the constraints of the budget. These risks could arise from a range of factor and should some or all these risks materialise during the year, they may create a budgetary pressure which will require to be addressed, either through efficiencies elsewhere within the Service or the Council, a policy change or the use of reserves.
- 3.4 The budget risks relating to the HRA and General Fund Housing Services are set out in [Appendix 5C](#).
- 3.5 Local Government Pay Awards continue to be a significant risk to the Council's budget as a whole. Scottish Government have provided funding of £155m towards a revised pay offer, of which Aberdeenshire Council anticipate to receive £7.088m. £4.6m of this funding was assumed in the budget setting process for the General Fund and was

transferred to an earmarked reserve. It will be recommended to Council that the additional funding is also transferred to the reserve pending agreement. The latest offer to Trade Unions which was within the Scottish Government funding envelope, of 5.5% was rejected. Any offer agreed above this level without additional funding will create a pressure on all services. Council agreed to transfer £0.3m to a HRA Risk & Inflation Reserve to mitigate against potential inflationary and pay award pressures within the HRA.

- 3.6 Future financial performance reports will provide updates on the monitoring of these risks and any envisaged impacts and mitigations.

4. General Fund Savings

- 4.1 Savings of **£0.161m** were agreed by Council in relation to General Fund Housing Services. These are detailed in **Appendix 5D**.
- 4.2 Of the £0.121m saving identified, **£0.091m** are on target to be achieved by the end of the financial year.
- 4.3 Savings in respect of a reduction in small repairs budgets unlikely be achieved due to demand pressures on the Private Sector Housing Grant.
- 4.4 Savings of **£0.040m** of Vacancy Management were also agreed to be achieved by the Housing Service within the General Fund meaning that when posts become vacant, services may be required to consider how to deliver services differently to avoid the need to recruit to the vacant post. Services are managing this carefully to ensure that delivery of services is not adversely impacted by reduced staffing numbers. To date, services look to be on track to achieve these.
- 4.5 Corporate savings of £2m were also agreed in relation to Voluntary Severance. Savings in relation to staff leaving the organisation under this scheme will be removed from the relevant General Fund budgets throughout the year as they are identified, and updates provided to committee. If sufficient savings are not able to be generated from Voluntary Severance, services may be required to find additional savings to mitigate.
- 4.6 Monitoring of the achievement of these savings will continue to be undertaken throughout the year and reported to future Committees as part of the financial performance reporting. Should it become apparent during the year that these savings will not be achieved, this will be reported to Committee as part of future financial performance reports, with details of the services options to mitigate any resultant budget pressure.

5. Reserves

- 5.1 Reserves are an important resource for the Council and the level, purpose and planned use of these reserves was set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Balances held in respect of the HRA and General Fund Housing Service are summarised in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Reserves at 30 June 2023

Reserve	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000	Balance at 30 June 2023 £000
HRA Working Balance	2,000	2,000
HRA Risk & Inflation Reserve	300	300
Total HRA Reserves	2,300	2,300
Affordable Housing Reserve	7,868	7,868
Total Housing Service Reserve	7,868	7,868

- 5.2 Council agreed an HRA Working Balance Reserve of £2.0m when it approved the budget for 2023/24. It should be recognised that were an unforeseen event to occur that could impact on the HRA revenue budget, which may require a call on this reserve, consideration would be made by Council as to how to reinstate the balance to the agreed level. In addition to this Council also agreed to create an earmarked reserve of £0.3m for known risks and inflation increases including any pay award above the 3% budgeted as highlighted above.
- 5.3 The Affordable Housing Reserve is available to support the Housing Service in the delivery of new affordable housing. This reserve is a revolving fund. It includes legally ring-fenced funds from 2nd homes council tax and supports delivery of new builds. £0.820m has been committed against three Council new build projects which are currently on site with spend anticipated by March 2024. A further £6.299m has been committed in principle to assist in the delivery of 262 units over the course of the next 5 years subject to appropriate approvals and funding. Given the ongoing challenges in the construction market with increased development costs, this fund will continue to be required to further subsidise the delivery of the new build programme.
- 5.4 It should be noted that the balances available in reserves are provisional and may be subject to change until the annual accounts for 2022/23 have been reviewed by External Audit. Any changes will be reflected in future financial performance monitoring reports together with updates on the use of these reserves throughout 2023/24.

6. Capital

- 6.1 The Capital Plan forms part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and reflects the Council's capital priorities. The capital projects identified in the 2023/24 budget were agreed as part of the Council's Capital Plan on 9 March 2023 and those that specifically relate to Housing are detailed in [Appendix 5B](#) and summarised in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Capital Plan Forecast vs Revised Budget 2023/24

	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual to 30 June 2023 £000	Forecast at 30 June 2023 £000	Under/ (over) budget £000
Housing General Fund	4,081	338	4,054	27
HRA Capital Programme	78,320	11,871	76,518	1,802
Total Capital Expenditure	82,401	12,209	80,572	1,829

- 6.2 Whilst the general services capital plan for 2023/24 was presented in detail on 9 March 2023, a detailed review of the Capital Plan is being undertaken during 2023/24 to allow a comprehensive, affordable, and deliverable Capital Plan to be developed for the financial years 2024 to 2028.
- 6.3 The level of borrowing required to support the capital investments presents an ongoing challenge to the Council's financial sustainability. The repayment of borrowing used to fund capital expenditure incurred today, creates a future revenue budget commitment over the entirety of the anticipated life span of the new asset.
- 6.4 The affordability of the HRA Capital Programme will be assessed as part of the HRA Business Plan Review ahead of the budget and rent setting being agreed for 2024/25.

APPENDIX 5B

2023-24 Budget Risk Register - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Risk Type	Risk <i>Threat to achievement of objectives</i>	Potential Consequences of Risk	Controls/Mitigations in place	Likelihood	Service	Budget Page
Pay Award - Local Government	Pay Awards being agreed in excess of those assumed in the budget; Ongoing pay negotiations with Teaching Unions may influence the 23/24 negotiations for SJC staff taking the pay award above the 3% included in the budget assumptions.	The Inflation Reserve created as part of 23/24 budget setting process will be exhausted. Budget pressures will be required to be met through service savings and/or efficiencies to limit impact on Capital Funded from Current Revenue and borrowing.	Transformation and identification of savings and efficiencies required to mitigate pressures; Creation of a Risk Reserve to draw down if required; acceptance of higher risks. Proposed 30-year Business Plan review in 23/24 to review affordability and identify priorities for future investment	MEDIUM	HRA	HRA
Inflation	Rising general inflation in the UK Economy	The Inflation Reserve created as part of 23/24 budget setting process will be exhausted. Budget pressures will be required to be met through service savings and/or efficiencies to limit impact on Capital Funded from Current Revenue and borrowing. Increase in cost of supplies and services and capital programme. Particular risk for contracts linked to Retail Price Index.	Financial Monitoring throughout the year to identify where spend is required to be reduced; Creation of Risk Reserve to draw down against inflationary pressures. Proposed 30-year Business Plan review in 23/24 to review affordability and identify priorities for future investment	MEDIUM	HRA	HRA
Energy Prices	The impact of the conflict in Ukraine on rising gas and electricity prices	Budget pressure on energy budgets within the HRA	Forward procurement pricing to be carried out along with regular monitoring by the Energy Management Team. £1.4m built in to the 23/24 budget. Proposed 30-year Business Plan review in 23/24 to review affordability and identify priorities for future investment		HRA	HRA
Cost of Living Crisis	The increasing cost of living crisis could have an impact on tenants financial situation	Potential that budgeted levels of income will not be received during the year with potentially higher bad debts and rent arrears.	Financial Monitoring throughout the year. Proposed 30-year Business Plan review in 23/24 to review affordability and identify priorities for future investment	Medium	HRA	HRA
Council House Rents Increase	Increase to Council House Rents could have an impact on tenants financial situation	Potential that budgeted levels of income will not be received during the year with potentially higher bad debts and rent arrears.	Financial Monitoring throughout the year. Proposed 30-year Business Plan review in 23/24 to review affordability and identify priorities for future investment	Low	HRA	HRA
Capital Plan	Delays resulting in increased costs; impact of increasing interest rates on affordability of capital projects		Review of the Capital Plan; Loans Fund Review; Identifying an affordable quantum of capital expenditure for future years		HRA	HRA
Interest Rates	Rising interest rates increase the cost of borrowing to fund the capital programme	Increase in cost of borrowing will put pressure on the level of Capital expenditure the HRA can afford;	Review of the Capital Plan; Loans Fund Review		HRA	HRA

APPENDIX 5B

2023-24 Budget Risk Register - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Risk Type	Risk <i>Threat to achievement of objectives</i>	Potential Consequences of Risk	Controls/Mitigations in place	Likelihood	Service	Budget Page
Weather	Risk of further storms and flooding causing damage to Housing stock	Additional revenue and capital costs associated with responses to these events	Bellwin Scheme is available for costs exceeding £1m threshold./ Insurance in place; preventative measures taken by services and communities	Medium	HRA	HRA
Repairs	There will be an impact on repairs and it will be just as significant as capital in regard to increased costs. The capital programme is behind schedule which will lead to increased levels of repairs as components will not be upgraded 'just in time' leading to greater number of repairs required.	Increase in cost of borrowing will put pressure on the level of Capital expenditure the HRA can afford;	Linked to review of the business plan.	High	HRA	HRA
Net Zero	Need to meet Net Zero is clear but how this will be measured and timescale for Social Housing is under review by the Scottish Government, so planning investment at this stage is not possible. This could also require more properties to be held void to enable upgrades to meet Net Zero.	Lack of clarity leading to inability to meet climate change targets, potential to not meet budgeted income levels if properties need to be held as voids.	Undertaking archetype house analysis to determine what investment is required to meet Net Zero.	Low	HRA	HRA
Fuel Crisis	Utility Companies not installing meters preventing properties being let.	Reduced properties available to let and potentially less than budgeted income.	Monitoring of voids, appointment of specialist company to work with utility companies to maximise installs.	Medium	HRA	HRA
Resources	Resources – both material (delayed delivery, increased costs, lack of available components) and staffing for our teams and contractors.	Lack of resources to undertake works.	Working with supply chain to encourage wholesalers to bulk purchase, to ensure availability of materials.		HRA	HRA
Contractor	Insufficient numbers or skilled contractors to install necessary upgrades and specialist upgrades for Net Zero works.	Lack of resources to undertake works.	Increasing use of apprentices with Housing Services and on major contracts to build capacity. Engaging with the market to ensure clarity of investment strategy to enable confident investment in the supply chain.		HRA	HRA

Appendix 5C
Aberdeenshire Council
General Fund Housing 2023/24 - Savings

Budget Page	Saving 2023/24 £000	Detail	RAG	Progress Update
Sheltered Housing Support	(91)	Development of alternative model of sheltered housing support with Registered Social Landlords		
Improvement and Repairs Grants	(30)	Reduction of Small Repairs Budgets		
Vacancy Management	(40)	Proactive Management of all vacant posts through the year		
	(161)			

APPENDIX 5D

2023/24 HRA/HOUSING GF CAPITAL PERFORMANCE - Q1 JUNE 2023

CAPITAL PERFORMANCE REPORT	Original Budget 2023/24 £000	Revised Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual 30 June 2023 £000	Forecast 2023/24 £000	Forecast Under/ (Over) Budget £000
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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

1 New Build Programme	23,009	23,009	3,822	23,210	(201)
2 Open Market House Purchases	2,000	2,000	138	2,000	0
3 Reactive Heating	1,998	1,998	277	1,998	0
4 Sheltered Housing Upgrades (Lifts, Boilers)	400	400	1	863	(463)
5 Sheltered Housing Fire Alarm/Sprinklers Programme	2,600	2,600	0	2,600	0
6 Sheltered Housing PV Installations	692	692	3	248	444
7 Sheltered Housing Sprinkler Programme	612	612	94	505	107
8 Stock Improvements (non-HIP)	300	300	49	264	36
9 Internal Net Zero (Gross Spend)	4,400	4,400	0	4,400	0
10 Internal Wall Insulation Programme	4,000	4,000	824	4,000	0
11 Housing Improvement Plan (HIP)	34,309	34,309	6,196	32,053	2,256
12 Smart Solar and Battery Storage (LCIPT)	0	0	0	282	(282)
13 Housing Fire and Smoke Detector Upgrades	0	0	0	77	(77)
14 Capital Works done at Void (Housing Repairs)	1,800	1,800	267	1,800	0
15 Housing Repairs Service Allocation	1,200	1,200	0	1,200	0
16 Staff Recharges	750	750	197	750	0
17 Other (ICT Infrastructure, SH car park upgrades, hard to treat properties)	250	250	0	228	22
18 Weir House Type Upgrades, Macduff	0	0	3	40	(40)
Housing Revenue Account Total	78,320	78,320	11,871	76,518	1,802

GENERAL FUND HOUSING

27 Affordable Housing	889	889	0	889	0
28 Disabled/Elderly Housing Adaptations (Private Sector Housing Grant)	750	750	300	750	0
29 Learning Disabilities - Adaptation Centres	70	76	33	36	40
30 Levelling Up - Macduff Aquarium	574	574	3	574	0
31 Live Life Aberdeenshire	485	626	2	639	(13)
32 Live Life Aberdeenshire Pitch & Outdoor Physical Activity Space Strategy	460	460	0	460	0
33 HSCP - Minor Works & LD Residential Improvements	706	706	0	706	0
General Fund Housing Total	3,934	4,081	338	4,054	27

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 To update Committee on the progress being made by the Housing Service on the actions identified in the Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Discuss and acknowledge the activities being undertaken jointly by Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and partners to deliver the actions identified within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24.

1.2.2 Consider new temporary accommodation charges as detailed in Appendix 4 and agree these should be reported to full council for agreement.

1.2.3 Agree to place the RRTP member officer group on hold until the new housing act is in place and detail around the homeless prevention duty is known.

1.2.4 Agree to a further update on progress in twelve months.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 On 21 February 2019 Communities Committee agreed the submission of the Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024 to the Scottish Government.

Previously, on the 6 September 2018, Communities Committee had been briefed on the work of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG), and the requirement to prepare a 5-year costed Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. On the 20 December 2019, they considered an update on the work of the RRTP Member Officer Working Group.

On 5 September 2019, members were advised of the progress that had been made during the first six months of the RRTP and requested that a further update be provided in six months. The report to have been provided in March 2020 was delayed due to the impact of Covid 19 but provided on 3 September 2020.

Further update reports were provided on 3 June 2021 and on 8 September 2022. Members agreed to receive a further update in 12 months.

This report provides an update on the implementation of Year 4 of the Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024, in terms of developing a rapid rehousing approach to meeting the needs of homeless households and those at risk of homelessness.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The requirement to produce an RRTP arose from the work of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG), set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce both short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. The recommendations of the group provided a vision of a whole system approach with prevention of homelessness paramount and responsibility lying with all parts of the public sector. Their recommendations together with the outcomes of an inquiry into homelessness undertaken by the Local Government and Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament resulted in the development of the Ending Homelessness Together high level action plan published in November 2018 and updated in October 2020, following HARSAG having been reconvened to provide further recommendations on action needed during the global pandemic and in the future to end homelessness.
- 3.2 Rapid Rehousing requires that where homelessness cannot be prevented it should be brief, with households accessing settled accommodation quickly and stays in temporary accommodation minimised. Move on accommodation should be sustainable to ensure that homelessness does not recur and that the cycle of homelessness is ended.
- 3.3 In the Aberdeenshire RRTP and Action Plan agreed by Communities Committee in February 2019 and submitted to the Scottish Government, a wide range of actions were identified across four main areas including homeless prevention, supply and access to permanent accommodation, temporary accommodation and support.
- 3.4 Since July 2019, as part of the distribution of the £24M Ending Homelessness Together Fund we have been awarded £1,422,000 to enable delivery of RRTP actions.

	RRTP Funding 2019-2024
2019/20 (Yr. 1)	£261,000
2020/21	£249,000
2021/22	£252,000
2022/23	£243,000
2023/24 (Yr. 5)	£227,000
Total	£1,232,000

- 3.5 In previous years we have produced a monitoring report for the Scottish Government using a template that focussed on activity and spend. This has been replaced for 2022/23 with a request for qualitative information to capture an overview of RRTP progress and challenges between 2019-2023.

The monitoring report, attached as **Appendix 1**, provides members with information on the progress made during Year 4 of the RRTP in the format that has been used previously while **Appendix 2** is the update requested by the Scottish Government.

- 3.6 Despite challenges which include the global pandemic, cost of living crisis and resettlement schemes, excellent progress has been made towards key rapid rehousing monitoring indicators during Year 4 of the plan.

These include:

- Homeless journey time reduced to 85 days.
- Homeless backlog (open homeless cases not under offer) reduced from a peak of 198 in October 2022 to 141 at March 2023 despite a 10% increase in homeless presentations during 2022/23.
- Average number of days spent in all temporary accommodation reduced to 83 days from 131 days in 2020.
- 128 households in temporary accommodation in March 2023 compared with 286 at March 2020.
- No breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order was recorded.
- Further 28 temporary properties flipped – providing a permanent tenancy and aiding resettlement by maintaining support networks and avoiding additional costs of moving.
- 70% of approaches for housing advice (426 households) resulted in positive housing outcomes being identified including homelessness being prevented.
- The Housing First team are supporting 100 tenancies with team at full capacity. Positive outcomes being achieved and excellent partnership working recognised.

Throughout 2022/23 we monitored homeless demand carefully, responded to changing legislation and built on existing partnerships to prevent homelessness where we could and identify appropriate sustainable housing options where that was not possible.

- 3.7 The Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) was extended to all households in September 2021. Any placement of a homeless household in accommodation that is considered unsuitable, mainly bed and breakfast or hotel, for more than 7 days is considered a breach of the order. Temporary accommodation use is closely monitored to prevent breach of the UAO. This means the service retains 2 emergency housing residential units and has a number of council properties that are kept as temporary emergency accommodation to ensure we have places available to avoid the use of bed and breakfasts or hotels. Aberdeenshire Council are one of very few authorities that are avoiding breaching the UAO because of this approach. Providing this service comes at high void costs and in addition temporary accommodation rents are low in comparison to our neighbouring authorities. Due to the successful impact of the RRTP this has led to less use of temporary accommodation and shorter stays and although this is very positive this has led to a drop in income for the homeless service. Finally, the current charges are complex in the way they are set out which can lead to confusion for our customers. The service is therefore proposing some changes to charges to simplify them and to ensure the current service provision can be sustained. These changes are detailed in **Appendix 3**. Housing charges are reserved to full council and would need to be agreed there.
- 3.8 On 29 November 2022 the Homeless Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022 was passed. Homeless households cannot be referred to another local authority in Scotland on the basis of their local connection status however the power to refer applicants to an authority in England and Wales remains. The impact of this change is being monitored and we are part of a national solutions group set up by the Scottish Government to consider and mitigate the impact of the change.
- 3.9 The Prevention Review Group, set up to progress work on preventing homelessness identified by HARSAG and in the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan outlined recommendations for legal duties to prevent homelessness in its report of February 2021. Aimed at reforming the homeless system and bringing together a wide range of public bodies with a focus on homeless prevention, it included a duty to “ask” and “act” where there is a risk of homelessness. The Scottish Government and COSLA consulted on the full raft of recommendations during December 2021 and April 2022. In January 2023, the Cabinet Secretary announced that the forthcoming Housing Bill to be introduced later this year would include new prevention of homelessness duties for public bodies. Workshops were held in March and June 2023 to raise awareness of these forthcoming duties and to guide future homeless prevention activity within refreshed RRTP activity beyond 2024.
- 3.10 There has been no indication from the Scottish Government whether RRTP funding will continue or whether there will be an ongoing requirement to have an RRTP. In addition the new Housing Bill has been delayed which in turn will delay the implementation of the Homeless Prevention Duty. At the RRTP Member Officer Working Group in May it was proposed the group is put on hold until there is further understanding on these issues. The group agreed with this

recommendation and the team will continue working operationally to get positive outcomes in the meantime.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This Report helps to deliver the Council Priority of Health & Wellbeing within the pillar “Our People” and the principle of “right people, right places, right time.” and the Council Priorities of Infrastructure and Resilient Communities within the pillar “Our Environment” and the principle tackling poverty and inequalities.

4.2 Implications

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	IIA attached as Appendix 4		
Children and Young People`s Rights and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 4		
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 4		
Town Centre First		X	

4.3 There are no staffing or financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is included as **Appendix 4**. The following impact has been identified which can be mitigated as described :-

The experience of homelessness can have negative effects on the life chances of young people experiencing it directly or within households. Preventing homelessness or a speedy resolution minimises the negative effects.

- 4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level;

ACORP001 – Budget Pressures – mitigated by changes to temporary accommodation costs.

ACORP002 – Changes in Government Policy, Legislation and Regulation – mitigated by regular monitoring and review.

ACORP005 – Working with other Organisations – mitigated by adhering to procurement guidance and contract monitoring

ACORP006 - reputation management (including social media) – mitigated by checking performance and costs at other authorities.

ACORP007 - social risk (e.g. population changes, poverty & social inequality, demographic changes, crime, antisocial behaviour) – mitigated by ongoing monitoring of direct changes in demand for service and through multi agency partnership working and sharing information about trends.

- 4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

ISR014 – Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness – The RRTP sets out to ensure we provide the best support possible.

ISR016 - Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required. Help deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy in relation to affordable housing supply

ISR017 - Tenancies are sustained/community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enabled – Ensure there are robust housing support services available.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D 7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as this relates to a decision on policy and resource matters.

Alan Wood, Director Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Allan Jones Housing Manager (Options and Homelessness) and Lorraine Stewart Team Leader (Change and Voids)

DATE : 4th August 2023

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 – RRTP Monitoring Report (Old Format)
- Appendix 2 - Proposed RRTP return to Scottish Gov for 2022/23
- Appendix 3 – Temporary Accommodation Charging
- Appendix 4 – Integrated Impact Assessment

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

2022/23 Monitoring Report - activity and funding
(RRTP funding - part of the Ending
Homelessness Together Fund)



Local Authority	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL		
Reporting Period	01/04/2022 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>	to	31/03/2023 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>
Reporting Officer	Allan Jones		
Position	Housing Manager (Options & Homelessness)		
Date Completed	27 July 2023		
Total RRTP Funding carried over from 2021/22	£23,491		
RRTP Funding received for 2022/23	£247,000		

2022/23 Activity

Activity Name:	INCREASE ACCESS TO SETTLED ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS			
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and reduce homeless backlog – including flipping • Reduction in average days to relet • Monitor and review impact of specialist officers – Community Care Grants (CCG) and Private Rented Sector (PRS) • Increase access to properties in the Private Rented Sector including discharge of homeless duty • Ensure access by homeless households to properties in social rented sector including where Choice Based Letting (CBL) is in place • Use of information to identify potential fraud through access to Insight 			
Allocation Spent on activity:	£	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
		Insight - £5000		
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	<p>The homeless backlog was monitored closely throughout 2022/23. At the end of March 2023 there were 141 open homeless cases not under offer.</p> <p>We experienced a 10% increase in homeless presentations during 2022/23 compared with the previous year and this had the effect of increasing the average number of open homeless cases at the end of each month from 146 to 172.</p> <p>At 31.3.23 10 cases had been open for more than 9 months compared with 6 at 31.3.21.</p> <p>These cases were being actively case managed and were open for an extended period due to circumstances that affected the type/location of property that could be offered or that was required to meet the needs of the household</p> <p>66% of the cases that made up the homeless backlog were single adults with no children</p> <p>28 temporary tenancies were flipped bringing the overall total during the RRTP to date to 319.</p>			

Whilst this activity has slowed it has continued to be significant in discharge of duty and reduction of the homeless backlog.

The average number of days to relet mainstream properties was 52 days at the end of 2022/23 compared with 75 days at the end of 2021/22.

The total average days is negatively impacted by low demand sheltered housing properties.

The staff structure introduced in Autumn 2021 continues to bed in.

Staff are confident in the new roles and their focus on case management with additional responsibility for temporary accommodation placements. The changes made since the introduction of the RRTP have put us in a good position to respond to recent and ongoing challenges that have come from changes to homeless legislation, the pandemic, supporting Ukraine displaced households and the unknown of the cost of living crisis.

The specialist Housing Officer post to prioritise the processing of Community Care Grant (CCG) applications and to facilitate prompt take up of settled accommodation by homeless applicants continues to work very well.

Issues with the delivery of items and completion of CCG orders by the contracted supplier have been addressed. These were having a negative impact on the overall timescale from application to delivery of goods and on customer satisfaction. The move to a cash first approach and a reduction in available budget for CCG in 2023/24 will be monitored and managed by finance colleagues.

The specialist Housing Officer (PRS) role is achieving positive results. Administering the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS) through a central point supports Housing Officers (Options & Homelessness) managing their case load to identify and achieve settled outcomes in the PRS where appropriate. This is important in relation to homeless prevention/housing options and in securing settled outcomes for those where homelessness cannot be prevented.

The Housing Officer (PRS) supports staff, landlords and potential tenants in the PRS by providing detailed information and advice, identifying available properties and facilitating access and promoting tenancy sustainment. There is close working and

communication between the Housing Officer (PRS) and the Private Sector Team. Advertising of available private rental properties on Aberdeenshire Council website has begun.

During 2022/23 79.3% of those assessed as statutory homeless in Aberdeenshire secured a settled outcome in the social rented sector compared with 3.3% in the private sector. This is very similar to previous years. The private sector plays a small part for those who have been assessed as homeless compared with outcomes through housing options advice where almost 8% of outcomes were in private sector.

Success in reducing the homeless backlog to current low levels and the impact of homeless prevention activity has impacted the proportion of mainstream lets being made to homeless applicants which was 42.6% compared with 41.9% in the previous year and short of the target of 50%.

The demographic of the homeless caseload means that we need a higher number of one bed properties than are available to let. Where there are suitable vacancies, given the large geographical spread of Aberdeenshire, they are often in areas where there is little or no current homeless demand. This mismatch in supply and demand is experienced by all social sector landlords in Aberdeenshire.

We, and the majority of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) operating within Aberdeenshire, allocate properties through CBL. We are in regular discussion with RSL partners to identify homeless applicants who could be matched to/offered available property before it is advertised. A similar approach is taken with our own vacancies and direct offers to applicants with homeless priority may be made prior to a property being advertised. Homeless applicants are also encouraged and supported to bid for appropriate properties either directly or through autobid. Changes to the Allocation policy ensures that those who have a homeless priority are considered for a wide a range of areas and that settled accommodation is identified as quickly as possible.

Trial of Insight as a tool to identify whether there is fraud within homeless applications was progressed and the initial one year contract has been extended for a further year.

<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99 referrals, from a variety of sources including Housing Officers (options) and the Resettlement Team, received for access to Rent Deposit Guarantees. 62 tenancies were created with £24,930 guaranteed. This is an average of £410 per tenancy. During the same period claims against RDGS amounted to £9549. • 613 CCG applications were processed as a priority. Positive feedback on both timescales and support provided to ensure delivery. • A case identified where false information had been given – this did not result in action being taken to recover the property. 			
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>SG RRTP Funding</p>	<p>Local Authority funding</p>	<p>Other</p>
<p>Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24.</p>		<p>£5000 - insight</p>		
<p>Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and maintain homeless backlog at current low levels • No homeless cases open for more than 9 months except in exceptional circumstances. • Reduce average days to relet mainstream properties to 40 days • Maximise allocations to homeless households • Monitor and support settled outcomes in Private Rented Sector 			

<h2 style="text-align: center;">2022/23 Activity</h2>	
<p>Activity Name:</p>	<p>REVIEW TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STOCK AND ITS USE</p>
<p>Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review temporary stock, including shared tenancies, in line with reduced homeless presentations and demographic of homeless backlog

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor number of placements and time spent in temporary accommodation – continue to reduce • Support Options & Homelessness staff to focus on case management approach and increased responsibility for temporary accommodation placements within it • Review community hosting project implementation and outcomes in partnership with Aberdeen City Council • Support colleagues in the resettlement team and within Children & Families SW to meet objectives in relation to Resettlement & Integration and Corporate Parenting. 											
<p>Allocation Spent on activity:</p>	£	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">SG RRTP funding</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Local Authority funding</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">£29,861.20 – Community Hosting</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">£25,200 – flipping</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other	£29,861.20 – Community Hosting			£25,200 – flipping			
SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other										
£29,861.20 – Community Hosting												
£25,200 – flipping												
<p>Overview of progress made to date:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>The overall homeless journey time has significantly reduced with average days to complete homeless cases at 85 days compared with 98 in 2021/22.</p> <p>The average days in temp was also reduced to 66 days from 73 due to placements being actively monitored and move on managed.</p> <p>Residential Accommodation Units (Hostel), Stonefield House and Katteburn Court, are now used for assessment and short-term placements and comply with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. The majority of placements are for less than 7 days.</p> <p>At the end of March 2023 the temporary accommodation stock included 155 self- contained furnished properties and 32 shared 2 bed properties compared with 350 self-contained properties prior to the introduction of the RRTP.</p> <p>We have responded to demand for homeless assistance from Afghan and Ukrainian nationals entering the UK through established visa routes and placed with hosts or joining family settled within Aberdeenshire. We are working with colleagues in Children and Families SW to support a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. We developed a small number of</p>											

	<p>additional properties in response and have continued to provide further resource as required.</p> <p>We were not required to report any breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.</p> <p>Reducing and re-profiling the temporary accommodation stock alongside the introduction of the new staffing structure within the Options and Homelessness Team has enabled change to how temporary accommodation is used and managed. Integrating former Temporary Accommodation Officers into the role of Housing Officer (Options & Homelessness) reflects the shifting of priorities away from maintaining high levels of temporary accommodation, and moves within it, towards an effective case management approach that moves people to settled solutions quickly.</p> <p>We recognised within the RRTP that our levels of youth homelessness were higher than the national average and that a different response might be required. We jointly commissioned Aberdeen Foyer to carry out a feasibility study to explore Community Hosting in Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire. Following evaluation of the study and completion of procurement a contract was awarded to Aberdeen Foyer for the delivery of a community hosting service using the `Nightstop` model. The contract began on 1 April 2022 and is jointly funded by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Recruitment of hosts has proved more difficult than expected and we have not achieved the target of recruiting 10 hosts in Year 1 despite extensive advertising and engagement. We currently have three hosts and referrals can now be accepted for placement. Further recruitment is ongoing.</p>
<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<p>128 households were in suitable temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023, including 27 households with children and 55 children. There were no placements in unsuitable temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Monthly variations during 2021/22 saw a peak in placements of 152 in May but reduced to 120 in December.</p>

Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:		SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24	£	£42,136.40 - Community Hosting	
£15,000- residual flipping				

We are supporting Aberdeen Foyer to achieve an increase in the number of hosts recruited for the Community Hosting service from within Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire and to have sufficient placements to be able to evaluate impact and decide on future funding.

We want to maintain the progress that we have made to ensure that the average length of the homeless journey is reduced to 75 days and the average time spent in temporary accommodation at 60 days.

We aim to avoid any breach of the Unsuited Accommodation Order.

We will flip properties where it is suitable and in the best interests of the individual and the service.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">2022/23 Activity</h2>	
Activity Name:	HOMELESS PREVENTION ACTIVITY
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention pathways for young people and those with care experience. • Housing Officer (Mediation) role and outcomes • Develop Housing Domestic Abuse Policy • Review hospital discharge arrangements – identify housing needs at early stage

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison release pathway – Sustainable Housing on release for everyone (SHORE) • Homeless Prevention budget • Resettlement / Housing Officer to work with Ukraine displaced households to identify housing options and prevent homelessness 			
Allocation Spent on activity:	£	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
		£12,648 prevention funding		£50,000 Lacer
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	<p>614 prevention/housing advice approaches were recorded during 2022/23 compared with 532 in previous year. 16.75% went on to make a homeless application while 57.5% secured alternative accommodation or remained in current accommodation.</p> <p>The Housing Officer (mediation) offers tailored housing options advice to the young people referred but take up of mediation has been low to date. In the initial 6 months there were 23 case contacts but increased to 90 in the following six months. 42.3% of contacts were resolved without a homeless application being made.</p> <p>The postholder provides a single point of contact for Education colleagues to access housing advice and assistance. Despite awareness raising within schools take up has been low and this is an area that we will concentrate on.</p> <p>During 2022/23, 267 homeless presentations were received from those aged 16-24 yrs reduced from 348 at the beginning of RRTP and pre pandemic. Repeat homelessness presentations have reduced by 50% and demonstrates the effectiveness of the work that is being done to reduce the time spent within the homeless system and to prevent re-entry.</p> <p>Close working with colleagues within Children`s Services around delivery of The Promise supports the Care leavers housing protocol and ongoing work of the Youth Housing Forum. It has also led to the development of initiatives such as Stepping Stone in Inverurie and housing inputs to the work</p>			

	<p>around family wellbeing hubs and the Aspen Approach (formerly the Holistic Family Support Project).</p> <p>We are active members of Aberdeenshire Community Justice Partnership and work closely with Social work and colleagues at HMP Grampian to ensure that accommodation and support needs are identified and addressed for individuals admitted to, and released from, prison. We attend the Case management board and share information re admission, releases and transfers allowing housing need to be assessed and homeless prevention activity to be carried out. This has enabled individuals to be housed directly in permanent accommodation on release and in other instances tenancies to be sustained. Homeless applications and repeat homelessness applications from prison leavers in Aberdeenshire have been reduced partly due to rapid rehousing but also through access to appropriate support through Housing First.</p> <p>A successful bid to the Scottish Government Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund (LACER) provided £100,000 in additional funding. This was used to fund activity around setting up and sustaining tenancies and for the alleviation of food and fuel poverty. This directly linked to the prevention of homelessness and supplemented the funding that was made available through the Homeless Prevention Budget.</p>								
<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<p>Payments made from the Homeless Prevention Budget and facilitated tenancy sustainment and prevented homelessness through full/partial payment of rent arrears and the purchase of household items/equipment to promote tenancy sustainment. This amounted to £12,648</p> <p>Lacer spend – RSL, LA and PRS - 90 tenancies were supported and rent arrears reduced to below level where action would be taken</p>								
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	£	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SG RRTP Funding</th> <th>Local Authority funding</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other	Unknown			
SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other							
Unknown									
<p>Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24.</p>	<p>We are raising awareness of forthcoming homeless prevention duty with wider partners. The pressure that this will place on our</p>								

	service in terms of resources and maintaining performance is not yet known.
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity: Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	This activity has been mainstreamed

Unspent RRTP Funding		
<p>Please provide the total RRTP funding provided by the Scottish Government for the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in your area that has <u>not</u> been spent to date.</p>	£	<p>£174,290.80 cannot be attributed to specific spend as RRTP funding not ring fenced. There is no carry over into 2023/24</p>

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

2022/23 Monitoring Report

Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund



Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans Monitoring Report

In previous years, we have asked all local authorities to provide a written report detailing how they have spent their allocation of funding including funding carried over from previous financial years. For this return we are refocusing on the outcomes of rapid rehousing transition plan spend and have included four questions which ask local authorities to provide qualitative information to capture an overview of rapid rehousing transition plan (RRTP) progress and challenges between 2019-2023.

These questions are designed to identify where RRTP funding has improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, to identify best practice and highlight where more support is needed. It is a free text return designed to allow local authorities to capture successes and challenges. We are also seeking anonymised case studies of people who have directly benefitted from the implementation of RRTPs in local authority areas. This qualitative information will be used in the consideration of future funding.

Please complete this report and include it with the latest version of your RRTP for 2022-23 and updated EQIA by **25 August 2023** to:

RapidRehousingTransitionPlansMailbox@gov.scot.

Please provide an overview of progress/outcomes since the implementation of your RRTP including anonymised case studies where helpful to demonstrate outcomes.

Word guide: approximately 500 words per question.

Can you describe how implementation of your RRTP has helped prevent homelessness within your local authority area?

Prevention of homeless has been a strong focus throughout the RRTP. It allowed us to trial new posts and ways of working including developing and strengthening joint working.

The role of Housing Officer (mediation) was developed and embedded to include the provision of housing options advice to young people at risk of homelessness ensuring consistent advice and access to appropriate resources. **(Case Study 1)** Joint work with Children's Services and Through Care social work enabled the development of prevention pathways for young people, including those who are Care Experienced, and the provision of accommodation that includes training flats and supported accommodation.

The Housing Officer (PRS) provides options advice facilitating access to tenancies in the PRS and provides landlords and tenants with support to sustain those tenancies. Addressing issues effectively at an early stage is vital to preventing repeat homelessness.

Recognising the increased risk of homelessness for those in prison we reviewed arrangements with Housing and Social Work colleagues and the Scottish Prison Service to meet SHORE standards and to identify sustainable housing on release. **(Case Study 2)**. This links with the development of Housing First and the establishment of a team to provide support to those with more complex needs. Many clients receiving Housing First support have been in prison, some multiple times, and each prison sentence would lead to the loss of accommodation and the need to present as homeless on release. With increased awareness and support, more tenancies have been able to be sustained.

RRTP funding allowed the trial of a mental health link worker post which has now been mainstreamed. This post was a direct response to the adverse impact of the pandemic on the mental health of clients of the housing service and on the housing issues they were raising. Linking clients to appropriate services and community resources has led to positive health and wellbeing outcomes and improved housing situations including the prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment. **(Case Study 3)**

Improved joint working and information sharing with Tenancy Services colleagues and Registered Social Landlord partners enabled tenancies at risk to be identified and appropriate interventions to be made including assessing for housing support, signposting to or providing financial assistance and the prevention of evictions. The RRTP has acted as a catalyst and focus for homeless prevention within housing management and enabled us to respond quickly and effectively to distribute both our Tenant Grant Fund allocation but also LACER funding.

With Resettlement and Social Work colleagues the Housing Officer (support) has ensured that New Scots households have settled into permanent accommodation. Households who have arrived through the various visa schemes, including more recently Ukraine displaced households, have been provided with dedicated housing options advice and assistance by a specialist Housing Officer (Ukraine), including identifying

settled accommodation without having had to go through a homeless route. **(Case Study 4)**

We reviewed our outreach support services and developed a prevention pathway in relation to Gender Based Abuse. This included working with commissioned services to move from refuge to outreach support and the development of domestic abuse housing guidance in line with the Chartered Institute of Housing "Make a stand" campaign. A housing procedure also detailed the practical assistance that can be offered to those affected by domestic abuse.

Can you describe how implementation of your RRTTP has helped speed up the process of rehousing homeless households?

A priority was to increase the supply of available settled accommodation and we took a cross tenure approach. We carried out a review of our void process and void management with input from an external consultant to reduce the overall void period and ensure that vacant council properties were available for relet as quickly as possible. RRTTP funding allowed us to trial different roles through tests of change and some of those roles have been mainstreamed. We have reduced the average number of days to relet mainstream properties from 75 to 52 days and are working to achieve target of 40 days.

We promote and assist with access to property in the private sector, particularly for those households with need of a specific type of accommodation or location or those we do not have a statutory duty to rehouse. The Housing Officer (PRS) is responsible for the administration of the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme where previously it was up to officers providing housing options advice to promote and administer. 62 tenancies were created in 2022/23 with £25,000 guaranteed. The Housing Officer (PRS) shares information re vacancies with wider options team and promotes vacancies on the council website.

We meet regularly with RSL partners and promote rapid rehousing and shared responsibility towards resolving homelessness. Raising awareness and working collaboratively has led to some increase in nominations but this is a work in progress and some partners could do more.

We reviewed the structure of the Options and Homeless team to deliver rapid rehousing and to effectively case manage open homeless cases. This includes regular monitoring of the homeless backlog and particularly cases that have been open longest, with a focus on finding solutions. At the end of June there were 132 open homeless cases with only 5 having been open for more than 9 months. 92% of homeless cases had been open for less than 6 months

We reviewed our homeless temporary accommodation stock in line with homeless demand and took the opportunity to flip properties where possible to reduce the overall number and make up of the stock. Households who occupied temporary accommodation that met their needs and who had been waiting for long periods of time for a suitable permanent offer were given the opportunity to remain and for us to discharge duty. This has been very effective and to date we have flipped 319 properties.

We introduced a Housing Officer (Community Care Grant) to our structure following a test of change. This enabled fast tracking of CCG applications from household households reducing the time taken to assess and for goods to be delivered. 613 CCG applications were processed as a priority during 2022/23. This has significantly reduced waiting time and promoted prompt resettlement. **(Case study 5)**

The combination of the above has resulted in the time taken to close a homeless case having been reduced from 142 days in 2019 to 85 days in 2023.

How has implementation of your RRTP affected the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and the time spent there?

Throughout the period of the RRTP we have reviewed our temporary stock, including our residential units, in line with homeless presentations, the demographic of the households who make up our homeless backlog and the relevant legislation.

The residential accommodation units in Inverurie and Peterhead are now used for assessment and short-term placements. The majority of placements are for less than 7 days.

We trialled shared tenancies and our model has been adopted by other Authorities and recognised as an exception in terms of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. We have used RRTP funding to explore the feasibility of Community Hosting and to jointly commission with Aberdeen City Council the development of Nightstop provision by Aberdeen Foyer. It is too early to identify whether this model will yield expected outcomes due to difficulties in recruiting hosts and referrals only now being accepted.

In April 2019 there were 303 households in temporary accommodation, we were reliant on using Bed & Breakfast and the average length of stay was 131 days. This contrasts with April 2023 where households in temporary accommodation amounted to 124, there is no use of Bed & Breakfast or breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the average stay is reduced to 83 days.

The number of placements and time spent in temporary accommodation are closely monitored.

As the homeless backload is reduced and prevention activity has an impact on the number of homeless presentations made there has been a need to reduce the temporary accommodation stock that we have and the properties that are available for use.

Reducing and re-profiling the temporary accommodation stock alongside the introduction of the new staffing structure within the Options and Homelessness Team has enabled change to how temporary accommodation is used and managed. Integrating former Temporary Accommodation Officers into the role of Housing Officer (Options & Homelessness) reflects the shifting of priorities away from maintaining high levels of temporary accommodation, and moves within it, towards an effective case management approach that moves people to settled solutions quickly.

The total stock of temporary accommodation was 350 in 2019 but by 2023 it comprises 155 self-contained properties and 32 shared 2 bed properties.

The reduction in use of temporary accommodation and shorter stays has had the negative consequence of reducing income and increasing void rent loss, resulting in us currently reviewing temporary accommodation charges.

Is your local authority on track for making the planned transition to rapid rehousing? If not, what major factors are hindering progress?

We have made excellent progress towards rapid rehousing in terms of meeting performance targets and embedding the understanding and commitment to delivering within the Options & Homeless team and across the wider housing service. A strong focus on homeless prevention and housing options has led to homeless presentations being reduced. Households are spending less time in temporary accommodation and the overall homeless journey time has been reduced significantly. The revolving door of homelessness has been ended with repeat homeless presentations now minimal.

We consider that we have reached a mature stage in delivering rapid rehousing but we have concerns relating to sustaining this performance in the face of uncertainty that includes the impact of the cost of living crisis, homeless demand from Ukraine displaced people as host placements come to an end and the implications of the homeless prevention duty.

We recognise that while we have been able to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, we require to maintain a more limited stock to meet demand and for emergency use. This may make us vulnerable and less able to respond to demand where it exceeds what may be considered normal eg adverse weather events. Reduction in the overall income and increasing costs to provide temporary accommodation may make it difficult to continue to ensure that temporary accommodation is affordable.

We have had feedback from a commissioned support provider that indicates that while Rapid Rehousing is desirable for the majority of those with homeless priority, there may be instances where it may have a negative consequence. Young people for example may benefit from having the opportunity to engage with housing support and to gain skills that will ensure tenancy sustainment. Moving them too quickly towards permanent accommodation may be detrimental to some young people. We are considering how to best address this in the context of rapid rehousing and monitoring of performance.

We are committed to continuing to work to achieve positive outcomes. Further review of our RRTP, while ongoing, has been delayed to enable a better understanding of future homeless prevention activity and funding of it.

Case Study 1 : Options Advice/Mediation

18 year old girl referred to Housing Officer (mediation). Staying with grandparents having been asked to leave parental home. Unemployed and not on benefits. Previously supported by CAMHS but now seeing GP re anxiety.

Given full Options advice including registering to bid on Aberdeenshire properties advertised by Council and RSLs., mid market rent, private renting including Rent Deposit Guarantee. Signposted to apply for UC and job searching. Discussed areas of choice and that area where she would prefer is low turnover and high demand. Need to widen areas of choice especially if homeless priority awarded. Discussed mediation and benefits – resolve conflict and planned move without chaos of homeless journey. She wanted to make a homeless application but agreed to contact with her mother.

Mediation meeting took place between mother and daughter – issues discussed were mainly around need to get a job and pay board and behavioural changes that mother tried to support but did not understand. No resolution and temp placement made – application for crisis grant and referral to housing support. Following 1 night in temp accommodation unit she returned to grandparents and Housing Officer (mediation) encouraged ongoing contact with support re training/job opportunities, bidding for property etc.

1 week later follow up – she had returned to parental home

Case Study 2 – SHORE

Applicant being released from HMP Grampian. Release highlighted through information provided by Scottish Prison Service and discussed at Case Management Board.

Homeless application taken and permanent tenancy identified prior to date of release. CCG applied for in advance and family assisted with setting up tenancy. This allowed for support and other services to be identified and referrals made. Avoided placement in temp and a further move of location and workers which can be difficult and unsettling.

Case Study 3 – Mental Health Link Worker

Mr X expressed that for the first time someone had taken the time to listen to him about his mental health. He appreciated the encouragement and empathy that was shown. The worker took the weight off their shoulders in terms of making the appointments and going and speaking about their mental health. He has now seen his GP and has medication. He also now attends a 12-week course via Penumbra, has attended Aberdeenshire Step in Service for Alcohol and drugs and is now receiving support which has led to a decrease in his substance use. He reports that he is now sleeping better, feels much more positive about his future and is considering getting involved in farming because this was something he enjoyed when he was younger. This client had a number of housing issues including hoarding and living in poor housing conditions but his improved health has seen him feel motivated to tackle his house condition and live with improved outcomes.

Case Study 4 : Access to PRS/Resettlement

Referral made through resettlement team – host placement of Ukrainian woman and her 14-year-old daughter coming to an end. Discussed housing options and specifically wish to secure accommodation in Inverurie only. Process of making homeless application discussed and unlikely to be housed within area of choice due to turnover and demand. Applicant working and felt private renting would be unaffordable but signposted for income maximisation with welfare rights.

Decided not to make homeless application but to explore private renting. Housing Officer (PRS) provided links to properties and web sites and answered queries relating to various properties and the process of viewing. Ongoing contact over a 4-week period and she was offered a 2-bed private rented property in area of choice. Rent deposit guarantee provided and lease agreed. Applicant very appreciative of assistance received and delighted with outcome.

Case Study 5 : Fast Track of CCG applications

Miss X received an offer of permanent accommodation from Aberdeenshire Council on 21/06/23. She signed for her new tenancy on 04/07/23. A Community Care Grant application was submitted by her Support Worker on 07/07/23. This was received by Housing Officer (CCG) on a Friday afternoon and was picked up on Monday morning for processing. The application investigated and a grant awarded to the applicant.

Miss X received an award which allowed her to purchase the appliances that she required for her new home and she was also awarded carpets for the living room and bedrooms which will be supplied and fitted for her.

The process was dealt with and processed within 1 working day of receiving the application.

Details of funding recipient

Local authority	Aberdeenshire Council		
Reporting period	01/04/2022	to	31/03/2023
Reporting officer	Allan Jones		
Position	Housing Manager (Options & Homelessness)		
Date completed	27.7.23		
Total RRTP funding carried over from 2021-22	nil		
RRTP funding received for 2022-23	£247,000		
RRTP spend 2022-23	£72,709.20		
Total RRTP funding carried over to 2023-24	£ nil RRTP funding is not ring fenced		

Housing First

Housing First tenancies

Provide a short brief overview of your progress and any obstacles to progression of Housing First in your area.

Housing First started as a pilot project in Aberdeenshire in 2017 but has rapidly expanded in recent years to upscale the scheme which now provides support for up to 100 live cases at one time. During 2022/23 we submitted a bid for funding to Aberdeenshire ADP which was successful and allowed us to sustain the funding of one member of staff we had for the last 3 years and further allow us to employ 3 additional staff members. One staff member will have the role as being a floating member of staff who covers the housing first clients when their main worker is on leave, sick leave, etc. This has proved very successful and allows for more streamlined support for the clients we support. During 2022/23 Aberdeenshire Council created 21 new Housing First Tenancies. During 2022/23 our partnership working has gone from strength to strength with involvement of the housing first team in a joint initiative with colleagues around Operation Protector which carries out targeted days in locations in Aberdeenshire where partners team up to visit those most vulnerable and who are at risk of exploitation and drug related death. Some Housing First clients fall into this category, and it ensures continued additional support from all agencies with report back on outcomes following the days of action.

The cost of living crisis and availability of hardship funds has put additional pressure on those supported via Housing First and our mainstream housing support services. We are seeing

	<p>additional vulnerabilities in relation to fuel poverty, food poverty and house condition issues since the costs of essential items have increased for the general population. This has led to a number of issues in local communities where those who exploit other people will seek opportunities to make use of client's homes to sell drugs or exploit people.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council also lead on the Rural Housing First meetings and have been asked to speak to multiple local authorities across Scotland over the past year to pass on experience and tips in relation to Housing First and general housing support contracts.</p>								
<p>Housing First partners Provide detail of all Housing First partners who are supporting the delivery of Housing First.</p>	<p>Police Scotland, DWP, RSL Partners, Substance misuse social work and clinical teams, mental health teams, criminal justice social work teams, health, Turning point Scotland, ADA, SPS, Community Safety.</p>								
<p>Allocation spent on Housing First 2022/23:</p>	<p>£</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SG RRTP funding</th> <th>Local authority funding</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>470,000</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP funding	Local authority funding	Other		470,000		
SG RRTP funding	Local authority funding	Other							
	470,000								
<p>Impact of Housing First: Any evidence of the impact of Housing First including anonymised case studies where appropriate</p>	<p>Housing First continues to support those who are most vulnerable in our Aberdeenshire Communities. During 22/23 we have also managed to support a number of prison leavers through this programme and outcomes for all clients are still very positive with tenancy sustainment rate of 90%.</p> <p>Case Study – Miss C was referred to Housing First because she had been living in temporary accommodation and was not responding to anyone including her homeless officer in</p>								

	<p>relation to an offer of permanent housing. She had a long history of substance misuse, had been looked after and was being exploited by others to deal drugs from her temporary accommodation flat. Initially Miss C was reluctant to engage with her Housing First worker either but the worker persisted and went round weekly only to be told to leave through the letterbox but she always left a card with her name and number. Several months later the Housing First Worker was at our Substance Misuse Step in Centre and staff highlighted Miss C was in the building. The Housing First worker then managed to speak to her and the response was that she could not believe the worker cared enough to keep coming to her door every week. From that appointment onwards Miss C engaged with her worker, has managed to move into her own permanent tenancy in an area close to her family supports, is now in treatment for use of substances and has recently given birth to a baby. She said to her worker that without the persistence and support from Housing First to continue to keep her motivated, assist to attend appointments and make her house a home she would have never managed to achieve such a positive outcome.</p>									
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	£	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SG RRTP Funding</th> <th>Local Authority funding</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">£542,000</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other		£542,000			
SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other								
	£542,000									
<p>Future plans for Housing First : Provide detail of the future of Housing First delivery in your local area, including timescales and progress towards Housing First being the default option for people</p>	<p>Increased promotion of Housing First as an available service for those who have multiple complex needs and experiencing</p>									

with multiple and complex needs experiencing homelessness.

homelessness. Aim to attend all partner agency meetings by end of March 2024.

Develop more reporting tools to report on multi agency outcomes and not just Housing Outcomes for those supported by the project.

Increased attendance at Substance Misuse Step in Centres. This has already been established in 3 locations but will be expanded to include a further 2 later this year.



From mountain to sea

Appendix 3 – Temporary Accommodation Charging

Temporary accommodation charges

- 1.1 Aberdeenshire Council currently charge much less for temporary accommodation compared to our neighbouring authorities. Due to changes in local connection this could mean more people want to approach Aberdeenshire Council for emergency housing leading to an increase in homelessness and association costs.
- 1.2 Due to increases in costs for furnishings and power temporary accommodation is becoming more expensive to run.
- 1.3 In Aberdeenshire temporary accommodation charges are currently linked to mainstream tenancies with an additional service charge to cover various things depending on the type of accommodation. As temporary accommodation is managed within general fund homelessness there is no specific reason charges need to be linked to HRA charges.
- 1.4 Current average weekly charges are as follows:

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£133.09	£140.83	£162.31	£162.31	£74.79*	£397.54*

* Includes power costs and council tax

- 1.5 For comparison other authority costs are as follows:

Aberdeen City

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£174.83	£181.35	£187.88	£194.39	£N/A	£773

The Moray Council (Costs are proposed)

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£237.87	£248.85	£260.37	£N/A	£N/A	£N/A*

* Use hotels/B&B's at cost



From mountain to sea

Highland Council

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£136.32	£147.22	£158.17	£169.06	£81.92	£N/A

Glasgow City Council

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£167.86	£179.48	£188.16	£195.16	£N/A	£382.83

1.6 All charges are made up of many different elements including costs for furniture, garden maintenance, management charging and in shared environments this can include power costs, Wi-Fi and the cost of providing 24 hour staffing along with the running costs of large shared occupancy buildings like fire monitoring and door entry systems. All these different elements can lead to confusion for applicants who have asked for a simpler single charge.

1.7 The service is therefore suggesting changes to temporary accommodation charges as follows:

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Shared Accommodation	Residential Unit
£130	£160	£190	£190**	£110	£420*

*£60 per night – Applicants ask for a simple per night figure as they would get in a hotel. Stays in Residential Units are limited.

