



BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024 at 10.15 am

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - WOODHILL HOUSE, WESTBURN ROAD, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB, (WITH VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE)** on **THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024, at 10.15 am**

This meeting will be live streamed and a recording of the public part of the meeting will be made publicly available at a later date.

Wednesday, 10 April 2024

Director of Business Services

To: Councillors G Owen (Chair), J Cox (Vice-Chair), D Black, S Burnett, Y Chou Turvey, G Crowson, S Dickinson, M Findlater, J Goodhall, D Mair, R McKail, C Miller, G Petrie and C Victor

Substitute Members: Councillors J Adams, S Adams, W Agnew, D Aitchison, G Blackett, J Crawley, I Davidson, A Forsyth, D Keating, T Mason, L McAllister, H Smith, S Smith and K Stelfox

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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:-

(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

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 9 & 10 of business below, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."

| | | |
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| 3 | Minute of the Meeting of 29 February 2024 | 4 - 13 |
| 4 | Statement of Outstanding Business | 14 |
| 5 | Business Services' Heads of Service Business Plans Update 2024/25 | 15 - 156 |
| 6 | Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Report 2022-23 | 157 - 170 |
| 7 | Aberdeenshire Draft British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030 | 171 - 202 |
| 8 | Scheme of Governance - Review of Common Good Policy, Associated Forms and Procedures. Community Empowered (Scotland) Act 2015 - Creation of Common Good Register | 203 - 255 |

ITEMS WHICH THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 9 | Bad Debts Write Off Report <i>[Exempt under paragraph 6]</i> | 256 - 264 |
|---|---|-----------|

Information relating to financial or business affairs of a particular person (other than the Council).

10 Asset Management Update
[*Exempt under paragraph 8 & 9*]

265 - 296

Expenditure to be incurred by the Council under a contract for acquisition of property or supply of goods or services.
Terms for a contract for acquisition or disposal of property or supply of goods or services.

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 29TH FEBRUARY, 2024

In Attendance: Councillors G Owen (Chair), S Adams (as substitute for Councillor S Burnett), D Black, Y Chou Turvey, G Crowson, S Dickinson, M Findlater, J Goodhall, D Mair, T Mason (as substitute for Councillor J Cox), R McKail, C Miller, G Petrie, and C Victor.

Apologies: Councillors S Burnett and J Cox.

Officers: Director of Business Services, Head of Service (Customer & Digital Services), Head of Service (Finance), Head of Service (Property & Facilities), Service Manager (Customer & Digital Services), Estates Manager (Property & Facilities), Pay & Reward Manager (Finance), Area Manager (Kincardine and Mearns), Strategic Commercial Manager (Procurement) (M Mackenzie), Business Partner, Finance (SA Gordon) and Legal Services Manager (L Cowie).

1 SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Councillor Black declared an interest in item 5 by virtue of being the chairperson of the organisation applying for the community asset transfer. Having applied the objective test Councillor Black concluded that she would leave the meeting and take no part in the determination of the item.

Councillor Petrie made a transparency statement in respect of Item 5 by virtue of working closely with Councillor Black. Having applied the objective test Councillor Petrie concluded that she would remain and participate in the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Dickinson made a transparency statement in respect of Item 5 by virtue of the item being in her ward, and therefore had previously shared information in regard to the applicant. Having applied the objective test, Councillor Dickinson concluded that she would remain and participate in the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Victor made a transparency statement in respect of Item 5 by virtue of friendship with Councillor Black. Having applied the objective test Councillor Victor concluded that she would remain and participate in the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Crowson made a transparency statement in respect of Item 5 by virtue of working closely with Councillor Black. Having applied the objective test Councillor Crowson concluded that he would remain and participate in the meeting during consideration of the item.

2(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
 - (d) to consider, where an Integrated Impact Assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

2(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 |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 8 | 9 |
| 9 | 8 |

3 MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF 11 JANUARY 2024

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of the Meeting of the Business Services Committee of 11 January 2024.

4 STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

There was circulated a list of outstanding actions from previous meetings of the Business Services Committee, which had been deferred to future meetings of the Committee, as at 29 February 2024. The Director of Business Services introduced the report and provided a verbal update to the Committee on each item:

Item 1: Common Good Policy. A report would be coming to Committee for consideration on 18 April 2024. This item would remain open until considered at that meeting.

Item 2: Unrecoverable debts arising from salary overpayment. Officers were preparing a report which was expected to be considered on 13 June 2024. This item would remain open until that date.

Item 3: Digital Strategy Implementation. The request had been passed to the Head of Housing and updates had been provided to Members regarding the Live Life Aberdeenshire system and the Harbour payment system. Item could be removed.

Item 4: Annual Report of Activity under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 Policy. The Policy was updated and published. Item could be removed.

Item 5: Estates Development and Investment Strategy. Comments were taken into consideration and a report would be produced annually for any further comments. Item could be removed.

Item 6: Office Space Strategy. A report was being prepared for 18 April 2024, which would outline Aberdeenshire's Council transformation with regards to buildings and estates. This item would remain open until the report was considered by Committee.

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

- (1) note the current position of actions arising from previous meetings; and
- (2) remove completed actions (Items 3, 4, and 5) from the outstanding actions list.

5. ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST FOR FORMER SEA CADET BUILDING, STONEHAVEN

Councillor Black left the room and did not take part in the consideration of the item due to her declaration of interest.

There was circulated a report dated 19 January 2024 by the Director of Business Services that asked Committee to make the final determination of the Asset Transfer Request of the former Sea Cadet Building, Stonehaven. A report had been presented to the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee at its meeting on 12 December 2023. At that meeting, Councillors agreed to recommend that the Asset Transfer Request submitted by the K&M Youth Club for the former Sea Cadet Building in Stonehaven should be approved. This decision was contrary to the recommendation of the officers, and as required by Section C.5.2.1 of the List of Committee Powers in the Scheme of Governance, it was then referred to the Business Services Committee for a final decision.

Members were informed that the application was very detailed and laudable, having considered various challenges/risks and demonstrated several mitigating measures. However, the main concern was the ability of the group, led by volunteers, to ensure long-term financial sustainability. Due to the building's condition, including design, age, state of repair, and accessibility, it was established by officers that the risk of failure in the medium to long term was high. This could be partially mitigated through

the building being returned to the Council. If the Council could not prove the building to be sustainable, it could revert to a probable sale process, albeit with potentially reduced capital value.

During discussion, concerns were raised that should the asset transfer fail and the Council take possession of the asset again (or at the end of the proposed lease), there could be a reduced capital value (if there was no investment by the applicant). However, the Youth Club were proposing investments into the asset and improvements to the building. If the Council was to have the asset returned, these improvements would mitigate decline in property value and potentially increase value. It was acknowledged that while there was a risk of devaluation, the value of the building may fluctuate over time regardless of investment.

Further discussion referred to cost considerations involved with transferring a building to the community. Committee considered potential cost savings the community might achieve through volunteer work or local contacts. However, the significant scale of the required work and the challenges involved in modifying a listed building, which would incur substantial expenses regardless of the methodology used, were highlighted.

Question arose regarding fire safety concerns and whether addressing them would be one of the initial tasks to ensure compliance with fire regulations. Members were reassured that the building had been used for Youth Services previously, mainly through the Sea Cadets, and had emergency access that met requirements.

Information on expectations and service provision was provided, including the potential impact if the project was not sustainable. The Youth Club currently provided services to approximately 40 young people, with a waiting list. It was anticipated, that if the project was approved, the capacity to deliver services to young people would increase to around 200. However, the concern was that if the project failed, there would not be another facility of the same size available.

Councillor Dickinson moved, seconded by Councillor Petrie, that the Council grant the Asset Transfer request as the challenge and risks were manageable. The mover acknowledged that the applicant intended to work in a phased basis prioritising expenditure, would apply for funding, would ensure that there was strong support for young people and would encourage strong social wellbeing.

As an amendment, Councillor Owen, seconded by Councillor Adams, moved to refuse the Asset Transfer request based on the officer's recommendations.

Members of the Committee voted:-

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----|--|
| for the Motion: | (9) | Councillors Chou-Turvey, Crowson, Dickinson, Goodhall, Mair, Mason, McKail, Petrie, Victor |
| for the Amendment: | (2) | Councillors Owen, Adams Findlater, and Miller. |

The motion was therefore carried and the Committee **agreed** to: -

- (1) grant the Asset Transfer Request for the former Sea Cadet Building, Stonehaven; and
- (2) instruct the Area Manager to issue a Decision Notice.

6. BUSINESS SERVICES FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

There was circulated a report dated 2 February 2024, by the Director of Business Services that provided an update on the forecast financial performance pertaining to the services which fell under the remit of Business Services Committee for the financial year 2023/24, as at 31 December 2023. There was a projected underspend of £930,000. Factors enabling that underspend included vacancy management, estates and property construction services. The report noted that there were many significant challenges and issues.

During the discussion, members asked for clarification about the likelihood of further voluntary severance savings in the next financial year. It was acknowledged that while there may be further voluntary severance opportunities, they may be aligned with transformation projects.

There was discussion on the release of funds from the digital strategy reserve. Details of the expenditure would be provided later, but no further expenditure was expected this year.

Members heard an update on the LACER project, which confirmed that funds did not have to be returned to the Scottish Government. However, intentions were to honour the original agreement. Further information would be presented in a report to Aberdeenshire Council.

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

- (1) approve the Revenue and Capital forecast position pertaining to this Committee for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- (2) approve the progress of Budget Savings associated with these budgets;
- (3) approve the Earmarked Reserves associated with this Committee and their use; and
- (4) note the approved revenue budget virements as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

7. BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW

There was circulated a report dated 9 February 2024, by the Director of Business Services that detailed the current position of policies that were delegated to the Committee. This was in line with Part 4B Scheme of Governance – Policy Development & Review Framework. As of December 2023, 18 policies were delegated to Business Services Committee. Of these, 12 policies had been recently

reviewed, and six were overdue review. All overdue reports were scheduled for review during 2024/25.

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

- (1) acknowledge the policies delegated to the Business Services Committee that had been reviewed during 2023, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) agree the proposed plans for review for those policies that had expired as well as those that were approaching their review date, to be considered at future committees; and
- (3) identify any gaps or review requirements as part of the agreed annual overview of the Council's Policy Framework, as per section 3.5 of the Policy Development and Review Framework in Part 4B of the Scheme of Governance.

8. THE MEWS DEVELOPMENT, MAR ROAD, BRAEMAR

There was circulated a report dated 1 February 2024, by the Director of Business Services providing an update on The Mews Development at Mar Road, Braemar, detailing an Options Appraisal Study undertaken by officers.

After consideration, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) that the general presumption against disposal of the existing buildings within the Braemar Mews Development should apply and they should not be sold; and
- (2) to market the additional land to the South of The Mews Development.

9. BUSINESS SERVICES DIRECTORATE ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN

There was circulated a report dated 13 February 2024, by the Director of Business Services that presented the Annual Procurement Plan for 2024/25 for the Business Services' Directorate. The Scheme of Governance's Financial Regulations required each Director to report "to their relevant Committee prior to the beginning of the financial year with a proposed Procurement Plan for all procurements falling within the jurisdiction of the Committee with a Contract Value of £50,000 or more". The Committee considered the items of the Procurement Plan which were identified as falling within their remit.

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

- (1) note the Directorate Annual Procurement Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) approve the items on the Annual Procurement Plan identified as falling within the remit of the Committee;

- (3) note the current utilities contracts providers and forecast expenditure for 2024/25 as detailed in the Annual Procurement Plan;
- (4) not reserve approval of the Procurement Approval Form for any item on the Procurement Plan where the value of the matter is between £50,000 and £1,000,000;
- (5) approve the Procurement Approval Forms for Construction Design Services Framework, Occupational Health Services, and Utilities attached as Appendices 3, 4 and 5; and
- (6) not reserve the award of the final contract for those items over £1,000,000 and note that if not reserved the Head of Property & Facilities Management and Head of Legal & People had the delegated powers to award the final contracts.

10. MINUTE OF MEETING OF LICENSING-SUB-COMMITTEE ON 8 December 2023

The Committee noted the Minute of the following meeting, a copy of which forms Appendix A to this minute:

- A. Minute of Meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee on 8 December 2023

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2023

Members: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), M Ewenson (Vice-Chair), G Crowson, J Gifford, T Mason, L McWhinnie, R Menard and J Nicol.

Officers: Kelly Bissett (Trainee Solicitor), Nicole Chidester (Committee Officer), and Fiona Stewart (Senior Solicitor).

Also in attendance: Sergeant Neil Grant (Police Scotland).

2 SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

2A 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

to consider, where an Integrated Impact Assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

2B CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Sub-Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and media representatives from the meeting for Items 4, 5 and 6 of the business below on account of the likely disclosure of confidential information in breach of the obligation of confidence.

4 MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF 13 OCTOBER 2023

There had been circulated and was **approved** as a correct record the Minute of the Meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee of 13 October 2023.

5 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF TAXI DRIVER'S LICENCE (CASE NO. 1089)

There had been circulated a report dated 9 November 2023, by the Director of Business Services, which (1) requested that consideration be given to an application for the grant of a taxi driver's licence (identified as Case No. 1089), in respect of which the Chief Constable had made a representation, and (2) detailed information relevant to the application.

This application was presented to the Sub-Committee on 13 October 2023, but was deferred until 8 December 2023 to allow for any further evidence and to seek clarification on details surrounding the charge, if possible.

Members were informed that following publication of committee papers, officers received information from Police Scotland to say that the court hearing was not scheduled until January 2024. Officers recommended that this application be deferred until after January 2024 due to the pending outstanding court case.

Members were also informed that the Chair and Vice-Chair were consulted on this new recommendation and the applicant had been given an indication that this deferral may take place.

Having considered the above, and with the understanding that this case must be determined by May 2024, Members **agreed** to note the application and formally agree to the deferral until 2 February 2023.

5 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF TAXI DRIVER'S LICENCE (CASE NO. 1091)

There had been circulated a report dated 7 November 2023, by the Director of Business Services, which (1) requested that consideration be given to an application for the grant of a taxi driver's licence (identified as Case No. 1091), in respect of which the Chief Constable had made a representation, and (2) detailed information relevant to the application.

Having heard from the applicant and the Chief Constable's representative, The Sub-Committee unanimously **agreed** that there was sufficient evidence before them to allow a determination to be made.

With a majority decision, the Sub-Committee **agreed** in principle to grant the license for 3 years, subject to satisfactory evidence of group 2 medical standards and with an added condition that the applicant's specified tattoo be covered at all times while driving as a taxi driver.

6 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF TAXI DRIVER'S LICENCE (CASE NO. 1092)

There had been circulated a report dated 1 November 2023, by the Director of Business Services, which (1) requested that consideration be given to an application for the grant of a taxi driver's licence (identified as Case No. 1092), in respect of which the Chief Constable had made a representation, and (2) detailed information relevant to the application.

Members confirmed that they have received the written submissions which were circulated prior to the committee.

Having heard from the applicant and the Chief Constable's representative, the Sub-Committee unanimously **agreed**:-

- (1) that there was sufficient evidence before them to allow a determination to be made; and
- (2) to GRANT the application for taxi driver's licence for a period of 3 years.

DRAFT

**PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE
AS AT 18 APRIL, 2024**

| | Item Title | Date of Meeting | Action Agreed | Responsible Officer | Progress to Date |
|----|---|------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Outturn Review of the Performance of the Treasury Management Function for the Period 1 April 2022 to 31 April 2023 | 14 09 2023 | Officers to provide further information on the figures related to the Common Good Fund | Alison Alexander/ Fiona Stewart | Report is on the agenda. |
| 2. | Request to Write Off Unrecoverable Debts Arising from Salary Overpayments | 11 01 2024 | Officers to prepare and bring a report to the Committee detailing the position on salary overpayments in the last 5 years with a particular focus on improvements in the process to mitigate any salary overpayments made and include information about the largest overpayments/data about recovery figures for future benchmarking. | Euan Proudfoot/ Karlyn Watt | Officers within Finance are continuing to collate the required information on salary overpayments that have been identified within the past 5 years, including the value of the overpayments, the reasons why they arose, and the total amount recovered. A report will be presented to the Committee on 13 June 2024. |
| 3. | Office Space Strategy | 11 01 2024 | Officers to prepare a report for the Committee with an update on the Council's whole office estate, including an update on Operation OYNE. | Allan Whyte / Karen Wiles | Report is on the agenda. |
| 4. | Business Services Financial Performance as at 31 December 2023 | 29 02 2024 | Officer to gather details of the projects that have been ongoing this year that have incurred expenditure from the Digital Strategy Reserve. | Rob Simpson / Shirleyann Gordon | This will be incorporated in the next Digital Strategy Update which will be brought to the meeting of the Committee on 13 June 2024. |

REPORT TO BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024

BUSINESS SERVICES' HEADS OF SERVICE BUSINESS PLANS UPDATE 2024/25

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 To present to Business Services Committee for consideration and comment the updated Heads of Service Business Plans for Business Services' Directorate which detail the direction each of the services will take in support of the Strategic Priorities set out in the Council Plan 2022-27. The report illustrates the links between Council and Service Priorities and how the Council Priorities translate into the priorities within the individual business plans.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Scrutinise, challenge, comment on and endorse the Heads of Service Business Plans attached at Appendix 1;

1.2.2 Consider, comment and agree the performance measures detailed in each Business Plan;

1.2.3 Instruct the Director of Business Services to continue to present performance reports to the Committee thereafter on a six-monthly basis, in line with the Performance Management Framework, evidencing progress and performance in support of the Council Plan 2022-27.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The [Council Plan 2022-27](#) was approved at Full Council at the meeting of 24 November 2022 and provided the strategic direction that the Council will take over the coming years. Evidence from the Strategic Assessment along with the key deliverables from the Administration's manifesto were used to inform activity.

2.2 The Strategic Priorities detailed in the Plan reflect the challenges being faced by the Council and inform our Medium-Term Financial Strategy in order to address what will be a significant financial shortfall. Sitting beneath the Strategic Priorities are the Strategic Outcomes which Council Services will use to plan activity and deploy resources. The Council will make the most of opportunities to work with partners, drive efficiencies through all areas of the Council and ensure we are agile and responsive to the needs of our communities. The Council will also continue to invest in our workforce so they are capable, skilled and adaptable.

2.3 This report is being presented to the committee as part of the Aberdeenshire Council Performance Management Framework, providing an update on the

Head of Service Business Plans for 2024/25 which support the delivery of the Council Plan.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 Following approval of the Council Plan 2022-27 and the discontinuation of Directorate Plan, Head of Service Business Plans were introduced in 2023/24 to set out the scope and standard of work the Service would deliver along with clear work programmes which will achieve improvements against SMARTER performance measures linked to the Council Priorities.
- 3.2 Business Plans will include context of work for the Service, challenges and risks, along with workforce plans.
- 3.3 Performance reports detailing progress in relation to the performance indicators contained within the Business Plans will be presented to Committee on a six-monthly basis.
- 3.4 Business Services is made up of a number of sub-services: Commercial & Procurement Shared Services, Customer & Digital Services, Finance, Legal & People, and Property & Facilities Management. The Head of Service Business Plans for each of these sub-services are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.5 The Area Managers for Buchan and Formartine also sit within Business Services however are not required to develop Business Plans.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 At its meeting on 24 November 2022, Full Council agreed a new set of six Strategic Priorities detailed in the undernoted table.

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

This report supports all six Strategic Priorities.

4.2 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 |

4.3 There are no staffing or financial implications arising directly from this report. However, there may be staffing or financial implications arising from any of the projects/actions which form part of the Heads of Service Business Plans (**Appendix 1**). Where required, these will be subject to separate reporting.

4.4 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out at the screening stage (IIA-002078) and no further detailed assessments are required. This report is a high-level planning document and does not have any differential impact on any of the protected characteristics. Any service changes made as a result of this plan will be subject to separate reporting and integrated impact assessments carried out as appropriate.

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

Aberdeenshire Corporate Risks: (*link: [Corporate Risk Register](#)*)

- ACORP001 – Budget Pressures
- ACORP002 – Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation
- ACORP003 – Workforce (attracting and retaining the right skills, performance, reward package)
- ACORP004 – Business & organisation transformation
- ACORP005 – Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)
- ACORP006 – Reputation Management (including social media)
- ACORP007 – Social Risk (e.g. population changes, poverty and social inequality, demographic changes, crime, anti-social behaviour)
- ACORP009 – Operational Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

Business Services Directorate Risks: (*link: [Business Services Directorate Risk Register](#)*).

- BSSR002 – Communities are confident, resilient and inclusive. Individuals feel secure and in control of their circumstances
- BSSR003 – We live within our means and use public money to maximise outcomes for our communities

- BSSR004 – Our asset, property and land are managed to the best financial effect, supporting delivery of our priorities and service ambitions in the medium to long term
- BSSR005 – One Aberdeenshire, people working effectively with each other across public services and across communities
- BSSR006 – Staffing working close to the communities they serve, making decisions based on local need

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 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 C.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the Committee's powers to decide on all policy issues and resource matters (within agreed budgets) relating to those functions delegated to Business Services Committee.

Rob Simpson

Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Jenn Askildsen, Support Services Manager
26 March 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Business Services' Head of Services Business Plans Update 2024/25

Business Services Head of Service Business Plans Update 2024/25 Appendix 1

Providing innovative, forward thinking and trusted advice and services
to protect and promote the interests of Aberdeenshire Council

Appendix 1: Contents

- [Director's Introduction and Business Services Overview](#)
- [Commercial & Procurement Business Plan](#)
- [Customer & Digital Services Business Plan](#)
- [Finance Business Plan](#)
- [Legal & People Business Plan](#)
- [Property & Facilities Management Business Plan](#)

Directors Introduction

I am delighted to introduce the Business Services Directorate Business Plans. The Plans guide the work of teams across Business Services and can and should be seen as living, breathing documents that capture key activities that will be taken forward together with a measurement of performance.

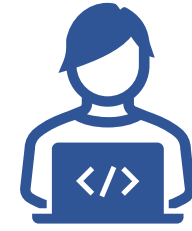
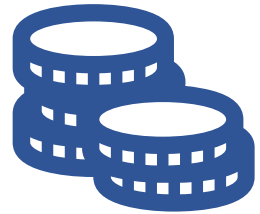
The Plans continue to evolve and have been refreshed this year to ensure greater consistency in reporting. The Plans will guide improvement activity enabling self-evaluation in order to allow us to look at actions and priorities. We are committed to utilising the Plans in an effective way and to that end we will commit to using the Plans as a basis for quarterly performance reviews where each Head of Service will discuss the performance of their area of responsibility with the wider Business Services Directorate Management Team. This will enable peer support, challenge and improvement.

The Business Services Directorate is committed to supporting the wider organisation, working with partners and delivering transformation. The plans set out ambitious and realistic targets which will allow us to deliver across these areas while dealing with the challenges that invariably arise. The challenges include, but are not limited to, reducing resources, rising costs, shifts in demand and areas of recruitment challenge. Despite these challenges our teams remain committed to delivering the best service possible for Aberdeenshire, organisation and citizen. As we move forward transformation will be at the heart of what we do. Transforming takes many guises and will involve changes across Business Services as we seek to be more efficient and take a modern approach to our service delivery. Business Services will also be at the heart of supporting transformation across the wider authority in order to deliver for our citizens and our communities.



Rob Simpson, March 2024

Overview



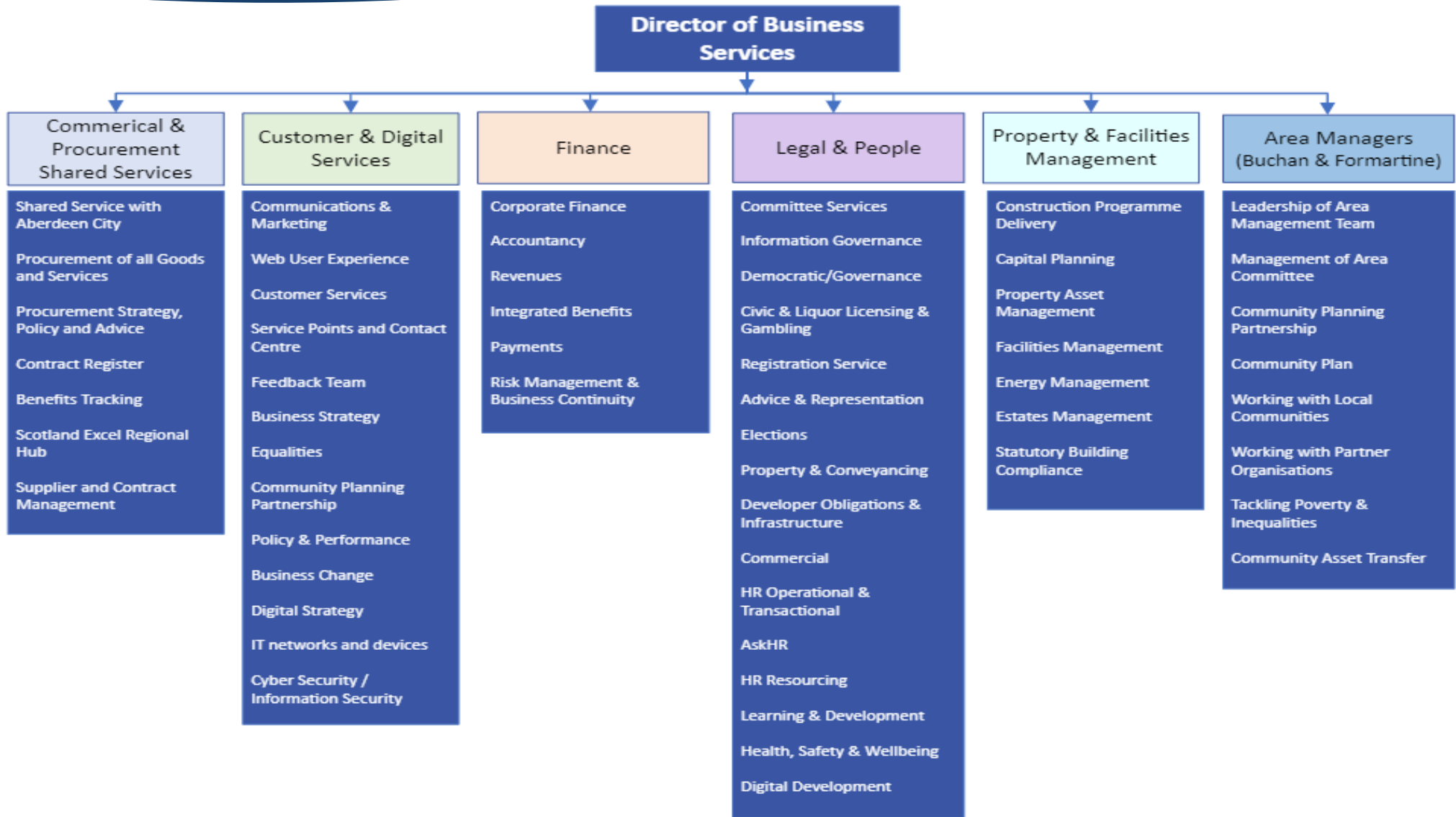
Business Services delivers a range of services and functions that support the front-line services of the Council and helps them achieve their aims and objectives within the framework of a modern and effective organisation. We have contact with every household and ratepayer in Aberdeenshire through the Revenues Taxation team; we oversee public perception of the Council through corporate communications and customer services; we have contact with every employee of the council via Legal & People; we enable flexible working arrangements with robust IT networks and support; and our property team have responsibility for a range of services focussed on managing the council's physical assets.