** 4 bedroom stock is very limited and it is not felt worthwhile having a different charge

1.8 These charges will make it simpler for our applicants to understand and would be charged for the property size, not on the number of occupiers. It is felt by reducing the 1-bedroom charge and increasing other costs ensures affordability where needed and increases revenue to the service. It is important to note most of these charges are paid for fully or partially by Housing Benefit.

1.9 Despite these changes this will still not bring in enough income to make the service full cost recovery. To do this would mean increasing charges much more to around £300 per week plus. To offer the high level of service delivery the service currently provides whilst accepting some



From mountain to sea

element of losses saves budget in other areas of the service. For example in 2010/11 the service spent 1.5 million on B&B accommodation, this has now reduced to zero leading to large savings to other parts of the council.

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan - Update on Year 4 activity

Assessment ID	IIA-001471
Lead Author	Lorraine Stewart
Additional Authors	Gail Predell
Service Reviewers	Allan Jones, Gail Predell
Subject Matter Experts	Susan Forbes, Kakuen Mo, Caroline Hastings, Annette Johnston, Christine McLennan
Approved By	Courtney Duncan
Approved On	Thursday August 24, 2023
Publication Date	Thursday August 24, 2023

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Aberdeenshire Council was required to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and submit it to the Scottish Government in 2019. The five year plan (2019/20 - 2023/24) outlined how we would move to a rapid rehousing approach for homeless households. We provide annual updates to Communities Committee and the Scottish Government outlining spend of RRTP funding and progress with RRTP activity. This assessment updates with activity during Year 4 2022/23

During screening 4 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 3 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities

In total there are 16 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 3 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by courtney.duncan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe	Yes			
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving	Yes			
Nurtured	Yes			
Active		Yes		
Respected		Yes		
Responsible		Yes		
Included		Yes		

4.2. Rights Indicators

UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy	Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 27 - Adequate standard of living
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4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Achieving	Children living within a household where there is extreme housing need including the threat of homelessness may experience emotional or psychological effects that could have a detrimental effect on their life including low self esteem and anxiety and affect them reaching full potential. Providing appropriate advice and assistance to prevent homelessness or to ensure that the experience of it is brief and non recurrent can help to address this. This includes access to appropriate settled accommodation, ensuring that any stays in temporary accommodation are for as short a period as possible and minimising the number of moves within it, and access to housing support to promote tenancy sustainment.
Healthy	Supporting households experiencing homelessness to receive appropriate advice, assistance and access to resources including suitable and sustainable accommodation promotes wellbeing both physically and emotionally
Nurtured	Providing access to appropriate advice, support and settled accommodation for families allows the needs of children to be met. When parents feel supported, safe and settled then children can feel nurtured.

Impact Area	Impact
Safe	Impact The actions within the Rapid Rehousing transition plan focus on providing access to good quality advice and assistance to prevent homelessness. Where homelessness cannot be prevented then it promotes speedy resolution and sustainable housing outcomes that meet the needs of the entire household. Safety concerns may arise at different stages during a homeless journey and assistance offered includes providing appropriate temporary accommodation and referral to support including access to specialist support for children.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Aberdeen Foyer	It highlighted an increased prevalence of young people presenting as homeless within the North East of Scotland and recognised that whilst they have similar issues to adults they also experience different issues relating to their physical, mental, social and emotional development. Youth homelessness is more than a housing issue and engagement across education, social work, youth justice and health is critical to developing positive pathways.	We need to adopt a proactive approach where we intervene earlier, faster and more effectively when a young person is at risk of homelessness and support them to transition quickly out of homelessness. Any approach must respond to the challenges young people experience and centre them as experts capable of leading the shift to prevention
External Consultation	Youth Housing Prevention Pathway	Adverse childhood experiences can negatively impact on health and social outcomes as has been shown in ACE related studies. The Scottish Government recognises homelessness as one such type of adverse childhood experience. This is also born out within the Hard Edges Scotland report which indicated that the experience of childhood adversity was a risk factor for homelessness around the age of 16.	Overcoming adversity can be eased by having the right home and this includes stable housing as opposed to temporary or insecure housing

4.5. Information Gaps

We need to continue to develop methods of engaging with homeless households and homeless

young people to understand the experience of the homeless journey, identify issues and continually develop our service.

4.6. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Housing is an adult service and engagement with children is limited as a result. We have not directly sought the views of children but they are included in planning to meet the needs of the household. We have met with young people within an LGBTQI group at Mearns Academy to discuss accessing services and potential barriers. We work closely with Aberdeen Foyer and Grampian Womens Aid and in commissioning specialist support services we are able to benefit from direct feedback on the delivery of the homelessness service. We have hosted several foundation apprenticeship placements and have had information and feedback as a result.

4.7. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

A rapid rehousing approach within Aberdeenshire seeks to prevent homelessness or where it cannot be prevented to ensure that it is brief and non recurrent. This is important for all households but especially where those households contain children or young people. The experience of homelessness, or threat of it, is hugely significant in the development of children and the future of young people. The development of appropriate accessible services that meet the needs of young people and are informed by their experience and views is critical. The experience of homelessness is damaging and isolating and can have long term negative effects. The prevention of homelessness or speedy resolution minimises the negative effects.

4.8. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

Ensuring that homeless households and homeless young people have access to appropriate advice and support and signposting to independent advice as required ensures that they have awareness of their rights and are able to advocate on their own behalf or to seek assistance to do so.

4.9. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

The experience of homelessness may have a range of negative impacts for the individual or members of the household depending on their circumstances, experiences etc. Homelessness cannot be prevented in every instance although we seek to achieve this where we can.

Homelessness, where it cannot be prevented, should be rare, brief and non recurrent and actions to deliver rapid rehousing support this overall aim.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes		Yes	
Age (Older)			Yes	
Disability		Yes		
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth		Yes		
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background		Yes		

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	We focussed on ways to address youth homeless presentations and as a result have created a post - Housing Officer (Mediation) to provide housing options advice to young people and to provide a point of contact for education colleagues should they identify that a young person has a housing issue.
Age (Younger)	We have jointly funded (with Aberdeen City) Aberdeen Foyer to develop a Nightstop model of Community Hosting to meet the needs of young people who may benefit from an opportunity to consider their options and to provide a supportive setting to meet temporary accommodation needs.

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	Recognising that a different approach is needed to address youth homeless presentations led to the development of specialist services including the creation of a Housing Officer (Mediation) who provides housing options advice for young people and is a point of contact for education colleagues where they identify a housing issue for a young person. We are piloting Community Hosting to meet the needs of young people who might benefit from breathing space to consider their options and to provide a supportive setting to meet temporary accommodation needs. We have a specific support contract that provides access to low level housing support from Aberdeen Foyer.
Low income	A housing options approach and emphasis on homelessness prevention involves a holistic and person centred approach being taken - this includes consideration of income and income maximisation, affordability and signposting to advice and assistance to manage debts. It also recognises the impact the impact that access to employability services can play and links are being developed with colleagues within Aberdeenshire to sign posting and increased engagement.
Low income	A housing options approach and emphasis on homeless prevention involves a holistic and person centred approach being taken - this includes consideration of income and income maximisation, affordability and sign posting to money advice and assistance with debts. It also recognises the impact that access to employability services can play and links are being strengthened within Aberdeenshire to sign posting and increased engagement.
Material deprivation	The employment of a specialist Housing Officer to prioritise Community Care Grants from those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness has improved the speed of processing and resolved issues in fulfilment of orders by preferred supplier. Ensuring access to basic household goods promotes a basic level of furnishing and promotes tenancy sustainment.
Material deprivation	The employment of a specialist Housing Officer to prioritise Community Care Grants from those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness has improved the speed of processing and resolved issues in fulfilment of orders by preferred supplier. Ensuring access to basic household goods is provided promotes a basic level of furnishing and promotes tenancy sustainment.

Impact Area	Impact
Material deprivation	The employment of a specialist Housing Officer to prioritise processing of Community Care Grants from those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness has reduced timescales and resolved issues in fulfilment of orders by the preferred supplier. Ensuring that there is access to basic household goods promotes tenancy sustainment. Flipping temporary accommodation enables households to remain within temporary accommodation on a permanent basis and removes the cost of moving and setting up a home. Where this happens it meets the principle of rapid rehousing but can be in the best interests of the occupant. Shared temporary accommodation is an affordable way for homeless households who may be in employment to access temporary accommodation. The charge includes services and council tax.

5.4. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Age (Older)	<p>66% of those who currently make up our homeless backlog require one bed property. Within Aberdeenshire we have a limited stock of one bed property and supply does not meet demand. Homeless households are prioritised within the rapid rehousing approach which seeks to get a settled solution as quickly as possible. Older people without homeless priority and who are not seeking sheltered accommodation are likely to have to wait for longer periods of time and may not be able to access one bed properties within the social rented sector.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Continue to raise awareness of the need to develop one bed properties within the Strategic Investment Plan as a means of increasing overall supply to meet demand</p> <p>Timescale Ongoing</p>
Age (Older)	<p>68% of those who currently make up our homeless backlog require one bed property. We have a limited stock and supply does not meet demand. Homeless households are prioritised within the rapid rehousing approach. Older people without homeless priority and who are not seeking sheltered accommodation may have to wait for longer periods of time.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation We continue to raise awareness of the need to develop one bed properties within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan as a means of increasing overall supply to meet demand</p> <p>Timescale Ongoing</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Age (Younger)	<p>A rapid response to the accommodation needs of young people - particularly those who have no experience of living on their own or managing a tenancy - may be detrimental in that they have had limited opportunity to benefit from support and develop skills to enable the move to settled accommodation to be successful. For some young people a longer stay in temporary accommodation may be more beneficial than rapid response.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation We are working with Aberdeen Foyer, the support provider for young people, to better understand the homeless journey and to develop a pathway that takes account of this. We have raised with SG so that they have awareness of this and recognise the potential impact on our excellent RRTP performance to date.</p> <p>Timescale Ongoing</p>

5.5. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	Housing Need and Demand Assessment - Aberdeen City and Shire 2017, Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023, Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019 -2024, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2019	Provides data in relation to Aberdeenshire demographics and housing demand and supply, homelessness applications, temporary accommodation provision and use, waiting list for social housing and allocation.	With an aging population we know that demand for one bed property will continue to outstrip supply. We need to explore all options with individual applicants to secure sustainable housing solutions that meet needs and expectations of our customers.

5.6. Engagement with affected groups

Workshops were held to initially inform the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. These were attended by tenant representatives, Registered Social Landlords, elected members and 3rd Sector organisations that work with those who have experienced/or are experiencing homelessness. Further workshops have taken place to advise re legislative changes and to update on RRTP performance and influence future direction

5.7. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Engagement has been around specific actions within the overall plan. We have engaged directly

with 3rd sector organisations who work directly with young people and with tenants groups representing the views of older people. Working closely with clients in receipt of housing support or within the Housing First programme includes both young and older people. The commissioned work undertaken by Aberdeen Foyer to develop community hosting was based directly on work with young people to understand their journey and inform service development.

5.8. Evidence of engagement

Engagement has taken place around specific actions within the overall plan. We have engaged with 3rd sector organisations who work directly with young people and with tenants groups representing the views of older people through the ongoing review of sheltered housing. Working closely with clients in receipt of Housing Support or within the Housing First programme includes

both young and older people. The commissioned work undertaken by Aberdeen Foyer to deliver Community Hosting was based on work directly with young people to understand their journey and to inform development of the service.

5.9. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Older people without homeless priority have been identified as potentially negatively impacted by the allocation of the majority of one bed properties that become available to single homeless applicants. This can be mitigated by increasing supply of one bed properties and ensuring that the assessment of housing applications takes account of all relevant circumstances. Older people as part of the Housing Needs Assessment are more likely to have recommendations for particular types of accommodation eg ground floor, level access etc and to be successful in bidding for those vacancies

5.10. Improving Relations

Ensuring that the actions arising from the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan are viewed in the context of the overarching aim which is to work together to end homelessness. We need to understand concerns and impacts on individuals and groups but promote understanding of shared responsibility and tackle any stigma or stereotyping.

5.11. Opportunities of Equality

Understanding that homelessness can happen to anyone and that a combined response is required that minimises the impacts and that takes account of the views of potential/current service users, staff, Elected members, partners and relevant agencies.

6. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

6.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating	Yes			
Exercise and physical activity		Yes		
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol	Yes			
Substance use – drugs	Yes			
Mental health	Yes			

6.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Healthy eating	Having reviewed the temporary accommodation stock and eradicated the use of Bed and Breakfast as a form of temporary accommodation we are confident that all households within temporary accommodation have access to the physical means to prepare food - this includes access to a kitchen and appropriate equipment and appliances to enable food to be prepared. Housing Support is available to assist individuals who may lack the skills, confidence or means to prepare food. There continue to be issues around food and fuel poverty and direct support and signposting to appropriate resources takes place and this can impact on the availability of fresh foods. Food banks and food parcels may not be able to provide a variety of foods or to cater for particular dietary requirements.
Mental health	Recognising that poor mental health can be a result of, and contribute to homelessness and its recurrence we have employed two Housing Officers to build links and to support staff dealing with homeless applicants with mental health issues. This has involved direct work with clients and support of housing options staff together with the delivery of awareness training. This has proved to be extremely effective in resolving issues, improving communication and developing links with GP surgeries and mental health professionals.
Substance use – alcohol	Housing support and particularly the support offered to individuals with multiple or complex issues including substance use (alcohol) has been very effective in encouraging take up of services. Homelessness and the reasons that might lead to someone becoming homeless can result in alcohol being used as a coping mechanism. Access to appropriate support and practical assistance can enable individuals to address issues and receive specialist support.

Impact Area	Impact
Substance use – drugs	Access to housing support and particularly Housing First for those with complex or multiple issues enables practical assistance and support to be provided and specialist services to engage to provide routes out of homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment.

6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	Homelessness and Health datasets	A significant % of the scottish population had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Over half of those had no evidence of health conditions relating to drugs, alcohol or mental health. Around 6% of those experiencing homelessness had evidence of a mental health condition, a drug related condition and an alcohol related condition and this was higher for those experiencing repeat homelessness. It was noted that there were increased interactions with health services correlating with homeless presentations and around the first homelessness assessment	Homelessness affects many people. Increased interactions with health services preceded people becoming homeless. Preventing homelessness could reduce health activity and improve health outcomes. High levels of health activity are linked to multiple homeless presentations and for those complex individuals with multiple needs there is evidence of the efficacy of Housing First approach to provide accommodation and wrap around support as a route out of homelessness.

6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

A person centred and holistic approach to homeless prevention, and rapid rehousing where homelessness cannot be prevented, provides a route out of homelessness and improved health outcomes. The Housing First approach provides an appropriate model of accommodation and intensive support for those with multiple and complex issues.

7. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
<p>Update Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to focus on enhanced homeless prevention activity</p>	<p>Lead Officer Allan Jones</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Monday July 24, 2023</p> <p>Planned Finish Friday January 26, 2024</p> <p>Expected Outcome We will evidence delivery of rapid rehousing and identify further activity to support the demands from the introduction of a homeless prevention duty.</p> <p>Resource Implications RRTP funding has been confirmed for 2023/24 but the implications of responding to enhanced homeless prevention duties will require additional resources, the detail of which is to be determined</p>

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

ABERDEENSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Annual Report 2022/2023 has been developed and will be considered by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board on 13 September 2023, prior to submission to the Scottish Government. This is an opportunity for Communities Committee to consider and comment on the draft annual report. Progress continues to be made across the three LOIP priorities – Reducing Poverty, Connected & Cohesive Communities and Health & Wellbeing, with a number of successful initiatives across Aberdeenshire having positive impacts on our communities.

1.2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider and comment on the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership draft annual report 2022/2023 (Appendix 1). Comments will be collated and presented to the Community Planning Partnership Board for their consideration prior to finalising the report for publication.

1.2.2 Note that the Annual Report will be considered by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 13 September 2023.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Community Planning Partnerships are required to publish annual reports which describe progress made towards ambitions in their Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Plans.

2.2 Scottish Government Guidance is that annual reports should be published within six months of the end of the reporting year.

2.3 The draft annual report will be considered by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 13 September 2023.

3 Discussion

3.1 The LOIP priorities – Reducing Poverty, Connected and Cohesive Communities and Health and Wellbeing have continued to see progress throughout challenging circumstances. Full details of achievements from 2022/2023 are available in Appendix 1.

3.2 Under the Reducing Poverty priority, the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities strategic group has continued to develop opportunities for experts in experience, targeting marginalised communities through the Lived Experience

forum. The group has adopted a rights-based approach to delivering a project focusing on fuel poverty.

- 3.3 Challenges for the group include the increasing number of households, particularly working households seeking advice and financial assistance, an increasing number of mental health referrals and issues around the availability of public transport, particularly in rural areas, which, along with access to childcare, is impacting on people's ability to take up employment.
- 3.4 A number of successful initiatives are being delivered under the Connected & Cohesive Communities priority which oversees delivery of four Locality Plans in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. These include Grow at the Vinery – The Vinery Project which is a Community Inclusion project around food, financial inclusion, and skills, delivering personal development and employability programmes for young people, parents and adults who are experiencing multiple and complex barriers to moving into good quality, sustainable employment. The project also supports those with long term mental health conditions, substance dependency, social isolation and are disengaged from education.
- 3.5 The Fraserburgh Community Council Resilience Group Food Larder opened in April 2021 and has steadily built up a membership of over 70 members. Run by volunteers and operating out of a temporary location made available by a local business, membership is open to residents of Fraserburgh and the surrounding area enabling weekly visits to stock up on key items. During 2022/2023, the initiative achieved its short-term plan to provide an inviting and non-stigmatised shopping experience. Partnership work continues to achieve the long-term plan to secure a larger, permanent building with a view to enhancing the service.
- 3.6 Much progress continues to be made in terms of the Health and Wellbeing priority, which is being delivered by two separate strands – healthy eating active living (HEAL) and mental wellbeing. 2022/2023 saw great engagement with our communities and a raft of presenters highlighting mental wellbeing through the Mind Yer Mind campaign.
- 3.7 The Healthy Living Active Living project completed a valuable and informative community engagement programme during 2021/2022 that involved community groups across Aberdeenshire to find out what keeps people well and what challenges they have. The feedback provided a wealth of insight, experience, understanding and enthusiasm to support community involvement in bringing about change and co-develop an action plan that aims to create environments across Aberdeenshire that support people make healthier choices about food and lead more active lives.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps deliver all six of the Council's Strategic Priorities as well as the Community Planning Partnership Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

Pillar	Priority
<i>Our People</i>	<i>Education Health & Wellbeing</i>
<i>Our Environment</i>	<i>Infrastructure Resilient Communities</i>
<i>Our Economy</i>	<i>Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation</i>

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

4.3 There are no financial and staffing impacts as a result of this report. Staffing and financial impacts as a result of delivery of the LOIP priorities are reported regularly to the Community Planning Partnership Board and Executive.

4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken as this report is presenting the draft LOIP Annual Report and will not in itself impact on people with protected characteristics. Individual LOIP priorities have all been impact assessed and are regularly reported to the CPP Board and Executive.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Corporate Level](#):

- ACORP005 Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Strategic Level](#):

- BSSR002 Communities are confident, resilient, and inclusive. Individuals feel secure and in control of their circumstances.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D.1.1.c of Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to Community Planning.

Rob Simpson, Director of Business Services

Report prepared by: Fionnlagh Campbell, Corporate Policy Officer for Community Planning, Aberdeenshire Council

Date: 8 August 2023

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Draft Annual Report
2022/2023

APPENDIX 1

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)

Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023

Text Only Version

[Graphic denoting progress from 2017 to 2027 inserted here]

Our Partners

[Page with logos of CPP Partners]

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request

If you have a question or would like to become more involved in community planning in Aberdeenshire, please contact us via email at communityplanning@ouraberdeenshire.org.uk

Or via our website:

<https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/>

Or by writing to us at:

Corporate Policy Officer for Community Planning
Business Strategy
Customer and Digital Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

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Foreword

As Chair of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership, I am delighted to introduce Aberdeenshire's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report 2022-2023. The report provides an overview of Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership LOIP's progress from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

Community Planning means the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to deliver better services in Aberdeenshire.

Our vision is to support the “best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire”. Partners work together at a strategic and local level to deliver our priorities through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Locality Plans.

We hope this annual report gives a clear insight into our performance over the last twelve months as well as acknowledging where we need to improve.

Communities across Aberdeenshire were engaged in the development of the priorities to ensure that they are the right ones for Aberdeenshire and that they make the biggest difference to people's lives.

The key achievements this year include:

- Grow at the Vinery – [Banff Vinery](#) is a community space managed by Aberdeen Foyer with both indoor and outdoor settings that provide opportunities for children, young people and families to take part in valuable health and wellbeing activities. Restored and regenerated with help from the Scottish Government, Aberdeenshire Council and the lead provider, local charity Aberdeen Foyer, this new community space officially opened on Saturday 27 August 2022. The Vinery provides opportunities for people to try new things, develop confidence, learn new life skills, and broaden their experiences in a welcoming and accessible facility. Activities are focused around improving health and wellbeing through mindfulness, exercise, therapeutic sessions, training, and accredited learning. The facility includes an open plan kitchen space and café area providing opportunities for community learning, cooking and workshops that make good use of the garden area's fresh produce to create healthy nutritious foods.
- Fraserburgh Community Council Resilience Group Food Larder – opened in April 2021 and has steadily built up a membership of over seventy members. Run by volunteers and operating out of a temporary location made available by a local business, membership is open to residents of Fraserburgh and the surrounding area enabling weekly visits to stock up on key items. During 2022/2023. The initiative achieved its short-term plan is to provide an inviting and non-stigmatised shopping experience, partnership work continues to achieve the long-term plan to secure a larger, permanent building with a view to enhancing the service available to members.
- The Healthy Living Active Living project completed a valuable and informative community engagement programme during 2021-2022 that involved community groups across Aberdeenshire to find out what keeps people well

and what challenges they have. The feedback provided a wealth of insights, experience, understanding and enthusiasm to support community involvement in bringing about change and co-develop an action plan that aims create environments across Aberdeenshire that support people make healthier choices about food and lead more active lives to live well.

During 2022 – 2023 we worked in partnership to develop co-ordinated, effective, efficient services to meet the needs of our communities and deliver better outcomes for all. This annual report therefore also highlights the projects and initiatives that we will focus on in 2023 – 2024.

[Picture of Cllr Stirling inserted here. Insert signatures when signed off]

Councillor Anne Stirling
Chair of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Board
Deputy Leader of Aberdeenshire Council

[Picture of Caroline inserted here. Insert signatures when signed off]

Caroline Hiscox
Deputy Chair of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Board
NHS Grampian Chief Executive

Introduction

Under Sections 8 and 12 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) are required to publish annual reports which describe progress made towards ambitions in their LOIP and Locality Plans.

The plan, developed jointly by community planning partners, is based on what communities have said are the issues for them. The plan sets the strategic direction for community planning based on three priority workstreams to ensure residents across all parts of Aberdeenshire have a voice. The plan focuses on priorities and actions which address poverty and inequality, and which are problematic issues that can only be addressed by collaborative working by partners. The plan provides the framework within which every partner can make an active contribution to meeting the agreed shared priorities.

In March 2017, the Aberdeenshire CPP Board formally agreed three LOIP priorities for Aberdeenshire. To enable the CPP to progress this 10-year plan (2017 – 2027), three Strategic Lead Partnership (SLP) groups were set up to oversee the development of the priorities.

- Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol
- Reducing Child Poverty, renamed Reducing Poverty in 2021
- Connected and Cohesive Communities (Locality Plans)

Following a three-year review of the LOIP priorities in 2020 the decision was made to remove Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol as a LOIP priority. It was considered that as the Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) (the strategic lead group for this priority) report directly to the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board, the added value as a LOIP priority was limited. The ADP provides an annual report to the CPP Board for scrutiny and assurance on this area. A comprehensive review of data was undertaken and identified health and wellbeing as priority for Aberdeenshire. Our three priorities are:

- Reducing Poverty
- Connected and Cohesive Communities (Locality Plans)
- Health and Wellbeing

Community Planning at A Glance

Reducing Poverty

[Insert Infographic from data in the report]

- 10,249 children and young people are living in poverty – 5,621 are in relative poverty and 4,628 are living in absolute poverty.
- 4,308 children and young people are entitled to free school meals, bridging payments and clothing grants.
- 14,173 people are claiming universal credit – 6,001 are in work.
- Increase in people accessing services resulting in waiting lists to access energy and welfare rights advice.

Health and Wellbeing

[Insert Infographic from data in the report]

Connected and Cohesive Communities

[Insert Infographic from data in the report]

Reducing Poverty Priority

In Aberdeenshire, our approach to tackling poverty focuses on early intervention and prevention; tackling the root causes of poverty and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances. A partnership approach is vital in ensuring opportunities and services are accessible and relevant.

The Tackling Poverty and Inequalities strategic group was set up through the Community Planning Partnership to coordinate strategic development to:

- Improve the lives of disadvantaged people across Aberdeenshire.
- Utilise the funding to address poverty holistically.
- Reduce the number of households living in poverty.
- Prevent households falling into poverty.
- Enable children to live poverty free in adult life.
- Improve the wellbeing of people living in poverty.

High level outcomes

Our high-level outcomes are:

- Preventing those on the margins of poverty falling into poverty.
- Reducing the number of people living in poverty by moving those in poverty out of poverty.
- Protecting those living in poverty from its most adverse effects.
- Enabling children to live a poverty-free adult life.
- Future focused economy: ensure our skills and training provision connects to new and emerging job opportunities.

Many of the actions within our Key Performance Indicators at a locality planning level help achieve the high-level outcomes for the Reducing Poverty LOIP priority. Our Key Performance Indicators help track the achievement of the prescribed outcomes.

- Aberdeenshire's population has increased over the last few years – but the rate of growth is slowing.
- Aberdeenshire's population is ageing.
- Aberdeenshire is home to the 4th largest child population (0-18 years) in Scotland relative to total population.
- The child population in Scotland is expected to decrease over the next couple of decades.
- Aberdeenshire's child population is projected to decrease by 9.9% by 2043.
- The overall population is projected to increase by 2.5% by 2043, largely driven by the 55+ age group.

Principles of Tackling Poverty and Inequalities

- Recognise Place¹ and empower communities and individuals to not only influence and inform decisions but co-produce services which meets their needs.

¹ Place is defined as 'A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services'
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

- Ensure a holistic approach is developed through partnership working at a local and or strategic level.
- Improving Health Inequalities.
- Addressing the causes of poverty, not its symptoms.
- Making early interventions for vulnerable individuals, families, and disadvantaged communities.
- Improving employability as a key means of tackling poverty.

Our 2022/2023 Aims

- Continue to develop opportunities for experts with experience, targeting marginalised communities.
- Using a rights-based approach to deliver a project with Council tenants focusing on Fuel Poverty.
- Deliver a research project which explores the additional challenges those living in the more rural and remote areas of Aberdeenshire to give local people a voice in shaping future services.
- Invest in areas or projects which will alleviate the impact of the cost of living and develop sustainable approaches with those most affected.

Aberdeenshire is one of Scotland’s 14 rural authorities and is defined as ‘mainly rural’. We are the fourth largest geographical local authority in Scotland.

The economy of rural Scotland is both similar to and tightly integrated with the economy of urban Scotland. However distinct differences often related to distance and scarcity remain between urban and rural economies. These differences may contribute to greater inequality particularly for low-income families.

Making Employment Work for Families

What we know

Universal Credit Single parent households (Feb 2023)	Universal Credit Families with 3+ Children (Feb 2023)	Universal Credit Disability entitlement (Feb 2023)
4,210 ²	1,164 ²	646 ²

Total number of children 19 and under living in poverty is 12,740 out of which 8,913 are in working households. (69.97%)

A high number of low-income families are employed in the care, processing, agriculture, or retail sector where wages are low and hours can be limited, therefore access to affordable flexible childcare is important to allow parents to continue to work.

Due to the rising cost of living there has been an increase in people not being able to take up employment opportunities as they cannot afford transport or childcare.

Several families have raised the issue of the low number of family friendly employers who can offer sustainable employment in the rural areas. Several lone parents or

² Data: Department of Work and Pensions, May 2023

parents with a disabled child have found it increasingly difficult to find local employment with hours that can be flexible around transport and childcare. These parents have taken up several part-time posts to ensure that flexibility.

Challenges for 2022/2023

- Increased number of households seeking advice and financial assistance especially working households.
- Household bills increasing with people having to choose to eat or heat, sometimes with neither being affordable.
- Increased number of households choosing to go on pre-paid meters for gas and electricity because of fuel debt.
- Increase in referrals for mental health support.
- Increase in people not being able to take up employment opportunities as they cannot afford transport or childcare.
- Working people in general are concerned about the cost of working from home or the cost of traveling due to their role resulting in challenges to fill vital posts especially in the care sector.
- Reduction in donations to emergency food providers.

Impact We Made In 2022/2023

Increase number of Experts of Experience and Co-Production

Local people being key partners in developing services, policies and influencing change. In 2022, 608 individuals shared their experience, with over 250 being young people. These experts of experience informed practice around stigmatisation, ensured information was available by development of a Worried About Money Leaflet, Young Scot Tackling Poverty and Inequalities page, and developed the fourth Child Poverty Action Report. They have informed national research on food insecurity and health conditions such as obesity, informed local charges set for recreation activities, explored issues that affected them such as fuel poverty and made recommendations for the future.

Through the Lived Experience Forum an in-person Lived Experience Conference was developed and delivered as part of Aberdeenshire Challenge Poverty Week 2022. The conference was hosted by The Rowett Institute which is part of Aberdeen University.

The aims of the conference were to share good practice, raise awareness of the importance of coproduction with those experts of experience and listen to those with experience around food security, increase fuel costs and the cost-of-living crisis.

“The tackling poverty and inequality day that was held at the Rowett Institute today was so good. I am so glad I went along in person and met some people from the forum. I think it was important to be present at the session to show that we do exist and are the actual people on the ground assisting with the forum and having our opinions heard. I left today feeling valued, appreciated, and encouraged that what we do makes a difference. I hope there are more opportunities for engagement going forward.” – Forum member/conference volunteer

The blended approach of in-person and online participation allowed 120 participants to take part in the day. They identified solutions, areas of improvement and informed national research but the main outcome was a commitment to develop a charter

which will support those who wish to use their experience to inform and change policy, services, and practice. Those at the conference expressed what they would like to see in the developing charter.

Increase Access to Integrated Services and Opportunities

The total number of people who have participated in the services, opportunities, and events that the partners have collectively delivered in 2022/2023 is 26,073 of which 3,272 are children and young people.

Improve Health and Inequalities

Partners have reported an increase in request for support around empowering people to access health services and increase skills and knowledge to improve their own health and wellbeing. Over the last year 567 individuals have reported an improvement in their own health and wellbeing because of the support that has been put in place.

In June 2021, the Housing Service employed a Health and Wellbeing Support worker to set up a project which targeted those who had no mental health services in place. The support worker found there was a requirement to work with clients to increase engagement with services through developing a person-centred approach and using warm handovers. In May 2022, the project received additional funding through Tackling Poverty and Inequalities to build capacity through an additional post. The workers receive referrals for clients, link them with mental health services and after a period refer on to other support services.

This project has worked with 79 people, with 43 people no longer requiring this level of support.

Food Security

Connecting with Communities supports locations within targeted areas of Kincardine and Mearns, Formartine and Banff and Buchan which may have limited food support and/or transport links for accessing food. Over the past 12 months they have supported 561 people of which 232 have been children.

The aim is to ensure residents in more rural and remote locations can access fresh fruit and vegetables at low cost and additionally receive good quality FareShare produce to ensure easier management of household budgets. The project delivery not only focuses on food but has the intention to ensure that individuals receive additional support to address other factors which contribute to the various challenges faced by so many, e.g. social isolation and loneliness/financial difficulties/disabilities and mental health illness.

Reducing Housing Costs

There are a number of workstreams that support low-income households to reduce housing costs. These are support with food, fuel, wellbeing funds and information and advice services. The number of households supported to reduce their housing costs is 21,731 with a client financial gain of £6,509,323.

Improving Employability and Skills

There is a number of programmes delivered through Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership which has supported over 1,200 people to enhance their employability skills through targeted training programmes, work experience and delivery of supported employment schemes.

Secured Additional Resource

Partners have used the funding they received through Tackling Poverty and Inequalities to collectively secure an additional £3,928,794.

Fuel Poverty

Through a partnership with SCARF, funding was allocated to increase energy advisors and continue to deliver the Heat and Eat Project which targets those households that have prepaid energy meters to reduce the risk of further fuel debt.

The Heat and Eat project supported 434 households across Aberdeenshire with 618 food and 618 fuel vouchers with a total investment of £61,182 for these targeted homes.

Fuel Poverty Project

Increasing income from employment and earnings should ensure the best support for parents to work and earn more, effectively lifting them and their families out of poverty. These outcomes are developed with the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership which includes Skills Development Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, Aberdeenshire Council, a range of third sector deliver partners such as Barnardo's, Enable, SHMU, Aberdeen Foyer and Inspire. [Project Report - November 2022](#)

“A reduction in available finances due to increased living costs makes essential items such as food, heating, fuel for car etc too expensive. This means that there's hard decisions to be made for low-income families such as ours” – Rural Family in Marr

Children and Young People

The Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Partnership was aware of the adverse effects the pandemic had on young people. Partners reported that young people felt that their voice had not been heard and the opportunities to develop skills, socialise and seek employment had reduced.

In partnership with Community Learning Development, a youth project was developed using a rights-based approach. Young people from 15 different groups across Formartine and Garioch explored poverty and inequalities. They developed workshops and performances that could be used to highlight not only the impact poverty and inequalities have on children and young people but of their families and communities. The young people organised an event [Over 2 Youth 22](#) which was held in September 2022 to deliver their findings to over 250 young people and partners.

Our 2023/2024 Aims

- Refocus Child Poverty Action Plan to reflect the national guidance.
- Continue developing our Cash First Partnership.
- Continue to strengthen the partnership.
- Increase opportunities for co-production.
- Ensure those households off the grid can access all the financial support they are entitled to especially around fuel.
- Explore flexible childcare models within the workstream lead by Education and Children's Services.
- Develop a lived experience panel with a focus on transport.
- Improve access to services for those living in rural and remote area.

Reducing Poverty – Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Measure	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Progress	RAG status
Number of children living in poverty in Aberdeenshire – seek to reduce					
Number of children in relative poverty age 0-4	Not available	1,613 (22.78%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in relative poverty age 5-10	Not available	2,225 (31.42%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in relative poverty age 11-15	Not available	2,051 (28.96%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in relative poverty age 16-19	Not available	1,194 (16.86%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in absolute poverty age 0-4	Not available	1,325 (23.43%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in absolute poverty age 5-10	Not available	1,740 (30.76%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in absolute poverty age 11-15	Not available	1,600 (28.29%)	Not available		↔
Number of children in absolute poverty age 16-19	Not available	992 (17.4%)	Not available		↔
Unemployment Rate (Adults/16-24 years) (National measure) – seek to reduce	34,100 - Scotland	31,800 (18,000 male, 13,800 female) - Scotland	Not available	In 2021-2022 the Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team helped 105 participants into employment, in 2022-2023 they helped 122 participants into employment (an increase of 17 people). We are seeking to reduce the number of unemployed adults aged 16-24 in Aberdeenshire.	↓
Personal debt levels- seek to reduce using the amount of debt being handled by Citizen’s Advice Bureau to measure performance				Debt is an important factor which may push individuals living in the margins of poverty, into poverty itself. The rising cost of living has increased the amount of debt which the Aberdeenshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) are handling.	↑

Key Performance Measure	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Progress	RAG status
				We are seeking to reduce the level of personal debt being experienced by our residents.	
Total amount of debt being handled by the Citizen's Advice Bureau	Not available	£5,935,450	Not available		
Access to crisis financial support (Scottish Welfare Fund) (local measure) - seek to decrease repeat applications				The Scottish Welfare Fund's Crisis Grants (for individuals facing a financial emergency or disaster) and Community Care Grants are administered by the Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team. From 2020/2021 to 2022/2023, the number of applications for both types of grants have increased over these years and therefore so have the number of applications paid and the total amounts spent.	↑
Crisis grant applications					
Number received – seeking to decrease	6,298 up 7% from previous year	7,661 up 22% from previous year	9,001 up 17% from previous year		↑
Number paid – seeking to decrease	4,400 up 20% from previous year	5,312 up 21% from previous year	5,669 up 7% from previous year		↑
Total spend – seeking to decrease		£523,878.92	£732,460.89		↑
Community care grant applications					
Number received – seeking to decrease	2,114	2,225	2,342		↑
Number paid – seeking to decrease	864	1,111	1,159		↑
Total spend – seeking to decrease	£419,812.44	£642,350.58	£700,203.75		↑
Aberdeenshire income maximisation achieved – seek to increase					
Number of households supported	Not available	14,205	21,731		↑

Key Performance Measure	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Progress	RAG status
Client financial gain	Not available	£5,819,936	£6,509,323		↑
Total income maximisation	Not available	£19,387,164	£9,355,405		↑
Annual participation (in education, training, or employment) measure 16 – 19-year-olds (National measure) - seek to increase	Not available	92.2% - Aberdeenshire 2021	93.1% - Aberdeenshire 2022	To contribute to a future-focused economy, the Reducing Poverty LOIP will monitor the participation of young people in activities that improve their skills and employment prospects.	↑
Unemployment rate 16-19 years – seek to reduce	Not available	Not available	1.5% - Aberdeenshire August 2022	Aberdeenshire has one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in the country. Approximately 1.5% of those aged 16-19 in Aberdeenshire are claiming unemployment benefits as at August 2022 (163 people). This is in line with the historic average after peaking at 3.5% in the months during COVID-19 lockdowns.	↔
Aberdeenshire Employability Agreement referrals – seek to increase	Not available	42	Not available	Aberdeenshire Employability Agreements are for young people aged 16 to 19 who are either leaving school and requiring support to move into a positive destination or currently unemployed. The AEA is a creative package of activity and learning for those requiring one-to-one support based around a young person's needs and interests and aims to address barriers. This could be a range of activities, such as personal skills development including confidence building to work tasters. Young people set their own learning goals and gain transferable skills to positively progress onto a positive destination	↔
Attainment Gap - % Difference in Tariff Scores Between Pupils in the Most Deprived and Least Deprived Quintiles, 2020/21 (Aberdeenshire in a Scottish Context)		154.0%			↔

Health and Wellbeing Priority

Strand 1 – Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)

Together we create an Aberdeenshire where everyone has the opportunity and the support to access and afford to eat healthy and be active and mentally well during a time of financial challenge for communities.

In April 2021, the HEAL Strategic Partnership Group was formed with the aim to support people living in Aberdeenshire to have a healthy weight. The group has adopted a 'Whole System Approach' (WSA) evidence-based method to identify and focus on action that will make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for Aberdeenshire communities.

Communities are key to the success of this programme and funding has been secured to commission work to engage and scope out with local partners, residents, and community representatives the need and the assets required to address HEAL in their communities so that the healthier choice is the easiest choice.

Our 2022/2023 Aims

1. Continue to progress a Whole Systems evidence-based method to develop actions that will make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for communities in Aberdeenshire.
2. Complete a 12-month programme of community engagement to understand assets and barriers to HEAL alongside input from the HEAL Strategic Partnership Group (SPG) to co-develop a HEAL action plan for approval by the HEAL SPG and Aberdeenshire CPP Board.
3. Develop and implement a HEAL action plan.

Progress of Aims – Whole Systems Evidence-Based Approach to Develop Actions

Continue to progress a Whole Systems evidence-based approach to develop actions that will make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for communities in Aberdeenshire.

The causes of unhealthy weight and obesity are complex, multiple and can be outside the control of the individual. Underpinning these are changes in transport, food production and food sales resulting in excess calorie consumption and physical inactivity. Collaborative partnership working provides the best opportunity to tackling the complex and wide-ranging issue of unhealthy weight and obesity with multi-level, and range of interventions being required.

Whole Systems Approach (WSA) is an evidenced-based approach advocated by Public Health Scotland and England that identifies and focuses on actions to address the complexities of unhealthy weight and reduce health inequalities. Key to this is to ensure that actions address the causes of unhealthy weight. Throughout 2022-23 the HEAL SPG continued to work through the WSA process to identify assets, barriers, and solutions relevant to communities in Aberdeenshire and develop actions that will make a positive difference to healthy weight and reduce health inequalities. An

action plan was developed and agreed by the HEAL SPG in October 2022 and endorsed by the CPP Executive and Board early 2023.

Over the past year the HEAL project has been recognised nationally for the WSA approach to improving healthy weight. In partnership with Scottish Government, Food Standards Scotland and Obesity Action Scotland, Public Health Scotland supported local areas, known as 'early adopters', to pilot a WSA to diet and healthy weight. This focused on children and health inequalities. Aberdeenshire was not part of this programme but the HEAL project came to the attention of Public Health Scotland who were impressed by the progress that had been made using WSA. As a result the Health Improvement Officer with Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the lead Officer for the HEAL project, has been part of a Public Health Scotland working group looking at ways to learn and improve on how we use WSA in the future. HEAL has been cited in a Public Health Scotland evaluation report '[A systems-based approach to diet and healthy weight](#)' that have been informing national and local approaches to address obesity.

Progress of Aims – Engagement to Understand Assets and Barriers To HEAL

Complete a 12-month programme of community engagement to understand assets and barriers to HEAL alongside input from the HEAL Strategic Partnership Group (SPG) to co-develop a HEAL action plan for approval by the HEAL SPG and Aberdeenshire CPP Board.

A 12 month HEAL community engagement project concluded in August 2022. The aim of the project was to work with communities to increase the SPG's understanding of the causes of unhealthy weight and what the communities' assets, barriers, and gaps in relation to HEAL were. The project explored people's choices and motivations and involved communities in co-developing solutions develop actions to improve HEAL. This ensured that the SPG's actions were better based on community priorities.

There were three phases to the community engagement project:

Phase 1 – to gather information on assets and barriers to HEAL. This involved 14 pop up stalls in towns and meetings with 12 groups. In total 261 people were involved. An online Engage Aberdeenshire survey had 243 people taking part.

Phase 2 – to have extended discussion with groups vulnerable to health inequalities: 10 focus group sessions were held on themes emerging from phase 1. There were 62 participants involved.

Phase 3 – A Mini Public³ took place with 16 Aberdeenshire residents, and some HEAL SPG service representatives to collaborate and prioritise draft actions for the HEAL action plan.

A full HEAL Community Engagement report and an accompanying summary report was published in October 2022 <https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/heal>. The report highlighted the following learning points:

- To eat healthily and to be active communities value our parks, beaches, and countryside, and other local assets such as shops, food networks, community groups and community activists, and local knowledge and expertise.

³ Mini-publics assemble small groups of randomly selected residents to become informed about and deliberate on a policy issue.

- Some groups struggle more to eat healthily and to keep active than other groups, cutting across and compounding other inequalities, namely cost, accessibility, mental health/wellbeing and education/self-management were seen as the main causes.
- Communities emphasised the need for clarity, simplicity, and an awareness of how language can reinforce health messaging.
- Ongoing community engagement was valued as a way of improving understanding of community priorities for HEAL and as a way of involving communities in bringing about change

Progress of Aims – Develop and Implement a HEAL Action Plan.

Using the WSA process the HEAL SPG and community participation co-developed a [HEAL action plan](#) consisting of 35 actions. The action plan was agreed by the HEAL SPG in October 2022 and endorsed by the CPP Executive and Board (February and March 2023 respectively).

The action plan consists of the following five themes.

- Community engagement
- Physical Activity
- Food accessibility
- Education and self-management
- Mental health and wellbeing

Implementing The HEAL Action Plan

In February 2023, a HEAL [Action Monitoring Framework](#) (AMF) was developed that detailed current work that many stakeholders were progressing and ‘action gaps’ where solutions and additional resource were needed. The AMF will be used to monitor progress of the HEAL action plan.

There are a wide range of HEAL partners who are progressing actions within the action plan. Partners include a number of Aberdeenshire Council services such as Environmental Health, Leisure (Live Life Aberdeenshire), and Planning services, alongside the Cairngorms National Park, the transport agency NESTRANS, North East Scotland College, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, University of Aberdeen and many others. In some cases, the HEAL action plan directly reflects organisations own service plans, for example Aberdeenshire Council Education Service promotes the majority of HEAL actions across schools and early years settings through the application of [Curriculum for Excellence: Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice](#). Similarly HEAL actions are reflected across all six of the [Aberdeenshire Local Community Plans](#).

Many of the HEAL actions are currently being progressed but some are yet to be progressed over the next year and beyond. In March 2023, the SPG agreed a proposal from Aberdeen University to address one of the action gaps on body image and unhealthy weight. In the summer 2023 Aberdeen University will conduct research with the SPG on their views, from a service delivery perspective, about how body image and stigma can hinder service users’ motivation and behaviours towards eating healthily and being active, and the opportunities to address this. The results will inform and improve service providers future policy and practices on HEAL that will improve healthy weight for Aberdeenshire communities. The SPG are also exploring opportunities for partners to work together on similar HEAL actions

resulting in efficient ways of working by pooling resources, avoiding duplication, and creating a more impactful approach to improving HEAL in Aberdeenshire.

Our 2023/2024 Aims

A key next step for the HEAL SPG is to prioritise specific actions to focus on during 2023/24 and explore ways in which partners can work better together on common actions.

What impact have we had?

Our Key Performance Indicators are set out below demonstrating the impacts of our actions.

It is noted that the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) is an evidenced-based approach advocated by Public Health Scotland and England that identifies and focuses on actions to address the complexities of unhealthy weight and reduce health inequalities. The WSA took time to develop including the time it took for community engagement, then the action plan was implemented at the beginning of 2023 so there has not been much time to see the impacts of any work. The SPG were aware that using WSA would take time and that impacts on improving health measures can take years, again, this was communicated to the SPG.

Strand 2 – Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health and Wellbeing is an important contribution to our wellbeing in Aberdeenshire during a time of financial challenge and uncertainty for communities.

Most often mental health focus is on services and the challenges of accessing the right service at the right time. The CPP recognises that to help reduce the burden on services and to promote a mentally flourishing Aberdeenshire action needs to be taken early. Research indicates that a few simple actions can go a long way to promote mental wellbeing, prevent poor mental health, reducing stigma and promote recovery.

Our 2022/2023 Aims

- Undertaking phase two of the Mind Yer Mind campaign.
- Developing a local approach to maximise community resources and opportunities for mental wellbeing and making them more accessible.

Progress of Aims – Undertaking Phase Two of the Mind Yer Mind campaign.

Following approval for a second phase of the Mind Yer Mind Campaign the campaign steering group was refreshed and the second campaign launched in early August 2022 with an emphasis on the five key steps to improving mental health and wellbeing. These five steps are:

- Staying connected to people
- Learning new things
- Take notice – remember the simple things that give you joy
- Carrying out acts of giving and kindness, and

- Taking part in physical activity.

In the lead up to this new campaign the steering group sought feedback from those who engaged in the first campaign with the aim of identifying how things could be improved. Responses were all supportive of a second campaign with two clear messages, the first being how important and necessary support for people struggling with their mental health is and the second was the need to promote the campaign as far as possible.

Impact we made

- Launch of a dedicated [website](#) for the campaign – the website was visited nearly 700 times with a peak of visits around December 2022.
- Social media campaigns were simultaneously launched on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram – there were 219 interactions on media platforms.
- [Regional e-books](#) have been developed for each of the six administration areas within Aberdeenshire – more than 400 copies have been downloaded from the website.
- Promotional adverts on local radio ran for three months.
- New campaign ambassadors were introduced for phase two.
- A webinar session had been developed and delivered; this has also been adapted for sharing with organisations for them to use and also for use within local libraries.
- Email campaign messages sent to more than 1,500 organisations and community groups across Aberdeenshire.
- Positive interest from secondary schools across Aberdeenshire with a pilot approach being developed with one academy with the aim of including more once this has been tested.

Our 2023/2024 Aims

- To continue promoting the key five step approach.
- To promote Mind Yer Mind throughout communities in Aberdeenshire.
- To engage with and promote awareness among employers in Aberdeenshire.
- To create a Mind Yer Mind support network of organisations and community groups able to share and promote the key five step messages.
- To continue developing Mind Yer Mind promotional and information materials and Toolkit.

Progress of Aims – Developing A Local Approach Accessing Community Resources

Developing a local approach to maximise community resources and opportunities for mental wellbeing and making them more accessible.

Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA) took on the lead for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strand of the LOIP in Autumn 2022 with the following main aims:

- Engaging with partners, third sector organisations and groups, and communities AVA will identify and map existing Mental Health and Wellbeing support services.
- To identify gaps in provision where there is unmet need or access difficulties.

- To support Community Planning Partners to agree a programme of action to improve support and access to services and mental health and wellbeing across Aberdeenshire.

Impact we made

- Built connections with local mental health and wellbeing networks and relevant statutory partners.
- Have achieved a data sharing agreement with A Local Information System for Scotland (ALISS).
- Established the need for a central resource detailing mental health and wellbeing support within communities.
- Gathered intelligence on more than 1,600 third sector organisations involved in community based mental health and wellbeing support provisions and services.
- Designed a service information capture form.
- Developing an information repository within a CRM system – this will eventually become an accessible and interactive application.
- Promoted opportunities offered by both the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing and Just Transition funds.
- Evaluated the mental health and wellbeing offering available to staff employed by CPP organisations.

Our 2023/2024 Aims

- To continue our development and evaluation work.
- To complete our mapping exercise.
- To launch the interactive website.
- Lead a consultation on existing mental health support provision involving relevant partners with the aims of identifying improvement and effectiveness.

Health and Wellbeing – Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Measure	Aberdeenshire	Scotland	Progress	RAG Status
Female Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) at birth (National measure – National Records of Scotland) – seek to increase	67.35yrs (2019-21)	61.1yrs (2019-21)	The HLE of females has increased by 1 year between 2019 and 2020. It is 6 years higher in Aberdeenshire than in Scotland. We are seeking to increase over 5-10 years as impact of Health and Wellbeing LOIP actions will take time to see improvement to this KPI	↑
Male Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) at birth (National measure – National Records of Scotland) - seek to increase	67.16yrs (2019-21)	60.4yrs (2019-21)	The HLE of males has stayed the same between 2019 and 2020. It is nearly 7 years higher in Aberdeenshire than in Scotland. We are seeking to increase over 5-10 years as impact of Health and Wellbeing LOIP actions will take time to see improvement to this KPI.	↔
Female Adult self-assessed general health – good or very good (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	74% (2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	71% (4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	The percentage of females self-assessing their general health – good or very good has dropped by 3% compared to the rest of Scotland (3-year aggregate 2016-2019). We are seeking to increase over 5-10 years as impact of Health and Wellbeing LOIP actions will take time to see improvement to this KPI. The data incorporated a 2-year period of the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), this may have a detrimental impact on the statistics.	↓
Male Adult self-assessed general health – good or very good (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	77% (2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-21)	74% (4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	The percentage of males self-assessing their general health – good or very good has stayed the same compared to Scotland (3-year aggregate 2016-2019). We are seeking to increase over 5-10 years as impact of Health and Wellbeing LOIP actions will take time to see improvement to this KPI. The data incorporated a 2-year period of the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), this may have a detrimental impact on the statistics.	↔
Proportion of Women who have a healthy weight (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	32% (2018) 4 - year aggregate 2016-19) <i>(Note 2017-2021 data not available will publish in Dec 2023)⁴</i>	36% (2018) 4 - year aggregate 2016-19) <i>(Note 2017-2021 data not available will publish Dec 2023)⁴</i>	The proportion of women (self-assessed) with a healthy weight has dropped from 35% (2012-2015) to 32%. Cannot comment due to no data change yet.	↓

⁴ When published, the data for 2020 are not included in the 2017-2021 time period, as they are not directly comparable with previous years.

Key Performance Measure	Aberdeenshire	Scotland	Progress	RAG Status
Proportion of Men who have a healthy weight (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	26% (2018) 4 - year aggregate 2016-19) (<i>Note 2017-2021 data not available will publish in Dec 2023</i>) ⁴	30% (2018) 4 - year aggregate 2016-19) (<i>Note 2017-2021 data not available will publish in Dec 2023</i>) ⁴	The proportion of men (self-assessed) with a healthy weight has dropped from 28% (2012-2015) to 26%. Cannot comment due to no data change yet.	↓
Female Adult Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBs) mean score (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	50.1 (2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	49.4(2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale Mean score for females in Aberdeenshire has decreased slightly from 50.7 to 50.1 (2017-2021). The data incorporated a 2-year time period of the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), this will have a detrimental impact on mental health measures.	↓
Male Adult Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale mean score (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) – seek to increase	50.5 (2021) 4 -year aggregate 2017-2021)	49.5 (2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale Mean score for males in Aberdeenshire has decreased from 50.6 (2016-2019) to 50.5 (2017-2021). While for the same periods Scotland has decreased by 0.2 of a point. The data incorporated a 2-year time period of the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), this will have a detrimental impact on mental health measures.	↓
Adult Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale mean score (National measure – Scottish Health Survey) - seek to increase	50.7(2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	49.5 (2021) 4 - year aggregate 2017-2021)	The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale mean scores have seen a slight decrease in Aberdeenshire by 0.2 to 50.7. Overall Aberdeenshire scores are higher than Scotland. The data incorporated a 2-year time period of the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), this will have a detrimental impact on mental health measures.	↓
Boys Epidemiological BMI P1 % healthy weight (National Measure – National services Scotland) - seek to increase	75.3% (2021/22)	74.2% (2021/22)	The BMI P1 % healthy weight for boys has dropped by 3.3% in Aberdeenshire between 2018/2019 and 2021/2022 but is 1.1% higher compared to the Scottish average.	↓
Girls Epidemiological BMI P1 % healthy weight (National Measure – National Services Scotland) - seek to increase.	79.6% (2021/22)	75.3% (2021/22)	The BMI P1 % healthy weight for girls has increased by 3.5% in Aberdeenshire between 2018/2019 and 2021/2022 and 0.8% higher compared to the Scottish average.	↑

This priority focuses on locality planning arrangements in three locality areas, four towns in Aberdeenshire – Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Banff and Macduff.