The 2024-2025 revenue budget for Business Services is £52.254m. Business Services priorities are aligned to the Council Priorities of Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.



Structure and Functions



Vision and Values

Business Services' Vision is:

“Providing innovative, forward thinking and trusted advice and services to protect and promote the interests of Aberdeenshire Council.”

We will do this by:

- Engaging effectively with customers and residents to provide the best services;
- Enabling employees to fulfil their potential by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools;
- Promoting good governance by ensuring the right things are done in the right way, but the right people at the right time;
- Encouraging innovation to create a culture of improvement.

The challenges we face

Finance

Aberdeenshire Council, like many councils across Scotland, is navigating through financial challenges amidst rising costs and heightened demand for local services. This has a significant impact on all directorates including Business Services and we are seeking to be proactive in navigating the challenges by transforming our services, improving our processes and ensuring our systems and support are fit for the future of Aberdeenshire Council.

Area of Recruitment Challenge

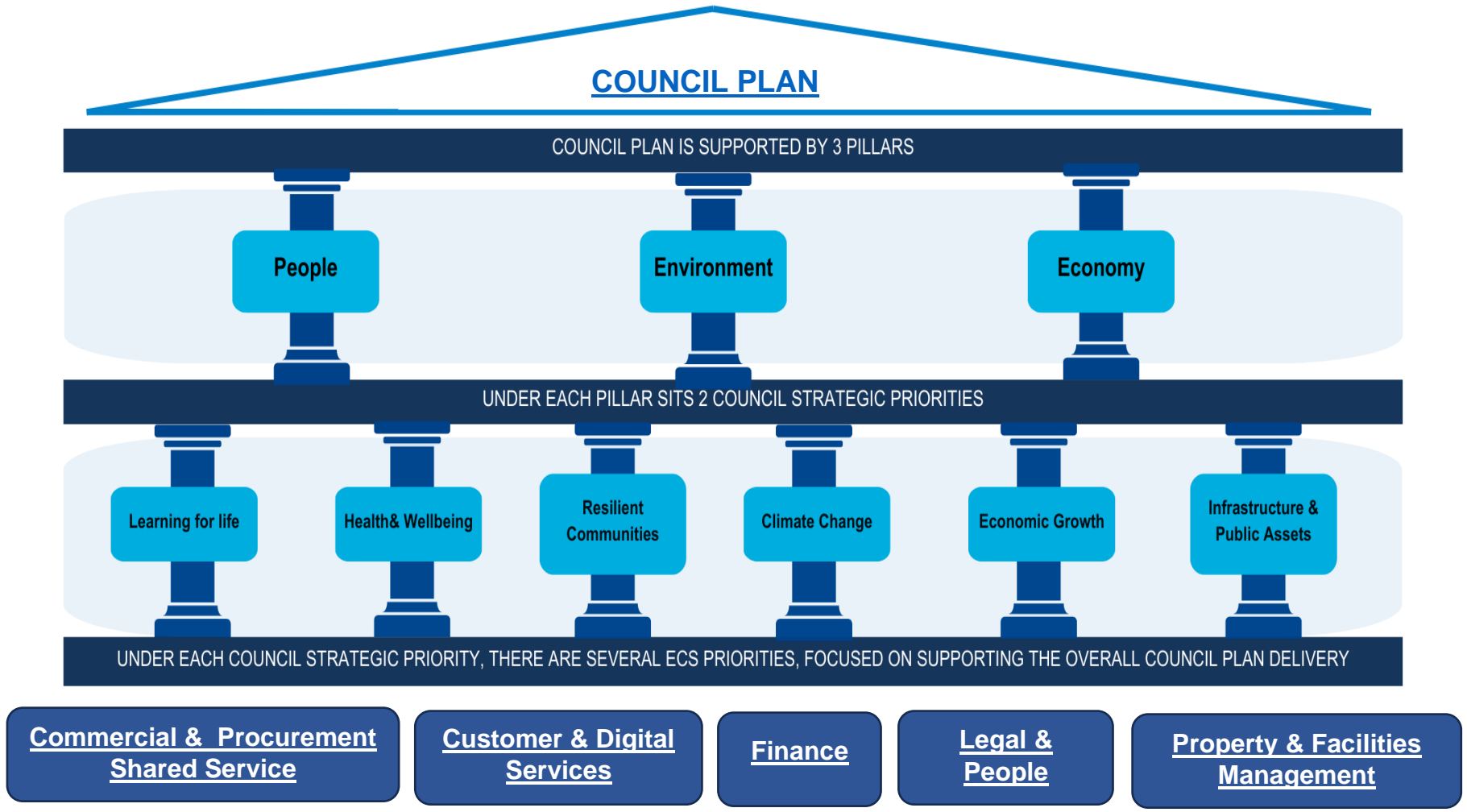
Business Services is not immune from recruitment challenges. As we transform across Aberdeenshire Council we would like to ‘springboard’ people into new areas of the business, upskilling, developing and creating opportunity. We will also look at how we deliver our services in order to competitively recruit to roles where we struggle to attract and retain.

Digital

As we seek to modernise and transform our services it is critical we continue to develop and upskill our teams. Future service delivery within Business Services and across Aberdeenshire Council may mean deployment of digital tools such as chatbots and artificial intelligence together with many other tools. Such deployment will create efficiency and aid the roles of colleagues. The critical challenge is in how we implement and ensure we take people with us.

Strategic and Service Priorities

The service strategies must align with Aberdeenshire Council's strategic priorities which is referred to as the golden thread and means that every task of every employee within the Council contributes to achieving better outcomes for the people of Aberdeenshire.



Drivers and Enablers

Drivers

Business Services work together, and in partnership, through a variety of plans, reports, and strategies, which support us to form and achieve our priorities.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Plan Best Value Assurance Report <p>Area & Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community Plans Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Connected & Cohesive Communities | <p>Customer & Digital Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeenshire Council's Digital Strategy 2020-25 Community Engagement Communications Strategy Customer Service Charter Mandatory Code of Practice Acceptable Use IT Customer Service Strategy | <p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Charging Policy & Framework Financial Regulations <p>Legal & People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme of Governance Councillors Code of Conduct Information Governance | <p>Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Governance Joint Procurement Strategy <p>Internal Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit Charter <p>Property & Facilities Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Asset Management Plan Capital Plan |
|--|--|---|---|

Enablers

There are a number of enablers which support our reporting and measuring of our priorities.

These include a number of internal and external strategies and reports, as well as various reporting platforms, such as Pentana.



Business Plans

The following 2024 - 2025 business plans outline the strategy and goals of each function in Business Services:

- [Commercial & Procurement Shared Services](#)
- [Customer & Digital Services](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Legal & People](#)
- [Property & Facilities Management](#)



COMMERCIAL & PROCUREMENT SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2027



Vision Statement

To deliver innovative, sustainable, cost effective and high-quality strategic procurement services, maximising outcomes and value and fostering collaboration.

Vision Statement

Aligned to the Joint Procurement Strategy for 2023 – 2026 the Vision and Mission Statement for Procurement are as set out below:



Procurement Vision

"to deliver innovative, sustainable, cost effective and high quality strategic procurement services, maximising outcomes and value and fostering collaboration"



Mission Statement

"deliver procurement outcomes that support the wider strategic aims of the Councils and the communities they serve, furthering local and national priorities to the fullest extent possible"

Service Function and Purpose

The Commercial & Procurement Shared Service provides Commercial and Procurement services to all Council Services under a shared service arrangement with Aberdeen City and The Highland Council. A range of Strategic Services are provided to partners to the Shared Service agreement, delivered by the Category and Commercial Management and Commissioning, Procurement and Contracts (Social Care) teams:

Category and Commercial Management

The primary role of the Category & Commercial Management Team is to enable the partner councils to achieve their strategic objectives through the delivery of goods, works and services procured externally and to deliver improved value/increased revenue opportunity aligned to the vision and mission statements within the Joint Procurement Strategy. The strategic services provided by the team are:

Data management, performance, analytics and insight.

Procurement strategy, legislation, policy, guidance, training and advice.

Category Management (for all strategic categories of spend).

Commercial Management – covering revenue opportunities

Commissioning, Procurement and Contracts (Social Care)

Buying health and social care and some other specific services, such as education services, is a complex area which requires consideration within the Council’s overall approach to the procurement of goods, works and services. This is because these services can have a considerable impact on the quality of life and health of service users. The responsibility for deciding on which social care services to commission rests with senior managers in the respective councils and in the health and social care partnerships.

Team Vision:
"Together we can commission better, procure with value, and contract in partnership"

We have five work streams:

Commissioning – supporting our colleagues in the councils and the health and social care partnerships to develop and implement strategic commissioning plans

Procurement – tenders; direct awards; compliance with governance

Contract management – administration; routine monitoring; noncompliance activity; supplier relationship management

Quality Assurance – this is not a core element of a contracts team but something we have developed ourselves to help us manage our complex and varied workload.

The Shared Service is overseen by the Strategic Procurement Board, the board is comprised of Senior Leaders from across the 3 Councils currently chaired by the Chief Executive for Aberdeenshire Council and has responsibility for:

- Oversight of the delivery of the services set out in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the partners to the joint arrangement.
- Oversight of a programme of digitisation of as many procurement processes as possible across the shared arrangement.
- Providing oversight of the roll out of a procurement capability programme across the shared arrangement.

Reviewing the performance of the service using Key Indicators and providing scrutiny and challenge, KPI's agreed by the board are as contained in the Business Plan and reported to the Strategic Procurement Board quarterly.

Service Priorities

Service Priorities and how they sit within the Council Plan

[The Council Plan](#) was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities

| Pillar | Council Priority |
|------------------------|---|
| Our People | 1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing |
| Our Environment | 3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | 5. Economic Growth 6. Infrastructure and Public Assets |

Business Services have generated service priorities to:

- (a) deliver on the Council priorities and strategic priorities and
- (b) to realise the service vision and strategic objectives.

The Council Plan was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities. The Council Plan can be viewed using this link - <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-plan/>

The Commercial & Procurement shared service supports delivery across all aspects of the Council’s Strategic Priorities through the services provided.

Key priorities for the Commercial & Procurement Service for 2024/25 are set out below:

| Priority | Strategic Priority | Anticipated Delivery by: |
|---|--|--|
| Delivery against Joint Procurement Strategy Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Policy • Food Procurement • Net Zero • Community Wealth Building (Procurement Pillar) • Commercialisation | Health & Wellbeing Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 Strategy reviewed annually to ensure alignment with key priorities. |
| Transformation Programme (Delivery of External Collaboration & Partnership Thematic Priority) | Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 |
| Development of a Community Benefit and Sustainable Procurement Policy | Health & Wellbeing Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth | 31 March 2025 |
| Revision of the Commercial Sponsorship Policy | Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 |
| Review and update Delegated Procurement E-Learning | Learning for Life | 30 September 2024 |
| Improve access to Contract Data (Roll out of new contract register platform) | Infrastructure & Public Assets | 30 June 2024 |
| Delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVIF) Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender • Contract Award • Commence Implementation | Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 |
| Delivery against Procurement Savings Target for 2024/25 | Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 |
| Enablement of Service Savings for 2024/25 | Infrastructure & Public Assets | 31 March 2025 |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| Council priority | Service performance measure | Action | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale |
|------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| People | Monitor number of officers undertaking training | Monitor training reports and numbers of officers submitted delegated procurer forms/maintain DPA register. | Knowledgeable and skilled delegated procurers | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | Ongoing |
| People | Further development of mechanisms of capturing the voice of those with lived experience | | Ethical commissioning principles are met | Neil Stephenson | 31 March 2025 |
| People | Strategic objectives from each services' commissioning plan aligns to Council and Team strategic plans | Engagement with Services in work plans/commissioning plans. Review and oversight of Procurement Approval Forms. | Clear linkage across services resulting in resource and financial efficiencies | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | 31 March 2025 |
| Environment | >95% contracts include clause relating to community benefits >95% contracts include clause relating to fair work | Ensure templates include relevant wording for Delegated Procurers for use in Procurement Activity. Monitor and track performance against these KPI's quarterly and provide an annual update within the Annual Procurement Report presented to committee. | Ensure through procurement we include Community Benefits, Fair Work and Sustainability criteria so the subsequent contract will improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing in a way additional to the main purpose of the contract. | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | 31 March 2025 |

| Council priority | Service performance measure | Action | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale |
|------------------|--|---|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Environment | >75% contracts include Carbon Reduction Measures | <p>Ensure templates include relevant wording for Delegated Procurers for use in Procurement Activity.</p> <p>Monitor and track performance against this KPI quarterly and provide an annual update to committee through the production of the annual procurement report</p> | <p>Ensure through procurement we include Community Benefits, Fair Work and Sustainability criteria so the subsequent contract will improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing in a way additional to the main purpose of the contract</p> | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | 31 March 2025 |
| Economy | >30% spend with suppliers to be local | <p>Provide guidance and support to local suppliers through Supplier Development activity.</p> <p>Internal engagement on methods of engaging with Suppliers in advance of procurement, working closely with the Procurement Development Officer in Economic Development.</p> | <p>Developing the local economy, redirecting wealth back into the local economy and placing control and benefits into the hand of local people</p> | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | 31 March 2025 |
| Economy | 80% spend is under contract – no maverick spends | <p>Monitor and track performance against this KPI quarterly.</p> <p>Produce quarterly compliance reports and provide support to areas demonstrating under target performance.</p> | <p>Support all service areas to adhere to governance</p> | Mel Mackenzie & Neil Stephenson | Ongoing |

Benchmarking & Self-Assessment

Benchmarking is carried out across key areas as listed below:

1. The Service benchmarks performance against information published by Scottish Government and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
2. Benchmarking is also undertaken when developing Strategy, Policy and Guidance with information gathered and reviewed around best practice from other local authorities in Scotland.
3. Contracts are regularly benchmarked against other local authorities for examples of best practice and against market rates on cost.

Procurement performance is benchmarked against that of other local authorities under Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) – Bi-Annual assessment due to take place May 2024, self assessment against pre-established questions is conducted in advance of the session.

The PCIP assessment provides a means of measuring and reporting on the procurement and commercial capability of organisations through the provision of evidence, based around a series of set questions and other evaluation methods.

As this assessment is planned to take place during this financial year, there are no immediate plans to undertake further self-assessment using the PSIF framework.

Financial Profile

Commercial & Procurement Shared Services Budget for 2024/25

The budget is agreed annually by Full Council in February, the budget agreed for Procurement for financial year 2024/25 is £911,000.

The budget for Procurement covers:

1. Aberdeenshire Council’s share of the Shared Procurement Service costs; and
2. Aberdeenshire Council’s membership fee for Scotland Excel.

Link to the budget report:

<https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s17088/4%2024%2002%2022%20Council%20Budget%202024-29.pdf>

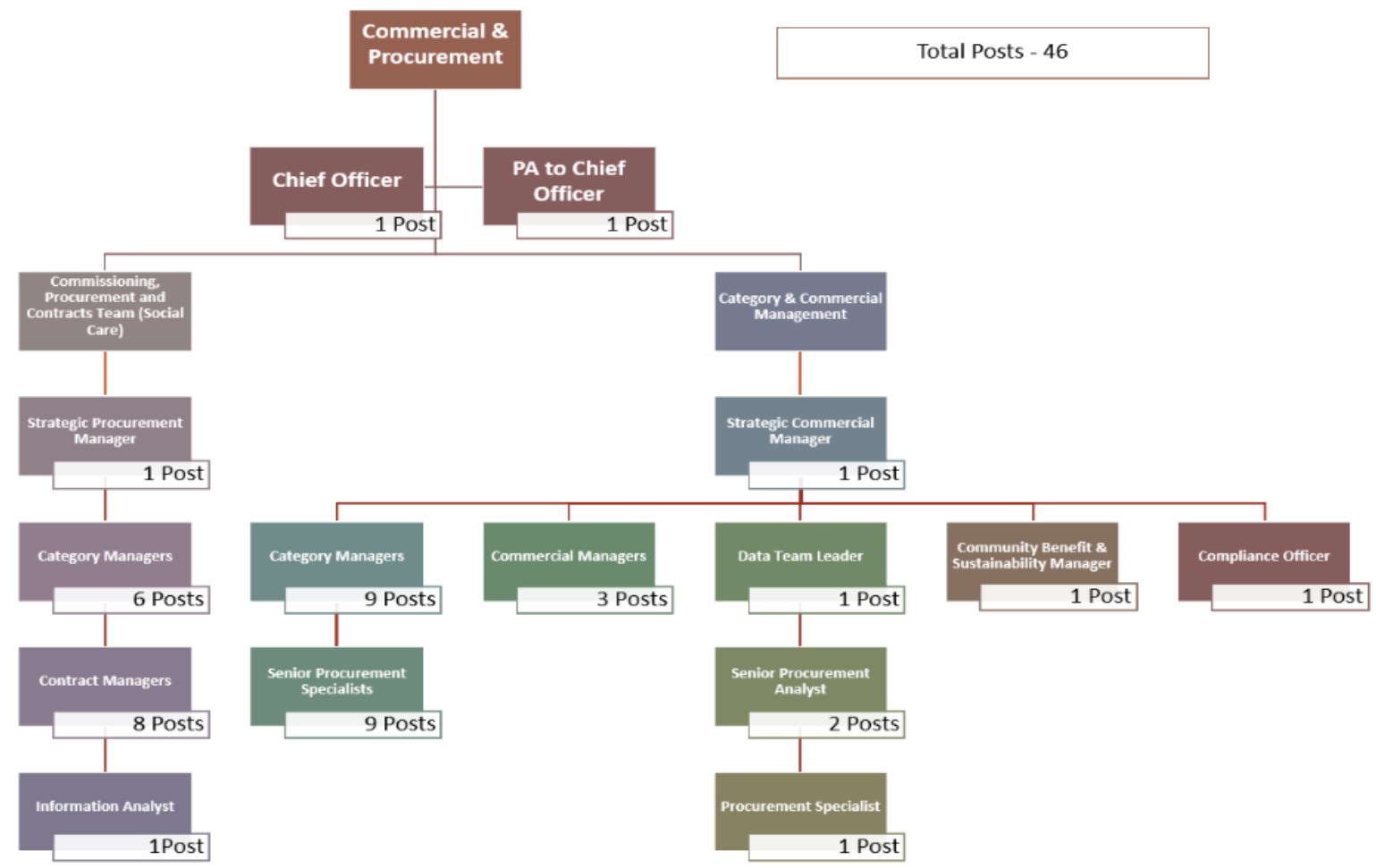
Budget Profile for 2024/25 is as per below:

| Commercial and Procurement 2024/25 Budget Profile | |
|---|-------------------|
| Supplies and Services (inc. Scotland Excel Membership) | <i>£184,000</i> |
| Payment to Third Parties (Shared Service Costs) | <i>£997,000</i> |
| Grants | <i>(£226,000)</i> |
| Income | <i>(£44,000)</i> |
| Total Budget | <i>£911,000</i> |

Our People: Staffing & Workforce Planning 2023-2026

Service Staffing Profile

Organisational Chart



Aberdeenshire Council have identified, at a corporate level, that all Business Plans must address the following workforce planning activities to support the Council in being fit and flexible for the future: Wellbeing, Digital Skills, Diversity and Succession Planning, Establishment Control. Services also identify actions relating to industry and service specific drivers based on their own internal and external environmental analysis to ensure they have the right people in the right place doing the right things at the right time for them to meet their overall service outcomes and priorities.

Workforce Planning requires a level of forecasting and should be in place for a rolling 3-year period as many workforce planning actions require time to come to fruition, e.g. natural turnover, skills development, succession planning. Also providing a transparent 3-year workforce plan allows for better transparency and levels of engagement with the workforce.

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

Measures of Success/ Progress Update

Workforce planning for the Shared Service would be conducted under Aberdeen City Council workforce planning activities with any staffing or structure changes approved by the Strategic Procurement Board, as required under the collaboration agreement that governs the shared service arrangement.

The model for Strategic Workforce Planning:

To deliver against the workforce strategic outcomes outlined in the Target Operating Model 1.2, the following section breaks down our planned activities into five key areas of work, along with specific objectives and projected timeline. These are:



Workforce Plan

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Wellbeing | Issue/ Risk | <p>Absence rates for C&PSS ranged have remained fairly steady across the first three quarters of 2023/24. See below table on average number of days lost per FTE:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>- Quarter 1 - 2023/24</td> <td>- Quarter 2 - 2023/24</td> <td>- Quarter 3 - 2023/24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- 0.8</td> <td>- 1.5</td> <td>- 1.5</td> </tr> </table> <p>CPSS absence is comparatively low compared to organisational trends.</p> | - Quarter 1 - 2023/24 | - Quarter 2 - 2023/24 | - Quarter 3 - 2023/24 | - 0.8 | - 1.5 | - 1.5 |
| | - Quarter 1 - 2023/24 | - Quarter 2 - 2023/24 | - Quarter 3 - 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | - 0.8 | - 1.5 | - 1.5 | | | | | |
| Action(s) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> As an employer Aberdeen City Council provides a range of mental health and wellbeing interventions and support; supports staff through the cost-of-living crisis; recognizes and supports work/life balance and enables individuals to remain in work or return to work effectively. Include as regular topic in team meetings to highlight support available. Absence levels regularly reviewed by the CPSS Health & Safety committee to identify concerns and highlight to SMT. | | | | | | | |
| Progress/ Measure | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement of absence trends quarterly – with discussion at SMT on reasons to identify any further support measures which could be put in place. Attendance levels for Mental Health Training. | | | | | | | |
| | | 31 March 2025 | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Skills | Issue/ Risk | Pressure of workload preventing team investment in Professional Development/Attendance at training. |
| | Action(s) | 1. Annual training plan and required funding to be agreed by the Strategic Procurement Board to allow for staff development and to support growing talent to allow for succession planning. 2. Team to be provided with time and space to ensure they can attend training, management to discuss ongoing continuous development during 1:1 meetings. |
| | Progress/ Measures | 1. Monitoring of team training plans on a regular basis 2. Ongoing discussion with individual team members during 1:1's |
| Diversity | Issue/ Risk | In 2023 employees were given access to record and maintain their Equality and Diversity details through the Core HR system at the present time managers do not have access to the employee equalities data available. We are aware however that the age profile of workforce presents a potential area for concern, the majority of the team are aged 30 and over. |
| | Action(s) | Identification of potential opportunities to include apprenticeship, graduate placements and entry level roles to teams. Review recruitment practices to ensure there is no gender bias, including advert text and job profiles particularly for senior management roles and encourage female colleagues to consider progression into leadership roles. |
| | Progress/ Measures | 1. Monitor number of opportunities for apprenticeships, graduate placements 2. Review and monitoring of data relating to recruitment |
| | | 31 March 2025 |
| | | 31 March 2025 |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Succession Planning | Issue/ Risk | A degree of vulnerability across the team around age profile. Established career pathways exist, however a focus on development around business-critical roles where succession planning would be of benefit is required. |
| | Action(s) | We seek opportunities to attract and support young people entering our workforce, our data; and have clear and structured career pathways in place to proactively enable employees to progress their careers and seek to develop the younger workforce through identification of opportunities for apprenticeship, graduate placements and entry level roles to teams. To support this we will identify business critical roles where succession planning is required and through Continuous Review and Development (Annually) identify where team members are keen to progress in their career/identify any gaps. |
| | Progress/ Measures | 1. Monitor the % of roles filled internally. 2. Monitor the use of CR&D conversations to identify personal development, employee engagement and job satisfaction. |
| | | 31 March 2025 |

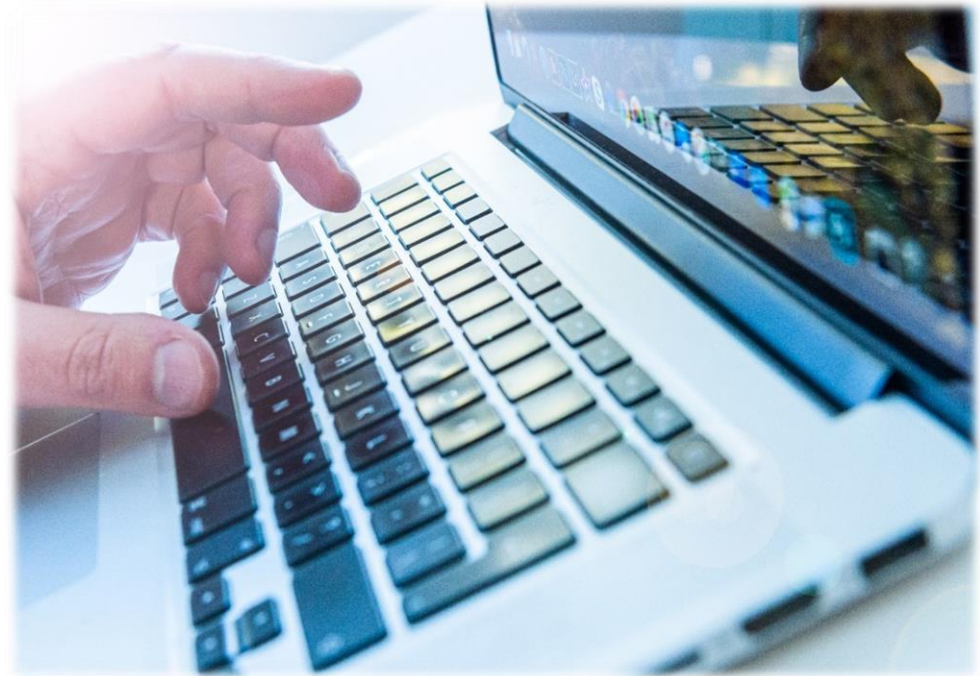
| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) | Issue/Risk | Turnover rates in C&PSS have remained low across the service with the total FTE at a stable level across the last year, team are invested in work supporting the Council(s) with procurement activity giving a wide variety of tasks, flexible/smarter working and recognition of the work of the team supports low turnover. Agency use is low at present but as demands and recruitment/retention challenges increase this is a potential area of risk. |
| | Action(s) | Continue to monitor turnover. Monitor demands/workload across the team to continue to balance workloads/give variety/responsibility. |
| | Progress/Measures | 1. Measure staff turnover figures – reported through SMT 2. Measure agency usage – reported through SMT |
| | | 31 March 2025 |

Concluding Summary

In working to deliver the priorities within this Commercial & Procurement Shared Services Business Plan, we aim to follow the commitment of our procurement vision which is:

“to deliver innovative, sustainable, cost effective and high quality strategic procurement services, maximising outcomes and value and fostering collaboration”

CUSTOMER & DIGITAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2024 - 25



Vision Statement

Customer & Digital Services is a valuable resource of business intelligence, professional advice, technical expertise and customer service excellence that drives Aberdeenshire towards delivering the council's priorities.