The Connected and Cohesive Communities (CCC) Strategic Lead Partnership Group oversees locality planning in Aberdeenshire. The group's overarching remit is to oversee locality planning arrangements for those communities experiencing poorer outcomes than other parts of Aberdeenshire or similar communities because of socio-economic inequality based on robust understanding of communities across Aberdeenshire.

North Collaborative Approach – Co-ordination Hubs

A co-ordination hubs model, enabling partnership working on core themes – tackling poverty, health and wellbeing and connected communities – and providing a platform for partners to collaborate with each other on shared priorities, remained in place throughout 2022/2023. The approach operates across North Aberdeenshire, covering Buchan's and Banff and Buchan's areas of greatest need, with some issues tackled jointly, as part of the North Collaborative Approach. The co-ordination hub activities align with Aberdeenshire's LOIP priorities, supporting actions at a local level.

The Hubs' role is to serve as the operational arms for the respective Buchan and Banff and Buchan Community Planning Groups, developing and delivering to the priorities and actions of Area Community Plans and focussed Locality Plans. Building capacity across partners, the Hubs strengthen community planning at a local and area level.

Operating as a 'centralised' focus on discussion and planning of local priorities, the Hub approach provides an opportunity to add value to joint working. The Hubs aim to also reduce duplication, in terms of meetings, discussions and work being taken forward, by supporting a co-ordinated collaborative approach to tackling local priorities. They also provide input and updates to strategic partnerships, including the respective Buchan (Area) Community Planning Group and Banff and Buchan (Area) Community Planning Group.

Buchan

- **Buchan Coordination Hubs** – Co-ordination Hubs in Buchan are well embedded within local community planning arrangements, ensuring a strong network operating across Buchan that allows local needs and issues to be identified, along with access to strategic links where required. During 2022/2023, the Hubs were led by Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, Buchan Development Partnership (Local Rural Partnership), Maud Resource Centre, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Aberdeen Foyer with attendance from a range of public services, organisations who operate in the area and community representatives.
- **The Buchan Community Planning Partnership** hosts 6-monthly interactive events involving Services, Organisations and Groups from across the Buchan Community Planning network to share information, knowledge and experience on the various themes which have been identified as priorities of the Buchan Community Plan and Peterhead Locality Plan. During 2022/2023 thematic topics tabled included '[developing our youth provision in Buchan](#)' and '[supporting resilience for our Buchan communities](#)'.

- **Peterhead Locality Plan** During 2022/2023, the Co-ordination Hubs supported the Local Community Planning Group to review the Buchan Community Plan and the Peterhead Locality Plan which ‘nests’ within this, through a collaborative process involving residents, community organisations, and partner agencies across the voluntary, private, and public sectors. In addition to the Co-ordination Hubs, there are strong networks for partnership working within Peterhead, who are collectively working towards the key priorities as identified through the Peterhead Strategic Needs Assessments 2021.

Peterhead Locality Plan Priorities (2020-2030)

1. Addressing certain health-related issues
2. Attracting a wider variety of employment opportunities for the area
3. Providing support for young people

Banff and Buchan

- **Banff and Buchan Coordination Hubs** – Co-ordination Hubs in Banff and Buchan activity continued during 2022/2023, including a partnership workshop convened by the Tackling Poverty Hub, to refresh objectives and identify partnership actions. Following a high level of Hub membership turnover due largely to partner reorganisations and the temporary lack of a permanent community planning officer resource in post, hub priorities were primarily delivered via time-limited project groups for a period during 2022/2023. These activities continued to be driven forward by key partners including a range of Aberdeenshire Council services, NHS Grampian, Banffshire Partnership (Local Rural Partnership), Police Scotland Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Aberdeen Foyer, with input from both business and community representatives.
- **The Banff and Buchan Community Planning Group** continued to meet during 2022/2023, providing strategic direction and partner input to joint working in response to local need. The Group also oversaw a review of the Banff and Buchan (Area) Community Plan with input from local partners.

Banff and Macduff Locality Plan Priorities (2022-2025)

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Strong and resilient communities
3. Connected communities

- **Banff and Macduff Locality Plan** A review of the Banff and Macduff Locality Plan was undertaken during 2022/2023, with input from local partners.
- Following the publication of the refreshed Strategic Needs Assessment for Fraserburgh in 2022, preparatory work was also undertaken in 2022/2023 to support a future review of the Fraserburgh Locality Plan, scheduled in 2023/2024.

Fraserburgh Locality Plan Priorities (2021-2023)

1. Healthy Living
2. Employability and Learning
3. Safe, Secure Communities
4. Service Connectivity

Delivering LOIP Priorities at a Local Level

Health and Wellbeing

Links to the Buchan Community Plan 2025: Priority 1 - Empowered Communities Priority 2 - Healthier Communities	Links to the Banff and Buchan Community Plan 2025: Priority 1 – Stronger, Empowered Communities Priority 2 – Healthier, Active Communities	
Peterhead Locality Plan Priorities Addressing certain health related issues	Fraserburgh Locality Plan priorities Healthy Living Safe, Secure communities	Banff and Macduff Locality Plan Priorities Strong and resilient Health and wellbeing Well connected

North Collaborative

- **Health and Wellbeing** – The development and delivery of activities and events in support of the [Aberdeenshire Wellbeing Festival](#) 2022 and in preparation for the 2023 event programme, promoting positive mental wellbeing across the North.
- **Warm Spaces** – Community planning partnerships in the North supported the establishment of area-based warm spaces within community settings during winter 2022/2023, supporting locally accessible, community run initiatives and assisted with the maintenance of the warm spaces list on the Aberdeenshire Council. Warm spaces funding also enabled warm spaces to kickstart and run throughout the winter and this will continue in 2022/2023, alongside other funding streams such as the Aberdeenshire Council community resilience fund which provides support to existing community resources.

Buchan

- Partners have supported the engagement and development of the [Healthy Eating Active Living \(HEAL\) Action Plan](#), with links established to both the Buchan Poverty and Health and Wellbeing Hubs.
- **Mental Health** – Supporting Phase 2 of the [Mind Yer Mind](#) campaign throughout the North through partner networks, complimented by an updated [E-Booklet](#) for the Buchan area, alongside ongoing work to identify Community Ambassadors.
- **Community Growing** – A [Community Market Garden](#) project in Buchan led by Aberdeenshire North Foodbank and a local Charity ‘Stella’s Voice’, is being

supported by partners and community groups to develop a productive growing space with volunteering and educational facilities to get people involved in learn growing and food skills.

Banff and Buchan

- Primary School Community Growing Projects** – Banff and Buchan continued to develop supported by funding via Boyndie Windfarm, while Public Health partners, in partnership with One Seed Forward and North School Fraserburgh, supported pupils to upskill via community growing activities. Preparatory discussions were also held with local public and third sector partners to inform a Banff and Buchan community growing proposal that will incorporate opportunities for activities for the benefit of council tenants, school communities and sheltered housing complexes.

Connected and Cohesive Communities

Links to the Buchan Community Plan 2025: Priority 1 - Empowered Communities Priority 2 – Stronger Communities	Links to the Banff and Buchan Community Plan 2025: Priority 1 – Stronger, Empowered Communities Priority 3 – Connecting Communities	
Peterhead Locality Plan Priorities Attracting a wider variety of employment opportunities in the area	Fraserburgh Locality Plan priorities Employability and Learning Service Connectivity	Banff and Macduff Locality Plan Priorities Strong and resilient Well connected Health and Wellbeing

North Collaborative

- Cultural Tides Levelling Up Funded programme** – Aberdeenshire Council’s £20m bid to the UK Government’s Levelling Up Fund for the Banff and Buchan constituency was successful. Called ‘Cultural Tides: North Sea Connections in Aberdeenshire’ the successful bid will see a £7 million renovation and extension of Macduff Marine Aquarium and a £18million development of a cultural quarter in Peterhead centred around the vacant Arbuthnot House.
- Aberdeenshire Loves Local Gift Card** – First introduced in 2021 as a tool to power the region’s economic fightback from the Covid pandemic by encouraging people to shop local, the gift card was the subject of a multi-channel marketing campaign during 2022/2023. 325 businesses across a wide variety of sectors have signed up to accept the card, including 60 of these in Banff and Buchan and 44 Buchan with all Aberdeenshire Council Live Life Aberdeenshire sites also accepting the card. This has led to an increase in sales and awareness of the card amongst the public.

- **Town Centres** – These cross-service teams continue to have a tactical and operational role in fostering collaborative work in Towns in the North area; Peterhead Town Team focused on the Peterhead Vision and Action Plan which will conclude its period of operation within the next year.
- **Peterhead 2040 Vision** – This place focussed work completed its primary research encompassing a study of previous community engagement, investment tracking, mapping of projects, identification relevant of data sets and sources and mapping of plans and strategies that relate to the town and surrounding areas. Wider Stakeholder engagement is now underway with partners and through forums such as the Peterhead Development Partnership.
- **SURF Alliance for Action Programme** – Partners supported a successful bid to bring Peterhead into the Alliance for Action programme. The newly recruited local facilitator will work with the community sector to achieve the twin aims of supporting better practical outcomes locally and drawing out learning that contributes to improving national policy and practice.
- **The Foyer Employability Space** in the heart of Peterhead town centre was developed in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council's Tackling Poverty and Inequality Team and Community Learning and Development, with significant contributions for local businesses. This new space offers a focal point for learning and employability, alongside a dedicated youth space.
- **Peer Consultation** – Partners supported young people to conduct a peer consultation through Youth Forums at Peterhead and Mintlaw Academies and report to Partners on the results covering themes such as mental health, youth spaces and activities. Funding has since provided for youth spaces and activities in Central Buchan and the following projects have been developed by partners and young people in Peterhead:
 - Tackling Poverty, Community Learning and Development, Police Scotland, Aberdeen Foyer, and Safer Community Wardens partners have helped identify young people to participate in a [street art youth project](#), funded through the Buchan Local Community Planning Group.
 - Peterhead Community Campus - building on a programme of stakeholder engagement this project is continuing through its planning and development phases. Further engagement will continue through formal Planning Permission process, as the two main programmes of work continue. Site 1 new education and community facilities at Kinmundy, Peterhead and Site 2 community facilities at the existing Peterhead Academy and Community and Leisure Centre location.

Banff and Buchan

- **Shaping Places for Wellbeing Fraserburgh (SPfW)** – The aim of this national programme is to improve Scotland's wellbeing by reducing the significant inequality in the health of its people while addressing the health of our planet. SPfW Fraserburgh is unique to the other SFfW project Towns in Scotland in that

the Project Lead is embedded within the local Aberdeenshire Council Area **Page 156** and community planning partnership, funded by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership. This facilitated the Project Lead to establish and build strong connections with key strategic and locality partners during 2022/2023, evident through representation secured on the Project Town Steering Group and the high level of engagement in meetings. Via workshops, data profiling and network building, the project has started to work through quantitative locality data to initiate, inform and frame discussions around Fraserburgh, the inequalities being experienced, key health concerns and challenges that can be identified and addressed.

- [Grow at the Vinery](#) is in Banff and led by Aberdeen Foyer. The Vinery Project is a Community Inclusion project around food, financial inclusion, and skills, delivering personal development and employability programmes for young people, parents and adults who are experiencing multiple and complex barriers to moving into good quality, sustainable employment. The project also supports those with long term mental health conditions, substance dependency, social isolation and are disengaged from education.

It also provides a safe, shared space for other community and third sector groups. Aberdeen Foyer works in close partnership with North East Scotland College (NESCOL) to ensure these are accredited learning opportunities.

The project has created 30 volunteer opportunities which give parents the opportunity for a first step into employment and training. The Vinery has created 11 additional local jobs within the project and has delivered skills academies and work experience for over 60 local people. This has included general employability skills, digital skills, CV updates and work placements and mock interviews, resulting in securing employment within the council Roads team as Survey Assistants and within the landscaping teams.

The Vinery has a Digital Skills Coach and has had a Financial Inclusion worker to provide financial health checks, assist with applications to grants and benefits and to support with budgeting skills training. This integrated approach of delivering advice, employment, wellbeing sessions, skills sessions in food and personal development along with developing that safe space has supported 129 families to access a range of services and employability opportunities.

Since opening in June 2022, the Vinery has seen a footfall of over 500 a month and welcomed over 1,600 visitors in the first quarter of 2023 alone. Averaging 20 sessions per week with an average footfall of 120, the Vinery also operates 15 active groups catering to all ages and interests including mental health, walking groups, arts and crafts, community gardening, National 5 revision and LGBTQ games groups, and serves up to 60 meals a week. Supported by a volunteer workforce of over 30 aged from 16 years to 70+ bring who amassed over 2,000 volunteer hours during 2022/2023, the Vinery provides volunteer training and opportunities to engage in community benefit projects.

- The Banffshire Partnership continued to support local community groups, in particular, Community Councils to develop community-designed and led Community Action Plans, along with support from Aberdeenshire Council and other partners on funding applications and technical guidance on project development and delivery.

- The Banff Academy Accelerate programme continued to explore how local service partners, businesses and communities can engage with young people and increase young people’s involvement in tackling local issues. Potential projects identified include community ambassadors and inspiring tourists to explore Banff’s culture, heritage and outdoors, which will now form project-based learning experiences that provide support for partners looking for additional engagement with the community whilst incorporating students’ ideas and upskilling.
- Local Police Scotland representatives continued to work in partnership with Fraserburgh Academy during 2022/2023, providing one-one engagement with young people via up to two-hour sessions at the Academy’s town centre Compass Centre. Police Scotland also engaged in life skills and team building exercises organised by the Academy to build up rapport with young people as a stepping stone to further engagement.

Reducing Poverty

<p>Links to the Buchan Community Plan 2025:</p> <p>Priority 1 - Empowered Communities Priority 2 – Healthier Communities Priority 3 – Safer communities Priority 4 – Stronger Communities</p>	<p>Links to the Banff and Buchan Community Plan 2025:</p> <p>Priority 1 – Stronger, Empowered Communities Priority 2 – Healthier, Active Communities Priority 3 – Connecting Communities</p>	
<p>Peterhead Locality Plan Priorities</p> <p>Providing support for young people</p>	<p>Fraserburgh Locality Plan priorities</p> <p>Safe, Secure communities</p>	<p>Banff and Macduff Locality Plan Priorities</p> <p>Strong and resilient</p>

North Collaborative

- Distribution points for [free period products](#) were in place across North Aberdeenshire and continued to grow in number throughout 2022/2023.
- The [‘Just in Time’ Buchan Food Map](#) and [Fraserburgh and District Food Map](#) resources continued to be updated regularly, to support access to food for members of the public and provide a useful signposting tool for partners and their clients, who may be experiencing a variety of financial difficulties.
- Supported through Local Authority Covid-19 Economic Recovery (LACER) Funding, 11,000 households eligible for Council Tax Reduction on 1 September 2022 received a £100 pre-loaded Aberdeenshire Loves Local Gift Card. Cards were sent out to eligible households on 23 February 2023. By 31 May 2022 just over £705,000 had been spent in eligible businesses across Aberdeenshire. The card is also being used across Council teams as a tool to support vulnerable households and those returning to employment.

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Opportunities continue to be explored for partnership working where vouchers can be used as an alternative to cash or store or Amazon gift cards to both local businesses and our communities.

- Aberdeenshire Council's Housing service continued to prioritise the provision of support and assistance to vulnerable tenants, focusing on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, anti-social behaviour, organised crime, and mental health concerns. Distribution of assistance via (LACER) funding commenced focusing on the provision of shopping vouchers and assistance to tenants struggling to pay rent. A 'real time' bulletin was developed for tenants providing information on cost-of-living assistance available.
- 'Days of Action' events were held in towns within the Banff and Buchan Area, working with partner agencies to tackle organised crime and to assist victims of cuckooing and related activities.

Buchan

- A new youth facility has been developed and co-designed developed by partners and young people at Drummers Corner in Peterhead, with input from youth workers and an artist, and partners will continue to support on issues as requested by the young people.
- Partners including NHS Grampian, Aberdeen Foyer and Community Learning and Development supported Aberdeenshire Council in the delivery of the summer holiday food, activities, and childcare programme 2022 with staff resources, a range of activities for children and their families, cooking sessions and free food packs.
- Supporting young people to participate within sports and activities with the help of sports kit for all. Following this initial pilot, the project has been expanded out to Central Buchan and other parts of Aberdeenshire.

Banff and Buchan

- Fraserburgh Community Council's Resilience Group's Food Larder - opened in April 2021 and has steadily built up a membership of over 70 members. Run by volunteers and operating out of a temporary location made available by a local business, membership is open to residents of Fraserburgh and the surrounding area enabling weekly visits to stock up on key items. During 2022/23. The initiative achieved its short-term plan is to provide an inviting and non-stigmatised shopping experience, partnership work continues to achieve the long-term plan to secure a larger, permanent building with a view to enhancing the service available to members.
- Supported by Scottish Government funding via Citizens Advice Scotland, the Aberdeenshire North West Citizens Advice Bureau (NWCAB) appointed an Energy Adviser; in the six-month period Oct 22 – March 23, NWCAB helped 293 clients with 426 issues, securing a cumulative financial gain of £53,460.91 by contacting grant providers, securing excessive payment 'write offs' once accurate energy readings were given and flagging inaccurate estimates. The work formed part of a holistic approach to tackling fuel poverty, where food

parcels were also distributed. Quote - "We had a family who had a **carer 8** survivor who could not have their heating on due to access costs. The **Page 159** adviser managed to get a grant of £1704.00 for them. They immediately went and switched their heating on.

Connected & Cohesive Communities – Key Performance Indicators

Outcome: Reduce the inequality gap in Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Banff and Macduff, our 3 locality plan areas.

Connected and Cohesive Communities High Level Performance Indicators

- Percent of the total population that are income deprived.
- Percent of the working age population (16-64 years) employment deprived.
- Crime rate per 1,000 population.

Reasons for selecting these indicators:

- **Income deprivation** as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), is a measure of the percentage of the population (adults and their dependents) in receipt of Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance, Guaranteed Pension Credits, Child and Working Tax Credits, or Universal Credit (excluding those in the category 'working with no requirements'), or in Tax Credit families on low income. In general, in relation to the total population covers all age groups while not being too specific, e.g., given that it relates to the whole population, it ostensibly covers relative child poverty, pensioner poverty, in-work and out-of-work poverty. As such, it touches on aspects of food security, access to paid services, lack of mobility (e.g., no car ownership).
- **Employment deprivation** as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), is a measure of the percentage of the working age population (men aged 16-64 and women aged 16-60) who are on the claimant count, those who receive Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or Severe Disablement Allowance, and Universal Credit claimants who are not in employment. Employment deprivation may also indicate a poorer job offering in the affected area relative to other areas in Aberdeenshire.
- **Crime rates** are the number of crimes (based on SIMD crimes of violence, sexual offences, domestic housebreaking, vandalism, drug offences and common assault) per 1,000 population. They indicate varying degrees of social breakdown or lack of social cohesion. Higher crime rates may also negatively affect residents' perception of their area as a nice place to live, etc., and can include the perception of public services generally.

The following statistics are collated by **Intermediate Zone** for each Locality Plan area. Intermediate zones are used for the dissemination of statistics that are not suitable for release at the smaller data zone level because of the sensitive nature of the statistic, or for reasons of reliability. Intermediate Zones were designed to meet constraints on population thresholds (2,500 - 6,000 household residents), to nest within local authorities, and to be built up from aggregates of data zones. Intermediate zones also represent a relatively stable geography that can be used to analyse change over time. There are 1,279 Intermediate Zones covering the whole of Scotland, 59 of which cover Aberdeenshire.

The latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) was published on **Item 8**
28 January 2020 and updated in June 2020. These figures and report are **Page 160**
on the updated version.

Key Performance Measure	2018	2019	2020	
Income deprivation				
% of the total population who are income deprived				
Peterhead Bay	14.64	14.92	14.66	↓
Peterhead Harbour	18.59	19.04	17.87	↓
Peterhead Links	7.02	7.07	7.05	↓
Peterhead Ugieside	7.95	7.98	7.83	↓
Fraserburgh Central-Academy	13.43	13.32	13.5	↓
Fraserburgh Harbour and Broadsea	21.18	21.49	20.25	↓
Fraserburgh Lochpots	17.19	17.87	16.66	↓
Fraserburgh Smiddyhill	4.25	4.30	4.33	↑
Banff	12.36	12.46	12.40	↓
Macduff	12.10	12.19	12.0	↓
Aberdeenshire	6.32	6.33	7.57	↑
Scotland	12.04	11.98	12.0	↑
Employment Deprivation – percent of the working age population (16-64 years)				
Peterhead Bay	11.65	11.73	11.33	↓
Peterhead Harbour	14.64	14.89	13.62	↓
Peterhead Links	5.29	5.38	5.66	↑
Peterhead Ugieside	5.70	5.77	6.0	↑
Fraserburgh Central-Academy	9.56	9.59	10.0	↑
Fraserburgh Harbour and Broadsea	15.81	16.26	15.25	↓
Fraserburgh Lochpots	13.61	14.33	13.0	↓
Fraserburgh Smiddyhill	4.24	4.30	4.33	↑
Banff	11.33	11.52	11.4	↓
Macduff	10.17	10.25	10.2	↓
Aberdeenshire	5.29	5.34	7.33	↑
Scotland	9.30	9.29	9.0	↓
Number of crimes (based on SIMD crimes of violence, sexual offences, domestic housebreaking, vandalism, drug offences and common assault) per 1,000 population.				
Peterhead Bay	56.18	57.27	55.73	↓
Peterhead Harbour	88.39	90.57	86.42	↓
Peterhead Links	30.73	30.95	30.62	↓
Peterhead Ugieside	12.41	12.46	12.23	↓
Fraserburgh Harbour and Broadsea	107.56	109.16	104.85	↓
Fraserburgh Lochpots	48.61	50.52	48.51	↓
Fraserburgh Smiddyhill	9.40	9.53	9.35	↓
Banff	31.58	31.84	32.11	↑
Macduff	27.68	27.90	27.38	↓
Aberdeenshire	17.25	17.27	19.41	↑
Scotland	28.75	28.61	30.98	↑

[REPORT ENDS]

If you have a question or would like to become more involved in community planning in Aberdeenshire, please contact us via email at communityplanning@ouraberdeenshire.org.uk

Or via our website:

<https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/>

Or by writing to us at:

Corporate Policy Officer for Community Planning
Business Strategy
Customer and Digital Services
Aberdeenshire Council
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Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB



REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7th SEPTEMBER 2023

**TACKLING POVERTY & INEQUALITIES – CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT
2022/23**

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report is to ask Committee to consider and agree the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report prior to its publication.

1.2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 To agree the Local Child Poverty Action Report for 2022/23

1.2.2 To consider the feedback from Education & Children’s Service Committee

1.2.3 Identify any changes or improvement within this area of work which the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group can implement; and

1.2.4 Acknowledge and support the progress made in tackling this agenda

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Scottish Government has an explicit commitment to ending child poverty through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (‘the Act’) which outlines a statutory requirement to reduce the number of children who live in poverty. The Act also places a statutory duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare and submit, to the Scottish Government, an annual “Local Child Poverty Action Report” (‘the Action Report’) that identifies what action has been taken in the previous 12 months and the actions that will be taken in the future to reduce child poverty.

2.2 The Local Child Poverty Action Report (Appendix 2) has been developed alongside Community Planning partners, most noticeably with NHS Grampian, which has the joint statutory duty with Aberdeenshire Council to produce the Action Report.

2.3 Reducing poverty is one of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities which is led by the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategic Partnership, chaired by Amanda Roe, Buchan Area Manager. The Action Report contributes to the LOIP priority.

2.4 The draft Action Report was considered by Education & Children Services Committee on the 31st August and the feedback has been taken into account within the final version prior to publication.

3 Discussion

3.1 On the 24th March 2022, the Scottish Government published the second version of the Tackling Poverty Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 “Best Start Bright Futures.” The plan builds on the foundations of Every Child, Every Chance and continues to focus on the three drivers of child poverty. The plan highlights 3 main drivers of child poverty:

- **Employment:** Income from parents’ work and earnings is insufficient to lift them from poverty;
- **Household costs:** The costs of living that households must cover are too high;
- **Social Security:** Income from Social Security has been cut back significantly, particularly for families with children

It also continues to highlight the six priority family groups.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/>

3.2 The Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan (Action Plan) was developed with those with lived experience, partners and comments from the Area Committee and Education & Children Service Policy Committee also informed the final version. This Committee agreed the new Action Plan on the 30th March 2023 and an updated version is attached at Appendix 3.

3.3 The priorities of the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership are:

- Reducing the number of children/people living in poverty;
- Preventing children/people falling into poverty;
- Enabling children to live poverty free in adult life; and
- Improve the wellbeing of people living in poverty.

3.4 Poverty is technically defined as when a person's household income is less than 60% of the UK average income. However, poverty is much more than just low income. The factors that generate poverty are wide-ranging and encompass many aspects of day-to-day life such as health, housing, educational attainment, employability, and access to services.

The Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership have adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of Poverty which is –

Poverty is when your resources are well below your minimum needs.

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

- 3.5 The table below outlines the most recent Child Poverty figures from the UK government’s national statistics for 2020/21 estimates children under 16 living in poverty across Aberdeenshire.

Constituency	2020/21	2021/22
Banff & Buchan	3326 (18%)	4054 (22.8%)
Gordon	2897 (13.3%)	3270 (15.2%)
West Aberdeenshire & Kincardine	2453 (11%)	2753 (12.8%)
Total	8, 676 (14.2%)	10,077 (16%)

Data source - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics>

- 3.6 In Aberdeenshire our approach to tackling child poverty focusses on early intervention and prevention. Tackling the root causes of poverty and building families capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances. A partnership approach is vital in ensuring opportunities and services are accessible and relevant. The draft report highlights good practice and the following outcomes which have been achieved over the last 12 months:

- **880** young people and parents have enhance their employability skills through targeted training programs, work experience and delivery of supported employment schemes.
- **21,731** households have been supported to reduce household costs with a client financial gain of **£6,509,323**.
- Through specialist pathways **386** priority families have been supported to secure additional financial support.
- **608** people shared their experience, with over **250** being young people. These experts of experience informed practice around the stigmatisation, ensure information was available by development of a Worried About Money Leaflet, Young Scot TP&I page and the Child Poverty Action Plan & Report.

4. Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The work and outcomes delivered through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities partnership helps delivery of all of the council priorities.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

Specifically, it supports the outcome to 'Improve the life chances of people at risk of falling into poverty, or already living in poverty.

- 4.2 The activities and outcomes, delivered through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership, helps deliver against the CPP Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan and links with a range of strategies including Criminal Justice, Housing, Transport and Economic Development.

This report helps deliver against the Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan Priority of Promoting Wellbeing / Resilience – Addressing Inequality / Child Poverty which over arches the strategic priorities. It also delivers on the LOIP Priorities, Reducing Poverty and contributes to the Healthy Eating & Active Lifestyles actions.

- 4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Climate Change and Sustainability		x	
Health and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Town Centre First		x	

- 4.4 No staffing implications have been identified and it is anticipated that the ambitions set out in the revised Child Poverty Action Plan will be met from within existing resources, where necessary there will be changes to the way in which services are delivered at no additional cost to partner organisations.

Funding opportunities such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and at a local level the Fairer Aberdeenshire Funding, will be explored where appropriate.

In addition, the Scottish Government's Delivery Plan, 'Best Start, Bright Futures', highlights a range of funding opportunities which will come onstream during the life of that plan. Opportunities to access these funding streams will be explored as appropriate.

4.5 An integrated impact assessment was carried out in 2021, updated in 2023 and is attached as Appendix 1. This assessment reflects the current work being undertaken and there is still a positive impact as follows –

- The work which is delivered and monitored through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership aims to maximise income and improve employability for people on a low income and can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, which helps meet our aims under the Fairer Scotland Duty.
- The children and young peoples' rights and wellbeing implications are likely to close the inequalities gap and support improved quality of life, which may contribute to children and young people living a poverty free life in adulthood.

4.6 The following risk has been identified, as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP007 – Social Risks, changes in population Poverty & Social Inequality [Corporate Risk Register](#)

The following risk have been identified through the Business Services Directorate risks: BSSR001 - Our young people have improved life chances

- Difficulty in sourcing data to report KPIs
- Challenges in sourcing sustainable funding streams

[Link to risk register page on website](#)

The integrated approach taken in developing the new Child Poverty Action Plan will ensure improved data collection and sustained outcomes through partnership resourcing.

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report and their comments are incorporated within the Report and are satisfied that the Report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D.4.4 – To approve the Council's annual Local Child Poverty Action Report following consultation with Area Committees and Education & Children's Services Committee.

Rob Simpson Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Annette Johnston, Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Coordinator

Date 8th August 2023

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Draft Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report

Appendix 3 – Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan.

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Tackling Poverty & Inequalities 2023

Assessment ID	IIA-001266
Lead Author	Caroline Hastings
Additional Authors	Annette Johnston
Service Reviewers	Caroline Hastings, Denise Forsyth
Subject Matter Experts	Susan Forbes, Lynne Gravener, Christine McLennan
Approved By	Amanda Roe
Approved On	Thursday March 09, 2023
Publication Date	Thursday March 09, 2023

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Integrated Impact Assessment for Tackling Poverty & Inequalities and supporting the Child Poverty Action Report.

Aims of Tackling Poverty & Inequality, Aberdeenshire Principles:

Reducing the number of children/people living in poverty.

Preventing children/people falling into poverty.

Enabling children to live poverty free in adult life.

Improve the well-being of people living in poverty.

During screening 6 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 3 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Children's Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities

In total there are 29 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated. The impact on 3 groups is not known, information is provided in the detailed sections of this document.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by amanda.roe@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No Negative Impacts Identified
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe	Yes			
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving	Yes			
Nurtured	Yes			
Active	Yes			
Respected	Yes			
Responsible	Yes			
Included	Yes			

4.2. Rights Indicators

<p>UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy</p>	<p>Article 2 - Non-discrimination Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 4 - Protection of rights Article 12 - Respect for the views of the child Article 18 - Parental responsibilities and state assistance Article 23 - Children with disabilities Article 27 - Adequate standard of living Article 28 - Right to education Article 30 - Children of minorities / indigenous groups Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture Article 42 - Knowledge of rights</p>
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4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Achieving	Working with Education and Children's Services to look at Cost of the School Day and the use of Pupil Equity funding to enable equity and inclusion. Ensuring young people are supported at transition areas of their life through a range of employability programmes increases skills and experience for their future.
Achieving	Working with Education and Children's Services to look at Cost of the School Day and the use of Pupil Equity funding to enable equity and inclusion. Ensuring young people are supported at transition areas of their life through a range of employability programmes increases skills and experience for their future.
Active	Through working with LLA a range of activities will be developed , informed by children and young people to improve their health & wellbeing ensuring they can participate in an active lifestyle.

Impact Area	Impact
Active	Through working with LLA a range of activities will be developed , informed by children and young people to improve their health & wellbeing ensuring they can participate in an active lifestyle.
Healthy	Access to food and skill development relating to shopping, preparation and cooking meals. Access to fresh food and vegetables through FareShare. Direct payments for free school meals allowing access to breakfast, break and lunchtime meals. Linking to Active Schools to enable positive mental health and physical wellbeing. Increased range of mental health supports available for Aberdeenshire children, young people and families.
Healthy	Access to food and skill development relating to shopping, preparation and cooking meals. Access to fresh food and vegetables through FareShare. Direct payments for free school meals allowing access to breakfast, break and lunchtime meals. Linking to Active Schools to enable positive mental health and physical wellbeing. Increased range of mental health supports available for Aberdeenshire children, young people and families.
Included	Ensuring we work with marginalised groups and community champions to include children and young people in priority groups affected by poverty and those with protected characteristics are not further marginalised. The development of a lived experience network will ensure those who feel marginalised are represented and are informing services, policies and practice.
Included	Ensuring we work with marginalised groups and community champions to include children and young people in priority groups affected by poverty and those with protected characteristics are not further marginalised. The development of a lived experience network will ensure those who feel marginalised are represented and are informing services, policies and practice.
Nurtured	Enabling children and young people to feel included as part of their community. Embedding trauma informed practice and developing services and policy through Rights Based Approach.
Nurtured	Enabling children and young people to feel included as part of their community. Embedding trauma informed practice and developing services and policy through Rights Based Approach.
Responsible	Ensure children, young people and families are equal partners through coproduction of services and programmes ensuring the ownership stays with those most effected by these developments.
Responsible	Ensure children, young people and families are equal partners through co production of services and programmes ensuring the ownership stays with those most effected by these developments.

Impact Area	Impact
Respected	Ensuring children and young people are enabled to participate and that their rights are upheld. Recognising the importance of the voice of children and young people in decisions being made that impact on them.
Respected	Ensuring children and young people are enabled to participate and that their rights are upheld. Recognising the importance of the voice of children and young people in decisions being made that impact on them.
Safe	We are looking to develop safe places for young people to go and participate in projects / activities. This has been identified as a gap so we now have 2 youth projects, 1 youth work training course and 4 TP&I youth workers.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Lived Experience Forum and Network	The voice of lived experience continues to be embedded across the work of TP&I and it's partners.	Those with lived experience can highlight areas of improvement, inform and co-produce service redesign, policy and practice. The input of those with lived experience, including young people, has been used to develop the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report and identify priorities for Tackling Poverty & Inequalities.

4.5. Information Gaps

Those children and young people who are part of Local Voices participate in informing decisions and those we can reach through youth groups and our third sector and other Aberdeenshire Council services however we recognise this does not necessarily reach a wider range of voices of children and young people.

4.6. Measures to fill Information Gaps

Measure	Timescale
Continue to expand the Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network (ALLEN) which is formed of third sector partners and Aberdeenshire council services who work with more marginalised or less easy to reach groups and individuals.	Ongoing Network information: https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/hub-page/aberdeenshire-lived-experience-network

4.7. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Young people form part of our 'Local Voices' lived experience forum and contribute to discussion about service improvement.

In September 2022 TP&I funded an 'Over2Youth' event which was developed and delivered by youth groups from central Aberdeenshire, highlighting issues of inequalities important to them and that impact on their lives. They are now continuing this work to develop actions to make changes.

4.8. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Article 12 - Respect for children's views:

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

We recognise that taking a right's-based approach is key to embedding our practice of working with those with lived experience as partners which will ensure services and activities support young peoples wellbeing.

Tackling Poverty & Inequalities allocate funding to a range of services and third sector partners to ensure children young people and their families have positive outcomes which improve and promote wellbeing. All funded projects take makes safeguarding a priority as part of their practice.

4.9. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

By embedding Children's Rights into our practice we provide support and promotion of young people's wellbeing through inclusion, participation and the importance of children and young people co-developing services and opportunities which meets their needs.

4.10. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The children and young peoples' rights and well being implications are likely to help towards closing the inequalities gap and support improved quality of life, which may contribute to children and young people living a poverty free life in adulthood.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race	Yes			
Religion or Belief				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified			
Sex	Yes			
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes			
Sexual Orientation				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified			
Gender Reassignment				Yes
	Will find out by: This data will not be identified			
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Yes			

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth	Yes			
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation	Yes			
Socioeconomic background	Yes			

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Older)	<p>Through increasing opportunities and access to services for parents or kinship carers who are living in low-income households ensuring improved outcomes.</p> <p>We have developed targeted support pathways for older people in relation to rural & remote communities.</p> <p>Working with some of this community to look at fuel poverty and it's impacts and develop recommendations and actions to improve service delivery.</p>

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	We have developed targeted support pathways for specific client groups. Priority families are now identified and are involved and undertaking projects using a rights based, person led approach.
Disability	Through increasing opportunities and access to services. We have developed targeted support pathways for disabled households. Working with some of this community to look at fuel poverty and it's impacts and develop recommendations and actions to improve service delivery.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Services and support will be more inclusive, reducing stigma and improving accessibility for priority families and those that have previously been marginalised.
Pregnancy and Maternity	The development of the targeted support pathways for specific client groups includes families with new babies. Services and support will be more inclusive, reducing stigma and improving accessibility for priority families and those that have previously been marginalised.
Race	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Services and support will be more inclusive, reducing stigma and improving accessibility for priority families and those that have previously been marginalised.
Sex	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Services and support will be more inclusive, reducing stigma and improving accessibility for priority families and those that have previously been marginalised.
Area deprivation	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. People living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty will experience a reduction of stigma from accessing services and opportunities which will improve their outcomes.
Low income	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Increased household income for those living in poverty and at highest risk of poverty through benefit up take and income maximisation.
Low wealth	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Services and support will be more inclusive, reducing stigma and improving accessibility for priority families and those that have previously been marginalised.
Material deprivation	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Increased access to services will close the inequalities gap and support improved quality of life.

Impact Area	Impact
Socioeconomic background	Through increasing opportunities and access to services for those families that have low income, high living costs and limited employment. Continue to support the lived experience forum the challenges of living in poverty and experience inequalities will be raised and address to ensure services and opportunities are accessible, where and when require

5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Lived experience, service and partner experiences: web page	Challenge Poverty Week 2022 - highlights challenges, barriers and ongoing work to change how we can improve delivery of and access to services https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/tackling-poverty-inequalities/challenge-poverty-week-2022/	This means that we are listening to our services users and our partners to understand how we can do things differently to ensure we can deliver on the Aberdeenshire Principles to tackling poverty & inequalities
Other Evidence	Lived Experience Forum	How we work with lived experience voices in Aberdeenshire https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/lived-experiences-online-forum/	That we recognise the importance of hearing from those who have directly experienced poverty or live on low incomes to learn how we can do things better to improve their outcomes.
Other Evidence	Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network	How important it is for TP&I to work in partnership with internal and external partners across Aberdeenshire. https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/hub-page/aberdeenshire-lived-experience-network	That we can make our resources work more effectively to deliver outcomes that improve the lives of families and individuals across Aberdeenshire through knowledge of shared practice and expertise. And that we can reach those more marginalised or less heard voices through existing and trusted relationships they have with third sector organisations.

5.5. Engagement with affected groups

Local voices is a lived experience forum which are asked their views on a range of topics/ issues/ services on a monthly bases.

Using Social media additional weekly engagement has been undertaken.

We have begun projects with youth groups and a fuel poverty project with housing tenants and property owners.

5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Local Voices membership reflects those families with protected characteristics. Through partnership work with those who support marginalised groups and through community champions supporting these communities.

5.7. Evidence of engagement

The Child Poverty Local Action Report (year 4) highlights the impact local voices make: https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Aberdeenshire-Local-Child-Poverty-Action-Report-2021_22.docx

Fuel Poverty Project: <https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Fuel-Poverty-Project-Report-November-2022.pdf>

5.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The approach to tackling poverty & inequalities focuses on tackling the root causes of poverty and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances.

The Fairer Aberdeenshire Fund is used to support services and opportunities that improve the live chances of those most vulnerable in Aberdeenshire.

The Child Poverty Action Report reflects our continued commitment to reducing poverty across all our communities.

5.9. Improving Relations

Ensure that the Lived Experience continues to reflect those target groups outlined the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 26 Best Start Bright Futures

Continue to build on the partnership work which has been developed around this area.

Report progress to Area Committees, Policy Committees and Health & Social Care Partnership.

Highlight good practice at a local and national level

5.10. Opportunities of Equality

The approach to tackling poverty & inequalities focusses on early intervention and prevention – tackling the root causes of poverty and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances.

Accessing appropriate services and opportunities will contribute to reducing child poverty, social justice, support housing first principles, reducing homelessness and reducing inequalities across Aberdeenshire.

Through identifying and addressing the barriers faced by those who are at risk of poverty or living in poverty should result in a reduction of inequalities

6. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

6.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating	Yes			
Exercise and physical activity		Yes		
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol		Yes		
Substance use – drugs		Yes		
Mental health	Yes			

6.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Healthy eating	To deliver the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) action plan which aims to make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for everyone in Aberdeenshire.
Mental health	<p>Raise awareness and improve access to services aimed at pupils to improve physical and mental well-being of children and young people experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Raise awareness and improve access to wellbeing services for priority families through the development of hubs and interventions that prevent crisis within the family.</p> <p>Deliver and fund a range of community-based well being programmes.</p>

6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Mind Yer Mind campaign	Through our Community Planning Partnership we have access to resources such as the Mind Yer Mind campaign: https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/news-and-events/mind-yer-mind-campaign/	This means we can access resources to share with our priority groups

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Child Poverty Action Plan	<p>Outlines what we need to do to provide services and support to those who have had their mental health further impacted.</p> <p>We know there is increased stress and worry that living on a low income brings and deterioration of people's mental health.</p> <p>There had been significant increase in mental health and anxiety because of the pandemic which is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, particular for young people and their families.</p>	Through raising awareness and new opportunities people's wellbeing will improve.

6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Through working with Live Life Aberdeenshire and the Health and Social Care Partnership and Public Health partners we are able to support delivery of activities for young people across Aberdeenshire, linking to holiday programmes and active schools activities. As well as working with partners to deliver on the Aberdeenshire Food Strategy through the Healthy Eating Active Living Health and Wellbeing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority, Health and Wellbeing. We are also working with colleagues in the Education and Children's Services to deliver on the actions to support the outcome 'Increase range of mental health supports available for Aberdeenshire children, young people and families'

7. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
To continue to develop and deliver the Child Poverty Action Plan	<p>Lead Officer Annette Johnston</p> <p>Repeating Activity Yes</p> <p>Frequency Ongoing</p> <p>Duration 2022-2026</p> <p>Expected Outcome The intention of this Action Plan is to improve outcomes for all families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty, but the key emphasis will be supporting families where the risk of children living in poverty is highest. To this end the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan will focus on the needs of 'priority families' who are at high risk of poverty</p> <p>Resource Implications Time of TP&I staff, those with lived experience and partner organisations. TP&I budget to cover costs of funded programmes within the plan.</p>

APPENDIX 2

(Draft)

Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Local Action Report

April 2022 – March 2023



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Partnership Foreword

I am proud to chair the Aberdeenshire Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership and of the work of the partnership to support children and families in our communities. Working together with NHS Grampian, our Third Sector partners, and agencies such as Skills Development Scotland and Social Security Scotland, our focus is to enable families to be lifted out of poverty, and to prevent families from ever experiencing poverty.

This report highlights some of the excellent and positive work being delivered in very challenging times. Together we have improved financial inclusion and employability pathways for low-income families by delivering integrated services to ensure people can access the help and support when they need them most. And together we are working to develop interventions to support families to improve health & wellbeing, ensure they have a voice in developing opportunities which reduces fuel poverty, and increases youth opportunities especially within the rural and remote communities across Aberdeenshire.

The partners central to the success of the partnership is of course our families with lived experience – working together to codesign and coproduce services that enable families to have the best outcomes possible, now and in the future. Together we are challenging stigma and ensuring local voices are heard when decisions are being made. Families tell us this approach makes a difference – not just in terms of the way in which services are developed and delivered but, more importantly, the process empowers them to become more active in their community, reducing the stigma which they have previously experienced.

However, as a partnership we know that the future is going to be as challenging as the present. Aberdeenshire families experience the rural premium that means the cost of living is even tougher here than in many other parts of the country. Families who have never experienced financial insecurity before are struggling with day-to-day bills and we know families highlighted as most vulnerable in the Scottish Government's Best Start Bright Futures strategy will continue to be at risk of experiencing poverty. Our focus as a partnership in the coming year is to ensure there is 'no wrong door' to support families through continued integration of services, regardless of responsible agency.

Reducing child poverty is a shared agenda and must be a priority for us all. It is increasingly important that the partnership between local voices and the community planning partners is strengthened as it needs all of us working closely together to ensure that what we are delivering will support those most affected by the current economic circumstances.

Amanda Roe Chair of Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership

Aberdeenshire Data

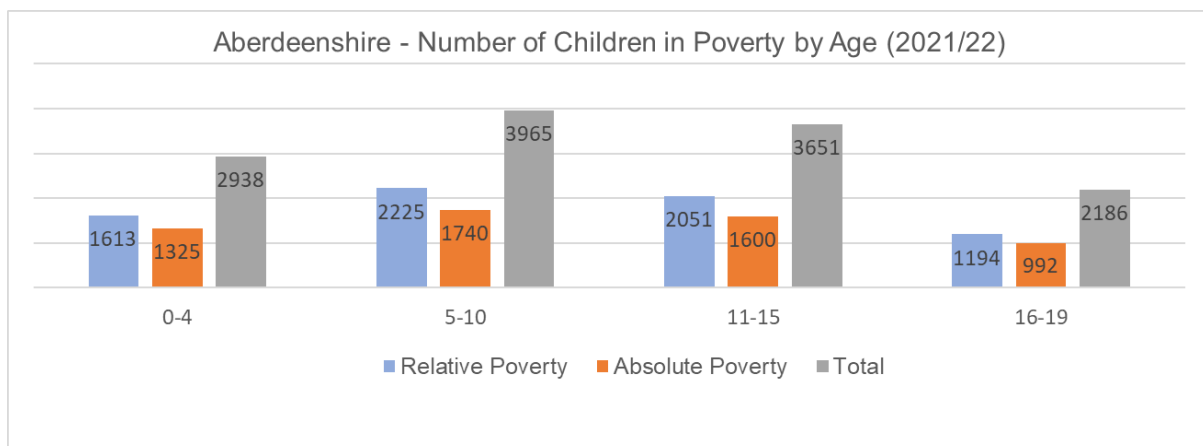


Aberdeenshire is one of Scotland’s 14 rural authorities and is defined as ‘mainly rural’. We are the fourth largest geographical local authority in Scotland.

The economy of rural Scotland is both similar to, and tightly integrated with the economy of urban Scotland. However distinct differences, often related to distance and scarcity, remain between urban and rural economies. These differences may contribute to an even greater level of inequality particularly for low-income families.

Its estimated that 16% of young people (under 16) in Aberdeenshire live in Poverty.

Constituency	2020/21	2021/22
Banff & Buchan	3326 (18%)	4054 (22.8%)
Gordon	2897 (13.3%)	3270 (15.2%)
West Aberdeenshire & Kincardine	2453 (11%)	2753 (12.8%)
Total	8, 676 (14.2%)	10,077 (16%)



Aberdeenshire's Approach

The Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Strategic Partnership leads on Child Poverty. This is a multi-agency partnership consisting of key council colleagues and external partners: Education & Children Services, Economic Development, Skills Development Scotland, Health & Social Care Partnership, Housing, Department of Work & Pensions, NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action.

Reducing Poverty is also a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priority therefore the Child Poverty Action Plan has been developed with local voices and Community Planning Partners.

In Aberdeenshire our approach to tackling child poverty focusses on early



intervention and prevention.

Tackling the root causes of poverty and building families capabilities through income maximisation, employability and promoting positive life chances. A partnership approach is vital in ensuring opportunities and services are accessible and relevant. This agenda is complex therefore streams of work have been developed to reduce inequalities and tackle

child poverty. These areas of work are lead through a range of partnership groups that are linked through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities strategic partnership. These partnership groups deliver actions, identify trends, and collate data which is used to inform priorities annually.

Partnership Principles

The partners who are working within this agenda have agreed the following principles:

- Recognise place and empower young people and families to not only influence and inform decisions but coproduce services which meets their needs.
- Ensure a holistic approach is developed through partnership working at a local and or strategic level.
- Improving Health Inequalities
- Addressing the causes of child poverty, not its symptoms
- Making early interventions for families, young people, and disadvantaged communities
- Improving employability as a key means of tackling child poverty

Developing an Intergrated approach

It is important that through a partnership approach low income families, children and young people feel valued, respected and supported to access services and opportunities when they need them at a local level.

An integrated impact assessment was carried out in 2023 and the current work being undertaken to reduce Child Poverty and the positive impact as follows –

- The work which is delivered which aims to maximise income and improve employability for people on a low income and can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, which helps meet the aims under the Fairer Scotland Duty.
- The children and young peoples' rights and wellbeing implications are likely to close the inequalities gap and support improved quality of life, which may contribute to children and young people living a poverty free life in adulthood.

Tackling fuel poverty and ensure affordable housing is a priority outlined in the [Aberdeenshire Housing Strategy](#). The housing service is also a partner in the Aberdeenshire Financial Inclusion Partnership which coordinates and delivers information & advice services, income maximisation and increases the up take of benefits ensures families access all the financial support they are entitled to. Parents and local tenants were involved in developing a report which has been used to inform future services and practice .

[Fuel Poverty Project - Report November 2022 \(ouraberdeenshire.org.uk\)](https://ouraberdeenshire.org.uk)

Increasing income from employment and earnings should ensure the best support for parents to work and earn more, effectively lifting them and their families out of poverty. These outcomes are developed with the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership which includes Skills Development Scotland, Department of Work & Pensions, Aberdeenshire Council, a range of third sector deliver partners such as Barnardos, Enable, SHMU, Aberdeen Foyer and Inspire.

The [Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) has Tackling Inequalities and Public Protection as a priority which contributes to Reducing Child Poverty.

Partners working through the GIRFEC Strategic Group continue to support positive outcomes for children, young people and their families, resulting in improved life chances of all children and young people in Aberdeenshire. [The Children and Young Peoples Service Plan \(2023-26\)](#) reflects the commitment partners have made to reducing Child Poverty across Aberdeenshire.

Making Employment work for families

What we know

Universal Credit Single parent households	Universal Credit Families with 3+ Children	Universal Credit Disability entitlement
4210	1164	646

Total number of children 19 and under living in poverty is 12,738 out of which 8,913 are in working households.(69.97%)

A high number of low-income families are employed in the care, processing, agriculture, or retail sector where wages are low and hours can be limited, therefore access to affordable flexible childcare is important to allow parents to continue to work.

Due to the rising cost of living there has been an increase in people not being able to take up employment opportunities as they can't afford the transport or childcare.

Several families have raised the issue of the low number of family friendly employers who can offer sustainable employment in the rural areas. Several lone parents or parents with a disabled child have found it increasingly difficult to find local employment with hours that can be flexible around transport and childcare. These parents have taken up several part-time posts to ensure that flexibility.

“I have part of a teaching degree that meant I was qualified as a nursery nurse but being a lone parent and a severe lack of childcare in my area meant that I could not pursue this as a career.” – Rural parent

Actions & Impact

Action	Impact / outcomes	Lead
<p>Using lived experience to inform practice and what programmes should be commissioned for 2023/24.</p> <p>Develop a range of employability programmes that supports those priority families seeking employment.</p>	<p>A group of priority families highlighted the barriers, types of support required and gaps in services for those in work and seeking employment.</p> <p>Applications for employability funding now include a lived experience element which is scored through the assessment process.</p> <p>Enhanced employment skills will increase the opportunities to secure sustainable employment.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Employability partnership have supported 880 to enhance their employability skills through targeted training programmes, work experience</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.</p>

Action	Impact / outcomes	Lead
	and delivery of supported employment schemes.	
Provide appropriate support to address in-work poverty by targeting support to help parents already in jobs to remain active in the workplace through accessing the Parental Support Fund, Tax Free Childcare and gain skills or additional qualifications which supports Career progression.	The progression or enhancing skills will support those in work to secure sustained employment.	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Develop a partnership with local employers to increase the number of local businesses who are Real Living Wage employers.	Those employed will feel valued, appreciated, and supported out of in work poverty.	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.

Next Steps

Actions	Impact	Timescale & lead
Encourage all businesses that are delivering services which have been procured by Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partners to be living wage employers with a diverse workforce which has no gender pay gap	The local economy will benefit from employers who invest and value their staff.	Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board.
Recruit Child Poverty Employability workers who will use a place-based approach to identify and address barriers to securing or sustaining work. The workers will support families through developing positive relationships to address barriers such as money advice, transport, affordable childcare or digital access.	Increased access to employment opportunities for those who have previously found securing sustained employment a challenge. Increased access to employment and training opportunities for those parents and young people living in rural & remote areas.	Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team June 2023

<p>To continue using a key worker to deliver support to those parents that require additional support especially around health & wellbeing.</p> <p>Develop the key worker model to include a Health & Wellbeing post.</p> <p>Develop opportunities for those parents with lived experience to secure key worker posts,</p>	<p>A new Health & wellbeing post to be developed as a result of the impact of those with lived experience in developing practice and services.</p> <p>Increased support for parents to secure the support required to increase positive employability outcomes.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team</p> <p>August 2023</p>
<p>Commission research to review models of existing childcare and through working with local families, partners, childcare providers and employers to develop a flexible childcare framework.</p>	<p>Increased accessibility to affordable childcare targeting primary age children who live in the rural and remote areas.</p>	<p>Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Partnership</p> <p>Aug 23</p>
<p>To develop a childcare sector-based training programme to address the challenges faced by providers with recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>To pilot a childcare training academy targeting a rural setting which will also deliver wrap around childcare for those with primary age children</p>	<p>The role of childcare has been identified as an important pillar of the approach to addressing child poverty in Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>

Case Study – The Vinery

[Grow at the Vinery](#) is in Banff and led by [Aberdeen Foyer](#). The Vinery Project is a Community Inclusion project around food, financial inclusion, and skills, delivering personal development and employability programmes for young people, parents and adults who are experiencing multiple and complex barriers to moving into good quality, sustainable employment. The project also supports those with long term mental health conditions, substance dependency, social isolation and are disengaged from education.

It also provides a safe, shared space for other community and third sector groups. Aberdeen Foyer works in close partnership with NESCOL to ensure these are accredited learning opportunities.

The project has created 30 volunteer opportunities which give parents the opportunity for a first step into employment and training. The Vinery has created 11 additional local jobs within the project and has delivered skills academies and work experience for over 60 local people. This has included general employability skills, digital skills, CV updates and work placements and mock interviews, resulting in securing employment within the council Roads team as Survey Assistants and within the landscaping teams.