Service Function and Purpose

Customer & Digital Services sits within the Council's Business Services Directorate and provides the first point of contact for our customers dealing with around 225,000 enquiries each year. It has responsibility for the provision of advice and support to services on communications and marketing, community engagement, corporate strategy and policy, performance, data, Best Value and equalities. We provide core IT services to the organisation and support digital change and innovation.

| Customer Services | Communications & Marketing | Strategy & Innovation | IT |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Delivering high quality customer service by ensuring we are accessible and that customers are treated fairly and considerately.</p> <p>50.4 FTE</p> | <p>Ensuring people feel informed and engaged in the work of the council.</p> <p>10.5 FTE</p> | <p>Using data intelligence, engagement and performance to support the strategic direction of the organisation.</p> <p>Enabling and leading strategic organisational change initiatives through direct support, guidance, tools and facilitation.</p> <p>Building a culture of benefits realisation through a programme led approach.</p> <p>28 FTE</p> | <p>Provision of core IT services, including infrastructure, devices, systems and data storage which are effective, available, resilient and secure.</p> <p>91 FTE</p> |

Service Priorities

Service Priorities and how they sit within the Council Plan

[The Council Plan](#) was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities

| Pillar | Council Priority |
|------------------------|---|
| Our People | 1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing |
| Our Environment | 3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | 5. Economic Growth 6. Infrastructure and Public Assets |

Business Services have generated service priorities to:

- (a) deliver on the Council priorities and strategic priorities and
- (b) to realise the service vision and strategic objectives.

As a corporate team, Customer & Digital Services supports all services in working towards, and delivering, the Council's Priorities.

Our priorities for the year ahead:

| C&DS Area | Priority | Priority Ref |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Strategic | • Supporting medium term financial sustainability by delivering the transformation Date, Digital and technology workstream | ST1 |
| | • Creation of a new Council Plan | ST2 |
| | • Support delivery of the Place Strategy | ST3 |
| Customer Service | • Implementation of the new Customer Service Strategy, supported by stakeholder engagement | CS1 |
| | • Transfer of face-to-face queries from 5 Service Points to signposting/support at agreed LLA venues | CS2 |
| | • Assess the criteria and potential alternatives for a CRM system to effectively support the Customer Service Strategy | CS3 |
| | • Review the whole customer journey to ensure appropriate responses to customer enquiries are provided within relevant timescales | CS4 |
| Comms & Marketing | • Entire refresh of comms strategy, with a focus on internal comms. | CM1 |
| | • Migrate all web content as part of ground-up web content review | CM2 |
| | • Focus on team wide involvement in Transformation strategy communications | CM3 |
| | • Embed creative and accessibility skills across the organisation. | CM4 |
| Strategy & Innovation | • Deliver a framework for Place-based community planning | SI1 |
| | • Develop and implement data strategy and data hub | SI2 |
| | • Develop equality outcomes 2025 | SI3 |
| | • Deliver the Big Data, Digital and Tech Transformation workstream | SI4 |
| | • Lead the Digital Programme | SI5 |
| | • Support transformational change through the application of service design and change management best practice and governance | SI6 |
| IT | • Delivery of the Next Generation Local Area Network | IT1 |
| | • Review corporate device provisioning and funding | IT2 |
| | • Review Microsoft 365 licence functionality & allocations | IT3 |
| | • Supporting the council in the delivery of key projects including Transformation & Ward Pages replacement | IT4 |
| | • Implement new IT strategy and team structure | IT5 |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| C&DS Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|-------------------|---|--|------------------|---|---|---|---|
| CS1 CS2 CS4 | Average call wait times for Customer Services | Deployment of technology (AI and webchat), new CRM, ongoing recruitment, end to end process redesign for top 5 customer transactions | 2022-23 – 7 mins | Target: 5 minutes Amber Threshold: 6 minutes Red Threshold: 7 minutes | Improvement in how we support customers with their enquiries | Customer Services: Michelle Milne Caroline O’Shaughnessy & David Anderson | Ongoing Reported quarterly |
| CS1 CS2 CS4 | Customer Services call abandonment rate | Deployment of technology (AI and webchat), new CRM, ongoing recruitment, end to end process redesign for top 5 customer transactions | 2022-23 – 31% | Target: 22% Amber Threshold: 25% Red Threshold: 30% | Reduced requirement for customers to call us back | Customer Services: Michelle Milne Caroline O’Shaughnessy & David Anderson | Ongoing Reported quarterly |
| CS1 CS4 | Investigation responses fully resolved within 20 working days | All Services to continue to log complaints via the corporate Feedback Team following the Complaints Handling Procedure, to ensure Customer Services manages the process to meet the 20-working day timescale | 2022-23 – 88.1% | Target: 95% Amber Threshold: 92% Red Threshold: 90% | This is an agreed target reported to SPSO and Local Authority Complaints Handling Network | Customer Services: Michelle Milne Caroline O’Shaughnessy & David Anderson | Ongoing Reported quarterly |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| C&DS Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|---------------|---|---|--------------------|---|--|--|---|
| CM1 | Engagement with the council via social media | The number of users who interact with our social media content over a quarter | Q2 2022 number= | Target: 1500000 Amber Threshold: 1425000 Red Threshold: 1350000 | A trusted engagement channels for residents to share and comment on council activity | Communications: Sarah Rochester & Neil Moir | Ongoing, quarterly |
| CM2 | Council Website: Quality of Content | Quality assurance review of = readability, accessibility, broken links, misspellings, and grammar | Q1 2022 data – 84% | Target: 87% Amber Threshold: 86% Red Threshold: 85% | Clearer, easier to understand content, less disrupted user experience, and compliance with website accessibility regulations | Comms – Website Team: Marta Mlynarczyk | Ongoing |
| SI1 | Percentage of engagement activity carried out on the Engage Aberdeenshire platform where feedback is provided to participants | | New indicator | 80% | Increase public confidence in Council engagement | Jane Wilkinson | |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| C&DS Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| SI3 | Percentage of employees who have completed equality training | | New indicator | 90% | Increased awareness of equality obligations across the organisation. | Jane Wilkinson | |
| SI6 | Percentage of Service design interventions that have resulted in business improvement | | New indicator | 70% | Reduce cost of service delivery across the Council. | Phil Hetherington | |
| IT1 IT4 IT5 | IT Service Desk customer tickets logged (rolling 12 months) | Focus on automation, more service requests (delivering what the organisation needs) and less incidents - getting it right first time with resilient, secure systems and services | April 2022 = 54537 April 2023 = 52135 | Target: 50,000 Amber Threshold: 51,000 Red Threshold: 53,000 | Continued decrease in overall volume numbers to meet target during 2024/25 | IT Ray Wilson | |
| IT1 IT4 IT5 | IT Service Desk response within SLA (monthly) | Channel shift from phones to chat with an associated reallocation of resources | April 2022 = 86% April 2023 = 88% | Target: 86% Amber Threshold: 84% Red Threshold: 82% | Continued decrease in contact by phone and an associated increase in contact through Chat | IT Jonathan Townsend | |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| C&DS Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|-------------------|--|--|--|---|---|------------------------|---|
| IT1 IT4 IT5 | Completed cyber security training | Continue reporting of mandatory training, focusing on any groups not meeting the threshold and using training to reinforce improvement actions after any incident | Q1 22/23 = 63% Q1 23/24 = 91% | Target: 90% Amber Threshold: 88% Red Threshold: 85% | Expected to steadily increase completion rate during 2024/2025 with an associated increase in targets | IT Lars Frevert | |
| IT1 IT4 IT5 | Internet connection availability (monthly) | Ongoing capacity planning to ensure funding and provision of additional capacity to meet demand is provided. Contract management through regular supplier reports and meetings to ensure contracted SLAs are met. | April 2022 = 100% April 2023 = 100% | Target: 99.7% Amber Threshold: 99.5% Red Threshold: 99.0% | Continuing to meet or exceed contracted availability | IT: Alec McVean | |

Benchmarking

IT has been participating in the SOCITM Benchmarking process to varying degrees since 2006/7 to help us ascertain whether we are delivering services in an efficient and productive manner and to help inform our strategy by correcting or validating assumptions thereby identifying changes to benefit our users.

Whilst the benchmarking topics, questions asked and indeed technologies have changed significantly over the years we have recently focussed on completing the Cost and Delivery benchmarking modules:

Cost: Examines the cost efficiency of our IT service. By comparing our organisation with others, we can identify areas for cost reduction and those that require additional investment. As well as measuring the overall cost, it monitors device, support and network costs.

Delivery: Provides insight into the relative size of our IT service, and how we develop our staff. It helps to identify if we are investing in the correct end-user devices; if we have the correct level of staffing and whether we are adopting the best policies to assist those staff.

Delivery

2021/22

| | |
|---|-------|
| Users per ICT | □□□□■ |
| Devices per 'support specialist' FTE | ■□□□□ |
| No. of users per service desk FTE | □□□□■ |
| ICT - Turmoil | ■□□□□ |
| Number of devices per user | □□□□■ |
| Number of workstations per user | □□□□■ |
| % of all devices purchased in the year | □□□□■ |
| Users per printer | ■□□□□ |
| Users equipped for flexible working | □■□□□ |
| Screens per workstation | □□□□□ |
| Average Bandwidth per site | □□□■□ |
| Adoption of Governance Standards | □□□□□ |
| % of technical FTEs in 1st Line support | □□□□■ |

2022/23

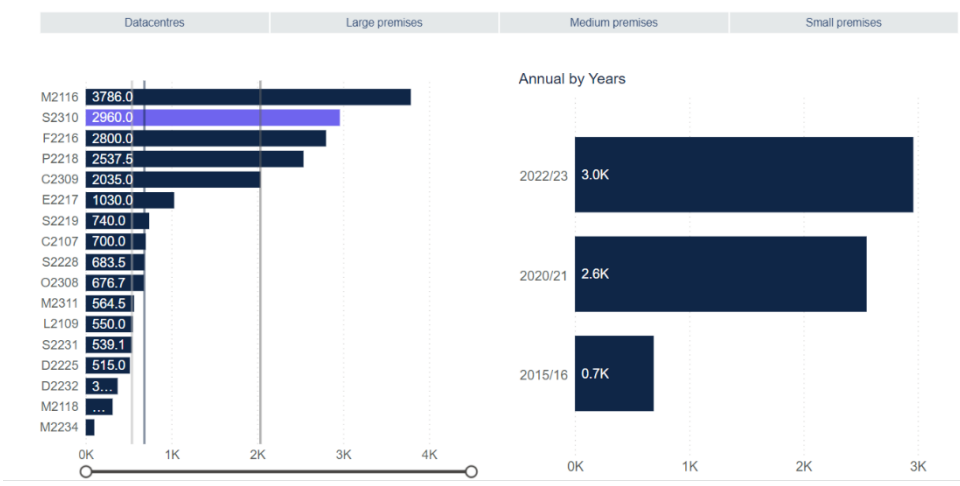
| | |
|---|-------|
| Users per ICT | □□□□■ |
| Devices per 'support specialist' FTE | □■□□□ |
| No. of users per service desk FTE | □■□□□ |
| ICT - Turmoil | ■□□□□ |
| Number of devices per user | □□□□■ |
| Number of workstations per user | □□□□■ |
| % of all devices purchased in the year | □□□□■ |
| Users per printer | ■□□□□ |
| Users equipped for flexible working | ■□□□□ |
| Screens per workstation | ■□□□□ |
| Average Bandwidth per site | □□□□■ |
| Adoption of Governance Standards | □■□□□ |
| % of technical FTEs in 1st Line support | □□□□■ |

| | 2021/22 | Cost | 2022/23 |
|----------------------------------|---------|------|---------|
| N/A | | | |
| Percentage spend on ICT | | | ■□□□ |
| Cost per ICT FTE | | | □□□■ |
| TCO per device | | | □■□□ |
| Spend on devices per user | | | □□□■ |
| Support costs per user | | | □□□□ |
| % of ICT spend on networks | | | □□□■ |
| Network spend per user | | | □□□□ |
| Network spend per device | | | ■□□□ |
| Grand total expenditure on ICT | | | □■□□ |
| ICT spend per head of population | | | □■□□ |
| ICT spend per user | | | ■□□□ |
| Acquisition cost per device | | | ■□□□ |
| Average support cost per device | | | □■□□ |
| Total spend on network | | | □□□■ |
| Network spend per site | | | □■□□ |
| Spend on training per ICT FTE | | | ■□□□ |

With many organisations having different structures, particularly around the management (and therefore inclusion of) education IT, it is sometimes not possible to directly compare all organisation’s data but with more than 20 organisations taking part trends and subsets of the benchmarking data provide important insights into our relative performance. In addition to comparing with other organisations they also provide a historical record of our performance and how it has changed. As part of the 2022/23 (and future) benchmarking process we have therefore added narratives to record our interpretation of the questions to ensure consistency internally.

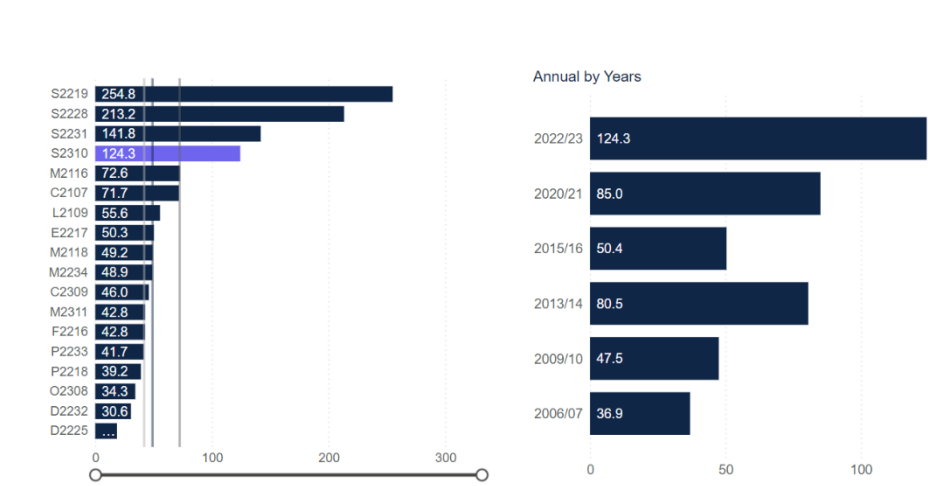
Some data is directly interpretable:

Socitm Average Bandwidth per site



Increase in Bandwidth delivered by the WAN project

Socitm Users per ICT



Ratio of users per ICT staff member increasing as number of IT users increases whilst number of IT staff decreases.

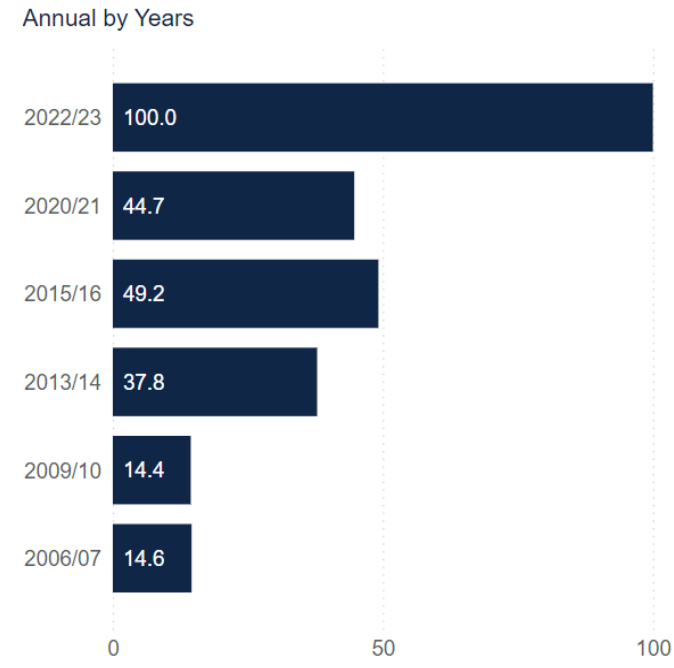
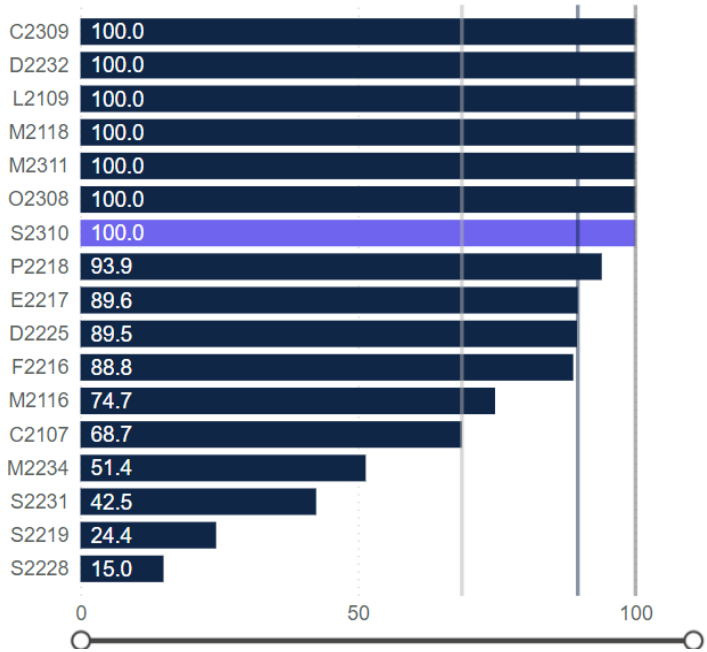
Some other data requires further narrative and interpretation. For example, the users equipped for flexible working result within the 2022/23 Delivery results shows a low-level result, a reduction from 2021/22:



By drilling down into the detail, it can be seen that almost all of our users are equipped to work flexibly but we did not have some data within IT, for example, "Desk to user ratio" and this has skewed the overall result:

Socitm Users equipped for flexible working

| % of all users equipped to work flexibly | % of all users working flexibly-Annually | % of all users working flexibly-Daily | % of equipped users working flexibly-Annually | % of equipped users working flexibly-Daily | Desk to user ratio |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|



Local Authority Complaints Handling Network Data

| | Aberdeenshire 22/23 | Family Group 22/23 | Scottish Average 22/23 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Complaints per 1,000 population | 7.97 | 5.8 | 11.45 |
| Complaint Outcomes | | | |
| Stage One – Partially & Upheld | 44% | 62% | 73% |
| Stage One – Not Upheld | 56% | 38% | 27% |
| Stage Two - Partially & Upheld | 27% | 37% | 41% |
| Stage Two – Not Upheld | 73% | 63% | 59% |
| Average Response Time (in days) | | | |
| Stage One (5-day target) | 8.1 | 6.4 | 9.1 |
| Stage Two (20-day target) | 18.88 | 25.21 | 20.91 |
| Closed Within timescale | | | |
| Stage One | 67% | 74% | 74% |
| Stage Two | 78% | 58% | 70% |

Across the wider service, we work collaboratively with other local authorities through various national forums including:

- Public Communications Headspace Group
- Scottish LA Comms Network – topline benchmarking survey created in collaboration with National Comms group, April 2024. In draft. Ongoing programme of best practise sharing being reinvigorated across Scotland under new chair of NCG.
- SOCITM
- Community Planning Network
- Scottish Councils Equality Network
- Digital Office
- Local Authority Customer Services Managers Group
- Local Authority Complaints Handling Network

Due to the nature of the activity carried out in Customer & Digital Services we're not aligned with the indicators in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). You can view the LGBF dashboard [here](#).

Self-Evaluation

Customer & Digital Services were the first team in the council to pilot the new approach to self-assessment using the PSIF model in 2022. The improvement actions identified have been delivered. The management team will review the impacts of these actions with teams and make further improvements as needed, prior to the next full PSIF exercise due in 2025.

- Create a governance structure around plans and clear signposting to plans relevant to CDS.
- Improve our approach to how key performance information is presented to staff to ensure it supports positive changes to service delivery.
- Look at the ways the service can make better use of customer feedback to ensure it is reflected in service design and delivery.
- Review current approaches to workforce planning to ensure they are fit for purpose in terms of staff profiles and skill gaps.

Financial Profile

Head of Service Narrative

Customer and Digital Services is adapting constantly to the financial challenges facing the organisation. At the core of our activity over the coming year we will be leading and delivering the data, digital and technology workstream as part of the transformation programme. Initially we will focus on driving efficiencies across administrative functions by automating processes, providing online services, deploying technology to remove the need for manual inputs, and increasing the use of corporate systems to drive improvements for our customers, like bookings. As we are delivering this programme of work, we will be exploring the use of AI and increasing our use of data to target where our interventions will provide the greatest financial return on investment. We will work towards embedding an Enterprise Architecture model across the Council, driving whole council improvements through investment in corporate systems, whilst also addressing the very real challenge of technical debt. We will continue to invest in cyber resilience, so our networks, data and information are safe.

We continue our network replacement programme, moving into our education estate once all corporate sites are upgraded. This programme will be delivered as a rolling programme as our capital allocation allows.

Over the last three years, Customer & Digital Services has reduced in size dropping from 196.21 FTE in 2021/22 to 179.9 FTE in 2024/25, a reduction of over 8%. These reductions have largely fallen in IT and Customer Services and is having an impact on the service's ability to respond to the needs of the wider organisation and our customers. We are responding to this by reviewing our service structures, deploying technology to automate key processes and transactions (through the deployment of ChatBots and automation), and being clear with services what we can, and cannot do, within the resources we have. As a team we will continue to prioritise our activity to where our interventions can have the greatest impact on our staff, residents and customers.

The budget is agreed annually by Full Council in February.

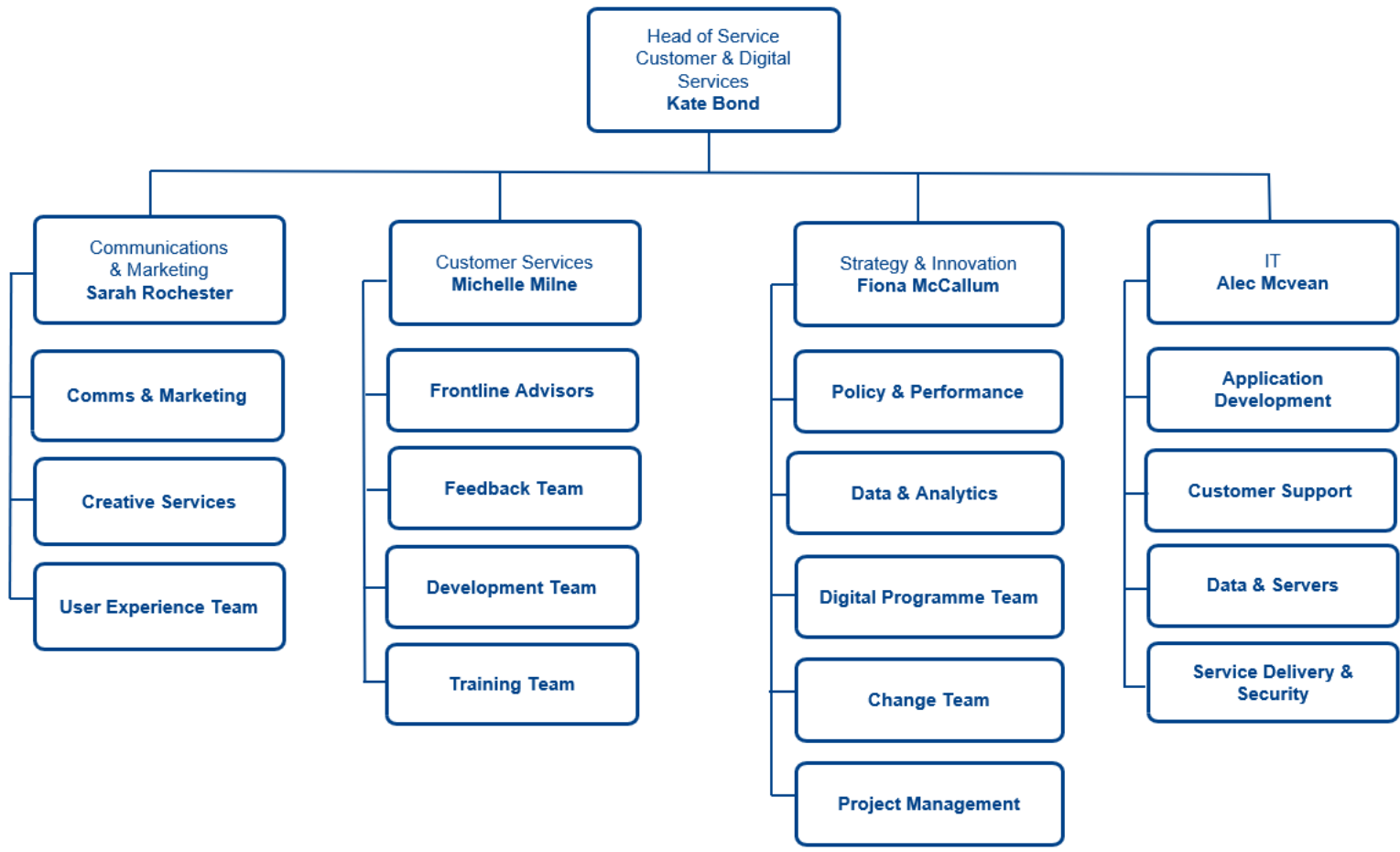
Customer & Digital Services Budget for 2024/25

| | 24/25 Budget £'000 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Staff Costs | 9,283 |
| Premises Costs | 6 |
| Transport | 25 |
| Supplies & Services | 3,643 |
| Grants | (15) |
| Income | (180) |
| Total | 12,762 |

IT Capital Budget for 24/25 is £1.450m

Our People: Staffing & Workforce Planning 2023-2026

Service Staffing Profile Customer & Digital Services



Aberdeenshire Council have identified, at a corporate level, that all Business Plans must address the following workforce planning activities to support the Council in being fit and flexible for the future: Wellbeing, Digital Skills, Diversity and Succession Planning, Establishment Control. Services also identify actions relating to industry and service specific drivers based on their own internal and external environmental analysis to ensure they have the right people in the right place doing the right things at the right time for them to meet their overall service outcomes and priorities.

Workforce Planning requires a level of forecasting and should be in place for a rolling 3-year period as many workforce planning actions require time to come to fruition, e.g. natural turnover, skills development, succession planning. Also providing a transparent 3-year workforce plan allows for better transparency and levels of engagement with the workforce.

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

Measures of Success/ Progress Update:

Over the last 12 months the following progress has been achieved in relation to the actions set in the 2023 Business Plan:

Wellbeing

- Between March 2023 and March 2024, stress accounted for 154 days lost to the service, with depression accounting for 235 days lost. ***This is a significant reduction by 60% and 28% respectively on the previous year.***
- All managers have completed Mental Health at Work training.
- 87% Wellbeing Platform and App have been discussed and promoted to every team. This includes a specific Lunch & Learn session for all C&DS staff.
- Support information has been highlighted to all staff. This includes a focus in the C&DS Virtual Staffroom (SharePoint page).
- PPPs and 1:1s regularly take place to provide a framework for constructive feedback and allow for conversations on workload and commitments to be discussed.

Skills

- Extensive training programmes in place for front-line Advisors on Services has been delivered.
- PPPs and 1:1s regularly take place where training/development is discussed.
- Annual training plans have been integrated into PPPs and teams plan processes with the expectation that all staff have an annual plan. This is aligned with a shift in focus to request the training that's required, and funding looked for externally if available. Learning statistics are gathered through a time recording process and reported through IT metrics.
- Customer Services has recently introduced a new coaching programme for all front-line Advisors, Supervisors and Team Leaders.
- Communications & Marketing have regular team learning workshops, discussions on training opportunities and budget. There are also, national discussions on training opportunities via the Government Communications Service. The Service Manager has begun a mentoring programme to support others in the organisation.
- Head of Service participated in an Exec Stretch demonstrating leadership and an openness to continuous learning.
- In Strategy & Innovation a training programme has been developed and training opportunities are shared on the Team chat. Training is a standing agenda item at Strategy & Innovation management team meetings.
- Coaching and mentoring is promoted through monthly 1:1s and PPP conversations in Strategy & Innovation.

Diversity

- iTrent reports are being used to analyse recruitment and employee data.
- Managers' toolkit is being utilised to track employee data.
- Further apprenticeship opportunities have been created.
- Student placement opportunities have been created within Strategy & Innovation.

Succession Planning

- As part of IT's recent restructure they've implemented new technology-based teams. Training needs are highlighted as well as utilising training that has been carried out (e.g. security) to provide new opportunities for staff and remove single points of failure/knowledge.
- There is a focus on internal recruitment opportunities to help with retention rates whilst matching services and service levels, to align with staffing changes such as VS.
- Succession planning is discussed as part of the PPP.
- In Strategy & Innovation the development of the Business Continuity Plan highlighted the need for succession planning and this is now incorporated into Team meetings and 1:1s. Significant progress has been made across all teams in terms of upskilling and knowledge sharing and this continues to be an area of focus.

Establishment Control

- Customer Services piloted new ways of working. Following the pilot period, this is now being rolled out across the team. Customer Services will continue to monitor the impact.
- Regular monitoring and delivering on PSIF activities take place.
- In Strategy & Innovation regular reviews of performance indicators take place to ensure these remain relevant and we continue to speak to other authorities about benchmarking opportunities.

Workforce Plan

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Wellbeing | Issue/Risk | |
| | Action(s) | |
| | Progress/Measure | |

During 2023, 38 C&DS employees signed up to use the 87% app.

Less than 10 employees participated in this year's assessment. As a result, due to anonymity reasons, an in-depth breakdown is not available. One of the reasons that can be attributed to the low participation figure is app users can access the assessment on a regular basis, thereby have no need to engage with this method.

In November 2023, a pulse survey was available to staff to rate their own wellbeing. The results from this show C&DS following a similar pattern to the whole organisation with a slightly worsening picture with decreased in the Excelling and Thriving categories and an increase in the lower 3 categories.

87% Wellbeing Platform and App to continue being discussed and promoted to every team.

Support information to continue being highlighted and provided to the whole service via the Virtual Staffroom (C&DS Team SharePoint page) allowing all employees to be aware of the range of support available to them.

PPP conversations to continue being carried out regularly with all team members to provide a consistency to the supportive conversations being had by managers, to provide a framework for constructive feedback and allow for regular conversations on workload and commitments to be discussed.

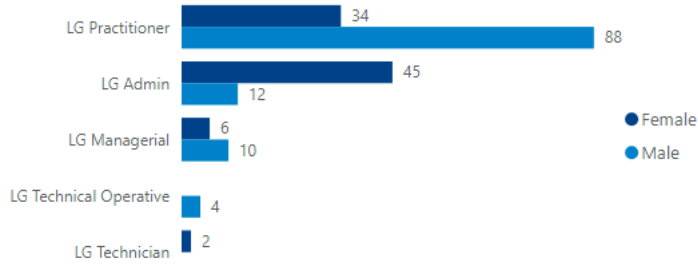
Monitored at C&DS Management Team by quarterly analysis and insights from Workforce Power BI and 87% Wellbeing data.

Ongoing

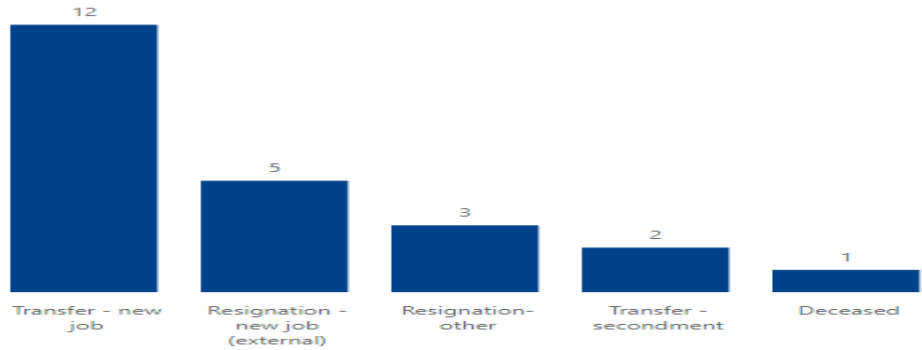
Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates

Item 5
Page 65

| Priority | Key Actions | | Target Date |
|----------|--------------------------|---|-------------|
| Skills | Issue/ Risk | Budget reductions require that digital tools are utilised to their full capacity, therefore the workforce need to be equipped with the skills to continually learn and develop their digital skills. | |
| | Action (s) | <p>Training Needs Analysis to continue being developed and carried out by team managers and digital skills gaps to be identified, so appropriate training/coaching can be developed/ undertaken.</p> <p>Continue development of appropriate training and coaching programmes to support development in areas where skills gaps are identified.</p> <p>Digital skills to continue being included in staff PPP discussions and in team meetings. Managers to identify training opportunities.</p> <p>Managers to continue encouraging discussion of digital improvement in team meetings, encouraging staff to suggest ideas for exploration.</p> | Ongoing |
| | Progress/ Measure | Monitor changes in the staff Digital Skills TNA and subsequent interaction with CDSMT/L&D. Training materials for Digital Skills monitored. | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|------|--------|------|-----------------|----|----|----------|----|----|---------------|---|----|------------------------|---|---|---------------|---|---|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diversity | Issue/ Risk | <p>The age profile of workforce continues to present a potential area for concern, with 4% of employees under the age of 20 and 34% of the workforce over 50.</p> <p>CDS has a majority female leadership team in contrast to many other services, however profile of diversity changes at practitioner level with over twice as many men at LG practitioner level as women 88 v 34.</p> <p>LG admin level roles see 45 women to 12 men.</p> <p>Jobholder Distribution (top 5 where applicable)</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="660 821 1355 1093"> <caption>Jobholder Distribution (top 5 where applicable)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Role</th> <th>Female</th> <th>Male</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LG Practitioner</td> <td>34</td> <td>88</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Admin</td> <td>45</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Managerial</td> <td>6</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Technical Operative</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Technician</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Role | Female | Male | LG Practitioner | 34 | 88 | LG Admin | 45 | 12 | LG Managerial | 6 | 10 | LG Technical Operative | 4 | 0 | LG Technician | 2 | 0 |
| Role | Female | Male | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Practitioner | 34 | 88 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Admin | 45 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Managerial | 6 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Technical Operative | 4 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Technician | 2 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | | Target Date |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------|
| Diversity cont'd | Action(s) | <p>Continue developing talent pipelines and career pathways to support workforce development, and support employee progression in the organisation (See succession planning). Teams and individuals to consider Zig Zag opportunities.</p> <p>Review recruitment practices to ensure there is no gender bias, including advert text and job profiles particularly for senior management roles and encourage female colleagues to consider progression into leadership roles.</p> <p>Continue developing the younger workforce through identifying potential opportunities to include Apprenticeship and entry level roles to teams.</p> | Ongoing |
| | Progress/ Measures | Monitor the diversity profile of the workforce through the Workforce Profile Dashboard and report to CDSMT on changes. | |
| Succession Planning | Issue/ Risk | <p>Knowledge share across teams with specific skillsets - value of everyone knowing everything v risk of one or two skilled in specific areas.</p> <p>Ability to attract and retain due to market forces, visibility/desirability of council as an employer of choice.</p> <p>Age profile of CDS as above.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|-------|--------------------|----|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|----------|---|--|
| | Action (s) | Identify business critical roles for which potential successors are required. Identify growing talent to fill these roles in the future. Provide clear development pathways, a wide range of activities and a dedicated succession plan programme nurturing internal talent. | 31 March 2025 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Progress/ Measure | Monitor the % of roles filled internally. Monitor the use of PPP conversations to identify personal development, employee engagement and job satisfaction | Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) | Issue/ Risk | <p>Customer Services continues to have a much higher turnover than the rest of C&DS – accounting for 62% of all leavers. The prime reason for this is due to progression opportunities available across the organisation and lack of flexibility in front-line roles.</p> <p><i>Leaving Reasons (top 5 where applicable)</i></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="779 965 1697 1316"> <caption>Leaving Reasons (top 5 where applicable)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Reason</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Transfer - new job</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resignation - new job (external)</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resignation - other</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transfer - secondment</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deceased</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Turnover rates in C&DS have remained relatively low across the service as a whole – averaging 0.65%. This contrasts with Customer Service turnover – averaging 3.25%.</p> | Reason | Count | Transfer - new job | 12 | Resignation - new job (external) | 5 | Resignation - other | 3 | Transfer - secondment | 2 | Deceased | 1 | |
| Reason | Count | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transfer - new job | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resignation - new job (external) | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resignation - other | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transfer - secondment | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deceased | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | | Target Date |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) cont'd</p> | <p>Action(s)</p> | <p>Continue to monitor turnover in line with indicators above.</p> <p>Monitor demand on priority areas and take corrective action where possible.</p> <p>Customer Services piloted new ways of working. Following the pilot period this is being rolled out across the team. Customer Services will continue to monitor the impact.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Progress/ Measures</p> | <p>Reduction in turnover through supportive and corrective measures as highlighted above.</p> | <p>Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates</p> |

Concluding Summary

In working to deliver the priorities within this Customer & Digital Services Business Plan, we aim to deliver services that are valued by the wider organisation. As a team we want to be seen as approachable, helpful and solution focused. We will provide a friendly and helpful first point of contact to our customers.

FINANCE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2027



Vision Statement

Forging Financial Resilience, One Strategic Move at a Time: Our Finance Service ensures seamless pay and rewards, precision accountancy, efficient treasury management, timely debt recovery, effective tax administration, and swift and accurate payment of welfare benefits. We are dedicated to cultivating sustainability and resilience at an individual community and organisation level, empowering them to navigate change with confidence and foresight.

Service Function and Purpose

Finance is one of the few Council services that is in contact with every household, business, employee, and elected member.

It plays an important role in the overall financial sustainability of the Council in facilitating the preparation of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Reserves Strategy and the annual revenue and capital budgets and reporting on the annual financial performance through the preparation of the statutory financial accounts.

The Revenues Service manages and collects all taxation income due to the Council through Business Rates (14,000 properties), Council Tax (122,895 council tax dwellings) as well as the collection of income through Sundry Debtors (56,000 invoices annually).

Through the Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team residents in Aberdeenshire can receive a range of welfare benefits worth around £30 million per annum.

The Pay and Rewards Team ensures that over 16,000 employees and elected members are paid accurately and timeously each month.

The Finance service is also home to Risk and Resilience, providing advice and support to services on emergency planning, civil contingencies, organisation resilience, business continuity and risk.

Corporate Finance – 87.21 FTE

The Corporate Finance Management Team comprises 4 FTE (1 Service Manager and 3 Team Leaders)

| ASAT | Accounts Payable | Risk & Resilience | Financial Management System | Development & Financial Training |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| 56.21 FTE Actual 52.48 (incl. 2 Apprentices) | 13 FTE Actual 9.2 FTE | 5 FTE Actual 4 FTE (incl. 1 externally funded fixed-term post) | 5 FTE Actual 4.2 FTE | 3 FTE Actual 2 FTE |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Queries • Housing Benefit • Council Tax Reduction • Discretionary Housing Payments • Crisis Grants • Community Care Grants • Free School Meals • School Clothing Grants • Blue Badge applications • Aberdeenshire Educational Trust • Appeals • HB Estimates & Subsidy Claim • Document Management • Process development and mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process supplier invoices • Queries from suppliers and services • Payment Runs • Purchase Cards • Supplier Records • Construction Industry Scheme Payments • Foreign Payments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Contingencies • Emergency Planning and response • Counter terrorism • Serious Organised Crime • Royalty Portfolios • Risk Management • Business Continuity • Event Safety Consultee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, test and control the Council's financial management system – Oracle E-Business • This system is key to the financial planning and management of the organisation and is used to produce the Council's statutory annual financial statements. • Provision of financial data and analysis • Liaise with software supplier. • Operational support to users of Oracle • Maintain, test and control I-Procurement the Council's purchasing system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing of Power BI Reports • Oracle E-Business Upgrades • Training on use of Oracle E-Business • Training on the use of Power BI Reports • Developing Robotic Process Automation for Payables • GDPR Compliance • Developing virtual centralised automated invoice processing option • Working with E&IS on the SAVE Replacement |

Revenues - 82 FTE

The Revenues Management Team comprises 4 FTE (1 Service Manager and 3 Principal Officers)

| Taxation | Income Management | Income Recovery | Revenues & Benefits Systems |
|---|---|--|--|
| 36 FTE Actual 31.5 | 12 FTE Actual 11.5 | 18 FTE Actual 17 | 12 FTE Actual 9.5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billing & Administration of Council Tax • Billing & Administration of Business Rates • Billing & Administration of BIDS • Grants • Working with Third parties including Assessors, Scottish Water, Citizen Advice, and DWP • Management & administration of Local Taxation Discounts, Exemptions and Reliefs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Direct Debits including BACS compliance • Management of Debit/Credit Card payments including PCI DSS compliance • Management of: • Bank Contract • Cash in Transit Contract • Third Party Payments Contract • Bank Account Reconciliations • Control Account Reconciliations • Sundry Debtor Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate recovery of Council Debts • Management of Sheriff Officer Contract • Management of debt held by Legal Services • Income Support and Universal Credit deductions • Sequestrations, Liquidations, and Trustees cases • Credit Checking services • Gone Away cases and Tracing Services • Working with Third Parties including Citizen Advice, DWP, Sheriff Courts, Accountancy & Bankruptcy and Sheriff Officers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, maintain, test and develop the systems used by the Revenues and Benefits teams • System user support • Management of Systems Support & Maintenance Contracts • IT Liaison • Critiqom Liaison • BACS files • <u>Service Development</u> • Civica Digital 360 Upgrade • Enhanced automation for the Corporate Arrears Recovery system |

Strategic Finance –30.27 FTE

The Strategic Finance Management Team comprises 4 FTE (Service Manager & 3 Team Leaders)

The Strategic Finance Service is currently reviewing its staffing structure to address risks highlighted by External Audit – a revised structure will be introduced in 2024/25 which will include the appointment of apprentices

| Business Partnering | Revenue Accounting | Capital Accounting & Treasury | Shared Insurance Service |
|--|--|--|---|
| 3.8 FTE | 15.47 FTE | 4 FTE | 3 FTE |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial monitoring of Committee reports and providing financial advice at Committee Meetings. Providing Financial advice and information to Directorates to support forecasting and analysis to help with decision making and setting of strategies. Advise on the application of and raise awareness of the Council’s financial regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial monitoring of Committee reports and providing financial advice at Committee Meetings. Providing financial advice to budget holders to support decision making. Preparing statutory annual accounts (including Trusts and Common Good Funds) Preparation and monitoring of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and revenue budgets VAT – accounting and returns. Completion of statutory financial returns Financial regulations and policies Provide financial services to Nestrans and Create Homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial monitoring of Committee reports and providing financial advice at Committee Meetings. Preparation of statutory annual accounts Preparation and monitoring of the General Services and Housing Capital Plans Completion of statutory financial returns Evaluation of capital projects. Provide advice on financial regulations. Monitoring of Developer Obligation funds and Road Bonds Undertake all Treasury Management activities (borrowing, investments, banking) for Council, Nestrans and Create Homes Cash flow forecasting and monitoring Leasing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of insurance services to Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils |

Payroll & Rewards – 34.86 FTE

The Payroll and Rewards Management Team comprises 4 FTE (Service Manager and 3 Team Leaders)

| Payroll | Reward & Analytics | Payroll & HR Systems Development | Travel & Employee Benefits |
|--|--|---|---|
| 14.7 FTE Actual 16.05 | 8.53 FTE Actual 7.55 | 5.89 FTE Actual 6.86 | 6.37 FTE Actual 6.37 |
| <p>Provision of a comprehensive payroll function for Council employees, Elected Members, Pensioners and external staff groups, i.e., NESTRANs, elections staff and individuals within scope of the IR35 regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process all related paperwork and notifications from services, external organisations, and other bodies to ensure correct payment of salaries or remuneration. • Perform payroll calculations (automated and manual) and review error and exception reports to identify issues for rectification. • Process forms completed by employees to join or leave the various pension schemes in operation, i.e., LGPS, SPPA and NEST. | <p>Ensure that the Council’s pay structure and conditions of service are fit for purpose and comply with statutory legislation and national agreements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose changes to the pay structure and terms & conditions of employment based on internal and external research and analysis. • Creation of associated reports and briefings and management of any required workforce and Trade Union consultation activity. • Produce guidance for services and employees on the application of the pay structure. • Identify appropriate employee benefit schemes to enhance the current package, assessing their value to the council against the | <p>Develop, support and maintain the council’s HR/Payroll system, associated reporting tools and processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, develop and create technical solutions using the iTrent system to improve council processes. • Test new functionality introduced via the regular updates made to iTrent. • Respond to queries and issues from system users concerning iTrent and its self-service portals. • Liaise with the system supplier, MHR, by raising helpdesk calls about problems and issues with the operation of iTrent. • Perform a range of tasks on a daily (i.e., new user creation), weekly (i.e., financial code | <p>Provision of a comprehensive travel service for Council employees and Elected Members and administration of employee benefits and relocation schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review error and exception reports relating to online mileage & expense claims to ensure the corporate T&S procedure is being correctly applied. • Design and book UK and international travel itineraries for employees and Elected Members (approx. 4,000 requests per annum). • Undertake administration of the Employee Benefits scheme which includes a range of salary sacrifice solutions and an overarching web-based portal. Workload involves statutory |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and respond to payroll-related queries and calls submitted by employees and services (approx. 25,000 per annum). • Participate in projects and working groups that have staffing and payroll implications, e.g., TUPE transfers, review of pay & conditions etc. • Respond to requests for information from a range of external bodies including HMRC, SPPA, NESPF, Courts, Solicitors, Landlords, Mortgage Lenders and Credit Reference agencies. | <p>relevant employment and ITEPA regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the impact of pay awards and Living Wage increases on the pay structure. • Develop and maintain a range of toolkits and calculators used by employees and services. • Maintain and update the organisational structure held within the iTrent system. • Extract, model and communicate a range of management information and analytics to inform strategic and operational decision-making processes. • Participate in projects and working groups that have staffing and payroll implications, e.g., TUPE transfers, review of pay & conditions etc. | <p>updating) and monthly basis (i.e., creating ledger files).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure system users have been set up with the correct security and develop & maintain validation processes to ensure that data entered into iTrent is complete and in the correct format. • Produce and maintain a suite of Business Objects reports that send information automatically to teams or systems on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. • Build and maintain relevant processes and procedures within Cherwell that relate to the employee lifecycle. • Test new system upgrades and provision of regular reporting on Cherwell and Talentlink. • Build and enhance platforms and processes for a range of Finance and Legal & People teams and customers utilising new (i.e., Chatbot, RPA) and existing functionality. | <p>eligibility checks, amendments, removals, and associated administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake administration of the council's Car Club solution. This includes providing advice and guidance to employees to ensure best value and contract management as it relates to invoicing arrangements. • Provide guidance and administrative support in relation to the two corporate relocation schemes which are in operation. • Undertake statutory reporting obligations in respect of all taxable benefits, including payments to HMRC. |
|--|---|---|---|

Service Priorities

Service Priorities and how they sit within the Council Plan

[The Council Plan](#) was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities

| Pillar | Council Priority |
|------------------------|---|
| Our People | 1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing |
| Our Environment | 3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | 5. Economic Growth 6. Infrastructure and Public Assets |

Business Services have generated service priorities to:

- (a) deliver on the Council priorities and strategic priorities and
- (b) to realise the service vision and strategic objectives.

The Finance Service supports all Directorates in working towards, and delivering, the Council's Priorities.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the associated annual revenue and capital budget allocations serve as a financial embodiment of the Council's Strategic Priorities

Ensuring the proper stewardship of the Council's finances and maximising the billing and collection of income is key to making sure we have the financial resources to achieve the outcomes set out within the Council Plan.

By meticulously overseeing the Council's finances and implementing robust financial management practices, including optimising debt and tax collection rates, ensuring timely payments to suppliers and employees, and expediting benefits processing, we fortify our financial foundation. This strategic approach not only ensures our ability to achieve the objectives outlined in the Council Plan but also underscores our commitment to effectively supporting our communities.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing stands as a core Strategic Priority for the Council, with the Finance Team's provision of financial assistance across various legislative and discretionary schemes serving as a significant enabler in this regard.

Through the Risk and Resilience team, we are actively fostering community resilience by providing vital support and guidance to community resilience groups. Moreover, we are equipping the organisation with a comprehensive understanding of risk appetite and by making risk and business continuity a "business as usual" activity we are facilitating proactive planning to effectively navigate unforeseen challenges. The planning and preparation work also undertaken by this Finance Team ensures that the Council can respond in a timely and appropriate manner is critical to ensuring the health and wellbeing of the vulnerable in our communities when an emergency arises or to protect them from the threat of serious organised crime and terrorism. The Team is currently working with services to assess the impact of the 'Protect Duty' or Martyn's Law as it is more commonly known as the bill goes through the legislative process.

A key part of the journey to closing the Council's projected future funding gap, as detailed within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, will be a major transformation programme that will be developed in the year ahead, looking at fundamentally reshaping our organisation. This will be informed and underpinned by our Place Strategy which will help us to determine how we deliver services within locations throughout Aberdeenshire, by ensuring that we make better use of our assets, closer working with partners and agencies to bring about a joining up of all services at a local level. Our service priorities have been, and will continue to be, informed by this transformation programme. Whilst the Finance Service will play a supporting role across all Transformation Themes, the Finance service itself will continue to consider transformation opportunities that align with these themes, through opportunities for shared services, removal of processing activities through digital transformation, and organisational redesign.

Our key Service priorities are:-

- **Financial Leadership:** Leading the development of a medium-term financial strategy, annual budgeting process and a financial management process to evidence its delivery, through effective use of data.
- **Deliver Efficiency and Improve the Customer Experience:** To improve the customer experience, whether internal or external by implementing standard financial processes and maximising the use of technology, where appropriate, across all finance systems, including through automation and the integration of systems and data.
- **Improve Financial Compliance and Control:** Support the effective financial management of the Council through the development of corporate financial governance arrangements, risk management and clear financial accountability and robust financial regulations.
- **Improve Scrutiny:** Provide elected members and budget holders with the tools, real-time data and professional advice that will assist them in making informed strategic and operational financial decisions.
- **Enhance Resilience:** Improving the resilience of the service through increased collaboration, sharing of skills and knowledge between Teams and enhancing workload and workforce planning activities.
- **Direct Service Delivery:** Provide financial services to vulnerable citizens in Aberdeenshire through a range of welfare benefits and financial support schemes and a holistic, understanding, and flexible approach to debt recovery. Maximise the income generated from council tax, business rates and sundry debts to support the delivery of the Council Plan.
- **Maximising the use of Technology:** An efficient, responsive, and cost-effective service, that maximises the use of digital technology to automate processes and communicate with customers, where practicable, procuring and utilising common IT systems across teams that will accelerate data integration, encourage collaboration, and improve data accuracy.