The Vinery has a Digital Skills Coach and has had a Financial Inclusion worker to provide financial health checks, assist with applications to grants and benefits and to support with budgeting skills training. This integrated approach of delivering advice, employment, wellbeing sessions, skills sessions in food and personal development along with developing that safe space has supported 129 families to access a range of services and employability opportunities.



Making Every Opportunity Count for families

What we know

Children & young people entitled to free school meals, clothing grants and bridging payments. 2019/20	Children & young people entitled to free school meals, clothing grants and bridging payments. 2022/23	Financial support secured for low-income families, including those home schooled 2022/23
2556	4737	£3,173,790

Over the last five years, average household incomes in Aberdeenshire have increased by 8%, while in Scotland they increased by 17% over the same period. The majority of Aberdeenshire towns have seen increases below the Scottish average.

There is a rural premium to be paid for families living in rural and remote area resulting in a higher cost for fuel, food, transport, and housing costs. The impact of the rising cost of living has seen an increased number of households seeking advice and financial assistance especially working households. Home Energy Scotland and advice services have seen an increase in households with children seeking advice on how to reduce their fuel bills. In Aberdeenshire we have seen an increased number of families choosing to go on prepaid meters for gas and electricity as a result of fuel debt.

Those experts of experience still highlight the stigma they feel when accessing services especially for the first time. The perception of those who are living in poverty can be very negative therefore people from smaller communities are hesitant to come forward.

“I have a car, a house and live in a nice area, but I have been made redundant. I feel ashamed that I need to use the local food larder to feed my family as I don’t have enough money to buy the weekly shopping. I live in an area that is perceived to be nice, but I am in the trap of poverty” – Parent highlighting hidden poverty.

Actions & Impact

Action	Impact & Outcomes	Lead
To continue to deliver good quality accessible information & advice services through the Information and advice framework. Money Advice & welfare rights workers will use a key worker approach to	<p>Increasing household income will ensure families can be financially supported through transitions in their children’s lives.</p> <p>Increased accessibility to the service the workers will be hosted within Primary Health Care facilities, housing services, community organisations including foodbank and within rural & remote communities.</p> <p>Through specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and financial support.</p>	Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Money Advice & Welfare Rights Team.

Action	Impact & Outcomes	Lead
<p>support for priority families.</p> <p>A community-based information & advice service will be delivered by a consortium which has been developed to include the 4 Citizen Advice Bureau who operates across Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>This consortium delivered a range of advice services including debt advice, benefit, housing, relationship, and employment advice.</p> <p>Over the last 12 months 9,841 clients have accessed Information & Advice Services across Aberdeenshire. Income maximisation has been challenging throughout the last 12 months however for those clients supported through the framework approximately £9,355,405 has been secured in client financial gain. The main issues that clients are receiving support for are benefits, debt, housing, energy debt and support with the rising cost of living.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire CAB Consortium.</p>
<p>To develop a cash first approach to food security through the delivery of the ‘Worrying About Money?’ leaflet, developing a strategic partnership and delivering wellbeing funds through a range of trusted partners and social landlords.</p> <p>To develop partnership projects and initiatives which reduces food security, fuel poverty using a</p>	<p>The Aberdeenshire ‘Worrying About Money?’ leaflet has been sent to every household in Aberdeenshire and training has been rolled out to staff & volunteers within Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, Health & Social Care Partnership, Third Sector, and community groups. The training highlights the complex nature of poverty, increases knowledge on what support is in place and how to access it and helps to reduce stigma.</p> <p>The Cash first approach is a dignified form of support to people facing hardship at a local level. It reduces the stigma therefore the initiatives and projects using this approach are seen as more inclusive. The number of low-income households supported using this approach to reduce their housing costs is 21,731 with a client financial gain of £6,509,323.</p> <p>Connecting with Communities Is a project delivered through CFINE that reduces food insecurity through increasing access to affordable food, increase cooking skills and those using the service can access the support they need when they need it.</p> <p>The aim is to ensure residents in more rural and remote locations can access</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire’s Financial Inclusion Partnership</p>

Action	Impact & Outcomes	Lead
cash first approach.	fresh fruit & vegetables at low cost and additionally receive good quality FareShare produce to ensure easier management of household budgets. The project operates in areas which may have limited food support and / or transport links for accessing food. Over the past 12 months they have supported 561 people out of which 232 have been children.	
<p>Deliver a range of opportunities to ensure those experts of experience can coproduce services, develop opportunities, inform practice and strategies.</p> <p>Support priority families to participate in the Local Voices Forum, expert panel sessions including deep dives into issues such as Fuel Poverty, Affordable & flexible Childcare, accessible transport.</p>	<p>Local Voices have improved services, opportunities and inform practice. Those families involved have developed skills, confidence and have felt not only supported by valued as equal partners.</p> <p>In 2022, 608 people shared their experience, with over 250 being young people. These experts of experience informed practice around the stigmatisation, ensure information was available by development of a 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet, Young Scot TP&I page, and the Child Poverty Action Plan & Report. They have informed national research on food insecurity and health conditions such as obesity, informed local charges set for recreation activities, explored issues that affected them such as fuel poverty and made recommendations for the future.</p> <p>Lived Experience Conference 2022 – See Me, Hear Me, Work with Me</p> <p>Fuel Poverty Project - Report November 2022 (ouraberdeenshire.org.uk)</p>	Tackling Poverty Team

Next Steps

Actions	Impact/ Outcome	Lead
Support priority families to participate in the Local Voices Forum, expert panel sessions including deep dives into Affordable & flexible Childcare and accessible transport.	Those families involved have developed skills, confidence and have felt not only supported by valued as equal partners.	Aberdeenshire's Lived Experience Network/ Forum and Youth Advisory Panel.

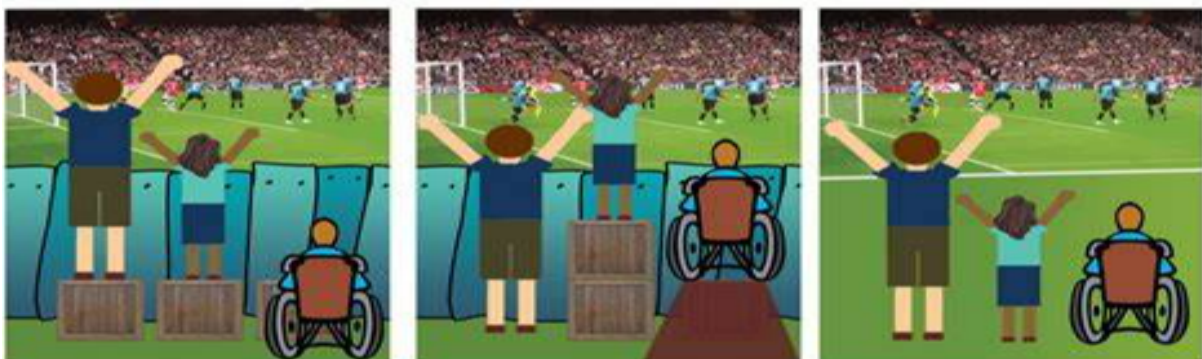
<p>To continue to develop a Cash First Approach through securing additional funding and co-develop support pathways for marginalised communities who don't traditionally access services</p>	<p>Increasing household income will ensure families can be financially supported through transitions in their children's lives.</p>	<p>Progress In Dialogue Progress In Dialogue – #ConversationsForChange Aberdeenshire Financial Inclusion Partnership.</p>
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Case Study – Progress in Dialogue

Progress In Dialogue (PID) is a grassroots organisation that amplifies the voice of those least heard. PID developed a wellbeing fund which targeted those marginalised communities that don't traditionally access support due to negative experience, fear of stigma, lack of knowledge and lack of trust in Local Authorities. The project used Community Champions from these communities to build up trusted relationships who would support the families to access the support required. The full report can be found using this link:

[Progress in Dialogue FWF2022_23 \[IMPACT REPORT\] \(canva.com\)](#)

One outcome of this project has been to place a full time Money Advice Welfare Rights Officer within the organisation who is developing a positive relationship with families who feel marginalised ensuring the Cash First approach is delivering sustained outcomes for these families.



(Image source: [link](#))

Making the future possible for all

What we know

Accessing services and opportunities is not equitable across Aberdeenshire as some remote and rural communities have been disadvantaged by centralising services such as health care. The challenges for those living in Aberdeenshire are around sustained employment, access to services, high cost of fuel especially for those off the grid, access to affordable food and affordable housing.

The impact of the last few years has highlighted the impact of stigma, lack of community ownership of services and solutions to address poverty & inequalities felt by children, young people, and their families.

Early intervention and changing the narrative will ensure that services and opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all children young people and their families.

“...certainly, where we live in such a rural location, change has to come from within. Local people need to be the ones who instigate the change, and then should be supported by the Council. More funding for them, and more support.” - Rural Parent

Actions & Impact

Action	Impact and Outcomes	Lead
<p>Support young people from priority families to participate Youth led projects which use a rights-based approach. Through these projects young people will challenge stigma and ensure the inequalities felt by those young people living in poverty are addressed.</p> <p>Strengthen the voice of children & Young People to ensure future plans, strategies and funding allocation is informed by their lived experience in relation to Poverty & Inequalities</p> <p>Ensure young people are aware of all the financial support available to them at different life transitions.</p>	<p>Stigma will be reduced, services become inclusive and young people will change the narrative around poverty and challenge the inequalities.</p> <p>A youth project was developed with young people using a rights-based approach resulting in a youth event developed and delivered by young people from 15 different youth groups. These groups explored the impact of poverty & inequalities on them and their families. They developed workshops and performances that could be delivered at the event “Over 2 Youth 22” which was held on 24th September 2022 to deliver their findings to over 250 young people and partners.</p> <p>Young people from this event are developing a TP&I youth panel.</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Raise awareness and improve access to services aimed at pupils</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of the link between the increased stress and worry that living on a low income</p>	<p>GIRFEC Strategic group.</p>

Action	Impact and Outcomes	Lead
<p>to improve physical and mental well-being of children and young people experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Raise awareness and improve access to wellbeing services for priority families through the development of hubs and interventions that prevent crisis within the family.</p>	<p>brings and deterioration of people's mental health.</p> <p>There had been significant increase in mental health and anxiety because of the pandemic which is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, particular for young people and their families.</p> <p>Using a rights-based approach a Mental Health Action Plan has been developed through GIRFEC which is outlined in the Childrens Service Plan 2023-26</p>	<p>Education & Children's Services</p>

Next steps

Action	Impact & outcomes	Lead
<p>Increase access to ESOL , digital skills and literacy support for priority families especially targeting those from marginalised communities where literacy levels are low.</p> <p>Improve digital access, affordability and skills for priority families across Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>Increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills will improve the ability for families to take up offers and new service deals which they may not have been aware of.</p> <p>It gives the families increased opportunities not only through employment but social cohesion.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Community Learning Partnership</p>
<p>Develop and share good practice examples using the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). These projects and interventions are developed to support pupils on lowest income close the poverty and attainment gap.</p>	<p>Children, young people and their families will be supported to reduce the cost of the school day, increase opportunities to enhance their learning through a range of support and interventions.</p>	<p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Ensure local transport strategies reflects the challenges and needs of priority families. Explore & develop new ideas to overcome the transport challenges that</p>	<p>Affordable transport is a key priority. Matching provision of where and when it is needed, linking work and services to where people live will make transport</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>NESTRAN</p>

<p>rural communities face especially for low-income families.</p>	<p>genuinely responsive and affordable.</p>	
<p>Ensure strategies and action related to affordable housing, prevention of homelessness domestic violence, the prevention of childhood accidents; parental substance misuse; supporting the needs of the Criminal Justice population; parenting and mental health can reduce the inequalities gap and further improve quality of life and life chances for children and their families living in poverty</p>	<p>Increased ownership of local, area and national strategies and action plans.</p> <p>A workforce that will deliver inclusive services with dignity and respect.</p> <p>Improved life changes for all.</p>	<p>TP&I strategic partnership.</p>

Case Studies – Local Voices and Henry

Case Study 1

Through the lived experience forum an in person Conference - See Me, Hear Me, Work with Me, was developed and delivered as part of Aberdeenshire Challenge Poverty Week 2022. The conference was hosted by The Rowett Institute which is part of Aberdeen University.

The aims of the conference were to share good practice, raise awareness of the importance of coproduction with those experts of experience and listen to those with experience around food security, increase cost of fuel and the cost-of-living crisis.

“The tackling poverty and inequality day that was held at the Rowett Institute today was so good. I am so glad I went along in person and met some people from the Forum. I think it was important to be present at the session to show that we do exist and are the actual people on the ground assisting with the Forum and having our opinions heard. I left today feeling valued, appreciated, and encouraged that what we do makes a difference. I hope there are more opportunities for engagement going forward.” – Forum member / conference volunteer

The blended approach of in person and online participation allowed 120 participants to take part in the day. They identified solutions, areas of improvements and informed national research but the main outcome was a commitment to develop a Charter that outlined expectations and process for those with lived experience.

Case Study 2

HENRY is a UK charity working to give babies and young children a healthy start in life. HENRY [Homepage](#) | [HENRY](#) provides families with a range of supports to help achieve a healthy lifestyle. Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership are working in partnership with Home-Start colleagues including North East Aberdeenshire to deliver HENRY “Healthy families — Right from the start” programme

This FREE programme is available to families with children aged 0-5 years that live in Aberdeenshire and are able to commit to the 8 week programme - self referral by the family is encouraged. We are now running both online and face to face groups and a range of 1-2 hour workshops taster sessions. Everyone wants the best for their children, but with so much conflicting advice it can be hard to know what to do for the best as a parent. Therefore our trained accredited HENRY facilitators (from Homestart NEA, health visiting, public health and community dietetics) are best placed to provide this information through our exciting HENRY programmes.

From May 2022 to March 23 we ran 10 programmes supporting 50 parents/carers, below are some of their feedback:

Parent 2; “Really good interesting course. The little bag of stuff you get is amazing. It’s great knowing that they’re always there if you needed anything. “

Parent 3; “It was great seeing a different approach to food and healthy living. Our bedtime routine is more consistent.”

For further information or to refer a family please contact gram.henryaberdeenshire@nhs.scot

Outcomes

Employment: Income from parents' work and earnings is insufficient to lift them from poverty;

There are a number of programmes delivered through Aberdeenshire Employability partnership have supported over **880** to enhance their employability skills through targeted training programmes, work experience and delivery of supported employment schemes.

Household costs: The costs of living that households must cover are too high;

There are a number of workstreams that support low-income households to reduce housing costs. These are support with food, fuel, wellbeing funds and information & Advice services. The number of households supported to reduce their housing costs is **21,731** with a client financial gain of **£6,509,323**.

Social Security: Income from Social Security

Through specialist pathways **386** priority families have been supported.

4737 children and young people being supported through the financial support available to families across Aberdeenshire.

The Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

Areas for Development for 2023/24

- Develop a Child Poverty data dashboard which will improve our use of data and intelligence to identify priority areas for investment.
- Continue to develop the Lived Experience Structure and develop a lived experience Charter and Youth Board.
- Continue to deliver rights-based approach projects focusing on young people's services.
- Co-develop targeted support pathways for families that are marginalised
- Using the recommendations from the Childcare research to develop flexible childcare framework
- Implement the Child Poverty Action Plan.
- Integrate services to ensure a no wrong door approach is delivered for families
- Highlight the impact of PEF and the impact of the cost of the school day.
- Explore affordable transport models with those with lived experience and make recommendations for change.



Final Word

"Poverty is not a choice it is a change in circumstance which you can't control or plan for"

- Local Parent

Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan

Appendix 1

INTRODUCTION

In Aberdeenshire people are living in poverty due to low wages, high living costs, lack of accessible affordable flexible childcare, affordable transport and the premium felt by those living in a remote and rural area. Preventative approaches to address children poverty ensuring they have a rural bias is a priority for this plan.

Parents worry about the impact poverty has on their children, particularly that they may be bullied because of the circumstances in which they live. They can also feel stigmatised when accessing services which can result in reluctance to access support in future. Children living in poverty frequently report feeling excluded and embarrassed, citing it as a key source of unhappiness, and worry about their parents.

This plan has been informed by and will be monitored by those priority families that have lived experience. The actions do reflect the rural challenges and are driven by the need to improve outcomes for priority families. This plan will be delivered by a strong partnership who are committed to jointly achieve outcomes that will reduce Child Poverty in Aberdeenshire.

The rural dimension of Aberdeenshire creates distinct challenges. In addressing the specific dynamics of rurality, the development of providing localised a whole family approach where partners are collocated gives a real meaning to “no wrong door”.

ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

The intention of this Action Plan is to improve outcomes for all families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty, but the key emphasis will be supporting families where the risk of children living in poverty is highest. To this end the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan will focus on the needs of ‘priority families’ who are at high risk of poverty, these are:-

- lone-parent families
- a household where someone is disabled.
- families with three or more children
- minority ethnic families
- families with a child under one year old
- families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Those in low-paid work, those who are part of marginalised communities such as Gypsy/Traveller families; people experiencing substance misuse issues and those families impacted by the criminal justice system will also be key groups that the actions set out in this action plan will support.

Priority – Making Employment Work

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress /impact	Lead
Develop and deliver a range of employability programmes that supports	The number of priority families supported into employment.	Increase income from employment.	880 individuals have been supported to enhanced employment skills out of which 225 have	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress /impact	Lead
those within priority families.	The number of priority families supported to enhance their employability.		secure sustainable employment.	https://employmentconnect.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Aberdeenshire-LEP-3-Year-Plan-Overview-002.pdf
Recruit Child Poverty Employability workers who will use a place-based approach to identify and address barriers to securing or sustaining work. The workers will support families through developing positive relationships to address barriers such as money advice, transport, affordable childcare or digital access	<p>The number of priority families supported through integrated flexible pathways.</p> <p>The number of working parents supported to reduce the cost of childcare and transport.</p> <p>The number of parents from the priority groups that secure or sustain</p>	Increase income from employment	<p>The recruitment of 2 Child Poverty Employability workers has taken place and they will start in September 2023.</p> <p>These posts will work with families to increase access to sustained employment and training opportunities especially for those living in rural & remote areas.</p>	Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team
Provide appropriate support to address in-work poverty by targeting support to help parents already in jobs to remain active in the workplace through	<p>The number of parents from priority families, who are in work , to enhance their skills or supported through career progression.</p> <p>The number of families</p>	Increase income from employment	<p>Over the last 9 months number of sessions around the Rising Cost of Living was delivered . These sessions raise awareness of the support available to working parents.</p> <p>The Parental Support fund supported 188</p>	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress /impact	Lead
accessing the Parental Support Fund, Tax Free Childcare and gain skills or additional qualifications which supports Career progression.	accessing the Parental Support Fund to support them to stay in work.		families. Including 54 into other employment including self-employment.	
Develop a partnership with local employers to increase the number of local businesses who are Living Wage employers.	<p>The number of employers that have been engaged with to support them to become a living wage employer.</p> <p>The number of Living Wage employers who operate within Aberdeenshire</p>	Increase income from employment	The number of accredited Living Wage employers increased from 64 in 2022 to 71 in July 2023.	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Encourage all businesses that are delivering services which have been procured by Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partners to be living wage employers with a diverse workforce which has no gender pay gap	The number of employability opportunities delivered through procured services	Increase income from employment	Through procurement 171 employers are paying their staff the living wage this is an increase of 23% from previous years. 01 July 2023: All employed staff, including apprentices and any other workers engaged in delivering the grant-funded activity must be paid at least the real Living Wage.	Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board.

Priority – Making Every Opportunity Count

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
<p>To continue to deliver good quality accessible information & advice services through the Information and advice framework.</p> <p>Money Advice & welfare rights workers will use a key worker approach to support for priority families. To increase accessibility to the service the workers will be hosted within Primary Health Care facilities, housing services, community organisations including foodbank and within rural & remote communities.</p> <p>A community-based information &</p>	<p>The number of priority families supported to ensure they have secured all benefits and financial support available to them.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits;</p>	<p>Pathways have been developed with NHS, Foodbanks, ADP, Progress In Dialogue, Resettlement Team and a pilot in Meldrum Academy will inform future services within ECS.</p> <p>Increased access to support, advice and financial support for those most effected by the rising cost of living.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the financial available to them.</p> <p>An allocation of £3,173,790 has supported 4737 children and young people to access food, clothing and essential items.</p> <p>Over the last 12 months 9,841 clients have accessed</p>	<p>Tackling Poverty & Inequalities (TP&I) Strategic Partnership</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
<p>advice service will be delivered by a consortium which has been developed to include the 4 Citizen Advice Bureau who operates across Aberdeenshire. This consortium will deliver a range of advice services including debt advice, benefits, housing, relationship and employment advice.</p>			<p>Information & Advice Services £9,355,405 has been secured in client financial gain . The main issues that clients are receiving support for are benefits, debt, housing, energy debt and support with the rising cost of living.</p>	
<p>To develop a cash first approach to food security through the delivery of the Worried About Money Leaflet, developing a strategic partnership and delivering wellbeing funds through a range of trusted partners and social landlords.</p>	<p>Number of Worried About Leaflets distributed to partners and communities.</p> <p>Number of priority families who accessed support through</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire has distributed over 120,000 leaflets to households, community groups and partner organisations.</p> <p>Over 350 priority families have increased their household income through accessing</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire's Financial Inclusion Partnership</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
To develop partnership projects and initiatives which reduces food security, fuel poverty using a cash first approach.	the wellbeing funds.		love local cards and Wellbeing funds.	
To develop and deliver the Fair Food Aberdeenshire action plan to increase access to affordable nutritious food, reduce food waste and increase food skills.	<p>The number of priority families supported through to reduce fuel and food costs.</p> <p>The number of integrated food & advice sessions delivered to priority families and the wider community.</p>		<p>706 low income households have been supported to reduce their heating costs.</p> <p>62 advice sessions have been delivered to parents and partners.</p>	Fair Food Aberdeenshire partnership
To deliver the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) action plan which aims to make healthy eating and active living possible and	The number of priority families engaged with emergency food providers.		3,149 low-income families have engaged with the emergency food providers resulting in 4,944 children have been fed by emergency food providers.	Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership.

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
achievable for everyone in Aberdeenshire.				
<p>To increase awareness and access to services when people need support through developing campaigns for transition periods of a child life enabling families to be aware of the support available at these stages of the child's life.</p> <p>Deliver partnership training and awareness to address the stigma felt by those families when accessing services.</p> <p>Develop a range of targeted pathways for families who have a new-born baby , those households</p>	<p>Number of social media shares and reach for campaigns.</p> <p>Number of participants who have engaged in training & awareness sessions.</p> <p>Number of priority families supported through the targeted pathways.</p> <p>Number of households/</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits;</p>	<p>Several campaigns have been shared on the social media platforms –</p> <p>Best Start Grants</p> <p>Parental Support Fund</p> <p>Fuel Fund</p> <p>These posts have reached over 6500 people per month.</p> <p>Over 978 people and young people have participated in on line and face to face training and awareness raising session.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>Financial pathways for families and those with new-born babies - NHS Grampian</p> <p>Vulnerable & disabled Households – TP&I partnership.</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
<p>with a disabled parent or child, those engaged with Criminal Justice System and clients supported through the Alcohol & Drugs Partnership service hubs.</p>	<p>people who have benefited from integrated services to improve their wellbeing , reduce poverty & inequalities ensuring positive outcomes</p>		<p>financial available to them.</p> <p>The total number of people who have participated in the services, opportunities and events that the partners have collectively delivered in 2022 is 26,073 out of which 3,272 are children and young people.</p>	<p>Specialist pathways -Criminal Justice Aberdeenshire ADP</p>
<p>Deliver a range of opportunities to ensure those experts of experience can coproduce services, develop opportunities, inform practice and strategies.</p> <p>Support priority families to participate in the Local Voices Forum, expert panel sessions including deep dives into issues such as Fuel Poverty, Affordable & flexible</p>	<p>Number of partners involved in Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network (ALEN)</p> <p>Number of interventions made by the network or expert forums which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice.</p> <p>Number of priority families involved in expert sessions and forums.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>There are 18 partners involved in ALEN.</p> <p>https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/hub-page/aberdeenshire-lived-experience-network</p> <p>There have been 15 different opportunities for those with lived experience to be involved in improving services , practice setting budget priorities, fees ,developing strategies and policies.</p> <p>608 including 250 young people from priority families have led and participated in sessions which informs practice and policy.</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Aberdeenshire's Lived Experience Network</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Forum</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
Childcare, accessible transport.	Number of coproduced services or opportunities.		Those experts with experience have coproduced training, Child Poverty Plans & reports and allocating funding.	

Priority – Making The Future Possible For All

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress / impact	Lead
Support young people from priority families to participate Youth led projects which use a rights-based approach. Through these projects young people will challenge stigma and ensure the inequalities felt by those young people living in poverty are addressed. Strengthen the voice of children & Young Peoples to ensure future plans, strategies and funding allocation is informed by their lived experience in relation to	Number of young people involved in rights-based TP&I projects. Number of interventions made by the young people which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice. Number of children and young people from priority families involved in expert panels, informing consultations and participating in structures that empower young people. Number of coproduced services, campaigns or	Reducing household costs. Maximising income from social security benefits. Increase income from employment	250 young people have been involved in TP&I projects which identify priorities. Through Education & Children Services there is a commitment from all partners to engage and empower young people. Through this structure there has been opportunities for young people to coproduce and inform policy around a number of areas which is outlined in the published Children Service Plan Childrens Service Plan 2023-26	TP&I Strategic Partnership Education & Children Services

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress /impact	Lead
<p>Poverty & Inequalities</p> <p>Ensure young people are aware of all the financial support available to them at different life transitions.</p>	<p>opportunities to address poverty & inequalities which children and young people have developed.</p> <p>Number of young people from priority families who secure the Education Maintenance Allowance</p>			
<p>Increase access to ESOL , digital skills and literacy support for priority families especially targeting those from marginalised communities where literacy levels are low.</p> <p>Improve digital access, affordability and skills for priority families across Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>Number of priority families who access ESOL support.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are supported with improving their literacy and digital skills.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are digitally connected.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills will improve the ability for families to take up offers and new service deals which they may not have been aware of.</p> <p>It gives the families increased opportunities not only through employment but social cohesion.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Community Learning Partnership</p>
<p>Develop and share good practice examples using the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). These</p>	<p>Number of pupils benefiting from a PEF programme or activity.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from</p>	<p>Children, young people and their families will be supported to reduce the cost of the school day, increase opportunities to enhance their learning</p>	<p>Education & Children Services</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress /impact	Lead
<p>projects and interventions are developed to support pupils on lowest income close the poverty and attainment gap.</p>	<p>Number of families supported through PEF initiatives.</p> <p>Number of projects and interventions that are shared as good practice examples through the partnership.</p>	<p>social security benefits.</p>	<p>through a range of support and interventions.</p>	
<p>To develop a childcare sector-based training programme to address the challenges faced by providers with recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>To pilot a childcare training academy targeting a rural setting which will also deliver wrap around childcare for those with primary age children.</p> <p>Develop models of flexible, affordable and</p>	<p>Number of flexible childcare pathways developed to support the rural and remote communities.</p> <p>Number of training programmes for childcare / early years workers delivered through the sector-based training programmes.</p> <p>Number of new Childminders, models or providers.</p> <p>Number of new employment opportunities filled.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>A tender has been developed with partners and those with lived experience to commission a review and research project which will be delivered in 2023. The outcomes will inform a Childcare strategy which will support working families going forward.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress /impact	Lead
<p>accessible wrap around childcare for priority families and working parents that would include not only early years but primary age children and young people who may require a higher level of care.</p>				
<p>Ensure local transport strategies reflects the challenges and needs of priority families.</p> <p>Explore & develop new ideas to overcome the transport challenges that rural communities face especially for low-income families.</p>	<p>Number of safe active travel routes across Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Number affordable & responsive rural transport projects.</p> <p>Number of sustained rural transport routes</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>An expert panel will be recruited from priority families to identify barriers and possible solutions around accessible and affordable transport.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>NESTRAN</p>
<p>Raise awareness and improve access to services aimed at pupils to improve physical and</p>	<p>Number of children & young people supported by the range of initiatives.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of the link between the increased stress and worry that living on a low income brings and deterioration of</p>	<p>GIRFEC Strategic group.</p> <p>Education & Children's Services</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress /impact	Lead
<p>mental well-being of children and young people experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Raise awareness and improve access to wellbeing services for priority families through the development of hubs and interventions that prevent crisis within the family.</p> <p>Deliver and fund a range of community-based wellbeing programmes.</p>	<p>Number of new projects, initiatives and opportunities available through the development of the wellbeing projects / hubs.</p> <p>Number of wellbeing programmes being integrated within existing opportunities.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>people's mental health.</p> <p>There had been significant increase in mental health and anxiety because of the pandemic which is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, particular for young people and their families. Through raising awareness and new opportunities people's wellbeing will improve.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA)</p>
<p>Ensure strategies and action related to affordable housing, prevention of homelessness domestic violence, the prevention of childhood accidents; parental substance misuse; supporting the needs of the</p>	<p>Number of strategies and action plans informed by experts of experience.</p> <p>Number of staff & volunteers that are trauma informed.</p> <p>Number of coproduced strategies and</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>Increase ownership of local , area and national strategies and action plans.</p> <p>A workforce that will deliver inclusive services with dignity and respect .</p> <p>Improved life changes for all.</p>	<p>TP&I strategic partnership.</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress /impact	Lead
<p>Criminal Justice population; parenting and mental health can reduce the inequalities gap and further improve quality of life and life chances for children and their families living in poverty</p>	<p>action plans that are developed, monitored and delivered.</p>			

ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2022- 2026

INTRODUCTION

In Aberdeenshire people are living in poverty due to low wages, high living costs, lack of accessible affordable flexible childcare, affordable transport and the premium felt by those living in a remote and rural area. Preventative approaches to address children poverty ensuring they have a rural bias is a priority for this plan.

Parents worry about the impact poverty has on their children, particularly that they may be bullied because of the circumstances in which they live. They can also feel stigmatised when accessing services which can result in reluctance to access support in future. Children living in poverty frequently report feeling excluded and embarrassed, citing it as a key source of unhappiness, and worry about their parents.

This plan has been informed by and will be monitored by those priority families that have lived experience. The actions do reflect the rural challenges and are driven by the need to improve outcomes for priority families. This plan will be delivered by a strong partnership who are committed to jointly achieve outcomes that will reduce Child Poverty in Aberdeenshire.

The rural dimension of Aberdeenshire creates distinct challenges. In addressing the specific dynamics of rurality, the development of providing localised a whole family approach where partners are collocated gives a real meaning to “no wrong door”.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

The Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 26 Best Start Bright Futures highlights 3 main drivers of child poverty:

- **Employment:** Income from parents’ work and earnings is insufficient to lift them from poverty.
- **Household costs:** The costs of living that households have to cover are too high.
- **Social Security:** Income from social security has been cut back significantly, particularly for families with children.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/>

ABERDEENSHIRE PRINCIPLES

Our approach to tackling Child Poverty focusses on tackling the root causes and building people's capabilities through income maximisation, employability, improving quality of life, helping families manage the impacts of poverty and promoting positive life chances. It is important the voices of those with lived experience are not just heard but their views construct future strategies and action plan as these families are key to deliver the 4 overarching goals which are highlighted in this plan. These are:

- Preventing children on the margins of poverty falling into poverty.
- Reducing the number of children living in poverty by moving those in poverty out of poverty.
- Protecting children living in poverty from its most adverse effects.
- Enabling children to live a poverty-free adult life.

The plan includes actions that in some cases contribute to more than one of the above overarching goals.

ABERDEENSHIRE CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

The intention of this Action Plan is to improve outcomes for all families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty, but the key emphasis will be supporting families where the risk of children living in poverty is highest. To this end the Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan will focus on the needs of 'priority families' who are at high risk of poverty, these are:-

- lone-parent families
- a household where someone is disabled.
- families with three or more children
- minority ethnic families
- families with a child under one year old
- families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Those in low-paid work, those who are part of marginalised communities such as Gypsy/Traveller families; people experiencing substance misuse issues and those families impacted by the criminal justice system will also be key groups that the actions set out in this action plan will support.

This Action Plan outlines a range of actions under 3 main aims –

- Making Employment Work
- Making every opportunity count
- Making the future possible for all

RESOURCING THE DELIVERY OF THE ACTION PLAN

It is anticipated that some of the ambitions set out in this action plan can be met from within existing resources where changes to the way in which services are delivered can be made at no additional cost to partner organisations. At a local level funding opportunities such as Fairer Aberdeenshire Funds, LACER, ESF, UK Prosperity Fund, No one Left Behind and ADP funding will be explored where appropriate. In addition, Scottish Government's Delivery Plan highlights a range of funding opportunities which will be explored as appropriate.

Reducing Child Poverty Action Plan 2022 – 2026

Priority Area
<i>Making Employment Work</i>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
Develop and deliver a range of employability programmes that supports those within priority families.	The number of priority families supported into employment. The number of priority families supported to enhance their employability.	Increase income from employment.	880 individuals have been supported to enhanced employment skills out of which 225 have secure sustainable employment. https://employmentconnect.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Aberdeenshire-LEP-3-Year-Plan-Overview-002.pdf	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Recruit Child Poverty Employability workers who will use a place-based approach to identify and address barriers to securing or sustaining work.	The number of priority families supported through integrated flexible pathways. The number of working parents supported to reduce the cost of childcare and transport. The number of parents from the priority groups that secure or sustain	Increase income from employment	The recruitment of 2 Child Poverty Employability workers has taken place and they will start in September 2023. These posts will work with families to increase access to	Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
These workers will support families through developing positive relationships with them which will identify and address barriers such as money advice, transport, affordable childcare or digital access			sustained employment and training opportunities especially for those living in rural & remote areas.	
Provide appropriate support to address in-work poverty by targeting support to help parents already in employment to remain active in the workplace. Support them to access a range of support such as - the Parental Support Fund, Tax Free Childcare and gain skills or additional qualifications which supports Career progression.	<p>The number of parents from priority families, who are in work , to enhance their skills or supported through career progression.</p> <p>The number of families accessing the Parental Support Fund to support them to stay in work.</p>	Increase income from employment	<p>Over the last 9 months number of sessions around the Rising Cost of Living was delivered . These sessions raise awareness of the support available to working parents.</p> <p>The Parental Support fund supported 188 families. Including 54 into other employment including self-employment.</p>	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Develop a partnership with local employers to increase the number of local businesses who are Living Wage employers.	<p>The number of employers that have been engaged with to support them to become a living wage employer.</p> <p>The number of Living Wage employers who operate within Aberdeenshire</p>	Increase income from employment	The number of accredited Living Wage employers increased from 64 in 2022 to 71 in July 2023.	Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership.
Encourage all businesses that are delivering services which have been procured by Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partners to be living wage employers with a diverse	The number of employability opportunities delivered through procured services	Increase income from employment	<p>Through procurement 171 employers are paying their staff the living wage this is an increase of 23% from previous years.</p> <p>From the 01 July 2023, all employed staff, including</p>	Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board.

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver	Progress made since approval	Lead
workforce which has no gender pay gap			apprentices and any other workers engaged in delivering grant-funded activities for Aberdeenshire Council must be paid at least the real Living Wage.	

Priority Area

Making Every Opportunity Count

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>To continue to deliver good quality accessible information & advice services through the Information and advice framework. Money Advice & welfare rights workers will use a key worker approach to support for priority families.</p> <p>To increase accessibility to the service the workers will be hosted within Primary Health Care facilities, housing services, community organisations including foodbank and within rural & remote communities.</p>	The number of priority families supported to ensure they have secured all benefits and financial support available to them.	Maximising income from social security benefits;	<p>Pathways have been developed with NHS , Foodbanks, ADP, Progress In Dialogue, Resettlement Team and a pilot in Meldrum Academy will inform future services within ECS.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the financial available to them.</p> <p>An allocation of £3,173,790 has supported 4737 children and young people to access</p>	Tackling Poverty & Inequalities (TP&I) Strategic Partnership

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
A community-based information & advice service will be delivered by a consortium which has been developed to include the 4 Citizen Advice Bureau who operates across Aberdeenshire. This consortium will deliver a range of advice services including debt advice, benefit, housing, relationship and employment advice.			<p>food, clothing and essential items.</p> <p>Over the last 12 months 9,841 clients have accessed Information & Advice Services £9,355,405 has been secured in client financial gain.</p> <p>The main issues that clients are receiving support for are benefits, debt, housing, energy debt and support with the rising cost of living.</p>	
<p>To develop a cash first approach to food security through delivery of the Worried About Money Leaflet, developing a strategic partnership and delivering wellbeing funds through a range of trusted partners and social landlords.</p> <p>To develop partnership projects and initiatives which reduces food security, fuel poverty using a cash first approach.</p> <p>To develop and deliver the Fair Food Aberdeenshire action plan to increase access to affordable nutritious food,</p>	<p>Number of 'Worried About Money' Leaflets distributed to partners and communities.</p> <p>Number of priority families who accessed support through the wellbeing funds.</p> <p>The number of priority families supported through to reduce fuel and food costs.</p> <p>The number of integrated food & advice sessions delivered to priority families and the wider community.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire has distributed over 120,000 leaflets to households, community groups and partner organisations.</p> <p>Over 350 priority families have increased their household income through accessing love local cards and Wellbeing funds.</p> <p>706 Households have been supported to reduce their heating costs.</p> <p>62 advice sessions have been delivered to parents and partners.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire's Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>Fair Food Aberdeenshire partnership</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>reduce food waste and increase food skills.</p> <p>To deliver the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) action plan which aims to make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for everyone in Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>The number of priority families engaged with emergency food providers.</p>		<p>3,149 low-income families have engaged with the emergency food providers resulting in 4,944 children have been fed by emergency food providers.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership.</p>
<p>To increase awareness and access to services when people need support through developing campaigns for transition periods of a child life enabling families to be aware of the support available at these stages of the child's life.</p> <p>Deliver partnership training and awareness to address the stigma felt by those families when accessing services.</p> <p>Develop a range of targeted pathways for families who have a new-born baby , those households with a disabled parent or child, those engaged with Criminal Justice System and clients supported through the Alcohol & Drugs Partnership service hubs.</p>	<p>Number of social media shares and reach for campaigns.</p> <p>Number of participants who have engaged in training & awareness sessions.</p> <p>Number of priority families supported through the targeted pathways.</p> <p>Number of households/ people who have benefited from integrated services to improve their wellbeing , reduce poverty & inequalities ensuring positive outcomes</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits;</p>	<p>Several campaigns have been hared on the social media platforms – Best Start Grants Parental Support Fund Fuel Fund These posts have reached over 6500 people per month.</p> <p>Over 978 people and young people have participated in on line and face to face training and awareness raising session.</p> <p>Through these specialist pathways 386 priority families have been supported to access additional benefits and the financial available to them.</p> <p>The total number of people who have participated in the services, opportunities and events that the partners have</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Financial Inclusion Partnership</p> <p>Financial pathways for families and those with new-born babies - NHS Grampian</p> <p>Vulnerable & disabled Households – TP&I partnership. Specialist pathways - Criminal Justice</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
			collectively delivered in 2022 is 26,073 out of which 3,272 are children and young people.	Aberdeenshire ADP
<p>Deliver a range of opportunities to ensure those experts of experience can coproduce services, develop opportunities, inform practice and strategies.</p> <p>Support priority families to participate in the Local Voices Forum, expert panel sessions including deep dives into issues such as Fuel Poverty, affordable & flexible Childcare, accessible transport.</p>	<p>Number of partners involved in Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Network (ALEN)</p> <p>Number of interventions made by the network or expert forums which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice.</p> <p>Number of priority families involved in expert sessions and forums.</p> <p>Number of coproduced services or opportunities.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>There are 18 partners involved in ALEN.</p> <p>There have been 15 different opportunities for those with lived experience to be involved in improving services , practice setting budget priorities, fees, developing strategies and policies.</p> <p>608 including 250 young people from priority families have led and participated in sessions which informs practice and policy.</p> <p>Those experts with experience have coproduced training, Child Poverty Plans & reports and allocating funding.</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Aberdeenshire’s Lived Experience Network</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Lived Experience Forum</p>

Priority Area
Making the future possible for all

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>Support young people from priority families to participate Youth led projects which use a rights-based approach. Through these projects young people will challenge stigma and ensure the inequalities felt by those young people living in poverty are addressed.</p> <p>Strengthen the voice of children & Young Peoples to ensure future plans, strategies and funding allocation is informed by their lived experience in relation to Poverty & Inequalities</p> <p>Ensure young people are aware of all the financial support available to them at different life transitions.</p>	<p>Number of young people involved in rights-based TP&I projects.</p> <p>Number of interventions made by the young people which informs strategies, budgets, policy and practice.</p> <p>Number of children and young people from priority families involved in expert panels, informing consultations and participating in structures that empower young people.</p> <p>Number of coproduced services, campaigns or opportunities to address poverty & inequalities which children and young people have developed.</p> <p>Number of young people from priority families who secure the Education Maintenance Allowance</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>250 young people have been involved in TP&I projects which identify priorities.</p> <p>Through Education & Children Services there is a commitment from all partners to engage and empower young people. Through this structure there has been opportunities for young people to coproduce and inform policy around a number of areas which is outlined in the published Children Service Plan Childrens Service Plan 2023-26</p>	<p>TP&I Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Increase access to ESOL , digital skills and literacy support for priority families especially targeting those from marginalised communities where literacy levels are low.</p> <p>Improve digital access , affordability and skills for priority families across Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>Number of priority families who access ESOL support.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are supported with improving their literacy and digital skills.</p> <p>Number of priority families that are digitally connected.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p> <p>Increase income from employment</p>	<p>Increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills will improve the ability for families to take up offers and new service deals which they may not have been aware of.</p> <p>It gives the families increased opportunities not only through employment but social cohesion.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Community Learning Partnership</p>
<p>Develop and share good practice examples using the Pupil Equity Funding</p>	<p>Number of pupils benefiting from a PEF programme or activity.</p>	<p>Reducing household costs.</p>	<p>Children, young people and their families will be supported</p>	<p>Education & Children Services</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
(PEF). These projects and interventions are developed to support pupils on lowest income close the poverty and attainment gap.	<p>Number of families supported through PEF initiatives.</p> <p>Number of projects and interventions that are shared as good practice examples through the partnership.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>to reduce the cost of the school day, increase opportunities to enhance their learning through a range of support and interventions.</p>	
<p>To develop a childcare sector-based training programme to address the challenges faced by providers with recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>To pilot a childcare training academy targeting a rural setting which will also deliver wrap around childcare for those with primary age children.</p> <p>Develop models of flexible, affordable and accessible wrap around childcare for priority families and working parents that would include not only early years but primary age children and young people who may require a higher level of care.</p>	<p>Number of flexible childcare pathways developed to support the rural and remote communities.</p> <p>Number of training programmes for childcare / early years workers delivered through the sector-based training programmes.</p> <p>Number of new Childminders, models or providers.</p> <p>Number of new employment opportunities filled.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>A tender has been developed with partners and those with lived experience to commission a review and research project which will be delivered in 2023. The outcomes will inform a Childcare strategy which will support working families going forward.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership</p> <p>Education & Children Services</p>
<p>Ensure local transport strategies reflects the challenges and needs of priority families.</p> <p>Explore & develop new ideas to overcome the transport challenges that rural communities face especially for low-income families.</p>	<p>Number of safe active travel routes across Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Number affordable & responsive rural transport projects.</p> <p>Number of sustained rural transport routes</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>An expert panel will be recruited from priority families to identify barriers and possible solutions around accessible and affordable transport.</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>NESTRAN</p>
<p>Raise awareness and improve access to services aimed at pupils to improve physical and mental well-being of</p>	<p>Number of children & young people supported by the range of initiatives.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of the link between the increased stress and worry that living on a low income brings and</p>	<p>GIRFEC Strategic group.</p>

Action	Performance Measure	Key Driver(s)	Progress made since approval	Lead
<p>children and young people experiencing poverty.</p> <p>Raise awareness and improve access to wellbeing services for priority families through the development of hubs and interventions that prevent crisis within the family.</p> <p>Deliver and fund a range of community-based wellbeing programmes.</p>	<p>Number of new projects, initiatives and opportunities available through the development of the wellbeing projects / hubs.</p> <p>Number of wellbeing programmes being integrated within existing opportunities.</p>	<p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>deterioration of people's mental health.</p> <p>There had been significant increase in mental health and anxiety because of the pandemic which is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, particular for young people and their families. Through raising awareness and new opportunities people's wellbeing will improve.</p>	<p>Education & Children's Services</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA)</p>
<p>Ensure strategies and action related to affordable housing, prevention of homelessness domestic violence, the prevention of childhood accidents; parental substance misuse; supporting the needs of the Criminal Justice population; parenting and mental health can reduce the inequalities gap and further improve quality of life and life chances for children and their families living in poverty</p>	<p>Number of strategies and action plans informed by experts of experience.</p> <p>Number of staff & volunteers that are trauma informed.</p> <p>Number of coproduced strategies and action plans that are developed, monitored and delivered.</p>	<p>Increase income from employment.</p> <p>Reducing household costs.</p> <p>Maximising income from social security benefits.</p>	<p>Increase ownership of local , area and national strategies and action plans.</p> <p>A workforce that will deliver inclusive services with dignity and respect .</p> <p>Improved life changes for all.</p>	<p>TP&I strategic partnership.</p>

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7th September 2023

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 1ST APRIL 2022 – 31ST MARCH 2023

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 *The main purpose of this report is to advise members how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is performing against key performance measures and associated targets, as set out in the Aberdeenshire Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24 approved at the meeting of the Communities Committee on 18th February 2021.*

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

Acknowledge and discuss the attached performance report relating to performance from 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 for the Aberdeenshire area of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The Police and Fire (Reform) Scotland Act 2012 places a duty on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to prepare a local fire and rescue plan for the local authority area. This can be summarised as follows:

- The SFRS must prepare a local fire and rescue plan for each local authority area.
- The SFRS must submit a local fire and rescue plan for approval to the local authority for the area to which the plan relates.
- The SFRS must give to a local authority such information or reports relating to the carrying out of the Service's functions in the local authority's area as the authority may reasonably request.
- The Local Senior Officer for each local authority area for the purpose of carrying out on behalf of the Service delegated functions including:
 - i. the preparation and review of the local fire and rescue plan
 - ii. the provision of information to the local authority
 - iii. the receiving of feedback from the local authority
 - iv. The SFRS's functions relating to its duty to participate in Community Planning.
- monitor and provide feedback to SFRS on the manner in which it carries out its functions;
- Provide feedback by reference to any local fire and rescue plan in force in its area.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 This report provides an overview of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services performance in the Aberdeenshire area for the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. The report provides the opportunity for members to maintain scrutiny of significant fire and rescue activities, to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The Aberdeenshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan supports the Local Authorities priorities with a key focus on the Health and Wellbeing of people throughout Aberdeenshire, providing early intervention and education in relation to improving community safety outcomes and protecting our environment and economy through both prevention and protection measures and operational response.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation

Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles. They are: right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy.

- 4.2 The Aberdeenshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan also supports other key strategic priorities including:
- Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.
 - Locality Plans
 - Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan
 - Childrens Services Plan
 - Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	[IIA attached as Appendix xx]	x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	[IIA attached as Appendix xx]	x	
Climate Change and Sustainability	[IIA attached as Appendix xx]	x	
Health and Wellbeing	[IIA attached as Appendix xx]	x	
Town Centre First	[IIA attached as Appendix xx]	x	

4.4 The Integrated Impact Assessment tool is an internal tool for Aberdeenshire Council officers to use to support decisions being made by the Council. It has been designed on Sharepoint and can only be accessed by individuals with Council email addresses. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, as an external partner, have their own Impact Assessing process and have utilised that when writing this report no impact has been identified.

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2 The Committee is able to consider / comment on this item in terms of Section D.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters concerning the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Rob Simpson, Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Craig Wallace, Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
3rd August 2023

List of Appendices – Appendix 1 – Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Aberdeenshire Performance Report 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023.



END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Covering the activities and performance in support of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire 2021-2024



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

Year to Date 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



ABOUT THE STATISTICS IN THIS REPORT

The activity totals and other statistics quoted in this report are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review.

Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be differences in the period totals quoted in our reports after original publication which result from revisions or additions to the data on our systems.

From 2015-16 onwards responsibility for the publication of end-year statistical data transferred from the Scottish Government to the SFRS. This change of responsibility does not change the status of the figures quoted in this and other SFRS reports reported to the Committee.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the end of year performance monitoring report for the SFRS, this report covers the period from 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. The report sets out the performance and activities in support of the six priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire 2021-2024, namely:

- Priority 1 – Unintentional Harm and Home Safety
- Priority 2 – Non-Fire Emergencies
- Priority 3 – Deliberate Fire Setting
- Priority 4 – Non- Domestic Fire Safety including Accidental and Secondary Fires
- Priority 5 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
- Priority 6 – Emergency Response and Community Resilience

As well as supporting the six priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire, this monitoring report shows how SFRS activities and performance contribute to the wider priorities of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership as set out in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan for Aberdeenshire.




The figures in this report are provisional, to provide the Committee with the SFRS's direction of travel in the Aberdeenshire area, in terms of performance against headline indicators and targets. Most figures will not change; however, members should note that there may be some small variations for some indicators when the final confirmed figures are published by the SFRS.













The Communities Committee agreed the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire 2021-2024 on 18th February 2021.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of performance against headline indicators and annual targets. It aims to provide – at a glance – our direction of travel during the reporting year.

Year-to-Date Legend

	Below headline target
	Less than 10% above headline target
	More than 10% above headline target

Key Performance Indicator	1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023				RAG STATUS
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	
 All Accidental Dwelling Fires	160	164	137	160	
 All Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties & (Fatalities)	23 (2)	15 (1)	23 (1)	28 (3)	
 Non-Fire Emergencies	508	457	614	659	
 All Deliberate Fires	233	233	253	209	
 Non- Domestic Fires including Accidental Other, Primary and Secondary Fires	79 28 63	90 35 114	98 38 105	71 40 86	
 UFAs	595	553	649	737	

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Of the 6 Priority areas, the following performance should be noted for the year 2022/23:

Accidental Dwelling Fires and Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties

The statistics against the key performance indicators show that there has been a slight increase in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) against the 3-year average. In relation to Casualties and Fatalities, these are also above the three-year rolling average.

Special Service All

Special Service Calls have increased compared to the three-year average, the categories of Special Service with the highest number of calls were RTC's and Effecting Entry with crews attending 219 and 126 respectively during this reporting period.

Compared to the 3-year rolling average RTC's have increased and we believe this is largely due to the increase in journeys compared to when COVID-19 restrictions were in place.

Deliberate Fires

Deliberate Fires have decreased compared to the three-year rolling average with deliberate secondary fires (refuse / grassland / scrub) contributing to the bulk of the calls (146 out of 209).

Non- Domestic Fires

Non- Domestic Fires have decreased when compared with the three-year rolling average with 71 incidents covering a variety of premise types.

We continue to work with owners and occupiers through our Fire Safety Enforcement Programme and Post Fire Audits to reduce the number of Non-Domestic Fires.

False Alarm – UFAS

UFAS incidents have increased when compared to the three-year rolling average, we continue to work with owners and occupiers of buildings to reduce these further. During this reporting year we carried out a review and consultation on how we respond to UFAS incidents and the change on how we respond to this type of incident went live in July 2023.

PRIORITY 1 – UNINTENTIONAL HARM & HOME SAFETY

Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

Apr 22 - Mar 23

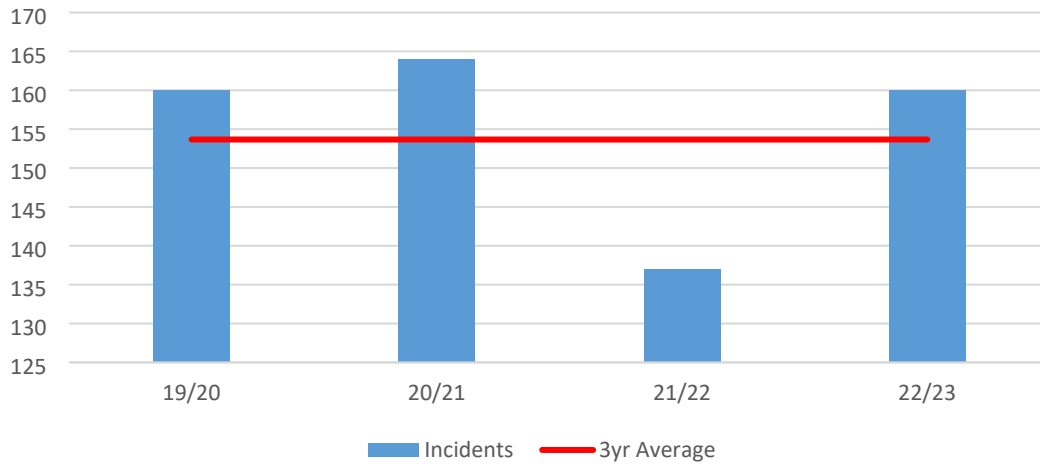


Table 1: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
ADF's	160	164	137	160	Amber

ADF Fatal Casualties & ADF Non-Fatal Casualties

Apr 22 - Mar 23

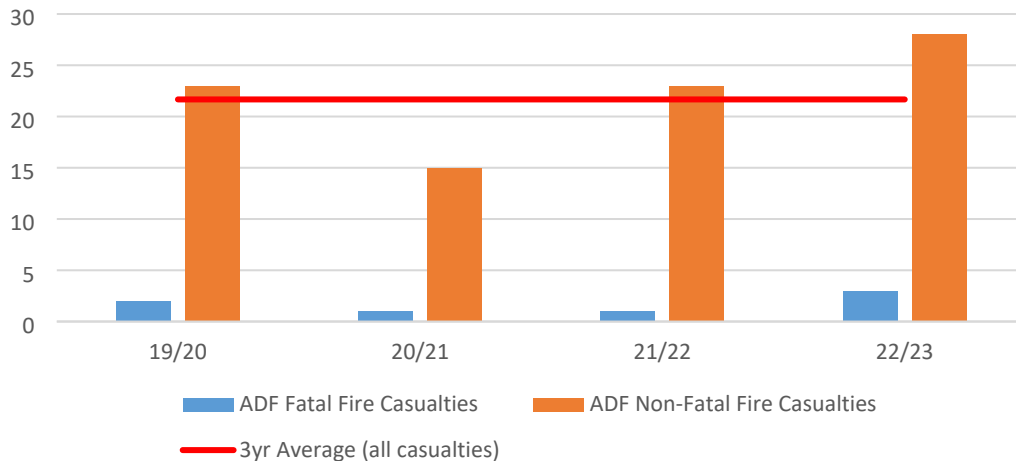


Table 2: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	YTD
ADF Fatal Casualties	2	1	1	3	Red
ADF Non-Fatal Casualties	23	15	23	28	Red

Indicator Description

The largest single type of primary fire in Aberdeenshire is accidental fires in the home and their prevention is a key focus of the Service's community safety activity.