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| Service priority | Service performance measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale – include key milestones where appropriate |
|--|--|--|----------|-----------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| Deliver Efficiency and Improve the Customer Experience | HB Speed of Processing – New Claims | Average number of days to process new claims | | 27 days | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| | CTR Speed of processing – New Claims | Average number of days to process new claims | | 27 days | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| | HB Speed of Processing – Changes in Circumstances | Average number of days to process changes | | 10 days | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| Direct Service Delivery | CTR Speed of processing – Changes in Circumstances | Average number of days to process changes | | 10 days | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| | Speed of Processing – Crisis Grants | Average number of days to process | | 1 working day | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| Maximising the use of Technology | Speed of Processing – Community Care Grants | Average number of days to process | | 15 working days | Claimants receive benefits timeously | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| | Council Tax Collection In-Year | Percentage of Council Tax collected in-year | | | Higher collection rates support financial sustainability and protects provision of services | Revenues Manager | |

| Service priority | Service performance measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale – include key milestones where appropriate |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|----------|--------|---|---------------------|--|
| Deliver Efficiency and Improve the Customer Experience | Business Rates Collection In-Year | Percentage of Business Rates collected in-year | | | Higher collection rates support financial sustainability and protects provision of services | Revenues Manager | |
| | Sundry Debt Collection | Income received as a %age of opening sundry debt balance | | | Higher collection rates support financial sustainability and protects provision of services | Revenues Manager | |
| Direct Service Delivery | Sundry Debt | %age of outstanding sundry debt that is more than 90 days old | | | Reduction in overdue debts supports financial sustainability and improves cashflow | Revenues Manager | |
| Maximising the use of Technology | Income Management | Number of card payments received | | | Measure of customer habit to help shape future service | Revenues Manager | |
| | Income Management | Number of direct debit payers for council tax | | | Improves cash flow | Revenues Manager | |
| | Income Management | Number of Post Office Payments | | | Measure of customer habit to help shape future service | Revenues Manager | |

| Service priority | Service performance measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale – include key milestones where appropriate |
|--|-----------------------------|---|----------|--------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Deliver Efficiency and Improve the Customer Experience | Payroll | Value of salaries and wages payments made correctly and timeously as a %age of the total value of payments made | | | Reduces adverse impact on employees, improves cash flow and reduces bad debts | Pay & Reward Manager | |
| | Payables | Number of invoices paid in 30 calendar days as a %age of all invoices paid | | | Improves cash flow for suppliers | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| Maximising the use of Technology | Payables | Number of invoices paid in 10 calendar days as a %age of all invoices paid | | | Improves cash flow for suppliers | Corporate Finance Manager | |
| Financial Leadership Improve Financial Compliance and Control | Accountancy | Revenue - Actual versus Budget | N/A | 100% | Demonstrates good cost control and living within our means to ensure financial sustainability. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |

| Service priority | Service performance measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale – include key milestones where appropriate |
|--|-----------------------------|---|----------|--------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Financial Leadership Improve Financial Compliance and Control | Accountancy | Revenue - Actual versus Projected Outturn | N/A | 100% | Demonstrates good cost control and understanding of cost drivers to manage risk throughout the year. This will support the Council living within our means and to ensure financial sustainability. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |
| | Accountancy | Capital - Actual versus Budget | N/A | 100% | Demonstrates good cost control and living within our means to ensure financial sustainability. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |
| | Accountancy | Capital - Actual versus Projected Outturn | N/A | 100% | Demonstrates good cost control and living within our means to ensure financial sustainability. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |

| Service priority | Service performance measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale – include key milestones where appropriate |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| Financial Leadership | Accountancy | Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Spend | N/A | 8.5% | Demonstrate compliance with Medium Term Financial Strategy | Strategic Finance Manager | 2024/25 to 20238/39 (Life of Capital Plan) |
| | Reserves | Usable Reserves as a %age of Council Annual Budget Net Revenue | | N/A | Used as a measure of the Council's ongoing financial resilience and managed use of earmarked reserves to deliver Council priorities. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |
| | Reserves | Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a %age of Annual Revenue Budget | | 1.19% (£9m working balances as per Budget) | Used as a measure of the Councils ongoing financial resilience. | Strategic Finance Manager | Throughout 2024/25 |

Note: Whilst the performance measures detailed above are monitored and reported by Finance, most of these hinge on decisions and activities that take place within all Council services, for example revenue and capital spending decisions are made by services, who are also pivotal in evaluating the Projected Outturn.

Benchmarking

The Service can benchmark its performance against a range of measures with performance data published by the UK and Scottish Governments, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and the CIPFA Scottish Performance Indicators. In addition, the Service utilises opportunities for ad hoc benchmarking in relation to specific areas of work or performance to contribute to and take advantage of areas, of best practice, through the professional bodies and national groups to which the professional teams are affiliated for example CIPFA Directors of Finance, COSLA Welfare and Social Security Advisory Group, Local Authority Resilience Group for Scotland, Institute of Revenue Rating and Valuation (IRRV).

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF Indicators currently reported are:

| National Indicator | Year (Latest Available Data) | Scottish Average | Aberdeenshire | Long Trend | Short Trend | National Ranking | Quartile Position |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| SCORP04: The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax | 2022/23 | £6.84 | £5.62 | TBC | TBC | 10 | Two |
| SCORP07: Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year | 2022/23 | 96.2% | 96.9% | Improving | Improving | 14 | Two |
| SCORP08: % of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days | 2022/23 | 90.6% | 91.5% | Improving | Improving | 16 | Two |
| SFINSUS1 Total useable reserves as a percentage of council annual budgeted revenue | 2022/23 | 24.5% | 12.9% | | | 31 | Four |

| National Indicator | Year (Latest Available Data) | Scottish Average | Aberdeenshire | Long Trend | Short Trend | National Ranking | Quartile Position |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| SFINSUS2 Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue | 2022/23 | 3.2% | 1.4% | | | 30 | Four |
| SFINSUS3 Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund | 2022/23 | 5.4% | 6.4% | | | 20 | Three |
| SFINSUS4 Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account | 2022/23 | 21.3% | 11.1% | | | 6 | One |
| SFINSUS5 Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure | 2022/23 | 98.6% | 100.0% | | | 11 | Two |
| SCORP09 Proportion of SWF Crisis Grants decisions within 1 day | 2023/24 | 93% | 98% | | | 10 | Two |
| SCORP10 Proportion of SWF community care decisions within 15 days | 2023/24 | 86% | 98.5% | | | 12 | Two |

| National Indicator | Year (Latest Available Data) | Scottish Average | Aberdeenshire | Long Trend | Short Trend | National Ranking | Quartile Position |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| SCORP11 Proportion of SWF Budget Spent | 2022/23 | 130% | 139.9% | | | 12 | Two |
| SCORP12 Proportion of DHP funding spent | 2022/23 | 94.4% | 75.5% | | | 30 | Four |
| Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population | 2023/24 | 3.1% | 1.8% | | | 4 | One |
| Claimant Count as % of 16-24 Population | 2023/24 | 3.6% | 2.4% | | | 6 | One |

The following benchmarking data is available via the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for housing benefit:

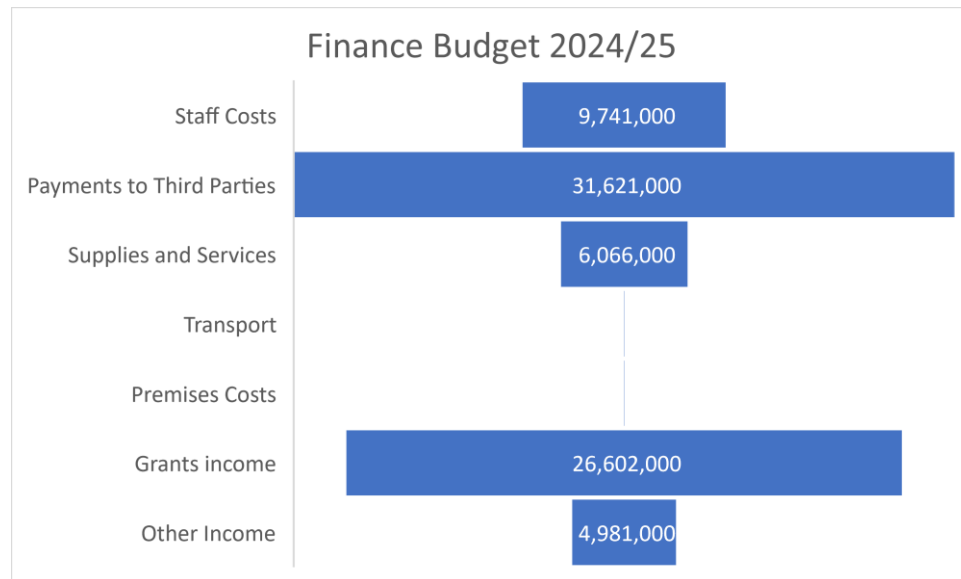
| National Indicator | Year (Latest Available Data) | Scottish Average | Aberdeenshire | Long Trend | Short Trend | National Ranking | Quartile Position |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| HB: Average number of days to process a new claim | 2023/24 | 19 | 15 | | | 10 | Two |
| SCORP12 Proportion of DHP funding spent | 2023/24 | 7 | 5 | | | 7 | Two |

Self-Evaluation

Finance will undertake the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) self-assessment in 2024/25 to support the delivery of improvement within the Finance service through a comprehensive review of our current activities. It is anticipated that this will inculcate an ethos of consistent continuous improvement across all teams within the service.

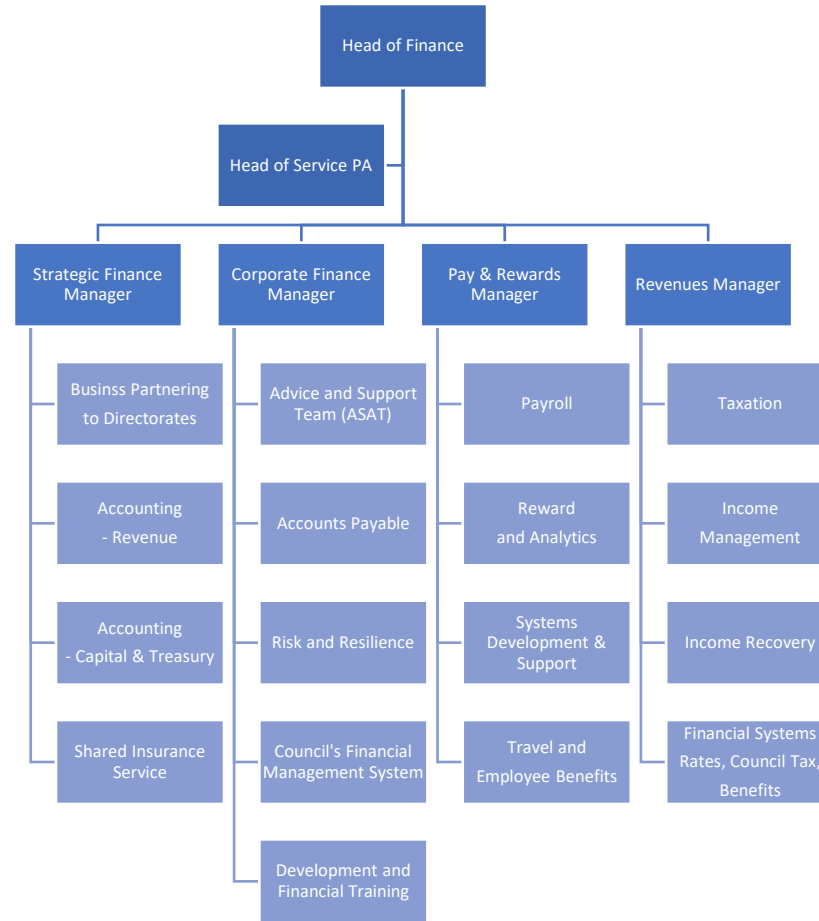
Financial Profile

The Finance Service Budget for 2024/25:



Our People: Staffing & Workforce Planning 2023-2026

Service Staffing Profile



Aberdeenshire Council have identified, at a corporate level, that all Business Plans must address the following workforce planning activities to support the Council in being fit and flexible for the future: Wellbeing, Digital Skills, Diversity and Succession Planning, Establishment Control. Services also identify actions relating to industry and service specific drivers based on their own internal and external environmental analysis to ensure they have the right people in the right place doing the right things at the right time for them to meet their overall service outcomes and priorities.

Workforce Planning requires a level of forecasting and should be in place for a rolling 3-year period as many workforce planning actions require time to come to fruition, e.g. natural turnover, skills development, succession planning. Also providing a transparent 3-year workforce plan allows for better transparency and levels of engagement with the workforce.

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

Measures of Success/ Progress Update

In respect of wellbeing, there have been positive signs with an overall reduction in calendar days lost due to sickness absence while the results from the employee survey suggest that Finance staff have experienced a general improvement in their wellbeing. However, the number of days lost due to stress increased in 2023 while uptake of the 87% wellbeing app remained relatively low. These factors highlight the ongoing need to actively monitor and manage staff wellbeing, as well as continuing to encourage uptake of the 87% app and other resources available.

The increased focus on digital technology to communicate and visualise data, for example using PowerBI and SharePoint, has reinforced the need to ensure that Finance staff have the appropriate digital skills and where gaps are identified, appropriate training/ coaching is provided.

In terms of establishment control, the overall FTE figure for Finance fell during the 12-month period of February 2023 to January 2024 inclusive, from 222.81 to 215.78. This reflects the ongoing management of fixed-term contracts and requirement to generate in-year budget savings. As further staff savings are to be found in 2024/25, there will be an increased focus on ensuring that the post budget data held within the HR/Payroll system is accurate and up-to-date, and that the workload implications of operating with fewer staff are monitored, with digital solutions being developed and implemented, where appropriate, to automate existing processes and reduce manual intervention.

Workforce Plan

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|------|------|-----------|----|----|----------|-----|-----|-----------|-----|-----|------------|----|-----|-----------|----|----|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Wellbeing</p> | <p>Issue/ Risk</p> <p>The overall sickness absence rate within Finance during 2023, peaked at 2.70% in March (by comparison, the peak absence rate in 2022 was 3.20% in July). In total, there were 2,304 calendar days lost due to sickness absence in 2023, a reduction of 236 (-10.2%) on the previous calendar year. The largest single reason for absence during 2023 was stress, with 730 days lost (compared with 469 days lost in 2022).</p> <p>In respect of wellbeing, based on the responses to the employee survey in September 2022 and then when the same question was asked as a pulse survey in November 2023, Finance staff have shown a general improvement in their wellbeing, with increases in the number who are 'Thriving' and 'Surviving' while those 'Struggling' has declined. This improvement differs to the overall Council picture, where respondents have indicated a general decline in their wellbeing, with more staff struggling or in crisis.</p> <p>While the improvement within Finance is to be welcomed, it is recognised that there is a need to actively promote and manage wellbeing, which includes encouraging staff to make use of the 87% app and other resources available.</p> <div data-bbox="645 1114 1384 1417"> <table border="1"> <caption>Employee Rating of Wellbeing - Finance</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Wellbeing Category</th> <th>2023</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excelling</td> <td>~2</td> <td>~1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thriving</td> <td>~62</td> <td>~48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surviving</td> <td>~45</td> <td>~35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Struggling</td> <td>~5</td> <td>~12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In Crisis</td> <td>~2</td> <td>~1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> | Wellbeing Category | 2023 | 2022 | Excelling | ~2 | ~1 | Thriving | ~62 | ~48 | Surviving | ~45 | ~35 | Struggling | ~5 | ~12 | In Crisis | ~2 | ~1 | |
| Wellbeing Category | 2023 | 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Excelling | ~2 | ~1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thriving | ~62 | ~48 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surviving | ~45 | ~35 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Struggling | ~5 | ~12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In Crisis | ~2 | ~1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | <p>Action(s)</p> <p>All managers to complete Mental Health at Work training course.</p> <p>87% Wellbeing Platform and App to be discussed and promoted to every team at least once by the Team Leader to ensure all employees in the service are aware of this support mechanism.</p> <p>Support information to be highlighted and provided to the whole service allowing all employees to be aware of the range of support available to them.</p> <p>PPP conversations to be carried out at least once every six months with all team members to provide a consistency to the supportive conversations being had by managers, to provide a framework for constructive feedback and allow for regular conversations on workload and commitments to be discussed.</p> | Continual process throughout 2024/25 |
| | <p>Progress/ Measure</p> <p>Measures of progress to include:</p> <p>All managers have completed Mental Health at Work training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved level of awareness of support resources throughout the whole service, measured through Wellbeing Assessments. • An increase in the number of employees saying they receive constructive feedback from their line manager. • A reduction in the number of days lost due to work-related stress from 2024 and onwards. | Quarterly monitoring |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Skills | Issue/ Risk | <p>Differing level of digital ability amongst Finance teams across M365 and service-specific systems.</p> <p>Lack of awareness and understanding regarding available tools to support development of potentially time-saving digital solutions – including M365 Power Platform, RPA, API integration, Chatbot etc.</p> <p>Budget reductions require that digital tools are utilised to their full capacity, therefore the workforce need to be equipped with the skills to continually learn and develop their digital skills.</p> |
| | Action (s) | <p>Training Needs Analysis to be developed for M365 and the main systems used within Finance to identify digital skills gaps so appropriate training/coaching can be identified and provided.</p> <p>Digital skills to be included in staff PPP discussions and in team meetings. Managers to identify appropriate training and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Managers to encourage discussion of digital improvement in team meetings, encouraging staff to suggest ideas for exploration, liaising with Digital Champion(s) as appropriate.</p> |
| | Progress/ Measure | <p>Monitor outputs from Digital TNAs and the resultant frequency of training/learning activities undertaken in response to outputs.</p> <p>Discussions through PPP</p> |
| | | Started in FY2023/24 to be fully complete in 2024/25 |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Diversity | Issue/ Risk | <p>There are limits to the employee equalities data available as across some protected characteristics categories, more than half of staff have either not responded or have selected 'Prefer not to say' in their responses. This indicates both a lack of engagement with the process and potentially a lack of confidence in the way the data will be used.</p> <p>The age profile of workforce presents a potential area for concern, with only 2 employees aged under 20 (0.82%) while 126 (51.6%) of the workforce are 50 or over, of whom 36 are aged 60 or over (15.6%). The overall Finance workforce remains predominantly female (81.6%).</p> |
| | Action(s) | <p>Improve quality of data available and reporting for meaningful use. Staff to be encouraged to record and update their 'Sensitive Information' screen through their Employee Self Service accounts.</p> <p>Develop the younger workforce through identifying potential opportunities to include Apprenticeship and entry level roles to teams.</p> |
| | Progress/ Measures | <p>Recognising that the provision of this information is voluntary, 100% return is not expected. However, the service should see improved data available across the service increased from the current rate.</p> <p>Review the diversity profile of the workforce through the Workforce Profile Dashboard and report to Finance Management Team on changes.</p> |
| Succession Planning | Issue/ Risk | <p>Unable to fill senior management roles and business critical positions including within strategic finance, system teams and payroll.</p> <p>Age profile of Finance – potential loss of significant experience and knowledge due to the number of staff who may retire in the next 3-5 years</p> |

| Priority | Key Actions | | Target Date |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | |
| | Action (s) | Identify business critical roles for which potential successors are required. Provide training, support and development opportunities to those staff who are seeking to improve or expand their skill set and who have shown the desire and potential to progress. | Throughout 2024/25 |
| | Progress/ Measure | Review the percentage of business-critical roles filled internally. | |
| Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) | Issue/ Risk | The FTE figure within Finance reduced from 223.40 to 212.18 during the 12-month period of March 2023 to February 2024 inclusive. The use of Fixed Term contracts has fallen during the above period from 60 to 38, as contracts are either ended or the employees take up positions elsewhere (either within or outside the Council). This type of contract can impact on attraction and retention of talent in a market where job security remains an important factor, although they may provide flexibility where budget pressures are a key consideration. The main reasons for leaving over the past 12 months have included moving to another job with the Council (12), moving to an external job (9), taking up a secondment (5) or retirement (4). | |
| | Action(s) | Review the use of fixed-term contracts to ensure that this is the most effective means of filling posts, some of which will be business-critical. Where a vacant post is to be filled, ensure that a robust business case has been established and agreed by Finance Management Team, with all other options fully considered. | Throughout 2024/25 |
| | Progress/ Measures | Review and manage the duration and average length of fixed term contracts at Finance Management Team | |

Concluding Summary

In working to deliver the priorities within this Finance Service Business Plan, our Finance Service aims to be a trusted partner to the organisation. We recognise that all teams within the Finance Service must serve as a foundation for everything that the Council does, and we will endeavour to make a meaningful impact and drive positive change across the financial and risk and resilience landscape.

LEGAL & PEOPLE BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2027



Vision Statement

The vision of Legal & People is to add value as Aberdeenshire Council's Trusted Advisers.

Legal & People Key priorities for 2024/25 are supporting the Council's Transformation Programme and continuing to Add Value.

These key priorities contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan - Supporting the Council's Transformation Programme; Learning for Life; Health and Wellbeing; Climate Change; Resilient Communities; Economic Growth and Infrastructure and Public Assets.

Service Function and Purpose

Legal & People sits within the Council’s Business Services Directorate and provides Legal, Governance, HR and Health & Safety support and advice to all Council Services and Elected Members and the delivery of Recruitment, Licensing, Developer Obligations and Registration services.

The current FTE (Full Time Equivalent) of Legal & People (29 February 2024) is 148.22, with a headcount of 178 and 190 jobholders. This is an overall reduction of 10.76 FTE since 2023.

| Governance (26.5 FTE reduced from 28.85 FTE in 2023*) <i>* Governance budget also includes Head of Service and Business Co-ordinator</i> | | |
|---|---|--|
| Governance | Democratic Services | Information Governance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring reports and providing legal advice to Council meetings Providing advice on Ethical Standards, Scheme of Governance, Governance support to Aberdeenshire IJB. Liquor and Civic Licensing, including processing applications and supporting Licensing Board Common Good Funds Trusts Support to Data Protection representatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring reports and providing legal advice to Council meetings Providing advice on Ethical Standards Planning Community Councils and Collaboration governance including City Region Deal Clerking support to Council meetings Advice on decision making processes and procedures. FOI Review Panel Aberdeenshire Childrens Panel <p><i>Trial merger of Committee Services Team</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection (including Data Protection Officer Freedom of Information Data Sharing Records Management |

| Advice (23.6 FTE reduced from 25.49 FTE in 2023) | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Advice | Representation | Registration | Elections (virtual) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education advice and placing requests. • Child Protection • Adult Protection • Employment law advice, including TUPE. • Permanence for looked after children. • Environment law advice • Debt recovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of the Council's interests in all aspects of litigation in courts and tribunals • Child Protection Orders • Adult Protection Orders • Permanence Orders • Guardianships • Interdicts • Employment Tribunals • Education Appeals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth registration • Marriage registration • Death registration • Marriage and civil ceremonies • Citizenship ceremonies • Family History Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares and delivers local authority, Scottish Parliament, and General Elections |

| Commercial (17.90 FTE, remained same as 2023) | | |
|---|--|---|
| Commercial | Property & Conveyancing | Developer Obligations & Infrastructure |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial contracts • Aberdeen City Region Deal • Procurement law • Major project work • Grants/funding agreements • Data protection • Subsidy Control (formerly state aid) • Commercial legal advice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property related legal advice. • Title reports • Purchases, Sales, Leases, Servitudes • Security work • Charging orders/grants • Land compensation • Flood prevention schemes • Common Good/ Community Asset Transfer • Major project work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of planning agreements and securing of funds for use by Council Services to mitigate the impact of development on local infrastructure. • Working in partnership with Council Services, Communities, NHS and Property and Conveyancing team to coordinate DO function. • Completion of all s69 and s75 planning agreements and any required variations • Advise and lead on delivery of infrastructure for major and complex development sites. |

| HR Resourcing and Development (31.8 FTE reduced from 32.92 FTE in 2023) | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Health, Safety & Wellbeing | Digital Workforce Development | Resourcing | Learning & Development And Learning Organisation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&S training and ALDO content • Wellbeing Training and ALDO content • Accident and Incidents • Advice and guidance on all H&S matters • Risk assessments and H&S Audits • Occupational Health Contract • 87% wellbeing contract • EAP contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Training needs Analysis Tool • Corporate Digital Champions Network • Organisational digital maturity • Digital learning pathways • Digital Learning Content • Develop ALDO content. • ALDO functionality and reporting • Service specific learning portals in ALDO • Employee Engagement Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Planning guidance • Emergency Mobilisation • SVQ Centre Management • Pre-employment checks • Leadership and management appointments • Apprenticeships/Developing the Young Workforce • Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion in Recruitment • Agency Contract • Sponsorship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop learning and tools around transformation behaviours and competencies. • Face to face learning • Develop new learning opportunities. • Develop and deliver bespoke learning. • Long service and employee rewards • PPP • Succession planning • Facilitate learning groups. • Facilitate learning opportunities and learning culture. |

| HR Operations (48.42 FTE, reduced from 53.82 FTE in 2023) | | |
|---|---|---|
| HR Operations (ECS & BS) | HR Operations (EIS & HSCP) | AskHR & Transactional |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Relations • Service redesign • Trade Union Liaison • HR Policy Development • Voluntary Severance • Job Sizing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Relations • Service redesign • Trade Union Liaison • HR Policy Development • Voluntary Severance • Job Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AskHR Helpdesk • Recruitment • Employment Contracts • HR Portal content • Employee Changes • Maternity, leave, etc |



Service Priorities

Service Priorities and how they sit within the Council Plan

[The Council Plan](#) was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities

| Pillar | Council Priority |
|------------------------|---|
| Our People | 1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing |
| Our Environment | 3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | 5. Economic Growth 6. Infrastructure and Public Assets |

Business Services have generated service priorities to:

- (a) deliver on the Council priorities and strategic priorities and
- (b) to realise the service vision and strategic objectives.

Legal & People supports all aspects of the Council’s Strategic Priorities through advice and support to Council Services and Elected Members. Key priorities for 2024/25 are supporting the Council’s Transformation Programme and continuing to Add Value across all Council Strategic Priorities.

More detail of Legal & People’s key priorities for 2024/25 are provided below.

OUR PRIORITIES

Legal & People supports all aspects of the Council's Strategic Priorities through advice and support to Council Services and Elected Members. Key priorities for 2024/25 are supporting the Council's Transformation Programme and continuing to Add Value. Legal & People's key priorities contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan, in particular supporting the Council's Transformation Programme, Learning for Life, Health and Wellbeing, Resilient Communities and Infrastructure and Public Assets.

More detail of Legal & People's key priorities for 2024/25 are provided below.

SUPPORTING THE COUNCIL'S TRANSFORMATION, LEGAL & PEOPLE WILL:

- Support services to maintain sustainable and affordable **Workforce Plans**
- Continue to review and reshape **employee procedures**
- Attract and retain employees by developing an effective **Pay Strategy and Reward Package**
- Empower employees to proactively support their own **wellbeing**
- Review all L&P systems use and contracts in line with corporate **Enterprise Architecture Transformation Programme**
- Continue to use **data, trends, and insights** to drive organisational decision making
- Lead the **development of the workforce digital skills** as part of the **Big Data, Digital and Technology Transformation Theme**
- Lead the **streamlining of governance** and the **workforce aspects** of the **Organisational Design and Structure Transformation Theme**
- Support all services to **maximise income through commercialisation** as part of the **Collaboration and Partnership Transformation Theme**
- Support the Legal and People aspects of the **Transport Transformation Theme**
- Support Estates colleagues in delivery of the **Asset Disinvestment Programme** as part of the **Buildings and Estates Transformation Theme**

CONTINUING TO ADD VALUE, IN-HOUSE LEGAL & PEOPLE TRUSTED ADVISORS WILL:

- Ensure that the Organisation remains compliant with legislative change and develops and supports its workforce
- Continue to invest in employee engagement through recognition, surveys and a common sense of purpose
- Maintain and develop skills and experience and enhance our professional competencies
- Support Aberdeenshire's **Capital Plan** major projects including the delivery of **Peterhead Community Campus**
- Support Housing/Property's procurement of: **HIP II framework** and **Minor works framework**
- Support HSCP with **care home resilience**
- Support Aberdeenshire Council to prepare for the **National Care Service** and continue to support HSCP in their review of adult social care
- Support Aberdeenshire's participation in the **UK and Scottish Covid Inquiries**
- Support the Council's preparation for **UNCRC (Rights of the Child) incorporation**
- Develop a collaboration model to generate income and offset costs through sharing HR and Legal resources with other local authorities



Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| Council Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|---|
| All | Percentage of customers giving at least a 4* rating in the L&P customer survey | At least 90% of customers will give a 4* rating or better in L&P customer survey. AskHR survey will separate payroll and HR ratings for 24/25 | 23/24 Legal 100% 4* rating or higher. AskHR 75% 4* rating or higher. | 90% | Continued customer satisfaction and positive working relationships. Continuous improvement. | LPMT | 24/25 |
| Learning for life and Health and Wellbeing | Percentage of the L&P workforce who present themselves as thriving in the 87% survey. | Increase in the number of L&P workforce who are Thriving year on year | There has been a decline of 2% since 23 when 46% identified as thriving. In January 24 44% identified as thriving | Remains stable.ie a minimum of 44% of L&P colleagues identify as “thriving” in the Jan 2025 87% assessment. | Increased attendance and greater levels of wellbeing. Improved engagement. | LPMT | 24/25 |
| Learning for Life and Health and wellbeing | Percentage of L&P employees who report an increase in Digital Confidence | Superusers regularly support and advise users of CIVICA to increase awareness of system capabilities. Digital Learning promoted widely in L&P teams | No base line was achieved in 2023 | 75% of L&P staff feel more digitally confident since the 2021 digital training needs analysis | More agile and responsive to transformation . | LPMT | 24/25 |

| Council Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|---|--|---------------------|---|
| Learning for Life and Health and Wellbeing | Increased learning opportunities for L&P workforce | Knowledge sharing - In house delivery of training sessions delivered service wide. | New PI – no base line | 75% of those responding to the employee engagement survey report they get learning opportunities at work. Internal appointments are made where possible. | Broader transferable skills and opportunities for succession planning. | LPMT | 24/25 |

Benchmarking

Legal & People undertakes benchmarking when looking at policy reviews, an example being the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which is currently under review, looking at and examining examples of best practice from other authorities across Scotland. The review of the procedures for the Council's data protection impact assessments also involves looking at what other authorities are doing and how we can learn from them. Benchmarking is also key when carrying out fee reviews, such as for Licensing, Registration and Property & Conveyancing.