Our aim is to reduce the rate of ADF's by keeping these incidents below the three-year average for 2022/23.

The reduction of fire casualties is clearly linked to our priority "Unintentional Harm and Home Safety". The reduction of fire fatalities and casualties is at the core of our preventative and early intervention activities carried out by SFRS in the Aberdeenshire area. Significant contributory factors associated with the number of fire casualties and fatalities include, lifestyle, independent living strategies, smoking, consumption of alcohol and prescribed and non-prescribed drugs, Individual capacity and vulnerability, and ageing demographics.

ADF Fatal Casualties

This indicator counts those people for whom fire has been clearly identified as the cause of death, even if they die some-time after the actual fire. Those who die at, or after, the fire but where fire is **not** identified as the cause of death are not included in these figures.

Our aim is to have **Zero ADF Fatal Casualties**, in Aberdeenshire

ADF Non-Fatal Casualties

This Indicator counts all types of non-fatal fire injury in the home, including precautionary checks.

Our aim is to reduce the risk of injury from fire in the home by keeping fire injuries below the three-year average.

We will achieve it by:

- Promoting and undertaking Home Safety Visits to those deemed most vulnerable and at risk from fire and/or harm.
- Providing an additional focus on cooking related fires which have accounted for 48% of Accidental Dwelling Fires in Aberdeenshire in the last 5 years.
- Working with our partners in Aberdeenshire to share information where risks within the home have been identified and to provide solutions to reduce risk and protect those from harm.
- Focusing engagement activities in those areas where service demand has been identified.

Performance Management

During this reporting period there were 160 ADFs which is a 4% increase on the 3-year average. We remain committed to reducing ADFs by working with partners and communities to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits to those at highest risk from fire.

The area remain committed to reducing the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires and during this period the Service increased publicity around how to prevent this type of incident using both traditional and social media.

We have continued to deliver HFSV's to those most at risk from fire where appropriate safety measures have been put in place and our Community Action Team have been providing advice in relation to reducing Accidental Dwelling Fires and the consequences of these over the telephone where we've been unable to deliver physical visit due to restrictions.

Sadly during this period there was 3 fatalities as a result of Accidental Dwelling Fires within Aberdeenshire. The SFRS are currently progressing learning reviews for two of the cases and awaiting permission from the Procurator Fiscal to conduct a learning review for the other one. We continue to work in a partnership approach to prevent all casualties and fatalities as a result of this type of incident.

During this reporting period there were 28 Non-Fatal Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties which is an increase compared to the three-year-rolling average. To provide some context to this 2 of the casualties were transported to hospital with injuries that appeared to be serious, 2 went to hospital with injuries that appeared to be slight and 24 were treated on scene and did require to attend hospital.

Home Fire Safety Visits remain a key focus in our community safety activity to reduce accidental dwelling fires and casualties resulting from these. We continue to explore and develop partnerships throughout the area to identify those most vulnerable and/or at risk from fire and/or harm in the home. Through our contribution to the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership collectively we have raised awareness of our referral process and promote a better understanding of fire risk in the home. The figures presented below show the number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) compared to the same period for the previous year

	2021 / 22	2022 / 23
High	657	496
Medium	361	334
Low	200	237
Total (Target)	1218	1067

The delivery of HFSV's has decreased slightly compared to the same period for last year. This is down to a decrease in referrals being received by some partners. Our Community Action Teams have been engaging with partners to deliver risk recognition training to re-energise referral pathways where required. The SFRS focus remains on the delivery of high risk and very high risk HFSV's, and these are being carried out by both our Community Action Team as well as operational front-line staff. We continue to monitor emerging risks and will adjust our delivery strategy in line with Scottish Government guidance, to protect both the public and our staff.

We have also worked closely with HMP Grampian and partners to support the Positive Lifestyles programme. The Positive Lifestyles programme supports the reintegration of those in custody, nearing their release, back into society as safe citizens. The programme received excellent feedback from those taking part. Further courses planned for 2023-24.

PRIORITY 2 – NON-FIRE EMERGENCIES

Non-Fire Emergencies

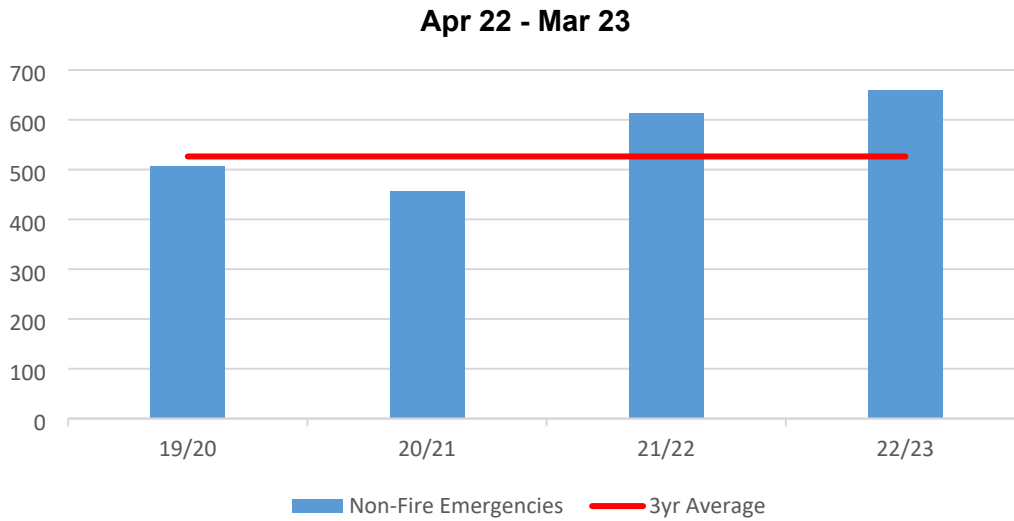


Table 3: Year to Date (Apr to Sep) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Non-Fire Emergencies	508	457	614	659	Red

Road Traffic Collisions

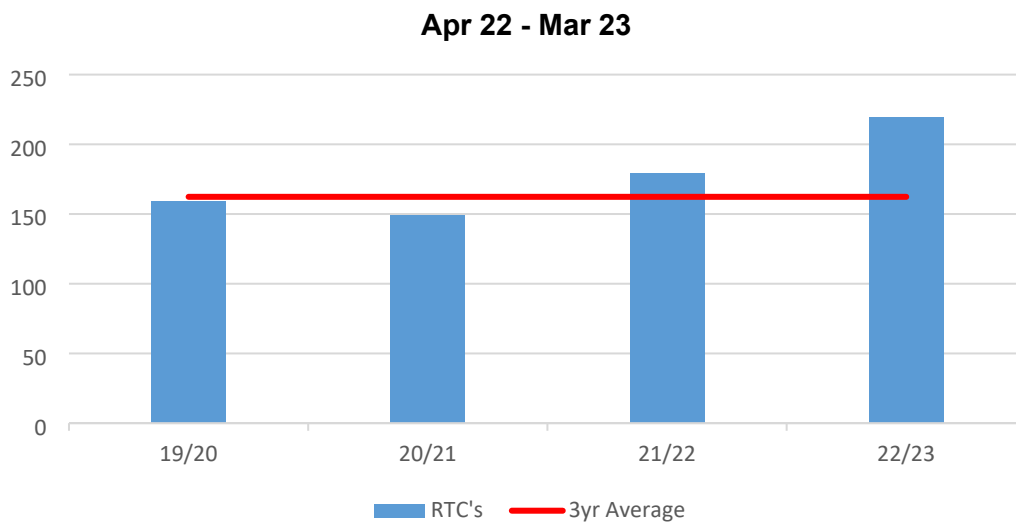


Table 4: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Road Traffic Collisions	159	149	179	219	Red
Fatal RTC Casualties	8	5	6	9	Red
Non-Fatal RTC Casualties	104	83	109	184	Red

Indicator Description:

A core part of SFRS activity locally is responding to Non-Fire Emergencies such as road traffic collisions (RTCs), other rescue situations and flooding. Firefighters are trained to a high standard and have at their disposal the most modern equipment for extracting people in rescue situations and administering first aid to casualties. As well as our operational response we are actively involved in preventing accidents from occurring through our work with the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Hub and Public Protection Partnership.

We will achieve it by:

- Continuing to contribute to Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership initiatives such as Crash Live and Safe Drive Stay Alive.
- Supporting the priorities of the North East of Scotland Road Casualty Reduction Strategy.
- Contributing to the development of local flood action plans and supporting local community initiatives.
- Contributing to the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership.
- The delivery of a co-response model to medical emergencies in key evidence based locations.
- Staff development and allocation to meet local and national need.

Performance Management:

When compared against the three-year rolling average calls to Non-Fire Emergencies have increased; this is not unexpected and is a reflection of the expanding role of the SFRS.

The most common form of Non-Fire Emergencies attended by the service are Road Traffic Collisions, as shown in table 4 indicators for RTC's are all showing that both the number of RTC's and the number of Fatal and Non-fatal casualties resulting from RTC's has increased. We believe this is primarily due to the restrictions that were in place resulting in fewer journeys on our roads in 2019-20 and 2020-21, now impacting the 3 year average figures. There is also some early evidence to suggest that there are a greater number of elderly drivers on the road who are returning to work after retirement due to the rising cost of living.

We are working closely with our partners in the Community Safety Partnership to deliver Young Driver Intervention presentations and have commissioned an SFRS working group to develop a Road Safety Demand Reduction Plan for Aberdeenshire. In addition to targeting young drivers, we are also focussed on commuter drivers through engagement sessions at large employers across the area and elderly drivers through established community groups and targeted initiatives.

We will continue working towards this priority in partnership with communities and our partners in Community Planning, Community Safety Partnerships and the North East Road Safety Group to drive down the number of RTC's and Fatalities and Casualties resulting from them.

The four other most common types of Non-Fire Emergencies that occurred over this period were Effecting Entry (126), Assisting other Agencies (70), Medical Incident First Responder / Co-Responder (65), Flooding (52).

Prevention is a key role of the SFRS locally and this extends to our expansion in the role of reducing unintentional harm and the identification of a wide range of risks. We have developed a local Prevention Delivery Plan to identify priority areas of work and will continue working with partners to make Aberdeenshire a safer place to live in, work in and visit and lead on the Reducing Unintentional Harm priority in the Community Safety Partnerships Strategy.

PRIORITY 3 – DELIBERATE FIRES

Deliberate Primary Fires

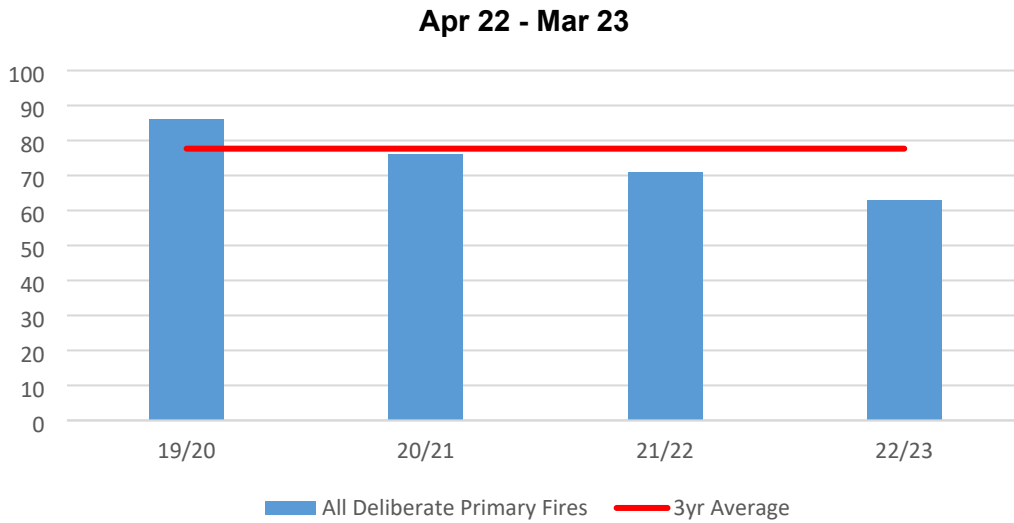


Table 5: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Deliberate Primary Fires	86	76	71	63	Green

Deliberate Secondary Fires

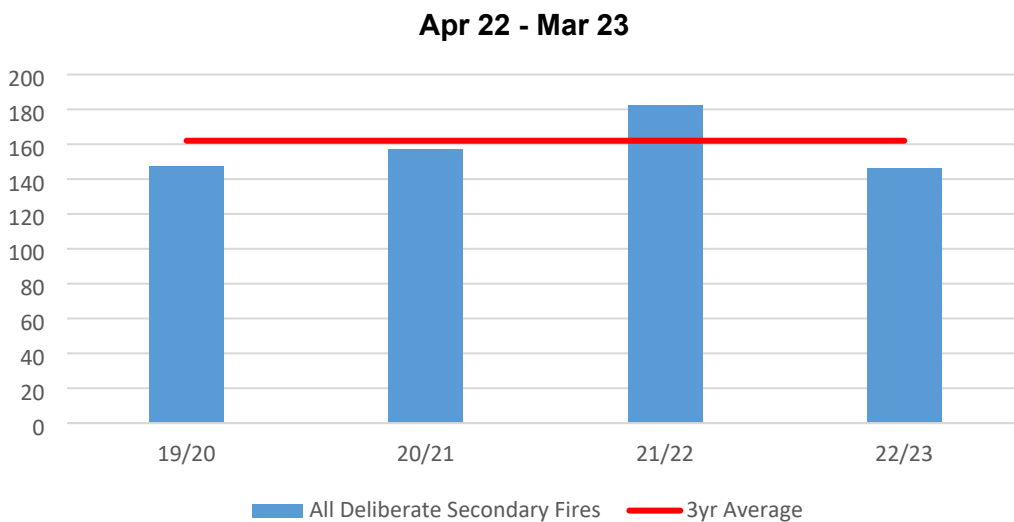


Table 6: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Deliberate Secondary Fires	147	157	182	146	Green

Indicator Description

Deliberate fire setting accounts for a significant number of operational incidents within Aberdeenshire and takes various forms. Whilst a small proportion involves occupied buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures (primary fires), the majority of deliberate fires are classed as secondary fires (grass, bushes, refuse etc.). In Aberdeenshire evidence reflects that deliberate fires can be closely linked with anti-social behaviour. Youth engagement has been identified as an opportunity for the SFRS to become more proactive in and work is in progress to further develop youth engagement activities such as Fire Safety Support and Education Programme, Fire Skills and a Youth Volunteer Scheme.

We will achieve it by:

- Delivery of thematic and multi-agency action plans tailored to meet local need.
- Continuing to utilise recognised SFRS Firesetters and diversionary programmes.
- Increasing community fire safety education in targeted areas where the majority of deliberate fires occur.
- Continuing to work with our partners to develop joint risk reduction strategies to further mitigate the impact of deliberate fires and the economic and social cost to the community.

Performance Management

Results for this indicator show that we are below the three-year rolling average for both deliberate primary and secondary fires.

During this reporting period 146 of the 209 (70%) of deliberate fires that occurred were secondary fires, these are fires involving grassland and refuse. The remaining 63 fires were primary fires and these included 22 fires involving crops and woodland, 7 vehicle fires, 6 dwelling house fires and 4 fires within private garages/sheds.

Partnership working is key to reducing Deliberate Fires and we continue to work with partners through the Community Planning and Community Safety Partnerships to reduce the number of deliberate fires in the area.

Youth engagement remains a priority in our efforts to reduce deliberate firesetting, we worked with Active Schools and Live Life Aberdeenshire and participated in the Summer Camps to provide Fire Safety advice in relation to deliberate fires.

We have an established Fire Skills Programme that has been successfully run at Peterhead in partnership with Peterdean and Fraserdean. Unfortunately due to funding pressures the Peterdean and Fraserdean initiatives are no longer running and we are now working with our partners in Education to identify areas where the Fire Skills initiative would be beneficial. During this reporting period 4 of these courses were delivered with great engagement from the participants involved.

We have an established Youth Volunteer Scheme in Peterhead and currently there are 16 youths in the scheme. Three of the youths represented the SFRS and the area at the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London and were a great credit to the service, the area and themselves. Although the scheme is progressing well and we look forward to seeing it continuing to develop.

The SFRS work in partnership to deliver a Fire Safety Support and Education (FSSE) programme to those under the age of 18. Through the delivery of tailored interventions, FSSE offers a flexible approach to assist in the education of those who demonstrate an unsafe interest in fire or fire related anti-social behaviour. Through 2022-23 the SFRS completed three FSSE interventions across Aberdeenshire.

PRIORITY 4 – NON-DOMESTIC FIRES

Non-Domestic Fires

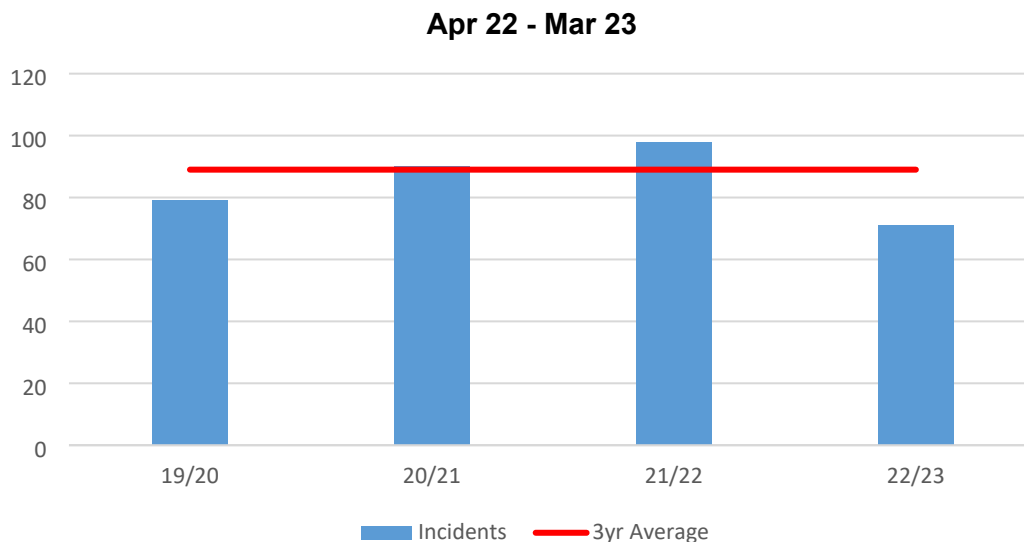


Table 7: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Non-Domestic Fires	79	90	98	71	Green

Table 7a: End of Year (Apr to Mar) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Accidental 'Other' Primary Fires	28	35	38	40	Red
Accidental 'Other' Secondary Fires	63	114	105	86	Green

Indicator Description

This priority concentrates on the reduction of fires occurring within buildings that are non-domestic premises. It also provides focus on the reduction of accidental 'other' primary and secondary fires which include agricultural land, forestry and moorland fires which pose a risk to Aberdeenshire.

Partnership working is key to reducing these types of incident and we work with building occupiers and owners through our Legislative Fire Safety Enforcement Officers to reduce fires in non-domestic properties. Every time that a fire does occur in a non-domestic building our Fire Safety Enforcement Team carry out a post fire audit.

We continue to work with land and forestry owners throughout Aberdeenshire to progress risk reduction activities and a partnership approach to dealing with Wildfires.

We will achieve it by:

- Continuing the fire safety audit programme for high risk premises.
- Engaging with the business community to highlight their responsibilities for compliance with fire legislation.
- Identifying trends in building types and conducting thematic fire safety audits
- Contribution and engagement with recognised national and local wildfire groups

Performance Management

In relation to this priority we have seen an decrease in non-domestic fires from 89 to 71 when compared against the three-year rolling average.

Of the 71 incidents that occurred, they can be broken down as; 8 Agricultural Sheds/buildings, 7 Retail Shops, 7 Garden Sheds, 6 Nursing Homes and 6 Sheltered Housing (not self-contained). The remaining incidents were isolated incidents over a wide range of premises type.

Out of the 71 incidents the damage was contained to under 5 Square Meters on 48 occasions.

Our dedicated Fire Safety Enforcement Officers continue to audit relevant premises that fall within the scope of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 to ensure compliance with their statutory responsibilities. These officers engage with duty holders of relevant premises and provide advice and guidance on how to prevent both accidental and deliberate fires in non-domestic buildings.

In relation to Accidental 'Other' Fires we continue to work with Landowners to reduce these through the promotion of outdoor safety advice and working with Ranger services in Aberdeenshire to educate people using our outdoor spaces for leisure. During this period we also worked with Aberdeenshire Council Infrastructure Services to display High Fire Risk Warnings for Outdoor Fires utilising Electronic Road Signs.

PRIORITY 5 – UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Apr 22 - Mar 23

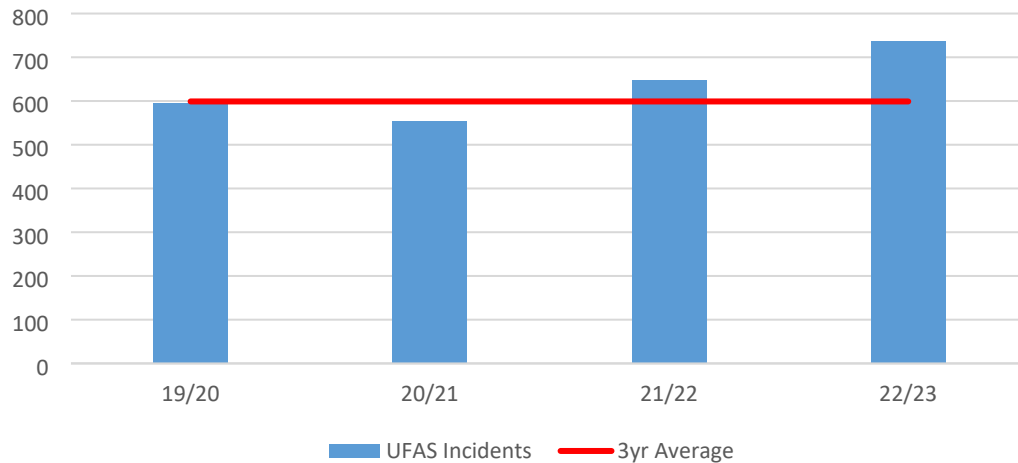


Table 8: Year to Date (Apr to Sep) Performance

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	YTD
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals	595	553	649	737	Red

Indicator Description

Automatic Fire alarms (AFA) are fundamental to providing early warning from fire, giving people the chance to evacuate safely. However, to be effective, they must be properly installed and maintained, and a good fire safety management regime must be in place by the duty holder, so they do not activate when there is no fire.

Every Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) from an AFA has an impact in terms of unnecessary blue light journeys, redirecting SFRS resources away from other activities such as community safety work and causing considerable disruption to businesses.

Our aim is to improve fire safety management and awareness, by reducing the number of attendances to unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) from automatic systems in non-domestic buildings during 2022/23.

We will achieve it by

- Identifying premises with high UFAS activity levels to determine if they comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and have appropriate fire safety management procedures in place
- Engaging with owners and occupiers to provide necessary support, advice and guidance for developing suitable action plans for UFAS reduction.
- Robust call management and implementation of service policy for UFAS reduction.
- Educating our frontline emergency response staff to identify problems, support responsible persons and provide feedback to our fire safety enforcement department.

Performance Management

In relation to this priority we have seen an increase from 599 to 737 in the number of incidents compared to the three-year rolling average. We believe this is largely due to 2 years of Covid incident activity within the 3-year rolling average figures where businesses had restrictions in place.

The table below lists the top five property types for UFAS call calls during this reporting year.

Property Type	No. of UFAS
Nursing / Care Homes	52
Offices / Call Centres	52
Hotels	50
Industrial Manufacturing / Engineering	35
Warehouses	34

Our operational crews continue to investigate the cause of every UFAS incident and provide advice and guidance on each and every occasion.

Following a comprehensive public consultation process, the SFRS has implemented a new UFAS reduction model from 1 July 2023. Our mobilising strategy has evolved in order to meet changing demands on resource availability, reducing road risk, reducing our Carbon emissions and cost to the Service. With the exception of premises providing sleeping accommodation, Dutyholders with responsibility for workplace premises are expected to safely investigate a fire alarm before calling 999. SFRS will treat any fire alarm signal as a sign of fire, other than from a single smoke detector.

All calls received to SFRS as a consequence of an AFA activation will be subject to a call challenge process to determine the level of attendance necessary in line with the UFAS policy and this procedure.

PRIORITY 6 – EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Description

The SFRS has a statutory duty to reduce the risks to our communities and to make certain that they receive the best possible service. It is essential that our firefighters possess the skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to incidents which, by their very nature, can be varied in both type and complexity.

The SFRS has a duty to prepare for and respond to major emergencies. The scope of such preparations may include responding to adverse weather events, natural disasters, pandemics, chemical incidents or major transport incidents. The threat of terrorism also compels the SFRS to ensure it can respond alongside other partner agencies should such an event occur.

It is essential that we have enough staff with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver our services when communities need them.

We will achieve it by

- Ensuring our staff are developed and equipment is fit for purpose to meet our current and future risk profile.
- Ensuring all known local risk information is obtained, communicated and tested.
- Working locally with partner organisations to ensure effective emergency response plans are developed for identified local risks.

Activity

During this reporting period we introduced a new Training for Operational Competence Programme for our uniformed staff. This is an improved programme that provides greater flexibility and greater time for practical skills sessions. Staff have welcomed this and appreciate the improvements that it has brought.

We continue to gather operational intelligence throughout Aberdeenshire to ensure that crews have up to date information on risks and response plans to deal with these effectively. The easing of restrictions has allowed staff to physically visit premises to review and update our operational risk information and response plans.

We also continue to contribute to the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership and were involved with the implementation of the Operation Unicorn plan following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022. Some wider Local Resilience Partnership activity was also supported, such as working with partners at a local level to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies. During this reporting period we took part in multi-agency exercises at BP Cruden Bay and St Fergus.

During this reporting period we have introduced a pre-recruitment engagement programme for people looking to join our On-call stations. This has had a positive impact with potential candidates gaining a greater understanding of both the role of an On-call Firefighter and being fully prepared for their Point of Entry Selection Tests.

Over the winter period from 2022-23, significant energy cost increases were experienced by residents across Aberdeenshire and several of our local community fire stations supported the Scottish Governments Warm Spaces initiative. This allowed our citizens, feeling the effects of fuel poverty, to attend a warm and inviting environment, have a hot refreshment and access relevant support from our Community Action Team. This positive initiative allowed us to further develop our relationships with communities and contribute to the LOIP priority of Reducing Poverty.

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES' SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

POLICE SCOTLAND - PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 To advise members of how the police service is performing against key performance measures and associated targets, as set out in the Aberdeenshire Police Plan approved at the meeting of the Communities Committee.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

2.1 Discuss the attached performance monitoring information relating to the Aberdeenshire component of the North East Division of Police Scotland.

2.2 Request the Divisional Commander to continue to report to Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The performance monitoring report will provide a regular opportunity for elected members to maintain scrutiny of significant police activities, in order to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire. This report has not already been considered by this or any other committee.

3 Discussion

3.1 In terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, it is worth noting the respective powers and duties that are relevant to the Committee's consideration of police matters.

The Chief Constable is responsible for:

- policing of Scotland and must account to the Scottish Police Authority
- ensuring adequate arrangements are in place for the policing of each local authority area
- designating a constable as Divisional Commander after consultation with the local authority

The Divisional Commander is responsible for:

- involving the local authority in setting of priorities and objectives for policing of its area
- providing to the local authority information it may reasonably require
- preparing and submitting a local police plan to their local authority for approval and, if approved, publishing the local police plan

- preparing and submitting replacement plan to the local authority for approval following a review (local police plans must be reviewed at least once every 3 years)

The local authority may:

- monitor and provide feedback to the Divisional Commander on policing of its area
- specify policing measures it wishes the Divisional Commander to include in a local policing plan

3.2 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This report helps deliver on Our People (Education, Health & Wellbeing) and Our Environment (Infrastructure and Resilient Communities).

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities

Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles. They are: right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy.

4.2 This report helps deliver on each of the LOIP Priorities.

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			x
Staffing			x
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's			x

Rights and Wellbeing			
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing			x
Town Centre First			x

- 4.4 The Integrated Impact Assessment tool is an internal tool for Aberdeenshire Council officers to use to support with decisions being made by the Council. It has been designed on Sharepoint and can only be accessed by individuals with Council email addresses. Police Scotland, as an external partner, have their own Impact Assessing process and have utilised that when writing this report.
- 4.5 The Committee is monitoring the performance of Police Scotland as required under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. It links to the Corporate Risk of Working with Other Organisations.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider/comment on this item in terms of Section D.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters concerning Police Scotland.

Rob Simpson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie
Date 17/08/2023

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Police Performance Report (Apr 22 – March 23)



POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

Communities Committee

North East Division
Aberdeenshire

April 2022 – March 2023



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- Miscellaneous



Introduction

I am pleased to present the latest Communities Committee report on behalf of Police Scotland, North East Division.

This report details performance in Aberdeenshire aligned to the agreed priorities at local and national level from the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

This has been an extremely challenging period for policing across Scotland as the impacts of post-COVID recovery on society become ever more apparent. As is evident throughout this report, demand on policing is increasing, not only in the crimes recorded but also in the demands placed upon our Officers to respond to vulnerabilities in our communities and assist those in need.

This increase in demand comes at a time when policing budgets are dropping to a level where the number of police Officers across Scotland has reduced from 17,234 to 16,600. The impact on North East Division has been the loss of 39 posts, which will have a significant impact on our policing activities across all local authority areas.

We are working hard to realign and redesign functions to ensure we maximise the skills and experience of our Officers, while still maintaining our ability to meet core demand placed upon us by the communities we serve.

I am therefore extremely proud of the efforts of Officers in Aberdeenshire, supported by divisional and national specialist teams, to deliver upon response policing while still introducing innovation and initiatives to prevent harm and support the vulnerable.

Our preventative initiatives in conjunction with key partners, highlight the dedication of Officers to try to do the right thing in the face of competing demands: the partnership work we deliver in schools and the pilot of the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation drug education programme could deliver positive outcomes for years to come; the Driver Engagement North initiative will prevent deaths on our roads; Operation Protector will enable vulnerable people to get the help and support they need and our work with Violence Against Women Partnerships will promote equality between genders and prevent harm to women and girls.

There are however challenges ahead and the report highlights a reduction in detection rates across a number of areas. There are a number of reasons for this but the impact of policing 'cyber space' and online criminality cannot be underestimated. This has had a direct impact in Group 1 crime where Threats and Extortion crimes have increased, in Group 2 crime where the prevalence of online activity in furtherance of sexualised crimes is increasingly prevalent, and in Group 3 and 5 crime where Organised Crime Groups maximise the criminal benefits of operating online, out with the sight of the public.

Finally, I wish to make comment upon the Chief Constable's statement regarding Police Scotland being institutionally discriminatory. His comments have been reported, debated and speculated on in the media and in wider society, both in Scotland and the rest of the UK. In order to make the improvements necessary, North East Division is fully committed to the Police Scotland Policing Together Strategy which will drive improvements to how policing in Scotland reflects, represents and serves all our communities and ultimately improve the experiences of our communities, including our Officers and staff.

Racism, homophobia, sexism and misogyny and discrimination of any kind is utterly deplorable and unacceptable. It has no place in society and no place in policing.



Regards

Graeme Mackie
Chief Superintendent



Staffing

	Authorised Establishment	March 2022	Difference
Police Officers ¹	1072 FTE	1022.47 FTE	-49.53 FTE
	March 2021	March 2022	Difference
Police Staff ¹	119.46 FTE	117.31 FTE	-2.15 FTE

¹ North East Division (Moray, Aberdeenshire, and Aberdeen City) Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

In the previous report covering April to September 2022, the Authorised Establishment for Police Officers in North East Division was **1092**. This has **reduced by 20 Officers to 1072**, during this review period due to a realignment of our Divisional Intelligence Officers who are now managed by the Specialist Crime Division. These 20 Officers are still dedicated to policing the North East and now merely line managed differently, and therefore there was no impact as a result of this restructure.

However, as has been well publicised, budgetary restraints upon Police Scotland do not allow us to maintain our workforce at the levels of previous years. While the figure of 1072 above was accurate on 31 March 2023, our establishment has since been **reduced by 39 posts** and for future reports will be documented as **1033**.

These posts have been lost from different areas across the Division in order to minimise the impact but this significant reduction in resource will undoubtedly impact policing in the North East, including Aberdeenshire. The effect of these reductions are felt not only in North East Division but across Police Scotland in both national teams and local divisions.

There is however still recruitment ongoing to replace those leaving the organisation and we have sought to encourage local applicants. An additional **28** Probationary Officers have been recruited during the reporting period. There are currently **46** Probationary Officers at various operational stations across the Aberdeenshire area and a further **9** Officers at the Scottish Police College who will transfer to Aberdeenshire in September 2023

43 Special Constables routinely work alongside full time Aberdeenshire Officers in Community and Specialist Policing teams in Aberdeenshire. These Special Constable colleagues volunteer considerable personal time in service to our communities and the value of their support cannot be overstated.



Complaints About the Police

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 2022	% Change 2023 v 2022
Overall Satisfaction of How Police Dealt With Your incident ²	N/A	67.2%	67.1%		+0.1%
Complaints Received About The Police	N/A	200	200	-	0.0%
Number of Complaints Per 10,000 Police Incidents	N/A	44.7	44.0	+0.7	+1.6%
On Duty Allegations Raised	N/A	181	231	-50	-21.6%
Off Duty Allegations Raised	N/A	0	1	-	-
Quality of Service Allegations	N/A	150	110	+40	+36.4%
Total Allegations	N/A	331	342	-11	-3.2%

² North East Division (Aberdeenshire, Moray, and Aberdeen City)

Levels of overall satisfaction remain consistent at 67.2% which is in line with the national average

The number of Complaints About the Police remains unchanged when compared to the previous reporting period with 'On Duty' allegations within these complaints **decreasing by 21.6%** and no 'Off Duty' allegations against Police Officers having been made.

A number of complaints stem from the use of Police powers and procedures and are categorised as 'Quality of Service Allegations' which have seen an **increase of 40 or 36.4%**. Allegations stemming from 'service delivery' and 'service outcome' also feature within the wider figures and this incorporates the 'type' of Police response which the public receive. Call demand and the requirement for Police attendance is decided by a national call handling assessment process based on the level of threat, vulnerability and risk of immediate harm. This can lead to frustration over perceived lack of action or 'face to face' contact however ensures resources are directed to those most in need of assistance.

While any increase in Complaints About the Police is disappointing, our Front Line Resolution process, which affords complainers an opportunity to ask questions and receive an explanation regarding Police action, or perceived lack thereof, remains the primary means by which complaints are resolved. Where complaints are not resolved in this manner, they are subject of a robust investigation by the Professional Standards Department with opportunity, if further dissatisfied, to request a review of the handling of the complaint by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC).

North East Division continues to promote the use of Body Worn Video (BWV) within operational policing which delivers significant benefits in terms of public trust and confidence. There is also a clear indication that BWV utilisation may lead to a reduction in complaints against Officers. This is due mainly to its ability to support an investigation by offering a credible, concise and somewhat irrefutable recording of an incident as it happens. This further reduces the amount of police time required to deal with such complaints therefore providing additional benefits.



Monthly overview of 'User Experience Data' is now embedded in North East Division with public feedback scrutinised at senior management level to ensure appropriate sharing of learning amongst staff and positive action, where required, to proactively reduce Complaints About the Police.



Antisocial Behaviour, Violence and Disorder

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 5 Year Av	% Change 2023 v 5 Year Av
Common Assault - Recorded	1,667.6	1,673	1,633	+5.4	+0.3%
Common Assault - Detection Rate	74.7%	69.3%	72.9%		-5.4%
Robbery - Recorded	37.0	39	27	+2.0	+5.4%
Robbery - Detection Rate	84.9%	87.2%	77.8%		+2.3%
Serious Assault – Recorded	84.8	90	85	+5.2	+6.1%
Serious Assault - Detection Rate	94.1%	87.8%	100.0%		-6.3%
Vandalism - Recorded	1,109.4	1,089	1,077	-20.4	-1.8%
Vandalism - Detection Rate	29.7%	28.9%	29.2%		-0.8%
Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 2022	% Change 2023 v 2022
Group 1 Crimes - Recorded ³	N/A	369	328	+41	+12.5%
Group 1 Crimes - Detection Rate	N/A	62.6%	72.3%		-9.7%
Number of Complaints of Disorder ⁵	N/A	3,911	5,038	-1,127	-22.4%

³ Crimes of Violence include Murder, Attempted Murder, Culpable Homicide, Cruelty, Neglect and Un-natural Treatment of Children and Adults, Abduction, Robbery, Assault with intent to Rob, Serious Assault, Threats and Extortion and Coercive or Controlling Behaviour (which was added in 2019).

⁵ Disorder includes Public Nuisance, Disturbance, Noise, Neighbour Dispute and Nuisance Phone Call incidents.

Group 1 Crime is a term used to encapsulate all forms of serious non-sexual Violent Crime and incorporates a range of diverse offences. During the reporting period there has been an **increase of 41** recorded Group 1 crimes with a **decrease in detection rate of 9.7%** compared to the same reporting period last year. A significant reason for the rise in such crimes and the reduction in detection rate is the increasing prevalence of online Threats and Extortion crimes, which due to their nature are extremely challenging to detect and therefore adversely affect the overall Group 1 detection rate.

Recorded Robbery (which is also a Group 1 crime) has risen by **5.4%** and is comparable with the 5 Year Average. We remain in a strong position in terms of detection across the division which is evidenced in Aberdeenshire where we maintain an **87.2%** detection rate. This is a reflection of the robust and professional standard of investigation, and the focused efforts of our teams to protect the community.

Serious Assaults (also a Group 1 crime) have **risen by 5** crimes when compared to the previous year and the 5 Year Average. Detection rates remain strong at **87.8%**. Recognising the impact these crimes have on victims we continue to ensure those intent on committing acts of violence are held accountable.

Common Assaults have risen since the last reporting period however are in line with the 5 Year Average while the detection rate of **69.3%** is only slightly below that achieved last year and the 5 Year Average. Preventative and proactive measures have been implemented across our communities, developed



through the Divisional Violence Prevention Board to effectively understand, manage and direct our resources to where there is an identified need.

Through the Violence Prevention Board, the 'No Knives Better Lives' campaign, launched in 2009 by the Scottish Government with the aid of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, has been offered and widely accepted across all secondary school settings and is currently being delivered throughout the North East, including Aberdeenshire. This preventative strategy will be further developed to include a reintroduction of knife amnesty bins assisted by a media campaign supported by our Partnerships, Preventions and Interventions business area.

Vandalism has remained comparable to previous years, while Complaints of Disorder have dropped, showing a significant **22.4% reduction**. This is much welcomed by the local communities we serve and can be attributed to the efforts of our Community Policing Teams who carried out a number of local initiatives over the review period to tackle these issues.

We are aware that local communities continue to experience quality of life issues and working together with partners, we continue to design bespoke initiatives ensuring there is an appropriate balance of enforcement, education and diversion.



Acquisitive Crime

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 5 Year Av	% Change 2023 v 5 Year Av
Crimes of Dishonesty - Recorded	2,406.2	2,447	2,449	+40.8	+1.7%
Crimes of Dishonesty - Detection Rate	48.2%	40.5%	42.5%		-7.7%
Housebreakings - Recorded	247.0	168	185	-79.0	-32.0%
Housebreakings - Detection Rate	37.3%	25.0%	44.3%		-12.3%
Motor Vehicle Crime - Recorded ⁶	201.2	184	188	-17.2	-8.5%
Motor Vehicle Crime - Detection Rate	44.8%	43.5%	55.9%		-1.3%
Theft of Motor Vehicle - Recorded	89.6	96	91	+6.4	+7.1%
Common Theft - Recorded	625.2	629	565	+3.8	+0.6%
Common Theft - Detection Rate	31.6%	30.2%	32.2%		-1.4%

⁶Theft from secure motor vehicle; Theft from insecure motor vehicle; Theft of a motor vehicle; Attempted Theft of a Motor Vehicle.

Overall crimes of dishonesty have increased slightly over the reporting period in comparison with the 5 Year Average, with a **1.7% increase**. This is potentially indicative of the cost of living crisis, as we have seen increases in Common Thefts including shopliftings. However this is tempered by the significant reduction in recorded Housebreakings and a reduction in Motor Vehicle Crime.

Divisional Proactive teams have supported Community Policing Teams in the investigation of Housebreakings, vehicle crime and other linked Acquisitive Crime across Aberdeenshire. This ensures a thorough and consistent approach to investigations, with the detection rates for these crime types in the main comparable to previous years.

We monitor national crime trends and work closely with other divisions and forces across the UK to ensure we are fully aware and involved in the investigation of any thefts committed by individuals from out with the area. Examples of this being the response to reports of thefts of cooking oil from business premises across the area. These were identified early as generally tying into larger Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), who are operating nationally, processing the cooking oil and financially gaining from its onward supply. This ensures all investigative opportunities, crossovers between incidents and links to OCGs are explored.

Although there are slight increases in Acquisitive Crime across Aberdeenshire, the level remains relatively low when compared with other localities. However the area has suffered from a small number of mobile criminals travelling into the area, often committing crimes in more rural and remote areas. We encourage communities to report incidents of suspicious activity to Police, CrimeStoppers and to sign up to 'Neighbourhood Watch' and 'Rural Watch' schemes.

The 'North East Partnership Against Rural Crime' (NEPARC) targets a variety of issues including acquisitive and other criminality affecting our rural communities in Aberdeenshire and across the North



East. The 2023 – 2025 'NEPARC' strategy was formally launched in March 2023. This comprises key areas which the partnership of some 34 representatives and organisations will work collaboratively to target.

Officers have commenced an initiative termed 'Arcadian Patrols' as part of NEPARC activity in Aberdeenshire. These are dedicated rural patrols overnight to deter and detect those involved in rural criminality. Alongside these patrols Officers have recently erected 'Rural Watch' signs were along primary road routes in Aberdeenshire. It is known from research elsewhere in the UK that this tactic has a positive effective in deterring travelling criminals.

Increased use of technology has resulted in anticipated rises in reported 'Non-Contact' Frauds and in particular, Cyber Enabled Frauds. The Divisional Cyber-Enabled Crime Team (DCECT), within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), have responsibility for all investigative and preventative strategies in this area of criminality.

Prevention work undertaken by DCECT over the reporting period has included representation at the Grampian Adult Protection Group's Adults at 'Risk of Financial Harm' sub group. As part of this group, DCECT entered into an agreement with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Trading Standards to identify victims of crime who would benefit from government funded call screening technology. Vulnerable individuals who have been victims of telephone scams have been approached and a number of devices will be delivered near future.

DCECT have delivered 'Cyber Security' advice to secondary school pupils across the Division in line with the roll out of a new 'Student Online Safety Guide'. These have been well received by pupils and parents and are tailored to different age groups. With the success of the sessions, separate engagements took place for parents.



Road Safety and Road Crime

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 2022	% Change 2023 v 2022
People Killed/Seriously Injured	N/A	115	104	+11	+10.6%
Children Killed/Seriously Injured	N/A	6	1	+5	-
People Killed	N/A	12	14	-2	-
Children Killed ⁷	N/A	0	0	0	0.0%
Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 5 Year Av	% Change 2023 v 5 Year Av
Mobile Phone Offences	69.0	120	42	+51.0	+73.9%
Speeding Offences	2,186.6	1,984	2,208	-202.6	-9.3%
Drink/ Drug Driving Offences	230.2	277	284	+46.8	+20.3%
Dangerous Driving	117.8	111	150	-6.8	-5.8%
Disqualified Driving	50.0	40	46	-10.0	-20.0%
Detected Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles	5,505.6	5,333	5,752	-172.6	-3.1%

⁷ Child is under 16 years of age.

Tragically, 12 individuals lost their lives on the roads in Aberdeenshire during the review period. While this is a decrease of 2 compared to the previous year, the loss of any life on our roads is tragic and that is why we are committed to influencing driver behaviours to improve road safety as a priority for policing. Analysis of the collision data in respect of persons who have been killed or seriously injured provides that older drivers are disproportionately affected.

We have invested resource towards a number of wider partnership initiatives which aim to have a long term impact in reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our road networks. For example, Police Scotland chair the Older Road User Group which is a partner led group which has the intention of working in collaboration to reduce the number of older road users killed or seriously injured in line with the targets set out in Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030. The group monitors trends to identify current and emerging opportunities to improve Road Safety for older road users with the current key focus being on ensuring fitness to drive. Part of the work delivered by this group is 'Driver Engagement North', a simulator based approach to assist older road users and their families make informed choices about their fitness to drive safely. This simulator allows the driver to assess their hazard awareness in a safe virtual setting.

Police Scotland have secured funding from the Transport Scotland to support and promote the roll out of Fitness to Drive Assessments in conjunction with Driving Mobility and DriveAbility Scotland who offer these



assessments on a self-referral or agency basis. This work is in the initial stages and further engagement will take place in due course.

Local road safety initiatives remained a constant focus of the Community Policing Teams across Aberdeenshire under Operation CEDaR (Challenge, Educate, Detect and Reduce). Part of the focus this year has been on targeting drivers under the influence of drink/drugs as can be seen by the **20.3% increase** in detections in this area.

Officers have responded to road safety concerns with targeted activity, positively influencing driver behaviour through education and enforcement. This has been supported by Officers from the North East Road Policing Unit (NERPU) with targeted activity aligned to national Road Safety campaigns and patrolling key routes. While the number of detected speeding offences has **decreased by 9.3%**, we recognise that speeding is an issue in our communities and we remain committed to deploying Officers and the Safety Camera Unit on an intelligence led basis.

During the reporting period the joint working initiative 'Operation Close Pass' was launched again in Aberdeenshire in order to focus on the safety of cyclists. Cyclists are regarded as vulnerable road users and with cycling increasing in popularity across Scotland this area has become a key area for focus.

The Police Scotland 'New Drivers Scheme' continues to be delivered, targeting people learning to drive, people who have recently acquired a full licence and employers of new drivers by providing key safety messaging, reinforced through a hard-hitting case study featuring real life footage.



Protecting People at Risk of Harm

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 5 Year Av	% Change 2023 v 5 Year Av
Group 2 Crimes – Recorded ⁸	541.4	625	625	+83.6	+15.4%
Group 2 Crimes - Detection Rate	57.4%	54.9%	46.4%		-2.5%
Rape - Recorded	70.2	92	74	+21.8	+31.1%
Rape - Detection Rate	48.7%	48.9%	37.8%		+0.2%
Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 2022	% Change 2023 v 2022
Domestic Abuse Incidents Reported	N/A	1,629	1,624	+5	+0.3%
Domestic Abuse Incidents Detection Rate	N/A	67.8%	72.1%		-4.3%
Hate Crime - Recorded	N/A	100	122	-22	-18.0%
Hate Crime - Detection Rate	N/A	76.0%	74.6%		+1.4%

⁸ Group 2 Crimes of Indecency include Rape, Assault with intent to Rape, Indecent Assault, Sexual Assault, Prostitution related crime and others with an indecent element.

During the reporting period North East Division saw a further increase in the number of Group 2 crimes reported. In Aberdeenshire recorded Group 2 crime remained consistent with the previous year but saw an increase of **15.4%** against the 5 Year Average.

It is important to note that 5 Year Average figures still remain impacted by the COVID pandemic, during which there was a decline in the number of sexual offences reported.

The detection rate for Group 2 crimes **increased by over 8% to 54.9%** against 2021-22, slightly below the 5 Year Average. Our local divisional Officers and public protection specialists continue to review all crimes for investigative opportunities through governance processes while ensuring a victim based approach is adopted in all cases.

Of note, the reporting period saw a significant increase in the number of on-line 'sextortion' type offences, whereby individuals are induced to perform sexual acts via an online chat facility which are covertly recorded and used in an attempt to extort money. 'Operation Tambo' is the national response to such crimes and is delivered locally through the support of the Divisional Cyber Enabled Crime Team. Despite significant efforts, the investigation of such offences remains extremely challenging with those perpetrating the crimes often linked to sophisticated Organised Crime Groups operating out-with the UK.

In relation to recorded Rape, **18 more** crimes were reported during 2022-23 compared to 2021-22, representing a **31.1% increase** against the 5 Year Average. The detection rate rose by **over 10%**, when compared to last year's figures, up to **48.9%**, just over the 5 Year Average. It should be noted that of the 92 crimes reported, approximately 54% had occurred over a year prior to reporting and 26% over 10 years prior. There are significant challenges faced when investigating crimes of a non-recent nature, where



forensic opportunities, as well as investigative lines of enquiry, are either significantly diminished or often non-existent. Of the 92 Rapes recorded during the reporting period only 22 of the crimes were reported within timescales allowing forensic evidence to be obtained in relation to the victim or perpetrator.

While it is only right to note and scrutinise any increase in sexual offences reported, the rise positively demonstrates an emerging willingness of victims to contact Police regarding crimes that may historically have gone unreported.

In respect of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to Police, this year remained consistent when compared against the previous year and there was a slight reduction of the detection rate to **67.8%**.

All domestic incidents reported to Police Scotland are subject of intense scrutiny and robust investigation. A new toolkit has been developed by North East Division for all frontline supervisors, to assist them in ensuring enquiries are progressed fully and timeously and all available evidence is gathered. With the support of our Partnership and Coordination Unit and Public Protection Unit, a Divisional oversight process continues to ensure those most at risk are supported and action is taken against those posing the most risk. Locally we are linked into the National Domestic Abuse Working Group, ensuring that good practice and revised guidance is quickly adopted in our working practices.

Our efforts are further supported by the Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Tasking & Co-ordination (MATAC) process which targets domestic abuse perpetrators who present the greatest risk of offending. The key aims of MATAC include the identification of individuals who present the greatest risk, proactive enforcement/active targeting of offenders, and the sharing of information for intelligence development, prevention or enforcement as appropriate.

Perpetrator Management Plans (PMPs) are another tool utilised by Police to proactively target perpetrators of domestic abuse. The ethos of this process being to disrupt, deter or detect the subject by focusing on other areas of offending.

With the majority of Domestic and Group 2 offences being recorded with female victims, we are committed to supporting the Aberdeenshire Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership with Officers participating in and delivering a number of events, training sessions and briefings. We strongly support the 'Equally Safe' strategy and are proud of our role in actively delivering upon its aim to eradicate violence against women and girls to, "achieve a Scotland in which women and girls are safe to thrive, fulfilling their potential free from violence and abuse". This is further strengthened by the newly publicised Police Scotland Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy, the content of which represents significant and unprecedented levels of engagement with women and girls as well as a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

The national '16 Days of Activism' campaign was also fully supported in Aberdeenshire during the reporting period and specifically, enforcement days were carried out by Divisional Officers, from Community Policing Teams and specialist units. Media messaging also continued to be driven forward in support of local and national campaigns, most notably the award winning 'That Guy' campaign challenging men's attitudes and behaviour towards women.

We continue to support victims of Domestic Abuse using tools such as MARAC. This is our Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference, through which, we can effectively plan and support victims most at risk. Additionally, we have seen an increase in the use of the DSDAS process which allows Police to disclose, in certain circumstances, details of an offenders past that may help protect a new partner from becoming a victim. The increase is attributed to better understanding by other professionals through awareness



raising inputs provided by Police Scotland and by members of the public through increased promotion during campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism.

The Division continues to be fully represented at other local, multi-agency and national Police Scotland forums focusing on this priority area. This includes other areas of Public Protection such as the Adult and Child Protection Committees and their various work streams and sub-committees.

With specific regards to Child Protection, the review period saw the successful implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) within the Division. Supported by a single 'Interagency Referral Discussion' process, the model is resilient and fit for purpose in terms of supporting the Scottish Government's 'Bairns Hoose' model implementation programme.

22 fewer Hate crimes were reported compared with the same period last year. While we welcome any reduction in victims, we must guard against any threats to community confidence to report crime. We have made it our priority to set up Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRC). TPRC are already operational in Aberdeenshire and are a means through which, victims can be supported to approach the Police to report crime. In conjunction with the Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC), we continue to roll out training to organisations across the North East, including Aberdeenshire Council, community groups and third sector organisations. Additionally, we are working with NHS Grampian to co-produce an online training package for NHS staff.

Our detection rate relating to Hate Crime in Aberdeenshire is **76.0%** which is above that of the previous year. Our robust investigative strategies in support of victims, has played a significant role in this. Our consistently high detection rate also gives confidence to our communities which is vital as we continue to grow existing and form new relationships.

Our teams have been visible right across Aberdeenshire, engaging with our diverse communities and taking time to understand the issues faced by our minority groups. We have supported events such as the Pride festivals as well as smaller community focused gatherings, all to provide confidence to the public.



Serious Organised Crime

Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 5 Year Av	% Change 2023 v 5 Year Av
Proceeds of Crime Act Seizures ⁹	£265,655	£89,633	£154,559.70	- £176,022	-66%
Drug Possession Offences	951.4	831	952	-120.4	-12.7%
Drug Supply Offences	155.0	117	137	-38.0	-24.5%
Indicator	5 Year Average	Apr 2022 – Mar 2023	Apr 2021 – Mar 2022	Difference 2023 v 2022	% Change 2023 v 2022
Drug Deaths ¹⁰	N/A	18	25	-7	-28.0%

⁹ North East Division (Aberdeenshire, Moray & City) reported seizures (reported figures only, this may mean that the money might finally be returned to the defender, forfeit at court or seized and remitted to Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service).

¹⁰ The data provided cannot be considered official Police Scotland Statistics; The data provided includes 'suspected' drug related deaths, which will not be confirmed, or otherwise, until the post mortem and toxicology procedures are completed- the data may therefore be subject to significant change, following a professional medical assessment as to the cause of death of an individual; comparison with 'confirmed' drug related deaths statistics (e.g. from previous YTD period or similar) will provide an unreliable assessment and should be avoided or heavily caveated; The official figures for Drug Related Deaths for Scotland are compiled and held by National Records of Scotland (NRS), who publish the data annually.

Although the monetary value of assets seized across the North East during the quarter has reduced compared to this period last year, it is noticeable that almost £90,000 in cash has been seized by Community Policing and CID teams during the course of enquiries into Serious and Organised Crime (SOC). This will be processed through the courts and may be seized permanently under Civil Recovery laws for long term benefits to local communities. With our CID teams progressing a number of SOC 'County Line' operations focussing on OCG's based in England and supplying Class A controlled drugs to the North East, a significant number of drug detections and monetary seizures can be attributed to this.

The number of Drug Supply Offences (117) has reduced in comparison with this time last year (137) and the 5 Year Average (155). This is also reflected in the number of Drug Possession Offences (831) in comparison with the 5 Year Average (951).

Drug Deaths have decreased compared to the previous year. We continue to work closely with partners and support services to better understand the causes of Drug Deaths and to signpost vulnerable individuals to referral pathways thus supporting them through addiction and dependency at the earliest possible point of intervention. SOC Interventions have been developing links into rehabilitation and addiction peer groups and intervention support will ensure Intervention and Diversion can be in place for those at a vulnerable stage in their recovery.

North East Division continues to lead strongly in our approach to SOC. Through our focused monitoring of emerging trends we are able to tackle the widespread and evermore sophisticated nature of this area effectively. By using the '4D' (DETECT-DISRUPT-DETER-DIVERT) methodology, some very positive successes have been seen when reflecting on enforcement results and our work with key partners to support and signpost those linked to SOC assessed as being in need of intervention.

Following the initial success of 'Operation Protector', it has continued during this reporting period. This multi-agency approach proactively addresses the effects of SOC and substance dependency on our communities. 'Days of Action' under Operation Protector involve joint teams of Police, third sector,



Community Safety and Local Authority staff conducting drug harm outreach visits to identify and support vulnerable people. Simultaneously, drug search warrants were executed to target and remove those causing the greatest harm in our communities.

The Division have been proactive in teaming up with Substance Dependence specialists and Housing workers to carry out further Cuckooing or drug related harm visits. Initially piloted in the North Aberdeenshire area, these visits support the Operation Protector 'Days of Action'.

Recognising the importance of further 'upstream' prevention and intervention, Police Scotland and representatives from all three Local Authorities have been working with the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs (DSM) Foundation (drug and alcohol education charity) to improve the way that drugs education is delivered in schools across the North East. There was overwhelming support for a 12 month pilot of drug/peer pressure based resources into 9 schools across North East Division and work is ongoing to secure funding for the pilot which will focus on providing drug and peer pressure based education (which will include resources relating to exploitation) to all secondary pupils. The pilot will also focus on upskilling professionals (social work, teachers, support workers, school nurses and police) and partners/carers in how to spot early signs of drug use/exploitation and how to report same. It is hoped that this will support the aim of identifying those at risk of County Lines based exploitation at an earlier stage which will allow for effective intervention. The pilot is due to start in August 2023.



Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism

The North East CONTEST Multi-Agency Board and associated Sub-groups continue to deliver the UK National CONTEST strategy across the North East of Scotland.

The Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare (4P's) principles of CONTEST are the continued focus of the strategy which aims to reduce the risks from terrorism.

The role of all partners within the North East Division CONTEST Multi-Agency Board is to ensure all strands of the CONTEST '4P' framework are proactively and proportionately delivered in a local context, aligned to the UK National Threat Level as determined by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC).

The 'Protect' strand within the CONTEST strategy has been an area of sustained activity and focus during this reporting period, due to the intended introduction of new UK legislation which is linked to learning and recommendations from the Manchester Arena Bombing in 2017 and subsequent enquiry.

At recent Scrutiny Boards it has been highlighted that CONTEST delivery groups had been updated by respective Governments on the recent 'Protect' Duty Consultation. This contains details of the foundational Government policy elements aimed at protecting Publicly Accessible Locations (PAL's) which will form the basis of the upcoming Protect Duty Bill known as 'Martyn's Law'.

In response North East Division's Multi-Agency CONTEST board will establish a 'Protect and Prepare' sub group chaired by Local Authorities. This will ensure all Publicly Accessible Locations within Aberdeenshire are prepared for the legislative requirement that will follow the introduction of the legislation this year.

Counter Terrorism Planning (CT Planning) have continued to carry out established prepare and protect exercises which sees regular testing by Police Scotland and Ministry of Defence Police to prepare and protect critical infrastructure, such as St Fergus Gas Terminal and Garlogie Pumping Station from terrorist attacks. This reporting period also saw the visit of former American President Donald Trump to Aberdeenshire. This was significant event which saw a major security operation instigated and successfully delivered.

Furthermore, during this reporting period, resources from Ministry of Defence Police along with Police Scotland and partners attended a number of table top exercises at St Fergus. Local Counter Terrorism resources are also involved in a number of planning and preparation exercises with Borders Policing. This includes Local Contest Liaison Officers working with Borders Policing in and around Aberdeenshire Harbours to ensure measures are taken to effectively Prepare and Protect vulnerable border areas against any issues arising.



Miscellaneous

Stop and Search

Indicator	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023 (Positive)
Consensual	0	-
Legislative	1286	367
Number of Consensual Stop and Searches Refused	0	-

**Guidance with respect to accessing further Stop and Search data was circulated to Members on 9 December 2021.*

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES' SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

POLICE SCOTLAND - THEMATIC REPORT: MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY – IMPACT ON POLICING

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 To advise members regarding mental health challenges in the community and the impact on policing.

1.2 **The Committee is recommended to:**

Note the attached report which seeks to update the Committee regarding the nature and extent of mental health challenges in the community and the impact on policing.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The performance monitoring report will provide a regular opportunity for elected members to maintain scrutiny of significant police activities, in order to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire. This report has not already been considered by this or any other committee.

3 Discussion

3.1 In terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, it is worth noting the respective powers and duties that are relevant to the Committee's consideration of police matters.

The Chief Constable is responsible for:

- policing of Scotland and must account to the Scottish Police Authority
- ensuring adequate arrangements are in place for the policing of each local authority area
- designating a constable as Divisional Commander after consultation with the local authority

The Divisional Commander is responsible for:

- involving the local authority in setting of priorities and objectives for policing of its area
- providing to the local authority information it may reasonably require
- preparing and submitting a local police plan to their local authority for approval and, if approved, publishing the local police plan
- preparing and submitting replacement plan to the local authority for approval following a review (local police plans must be reviewed at least once every 3 years)

The local authority may:

- monitor and provide feedback to the Divisional Commander on policing of its area

- specify policing measures it wishes the Divisional Commander to include in a local policing plan

3.2 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

4. Discussion

Mental Health Related Demand Impacts On Policing

- 4.1 It is recognised within policing nationally that mental health calls are creating an increasing demand on front line resources and that a multi-agency, partnership based approach represents an effective strategy for addressing and reducing the impact on Police resources whilst seeking to ensure those in mental health crisis are provided with access to suitable support and resources in a timely and efficient manner.
- 4.2 The need for access to appropriate mental health support is illustrated by the increasing demand, seen across North East Division in the number of STORM calls responded to where a mental health concern is identified (i.e. those STORM calls written off with a mental health related Disposal Code). This has risen from **998** in 2017 to a peak **2176** in 2022 representing an increase of approximately 120% over that time frame. The rise has been largely linear with the exception of 2020 where demand was reduced. Despite efficiencies in Policing being released through innovation such the introduction digital technologies, we know that impacts include less time for our operational Officers to focus on the investigation of crimes reported to the Police.
- 4.3 Across the same period the total number of STORM calls has also increased from 111,135 in 2017 to 120,868 in 2022. This represents an **increase of less than 10%** between those years and clearly indicates the increasing and disproportionate demand placed on policing by mental health related calls. While these figures relate to the Division as a whole it is not unreasonable to expect they reflect the situation seen within each of the individual Local Command Areas including those covering Aberdeenshire.
- 4.4 Within that review period the year with peak overall demand, as measured by the number of STORM calls, was 2018. That year there were 138,093 recorded incidents in North East Division which is greater than the total demand faced in 2022. That same year, 2018, there were 1701 mental health related calls, which is lower than the figure seen in 2022. This supports the position that the frequency of mental health related calls is increasing almost independently of the general demand on Police resources.
- 4.5 During the period 2019 to 2020, COVID impacted on policing practices leading to a reduced number of persons coming into Police Custody Suites (Kittybrewster in the City, Fraserburgh in Aberdeenshire and Elgin in Moray).

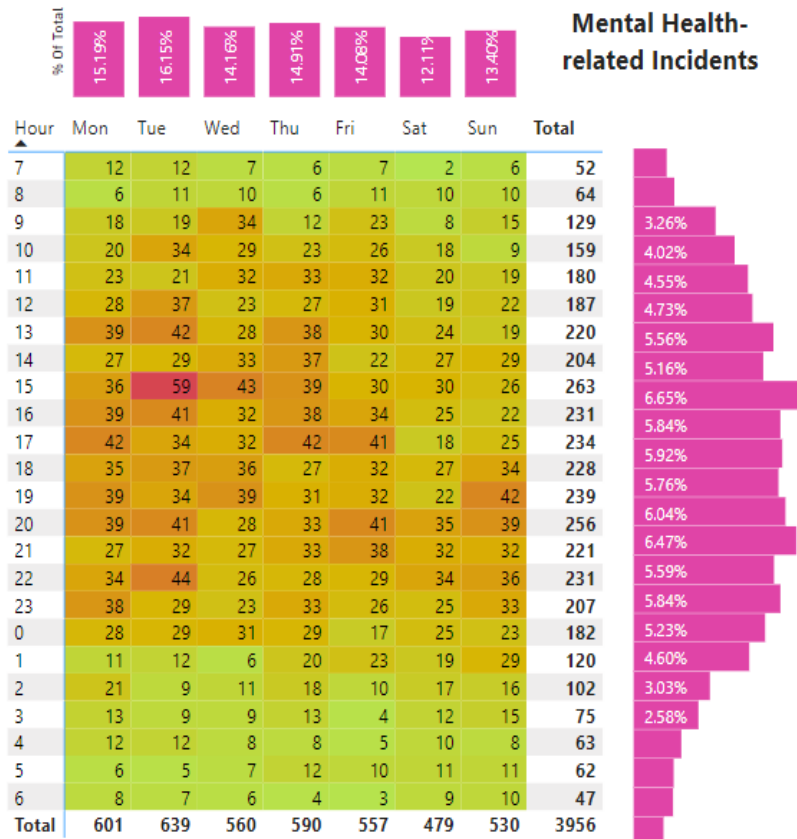
Additionally, in 2021, practices were permanently altered driven by the Criminal Justice Act 2016, which meant there was a greater 'presumption of liberty' afforded to suspects and accused persons, in turn, reducing numbers being presented at Kittybrewster Custody Suite. Therefore, a fair comparison is only achievable using data from 2021 onwards. Since 2021 the proportion of individuals presenting at Kittybrewster Custody Suite with self-identified mental health issues has increased slightly from 40% to 42%. For clarity, these are not people who are in mental health crisis but are people who have identified previous or ongoing mental health issues when questioned as part of their welfare screening. It is worth recognising that Kittybrewster is the primary custody facility in North East Division and by virtue of its location it will receive custodies from across Aberdeen City and a large proportion of Aberdeenshire. This robust welfare screening process informs custody welfare provision by trained Custody Officers and on site NHS Nurses. Provision escalates in line with the assessed risks including self-harm or suicide. Welfare support can be significant and can include a 'Constant Supervision' which requires an Officer to oversee that person at all times.

- 4.6 A further indication of the impact mental health calls have on Police resources can be found in the comparative number of incidents attended which result in the recording of a crime. In general terms between 16-18% of all STORM calls responded to by Police in North East Division will result in a crime report being created. It is undeniable that communities all benefit from Policing resource to prevent and detect crime, as well as playing a key role in building community cohesion. However, this support and proactivity has become more challenging as a consequence of Mental Health demand increases.
- 4.7 In contrast, over the period 2017 to 2022 only between 2.1 and 3.2% of Mental Health calls resulted in a person being charged with an offence or crime. Figures from 2022 show 2.4% of calls with a mental health element result in a crime being recorded. This is positive in demonstrating that Police Officers in A Division are not unnecessarily criminalising those who are in crisis but it also illustrates the volume of incidents attended where the support and involvement of other agencies, more suited to addressing mental health crises may be more appropriate.

Reducing Mental Health Related Demand Impacts On Policing

- 4.8 The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 included an Action 15 which was to increase the workforce to give access to dedicated mental health professionals to all GP Practices, Police custody suites and prisons. To that end a financial commitment was made to increase investment to allow local authority areas/health and social care partnerships to implement measures designed to provide an, 'ask once, get help fast' service. To address the Scottish Governments Action 15 aim in Aberdeenshire (primarily North Shire) the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) was implemented by the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

- 4.9 The CIT includes fully qualified and trained mental health professionals and Social Workers who are based within Fraserburgh Police Office. Their role saw them closely affiliated with the Fraserburgh Custody suite where they could readily identify and assess individuals highlighted to them as having potential mental health concerns. These referrals are intended to facilitate the provision of appropriate services to provide assistance with mental health and wellbeing. This would either be in the form of short term assistance from the CIT itself or by securing referrals to more appropriate services. Additionally, referrals to the CIT can come from frontline Police officers who may be 'on scene' with an individual in crisis. When available the CIT will attend, at scene, to assist Police Officers manage down an individual's mental health crisis.
- 4.10 The CIT as a group, are experienced in dealing with people in mental health crisis and have direct access to a network of relevant support agencies which they can bring to bear in the interest of alleviating distress and securing support. The ability for Police to refer into the service directly from the field presents an opportunity to use an alternative to custody for those individuals who are experiencing mental health distress, have come to the adverse attention of Police Scotland in the community and who would otherwise be conveyed to the Custody Suite at Fraserburgh or Kittybrewster.
- 4.11 This also represents an opportunity to reduce the impact and demand created by mental health calls on frontline Officers and equips our staff with an additional resource which can be drawn upon when faced with a non-criminal situation of a person in mental health crisis. There is however a challenge in that the CIT service, which has strived to provide a seven day per week service, is facing a reduction in funding, which brings with it, a reduction in capacity to the point the service may only be able to operate four or five days per week (mainly weekdays) and during office hours. Currently whilst it is the case that Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 captures a good proportion of likely demand there is still a significant number of calls occurring from 1700 hours onwards. The heat map below, specifically for North Aberdeenshire for the period 2017 to 2022, illustrates this.



- 4.12 The immediate benefit to policing from the CIT is their ability to provide rapid/immediate assistance and support in cases where mental health issues are in evidence. This can yield immediate benefit in that it can reduce the time Police resources have to dedicate to these types of incident. Further benefit is likely to be derived in terms of a reduction in the frequency with which individuals come to Police attention. The percentage of Police attended incidents where mental health is a concern that actually result in a crime being recorded is very small.
- 4.13 A review of CIT usage, between January 2023 and June 2023, by Police was undertaken. This review concluded there were a number of missed opportunities for Police to call upon the CIT but had not done so. The CIT SPOC is the Fraserburgh Police Inspector who is reviewing this presently with a view to refreshing the internal communication strategy.
- 4.14 A fuller assessment of the effectiveness of the CIT Service is not currently available but there are currently concerns as to its sustainability. The service has already gone from 7 days to 5 days per week with the potential for this to be reduced further to consolidate their resources. The value of the service in terms of the demand it can take off front line policing and most importantly the support it can offer to those in crisis, make the prospect of any further reductions in capacity particularly worrying.
- 4.15 DBI was piloted in Aberdeen between 2016 and 2021 and since then has been adopted on a longer term basis and rolled out across Scotland. DBI is a two level approach and while training for this mechanism is not available to Officers based in Aberdeenshire (unlike their counterparts in Aberdeen and Moray)

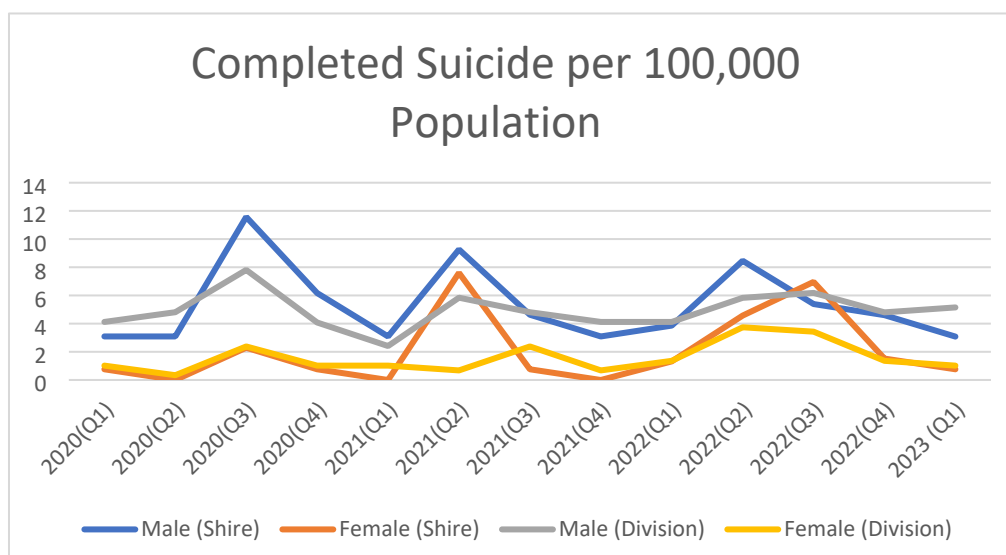
there remains scope for referring Aberdeenshire residents into the service. For example, when Aberdeenshire residents have dealings with trained Officers in the City or on rare occasions where an Officer, previously trained in the use of DBI is relocated to Aberdeenshire. This is agreeable to Penumbra as part of the Aberdeen based DBI service arrangements.

- 4.16 DBI Level 1 partners are front line workers in agencies including Police Scotland, Primary Care, Mental Health Pathways (MHP), the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Emergency Department, including Psychiatric Liaison. The Level 1 partners are provided with specific training to provide a compassionate response to distress, signposting and the offer of a referral to DBI Level 2.
- 4.17 A referral to Level 2 will trigger a 14 day supportive intervention, focusing on self-management of distress, community based problem solving, developing distress management tools and signposting to community, non-Police assets and relevant agencies. Having armed an individual with the tools to manage distress it becomes more likely they will implement these skills, this in turn is likely to see a reduction in demand on Police resources.
- 4.18 In 2023, 19 referrals were made to DBI relating to persons from Aberdeenshire. It is the case that most, if not all of those, arose as a result of Police interactions with residents of Aberdeenshire while they were visiting the City.

Suicide

- 4.19 Suicide rates vary across the Division but it is clear, irrespective of geography that mental health is a significant factor. In many, but by no means all, of the recorded completed suicides that is the case. In addition, those instances where there is no recorded mental health diagnosis there are often lifestyle factors or adverse life events in evidence which could be reasonably presumed to precipitate an emotional collapse leading to a degree of acute mental health crisis.
- 4.20 In the two Aberdeenshire Local Command Areas there have been completed suicides recorded in respect of 9 males and 5 females since the start of the year (1 January 2023 to 31 May 2023). Additionally there have been 107 recorded attempted suicides. On reviewing the geographic spread of the completed suicides it appears North Aberdeenshire is more heavily affected with 7 males and 4 females completing suicide compared to 2 males and 1 female in South Aberdeenshire. The numbers of attempted suicides are similarly skewed with 68 attempts in North Aberdeenshire compared to 23 in the South. Of particular note is the fact in both areas female attempted suicides far exceed those of males (52/31 on North 'Shire and 20/11 in South). This may indicate that females are generally more open to discuss their concerns with professionals than males but it also indicates a risk that males in crisis are going unnoticed until the point they complete suicide. A caveat to these figures is that it does not differentiate between discrete suicide attempts or repeated attempts by a given individual.

- 4.21 Data collated since 2020 shows the frequency of deaths by suicide across the Aberdeenshire Local Command Areas and the Division as a whole remain variable. In general terms (highlighted by the pronounced peaks at Q3 of 2020, Q2 of 2021 and Q2 of 2022) males in Aberdeenshire appear more likely to attempt or complete suicide than their counterparts in the wider North East Division area.
- 4.22 Save for pronounced peaks in Q2 of 2021 and Q3 of 2022, the female population of Aberdeenshire are generally as, or less likely to complete suicide than those who reside elsewhere in the Division. The reason for the peaks in both male and female cases are not clear but they are very pronounced.
- 4.23 What is evident from the data is that since the most recent peak periods referenced (Q3 2022 for females and Q2 2022 for males) the general trend indicates that rates for death by suicide in Aberdeenshire are reducing. This is in contrast with the wider divisional picture where the recent rate of male deaths by suicide has increased slightly.



- 4.24 The overall picture illustrates how volatile the true situation in respect of death by suicide truly is and reinforces the need for a continued vigilance and effective multi-agency suicide prevention strategies across Aberdeenshire and the wider Division.

Suicide Prevention

- 4.25 In terms of action to reduce the frequency of suicide both in Aberdeenshire and across the wider Division, Police Scotland are working closely with partners in the Local Authorities, NHSG, Public Health Scotland, SFRS and SAMH, all of whom are key members of the Suicide Prevention Strategic Group.
- 4.26 Until 2022, the regional response to Suicide Prevention was guided by the North East Suicide Prevention Lead Group (NESPLG). The work of this group

helped identify and inform key strategic priorities now being progressed leadership of the new Strategic Group.

- 4.27 Police Scotland remain intimately involved in Suicide Prevention Projects across all three Local Authority areas. These groups develop data, from a range of sources from which efforts are made to identify 'at risk' demographics so that suitable support and intervention can be mounted. The multi-agency team in Aberdeenshire, currently chaired by Vicky Henderson (Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership) looks to develop and deliver suicide prevention messaging designed to highlight the factors which might lead to suicide and strategies to address them, in support of those at risk demographics.
- 4.28 There are a number of factors which have been identified as contributing to suicide/attempted suicide. Some, like addiction which has a strong relationship with mental health, are of a type which is likely to see an individual come to adverse Police attention prior to a suicide attempt.
- 4.29 In those cases it is important that Police Officers are aware of the resources available to them and the person in crisis. All such cases who come to Police attention will be brought to the attention of partner agencies via Vulnerable Persons Database entry referrals. This represents an established route by which to instigate the provision of support to those in our community who may be at risk of suicide.
- 4.30 Other recognised contributory factors are less likely to directly involve Police interaction. Several such societal factors like financial hardship, relationship difficulties, bereavement, unemployment and homelessness are such that direct Police intervention is less likely. The work of the NESPLG has been a driver to ensure some of the 'touchpoints' relating to these factors, are informed and upskilled to intervene.

Missing Persons

- 4.31 Missing persons create a substantial demand on divisional resources. Information provided by Police Scotland's DPU indicates that the average resource commitment to a Medium Risk missing person enquiry is 182 hours where there is a mental health element involved. The data set used to determine the average resource commitment is limited and relates to another Policing Division with a largely urban environment and without rural specific challenges such as increased travelling times
- 4.32 In year 2021/2022 North East Division dealt with 874 missing person reports of which approximately 23% had a significant mental health element. Of that number approximately 10% of reports originated in Aberdeenshire in 2022/23 the numbers remained similar with a slight decrease to 9% of mental health missing person calls originating in Aberdeenshire. There was no single significant location from which people were reported missing in Aberdeenshire.

- 4.33 This however does not capture the whole picture in terms of mental health impact on missing individuals resident in that local authority area. In year 2021/2022, there were 118 individuals reported missing from psychiatric care at Royal Cornhill Hospital (RCH). The figure for year 2022/2023 is identical at 118. These figures make no differentiation over where the patients involved would usually reside and as such will include individuals who are normally resident in all of the local command areas and by extension all of the local authorities which constitute the Division as a whole.
- 4.34 The 2021/22 figure was a noticeable increase over the 71 missing people reported missing the previous year (2020/2021). It remains notable that of the 118 Missing Person reports generated as a result of absconding from RCH that year, 75 of them (63.5%) related to only 24 individual nominals. This clearly identifies a need to address interventions towards a relatively small population of subjects which, were they to be successful, could yield significant benefit in terms of reducing demand on policing resources (see Conclusion).
- 4.35 Another observation from RCH was that in year 2022/23, 47% of missing persons them (54) were found to have absconded during periods where they had been permitted leave from the ward by staff. This includes for things such as smoking breaks or time away from a ward as part of their treatment plan. Given the staff interaction already in evidence prior to leave from the wards being granted there may be an opportunity to pre-empt any absconding behaviour or minimise the impact of same. Simple approaches such as ensuring patients are in possession of mobile phones, asking them directly about their intentions or even accommodating longer periods off ward (where it is in the judgement of Health professionals clinically safe to do so) might be effective in securing reciprocal cooperation from the patients involved and reducing the frequency of incidents where missing person reports are necessary.

Reducing Missing Persons

- 4.36 The Scottish Government's National Missing Persons Framework (NMPF) for Scotland sets out the following four objectives:
- To introduce preventative measures to reduce the number of episodes of people going missing
 - To respond consistently and appropriately to missing person episodes
 - To provide the best possible support to missing people and their families
 - To protect vulnerable people to reduce the risk of harm
- 4.37 Achieving these objectives will by extension reduce demand on operational policing resources. North East Division (and Police Scotland more broadly) continue to work on a multi-agency basis towards achieving these objectives across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. This includes working with

NHS, Social Work and residential homes, looking for ways to improve and enhance their internal practices.

- 4.38 In 2022, Police worked in partnership with NHS Grampian on refreshing their 'Responding to Missing People Policy' which focused on reducing the risk of people going missing and mitigating the risk to the people who have gone missing. It set out the roles, responsibilities and actions to be taken by staff in respect of missing persons. It also ensured a collective response delivered on the achievement of the objectives contained within the NMPF. New, clear appendices were included which featured: a flowchart for frontline workers; risk assessment matrix and frameworks; and return home welfare discussions to formulate plans to reduce future episodes.
- 4.39 It will be important that the same solutions are considered for any care setting in Aberdeenshire, where people with mental health issues are resident.
- 4.40 This new policy is still being embedded but once established, it should reduce missing episodes, time spent missing and services time on information gathering and whole episodes. This will bring benefit in terms of reduced resource demand to frontline policing.

Risk Mitigation and the Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD)

- 4.41 Police Scotland has a duty to, and does, ensure that following a mental health related call, people (including Missing Persons) are no longer at immediate risk and short term measures are in place. Tactical options include but are not limited to taking advice from services, such as the CIT, conveying an individual to RCH or another health care establishment or leaving an individual in the care of a suitable relative or friend.
- 4.42 A VPD entry is completed and ultimately shared with organisations in order that the appropriate follow up is instigated. We know that the sharing process is not instantaneous and we know that in some cases, although persons may not be in an acute need of care, in order to help stabilise their situation, care and support is needed to avoid a further incident.
- 4.43 Frequently, there is a requirement to notify partners in advance of a VPD entry reaching its intended recipient. In order that support plans for individuals can be considered at an earlier stage. Often, the most suitable forum to take forward these more immediate joint discussions can be within a multi-agency meeting.
- 4.44 Experience frequently shows us that finding the right person or professionals across the range of partners can be challenging. On occasion these meetings can include several representatives from the same organisation with little previous connectivity even between those same organisations. We know that the requirement to gather data and attend meetings can be challenging for some organisations including Police Scotland.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This report has identified those sources of demand on Police resources where mental health is likely to be a factor/consideration. It has also illustrated the partnership arrangements, both established and developing which are deployable to support vulnerable individuals who may present in mental health crisis and which in turn may yield a benefit to local policing in terms of reducing the demand on them.
- 5.2 There is a recognised need for effective data gathering, sharing, analysis and interpretation. These remain under ongoing review and development with appropriate approaches to extracting maximum value from the data being explored. In turn this will enable wider and more informed scrutiny across partners and open up opportunities to identify and implement earlier, meaningful interventions.
- 5.3 Even at this early stage it appears that projects such as the CIT and DBI are capable of having a positive effect on reducing the frequency at which individuals are coming to the attention of Police and other partners, although continued provision of the CIT service is likely to be linked to an ability to prove there is sufficient demand for it. If that can be addressed and the service secured it should translate into a resource benefit for local policing across Aberdeenshire – particularly across the north of the region.
- 5.4 Risk and vulnerability is being managed by Police Scotland and partners but finding access points to seek assistance can be challenging given the range of organisations and professionals that can work with a person. Given the presumed increasing demand faced by all services, the ‘as and when’ approach to arranging multi-agency meetings can place variable extra pressures on services when meetings are required. A solution may be to agree a process, through which, partner agencies can quickly navigate towards the right informed ‘decision makers’.
- 5.5 Agencies already collaborate within groups to examine systems to reduce demand, however, a starting point may be to look at specific individuals and explore the formation or creation of a new group to examine the individuals and reduce mental health demand created by a small few across multiple services.
- 5.6 This is further supported by analysis of the missing person figures that suggest that a relatively small number of individuals are creating a disproportionate level of demand when they repeatedly abscond from RCH. These individuals are likely to originate from areas across the Grampian region, including Aberdeenshire. Having identified this, we are already engaging further with partners at RCH with a view to enhancing their procedures further and bringing those more in line with those adopted by the wider NHSG estate. Learning from RCH, it is reasonable to presume that preventative solutions are relevant to all care settings.

6 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 6.1 This report helps deliver on Our People (Education, Health & Wellbeing) and Our Environment (Resilient Communities).

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Resilient Communities
Our Economy	

Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles. They are: right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy.

- 6.2 This report helps deliver on the LOIP Priorities Connected and Cohesive Communities and Health & Wellbeing.

- 6.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			x
Staffing			x
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			x
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing			x
Town Centre First			x

- 6.4 The Integrated Impact Assessment tool is an internal tool for Aberdeenshire Council officers to use to support with decisions being made by the Council. It has been designed on Sharepoint and can only be accessed by individuals with Council email addresses. Police Scotland, as an external partner, have their own Impact Assessing process and have utilised that when writing this report.

- 6.5 The Committee is monitoring the performance of Police Scotland as required under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. It links to the Corporate Risk of Working with Other Organisations.

Report prepared by:
Chief Inspector Darren Bruce, Police Scotland

Date 16/08/2023

List of Appendices – Appendix A – Case Studies

APPENDIX A

Aberdeenshire Resident - Subject A

Subject A is a young adult who has a diagnosis of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder. They are currently transitioning and have had support from services including Social Work, Criminal Justice Social Work, Community Mental Health, Psychiatric services, Crisis Intervention and Penumbra with varying level of engagement / success.

There have been 189 iVPD's from September 2014 to date but 184 of these have been from 2021 onwards with 29 in 2023; each of these relates to an individual interaction with Police. There is an observed decline in their mental health following the death of their mother in 2020 and they have previously reported being the victim of sexual assaults / familial sexual abuse.

The vulnerabilities bringing Subject A to police attention have been recorded and shared with partners. They relate to concerns about their mental health, self-harming, overdoses, suicidal ideology and attempts, drug consumption. There have been discussed safety plans with Subject B but they are unwilling / unable to follow these and will often respond to being advised that there will be a delay by escalating to self-harm / suicidal comments and actions.

The demand generated by Subject A and the impact to services and the community will depend on the circumstances identified but generally requires Police to attend, assess, support Subject B, on occasion detaining them under the Mental Health Act, on others awaiting for support through NHS 24 / attendance of SAS or taking them to hospital due to a lack of available Ambulances. Some of these concerns have been raised by partners, including NHS 24, but there are currently no other available or suitable options to attend these incidents and so the default position is to request Police. This causes a significant impact to all services who already have stretched resources but the Police are particularly affected.

There have been Multi-agency meetings / Professionals / Case Conferences / IRD's held with partners in relation to identifying a joined up approach for actions with a Trigger Plan has been created to provide the relevant information to Police officers dealing with Subject A. It was also identified that Subject A is not suitable to be detained under the Mental Health act due to his condition and does not meet the point of being an adult at risk.

Whilst Subject A was open to direct access with Unscheduled Care previously, as well as other partners / agencies, their care appears to be mainly through Community Mental Health with support of Penumbra / Gender ID Clinic. It was identified some time ago that Subject A would benefit from Psychotherapy. The referral is in but Subject A has not been in a stable place for this to be effective being identified they would benefit from

This partnership approach is continuing but Subject A appears unable to comply with the advice and support offered or unable to accept that it may not be available at the

exact point he feels in need. As such the work undertaken to date has not significantly reduced the demand on Police resources nor the risk to Subject A and the community.

Aberdeenshire Resident - Subject B

Subject B is a young adult who has been known to services for several years. They appear as the subject of concern on 73 iVPD's, 22 of these between January and June 2023 alone, which have been shared with partners. Their vulnerabilities include Mental Health issues, suicidal ideology including attempted suicide, self-harm, drug & alcohol consumption and as a repeated Missing Person. The number of incidents increased in the approach to and post transitioning from Child to Adult services due to anxiety of loss of support. This adverse reaction is also seen in cases in the City.

Their actions resulted in periods of being detained due to their mental health and there have been several Professionals Meetings / Multi-agency meetings in relation to Subject B. It was identified that their actions were behavioural, exaggerated by poor mental wellbeing rather than an underlying mental illness but that they were at a High Risk of suicide / overdose due to their actions. They have also been violent towards Police and Partners, making threats and placing family members and other members of the community at risk.

Subject B has been open to various services regarding their conditions. Multiagency actions have been unable to reduce the impact on services, Subject B continues to fail to engage in a meaningful manner, with partners, and regularly comes to Police attention.

Aberdeenshire Resident - Subject C

Subject C is a young adult who has Foetal alcohol syndrome, ADHD, learning difficulties and type 1 diabetes, requires an Appropriate Adult and considered vulnerable. They appear on 96 iVPD's in relation to Mental Health, Learning Disability, Suicidal ideology, Self-harm, and as being a Missing Person, which have been shared with the relevant partners. 27 of these are in 2023 alone.

These vulnerabilities have made Subject C susceptible to being the victim of offences and other concerns, including from members of their family. It has also caused outbursts of violence towards others.

Subject C has been the focus of significant work by Partners and they are resident in supported accommodation. Subject C's actions have often resulted in their being out with the control of staff or reported as missing resulting in significant Police involvement and strain on an already stretched service.

Despite there being effective staff in place to manage most elements of her behaviours, levels of aggression can often mean that she is able to leave their supported accommodation generating a Policing response thereafter.

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE – GRANT FUNDING FOR THE MUSEUM OF SCOTTISH LIGHTHOUSES

1 Executive Summary / Recommendations

1.1 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to and recognises the value of partnership working. In Arts, Heritage and Community Learning & Development (CLD), the Council has long-established partnership arrangements, with council funding supporting a range of activities that bring significant benefit to Aberdeenshire's residents and communities. This report outlines proposed financial support to The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses in Fraserburgh.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Agree the grant payment to The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses for 2023 (3.6 & 3.7)

1.2.2 Direct officers to negotiate a new Grant Funding Agreement with the board of The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses (3.7)

1.2.2 Agree the Grant Funding Agreement be for a three-year period (3.7)

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Communities Committee is the policy committee for Live Life Aberdeenshire and is the lead on Culture and Sport in Aberdeenshire.

2.2 At the Education and Children's Services Committee on 23 March 2017, the Committee agreed the £90,000 grant payment to The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses in Fraserburgh for 2017/18

2.3 At the Communities Committee on 14 October 2021, the Committee agreed to the £90,000 grant payment to the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses in Fraserburgh for 21/22.

3 Discussion

3.1 The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses (MoSL) is a purpose-built museum located in Fraserburgh. It sits next to the Kinnaird Head Lighthouse – the very first lighthouse built on mainland Scotland in 1787.

3.2 The museum attracts more than 9000 visitors annually, with 9281 visits during 2022/23, bringing visitors and economic benefits to the town.

3.3 The museum has an active educational programme for preschool, primary and secondary schools. For groups or schools unable to visit, the museum offers a loan box to educate, engage and inspire young people in the story of the Northern Lighthouse Board, the engineering and challenges of building lighthouses, and the stories of the lighthouse keepers.

- 3.4 The grant agreement is between the board of trustees of the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses and Aberdeenshire Council.
- 3.5 As the grant was on the Aberdeenshire Council Grants register, the payment for Q1 £22,500 2023/24 has been made. However, when a review was undertaken in preparation for the proposal to agree to a new grant award, the governance was not in place, and officers request a retrospective agreement from the Committee for the Q1 payment.
- 3.6 The balance of the grant of £67,500 is to be paid quarterly for 2023/24.
- 3.7 Officers recommend the grant of £90,000 be awarded under a new agreement and a term of three years be agreed to, subject to council budgets. The grant agreement should run from 2023/24 through to and including 2025/26.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report and the Live Life Aberdeenshire Business Plan will contribute to the delivery of Council priorities, particularly Health and Wellbeing and Education within the People Pillar and Resilient Communities within the Environment Pillar.
- 4.2 This report helps deliver on the LOIP Priority – Connected and Cohesive Communities.

<https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/connected-and-cohesive-communities/>

- 4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.4 At the Communities Committee on 16 February 2023, a Business Plan and Delivery plan 2022/23 was agreed
- 4.5 An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required because the screening as part of Stage One of the IIA has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken.
- 4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- ACORP004 Business and organisational change (including: ensuring governance structures support change; and, managing the pace of change) Corporate Risk Register.
- ACORP005 Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)
- ACORP006 Reputation management (including social media)
- ECSR0004 To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Live @ Home

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report, their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Communities Committee is able to consider this matter as per its delegations in Section D6, paragraphs 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 in Part 2A, List of Committee Powers in the Scheme of Governance.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by: John Cornfield – Service Manager Live Life Aberdeenshire
Date: 26 July 2023

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE – PROGRESS WITH LLA ESTATE DISINVESTMENT

1.1 Live Life Aberdeenshire has an estate portfolio that includes community halls, libraries, museums, leisure centres, ski slopes, swimming pools, sports pavilions and an aquarium. The service is committed to meeting the needs of our communities, shaping service delivery to the changing landscape of demand and usage. The service has demonstrated it no longer requires such an expansive estate for direct service delivery. Through innovative digital applications and alternative delivery models for services, including co-locating with community partners and outreach, a reduced portfolio of static buildings can continue to meet the needs of our communities from a direct service delivery perspective.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Review and comment on the progress of the previously agreed asset disinvestment at Appendix 1.

1.2.2 Agree the service should proceed in declaring as surplus to requirements the properties in Appendix 1, to ensure these properties are used to benefit their communities through community asset transfer or sale or adoption by another service area.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 The Communities Committee is the policy committee for Live Life Aberdeenshire, the Culture and Sport Service of Aberdeenshire Council.

2.2 Full Council previously agreed to budget savings in 2019/20 with a list of assets (Appendix 1) to be removed from the Live Life Aberdeenshire Estate.

3 Discussion

3.1 As part of council-wide budget savings in 2021/22, the service proposed several buildings to be surplus as the service would meet the needs by co-location and the introduction of click-and-collect and delivery services with electric vehicles. The properties and savings are set out in Appendix 2.

3.2 Property Colleagues support removing these assets from Live Life Aberdeenshire use, predicated upon sale or community asset transfer or adoption by another service department.

3.3 Associated costs are still borne by the service, creating a budget pressure of £245,308, as shown in Appendix 2.

3.4 The service recognises slow progress and identified a manager to lead on disinvestment in April 2023. Their focus has seen disinvestment progress significantly in the past few months, as shown in Appendix 1.

3.5 The manager is also leading a review that will identify additional properties the service no longer requires. The properties identified to date are set out in Appendices 1 and 2. Following consultation and community engagement, the resulting sale or transfer will save the service £245,308 per annum.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This report and the Live Life Aberdeenshire Business Plan will contribute to the delivery of Council priorities, particularly Health and Wellbeing and Education within the People Pillar and Resilient Communities within the Environment Pillar.

4.2 This report helps deliver on the LOIP Priority – Connected and Cohesive Communities.

<https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/connected-and-cohesive-communities/>

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

4.4 At the Communities Committee on 16 February 2023, a Business Plan and Delivery plan 2022/23 was agreed.

4.5 An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required because the screening as part of Stage One of the IIA has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken.

4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- ACORP004 Business and organisational change (including: ensuring governance structures support change; and, managing the pace of change) *Corporate Risk Register*.
- ACORP006 Reputation management (including social media)
- ECSR0004 To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Live @ Home

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report, their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Communities Committee is able to consider this matter as per its delegations in Section D6, paragraphs 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 in Part 2A, List of Committee Powers in the Scheme of Governance.

Laurence Findlay Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by: John Cornfield – Service Manager Live Life Aberdeenshire
Date: 26 July 2023

Appendix 1 List of Assets
Appendix 2 Properties and Savings

APPENDIX 1

Asset Rationalisation - Progress							
Area	Facility	W3W	Intent to declare form sent	Surplus property declaration form completed	Decommissioning complete	Surplus property form completed/transferred?	Overview & Estates info
B	Blackhills hall	https://w3w.co/observe.sn-owstorm.exile	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users, no staff, extremely low use pre covid, none since. Clean title held. Bowling and WRI previously used.
B	Cairnbanno hall	https://w3w.co/commands.valley.decompose	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users, no staff, closed for 5/6 years. Building in poor condition. Awaiting title confirmation.
B	Oldwhat Community Centre	https://w3w.co/gums.snooty.interrupt	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users and no staff, building is closed. Awaiting title confirmation - private water supply to be clarified.
B&B	Macduff Town Hall	https://w3w.co/posed.visits.argued	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users and no staff, building is closed. Decommissioning underway, engagement with cultural and Area Management teams to relocate any historical items. Clean title. Zero rates payable once building is declared surplus.
F	Artrochie Community Centre	https://what3words.com/dupe.referral.desiring	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users, no staff, building closed. Decommissioning underway. Clean title.
F	Birkenhills Hall	https://w3w.co/repayment.plugged.cyclones	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users and no staff, building is available although not used. Awaiting title information.
F	Woodhead Community Education Centre	https://w3w.co/boats.crinkled.facing	Yes	Yes	Underway	No	No users, no staff. Clean title - Rights of access to rear of facility and informal war memorial in place. LLA working to relocate memorial. Initial discussion with local Church as an option. Conservation required for any removal.
M	Ythan Wells Community Centre	https://w3w.co/cautious.beanbag.mentions	Yes	Yes	No	No	No users, no staff. Title not clear (partly built on land not owned by AC). Pump house shared with residents.
G	Leslie Hall	https://w3w.co/harp.liberty.quilt	Yes	Yes	No	No	No users, no staff, building not used. Wood turning and bowling equipment being relocated. Engaging with the Area management team re possible future community use. Servitude rights being negotiated.
M	Lumphanan Hall	https://w3w.co/toward.queench.romantics	Yes	Yes	No	No	Limited use, no staff, building still operational. Attached flat in poor condition with mould - property stripping walls back to stone. Moving Pictures group have cinema equipment installed - group made aware of closure plans prior to installing items. Lumphanan CC use the facility. Pre exemption rights (previous owner can buy back) Significant community interest despite historical very low usage. (Panto and occasional film show)
B	Boddam library	https://w3w.co/included.ballroom.headers	No	No	No	No	Small amount of use, no staff (cover from Peterhead). Alternative provision being explored. Awaiting title confirmation

APPENDIX 1

B	New Pitsligo Library	https://w3w.co/verve.speak.candles	Yes	No	No	No	Reasonable/low use, one 15 hr p/wk staff member based at the Library. Proposed for sale however LLA are revisiting. Potential to retain Library and disinvest in St John's community centre. Clean title (Includes road, path and layby)
B	Strichen Library	https://w3w.co/heartened.rods.avocado	Yes	No	No	No	Reasonable/Low use, one 15 hr p/wk staff member based at the Library. Alternative Service Provision being explored, working with Area Management team. Awaiting title confirmation (note that it's a Listed building).
B&B	Aberchirder Library	https://w3w.co/gathering.hasten.batches	Yes	Yes	Underway	Yes	No users, no staff, building closed. Final decommissioning underway. Awaiting title confirmation.
B&B	Bracoden library	https://w3w.co/hoofs.verve.wildfires	No	No	Underway	No	No users, no staff, building closed. Outreach provided to the school. Awaiting title confirmation. Education have indicated that they do not require the space.
B&B	Whitehills Library	https://w3w.co/vertical.twirls.starlight	No	No	No	No	Low use, no staff based there (cover from Banff). Alternative provision being explored. Occasionally used by AC Employment services when open.
B&B	Portsoy library	https://w3w.co/below.shatters.cemented	No	No	No	No	Low, no staff based there (cover from Banff). Alternative provision being explored. Also used by Wellie walkers Childminding service.
K&M	Newtonhill Library	https://w3w.co/sundial.desk.paler	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Portacabin building. No users, no staff, building closed. Now fully emptied and services disconnected. Final inspection required by Property and being added to demolition schedule.
K&M	Fettercairn Library	https://w3w.co/deprives.cafe.junior	No	No	Underway	No	No users, no staff, building closed. Outreach provided to the school. Items still to be relocated/disposed of. Mearns staff occasionally use for outreach. Education do not wish to take on the building.

Asset Rationalisation - Considered and removed from the current rationalisation list							
G	Culsalmond Hall	https://w3w.co/builds.pingpong.thundered	No (Withdrawn)	No	No	No	Building now in regular use
M	Insch Library	https://w3w.co/metals.plump.interrupt	No, privately owned	No	No	No	Not suitable for transfer, privately owned. (2 rooms are leased)
G	Insch CEC	https://w3w.co/sizzled.fortnight.piglets	No, wait. See note	No	No	No	Await 18 months (revisit Sep 2024)

APPENDIX 2

Rural Halls and Pavillions

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
		Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s	Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s	Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s
E352401	Artrochie CEC	1,718	0	1,718	592	0	592	2,029	0	2,029
E642005	Birkenhills Public Hall	2,506	0	2,506	3,445	0	3,445	2,163	0	2,163
E641001	Blackhills Public Hall	59	0	59	1,929	0	1,929	1,452	(100)	1,352
E641005	Cairnbanno Public Hall	1,938	0	1,938	175	0	175	191	0	191
E353416	Leslie Community Centre	1,075	0	1,075	1,925	0	1,925	2,422	0	2,422
E655010	Lumphanan Public Hall	27,395	(1,028)	26,367	13,881	(794)	13,087	8,231	(155)	8,076
E650010	Macduff Public Hall	42,156	0	42,156	22,089	(480)	21,609	12,041	(17)	12,023
E641010	Oldwhat Public Hall	2,731	0	2,731	776	0	776	1,388	(178)	1,210
E642030	Woodhead Public Hall	5,611	0	5,611	2,341	0	2,341	3,132	0	3,132
E355460	Ythanwells CEC	4,866	0	4,866	2,790	0	2,790	3,062	0	3,062
	<u>Halls totals</u>	<u>90,056</u>	<u>(1,028)</u>	<u>89,028</u>	<u>49,943</u>	<u>(1,274)</u>	<u>48,669</u>	<u>36,111</u>	<u>(450)</u>	<u>35,661</u>

Libraries

	Cost Centre Description	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
		Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s	Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s	Expenditure £'s	Income £'s	Total £'s
E154020	Newtonhill Library	47,045	(14)	47,031	24,461	0	24,461	16,958	0	16,958
E150001	Aberchirder Library	43,854	(144)	43,710	15,569	(25)	15,544	20,774	0	20,774
E150015	Boddam Library	9,582	0	9,582	38,738	0	38,738	9,594	0	9,594
E150020	Bracoden Library	532	0	532	2,606	0	2,606	6,473	0	6,473
E154001	Fettercairn Library	108	0	108	4,012	0	4,012	6,838	(68)	6,771
E150050	Whitehills Library	5,243	0	5,243	9,344	0	9,344	12,344	0	12,344
E150040	Portsoy Library	4,173	0	4,173	9,098	0	9,098	22,159	0	22,159
E151015	New Pitsligo Library	27,458	0	27,458	23,014	0	23,014	18,661	(71)	18,590
E151025	Strichen Library	18,485	(41)	18,444	8,822	(1)	8,820	8,547	(12)	8,535
	<u>Libraries total</u>	<u>156,480</u>	<u>(199)</u>	<u>156,281</u>	<u>135,664</u>	<u>(26)</u>	<u>135,638</u>	<u>122,348</u>	<u>(151)</u>	<u>122,198</u>
	<u>Grand totals</u>	<u>246,536</u>	<u>(1,228)</u>	<u>245,308</u>	<u>185,607</u>	<u>(1,300)</u>	<u>184,307</u>	<u>158,460</u>	<u>(601)</u>	<u>157,859</u>

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 07 SEPTEMBER 2023

COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS STAGE 2 REFERRAL UPDATE: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2301 – ABERDEENSHIRE ALCOHOL & DRUGS PARTNERSHIP (ADP) GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides an update on progress against the action plan arising from Internal Audit Report 2301 'Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Governance Arrangements', following previous discussion at Communities Committee on 16 February 2023 and 30 March 2023, the Stage 2 workshop held on 10 May 2023, and subsequent report to Communities Committee on 1 June 2023 as part of the agreed framework of the Committee Review Process. Members are asked to consider recommendations and agree future improvement actions.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 **Consider whether this further update on the ADP action plan provides the Committee with sufficient assurances on progress; and**

1.2.2 **Where the Committee feels that the report does not provide adequate reassurance, consider whether it is appropriate to move to Stage 3 Investigation to allow for further exploration of the issue and identification of potential improvement actions.**

1.2.3 **Should the Committee agree to progress to a Stage 3 Investigation, in line with the Scheme of Governance, an Investigation Group should be identified.**

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 On 10 November 2022, the Audit Committee considered Internal Audit Report 2301 and agreed that a request be made to the Communities Committee to conduct the Committee Review Process relating to a matter of service delivery for improvement identified on the matter of 'Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Governance Arrangements'.

2.2 On 22 December 2022 the Communities Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer of the Health and Social Care Partnership asking it to consider this referral from the Audit Committee on a proposed Committee Review Process. The Communities Committee considered the request from the Audit Committee and determined to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of the matter of service delivery identified by the Audit Committee for improvement.

2.3 On 16 February 2023 the Communities Committee considered the Stage 1 Report from the Committee Review Process. The Committee deferred its

decision and requested further information and update to be provided by officers at the Committee's next meeting on 30 March 2023.

- 2.4** On 30 March 2023, the Communities Committee considered the update provided by officers and agreed to proceed to Stage 2 of the Committee Review Process to allow further exploration of the issues and identification of improvement actions. On 10 May 2023 a Stage 2 workshop was held, the outcomes from which were presented to the Communities Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2023.
- 2.5** At the meeting on 1 June 2023, following a division, the Committee agreed to defer its decision until the meeting of the Committee on 7 September 2023 for a revised report, including information on the outcome of the ADP's consideration of its draft Terms of Reference and Partnership Agreement. A report was submitted to the Audit Committee on 6 July 2023 advising of the Committee's decision.

3 Discussion

- 3.1** By way of background, the detailed scope of this review was provided in the Stage 1 Report to Communities Committee on 16 February 2023 including presentation of progress against the action plan.
- 3.2** Officers from across the Aberdeenshire HSCP (AHSCP) have continued to dedicate significant time and resources to the delivery of this action plan.
- 3.3** An update on the status of all actions, as of August 2023, is provided in Appendix 1. A copy of the ADP's agreed Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference is provided in Appendix 2 and 3.
- 3.4** The Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference have now been agreed by all strategic partner organisations, Internal Audit have indicated that they will agree to close the relevant outstanding recommendations following the next ADP formal meeting to be held on 15th September 2023 where partners agreement will be noted in the minutes.
- 3.5** There has been good progress in partnership working with the finance team at NHS Grampian and this is represented in the completed actions below. Financial colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council have also provided support to ensure financial procedures are followed in relation to ADP funded contracts, as well as other direct funding project allocations i.e., PAF (Procurement Approval Form) awards and direct council allocations for Drug and Alcohol Projects.
- 3.6** Over the period since the last report to Communities Committee, Work has been ongoing in relation to the outstanding recommendations. Currently there are nine outstanding recommendations, four of which relate to the Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference. The remaining five relate to financial procedures with two of these relating to long-standing and wider NHS Grampian arrangements. The remaining three relate to providing an

ADP financial instructions document which will be submitted week commencing 28th August.