Teams benchmark against the cost of external solicitors in several areas of the law, for example in permanence/adoption cases. We utilise our communities of interest, including SOLAR, to ascertain benchmarking information in a range of areas such as legal processes around Developer Obligations, permanence for looked after children, licensing and education placements and appeals. Through SOLAR we share information and best practice to ascertain how we compare to other local authorities and to improve service delivery. We chair or actively participate in the following SOLAR and SPDS working groups:

- Child Law Group
- Community Care Group
- Planning Law Group
- Monitoring Officers Group
- Property Group
- Education Law Group
- Data Protection and Human Rights Group
- Health & Social Care/National Care Service Group
- Licensing Group
- Procurement Group
- FOI and Data Protection Group
- Developer Obligations Legal Agent Forum – instigated by Aberdeenshire Council for better liaison with our local agents

We benchmark ourselves in HR with other local authorities when reviewing policies and procedures, as well as benefitting from others who seek to benchmark with us. For example, our sickness absence and equal pay gaps. Another area where we are looking to benchmark ourselves involves exploring commercialisation of HR. We have formed a group based on the SPDS North Group (Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, Highland, Moray, Western Isles, Orkney, and Shetland) to take this forward.

Going forward L&P continue to benchmark our FTE and Outsourcing against equivalent local authorities.

Self-Evaluation

From the HR PSIF Self Evaluation exercise undertaken in 2023, several actions and measures were identified and recorded in an Improvement Plan. Five key areas for improvement were identified, each containing actions, measures and outcomes and monitored via Pentana.

The Service continues to work towards delivering the identified improvement outcomes with the aim of achieving all by the end of 2024.

1. Develop better Performance Management understanding and processes throughout the Service at all levels.
2. Develop communication, information and understanding on Council Plan, Priorities and Strategies including HR Fit for the Future – “Golden Thread”
3. Ensure all teams understand what difference is being made in the role they have including HR Fit for the Future – “Golden Thread”
4. Develop and raise awareness of all areas of HR to ensure that everyone can share knowledge and develop skills across the Service to include:
 - > clear understanding across teams of who partners and customers are and how we support them.
 - > review operational need and capacity across all teams to ensure that the workload is shared across the Service to enable the pooling of resources and skills when required – cross working for teams.
 - > develop opportunities to progress with improvements – developing skills and project management and service design.
5. Embedding clear leadership within the Service ‘lead by example’. Having clear line management in place including employee support.

A key priority for L&P in 2023 was the further development of the customer satisfaction survey. In 2024/25, with the survey now being fully embedded into CIVICA legal case management and AskHR, there will be the opportunity for self-evaluation through the collection and analysis of the data.

Financial Profile

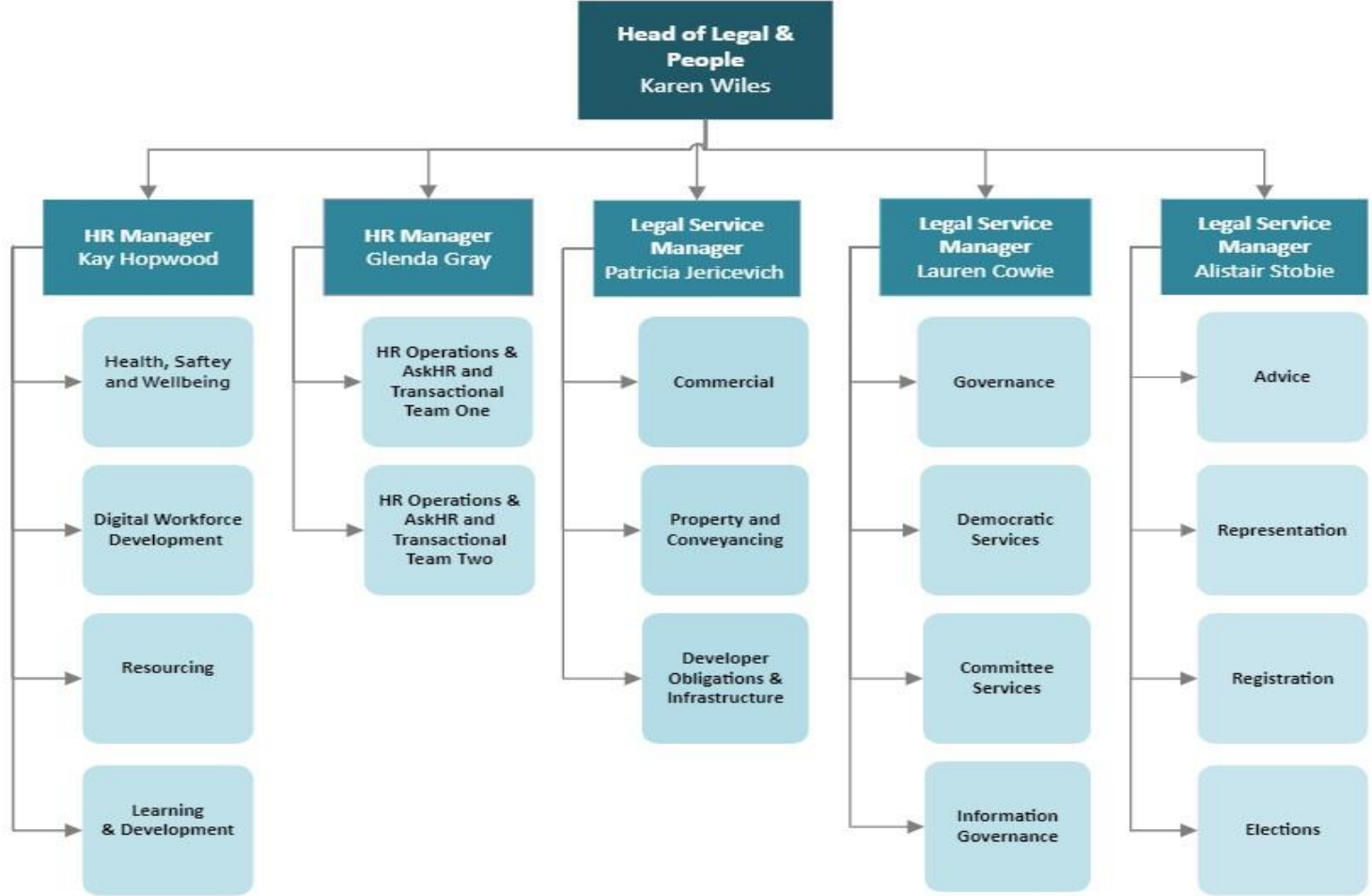
Legal & People Budget for 2024/25

The table below represents the split within the L&P budget whereby Miscellaneous Licensing is included in a separate budget line due to the statutory requirement to ensure the income reflects the cost of delivering the service.

| Legal and People | | Miscellaneous Licensing | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Expenditure | | Expenditure | |
| 01.Staff Costs | 7,761,000 | 01.Staff Costs | 337,000 |
| 02.Premises Costs | 38,000 | 02.Premises Costs | |
| 03.Transport | 30,000 | 03.Transport | 71,000 |
| 04.Supplies & Services | 564,000 | 04.Supplies & Services | 200,000 |
| 05.Third Parties | 5,000 | 05.Third Parties | |
| | | | |
| Income | | Income | |
| 09.Grants | -9,000 | 09.Grants | |
| 10.Income | -590,000 | 10.Income | -682,000 |
| | | | |
| Total | 7,799,000 | Total | -£74,000 |

Our People: Staffing & Workforce Planning 2023-2026

Service Staffing Profile



Aberdeenshire Council have identified, at a corporate level, that all Business Plans must address the following workforce planning activities to support the Council in being fit and flexible for the future: Wellbeing, Digital Skills, Diversity and Succession Planning, Establishment Control. Services also identify actions relating to industry and service specific drivers based on their own internal and external environmental analysis to ensure they have the right people in the right place doing the right things at the right time for them to meet their overall service outcomes and priorities.

Workforce Planning requires a level of forecasting and should be in place for a rolling 3-year period as many workforce planning actions require time to come to fruition, e.g. natural turnover, skills development, succession planning. Also providing a transparent 3-year workforce plan allows for better transparency and levels of engagement with the workforce.

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

Measures of Success/ Progress Update

Overall, with the backdrop of a shrinking service we can expect to reduce in areas where processes can be replaced with digital solutions. We will continue to engage with the workforce to ensure that all colleagues are able to maximise their wellbeing and performance at work.

Wellbeing

Stress remains the leading cause of absence in our service, however, the rate of increase in this has slowed over 2023. The overall trend of sickness absence is reducing. Engagement with wellbeing activities remains high and we will continue to promote this. A continued focus for the coming year will be managers passport training for all our line managers.

Skills and Digital Skills

We continue to provide CPD opportunities and support across L&P, combining delivery of targeted, system-specific training with improved range of M365 digital learning resources. In 2024 we will have a definitive measurement of our workforce's digital confidence and will begin to target digital learning more effectively.

Learning and CPD continues to be a focus for the L&P workforce, and this includes shared learning, learning on the job, learning through networks and others.

Diversity

Diversity figures continue to be monitored by LPMT and LPMTX. The key focus remains to improve the levels of equality and diversity information recorded by our colleagues using Employee Self Service. Once we have better data work can begin to determine key actions in line with our diversity profile.

Succession Planning

Legal Services continue to support 3 trainee solicitor posts. Within HR 3 posts of Assistant HR Advisor have been introduced, taking the total assistant posts to 4. This provides a valuable entry level opportunity into HR.

Graduate Apprenticeships and foundation apprenticeship opportunities continue to be supported by the service (9 GA and FA opportunities have been provided in the last few years)

Establishment Control:

Compared to March 2023 figures the FTE, Headcount and Jobholders have reduced in March 2024 (FTE reduced by 10.76 FTE)

Workforce Plan

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---|-------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Wellbeing | <p>Issue/ Risk</p> <p>Overall, indicators are showing a levelling out of the improvements that were being seen in the wellbeing of the L&P workforce and some indicators beginning to suggest a reducing trend in wellbeing in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with wellbeing activities and measures remains high at 51-58%, however, that is a slight decline from the previous year which saw engagement at 60-70%. Slight decline in the percentage of employees with their wellbeing being rated as Thriving via 87% assessment in January 2024 from 46% in 2023 to 44%. The overall sickness absence trend for L&P is continuing on a downward trend, however, an increase towards the end of 2023 was starting to be seen and has continued into the beginning of 2024. <p><u>Wellbeing Survey</u></p> <p>Employees were asked to rate their wellbeing through survey formats in 2022 and again using the same scale in 2023. Legal and People are seeing an increase in those rating their wellbeing in the lower end of the scale (Surviving, Struggling, In Crisis) and a reduction in those rating themselves at the top of the scale (Thriving and Excelling) in 2023 indicating a reduction in employee wellbeing. This is consistent with what is being seen across the organisation as a whole.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|------|------|-----------|----|----|----------|----|----|-----------|----|----|------------|---|---|-----------|---|---|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <div data-bbox="772 359 1713 726" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Employee Wellbeing Rating - Legal & People</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>2023</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excelling</td> <td>~2</td> <td>~2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thriving</td> <td>46</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surviving</td> <td>38</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Struggling</td> <td>8</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In Crisis</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p data-bbox="560 758 1870 829">A consistent picture is coming through the 87% Wellbeing assessment in 2024 also with a reduction of those being rated as their wellbeing 'Thriving' from 46% in 2023 to 44% in 2024.</p> <p data-bbox="560 861 828 901"><u>Sickness Absence</u></p> <p data-bbox="560 901 1944 1157">Stress remains the top reason for absence within Legal and People, however the number of days lost due to stress has reduced from 318 days (April 2022-March 2023), to 237 days (April 2023 – March 2024). The number of absences due to stress reduced by 1 from 10 to 9 which would suggest that the length of absences due to stress have been shorter in the last year than in the previous year. The data does suggest that although the overall wellbeing of the workforce in L&P is showing signs of being less well, the aim of steadying absences due to stress has been achieved.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1189 784 1228"><u>Transformation</u></p> <p data-bbox="560 1228 1944 1372">The resilience of the workforce in L&P will be a risk in the coming year given the change that is expected across the organisation via Transformation work and the direct impact on workloads within this service coupled with the environment of change. Attention to be given on an ongoing basis by LPMT of how the Transformation agenda is impacting on the workforce in the service.</p> | Rating | 2023 | 2022 | Excelling | ~2 | ~2 | Thriving | 46 | 44 | Surviving | 38 | 36 | Struggling | 8 | 6 | In Crisis | 2 | 1 | |
| Rating | 2023 | 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Excelling | ~2 | ~2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thriving | 46 | 44 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surviving | 38 | 36 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Struggling | 8 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In Crisis | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

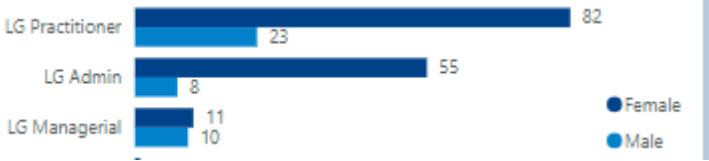
| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--|---|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | <p>Action(s)</p> <p>Measure of employee wellbeing to continue on an at least an annual basis to track changes over time through a pulse survey.</p> <p>LMPTX to improve information sharing about wellbeing activities and to actively promote engagement with these wellbeing resources and measures on a regular basis with their teams.</p> <p>Continued focus on training and the provision of resources for managers to support employee wellbeing in a changing environment.</p> <p>87% Wellbeing Platform and App to be discussed and promoted to every team at least once by the Workplace Wellbeing Advisor and once by the Team Leader to ensure all employees in the service are aware of this support mechanism.</p> <p>PPP conversations to be carried out at least twice a year with all team members to provide a consistency to the supportive conversations being had by managers, to provide a framework for constructive feedback and allow for regular conversations on workload and commitments to be discussed. (January and August).</p> <p>Back related problems are appearing in the top reasons for absences, whilst the number of instances are low, the length of absences and resulting days lost is higher and DSE is one of the primary known risks to employees within L&P. A renewed focus on DSE set ups in the office and at home to be undertaken.</p> <p>Support information to be highlighted and provided to the whole service via L&P Team page allowing all employees to be aware of the range of support available to them.</p> | <p>June 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Twice annually</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>6 monthly</p> |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | Progress/ Measure | <p>Sickness Absences directly attributed to stress to start to see a reduction in days lost in 2024 and onwards (241 days lost to March 2024).</p> <p>100% of managers have completed Mental Health at Work training. 36% of managers in Legal and People have currently completed this training.</p> <p>100% of desk-based employees within L&P to have completed the DSE e-learning training and to have a DSE assessment undertaken.</p> <p>Engagement in Wellbeing Assessments of the workforce is at least 70% of the service.</p> <p>Minimum of 44% of employees within the service have a wellbeing rating of Thriving when measured via 87% Wellbeing Assessment</p> |
| | | <p>March 2025</p> <p>March 2025</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>January 2025</p> |
| Skills | Issue/ Risk | <p>L&P teams depend on both the Microsoft365 suite and a range of proprietary software solutions to support service delivery.</p> <p>A 2021 Digital Training Needs Analysis suggested most L&P team members possess an average degree of digital competence, but with some reporting an overall lack of confidence, and with relatively few possessing advanced' abilities.</p> <p>Overall, this suggests a good foundation for digital skills development, improving staff ability to confidently develop more effective/efficient business practices.</p> |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--|-------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | <p>Action (s)</p> <p>Inconsistent digital confidence and ability among L&P teams across M365 and proprietary systems. Without appropriate training and support, some colleagues retain inefficient operational practices, potentially leading to a sense of disengagement in an increasingly digitise workplace.</p> <p>Requirement for improved manager/team awareness of and engagement with digital tools available to support development of potentially time-saving digital solutions – including M365 Power Platform, RPA (Robotic Process Automation), API integration, Chatbot etc. Insufficient engagement in this area reduces likelihood of systems development/enhancement, which may minimise benefit realisation.</p> <p>Budget reductions require that digital tools are utilised to their full capacity, therefore the workforce need to be equipped with the skills to continually learn and develop their digital skills.</p> <p>Implementation of iCasework Legal Case Management system (Feb 2023) and Civica Committee Management (Nov 2023) included provision of induction training for all users. iCasework Superuser and Board groups convene monthly to share knowledge of outstanding issues, hints & tips, and to support consistent system use throughout the service. A subsequent iCasework feedback survey (Oct 2023) confirmed general desire for refresher training – now being delivered to all legal teams. 2024/25 development work will focus on improving existing functionality, creating new workflows, and explore integration with aligned business systems (e.g. Uniform) to improve transactional efficiency. This development will be enabled by systems support resource recruited to Business Support Admin.</p> <p>Regular engagement with HR staff is key to ongoing AskHR and Cherwell system development. A function of this engagement - development of a new handbook to improve workflow between these systems - led to delivery of bespoke system training to HR Ops in October 2023.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | L&D broader focus on Digital Workforce development has led to a range of initiatives to improve workforce access to relevant digital learning and support, including: Digital Workforce SharePoint page (live); M365 skills hub (early release); M365 TNA app (development); reintroduction of trainer/partner-led digital skills webinars (live). Additionally, reintroduction of monthly Digital Champions meetings has led to increased engagement among this community – a key resource in supporting digital adoption within services. Formal expansion and skills development of this community anticipated from April '24. | |
| | <p>Progress/ Measure</p> <p>Digital Skills development CPD session to present range of digital skills development options available to L&P colleagues.</p> <p>M365 TNA to be issued to all L&P staff (as early adopters of new app)</p> <p>Digital Skills development to be discussed in PPP conversations.</p> <p>Business System owners to ensure appropriate user/superuser groups in place to share best practice and consider opportunities for system enhancement / integration / automation.</p> <p>Managers to lead teams in seeking digital improvement opportunities, whether in-house M365 solutions / process automation / system integration. Digital improvement and skills to be discussed in team meetings, encouraging staff to suggest ideas, liaising with Digital Champion as appropriate.</p> | <p>April 2024</p> <p>May 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

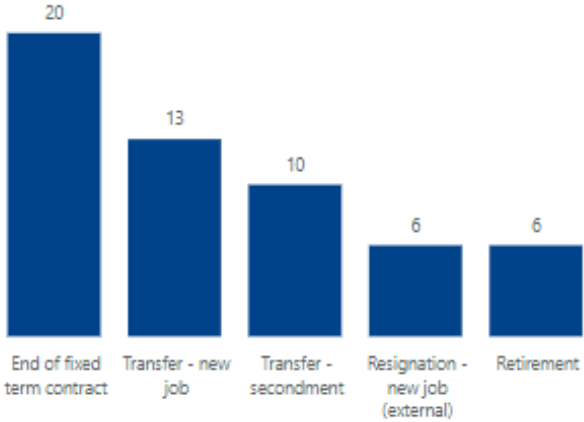
| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--|-------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Diversity | <p>Issue/ Risk</p> <p>In 2022 Employees were given access to record and maintain their Equality and Diversity details through their Employee Self Service accounts, the categories were also amended to match both Talentlink and the recent Census to allow for improved reporting moving forward.</p> <p>There are however still significant gaps in the diversity data for L&P. The lack of equalities data available creates challenges in identifying the level of diversity in the service. This suggests a lack of engagement with the process and potentially a lack of confidence in the way the data will be used.</p> <p>The age and sex profile of L&P is however complete as this information is mandatory, where other diversity details are provided on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>47% of the workforce are over the age of 50 (an increase of 1% from 2023), the majority of whom fall in the 50-59 age bracket. The percentage of employees over 60 had risen from 8.4% in March 2023 to 11.24% in March 2024. This may present an issue over the next 5-10 years as these individuals may opt to retire. There are still no employees under the age of 20 in L&P suggesting the service are not attracting young people into the workforce.</p> <p>The overall L&P workforce remains predominantly female with a similar proportion of male to female seen through the job banding, although this evens at management level. The mainly female workforce suggests there is opportunity and interest for both male and female employees to progress within the service. However, it should be noted that at managerial level there is a narrower divide between numbers of male and female employees. 48% male in managerial roles (an 8% increase from 2023) compared to 22% of those in practitioner roles being male (a 2% decrease from 2023), which may suggest that female employees are not progressing to management roles at the same rate as their male colleagues.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------|------|-----------------|----|----|----------|----|---|---------------|----|----|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| |  <table border="1" data-bbox="566 451 1272 611"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Female</th> <th>Male</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LG Practitioner</td> <td>82</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Admin</td> <td>55</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LG Managerial</td> <td>11</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Category | Female | Male | LG Practitioner | 82 | 23 | LG Admin | 55 | 8 | LG Managerial | 11 | 10 | |
| Category | Female | Male | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Practitioner | 82 | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Admin | 55 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LG Managerial | 11 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Action(s)</p> <p>Improve quality of data available and reporting for meaningful use. Staff to be encouraged by their line managers and posts to L&P team to record and update their 'Sensitive Information' screen through their Employee Self Service accounts.</p> <p>Appropriate reports to be developed to improve the analysis of recruitment and employee data regarding diversity categories to support meaningful decision making.</p> <p>Develop talent pipelines and career pathways to support workforce development, and support employee progression in the organisation (See succession planning). Teams and individuals to consider Zig Zag opportunities.</p> | <p>Ongoing- until significant rise in declaration</p> <p>Dec 2024 Reported through L&P Extended Management Team and L&P Management Team twice a year.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | |
| | <p>Develop the younger workforce through identifying potential opportunities to include Apprenticeship and entry level roles to teams</p> <p>Review recruitment practices to ensure there is no gender bias, including advert text and job profiles particularly for senior management roles.</p> | <p>Improvement by Dec 2024 monitored as above.</p> <p>Ongoing 2024</p> | |
| | Progress/ Measures | <p>Recognising that the provision of this information is voluntary, 100% return is not expected. However, the service should see improved data available across the service increased from the current rate.</p> <p>Monitor the diversity profile of the workforce through the Workforce Profile Dashboard and report data and insights to LPMT and LPMTX any progress.</p> | <p>Reported through L&P Extended Management Team twice a year</p> |
| Succession Planning | Issue/ Risk | <p>Good practice exists across L&P providing training and learning opportunities at all career levels, formal traineeships, paid and unpaid placements, foundation, modern and graduate apprentice opportunities. In addition, employees have access to opportunities such as young local authority of the year L&P will engagement with corporate initiatives due this year around future leader programmes, employee recognition programmes and other external recognition programmes such as SOLACE. Currently there is a vulnerability around filling business critical and leadership roles. Additional vulnerability in some teams around age profile. Whilst there are established talent pipelines, more overt development of high potential talent is required.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---|---|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | <p>Current vacancy management may result in limited opportunities and a limited application pool.</p> <p>Therefore, the risk L&P are unable to fill leadership and business critical positions. Age profile of L&P as above – Diversity issue risk 2.</p> <p>The Employee recognition survey found 57% of the responses rated between 1 and 3 when asked if they felt recognised for the work they did (1 star meaning not at all to 5 Priority Key Actions Target Date).</p> | |
| | <p>Action (s)</p> <p>Identify growing talent to fill these roles in the future through corporate competency Framework.</p> <p>Provide clear development pathways/programmes, a wide range of activities and a dedicated succession plan programme nurturing internal talent. This would include apprenticeship schemes, youth pathways, zig zag, executive stretch, mentoring, coaching, secondments etc.</p> | <p>March 2025</p> <p>March 2025</p> |
| | <p>Progress/ Measure</p> <p>Monitor the % of leadership roles filled internally.</p> <p>Monitor the uptake of the various development opportunities.</p> | <p>Reported through L&P Management Team and L&P Extended Management Team twice a year</p> |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--|-----------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----|-----|--------|-------|------------|----|----|-------|-------|--------|---|---|------|------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) | Issue/ Risk | <p>Compared to March 2023 figures the FTE, Headcount and Jobholders have reduced in March 2024. Permanent contracts have remained on a steady downward trend in 2023.</p> <p>Fixed Term contracts continue in an upward trend from 2022 to date, with 32 fixed term contracts in place in March 2024. To date March (2024) fixed term contracts make up 20% of the overall occupancy rate.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contract Status</th> <th>Headcount</th> <th>Jobholders</th> <th>FTE</th> <th>Avg. Service (Yrs)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Permanent</td> <td>148</td> <td>154</td> <td>123.25</td> <td>14.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fixed term</td> <td>34</td> <td>35</td> <td>25.23</td> <td>10.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Relief</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.00</td> <td>6.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>178</td> <td>191</td> <td>148.48</td> <td>13.34</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Relying on contracts of this type may impact on attraction and retention of talent in a market where job security remains an important factor, although may provide flexibility where budget pressures remain constrained.</p> <p>The main reason for leaving over the past 12 months has been an 'end to Fixed Term Contract', closely followed by 'transferring to a new job' and 'secondment'. Only 6 have indicated new job and 5 employees have retired.</p> | Contract Status | Headcount | Jobholders | FTE | Avg. Service (Yrs) | Permanent | 148 | 154 | 123.25 | 14.75 | Fixed term | 34 | 35 | 25.23 | 10.20 | Relief | 2 | 2 | 0.00 | 6.75 | Total | 178 | 191 | 148.48 | 13.34 |
| | | Contract Status | Headcount | Jobholders | FTE | Avg. Service (Yrs) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Permanent | 148 | 154 | 123.25 | 14.75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fixed term | 34 | 35 | 25.23 | 10.20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Relief | 2 | 2 | 0.00 | 6.75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 178 | 191 | 148.48 | 13.34 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---|-------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| |  <p>The turnover rate for Legal & People (2023) was 14.95% (<i>please note this also includes internal transfers</i>) which is an increase of 9.21% in the 2022 turnover rate of 5.74%.</p> <p>This increase is affected by 13 leavers with a reason of ‘Transfer – New Job’, which includes the changes to registrar posts. As Legal & People is a smaller group any increase/decrease in the number of leavers will change the percentage to a greater extent.</p> <p>The turnover for the whole council was 14.3% (2023) compared to 14.9% for (2022).</p> <p>Overtime costs are very low with a total for 2023 of £1,081.18 which is a reduction from £9,786 from the previous year. There has been no spend on consultants in 2023 or the early part of 2024.</p> <p>There is an anticipated continued reduction in staffing budgets each financial year.</p> <p>There are risks associated with the age profile as indicated within the Diversity priority detailed above and flexibility of skills/experience to fill required gaps within L&P and other critical posts across Services.</p> | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|--|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| | <p>Action(s)</p> <p>Use turnover and voluntary service to manage areas of reduced demand or that have reduced resource requirement due to new digital processes.</p> <p>Retrain and move existing staff into new roles and careers to address areas of sustained and increasing demand in our own or other Service areas.</p> <p>Provide opportunities to develop our young workforce by creation of Modern Apprenticeships, by providing at least two Foundation Apprenticeship places (per school year); taking advantage of any relevant government funding opportunities to fund fixed term placements or apprenticeships.</p> <p>Digital transformation such as RPA and chatbot will further impact on establishment over the course of 24/25 and 25/26.</p> | <p>March 2024- March 2025</p> <p>March 2024- March 2026</p> <p>March 2024- March 2026</p> <p>March 2024 – March 2026</p> |
| | <p>Progress/ Measures</p> <p>FTE has decreased following the establishment of Vacancy Management and the Voluntary Severance Scheme in late 2023.</p> <p>Vacancy management will continue and FTE will be regularly monitored.</p> <p>Monitor FTE, turnover, agency, external consultants and overtime spend on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Three Foundation Apprentices were supported in year 2023/24. Continue to monitor numbers of new opportunities (under 25s).</p> | <p>Reported through LMPTX/ LPMT twice a year.</p> |

Concluding Summary

In working to deliver the priorities within this Legal & People Business Plan, we aim to strike a balance between the everyday demands of our caseload and the councils transformation agenda whilst at all times reaching service excellence. As a business service that supports the key priorities and delivery of functions of every other part of the Council, we will be focussed on the expertise, professionalism, energy and motivation needed in our teams to deliver the innovation needed for transformation. We will be aiming to remain a trusted adviser and key partner in transformation in order that we can add value to our organisation. That means keeping our staff learning; keeping them well; and keeping them motivated and committed to high standards in what will be a challenging environment.