- 3.7** Should the Committee not be assured and agree to progress to a Stage 3 Investigation an investigation group will need to be identified. An Investigation Group could be the whole Committee, a smaller group of members or a member officer working group. This group would lead on the investigation but bring a report back for any decision to Communities Committee. The remit would be identified by the Investigation Group and a term of reference would be agreed.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1** This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Economic Growth” within the Pillar “Our Economy”.
- 4.2** The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.3** There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
- 4.4** The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process was completed when the scrutiny referral was submitted to Communities Committee on 22 December 2022. This did not identify the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. An integrated impact assessment is not required because this report is to provide the Committee with information relating to a matter being processed by way of the Committee Review Process.
- 4.5** The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- ACORP005 Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1** The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report. They are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.
- 5.2** The Committee can consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section D.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the matter relates to the scrutiny and review of the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery in respect of a function within its remit.
- 5.3** The Communities Committee should determine whether it is sufficiently assured by this report and, if not, it can recommend moving to Stage 3 of the Committee Review Process.
- 5.4** This scrutiny report originated from a referral from the Audit Committee and, therefore, it will be updated on the progress and outcomes from this Committee.

PAMELA MILLIKEN
Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Report prepared by Jeff Shaw, Partnership Manager – North

16th August 2023

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – ADP Internal Audit Report Actions Completed and Outstanding

APPENDIX 2 – ADP Terms of Reference

APPENDIX 3 – ADP Partnership Agreement

APPENDIX 1

Completed Actions as of August 2023

Action No.	Action	Risk Rating	Due Date	RAG Status	Comment
1.3	Operational management and delegation	Major	Mar-23	Green	Complete and agreed with Internal Audit (IA)
1.4	Clarity over funding sources	Moderate	Sept-23	Green	Funding letter just received and finance sheet has been finalised to reflect income in and alignment to expenditure. Finance document submitted and action closed by IA
1.5	Budget allocation and alignment to strategy	Major	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.6	Detailed budget monitoring	Major	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.7	Board level budget monitoring	Moderate	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.8c	Funding Reconciliation	Major	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.9	Efficiency of payments	Minor	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.12	Strategic commissioning	Moderate	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.13	Procurement and contracts	Major	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.15	Contract and project recording	Moderate	Dec-22	Green	Complete and agreed with IA

1.16	Funding options appraisal and alignment with Strategy	Moderate	Mar-23	Green	Complete and agreed with IA
1.17	Projects' contribution towards ADP performance	MAJOR	MAR-23	Green	Complete and agreed with IA

Outstanding Actions as of August 2023

Action No.	Action	Risk Rating	Due Date	RAG Status	Comment
1.1a	The ADP should implement the planned revisions to its governance structure promptly and monitor arrangements in the interim to ensure no impact on efficiency.	Moderate	31/7/2023	Amber	Internal Audit has reviewed the Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference and accepts that their agreement and acceptance addresses the recommendation and will help mitigate the risk. The documents are Agreed by all Strategic Partner organisations by all and will be formally adopted at the next ADP Strategic Committee. Internal Audit has confirmed that following this they will sign off on (close) the related major recommendation, which is outstanding, along with other relevant actions as appropriate.
1.1b	The ADP should ensure decision making is appropriately delegated to Sub-groups within defined limits.	Moderate	31/7/2023	Amber	Internal Audit has reviewed the Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference and accepts that their agreement and acceptance addresses the recommendation and will help mitigate the risk. The documents are Agreed by all Strategic Partner organisations by all and will be formally adopted at the next ADP Strategic Committee. Internal Audit has confirmed that following this they will sign off on (close) the related major

					recommendation, which is outstanding, along with other relevant actions as appropriate.
1.2	The ADP should ensure all partners assert and agree the level of their commitment to the Partnership in a Partnership Agreement.	Major	July 23	Amber	Internal Audit has reviewed the Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference and accepts that their agreement and acceptance addresses the recommendation and will help mitigate the risk. The documents are Agreed by all Strategic Partner organisations by all and will be formally adopted at the next ADP Strategic Committee. Internal Audit has confirmed that following this they will sign off on (close) the related major recommendation, which is outstanding, along with other relevant actions as appropriate

1.8	Funding reconciliation	Major	8a May-23 8b Sept 23 8c Sept 23	Amber	<p>8a Funding allocated for Drug and Alcohol work is ultimately the responsibility of the IJB, evident by the funding letter from the Scottish Government. The Integration Scheme of Delegation states that the Integration Authority has responsibility for services provided out with hospital in relation to an addiction or dependance on any substance. The IJB agree the budget for the ADP to allocate. Resolution of agreed allocation to ADP may require submission of formal report to IJB for their decision. To allow further discussion an extension to December 2023 is requested</p> <p>8b New Scottish Government letter funding letter received, and reconciliation of funding awarded, so funding reported can now take place with accuracy and related to understanding of NHS arrangements. These matters were discussed on 22/8/23 and ongoing contact has been established with NHSG colleagues. It is anticipated this action will be complete by end Dec 2023 due to complexities of historic funding arrangements</p> <p>8C The split of funding between ADPs in Grampian was determined many years ago when Public Health oversaw the ADPs. The basis used at the time was numbers of drug deaths in each area and there has been no revision to the split since then. A review of the income and the allocation has taken place and evidence provided of this meets Internal Audit recommendation. The findings of the review are being taken for further discussion with NHS at a meeting with NHS finance colleagues on the 22/8/2023. Agreed closure by IA as in first table.</p>
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Action No.	Action	Risk Rating	Due Date	RAG Status	Comment
1.10	Payment approvals	Major	Sept 23	Amber	10a and b. IA in agreement with work undertaken to date with revised implementation date of Mar-23. Work undertaken to close old cost codes, and to ensure compliance with Council contract payment processes as the contract awarding body, with monthly invoicing to commence with the new contract award from 1 st April 2023. The payments out with contracts have been stopped and the providers advised. Monthly meetings taking place with Finance and the Resources and Governance sub-group chair to ensure continued scrutiny and accuracy of reporting. Further work being submitted to evidence embedding of clear processes and sustainability of improvement
1.11	Payments on behalf of third-parties	Major	Sept 23	Amber	NHS Grampian's standing financial instructions and scheme of delegation provide guidance on making payments to third parties and the NHSG Finance Department can assist with their interpretation when required. Work being submitted to ensure processes and procedures are clear, accessible to those involved in financial approvals and that these are followed by all.
1.14	Procurement and contract decision making	Major	Sept-23	Amber	A flowchart in place and accompanying guidance has been included in the Partnership Agreement, to be submitted to ADP Committee and recording of agreement in minutes to clear. – see comments in 1.1



APPENDIX 2

Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership

Terms of Reference

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1 Introduction

This Terms of Reference sets out how the Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership will operate. The ADP Committee have agreed that 3 strategic subgroups are required to enable discussion and allow a wider range of partners to be involved in specific discussions.

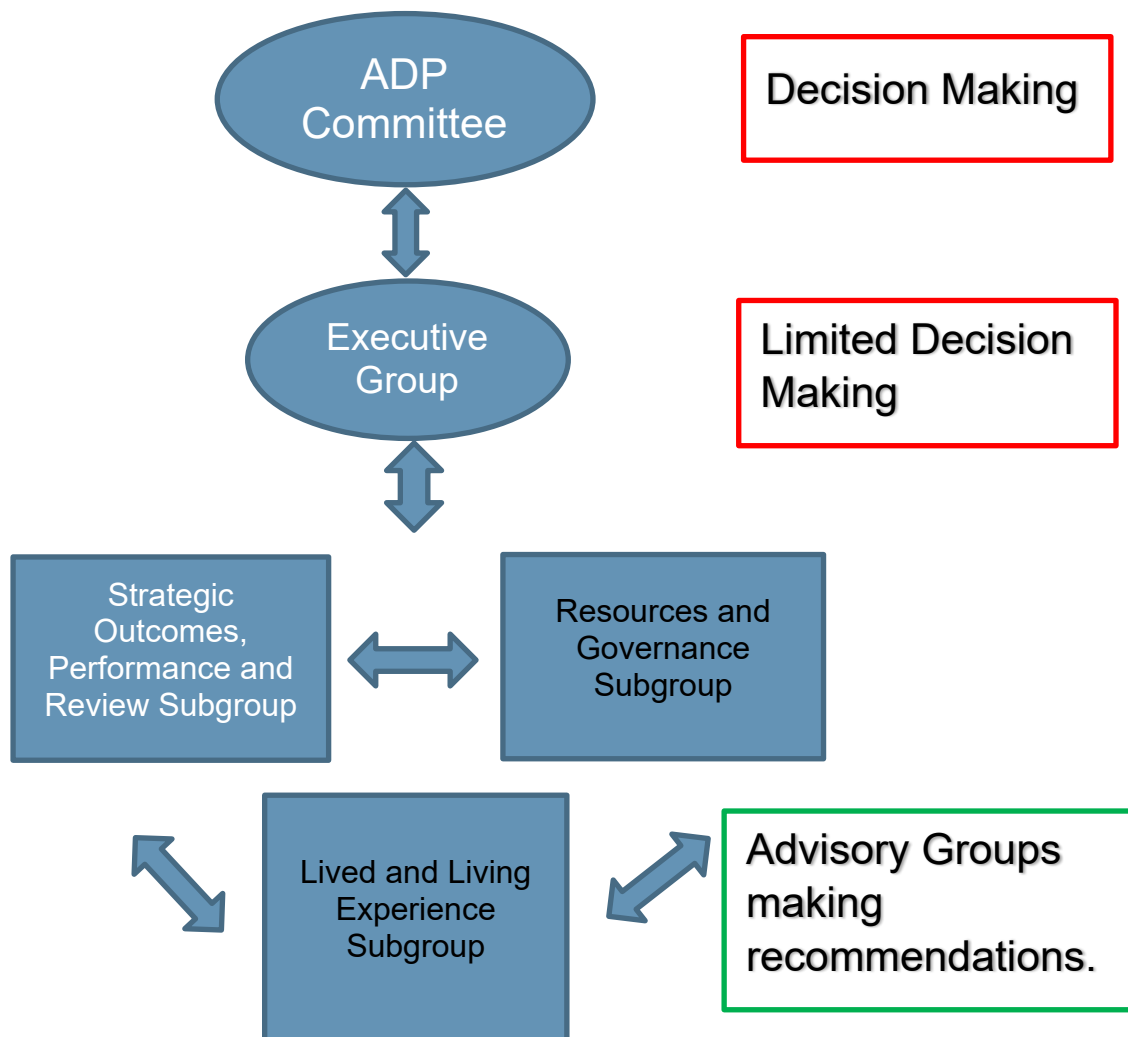
These sub-groups are: -

- Lived and Living Experience
- Resources and Governance
- Strategic Outcomes and Performance

The Terms of Reference for each group are included in this document.

The Chairs of the three sub-Groups meet with the ADP Chair and Vice Chair, ADP Lead Officer, and finance colleagues as an ADP Executive Group between formal meetings of the ADP to ensure the smooth operation of the ADP. They may invite additional representation if required.

The ADP will make decisions collectively at meetings of the ADP Committee. The subgroups are advisory and will make recommendations to the ADP, after consultation with the other subgroups, for determination.



Part One: Remit and Standing Orders for Meetings of the ADP Committee



2 ADP Committee

The ADP Committee is the decision-making vehicle for the ADP partnership and is led by the ADP Chair. In general, operational issues are a matter for the ADPs constituent Partners. The subgroups as described in this document are accountable to the ADP Committee.

The ADP Committee will:

- **Error! Reference source not found.**Promote an anti-stigma approach to tackling problematic alcohol and substance use.
- **Error! Reference source not found.**
- **Error! Reference source not found.**Clarify partner's responsibilities in contributing to the achievement of agreed outcomes.
- Approve all commissioning spend.
- Approve the Annual Report of the ADP
- Approve the ADP Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Overall monitoring of delivery of outcomes to show progress in delivering the strategy and effective use of funds.
- Account to Scottish Government for the use of ADP resources used to support strategy implementation and the outcomes achieved.

The ADP Committee will meet in accordance with these Standing Orders and members will always abide by the Code of Conduct.

For the avoidance of doubt, the ADP does not have the role to take a decision on any matter which is the statutory or sole responsibility of any member organisation. The ADP may however make recommendations on such matters to the relevant decision-maker.

Any member of the ADP Committee who has a personal financial interest, a business interest or any other direct or indirect private or personal interest in a matter under discussion should, as soon as it is practicable, declare that interest and take no part in the discussion of the matter. The member should absent themselves from the meeting while the discussion takes place. In utilising the authority and carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them, officers must comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct for their partner organisation where appropriate regarding conflicts of interest and where not conflicting with the Code of Conduct for the ADP.

2.1 General

These Standing Orders regulate the conduct and proceedings of the ADP Committee. They do not apply to the meetings of any of the subgroups unless they wish to adopt them.

2.2 Membership

It is vital that the ADP includes a full range of communities and partners to ensure that their work is: -

Fully informed by lived experience and wider community interests.

Supported by local services and allow drugs and alcohol support and advice to be part of all services business.

Informed by local strategies and investments/resources of local partnerships as set out in the Partnership Agreement.

Membership of the ADP Committee include: -

- ADP Chair
- ADP Vice Chair
- ADP Lead Officer
- Chair of Lived and Living Experience Committee
- Chair of Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting Committee
- Chair of Resources and Governance Committee
- Representative of North, Central and South Community Forums
- Representative of Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action
- Representative of Aberdeenshire Council
- Representative of Police Scotland
- Representative of NHS Grampian
- Representative of Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- Representative of the Aberdeenshire Community Justice Partnership
- Representative of Scottish Prison Service
- Representative of Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Representative of Scottish Ambulance Service
- The Chief Finance and Business Officer of the Health and Social Care Partnership
- Independent Chair of Aberdeenshire Adult and Children's Protection Committees

Membership will be reviewed regularly by the Chair to reflect changes in local arrangements.

If and when a person ceases to hold the office or post, because of which he or she became a member of the ADP Committee then that person shall cease to be a member of the ADP Committee. In that case, the Chair will contact the relevant organisation to ask for an alternative nomination from that organisation.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting of the ADP Committee, the relevant partner should use its best endeavours to arrange for a suitably experienced substitute. The substitute voting member may vote on decisions put to that meeting but may not preside over the meeting.

2.3 Removal of Members

If a member has not attended three consecutive meetings of the ADP Committee and their absence was not due to illness or other reasonable cause, as may be determined by the ADP Committee, the ADP Committee may remove the member from office by providing the member with one month's notice in writing. The Chair will contact the relevant organisation to ask for a further nomination from that organisation.

If a member acts in a way which brings the ADP Committee into disrepute or in a way which is inconsistent with the proper performance of the functions of the ADP Committee, the ADP Committee may remove the member from office with effect from such date as the ADP Chair may specify in writing. Should any member who has been removed from the ADP Committee wish to appeal their removal, they should contact the ADP Chair in the first instance.

If a member representing a partner organisation ceases to be a member of that partner organisation, they are to be removed from membership of the ADP Committee with effect from the day they cease to represent that organisation.

A partner organisation may remove and replace members nominated to the ADP Committee by providing four weeks notice in writing to the member and the ADP Committee.

2.4 Chair and Vice-Chair

A partner nominated from the partner duty holders, with the skill and profile to engage with partners, provide leadership for the partnership and with the time and commitment that the role requires shall be appointed to the position of Chair by the ADP Committee for a period of two years, but this may be extended by mutual agreement. The Chair will appoint a Vice Chair on behalf of rights holders.

The Chair will preside at every meeting of the ADP that he or she attends.

In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair shall preside at the meeting of the ADP.

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the members present at the meeting shall choose another member to preside. In the event of an equality of votes, the decision as to who shall preside shall be determined by lot.

Should either the Chair or Vice Chair leave the post during the term of office, the partner duty holders will decide on a new Chair or Vice Chair as appropriate.

2.5 Duties and responsibilities of the Chair

At all times during a Meeting, Members will respect the authority of the Chair. If the Chair speaks, any Member who is speaking to the Meeting will stop.

The Chair's duty is to preserve order at the Meeting and ensure that Members are given a fair hearing. If two or more Members try to speak at the same time, the Chair will decide who is to speak first. The Chair will manage all instances of conflict resolution.

The Chair will decide all matters of order, admissibility, and urgency and that ruling will be final.

The Chair will ensure that the decision of the Meeting is clear about all matters which form the business of the Meeting.

The Chair will also chair meetings of the ADP Executive Meeting.

The Chair will escalate and progress discussions with local partners/responsible officers where a priority is not being delivered to ensure a process is in place to ensure ADP contribution to aligned plans is being progressed.

The Chair is authorised to take a decision on any matter, which in their judgement should be taken by the ADP Committee but by reason of special urgency it is impractical to convene a meeting of the ADP Committee. Any decision taken by the Chair in this circumstance must only be taken following consultation with the Executive Group. Any decision taken by the Chair in this way will be reported back to the next meeting of the ADP Committee.

2.6 Ordinary and special meetings

The ADP Committee shall meet quarterly each financial year and agree a timetable of meetings in advance.

The ADP Chair may amend or adjust that timetable of ordinary meetings from time to time.

The Chair may change the date and/or time of an ordinary meeting and shall determine whether the meeting is fully virtual or whether it is fully in person though generally meetings in spring and summer will be held in person and meetings in autumn and winter shall be held virtually.

The Chair may call a special meeting of the ADP Committee at any time by delivering an agenda stipulating the business to be transacted. For the avoidance of doubt, this can be by electronic means.

2.7 Calling meetings

For all Meetings an agenda will be issued at least 7 days in advance by email and will: - a. Detail the time and, where relevant, the place of the Meeting together with access arrangements where appropriate; and b. If it is a Special Meeting, name the Members who have called the Meeting. The agenda will be sent electronically by secure e-mail to the e-mail address which the external member has given in writing to the Chair.

Reports and other supporting papers shall be attached to the notice and delivered with it.

Only the business specified in the notice shall be transacted at the meeting, unless an item of business is notified to the Chair before the meeting with a request for it to be added to the agenda, and the Chair rules to allow it to be considered on the ground of urgency. The Chair shall state the reason for such a ruling and the minute shall record the ruling and the reason given.

If the Chair rules that the matter is not urgent, it shall be included as an item for the next ordinary meeting, unless it is withdrawn.

2.8 Public access to meetings and meeting papers

Access to meeting papers will be made available to the public through the internet.

Every Meeting of the ADP Committee will be open to the public to attend and observe but not to take part.

No person or body shall be permitted, without the permission of the ADP Committee, to tape record, photograph, video, film or use any other form of electronic, digital, or computerised sound or visual recording system during any Meeting.

However, the public must be excluded from a Meeting when an item of business is being considered if it is likely, because of the business itself or what might be said at the Meeting, that confidential information (as meant by the relevant law) would be given to members of the public. Papers which contain confidential information will not be available to the public.

The ADP Committee may decide to exclude the public when it is considering an item of business if it is likely, because of the business itself or what might be said at the Meeting, that exempt information would be given to members of the public. The types of information that are classed as exempt can be found in section 15 of these Standing Orders. Exempt papers will not be available for the public nor published online.

The minute of the meeting will record the reason for any decision by the ADP Committee to exclude the public from a meeting.

2.9 Quorum

There must be a minimum number of Members present at a Meeting. This is known as the quorum. The quorum for each Meeting shall be one-half of the whole number of the membership and must include representatives from both the public sector and lived and living experience.

If, 10 minutes after the time set for the start of a Meeting a quorum is not present, the Meeting will be abandoned, and the Chair will record that no business was considered because there was no quorum.

If at any time after the start of a quorate Meeting there is a question about whether there continues to be a quorum, the Chair will, after allowing an interval of 10 minutes, count the number of Members present. If a quorum is not present, the Meeting will be adjourned to another time on the same day or to another date and time as the Chair may decide then or afterwards. The Chair may direct that any business which has not been disposed of due to a lack of quorum may be dealt with at such adjourned Meeting.

If a member withdraws from a meeting, then he or she shall not be counted for the purposes of a quorum. If there is as a result no quorum for that item of business, then the item shall not be considered and shall be carried forward to the next ordinary meeting unless it is withdrawn.

2.10 Conduct of members

If a member persistently misbehaves by disregarding rulings by the Chair, or behaves improperly or offensively, or wilfully obstructs the business of the Meeting, the Chair may take the following courses of action sequentially –

Warn the Member about their behaviour.

Adjourn the Meeting for a short time as seems reasonable to the Chair in the circumstances.

Following adjournment, if the behaviour persists, tell the Member not to speak during the remainder of the debate on the item being discussed.

Move that the Member should not speak again during the Meeting. The motion, if seconded, will be decided without discussion; if the motion is carried the Member will not speak again during that Meeting.

Move that the Member should be suspended for the remainder of the Meeting. The motion, if seconded, will be decided without discussion; if the motion is carried, the Member will leave the Meeting immediately.

If there is disorder at any Meeting, the Chair will be entitled to adjourn the Meeting to another time the same day, or to another date and time as she/he may decide then or afterwards.

2.11 Adjournment

The Chair may adjourn a Meeting for a reasonable interval if she/he decides there is a good reason to do so.

At the end of any item of business, the Meeting may be adjourned for a reasonable interval or to another date as agreed by the Members at the Meeting, failing which as determined by the Chair at the Meeting. If it is decided at the Meeting to adjourn, the remaining business will stand over until a resumed Meeting. Proceedings shall start at the point at which they were broken off at the adjournment. A fresh notice of the Meeting will not require to be issued.

2.12 Items of business and debate

The ADP Committee may reach consensus on an item of business without taking a formal vote however all members should indicate their position explicitly to ensure all voices are heard. Consensus, in respect of any item under consideration, will be taken to constitute a majority rather than unanimity and the Chair will be the sole judge of consensus in respect of any item of business. Where no consensus is met, the ADP Committee may either take a decision by the casting of lots or instruct the ADP Lead to bring back a further report with such clarification as may be appropriate to a future meeting of the ADP Committee.

2.13 Minutes

Minutes shall be prepared for meetings of the ADP Committee and issued in advance of the next quarterly meeting with the agenda.

The ADP Committee shall receive and review its minutes for agreement at its following ordinary meeting and shall thereafter be published online.

Papers will be accessible on the MS Teams Aberdeenshire ADP Committee public channel:

<https://scottish.sharepoint.com/sites/AberdeenshireADP/Shared%20Documents/ADP%20Committee/ADP%20Committee%20Papers>

2.14 Subgroups

The ADP shall appoint subgroups with specific remits as it thinks fit and shall approve the terms of reference, remit, and powers of such subgroups. These Terms of Reference can be found in Part 2 of this Handbook.

The ADP shall appoint the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and members of its subgroups. The appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Lived and Living Experience subgroup should be following recommendation from rights holders.

2.15 Exempt Information

These paragraphs will be referenced at the foot of reports to indicate the reason for exemption.

1 Information relating to a particular employee, former employee, or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an officeholder under, the ADP or any partner thereof where the information relates to that person in one of those capacities.

2 Information relating to any occupier or former occupier of, or applicant for, accommodation provided by or at the expense of the ADP.

3 Information relating to any applicant for, or recipient or former recipient of, any service or financial assistance provided by the ADP.

4 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person or body.

5 Information relating to anything done or to be done in respect of any person for the purposes of any of the matters referred to in section 27(1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (providing reports on and supervision of certain persons).

6 The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the ADP, or a partner on behalf of the ADP, under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services, provided that disclosure to the public of the amount there referred to would be likely to give an advantage to a person entering into, or seeking to enter into, a contract with the authority in respect of the property, goods or services.

7 Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the ADP, or a partner on behalf of the ADP during negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services, if disclosure to the public of the terms would prejudice the authority in those for any other negotiations concerning the property or goods or services.

8 Any advice received, information obtained or action to be taken in connection with— (a) any legal proceedings by or against the authority, or (b) the determination of any matter affecting the authority, (whether, in either case, proceedings have been commenced or otherwise). Any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation, or prosecution of crime.

Part 2 – ADP Substructure



3 ADP Executive Group Terms of Reference

3.1 Name

The Executive Group of the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP)

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of the ADP Executive Group is to provide leadership and strategic direction to the ADP and its subgroups. The Group will:

- Oversee the work and progress of the subgroups and ensure that appropriate governance processes are in place and functioning effectively.
- Support the Chair in creating agendas for formal meetings.
- Maintain an overview of budgets and expenditures ensuring the engagement of critical stakeholders.
- Ensure effective ADP decision-making by endorsing or challenging recommendations of sub-groups.
- Formulating options for decision-making by the ADP Committee.
- Exceptionally, being consulted by the Chair, which can be electronically, on making urgent decisions where it is impractical to hold a meeting on behalf of the ADP Committee.
- Commission work of the ADP Support Team.
- Approve the bi-annual ADP reports to the IJB and reports to Scottish Government on collective progress against strategic priorities¹.

3.3 Method of Working

The Group will meet bi-monthly or as called by the ADP Chair. Group papers will be accessible on the MS Teams Aberdeenshire ADP private 'Exec Channel':

<https://scottish.sharepoint.com/sites/AberdeenshireADP-Exec/Shared Documents>

3.4 Membership

The membership of the Executive Group is:

- ADP Chair,
- ADP Vice-chair,
- Chairs of the Resources and Governance, Lived and Living Experienced, and Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting sub-groups,
- H&SCP Chief Officer Representative,
- H&SCP Finance Officer, and
- ADP Lead Officer.

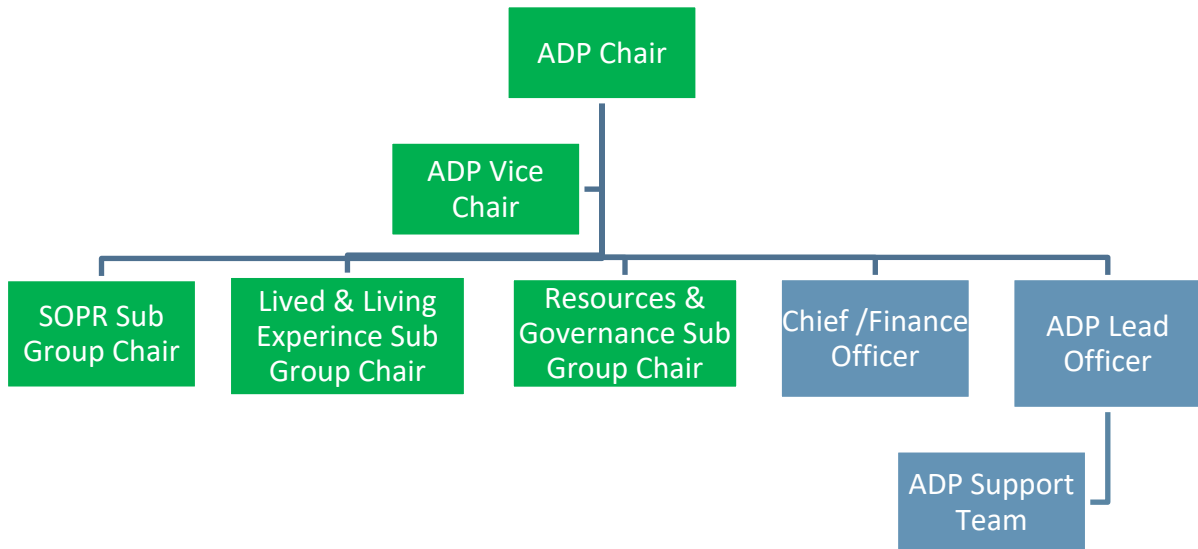
Additional members may be co-opted as needed.

Recommendations of subgroups, once all subgroups have been consulted and views shared on a template report, will be presented to the Executive Group for

¹ These reports are distinct from reports the H&SCP Chief Officer may also present to the IJB on matters relating to HSCP services relating to alcohol and drugs.

consideration. In the event of disagreement, a vote will be held to either endorse the recommendation, refer it back to the subgroup for further information, or exceptionally refer it to the full ADP Committee.

Voting rights are held by the ADP Chair, ADP Vice-chair, and the Chairs of the three sub-groups as illustrated by the green boxes below.



3.5 ADP Support Team

The ADP are supported by the ADP Support Team, as narrated in the Partnership Agreement.

4 Lived and Living Experience Subgroup Terms of Reference (“LLE”)

4.1 Purpose

Provide an overview to ADP Committee and other subgroups of community experience & priorities in Aberdeenshire and propose, in collaboration with other relevant agencies, actions to continuously improve the lived experience of past & present substance users and those affected by them, reducing harms associated with substance use across Aberdeenshire. The LLE subgroup engages with a range of groups including:

- Community forums
- Patient participation groups
- Youth Participation Networks
- Stakeholder members on boards and committees
- Specific engagement activity around topics

4.2 Remit

- Support the development and operation of a wider community-led Aberdeenshire Lived & Living Experience panel meeting quarterly to share experiences of substance use, its effects and treatment within Aberdeenshire Community.
- Collate and review available evidence of the experience of all those living with the effects of present or past substance use within Aberdeenshire.
- Provide an overview to ADP of Lived & Living experience & priorities in Aberdeenshire.
- Develop practices and channels enabling the communication of National & Local Government Policies, ADP Delivery Plan initiatives and outcomes throughout the Lived & Living Experience community.
- Represent Community Lived & Living Experience concerns and issues to ADP (and to statutory and third sector service providers)
- Develop recommendations to address community comments and concerns and issues in collaboration with relevant ADP Partners
- Provide feedback to other subgroups on proposals and formulate recommendations to the ADP Committee.
- The Chair will represent the Subgroup on the Executive Group.

4.3 Membership

Significant ‘elected’ Lived & Living Experience membership.

- Forums (Recovery) – 2+ (Chair currently from within this group)
- Youth representation - 2
- Living experience (In (early) Service) – 2
- Prison population - 1
- Families - 1+

Representative Front-line Workers

- 3rd sector providers - 2
-

- Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs - 1
- Health & Social Care Partnership – 1
- Front-line Emergency Services

Community Learning and Development Support – a suitably skilled Community Learning & Development worker to support the subgroup's development and capacity building.

Other agencies may attend dependent on agenda items and at the discretion of the Chair.

4.4 Meetings

The subgroup will meet regularly (e.g., 6 times per annum) with consistency of representation but a recognition of the capacity limitations of many within the Lived & Living Experience community.

Timing and location of meetings specifically focus on the availability and access issues of members living within the community.

Meetings are structured to focus on:

- 50% experience review,
- 25% formulation of recommended actions,
- 25% developments in policy and implementation.

Reporting to and from the subgroup in clear, everyday language formatted to enable accessibility to community members.

Papers will be accessible on the MS Teams Lived and Living Experience Subgroup public channel:

<https://scottish.sharepoint.com/sites/AberdeenshireADP/Shared%20Documents/Community%20Lived%20and%20Living%20Experience%20subcommittee>

4.5 Confidentiality

All member of the Subgroup will be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of relevant documents. The Chairperson will rule where necessary to advise on the confidentiality of documents with support from the ADP Support Team if required or appropriate.

4.6 Declaration of Interests

Any member of the LLE subgroup who has a personal financial interest, a business interest or any other direct or indirect private or personal interest in a matter under discussion should, as soon as it is practicable, declare that interest and take no part in the discussion of the matter. The member should absent themselves from the meeting while the discussion takes place. In utilising the authority and carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them, officers must comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct for their partner organisation regarding conflicts of interest and where not conflicting with the Code of Conduct for the ADP.

5 Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting Group

5.1 Purpose

The aim for this subgroup is to provide assurance to the ADP Committee that there is a robust reporting framework for the development of and monitoring thereafter of strategic outcomes, including activity of services, delivery plan and partner contributions. The group makes recommendations to the ADP Committee following consultation and discussion with the other subgroups and following discussion by the ADP Executive Group.

5.2 Remit

- Support the implementation of psychological and trauma informed integrated drug and alcohol services.
- Design and review of the Delivery Plan
- Monitoring progress against the Strategic Outcomes / Delivery Plan
- Monitoring reporting requirements and ensuring compliance.
- Ensuring local understanding through being data led and local intelligence informed, and compliance of national priorities, expectations, and requirements.
- Provide feedback to other subgroups on proposals and formulate recommendations to the ADP Committee.
- Ensure a quality improvement approach to service planning and delivery which is accountable to local communities.
- Ensure clear monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place and reports published for local communities, local governance structures and Scottish Government to show progress in delivering the strategy and effective use of funds.

5.3 Membership:

- Membership of the ADP subgroup will include representation from each of the following:
 - Consultant in Public Health
 - Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug
 - Clinical Lead
 - Aberdeenshire Housing
 - Community Safety Partnership
 - HSCP Business Services
 - Aberdeenshire Lived and Living Experience
 - Community Justice Partnership
 - Police Scotland
 - Children and education services
 - Health Intelligence
 - Tackling Poverty and Inequality
 - Pharmacy
 - MAT / Daisy data support
 - Scottish Prison Service
-

- Prison Health
- Also, in attendance at ADP meetings will be representatives from the HSCP or Aberdeenshire Council as required. Other organisations may be invited to join the subgroup as and when a need is identified to extend the membership and with agreement of partnership members.

When joining the ADP subgroup each member will be required to formally nominate a named representative to attend subgroup meetings if the member is not available to attend, members should ensure an appropriate level of seniority is maintained when people are asked to deputise for core members of the group.

- All members and nominated representatives should have a detailed understanding of the alcohol and drugs agenda, how this fits within their service and is of significant seniority to act and make decisions on behalf of their service.
- Members and nominated representatives will be responsible for taking issues between the ADP subgroup and their organisations/forums for information, comment, or action as appropriate.
- Members of the subgroup may, from time to time, arrange for other individuals to attend meetings of the partnership in a supporting or advisory capacity with the approval of the Chairperson. Other officers or individuals may be invited to attend subgroup meetings to provide information or advice about specific matters at the discretion of the Chairperson.

5.4 Chair

The subgroup Chairperson will be the Grampian Public Health Consultant with a lead for alcohol and drugs. The Chairperson shall preside at subgroup meetings and in his/her absence the group shall appoint a Chairperson for that meeting only from its members.

The Chairperson may nominate an additional representative to attend meetings and represent the host organisation.

5.5 Chair Responsibilities

- To agree the agenda of ADP subgroup meetings
- To decide on matters of order, competency, relevance and conduct and keep meetings focussed on the agenda.
- To ensure that a fair opportunity is given to all members of the group to express their views on any matter of business.
- To preserve order during the meeting
- To represent the subgroup at the Executive Group meetings.

5.6 Meetings

5.6.1 Frequency of meetings

The ADP Strategic Outcomes, Performance, and Reporting subgroup will normally meet (face to face or virtually) no less than four times per year. An extraordinary meeting may be called, if necessary, by the Chairperson. The Chairperson may

cancel a scheduled meeting because of lack of business, inconvenience to members or unavailability of members. The dates of the meetings will be set, on an annual basis, for the forthcoming year.

5.6.2 Notice of Meeting

The agenda and papers of the ADP subgroup meetings will be sent electronically to members not less than five clear working days before the date of the meeting. From time to time this deadline may be relaxed, in which case, members shall be informed electronically of the delay and the expected date for circulation of papers.

5.6.3 Agenda

The agenda of the ADP subgroup will normally be decided by the Chairperson. Members of the ADP subgroup will be invited to propose agenda items not less than 15 working days prior to the meeting date which are relevant to the priorities of the ADP subgroup. Partner organisations proposing agenda items will be responsible to produce all relevant reports and papers relating to that item no less than seven working days prior to the meeting.

5.6.4 Declaration of Interests

Any member of the ADP subgroup who has a personal financial interest, a business interest or any other direct or indirect private or personal interest in a matter under discussion should, as soon as it is practicable, declare that interest and take no part in the discussion of the matter. The member should absent themselves from the meeting while the discussion takes place. In utilising the authority and carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them, officers must comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct for their partner organisation regarding conflicts of interest and where not conflicting with the Code of Conduct for the ADP.

5.6.5 Minutes

The draft minute of the ADP subgroup meeting will be prepared for the approval of the Chairperson, before being circulated electronically and submitted for final approval to the next meeting of the ADP subgroup. Following approval at the following ADP subgroup meeting the minutes will be distributed to partner organisations as appropriate.

Papers will be accessible on the MS Teams Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting Group public channel:

<https://scottish.sharepoint.com/sites/AberdeenshireADP/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Outcomes%2C%20Performance%2C%20Reporting%20Sub%2FCommittee%20Papers/>

5.6.6 Absence

In an event of a member of the ADP subgroup being unable to attend, apologies for absence should be sent to the contact on the meeting invite.

5.7 Confidentiality

All member of the ADP will be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of relevant documents. The Chairperson will rule where necessary to advise on the confidentiality of documents. The subgroup will operate in line with the requirements of GDPR.

5.8 Review of the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by members of the ADP subgroup every two years unless significant changes in governance require more frequent review.

6 Resources and Governance Group

6.1 Purpose

- To provide assurance to the ADP Committee that robust governance arrangements are applied in relation to the allocation of ADP resources.
- Monitoring of finance sheet to ensure spend is adhering to financial regulations and reflects the spend agreed by the ADP Committee
- Supporting commissioning process when required
- Ensuring projects are reviewed in time for continuation of funding applications.
- Consideration of funding applications or identification of evidence-based gaps in provision in Aberdeenshire.
- To make recommendations to the ADP Committee about the disbursement of ADP funds.

6.2 Remit

- To maintain a Finance Sheet which ensures that resources and governance arrangements are up to date and compliant with regulations and legislation.
 - To support the maintenance of an accurate and current ADP financial position.
 - To contribute to the Financial Report to be submitted on a bi-annual basis to the Integration Joint Board.
 - To receive and consider the allocation of resource requirements identified by the Strategic, Outcomes, Performance and Reporting Subgroup (SOPR) and Lived and Living Experienced Subgroup (LLE) and received from partners and stakeholders. Apply appropriate governance to the consideration of resource allocation. To thereafter submit a recommendation report to the Executive Group in the first instance and then onwards to the ADP Committee for determination.
 - To receive and consider any allocation of funding which has been received by any partner agency through an ADP funding application. Carry out a review of this application in collaboration with the LLE Subgroup and SOPR Subgroup. To ensure governance arrangements are in place inclusive of review arrangements for any funding which is recommended in this category and is approved by the ADP Committee.
 - To expedite through Quick Quote resource investment which meets an immediate, dynamic, or emerging need by collaboration with SOPR and LLE Subgroups and following approval for spend from the ADP Committee.
 - Receive and monitor reports from grant providers which should be consistent with the terms of the grant arrangement, and which reflect consistency with strategic priorities.
 - To ensure that investments have time frames which comply with appropriate grant or contracted arrangements.
 - Facilitate the review of grant arrangements, receive the recommendations of these reviews, and consider continued investment based on the fulfilment of identified grant outcomes which meet local and national strategic priorities and local delivery plans. Collaboration with SOPR and LLE subgroups.
 - Facilitate the review of partner/service/organisation providers which are funded through Corra and consider the recommendation of that review and consider continued investment based on the fulfilment of identified service/project
-

outcomes which meet local and national strategic priorities and local delivery plans. Collaboration with SOPR and LLE in this process. Thereafter make recommendation to ADP Committee for decision.

- Review all other ADP commitments (such as social marketing/Learning and Development) in collaboration with SOPR and LLE Subgroups, be informed by local delivery needs and national priorities. Prepare a recommendation to the Executive Group in collaboration with SOPR and LLE about resource levels and nature of commitments for final decision by the ADP Committee.
- Work in collaboration with the Chief Finance and Business Officer of the Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure timeous and accurate transfer arrangements are in place between NHS Grampian and the Health and Social Care Partnership for delivery of statutory services and contracts.
- Receive information from finance colleagues regarding underspend/overspend projections to ensure appropriate action is taken in response and report to the ADP Committee.
- Collate information from Scottish Government regarding funding allocations and present in a transparent and coordinated way which provides clarity about purpose, timeframes and reporting to the ADP Committee.
- Ensure that clear and accessible information is available regarding the process relating to resource allocations. Establish an application process which includes a funding application form and reporting template.
- Ensure that clear and accessible information is available regarding the process relating to Contracts and Commissioning.
- Provide feedback to other subgroups on proposals and formulate recommendations to the ADP Committee.

6.3 Membership:

- Health and Social Care Partnership (currently)
- Commissioning and Contracts Team
- NHS Finance
- HSCP Finance
- Council Finance
- ADP Support Team
- Administration

Other organisations/ partners including those with lived and living experience may be invited to join the subgroup as and when a need is identified to extend the membership either generally or for specific issues and with agreement of subgroup members.

When joining the ADP subgroup each member will be required to formally nominate a named representative to attend subgroup meetings if the member is not available to attend, members should ensure an appropriate level of seniority is maintained when people are asked to deputise for core members of the group.

Members and nominated representatives will be responsible for taking issues between the Resources and Governance subgroup and their organisations/forums for information, comment, or action as appropriate.

Members of the subgroup may, from time to time, arrange for other individuals to attend meetings of the partnership in a supporting or advisory capacity with the approval of the Chair. Other officers or individuals may be invited to attend subgroup meetings to provide information or advice about specific matters at the discretion of the Chair.

The subgroup Chair shall preside at subgroup meetings and in his/her absence the group shall appoint a Chair for that meeting only from its members.

6.4 Chair

The Chair is appointed by the ADP Committee and will remain in position for two years.

6.5 Chairs Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Chair are:

- To agree the agenda of the Resources and Governance Subgroup meeting
- To decide on matters of order, competency, relevance and conduct and keep meetings focussed on the agenda.
- To seek guidance on any matter which relates to governance arrangements to ensure robust and transparent compliance with legislation and policy.
- To ensure that a fair opportunity is given to all members of the group to express their views on any matter of business.
- Following the occurrence of each subgroup, the Chair will attend the Executive Group meeting at which the actions and priority subgroup agenda items will be presented and coordination with other subgroups will take place in partnership with ADP Lead Officer and ADP Chair.

6.6 Meetings

6.6.1 Frequency of meetings

The Resources and Governance Subgroup will meet (virtually) between ADP Committees. Two meetings between quarterly ADP Committees are desirable. An extraordinary meeting may be called, if necessary, by the Chair. The Chair may cancel a scheduled meeting because of lack of business, inconvenience to members or unavailability of members.

6.6.2 Notice of Meeting

The agenda and papers of the Resources and Governance Subgroup meetings will be sent electronically to members not less than five clear working days before the date of the meeting. From time to time this deadline may be relaxed, in which case, members shall be informed electronically of the delay and the expected date for circulation of papers.

6.6.3 Agenda

The agenda of the Resources and Governance Subgroup will normally be decided by the Chair. Members will be invited to propose agenda items. Partner organisations proposing agenda items will be responsible to produce all relevant reports and papers relating to that item no less than seven working days prior to the meeting. A standing agenda is likely given the purpose of the group. Resources requests/funding applications received from the other Subgroups or from partners/stakeholders will be tabled at the Resources and Governance Subgroup for consideration and identification of governance requirements.

6.6.4 Declaration of Interests

Any member of the Resources and Governance Subgroup who has a financial interest, a business interest or any other direct or indirect private or personal interest in a matter under discussion should, as soon as it is practicable, declare that interest and take no part in the discussion of the matter. The member should absent themselves from the meeting while the discussion takes place. In utilising the authority and carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them, officers must comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct for their partner organisation regarding conflicts of interest.

6.6.5 Minutes

The draft minute of the Resources and Governance Subgroup meeting will be prepared for the approval of the Chair, before being circulated electronically and submitted for final approval to the next meeting of the subgroup. Following approval at the following subgroup meeting, the minutes will be distributed to partner organisations as appropriate. Minutes of the Resources and Governance Subgroup meetings will be made available to ADP members.

Papers will be accessible on the MS Teams Resources and Governance Group public channel:

<https://scottish.sharepoint.com/sites/AberdeenshireADP/Shared%20Documents/Resources%20and%20Governance%20subcommittee/Committee%20Papers>

6.6.6 Absence

In an event of a member of the Resources and Governance Subgroup being unable to attend, apologies for absence should be sent to the contact on the meeting invite.

6.7 Confidentiality

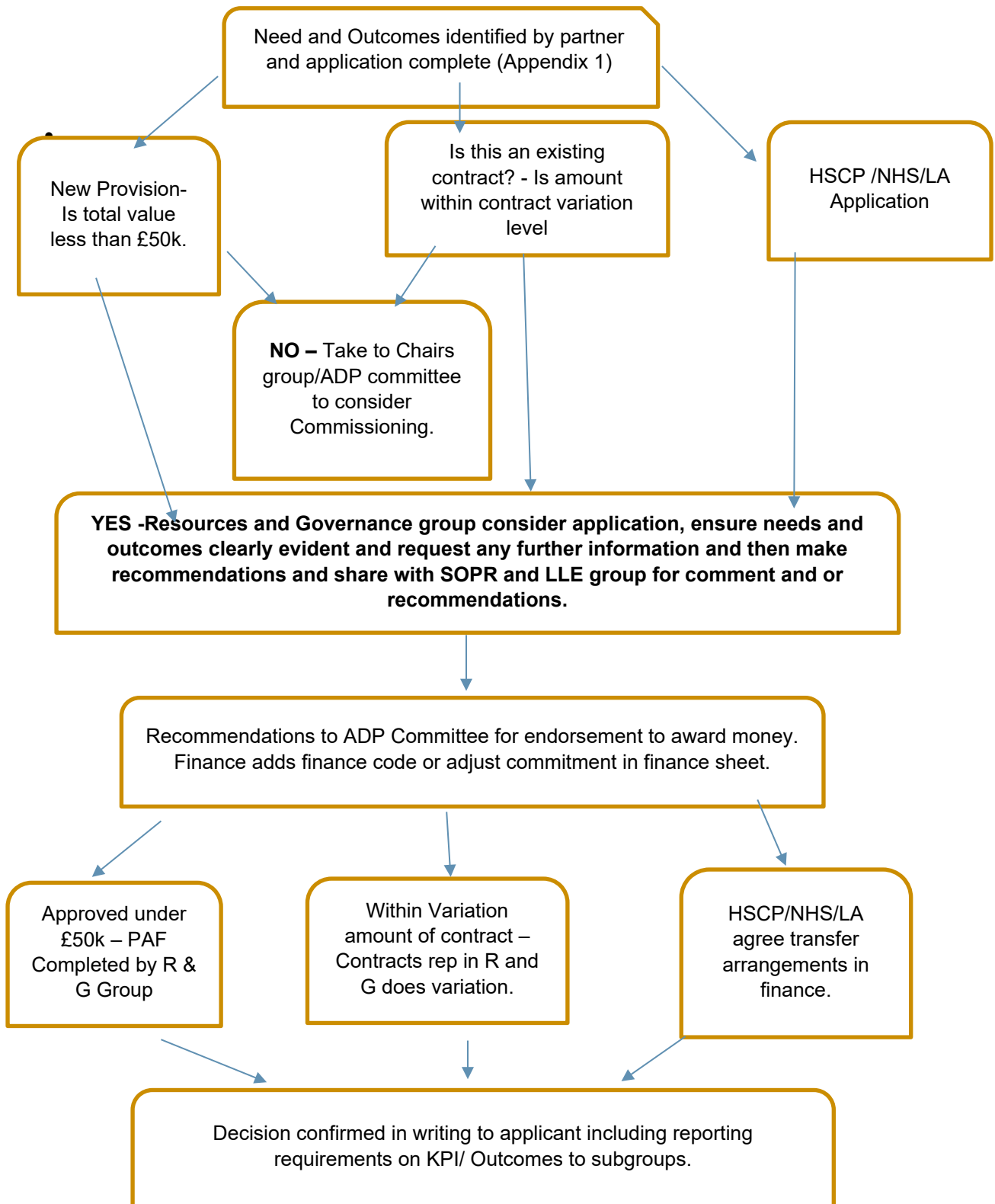
All members of the Resources and Governance Subgroup will be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of relevant documents and discussions. The Chair will decide where necessary to advise on the confidentiality of documents.

The Resources and Governance Subgroup will operate in line with the requirements of GDPR.

6.8 Review of the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by members of the Resources and Governance Subgroup every two years unless significant changes in governance require more frequent review.

6.9 Process for Financial and governance on ADP spend.



7 ADP Code of Conduct

The Aberdeenshire ADP is committed to creating a safe and welcoming environment for addressing issues pertaining to alcohol and other drugs and recovery in Aberdeenshire. To work together effectively the ADP have agreed to adopt the nationally recognised Nolan principles which are: -

- Selflessness – A duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest and not to gain financial or material benefit for myself, family, or friends.
- Integrity – Not being subject to any financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations that would reasonably influence you during the performance of duties.
- Objectivity – Making decisions solely on merit, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for reward or benefits.
- Accountability – Accountable to the public for decisions and actions, along with the duty to consider issues on their merits and taking account of the views of others, ensuring the ADP uses resources prudently and in accordance with the law.
- Openness – Duty to be open as possible about decisions and actions, giving reasons for decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest demands it.
- Honesty – duty to act honestly and declare any private interests relating to public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership – Duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public trust and confidence in the integrity of the ADP.
- Duty (Public Service) – A duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and public trust placed in the holder. A duty to act in the interests of the ADP and in accordance with the core functions and duties of the ADP.
- Respect – Respect all other Board Members and those they meet and the role they play, always treating them with courtesy.

Bearing this in mind, the partners of the ADP agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct in all their dealings with the ADP including on subgroups. The Code of Conduct for the ADP is based on the Code of Conduct for Forum members.

ADP members understand that the public has a high expectation of those who serve on the boards of public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. By accepting their role as a partner on the ADP, they will always seek to meet those expectations by ensuring that they conduct myself in accordance with this Code.

All ADP members, including those on subgroups, will: -

- Be respectful and non-judgemental and open about people's backgrounds, experiences, and presentations.
 - Listen actively.
 - Be mindful in allowing others to finish their verbal contributions and pay attention to all speakers.
 - Be respectful of all views even where there is disagreement.
-

- Aim to work together with all partners constructively and collaboratively acting fairly, honestly and in good faith.
- Be open and honest about aspirations, expectations, and constraints.
- Respect privacy and GDPR requirements
- Be aware of use of language.
- Handle disagreement constructively.

It is the nature of the ADP to bring together people from a wide spectrum of beliefs, life experiences and views. Therefore, it is vital that discussions and decisions include and acknowledge a diversity of opinions and experiences, and that the ADP ensure that wilfully inappropriate behaviour or harassment of any kind, is not tolerated.

7.1 Equality

All partners of the ADP are equal partners, and there should be no power imbalances, either actual or perceived between community members and service representatives. Partners will work together to achieve a culture of coproduction where lived and living experience is valued. It is the membership's collective responsibility to ensure that a safe, creative, productive, and welcoming space is created that welcomes diversity.

7.2 Respect

All partners of the ADP must treat one another with respect and make a valuable contribution.

ADP members may not always agree, but must always be openness to all views, whether they agree or not. Frustration cannot turn into a personal attack. It is important to remember where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not productive, and that the meeting conduct and adherence to this Terms of Reference are anchored in the ADP culture that members commit to.

7.3 Behaviour

All members will ensure that their behaviour is appropriate and commit not to discriminate on any grounds, but particularly: -

- gender,
- gender identity and expression,
- sexual orientation,
- disability,
- physical appearance,
- body size,
- race,
- religion.

The ADP members will not harass any other member. Harassment and inappropriate behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental illness, substance use, physical appearance, body size, race, culture, or religion.
- Unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs or alcohol, and employment.
- Gratuitous or off-topic sexual images or behaviour in spaces where they are not appropriate.
- Physical contact and simulated physical contact without consent or after a request to stop.
- Unwelcome sexual attention.
- Deliberate intimidation.
- Sustained disruption of discussion.
- Continued one-on-one communication after requests to cease.

7.4 Confidentiality

ADP members will not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential or private nature, without the express consent of a person or body authorised to give such consent, or unless required to do so by law. If there is no express consent, members should assume it is not given.