PROPERTY & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2027



Vision Statement

Aberdeenshire Council's Property and Facilities Management Team strives to create spaces that serve the diverse needs of our community and workforce. Our commitment to excellence drives us to optimise resource utilisation, reduce environmental impact, and enhance the functionality of our facilities, whilst ensuring a sustainable approach to construction. Taking an innovative and collaborative approach, we aim to set high standards in asset management, construction programmes and facilities management. Our aim is to ensure the council properties/assets are maintained to an appropriate standard, ensuring we have quality functional buildings within our evolving estate and aligned to the Council's Place Strategy and Place Planning.

Service Function and Purpose

Our Team – Serving Aberdeenshire From Mountain to Sea

Our Property & Facilities Management team is part of the Council’s Business Services Directorate. The team supports the delivery of Aberdeenshire Council’s priorities through the provision of a customer focused Property Management Service. With an extensive property portfolio including schools, libraries, sports facilities, care homes, administrative offices and a large commercial portfolio, the remit of the team is widespread.

.... *design, construct, develop and maintain.*



The Property and Facilities Management team exists to support the delivery of Council Services to meet the needs of our communities; including facilities management of our buildings; providing a design service delivering capital programmes across the Council’s extensive range of property assets, and the provision and management of commercial units to both provide an income stream and stimulate economic activity in our region. We have grown considerably in recent years, to have a team in place delivering over £1 Billion of investment since 2010, with a reduction in operational property assets by 28% over the same period. The Council was commended in the 2021 Best Value for its approach to Estate Rationalisation. The methodology has informed the approach to the wider Estate Modernisation agenda. The Service is cognisant of the need to move towards a smaller one public sector estate.

The Council is the largest construction client in the region, with public sector overall contributing more than half of the nation’s £8bn expenditure on construction: with the construction sector providing 8% of Scotland’s GDP; hence the importance of construction to the economy. The Council has 611 operational assets/features, around 450 commercial assets and 13200 homes. The Council has the largest portfolio of property assets in the North East with the use of those assets having a direct correlation to the quality of services being delivered; whilst the investment portfolio helps both stimulate economic activity and provides income generation to the Council.

The service is cognisant of the current megatrends and the headwinds such as skills and labour shortages, inflation, energy increases, material costs and availability which has impacted on market volatility and financial constraints, There is a need for the service to continually evolve to meet current and future challenges by aiming to develop a resource plan and a workforce that is highly motivated, highly skilled and high producing to meet the current and future needs of the service. This Business Plan sets out that vision.

The impact of the Service is wide ranging but can be segmented into three key areas functions, namely, Property Asset Management (including Estates), Facilities Management and Construction Programme Management.

| Property Asset Management | Construction Programme Management | Facilities Management |
|---|---|---|
| Ensure that the Council's built estate has the right properties in the right place at the right time to support the Council's strategic requirements. | Ensuring the delivery of the Council's Capital Plan by effective and efficient delivery of construction projects. | Provision of modern local offices, depots, and public toilets, ensuring all Council facilities are maintained and cleaned to an appropriate standard. |

Property Asset Management

Estates: This team of professionals manages the Council's operational and non-operational assets. In terms of non-operational properties, the team provides commercial and industrial properties which both support the local economy and generate an income for the Council, which can be invested in service delivery. The team further undertake asset valuations which are required for the Council's annual accounts. In terms of operational properties, the Asset Management team ensures that the Council's built estate has the right properties in the right place at the right time to support the Council's strategic requirements and aligned to Place Plans. Through an asset review process the team identifies investment requirements, and where relevant, disinvestment, through challenge of asset use to highlight underperforming assets. The team also manages data concerning property assets to inform the decision-making process. As part of the asset review process, the team identifies properties that are surplus to the use of services, and the Council, which are then transferred to the non-operational portfolio for disposal, or demolition, as appropriate.



Construction Programme Delivery

The professional teams involved in this workstream design and deliver the building assets required by Council Services. These include facilities for all Council Services, comprising schools, care homes, sports centres, housing, depots and the like. The Construction Programme delivery team has three separate, but related, professional disciplines i.e., Architecture, Engineering and Quantity Surveying, comprising:

Architecture: The Architecture team include expertise across several disciplines including Architects, Technologists, Project Managers, Contract Leaders, Clerk of Works, CDM Advisors, BIM specialists and Technical Officers. The team assists client services through the full project delivery process from inception to completion and handover – all RIBA Stages are covered and managed across P&FM's aligned Gateway Project Stages. Despite the significant resource available, the large programme of work managed by the team requires that some design services be outsourced to private practices, including some specialised design input such as acoustic engineering, fire engineering, etc.

The Architecture team acts as Lead Consultant and Principal Designer on all their project work irrespective of scale. In addition, all outsourced Architecture, Structural Engineering, Clerk of Works and Landscape Architecture design service work is managed by the Architecture team.



Engineering: The team includes mechanical and electrical building services engineers and the energy management team. Building services engineers provide technical solutions for new buildings, extensions, refurbishments and upgrades in schools, offices, leisure centres, care homes and depots and for housing stock improvements. The works include design, calculations, drawings, specifications, bills of quantities, cost control, feasibility studies, option appraisals, risk assessments, value engineering and project management. The team collaborates with other Council Services, design teams, external consultants, contractors and utility suppliers.

The energy management team monitors and targets energy costs, consumption and emissions, validates and verifies energy invoices, manages fuel procurement contracts and manages building management systems. The team works with all Services to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Quantity Surveying: The Quantity Surveying team carries out cost planning capturing the whole life cost of proposed construction projects from inception to completion. The team contributes to option appraisal processes and business case evaluation to establish best value solutions. The team manages the tendering process and deals with the commercial and contractual aspects of construction projects including monitoring budgets, construction procurement, risk and value management. The team further provides insurance replacement values for the Council's extensive property portfolio.

Facilities Management

The Facilities Management Team helps meet the public's demands and expectations through the provision of modern local offices and ensures the Council wider built environment has effective and efficient facilities management arrangements in place. Around 48,000 response and planned preventative maintenance tasks are completed each year.



Hard Facilities Management - Response, Planned Preventative and Lifecycle Component Replacement. This element includes the management of the repair, maintenance and improvement of the buildings which Council services are delivered from, including education, leisure, office accommodation, depots and operational buildings. This Team includes a range of professional disciplines including Building Surveyors, Building Services Officers, Property Inspectors, Contract Leaders and Technical Officers, each with a focus on customer need, quality and cost management. The team manages minor works programmes and utilises an innovative approach to the delivery of reactive and planned preventative maintenance activities using an integrated provider model.

Soft Facilities Management - The main corporate office sites throughout Aberdeenshire are supported by a team of facilities staff that provide reception and caretaking related activities, such as general and minor maintenance tasks, mail room duties, health & safety checks, building security and cleaning. The building cleaning team manages the provision of building cleaning for operational establishments including offices, sheltered housing sites and libraries and applies British Cleaning Institute Standards to provide a consistent approach to service delivery and one in which efficiency is key factor. The Service also includes the operation of Public Convenience sites. It manages substantive posts and relief staff and includes a mobile reactive team to clean Council Housing stock void properties, bus shelters and remove graffiti. It can also deploy trained staff to implement infection control procedures to sites to assist in the management of community health and wellbeing.

Service Priorities

Service Priorities and how they sit within the Council Plan

[The Council Plan](#) was agreed in November 2022 and sets out the Council Strategic Priorities

| Pillar | Council Priority |
|------------------------|---|
| Our People | 1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing |
| Our Environment | 3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | 5. Economic Growth 6. Infrastructure and Public Assets |

Business Services have generated service priorities to:

- (a) deliver on the Council priorities and strategic priorities and
- (b) to realise the service vision and strategic objectives.

Our Performance

The nature of Business Services is to provide professional and business support to all Services within the Council and as such will input to and provide a supporting role in helping deliver many of the Council Priorities.

Property & Facilities Management has a lead role for the delivery of the following Council Priorities: -

Infrastructure and Public Assets

- Deliver an ambitious yet affordable Capital Programme
- Create and sustain a Council Estate that is fit for purpose to provide modern public services that meet the current and future needs of our communities.

Key measures:

- Percentage of planned expenditure on the Capital Plan achieved
- Capacity meets demand and efficient use of any under-utilised estate
- Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
- Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition

Property & Facilities Management has a supporting role in the delivery of the following Council Priorities: -

Health & Wellbeing

- Enable and deliver the provision of good quality, energy efficient and accessible housing.

Resilient Communities

- Develop and implement a Place Strategy that considers the current and future needs of communities.
- Energy efficiency measures installed in private sector housing and social sector housing.

Climate Change

- Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045, with the Council showing leadership through the Carbon Budget and carbon reduction toolkit.

Economic Growth

- Develop our key sectors and secure inward investment to sustain economic growth.

Property & Facilities Management Service Priorities

The Service continually delivers on key projects and programmes. The main priorities for the year ahead, recognising the Council priorities, are:

- Deliver on the Building and Estates Transformation Programme including:
 - Update the Corporate Asset Management plan with new Strategic Asset Plan aligned to the Place Strategy
 - Report on a renewed Depot Strategy
 - Continue to deliver the Office Space Strategy
 - Operation Oyne - Asset Disinvestment
 - Ensuring the implementation of Service Annual Estate Plans
 - Implementation of Responsible Premises Officer Guidance
 - Develop and Implement the Heating Policy
 - Undertake renewables feasibility and business cases
 - Provide an overarching report on asset condition and investment requirements
- Continue to develop the estate requirements of the Net Zero Route Map targets
- Delivery of the Capital Plans
- Develop Housing Improvement Programme 2
- CONTEST Lead including Protect Duty

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| Council Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--------|---------------------|--|---|
| Infrastructure & Public Sector Assets | Percentage of capital plan being expended | Deliver an ambitious, yet affordable, capital programme | £136.063m Planned spend on the Capital Plan for 2022/23 was 57.5%. This is a decrease from 2021/22 which was 62.6%. | 85% | 70% | Allan Whyte, Head of Property & Facilities Management | Quarterly monitoring. Reported at end of financial year |
| | Percentage of key projects delivered on time | Deliver Property related construction projects | 48.28% | 80% | 80% | Neil Reid, Architecture Manager | Monthly monitoring |
| | Percentage of key projects delivered within approved budget | Deliver Property related construction projects | 95.25% | 90% | 90% | Craig Reid, Quantity Surveying Manager | Monthly monitoring |
| | Client satisfaction | Deliver Property related construction projects | 60% | 60% | 60% | Neil Reid, Architecture Manager | Monthly monitoring |

| Council Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|------------------|--|---|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | No or vacant operational assets/no of operational assets in use | Create and sustain a Council estate that is fit for purpose to provide modern public services that meet the current and future needs of our communities | | Reduce holding costs of vacant assets by 25%. Target of realising 100% of budgeted capital receipts | Reduce holding costs of vacant assets by 25%. Target of realising 100% of budgeted capital receipts | Andy Moir, Principal Asset Management Officer | Quarterly monitoring |
| Climate Change | Energy usage – kWh per M ² gross internal building area of council operational buildings | Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045 | 193.4 kWh per M ² | 205 kWh per M ² | 205 kWh per M ² | Iain Wylie, Engineering Services Manager | Reported annually |
| | CO ² emissions – Kg per M ² gross internal area of council operational buildings | Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045 | 36 Kg per M ² | 40 Kg per M ² | 40 Kg per M ² | Iain Wylie, Engineering Services Manager | Reported annually |
| | Quantity of Biomass energy consumed in council properties | Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045 | | 9,537,452 kW hours (2020/21 result) | 9,537,452 kW hours (2020/21 result) | Iain Wylie, Engineering Services Manager | Reported annually |
| Economic Growth | Supporting new and existing businesses to thrive, creating competitive advantage and providing fair work opportunities | Percentage of commercial and industrial properties occupied at the end of the period | 93.1% | 90% | 90% | John Gahagan, Estates Manager | Quarterly monitoring |

Service Performance Indicators 2022-2027

| Council Priority | Service Performance Measure | Action | Baseline | Target | Anticipated Outcome | Responsible Officer | Timescale (include key milestones where appropriate) |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|----------|--------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| | Sickness absence rate in Property & Facilities Management | Percentage of time lost due to sickness | | | | | Quarterly monitoring |
| Infrastructure & Public Sector Assets | Hard FM KPI's | Hard FM | 98% | 90% | 98% | Emma Plunkett, Facilities Manager | Monthly monitoring. Contract term 2022-2027 |
| | Housing Programme KPI's There are number of KPI's associated with the Housing Improvement Programme all of which are reported to Communities Committee. | Housing Improvement Programme | 92% | 92% | 94% | Pearl Strachan, Project Manager | Quarterly monitoring. Contract term ends 2024 |

Benchmarking

| National Indicator | Year | Scottish Average | Aberdeen shire | Long Trend | Short Trend | National Ranking | Quartile Position | Owner | Proposed action |
|--|---------|------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| SCORPAM01: Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use % | 2019/20 | 82.47% | 74.96% | Improving | Improving | 29 | Four | Head of Property & FM | Our target in this area is to improve our performance by 1% each year. Focus on the estate through asset challenge and asset reduction activities will result in the reduction of a number of poor performing assets. Further, a number of underperforming assets (suitability) form part of ongoing asset strategies currently being implemented e.g. depot strategy. |
| | 2020/21 | 82.31% | 77.4% | Improving | Improving | 25 | Four | | |
| | 2021/22 | 85.30% | 77.87% | Improving | Improving | 27 | Four | | |
| | 2022/23 | TBC | 78.1% | Improving | Improving | TBC | TBC | | |
| SCORPAM02: Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition % | 2019/20 | 88.62% | 87.56% | Improving | Improving | 21 | Three | Head of Property & FM | Current performance is above the Scottish average and we anticipate that the focus on our Estate will continue to lead to improvements in our performance and ranking through ongoing condition surveys. Further, asset challenge and asset reduction activities will result in the reduction of a number of poor performing assets. |
| | 2020/21 | 89.20% | 90.82% | Improving | Improving | 16 | Two | | |
| | 2021/22 | 90.12% | 91.59% | Improving | Improving | 17 | Three | | |
| | 2022/23 | TBC | 91.86% | Improving | Improving | TBC | TBC | | |

APSE Building Cleaning 2022-23 Performance

| <u>Performance</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Key Performance Indicator</u> |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Performance for 2022/23 is better than the family group average</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Investment per square metre for all areas cleaned (excluding CEC) (LA only)</u> • <u>Investment per square metre for all areas cleaned (excluding CEC) (All work)</u> • <u>Staff absence (front line staff), Staff absence (Scotland only) – front line employees only</u> • <u>Investment per FTE front-line employee (All work)</u> • <u>Front line staff cost per square metre cleaned (excluding outdoor areas) (LA only)</u> • <u>Front line staff cost per square metre cleaned (excluding outdoor areas) (All work)</u> • <u>Leavers as a percentage of total operational staff</u> • <u>Staff absence excluding long term (front line staff)</u> • <u>Staff absence (excluding long term) (Scotland only) - front line employees only</u> |
| <p><u>Performance for 2022/23 is within 25% of the family group average</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Total square metres cleaned per FTE employee (excluding outdoor areas) (LA only)</u> • <u>Total square metres cleaned per FTE employee (excluding outdoor areas) (All work)</u> • <u>Number of paid staff hours per measured square metre cleaned (LA only)</u> • <u>Number of paid staff hours per measured square metre cleaned (All work)</u> • <u>Starters as a percentage of total operational staff</u> |
| <p><u>Performance for 2022/23 is not as good as the family group average range above</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (all offices) (LA only)</u> • <u>Ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (all offices) (All work)</u> • <u>Ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (libraries) (LA only)</u> • <u>Quality assurance and consultation process</u> • <u>Proportion of unpaid staff absence to paid staff hours</u> • <u>Human resources and people management</u> |
| <p><u>Financial Performance for 2022/23 is above the family group average</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>All staff costs as a percentage of total investment (All work)</u> • <u>All staff costs as a percentage of total investment (LA only)</u> |
| <p><u>Financial Performance for 2022/23 is below the family group average</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cleaning materials investment as a percentage of total investment</u> • <u>Cleaning equipment investment as a percentage of total investment</u> • <u>Materials and equipment investment as a percentage of total investment</u> • <u>Front line staff costs as a percentage of total investment (All work)</u> • <u>Other costs as a percentage of total investment (All work)</u> • <u>Additional works/variation orders as a percentage of scheduled work</u> |

Self-Evaluation

The Property & Facilities Management Service will undertake the Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) self-evaluation during 2024/25.

Financial Profile

Property & Facilities Management Budget for 2024/25

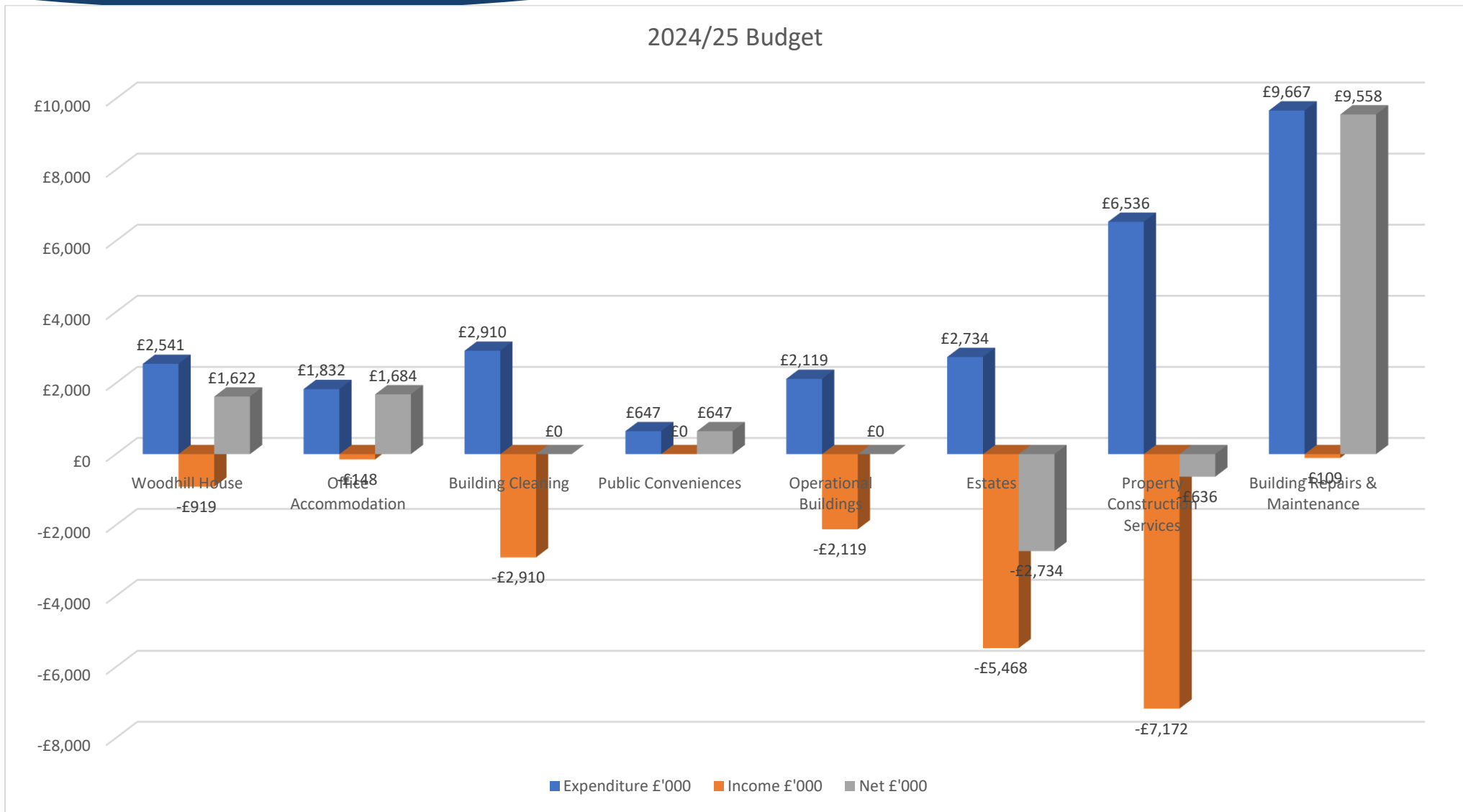
The Property & Facilities Management Service undertakes significant financial activity across both revenue and capital budgets, the details of which are noted below.

The following provides details of the budgets allocated to the Service.

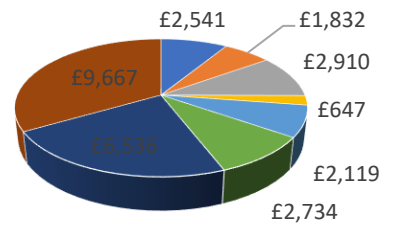
| 2024/25 Budget | Expenditure £'000 | Income £'000 | Net £'000 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Woodhill House | 2,541 | (919) | 1,622 |
| Office Accommodation | 1,832 | (148) | 1,684 |
| Building Cleaning | 2,910 | (2,910) | - |
| Public Conveniences | 647 | - | 647 |
| Operational Buildings | 2,119 | (2,119) | - |
| Estates | 2,734 | (5,468) | (2,734) |
| Property Construction Services | 6,536 | (7,172) | (636) |
| Building Repairs & Maintenance | 9,667 | (109) | 9,558 |
| Total | 28,986 | (18,845) | 10,141 |

The Service provide Construction Professional Services for Capital Plan programmes on behalf of Client Services including the project such as the Peterhead Community Campus and the Infrastructure programmes. In addition, the Energy Management Team is responsible for the management of the Council's utility contracts.