Confidential information can include discussions, documents, and information which is not yet public or never intended to be public, and information deemed confidential by statute. Confidential information will only be used to undertake duties as a board member and will not be used in any way for personal advantage or to discredit the ADP (even if personal views are that the information should be publicly available)

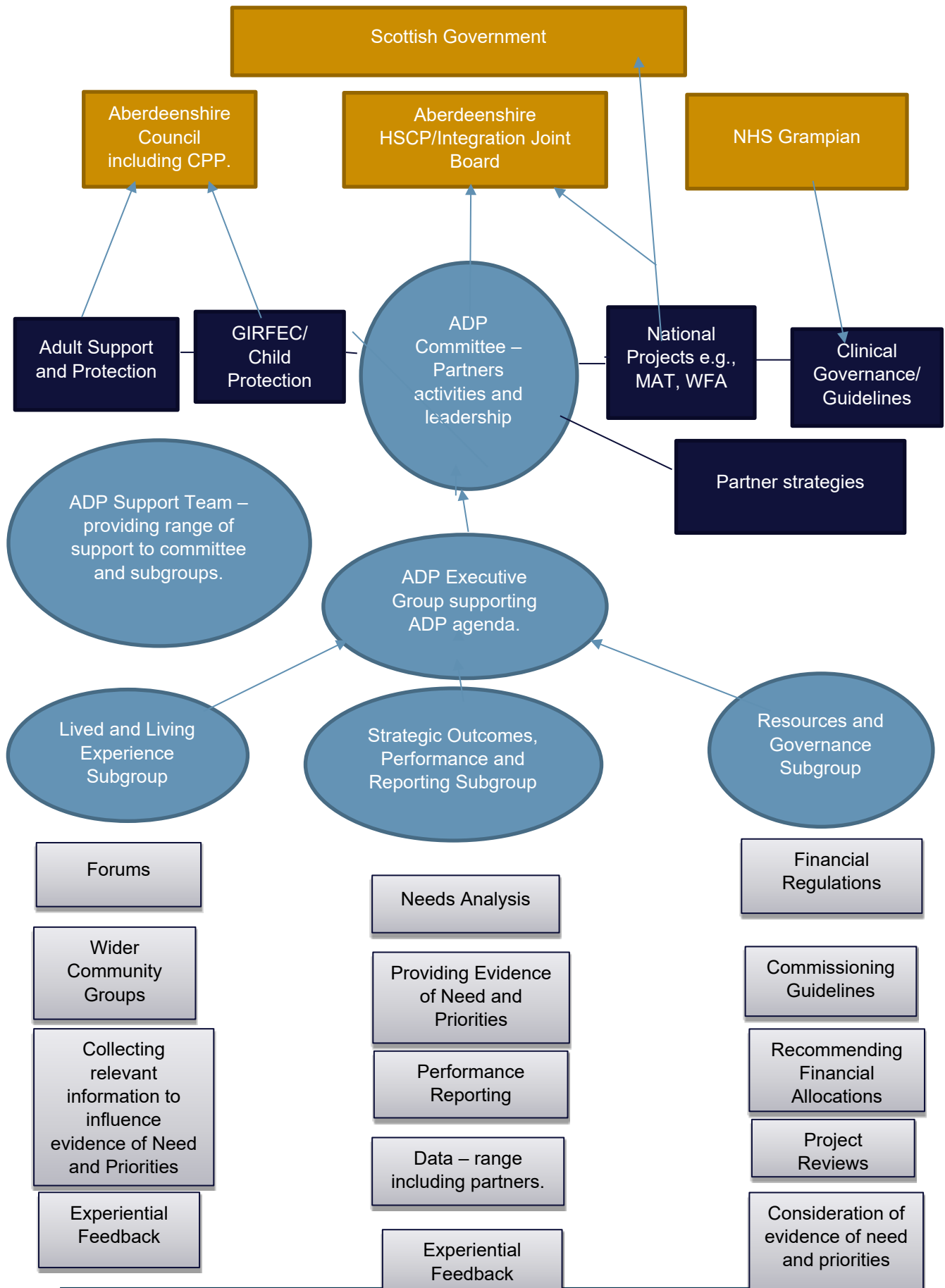
7.5 Declarations of Interest

Any member of the ADP or any subgroup who has a financial interest, a business interest or any other direct or indirect private or personal interest in a matter under discussion should, as soon as it is practicable, declare that interest and take no part in the discussion of the matter. The member should absent themselves from the meeting while the discussion takes place. In utilising the authority and carrying out the responsibilities delegated to them, officers must comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct for their partner organisation regarding conflicts of interest.

7.6 Collective Responsibility

All members of the ADP, including subgroups, will respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that once the Board has decided, all will support that decision, even if partners did not agree with it or vote for it.

8 Appendix 1 - Organogram of ADP structure and reporting lines



The preceding page includes an organogram illustrating the ADP structure and the reporting and monitoring lines. The key to that organogram is as follows: -





APPENDIX 3

Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership Agreement

2023

Add logos from all partners.

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1. Introduction

Aberdeenshire and Scotland more generally experience significantly higher levels of harm due to alcohol and other drugs and health inequalities than other parts of the UK and Europe. Preventing and addressing health and societal harm from alcohol and other drugs is a public health priority for Aberdeenshire's citizens, statutory and third sector agencies and the Scottish Government.

Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) exists to draw stakeholders together to ensure a collective strategic response to problematic substance use and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable in Aberdeenshire, so that health inequalities are reduced, and life expectancy is improved. ADPs across Scotland aim to ensure a joined-up whole-system approach to alcohol and other drugs expressly integrated and owned within the operational activities of each public service organisation and community.

This Partnership Agreement has been drafted to make explicit the governance of Aberdeenshire ADP so that all partners involved are clear about the accountability arrangements and their responsibilities when working together in the identification, pursuit, and achievement of agreed, shared outcomes. It covers the mechanics of the ADP's organisation and working relationships and is quite distinct from what partners collectively aim to achieve which is described within Aberdeenshire's Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy and national strategies such as Scotland's Alcohol and Drug Strategy, Rights Respect Recovery, and the Alcohol Framework 2018.

Scottish Government and COSLA expect ADPs to lead local implementation of national alcohol and drug policy. These expectations are laid out in the overarching national Partnership Delivery Framework¹ supplemented with periodic instructions from Ministers. This partnership agreement takes account of such expectations and supersedes all previous Partnership Agreements.

This agreement sets out the Aberdeenshire ADP's approach to: -

- Strategic Planning
- Financial Arrangements
- Quality Improvement
- Governance and Oversight

¹ National Partnership Delivery Framework to Reduce the Use of and Harm from Alcohol and Other Drugs, Scottish Government and CoSLA, July 2019

2. Agreement of Partners

The partners have agreed to work together as set out in this the Partnership Agreement, which has been signed off through their internal governance processes, where relevant or appropriate and were agreed by the ADP Committee on X [anticipated 15 Sept 2023].

This agreement will apply from the commencement date of 1 Oct 2023 and shall continue on a year-to-year basis until such time that a review is requested by the sitting ADP chair, a partner or changes introduced by the Scottish Government.

This agreement shall not be regarded for any purposes as giving rise to contractual rights or liabilities but is founded on the understanding that success is dependent on continued goodwill and co-operation of Partners.



3. What is the Aberdeenshire ADP?

The ADP is a partnership of stakeholders working together to provide a collective strategic response to problematic substance use and protect the rights of the most vulnerable in Aberdeenshire.

3.1. What are the Values and Principles of the ADP?

- Treating all people with dignity, compassion, and respect, including working in a way that is anti-stigma and trauma informed.
 - Recognise and respond to the complexity of real life and the multiple needs and strengths everyone has.
 - Protect and fulfil people's human rights.
 - Recognise the importance of preventing harm and negative risk.
 - Collaboration across the system is key to developing and delivering joined-up approaches and services that reduce risk and harm and address health and other inequalities. People do not live 'single-issue lives' and single-issue services are not appropriate.
 - Promote a culture of learning, listening and reflection.
 - Use a broad evidence-base to inform our decision making including external best practice alongside internal data and qualitative insights.
 - All partners, irrespective of their size or nature will be treated equally and afforded equal opportunity of influence.
 - The ADP will account for its collective performance and efficient use of available resources.
 - Partners will account to the ADP for their contribution, implementation of agreed actions and use of ADP resources.
-

4. What does the ADP do?

The goal of the ADP is to ensure fewer people and families suffer from alcohol and other drugs so that health inequalities are reduced, and life expectancy is improved.

The ADP will work towards this goal by: -

- Ensuring a collective strategic response to problematic substance use in Aberdeenshire.
 - Promoting the human rights of rights holders affected by alcohol or other drugs.
 - Promote an anti-stigma approach to tackling problematic alcohol and substance use.
 - Enabling the active involvement of community members with a lived or living experience of alcohol or other drugs and representatives of the third sector in the work of the ADP with equal status with all other partners.
 - Conducting needs assessments to gain understanding of the local alcohol and other drug system, the difference it is making to local communities and any gaps revealed so the ADP is data and local intelligence led.
 - Publishing an evidence-based strategy to achieve collectively agreed measurable priority outcomes drawn from national strategy.
 - Clarifying partners' responsibilities in contributing to the achievement of agreed outcomes.
 - Allocating resources where necessary to ensure the delivery of priority actions designed to achieve agreed outcomes.
 - Ensuring clear governance arrangements are in place for shared, timely and effective decision making and financial allocation, accountable to local communities.
 - Ensuring a quality improvement approach to service planning and delivery which is accountable to local communities.
 - Maintaining a shared understanding of resources invested in preventing harm and reducing inequalities from alcohol and other drugs across the local system.
 - Ensuring clear monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place and reports published for local communities, local governance structures and Scottish Government to show progress in delivering the strategy and effective use of funds.
 - Account to Scottish Government for ADP resources used to support strategy implementation and the outcomes achieved.
-

5. Strategic Planning

The Alcohol and Drug strategy sets out clearly the priorities for preventing harm from drugs and alcohol in Aberdeenshire.

The ADP will publish an evidence-based strategy to achieve the collectively agreed measurable priority outcomes drawn from national strategy as approved by the ADP Committee. The ADP will use the outcomes and priority actions set by the Scottish Government, as well as the associated monitoring and evaluation plans, to support the development of our local strategy. The Aberdeenshire ADP will collate and analyse data, including, but not restricted to, from partners, to ensure that we are data and local intelligence led. The strategy will set out the agreed outcomes and will be supplemented by a delivery plan, identifying priorities and action plans. The strategy will capture not only the elements that partners will deliver on their own but will enable partners to work together collaboratively in a co-ordinated way ensuring added value.

The Alcohol and Drug Strategy Delivery Plan brings together actions that individual partners, local partnerships and the ADP collectively are working to deliver. The Delivery Plan will be clear where responsibility lies for delivery of the action and partners commit to providing regular performance updates to the ADP in line with this agreement.

In addition to working together as a partnership to develop the Strategy and Delivery Plan, partners commit to working together to deliver the plan and to monitor progress towards delivery through performance monitoring and appropriate challenge as well as working together in a solution focussed way.

The relevant statutory requirements for the local strategic plans and reporting arrangements are set out in Appendix 1.

The outcomes achieved will result from actions that sit within the plans and strategies of the partner organisations which make up the ADP membership along with other local partnerships as detailed below. Further detail on the outcomes associated with the strategic priorities, responsibility for delivery and how performance will be measured is contained within the strategy.

6. Working Arrangements with other Partnerships

Through the development and delivery of the local strategy the ADP should identify where there are shared outcomes and priorities with other local strategic partnerships and should develop shared arrangements to support delivery and negate duplication.

6.1. Community Justice Partnership

- The Chair of the Community Justice Partnership is a member of the ADP. This link is important in identifying shared outcomes and priorities.
- The Project Manager for Community Justice is a member of the Strategic Outcomes Performance and Reporting Group to ensure representation and a link to the work of the Community Justice Partnership.
- Actions related to alcohol and drugs which are included in the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) and reported on the national framework will be extracted from the Community Justice Partnership Annual Report and formally shared annually with the ADP. Quarterly updates on relevant actions within the CJOIP will also be made available as deemed appropriate by the Community Justice Partnership.

6.2. Children's Services Planning Partnership – GIRFEC Strategic Group

- A member of the GIRFEC Strategic Group is a member of the ADP which facilitates identifying shared outcomes and priorities.
- Should any of the ADP Sub-Groups require expert views or their work specifically relate to children and young people, a member of the GIRFEC group will join for those discussions and provide input as appropriate.
- These measures will ensure no duplication in the development of shared outcomes and priorities, ensuring they are incorporated in the Alcohol and Drug Strategy, ADP Delivery Plan and Children's Services Plan.

6.3. Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board

- Provide support to the work of the ADP and its governance and accountability arrangements and align Strategic Plans.
- Receive and consider a report twice per year on ADP delivery against agreed strategic priorities.
- Consider the use of directions to formalise those agreed elements of Alcohol and Drug Strategy and ADP Delivery Plan Actions relating to NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council.

6.4. Community Planning Partnership Board

- Community planning requires local public sector bodies to work together with community bodies, to improve outcomes on themes they determine are local priorities for collective action. Where reducing the use of and harms from alcohol and other drugs feature in these priorities, local Community Planning partners, defined by those members of the Community Planning Partnership, should consider how co-operation with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships can support delivery.
 - Incorporate relevant parts of the Alcohol and Drug Strategy and Delivery Plan into the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
 - Incorporate relevant parts of the Alcohol and Drug Strategy and Delivery Plan into Locality Plans
-

- Receive information from the ADP and provide support where necessary to address barriers to progress.

6.5. Executive Group for Public Protection

- Receive information from the ADP and provide support where necessary to address barriers to progress.

6.6. Adult and Children Protection Committees

- The Independent Chair of both Adult and Child Protection Committees is a member of the ADP which facilitates joint strategic working.
-

7. Financial Arrangements

The financial arrangements of the ADP are set out in this section. The aim is to work towards a shared understanding of the total investment of resources in the prevention of harm and reducing inequalities from alcohol and other drugs across the local system. This will allow the ADP to make effective decisions to invest in the delivery of outcomes and ensure appropriate scrutiny and ability to report to local governance structures and the Scottish Government.

7.1. Accountancy Support

Accountancy Support is provided by NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council as part of their partnership contribution towards the ADP. NHS Grampian will disseminate Scottish Government funding for the delivery of alcohol and drug outcomes to each IJB in an agreed and transparent way.

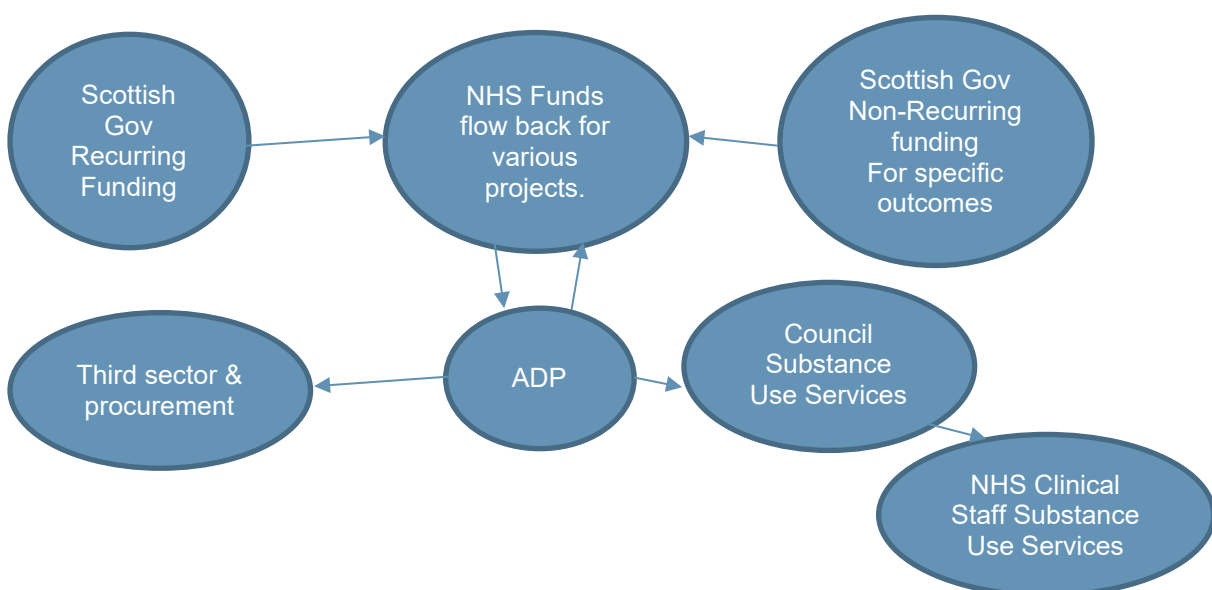
7.2. Financial Information

In addition to investment which individual partners may make in alcohol and other drug activities, the ADP oversees funds made available by Scottish Government for investment in alcohol and other drug interventions. These funds are routed to the ADP via NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board. The allocation is to be used in full to implement the ADP's strategy to achieve agreed alcohol and other drug misuse outcomes and in accordance with any funding conditions.

Sources of direct funding to the ADP include direct funding of a base budget through NHS Grampian alongside specific allocations or grant funding from the Scottish Government.

The ADP will set out an annual budget based on known funding and allocations and align the funding to its strategic priorities and operational activities. Funding directed through the ADP will be reported to the ADP Committee quarterly.

Partners may also contribute in terms of funding, resources and experience and their contributions will be captured as part of an ADP annual report.



7.3. Procurement Authority/Approval

The ADP is not a separate legal entity, and so the ADP cannot enter into any contract or agreement with a third party in its own name. The partners agree that any contracts will be procured by Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of the ADP except for the procurement of services on behalf of individual partners who will each follow their own procurement process.

Aberdeenshire Council's Financial Regulations have been adopted in relation to all procurement. Procurement services are provided by the Council's Commercial and Procurement Service. Practically this means that authorised officers can authorise procurement spend of up to £50,000, following the financial regulations, and any procurement over that level must follow the Council's procurement governance process with appropriate authority from the IJB which is appropriate as the ADP budget for the procurement would be allocated through the HSCP. The Commercial and Procurement Service will also provide support to the ADP for grant funding and the Council's financial regulations will be followed in this regard.

7.4. Financial Monitoring and Governance

Financial arrangements are in line with the financial regulations for the lead authority for contracts or spend, e.g., NHS Grampian or Aberdeenshire Council. Both organisations have arrangements in place for authorised signatories at appropriate levels from the other organisation to allow integration.

Each partner has resource related to their single service work around the alcohol and drugs agenda – each has a responsibility to provide information, where it is possible to segregate it, to the ADP Support Team and finance colleagues, quarterly who will collate the collective spend into a single document for oversight and monitoring of the total resource by the ADP.

The most up to date financial information will be reported quarterly to the ADP Committee for monitoring. Regular budget monitoring and funding reconciliation will take place.

It is recognised that some partners will be unable to accurately attribute direct spend in relation to drugs and alcohol. Police Scotland will provide updates providing context to their work and ensuring alignment with strategy. Should funding be given to Police Scotland, they would implement appropriate governance arrangements to monitor the spend.

The ADP aims to work within its financial means and to ensure all funding is used appropriately. Where an award letter directs that, if required, funding be carried forward in an earmarked reserve then it will be carried forward to the next financial year. However if no such direction is given, it will be at the discretion of the Health and Social Care Partnership's Chief Finance and Business Officer considering the overall financial position of the partnership.

Deadlines will be set at the start of each financial year considering the reporting cycles of partners.

The Resources and Governance Subgroup recommends and oversees the use of ADP funds as well as evaluating effectiveness of use. The subgroup also seeks to understand the totality of investment in alcohol and other drugs to ensure the best use of ADP delegated funds. The Subgroup will make recommendations, following consultation with both the Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting subgroup and the Lived and Living Experience Subgroup, on spend for decision by the ADP Committee.

The Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting subgroup seeks to understand how resources used contribute to the achievement of ADP outcomes and to recommend priorities for moving forward.

The IJB Chief Finance Officer oversees ADP effectiveness of governance of delegated ADP funds.

7.5. Financial honorariums

To support the ADPs aspiration to recognise and value the voluntary contribution of community activists involved in the work of the ADP, an honorarium is paid to the following office bearers on a quarterly basis:

- ADP Vice Chair
- LLE Subgroup Chair
- North Forum Representative
- Central Forum Representative
- South Forum Representative

Members of the public who voluntarily give up their time to attend meetings on behalf of the ADP shall be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses according to the rules set out in NHS Grampian's current Patient and Public Involvement Expenses Payment Policy.

Expenses incurred by employees of partner agencies attending meetings of the ADP or on behalf of the ADP will be reimbursed by the partner agency in accordance with their internal policies.

8. Quality Improvement

8.1. Performance Monitoring – Board Level

The ADP will receive regular performance monitoring reports on a quarterly basis. An annual report will also be collated and reported to the ADP in the first instance. The ADP will appropriately scrutinise the performance reports and ensure partners are held to account. In addition to the ADP scrutiny, arrangements are in place to share information with other local partnerships. The subgroups of the ADP all have a role in monitoring performance and outcomes as narrated in the Terms of Reference.

In addition to the report submitted to the Scottish Government, each partner and subgroup will contribute to an annual report of activity showing the financial position as well as progress towards outcomes. This will include a summary of all partners contributions to the work of the ADP including financial, non-financial, resources and in-kind benefits.

8.2. Accountability – External Partners

The national Partnership Delivery Framework requires that NHS and Local Authorities should ensure local partnership arrangements enable them to meet their respective governance and accountability arrangements between the Scottish Government and local partners. Section 6 of this partnership agreement highlights the relationships with external partnerships and how the ADP will work with them strategically.

The ADP Committee exists within a complex public sector governance structure and will provide report twice yearly to the Integration Joint Board on delivery of agreed strategic priorities. The ADP will provide information to the Executive Group for Public Protection and the Community Planning Board on progress in relation to agreed strategic priorities and the ADP's annual report will also be shared widely.

On behalf of the Partnership, the ADP Lead Officer following consultation with the Executive Group, supported by the ADP Support Team, will report directly to the Scottish Government on key measures as advised on an annual basis by the Scottish Government reporting template. This Annual Report will be published online on the HSCP website and circulated to all partners.

Partners contributing to the delivery action plans will provide regular updates to the ADP for consideration and monitoring.

9. Governance and oversight

9.1. How does the ADP Operate?

Key to delivery of the ADP's goal and functions is a collective multi-stakeholder approach with clear responsibilities embedded within the roles of each partner.

To enable effective coordination, the ADP is led by:

- An ADP Chair nominated from duty holder organisations.
- An ADP Vice Chair nominated from the recovery community (representing rights holders).
- An ADP Lead Officer employed to provide expert strategic support to the partnership.

The functions of the ADP are delivered in the following structure:

- ADP Committee
- ADP Executive Group
- Lived and Living Experience Subgroup ("LLE")
- Strategic Outcomes, Performance and Reporting Subgroup ("SOPR")
- Resources and Governance Subgroup ("R&G")

The role of the ADP Committee is to:

- Set the system wide strategic direction for alcohol and drugs for Aberdeenshire.
- Ensure key stakeholders are involved, including people with lived and living experience.
- Coordinate effective responses to strategic risk.

The ADP Committee will meet in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference.

9.2. Membership

The ADP Committee bring together stakeholders from the following organisations or groups to lead and co-ordinate all the alcohol and drug services and supports available across Aberdeenshire. These partners sit on the ADP Committee alongside the Chair, Vice-Chair and ADP Lead Officer, and are the decision makers for the ADP.

Duty Holders

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Police Scotland
- NHS Grampian Board
- Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership on behalf of the Integration Joint Board
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Prison Service
- Department for Work and Pensions – Job Centre Plus
- The third sector
- Independent Chair of Aberdeenshire Adult and Children's Protection Committees

Rights Holders

- Community members as representatives from the North, Central and South Forums and Lived and Living Experience Committee

These agencies are represented on and contribute to a range of strategic groups that have a specific remit around drugs and alcohol and the community members are represented by nominees by the three community forums and the Lived and Lived Experience subgroup chair.

Membership will be reviewed regularly by the Chair to reflect changes in local arrangements and in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

9.3. ADP Roles and Commitments

All partners commit to work together in accordance with this partnership agreement. For the avoidance of doubt, the following responsibilities are articulated to ensure mutual understanding and not to imply any executive oversight of partner organisations. These responsibilities will be to the degree proportionate to the Partner's contribution, compatible with their wider duties and responsibilities.

9.4. Role of ADP

The Aberdeenshire ADP will work in partnership to: -

- Provide strategic leadership for partner agencies within Aberdeenshire who play a part in reducing the use of and harm from alcohol and other drugs.
- Agree, and then comply with, the Terms of Reference for the Aberdeenshire ADP.
- Provide direction and guidance to sub-groups.
- Ensure that partnership arrangements enable the appropriate involvement of local organisations with a potential contribution to make to the achievement of agreed local outcomes.
- Ensure that the ADP engages with stakeholders including people with lived and living experience, carers, family groups and wider organisations with an interest in alcohol and drug related issues.
- Lead on the design and implementation of the local alcohol and drugs strategy and delivery plan which will be based on a collective agreement of evidence-based needs.
- Direct the use of resources to best meet local needs in line with local strategy and plans.
- Ensure robust performance monitoring arrangements and reporting for the delivery of key outcomes to be achieved by the ADP.
- Ensure that the operation of the ADP is appropriately aligned with Aberdeenshire HSCP governance and community planning arrangements through the joint identification of shared outcomes across partners agencies.
- Understand that the ADP may not take a final decision on any matter which is the statutory responsibility of any member organisation and may not take any final decision on the allocation of funds which are the sole responsibility of any member organisation, unless given the authority by that member organisation to do so. The ADP may however make recommendations on such matters.

9.5. Partner Commitments

All Partners: -

- To provide financial data, where possible, in an agreed format, to an agreed schedule. This may include in kind contributions as well as partners own spend relating to alcohol and other drug activity to enable an overview of investment to be maintained.
- Share with partners the totality of resources, where possible, their organisation can direct to the pursuit of alcohol and drugs outcomes.
- Account for the use of ADP resources or potential slippage of planned expenditure including the achievement of agreed outcomes.
- To provide performance data to an agreed schedule.
- Demonstrate commitment and contribute to the collective purpose of the ADP and achievement of its outcomes at a level proportionate to their means.
- Ensure that sufficiently senior members of staff with the authority to take strategic and financial decisions on behalf of their organisation participate in the operation of the ADP or its sub-committees and identify and fully brief deputies to attend in case of their absence.
- To ensure member representatives on the ADP are responsible for informing their organisation and all associated groups of the work of and engagement with the ADP.
- Members and nominated representatives will be responsible for taking issues between the ADP and their organisations/communities for information, comment, or action as appropriate.
- All partners agree to abide by the terms of the Code of Conduct as set out in the Terms of Reference and by demonstrating behaviours consistent with the values and principles set out in this agreement.
- Ensure actions agreed at ADP committees are progressed and reported on in accordance with agreed timelines.
- Formally incorporate relevant parts of the Alcohol and Drug Strategy and appropriate parts of the ADP Delivery Plan into the plans and strategies of the host organisation.
- Ensure delivery plan items overseen by each partner are progressed, maintained up-to-date and reported on in accordance with agreed timelines.
- Offer constructive challenge where necessary as part of mutual partnership performance monitoring.
- Provide periodic updates of relevance to other ADP partners for information at ADP Committee meetings.
- Share issues between the ADP and their organisations/communities for information, comment, or action as appropriate.

9.6. Information Sharing

In agreeing to this Partnership Agreement, partners also agree to share relevant information within the scope of achieving the outcomes set out in the strategy with the ADP and its Partners in keeping with best practice under the General Data Protection Regulations common law obligations of confidentiality.

Standard child and adult protection processes would always be utilised, and referrals made as quickly as possible/urgently should any form of harm linked to vulnerable children, families or adults who come to the notice of the ADP or its members.

9.7. Freedom of Information

ADP Committee meetings are open to the public and media to attend. Subject to data protection and security requirements, all agendas, papers, evidence, and minutes will be published on the ADP website, including the details of people attending ADP meetings.

Freedom of Information requests received by the ADP will be redirected to the most relevant statutory partner to respond to.

9.8. Complaints

The ADP has no role in regulating the business of partners or duty holders. Complaints relating to a particular partner, or their services should follow the internal complaints process of that partner. Complaints of this nature directed to the ADP will be forwarded to the appropriate partner for their attention.

Complaints relating to ADP commissioning or decommissioning activity will follow the complaints process of Aberdeenshire Council, as commissioning partner for the ADP.

Complaints about the conduct or decisions of any ADP group or committee should be directed to the ADP Chair in writing for a determination. A response will be provided within 28 days of receipt of the complaint.

In keeping with the collective 'whole system' and 'quality improvement' ethos to deliver sustainable change and the ADP's oversight role and accountability to local communities, there is a joint collegiate responsibility for the quality of the system.

This means that where a complaint is unresolved, or the underlying factors relate to more than one agency, these may be brought to the attention of the ADP for the purpose of collective partnership learning and improvement and triangulation with the wider community so that they feel heard and can be involved in improvement efforts.

10. ADP Support Team

The ADP and its committees are supported by an ADP Support Team providing a strategic support function to assist the ADP meet its responsibilities. This includes:

- Strategy development
- Action plan development
- Finance investment and commissioning plans
- System wide leadership
- Maintaining relationships with national government.

The ADP support team exists to support the system wide partnership to deliver the strategic priorities and associated delivery plans.

Other support team specific activities may be developed to support the effective function of the ADP including for example, capacity to support service improvement, community engagement, data analysis, briefings on Scottish Government developments, drug and alcohol trends, co-ordination of Experiential Learning as well as Intelligence and needs analysis and prevention/early intervention.

The Support Team will also coordinate and collate performance reports and local intelligence from partners into reports as well as ensure the timely production and dissemination of sub-group and ADP minutes including publication where appropriate.

11. Strategic Groups

These are the range of groups which contribute towards delivery of the alcohol and drug strategic priorities for Aberdeenshire.

11.1. Drug and Alcohol Review Group

Monitors trends and findings of mortality reviews to offer opportunities for prevention, harm reduction and service delivery improvements.

11.2. Community Forums

There are 3 Community Forums (North, Central and South) led and organised by the community themselves where people with lived and living experience, community representatives and front-line workers from within the area can share insights, explore issues of concern, and identify unmet needs.

Forums enable communities to have a voice and the confidence to do things for themselves:

- To prevent and reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs.
- To work together to overcome stigma and apathy in realising aspirations.
- To promote recovery and help develop recovery-supportive communities.

Forums provide a platform that ensures that the collective voice of lived and living experience of individuals, families and communities is effectively heard, that they are empowered to influence policy and practice and that the Partnership continues to place the interests of affected individuals at the centre of its thinking.

They are independent of but closely partnered with the ADP. They receive funding from the ADP, and they are accountable to the Resources and Governance Committee for any monies they receive from the Partnership. Each forum has a seat on the ADP Strategic Committee and Lived and Living Experience Committee. Forum representatives are encouraged to inform, influence, and hold to account the ADP.

Organisation and conduct of the forums are described in their Terms of Reference.

11.3. Community Groups

Within Aberdeenshire there is a move to a more locality focused asset-based approach which considers, at a local level, the needs of the community and matches that with local resources, building capacity and identifying opportunities for development. In each locality there are a variety of community organisations and groups which provide support, contributing towards the priorities in the Alcohol and Drug Strategy². This community-based provision should support and complement statutory provision.

² <https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/local-outcomes-improvement-plan/>

11.4. Communities

There are mechanisms in place across Aberdeenshire to provide opportunities for the wider community to engage. This includes but is not restricted to:

- Patient participation groups
- Youth Participation Networks
- Stakeholder members on boards and committees
- Specific engagement activity around particular topics

Service providers and a wide range of local organisations community groups play an important role in supporting people in local communities.



12. Appendix 1: Statutory requirements regards planning and reporting

The table below summaries the statutory requirements in relation to local partnership strategic plans:

Strategic planning documents	Responsible body	Legislative framework
Health and Social Care Strategic Plan	Integration Authority	Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014
Health and Social Care Annual Performance Report	Integration Authority	Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014
Children's Services Plan	Local Authority and Health Board with Community Planning Partners	Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan	Community Justice Partners ³	The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016
Locality Plan	Community Planning Partners ⁴	Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 ⁵
Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Community Planning Partners	Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 ⁶
Police Scotland Local Policing Plans	Divisional Commanders	Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

12.1. Licensing Boards

Licensing Boards are made up of locally elected councillors and are distinct from local authorities, they have responsibilities in relation to the local administration of alcohol (and gambling) and are obliged to publish a licensing policy statement and annual report under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and Gambling Act 2005, as amended.

³ Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016

⁴ Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

⁵ Note: Duties apply to locally identified priorities. Only applies to alcohol or drugs where the CPP agrees that these or related issues are one of the priorities for the locality.

⁶ Note: Duties apply to locally identified priorities. Only applies to alcohol or drugs where the CPP agrees that these or related issues are one of the priorities for its area.

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 07 SEPTEMBER 2023

COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS STAGE 1 REFERRAL: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2312 – ASSURANCE REVIEW OF IJB GOVERNANCE

1. Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides an update on progress against the action plan arising from Internal Audit Report 2312 'Assurance Review of IJB (Integration Joint Board) Governance', following previous discussion at Communities Committee on 1st June 2023 and as part of the agreed framework of the Stage 1 Committee Review Process. Members are asked to consider recommendations and agree future improvement actions.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider whether this further update on the Stage 1 scrutiny report and recommendations provides the Committee with sufficient assurances on this matter; and

1.2.2 Where the Committee feels that the report does not provide adequate reassurance, request the delivery of a Stage 2 workshop for the Committee to allow for further exploration of the issue and identification of potential improvement actions.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 On 22 March 2023, the Audit Committee considered Internal Audit Report 2312 and agreed that a request be made to the Communities Committee to conduct the Committee Review Process relating to a matter of service delivery for improvement identified on the matter of 'Assurance Review of IJB (Integration Joint Board) Governance'.

2.2 On 01 June 2023 the Communities Committee received a report from the Chief Officer of the Health and Social Care Partnership asking it to consider this referral from the Audit Committee on a proposed Committee Review Process. The Communities Committee considered the request from the Audit Committee and determined to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of the matter of service delivery identified by the Audit Committee for improvement. The Committee agreed that the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership would report to Committee with the Stage 1 Report on 07 September 2023 (the next Committee following summer recess).

2.3 On 06 July 2023 the Audit Committee considered a report advising that the Communities Committee had agreed to conduct the Stage 1 Report Committee Review and noted that a further report would be presented to the

Audit Committee when the Communities Committee has concluded its consideration in terms of the Committee Review Process.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The detailed scope of this review was provided in the Stage 1 Report to Communities Committee on 01 June 2023 including presentation of progress against the action plan.
- 3.2 Recommendations from Internal Audit report 2312 continue to guide the work of the Aberdeenshire HSCP Governance Short Life Working Group convened to oversee a range of related governance tasks and activities. This group includes the Legal Advisor to the HSCP who has also been seconded to the HSCP to undertake a strategic governance review of current governance arrangements and provide support in putting in place revised processes.
- 3.3 Considerable progress has been made with a further 5 recommendations being agreed as complete since the last report to Communities Committee and actions in place for ensuring completion of the outstanding recommendations. An update on all actions is included at Appendix 1. In addition to the work previously completed, a summary of the documentation and activities which have been completed in the last 3 months include:
- Update of the HSCP’s Medium Term Finance Strategy.
 - Development of a strategy tracker to enable effective monitoring of all AHSCP strategies throughout their lifespan and ensuring development, evaluation and review is undertaken within required timelines and to agreed processes, aligned with the IJB’s master forward planner.
 - Development of a draft self-assessment tool for IJB committees to support annual reviews of performance in line with their Terms of Reference.
 - Implementation of the HSCP’s revised performance reporting framework to the IJB including reports to the Communities Committee and Area Committee structures.
- 3.4 The Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership will report the Committee’s decision to the meeting of the Audit Committee on 21 September 2023.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Health and Wellbeing” within the Pillar “People”.
- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	

Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.3 There are no staffing or financial implications specifically arising from the recommendations if agreed.
- 4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process was completed when the scrutiny referral was submitted to Communities Committee on 01 June 2023. This did not identify the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. An integrated impact assessment is not required because this report is to provide committee with information relating to a matter being processed by way of the Committee Review Process.
- 4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:
- ACORP004 Business and organisational transformation

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section D.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the matter relates to the scrutiny and review of the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery in respect of a function within its remit.

Pamela Milliken, Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Report prepared by Angela MacLeod, Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager

Date 14 August 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report 2312 Action Plan Update

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report 2312 Action Plan Update

A summary of progress against specific recommendations within Internal Audit Report 2312 – Assurance Review of IJB Governance is provided below. Recommendations noted as complete have been signed off with Internal Audit as closed. At the time of writing 10 of the 15 recommendations agreed have been completed.

Completed Actions/Recommendations

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.1	The IJB should ensure consultation is completed and the review of the Integration Scheme concluded and reported back to the IJB promptly.	Moderate	Chief Officer	April 2023	Review of the Integration Scheme including public consultation was completed and the revised version approved by IJB, Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian and has been submitted to Scottish Government.	Complete
1.6	The Chief Officer should report annually on the use of emergency powers, in line with the delegation of those powers by the IJB.	Moderate	Chief Officer	March 2023	A report was submitted to the 1st March 2023 meeting of the IJB providing a report on all instances where delegated urgent powers have been used since the IJB's decision to approve this provision in March 2020, subsequently formalised in the IJB's Scheme of Governance in March 2022. An internal system has been established including a register for recording and reporting of all future instances where urgent powers are used including the submission of an annual report to the IJB moving forward.	Complete
1.7	The next update of the MTFs [Medium Term Finance Strategy] should reflect scenario planning, including the potential impact of a revised Strategic Plan from 2025	Moderate	Chief Finance and Business Officer (CFBO)	August 2023	The updated MTFs was presented and approved by the Integration Joint Board at its meeting on 05 July 2023.	Complete

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.9	The IJB should have a role in determining strategy (e.g. the strategic elements of the Workforce Plan, and further strategies still to be updated and implemented).	Major	Chief Officer	March 2023 (Internal Audit confirmed extension to June-23)	The IJB has been and will remain formally sighted and consulted on key strategies. Strategy tracker is in place to monitor AHSCP strategies throughout their lifespan and ensuring development, evaluation and review is undertaken within required timelines and scheduled into the IJB forward planner. Work also undertaken on strategy process/flow chart to ensure consistency of approach including IJB involvement with formalized process in place for us of Special Urgency measures if required. At its meeting in July 2023 the IJB considered and approved both the HSCP Workforce Plan annual review update and the Autism Strategy.	Complete
1.4	The IJB should consider aligning rotation of its committee chairs.	Minor	Chief Officer	Recorded as implemented within IA Report	Agreed. This has been given due consideration. Legal advice provides that members can change which committee they are on at any time and Cllr terms and NHS Board member terms are not coterminous. There are considered to be both advantages and disadvantages to aligning rotation of chairs, and we feel that the greater risk would be with the impact of multiple changes at once.	Complete
1.10	The HSCP should maintain a core accessible register of all current and intended strategies and use it in forward planning for strategy updates.	Moderate	Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager	Part Implemented/ December 2023	A tracker has been developed to monitor strategies throughout their lifespan, ensuring that the development, evaluation and review of a strategy is included in the IJB forward planner to allow sufficient involvement and consideration of key strategies by the IJB.	Complete
1.11	a) The HSCP should maintain a core register of all current and intended plans and use it in forward planning for plan updates.	Major	Programme Manager	Implemented	Reporting schedules for updates on plans are in place and a template has been developed to support consistent updates to the Senior Management Team.	Complete

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.13	The annual performance report should be published and shared with Partners in line with the requirements of the Act.	Moderate	Programme Manager	April 2023	The annual performance report has been published on the HSCP section of the Council website and shared with both Partners.	Complete
1.14	The IJB Action Log should be extended, or supplementary planners developed and published, to cover all required and planned formal business.	Moderate	Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager	July 2023	IJB master planner has been augmented with dates for when future strategies/reviews will need to be brought back to the IJB and ensuring critical/time sensitive items are clearly identified. Strategy work planner provides a more detailed operational tool to support forward planning with oversight held by AHSCP Strategy team.	Complete
1.15	The Service should ensure stakeholders receive performance reports on a regular basis. Stakeholders should be consulted on proposed changes to performance reporting.	Major	Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager	Ongoing	IJB approved its Strategic Delivery Plan performance framework on 1st March 2023. The performance report was subsequently presented to the Communities Committee on 30/03/2023 which agreed to continue to receive reports on a 6-monthly basis in line with the reporting process for other Council services/directorates. HSCP officers presented the IJB performance reports to Area Committees in May/June 2023 with approval to report formally on 6-monthly basis. Performance reporting arrangements continue to Council Senior Leadership Team and NHS Grampian Chief Executives Team.	Complete

In-Progress Actions/Recommendations

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.2	The IJB's committees should all publish their meeting agenda papers, minutes and decisions.	Moderate	Chief Officer and Chief Finance and Business Officer	July 2023 (Internal Audit confirmed extension to December 2023)	IJB Audit Committee papers are published online in accordance with Council Committee arrangements and IJB standing orders. It has been agreed to publish the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance (CASWG) Committee meeting papers and Legal advice received regarding requirements in line with the standing orders of the IJB. Funding is being identified to recruit dedicated Committee Officer support and this will be progressed. In the short term a request was submitted to Committee Services for support to publish the papers of the next scheduled CASWG Committee meeting via the Council committee system however Committee Services have no capacity at the moment to support this. The HSCP is investigating alternative routes to publish the information as an interim measure.	In-Progress
1.3	The IJB's committees should each formally review their effectiveness and performance annually in line with their terms of reference.	Moderate	Chief Officer and Chief Finance and Business Officer	December 2023	Committees are being supported to undertake an annual review of their effectiveness, in line with their terms of reference. A draft self-assessment tool has been developed with the proposal that this is tailored for use by each Committee. The IJB Audit Committee has agreed to use this self-assessment tool and timelines to implement the self-assessment are to be finalized. Learning from this process will be utilized to inform subsequent implementation with the CASWG Committee.	In-Progress

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.5	The Service should ensure group structures, remits, and reporting lines are clearly recorded, mapped, and published.	Moderate	Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	The HSCP has an Organisational Governance Framework which is subject to annual review and will be updated and submitted to the IJB at its December 2023 meeting for approval. Updates to the supporting documentation around group structures, remits and reporting lines continue to be refreshed on a 6 monthly basis. Further to advice from Customer and Digital Services which confirms only high-level information is published on the Council website the HSCP will look to include high level information on the IJB Committees on its public pages (in addition to that already published via the Committee meetings site) and, upon approval by IJB, make available the Organisational Governance Framework via Arcadia and NHSG intranet.	In-Progress
1.11	c) All plans should set out clear, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound (SMART) goals, milestones, performance measures and baselines against which to measure delivery.	Major	Programme Manager	March 2024	Work completed on the review of all project documentation and creation of a project process flow chart. Within this documentation is the Project Charter which provides guidance on creating measurable benefits for the project (identified through the Benefit Mapping activities carried out for each new project). A generic template has been developed to support delivery plans ensuring all associated actions are SMART and developed in a more consistent way – this will now be tested/rolled out across our strategy delivery plans.	In-Progress
1.12	The HSCP should set out the separate arrangements for carrying out the integration functions in each Locality.	Major	Chief Officer	August 2023 (Internal Audit confirmed extension to	The common objectives of the HSCP are set out in the Strategic Plan, with local delivery reflecting local need. The Integration Scheme describes the arrangements for how services are devolved locally to the IJB and within the HSCP. Information on	In-Progress

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
				December 2023)	<p>arrangements for how services are provided in localities is described in both the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Reports, as well as those services which are managed on an Aberdeenshire-wide basis or hosted on behalf of all 3 HSCPs in NHS Grampian. The HSCP has a clear organogram through its iMatter structure denoting reporting responsibilities across local teams.</p> <p>Work continues on updating information on the HSCP web pages outlining the specific services provided in each area including the building based services and teams managed by each of the Location Managers. Information Governance approval is awaited from Public Health Scotland in order to publish Locality Profiles to provide further local context.</p> <p>The IJB has agreed that the HSCP will participate in Aberdeenshire Council's place-based strategy to support an integrated approach moving forward. HSCP officers have participated in several meetings/workshops with Aberdeenshire Council in the development and implementation of the Place Strategy, alongside participation in associated local place based pathfinders/projects in Inverurie and Fraserburgh. A report is scheduled to be brought to the October 2023 meeting of the Integration Joint Board to seek further input and direction from the IJB on this strategy.</p>	

Recommendations not agreed by the HSCP

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
1.8	The HSCP should develop a Commissioning Strategy describing its overall commissioning direction and intentions, and the interrelationship with the Strategic Plan, Strategic Development Plan, MTFS and Workforce Plan.	Moderate	N/A	N/A	<p>This recommendation was not agreed by the HSCP but is included for completeness.</p> <p>The HSCP continues to work on strengthening and ensuring clarity as to linkages between the Strategic Plan, Strategic Delivery Plan, MTFS, Workforce Plan and its Commissioning and Procurement Plan which is a live document regularly updated. The HSCP, working collaboratively with the Commercial and Procurement Shared Service, has enhanced its governance and oversight around strategic commissioning through the establishment of its Commissioning and Procurement Group which monitors the Commissioning and Procurement Plan and reports both to the Senior Management Team and Strategic Planning Group to ensure ongoing alignment between commissioning activities and the IJB's strategic priorities. Consideration will be given within the Commissioning and Procurement Group to development of a summary document setting out the HSCP's commissioning approach and linkages to existing strategies.</p>	Not Agreed
1.11	b) The HSCP should review operational plans to ensure there are comprehensive, performance measurable, plans for all of the functions delegated under the Integration Scheme.	Major	N/A	N/A	<p>This recommendation was not agreed by the HSCP but is included for completeness.</p> <p>The IJB has agreed the HSCP does not have the capacity to prepare an operational delivery plan for all of the functions delegated under the Integration Scheme and has agreed a prioritised approach.</p>	Not Agreed

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 07 SEPTEMBER 2023

COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS STAGE 1 / STAGE 1 REFERRAL: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2212 – IJB TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

1. Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides an update on progress against the action plan arising from Internal Audit Report 2212 'IJB (Integration Joint Board) Transformational Projects', following previous discussion at Communities Committee on 1st June 2023 and as part of the agreed framework of the Stage 1 Committee Review Process. Members are asked to consider recommendations and agree future improvement actions.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider whether this further update on the Stage 1 scrutiny report and recommendations provides the Committee with sufficient assurances on this matter; and

1.2.2 Where the Committee feels that the report does not provide adequate reassurance, request the delivery of a Stage 2 workshop for the Committee to allow for further exploration of the issue and identification of potential improvement actions.

2 Decision-Making Route

2.1 On 22 March 2023, the Audit Committee considered Internal Audit Report 2212 and agreed that a request be made to the Communities Committee to conduct the Committee Review Process relating to a matter of service delivery for improvement identified on the matter of 'Assurance Review of IJB (Integration Joint Board) Governance'.

2.2 On 01 June 2023 the Communities Committee received a report from the Chief Officer of the Health and Social Care Partnership asking it to consider this referral from the Audit Committee on a proposed Committee Review Process. The Communities Committee considered the request from the Audit Committee and determined to conduct the Committee Review Process in respect of the matter of service delivery identified by the Audit Committee for improvement. The Committee agreed that the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership would report to Committee with the Stage 1 Report on 07 September 2023 (the next Committee following summer recess).

2.3 On 06 July 2023 the Audit Committee considered a report advising that the Communities Committee had agreed to conduct the Stage 1 Report Committee Review and noted that a further report would be presented to the Audit Committee when the Communities Committee has concluded its consideration in terms of the Committee Review Process.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The detailed scope of this review was provided in the Stage 1 Report to Communities Committee on 01 June 2023 including presentation of progress against the action plan.
- 3.2 The AHSCP intentionally agreed longer term timescales for delivery of these recommendations (to December 2023) recognising the depth of work involved and the requirement for a collaborative approach to the embedding of project management processes across the HSCP with the involvement of operational managers and professional leads participating in or leading projects under the Strategic Delivery Plan.
- 3.3 In the interim the IJB also instructed officers to further review and prioritise its transformational work as pressures and demands on health and social care services have continued, to ensure realistic deliverables.
- 3.4 For this reason the status against the majority of recommendations remains 'in-progress' however focus continues to be given to implementing actions required to provide assurance and ensure timely completion for workstreams agreed as continuing priorities under the HSCP's strategic delivery plan.
- 3.4 The Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership will report the Committee's decision to the meeting of the Audit Committee on 21 September 2023.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority "Health and Wellbeing" within the Pillar "People".
- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.3 There are no staffing or financial implications specifically arising from the recommendations if agreed.
- 4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process was completed when the scrutiny referral was submitted to Communities Committee on 01 June 2023. This did not identify the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken. An integrated impact assessment is not required because this report is to provide committee with information relating to a matter being processed by way of the Committee Review Process.
- 4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:
- ACORP004 Business and organisational transformation

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section D.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the matter relates to the scrutiny and review of the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery in respect of a function within its remit.

Pamela Milliken, Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Report prepared by Angela MacLeod, Interim Strategy and Transformation Manager

Date 14 August 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report 2212 Action Plan Update

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report 2212 Action Plan Update

A summary of progress against specific recommendations within Internal Audit Report 2212 – IJB Transformational Projects is provided below, as at August 2023. Recommendations noted as complete have been signed off with Internal Audit as closed.

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
2.1.5	Specific milestones, reporting schedules, and performance measures should be set for each project.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>Work completed on the review of all project documentation and creation of a project process flow chart.</p> <p>The HSCP will continue to work on embedding and supporting this through the project management tools and processes it has developed. Phases and plans are being developed, and milestones and outcomes are being clarified for the first phase of projects being progressed within the next financial year. Progress with implementation will feed in to the refreshed reporting process outlined below at 2.1.8</p> <p>Reporting schedules for updates on plans are in place and the project documentation has been developed to support consistent updates to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Strategic Planning Group (SPG).</p> <p>Focus in the last 6 months, in response to IJB direction, has been given to further prioritization of the HSCP's workstreams to ensure deliverability of the overall Strategic Delivery Plan as system demands continue. This has required review and revision of the reporting timetable, and work to be revisited on project charters to ensure these are completed/reflect new objectives and priorities – this work is ongoing. Work has been completed on a generic template to support a consistent approach to monitoring of delivery plans ensuring all associated actions are SMART – this will now move to implementation.</p>	In-Progress

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
2.1.8	Governance and reporting arrangements for transformational projects should be fully and consistently implemented.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>The HSCP has been working to an agreed governance and reporting structure with project update reports being reported to either the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) or Senior Management Team (SMT)</p> <p>Enhanced reporting arrangements were presented to and approved by the IJB in December 2022, including the introduction of quarterly reports summarising progress on Transformational projects. Additionally a more detailed update on each project is scheduled and presented to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) which is then reported to IJB via the SPG's summary report.</p> <p>Quarterly performance reports have been submitted to the IJB in March and July 2023, and subsequent reports added to the IJB's forward planner. Focus in the last 6 months, in response to IJB direction, has been given to further review of the HSCP's workstreams to ensure deliverability of the overall Strategic Delivery Plan as system demands continue.</p>	In-Progress
2.1.12	Project identification and prioritisation processes should be formally set out and decision making recorded.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>A high-level set of prioritisation criteria was utilised by the Senior Management Team when considering new priorities for the Strategic Delivery Plan 2022 onwards. A number of workshops and engagement sessions were held with HSCP officers to consider and agree priority workstreams moving forward. In addition two development sessions were held with IJB members to discuss and seek feedback on priorities prior to presentation of the revised Strategic Delivery Plan 2022-25 which was subsequently approved by the IJB in December 2022.</p> <p>The IJB received a full list of projects in March 2023 as part of the refreshed reporting arrangements discussed at 2.1.8 above. All new projects complete a project mandate which includes consideration of delegation and reporting, and is</p>	In-Progress

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
					<p>submitted to SMT for consideration and approval to support ongoing prioritization of capacity and resources.</p> <p>The project mandate process has now been utilized on several occasions enabling SMT consideration and decision-making which is then recorded in SMT minutes and on the project mandates.</p> <p>Following the IJB's request for officers to further review and prioritise the HSCP's workstreams to ensure deliverability of the overall Strategic Delivery Plan, the performance report submitted to and approved by the IJB on 05 July 2023 provided an update on initial outcomes from this process with agreement to cease 3 workstreams.</p>	
2.1.17	Projects should report back to the SPG, and then to the IJB, in line with the agreed reporting frequency and with a consistent level of detail.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>As described in 1.8 a more detailed update on each project is scheduled and presented to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) which is then reported to IJB via the SPG's summary report.</p> <p>As noted above, in response to IJB direction, recent focus has been given to further review of the HSCP's workstreams to ensure deliverability of the overall Strategic Delivery Plan as system demands continue. A revised timetable has been agreed and reporting to SPG will resume from its August 2023 meeting with reports to be thereafter presented to the IJB.</p>	In-Progress
2.1.18	There should be a single clearly referenced list of all projects, from which the SPG and IJB can identify the extent of transformation work and obtain assurance over progress.	Minor	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	The refreshed reporting mechanism includes the allocation of a project identification number for each project. The progress of all transformational projects is monitored through a Strategic Delivery Plan tracker which supports the quarterly performance reports to IJB.	Complete

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
					The new referencing system was introduced with the IJB quarterly performance report in July 2023 with Internal Audit thereafter agreeing this recommendation as complete.	
2.1.19	Escalation processes for risks should be clearly defined and applied consistently.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>A Risk Policy and Procedure exists for risks added to the HSCP's risk register. Updates to all risks on the risk register are scheduled and reported using a set template to either the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance (CASWG) Group or the Risk and Assurance Group (depending on whether the risk is clinical or non-clinical). Any escalation regarding a risk would also be via these groups.</p> <p>The project charter includes the identification of risks and the project update template to SMT and SPG requires updates on these risks. Assessment on the level of risk is the responsibility of the project lead and monitored through the project group. Further work is planned to create a more consistent approach to determining the level of risk, and to support the SPG and SMT to consistently and effectively scrutinise the risks for each project.</p> <p>Work is underway to ensure every transformation project has its own risk identified on the IJB Risk Register ensuring effective monitoring and escalation throughout the project's duration (and recorded via Datix, the HSCP's online system for recording risks). Through this process, risk owners will be routinely prompted to review and update risks with oversight through either the Clinical and Adult Social Work Governance Group (for clinical risks) or Risk and Assurance Group (non-clinical risks).</p>	In-Progress

Item No.	Recommendation	Grading	Person(s)	Due Date	Progress	Status
2.1.22	Authority and controls over change management should be clearly defined and applied consistently.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>A process for change controls will be developed and monitored through SPG and SMT linking with 2.1.19.</p> <p>This process remains in development; the strategic delivery plan performance reports to IJB now will report specific changes or decisions requiring escalation; approval to cease/pause 3 workstreams was sought via the performance report to IJB in July 2023 and recorded accordingly.</p>	In-Progress
2.2.5	Consistent templates should be used across the board for planning and reporting every project.	Moderate	Strategy and Transformation Manager	December 2023	<p>The service has undertaken significant work to develop an agreed project process and documentation suite and will continue to work on embedding consistency and rigour in its approach, recognising the scale and complexity of workstreams it has responsibility for. The introduction of a project mandate document with approval through the SMT is intended to support a consistency and central point of oversight for all new projects; this will include reporting to IJB where it has been documented in the mandate that this is required.</p> <p>As previously indicated the project mandate process has now been utilized on several occasions enabling SMT consideration and decision-making recorded in SMT minutes and on the project mandates. Work continues to ensure comprehensive documentation across all workstreams recognizing that some projects require review of project charter where wider system impacts/demands have required a change in project objective/focus.</p>	In-Progress

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