2024/25 Budget

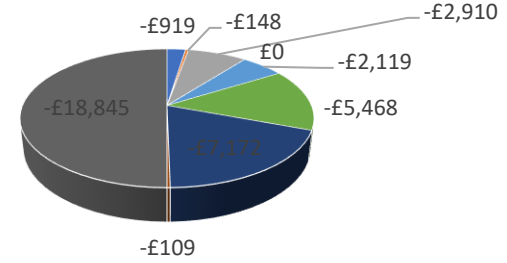


2024/25 Budget Expenditure £'000



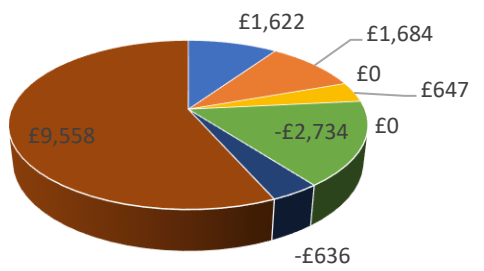
- Woodhill House
- Building Cleaning
- Operational Buildings
- Property Construction Services
- Office Accommodation
- Public Conveniences
- Estates
- Building Repairs & Maintenance

2024/25 Budget Income £'000



- Woodhill House
- Building Cleaning
- Operational Buildings
- Property Construction Services
- Total
- Office Accommodation
- Public Conveniences
- Estates
- Building Repairs & Maintenance

2024/25 Budget Net £'000



- Woodhill House
- Building Cleaning
- Operational Buildings
- Property Construction Services
- Office Accommodation
- Public Conveniences
- Estates
- Building Repairs & Maintenance

2024/25 Business Services Capital Budget (Non HRA)

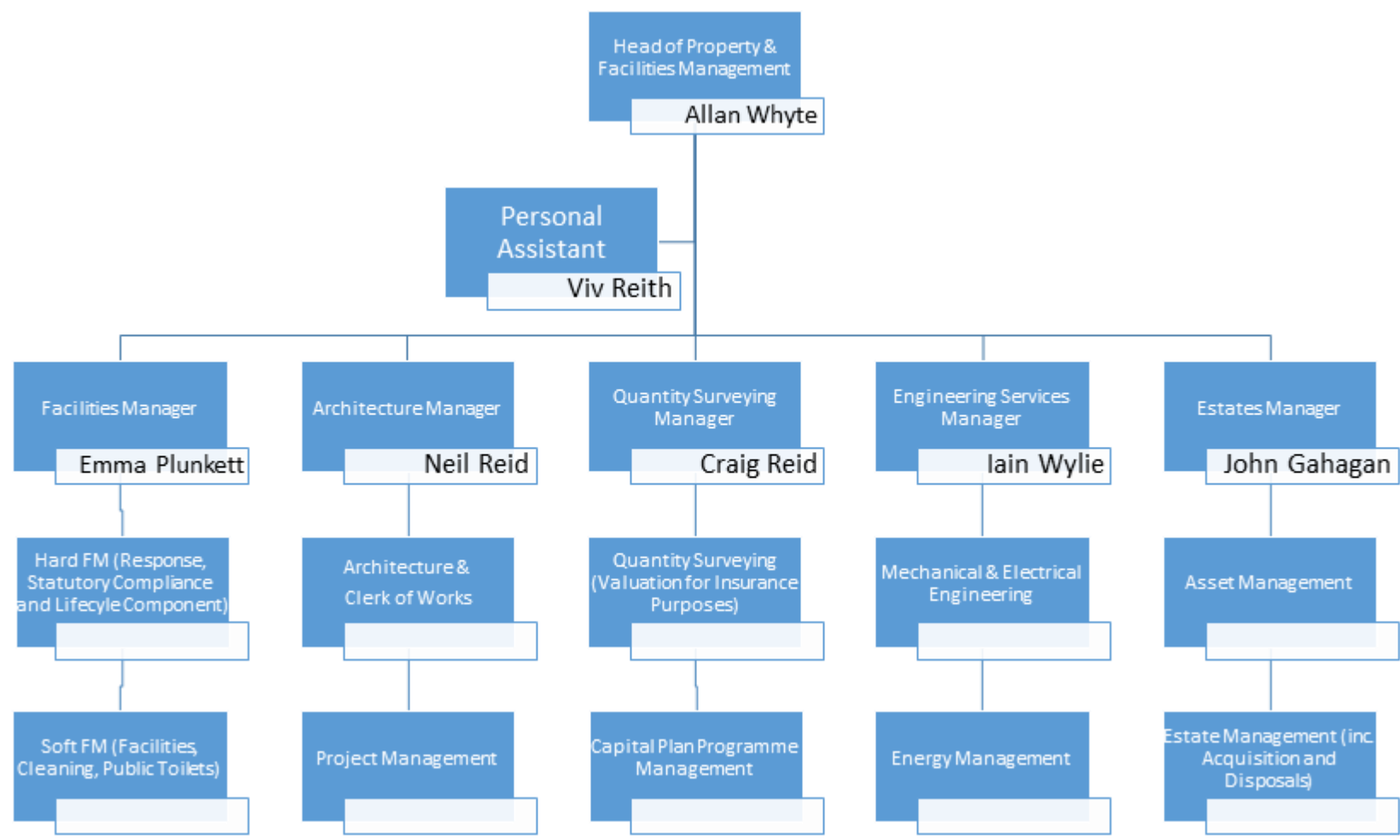
| Capital Plan Line | Budget £'000 |
|--|-------------------------|
| Carbon Reduction - Council Wide Objectives | 354 |
| Depots | 1,297 |
| Development of Industrial Portfolio & Factory Units | 666 |
| Fraserburgh Lighthouse Museum | 326 |
| Health & Safety - Council Wide Objectives | 600 |
| Information Communications Technology | 1,450 |
| Lifecycle Maintenance - Council Wide Objectives | 3,144 |
| New Council Office (Previously on Plan as Workspace Inverurie) | 10,590 |
| | <u>18,427</u> |

2024/25 HRA Capital Programme (Design and Contract Management role)

| | Budget £'000 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Stock Improvements | 600 |
| New Builds | 23,486 |
| Other Expenditure | 443 |
| Total Capital Expenditure | <u>24,529</u> |

Our People: Staffing & Workforce Planning 2023-2026

Service Staffing Profile



| Staffing Nos. | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Team | FTE * | Head Count | No. Vacancies (FTE) |
| Directorate | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Engineering | 18 | 17 | 2 |
| Quantity Surveying ** | 9 | 13 | 6.5 |
| Architecture | 59 | 43 | 16 |
| Estates | 17 | 21 | 4 |
| Facilities Management | 106 (63 Cleaners) | 649 (340 Reliefs) | 26 (18 Cleaners) |
| Total | 210 | 744 | 34.5 |

* Full Time Equivalents as established posts

** Headcount includes for 4 secondees and vacancies reduced accordingly

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

- **Service Training Plan**

- The Service has developed a P&FM portal for accessing ALDO identifying training needs for each individual post within Service.

- **Independent Professional Support**

- The Service has developed a framework for external professional support to supplement internal resources in response to needs as required; this includes the use of secondees where deemed appropriate.

- **Future Skills Gap Analysis & Professional Development**

- Finding gaps between where we are now and where we need to be in the future for P&FM related functions including building information modelling, carbon reduction and net zero, digital skills.
- Allocation of Service Champions for digital, net zero, building information modelling, governance.

- **Reassessment of roles and structure to align with current and developing priorities**
 - Review current roles to align to Council Priority on Infrastructure and Public Sector Assets.
 - Review management and team structure giving consideration to succession planning and service priorities.
 - Increasing opportunities for young people; continuing to develop the graduate apprenticeship roles, student placements, supporting further education and use of interns.
 - In the medium term, look to establish an internal civil and structural engineering resource.
 - Create a multi-skilled operative role to support asset management functions.

- **Wellbeing**
 - Create formalised approach for gathering information, analysis and subsequent actions building on the 87% assessment.

Aberdeenshire Council have identified, at a corporate level, that all Business Plans must address the following workforce planning activities to support the Council in being fit and flexible for the future: Wellbeing, Digital Skills, Diversity and Succession Planning, Establishment Control. Services also identify actions relating to industry and service specific drivers based on their own internal and external environmental analysis to ensure they have the right people in the right place doing the right things at the right time for them to meet their overall service outcomes and priorities.

Workforce Planning requires a level of forecasting and should be in place for a rolling 3-year period as many workforce planning actions require time to come to fruition, e.g. natural turnover, skills development, succession planning. Also providing a transparent 3-year workforce plan allows for better transparency and levels of engagement with the workforce.

Key priorities and updates are provided below.

Measures of Success/ Progress Update

- Reduction in vacancies
- Increase in staff retention
- Reduction in sickness absence
- Increased client satisfaction through effective delivery of projects and programmes
- Increased number of staff being promoted to management roles within the Council or wider public sector

Workforce Plan

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | |
|---|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | |
| Wellbeing | Issue/ Risk | <p>In the recent 87% wellbeing data survey there were 95 respondents from Property & Facilities Management 42% self-identified as thriving, 39% doing well, 19% could improve.</p> <p>Below are the Q3 (Oct-Dec 2023) sickness absence figures for P&FM. A decrease of 1.65%.</p> <p>Absence rates across P&FM for the period 01/10/2023 to 31/12/2023 were: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.00% - Admin/Clerical 3.30% - Building Cleaning (including Public Toilets) 8.40% - Facilities and Halls 0.00% - Facilities and Halls/Admin-Clerical 2.76% - Professional/Technical <p>Overall days 1,214 for 408 job holders = 3.23%</p> | January 2024 |
| | Action(s) | Support the continued use of corporate wellbeing tools, approachable and visible management, coaching and mentoring, identification of themes from annual appraisal. | Various |
| | Progress/ Measure | <p>Continue to analyse percentage of workforce identifying as thriving or excelling.</p> <p>Reduce mental health related absences.</p> <p>Monitored at P&FM Management Team by quarterly analysis and insights from workforce, Power-Bi and 87% wellbeing data.</p> | Quarterly monitoring |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | |
|---|--------------------------|--|---------|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | |
| Skills | Issue/ Risk | Ensure that all staff are fully trained and efficient in the use of the Service's software and processes across all disciplines. Sufficient resource must be available to evolve the P&FM SharePoint Common Data Environment (CDE), delivering Building Information Modelling (BIM) compliant projects and automated processes. Ensure that the ALDO P&FM Training Portal is maintained and current. | Various |
| | Action (s) | Support the continued development of an integrated digital environment that includes BIM compliant live project delivery, searchable and controlled archive data across all properties, and managed Service and Corporate information for the wider P&FM team. Maintain the P&FM training plan and portal to ensure all core activities are included by role, and targeted specialist training is available as new software is introduced or BIM processes evolve. | Various |
| | Progress/ Measure | The P&FM Service SharePoint site has been developed to deliver a BIM compliant CDE for live and archived project work, and the P&FM area of the site is also live. All network files have been transferred into this new site (but require relocating to property-specific locations) and permission structures developed to permit P&FM staff, Client Services, and external design teams / contractors' access to relevant data in a fully controlled and secure manner. | |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date | |
|---|---------------------------|--|--|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | | |
| Diversity | Issue/ Risk | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. P&FM have a significantly female workforce; however, this is largely down to a large number of cleaners. In higher up grades, (practitioner and managerial roles), there is a more equitable split of male and female employees. 2. In terms of the age profile, there is a small number of the workforce under the age of 20. Increasing the opportunities for developing the young workforce to ensure there is suitable talent in the pipeline could be an action. This will also link to “Succession Planning.” 3. Like most services, there is a considerable number of employees who have either not provided the equality and diversity information or have selected ‘prefer not to say.’ It is not mandatory for employees to complete this information; however, an action could be to encourage employees to record their details through Employee Self Service. HR are also going to promote the completion of these details over the coming months. | |
| | Action(s) | <p>Review advert text and job profiles to ensure they use gender neutral language.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for the younger workforce - age; grow your own; increase opportunities for young people - student placements, apprenticeships., interns.</p> | Quarterly monitoring |
| | Progress/ Measures | Continue to monitor the diversity of the team. | Report and monitor through Property Policy Group (PPG) |

| Priority | Key Actions | Target Date |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i> | | |
| Succession Planning | Issue/ Risk | Ensure that there is capacity and capability linked to future roles for personnel to meet the future service needs. |
| | Action (s) | Analysis of workforce to be undertaken, identify high performing individuals. Recruitment planning. Training Plan. |
| | Progress/ Measure | Training plan for all posts has been implemented and key priorities identified above. Monitor the percentage of roles filled internally. |
| Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) | Issue/ Risk | Lack of personnel to fill all functions and delivery on key priorities |
| | Action(s) | Recruitment and succession planning. Independent professional support to be appointed when required. Monitor turnover rates. Liaising with higher education sector on availability and number of entrants for undergraduate courses. Procurement Strategy, i.e., internal resource/external resource and use of design and build arrangements |
| | Progress/ Measures | Consultancy Framework in place Monitor turnover |

Concluding Summary

As this Business Plan demonstrates Property & Facilities Management will undertake key activity during the 2024/25 financial year. This will include delivering on the Building and Estates Transformation Programme with particular focus on asset disinvestment aligned to the Council's Place Strategy. The P&FM Service will also work collaboratively across all Services in the delivery of Construction Programmes, with a recognition to align Service resource requirements with the approved Capital Plans. The Service will furthermore continue to develop estate requirements of the Net Zero route map targets.

Revision History

Business Services' Head of Service Business Plans Update 2024/25, Appendix 1

Table 1-1 Version control

| Version | Status | Date | Revised by | Reason |
|---|------------|------------|-------------|--|
|  1.0 | 2024 Draft | 27/02/2024 | J Askildsen | Apply new streamlined format and content as part of annual review. Due to go to Committee 18 April 2024. |
|  1.1 | 2024 Draft | 07/03/2024 | J Askildsen | First draft prepared for Collaboration Board (11/3) and BSLT for comment/input |
|  1.2 | 2024 Final | 26/03/2024 | J Askildsen | Final draft for presentation to Business Services Committee – 18 April 2024 |
|  | | | | |
|  | | | | |

REPORT TO BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE – 18 APRIL 2024

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2022-23

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 requires all local authorities to publish a Gaelic Language Plan (the Plan) and to monitor progress of actions within the Plan. The Council is required to submit its statutory monitoring report (annual return) for the period December 2022 to July 2023. Committee is requested to consider, comment on and agree the Annual Return Form attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. The annual return reflects the shorter than normal reporting period with activity ongoing to deliver the Plan proportionate to local demand.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 **Consider, comment on and agree the Annual Return Form attached at Appendix 1; and**

1.2.2 **Note that following approval, the Annual Return Form will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.**

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act) requires relevant public authorities, including the Council, to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan (GLP). Aberdeenshire Council's first GLP was published in 2016. The next iteration of our GLP, from 2022-2027, was approved by Business Services Committee on 11 November 2021 and submitted to the Bòrd Na Gaidhlig (the principal Gaelic body in Scotland) (BnG) for approval.

2.2 BnG requested a number of modifications to the draft Plan in August 2022. Following significant negotiations with BnG, modifications were agreed by Committee on 2 March 2023 and the amended Plan was submitted for approval. The plan was agreed by BnG, and the current Gaelic Language Plan is now in place for 2023-2028. The 2016 Plan remained in place until the agreement of the 2023 Plan.

3 Discussion

3.1 BnG submitted a statutory request for a monitoring report to the Council on 11 January 2024. The monitoring report is for the period 7 December 2022 to 24 July 2023. Following Committee approval, the monitoring report will be submitted to BnG who will assess it and provide a written response to the Council.

3.2 The report requests information and data on areas such as: the number of staff who received Gaelic skills training, communications/publications released in

Gaelic, correspondence in Gaelic received by the council, staff who have Gaelic skills and Care Experienced Gaelic speakers. It asks for specific action points to be ranked as a RAG (red, amber, green) status on how successfully the Council is meeting each of the action areas. The annual return form reflects the short reporting period and local demand in terms of the primary indicator area. The Council continues to progress the National Gaelic Language Plan Priorities and Corporate Indicators.

- 3.3 Whilst work has continued to deliver the Gaelic Language Plan priorities, the Council's main focus has been the delivery of core services; progress is reflective of the circumstances and local demand for Gaelic services and the pressure on staff.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps to deliver the Strategic Priority "Learning for Life" within the Pillar "Our People".

| 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 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 | |

- 4.3 There are no staffing / financial implications as a result of this report.
- 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 performance information to Committee and does not have an impact on those with protected characteristics or experiencing poorer socio-economic outcomes.

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

- ACORP006 – Reputation management (including social media); There is a risk that Aberdeenshire Council would not meet its public duties by failing to respond to the statutory requirement and reporting duties. Failure to comply has the potential to result in loss of reputation. [Corporate Risk Register](#).

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 C. 1.1.b of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to a policy issue within the functions delegated to Committee, specifically Customer & Digital Services.

Rob Simpson

Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Katie Insch, Policy Officer
25 March 2024

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 Gaelic Language Plan Annual Return Form 2022/23

BÒRD NA GàIDHLIG

FOIRM DÀTA BLIADHNAIL 2022-2023
ANNUAL RETURN FORM 2022-2023

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Ainm na buidhne Organisation's name | Aberdeenshire Council |
|--|------------------------------|

Prìomh Dhàta Measaidh
Primary Indicator Data

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Fios bhon Phoball Communications from the Public | Cia mheud brath sgrìobhte a fhuair am buidheann bhon phoball ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many written communications have the organisation received from the public in Gaelic this year? | 0 |
| A' sgaoileadh fiosrachaidh Dissemination of information | Cia mheud pìos a sgaoil am buidheann air na meadhanan sòisealta ann an Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many posts did the organisation distribute on social media in Gaelic this year? | 0 |
| | Cia mheud fios-naidheachd a chaidh a sgaoileadh leis a' bhuidheann anns a' Ghàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many press releases did the organisation publish in Gaelic this year? | 0 |
| Luchd-obrach Staff | Cia meud neach-obrach a fhuair cothrom trèanaidh ann an sgìlean Gàidhlig am-bliadhna? How many staff received Gaelic skills training this year? | 1 |
| | Cia mheud dreuchd a th' agaibh an-dràsta far a bheil Gàidhlig ann mar sgìl riatanach? How many posts do you currently have where Gaelic is an essential skill? | 0 |
| | Cia mheud neach-obrach a th' agaibh an-dràsta aig a bheil sgìlean Gàidhlig? How many staff currently within the organisation have Gaelic skills? | Not currently recorded. |

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| <p>Foillseachaidhean Publications</p> | <p>Cia mheud foillseachadh a dh'fhoillsich am buidheann gu dà-chananach am-bliadhna? How many organisational publications have been published bilingually (Gaelic and English) this year?</p> | <p>0</p> |
| <p>Inbhe Status</p> | <p>Cia mheud soidhne dà-chànanach a chuir am buidheann an àirde am-bliadhna? How many new bilingual signs has the organisation erected this year?</p> | <p>0</p> |

Prìomhachasan a' Phlana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig
National Gaelic Language Plan Priorities

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig / Using Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the use of Gaelic?

Resources to support staff to use Gaelic are available on our internal training platform. They include guidance for staff who speak Gaelic (and indicated that they are happy to communicate with public in Gaelic) on the following issues: how to communicate with callers that speak in Gaelic, how to deal with any mail/email received in Gaelic and how to incorporate basic written Gaelic (greetings, titles, signatures etc.) into correspondence with Gaelic organisations or other contacts who have made us aware they wish to be communicated to in Gaelic.

There has previously been collaboration with neighbouring authorities in sharing resources and the council continues to be open to building relationships with other local authorities to share resources where appropriate.

Aberdeenshire Council has an interpretation, translation, and transcription service. Gaelic is included in the contract.

Ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig / Learning Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' bhuidhinn a' toirt fàs air ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation increasing the learning of Gaelic?

Aberdeenshire Council continues to have a Gaelic course on the learning platform for all staff to access.

The promotion of Gaelic as a viable and relevant L3 as part of 1+2 Language provision continues. Teachers benefit from access to Gaelic language learning and resources through the Regional Improvement Collaborative. New developments are promoted and signposted through the Aberdeenshire Primary Languages Portal which is accessible to all teaching staff. Schools are encouraged to signpost families to the Gaelic Learning opportunities hosted on the Northern Alliance Family Learning site.

A "Step into Gaelic" infographic was created in collaboration with the Education Scotland

Development Officer and shared with Secondary and Primary Schools.

Professional learning is also signposted through Weekly School Mail and Language ambassadors.

A'cur air adhart na Gàidhlig / Promoting Gaelic

Ciamar a tha a' buidhinn a' cur deagh iomhaigh air adhart airson na Gàidhlig?

How is the organisation promoting a positive image of Gaelic?

The Council has developed and maintains a dedicated page on the website for [Gaelic language services](#) signposting residents to the information that is available in Gaelic as well as opportunities for learning and Gaelic events.

Aberdeenshire Council have Gaelic Bookbug-bags which are available on request through the library service.

Fiosrachadh dearcnachaidh eile
Other monitoring information

A' brosnachadh Foghlam Gàidhlig
Promotion of Gaelic Education

Chan fheum ach Ùghdarrasan Ionadail seo a lìonadh a-steach
For Local Authorities only to complete

Fo Earrainn 15 de dh'Àchd an Fhoghlaim (Alba) 2016, feumaidh ùghdarrasan ionadail aig a bheil foghlam Gàidhlig anns an sgìre aca seo a shanasachd ann an dòigh iomchaidh. Feumaidh gach ùghdarras ionadail sanasachd a dhèanamh air na còraichean a th' aig pàrantan gus tagradh a dhèanamh airson foghlam Gàidhlig aig ìre na bun-sgoile agus foghlam luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh. Ciamar a tha sibh a' coileanadh an dleastanais seo?

Under Section 15 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, local authorities which already provide Gaelic education in their area must take reasonable steps to promote this. All local authorities must take reasonable steps to promote the rights which parents have under the Act to make a request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education and the potential provision of Gaelic Learner Education. Could you tell us how you are undertaking this?

The 'Gaelic in Schools' section of our website highlights how a request for GME can be made.

Pàrantan Corporra
Corporate Parenting

Chan fheum ach Pàrantan Chorporra seo a lìonadh a-steach
For Corporate Parents only to complete

Am b' urrainn dhuibh dàta a thoirt dhuinn air an àireimh de dhaoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras.

Please provide data on the number of Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people registered with the Authority.

There are currently no Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people registered with Aberdeenshire Council.

Am b' urrainn dhuibh fiosrachadh a thoirt dhuinn air tachartasan no cothroman a tha sibh a' cur air dòigh airson daoine òga le Gàidhlig a tha, no a tha air a bhith, fo chùram a tha clàraichte leis an Ùghdarras.

Please provide information on activities or opportunities you provide for Gaelic-speaking care experienced young people.

There is currently no requirement for this.

Gaelic speaking care experienced young people will be supported to develop and learn their cultural identity when the need is identified.

Co-ionannachd Equalities

Bu chòir don a h-uile buidheann seo a lìonadh a-steach

For all organisations to complete

An do chomharraich an t-ùghdarras poblach agaibh cùisean sònraichte sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd chothroman a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig?
Has your public authority identified any particular issues relating to equality of opportunity with regard to the development of Gaelic language?

The lack of demand and requirement for the development of Gaelic language, alongside the geographical spread, including residents living in remote rural areas of Aberdeenshire, are identified issues for the authority. The Learning and Development team have also identified issues around suppliers who can carry out staff training.

A bheil poileasaidhean, modhan-obrach no dòighean-obrach sam bith co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd a chaidh a chur an gnìomh leis an ùghdarras phoblach agaibh, no a tha gan cur an gnìomh an-dràsta, a bhuineas ri bhith a' cur co-ionannachd chothroman air adhart an lùib leasachadh na Gàidhlig? An inns sibh dhuinn mun deidhinn?
Are there any equalities policies, procedures or measures that have been implemented by your public authority, or are in the process of being implemented, that are relevant to advancing the equality of opportunity in the development of Gaelic language? Can you tell us about them?

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and future employees as set out within our Equalities Policy and Procedures.

The Council has developed and maintains a dedicated page on the website for [Gaelic language services](#) signposting residents to the information that is available in Gaelic as well as opportunities for learning and Gaelic events.

A bheil eisimpleirean ann de cheumannan sònraichte a ghabh sibh gus piseach a thoirt air in-ghabhail agus com-pàirteachas a tha air obrachadh gu sònraichte math a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig taobh a-staigh an ùghdarrais phoblaich agaibh? An inns sibh dhuinn nam biodh sibh toilichte nan sgaoileadh Bòrd na Gàidhlig na h-eisimpleirean agaibh agus nan dèanamaid sanasachd orra.
Are there examples of implementing specific measures to improve inclusivity or engagement that have worked particularly well regarding Gaelic language development for your public authority? Please indicate if you would be happy for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to share and promote the examples provided.

Aberdeenshire Council consulted and engaged with the public in preparation for starting the Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028.

| Amasan airson Seirbhisean Corporra | Corporate Service Aims | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Àrd Phrionnsabalan | Overarching Principles | | | |
| <p>Spèis Cho-ionann A h-uile gealladh anns a’ phlana Ghàidhlig air a lìbhrigeadh dhan aon ìre anns a’ Ghàidhlig agus anns a’ Bheurla.</p> | <p>Equal Respect Gaelic language plan commitments delivered to an equal standard in both Gaelic and English.</p> | Work to deliver the GLP 2023 is ongoing. | | |
| <p>Cothroman Follaiseach Gnìomhan practaigeach gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil fios aig luchd-obrach na buidhne agus am poball daonna air na cothroman a th’ ann gus Gàidhlig a chleachdadh leis an ùghdarras phoblach.</p> | <p>Active Offer Practical measures to ensure that staff and public are kept regularly informed of all opportunities that exist to use Gaelic in relation to the work of the public authority.</p> | Information is available in a central location on the council’s website in Gaelic. This link takes you to the landing page. | | |
| <p>Treas Phàrtaidhean A’ dearbhadh gum bi ALEOs agus cunnraidhean eile ag obair gus plana Gàidhlig an ùghdarras phoblach a chur an gnìomh.</p> | <p>Third Parties Ensure that Arm’s Length Executive Organisations and other contractors help with the delivery of the public authority Gaelic language plan.</p> | | | |
| <p>Gàidhlig na nì àbhaisteach Geallaidhean bhon phlana Ghàidhlig air an gabhail a- steach ann an structaran an ùghdarras phoblach tro thìde, le sgrùdadh cunbhalach airson cothroman a chomharrachadh taobh a-staigh bhuidseatan stèidhichte gus Gàidhlig a thoirt air adhart.</p> | <p>Normalisation Gaelic plan commitments are normalised within the structures of the public authority over time, with opportunities to grow Gaelic within existing budgets constantly assessed.</p> | Work to deliver the GLP 2023 is ongoing. | | |
| <p>Pàrantan Corporra Gu bheillear mothachail air na dleastanasan a th’ ann mar Phàrant Corporra gum bi a h-uile pàiste is neach òg fo chùram no a b’ àbhaist a bhith fo chùram le Gàidhlig a’ faighinn na h-aon cothroman ‘s a tha clann le cànan eile.</p> | <p>Corporate Parenting That the authority is aware of the duties of a Corporate Parent to ensure that looked after children and young people and care leavers with Gaelic receive the same opportunities as those with other languages.</p> | The council will ensure that any Child’s Plan (for care experienced young people) or care leaver’s Pathways Plan gives due consideration to language opportunities. | | |

| Inbhe | Status | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Suaicheantas Ag amas air suaicheantas corporra anns a’ Ghàidhlig agus anns a’ Bheurla a chruthachadh nuair a thig a’ chiad chothrom agus mar phàirt den phròiseas ùrachaidh. Bu chòir an aon ìre follaiseachd a bhith ann airson an dà chànan san t-suaicheantas.</p> | <p>Logo Aim to render the corporate logo in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process. The logo should demonstrate equal prominence for both languages.</p> | <p>A corporate Gaelic logo has been agreed and in place for a number of years.</p> | | |
| <p>Soidhnichean Prìomh shoidhnichean air an dèanamh dà-chànanach nuair a thathar gan ùrachadh.</p> | <p>Signage Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.</p> | <p>Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.</p> | | |
| Conaltradh leis a’ phoball | Communicating with the public | | | |
| <p>Adhartachadh A’ toirt teachdaireachd bhrosnachail seachad gum bithear daonnan a’ cur fàilte air conaltradh a nì am mòr-shluagh ris an ùghdarras ann an Gàidhlig.</p> | <p>Promotion Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome.</p> | <p>Information is available in a central location on the council’s website in Gaelic: Gaelic language services - Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p>Signatures have been created for use by Officers including “Happy to communicate in Gaelic”. Signatures have been widely shared across the organization.</p> | | |
| <p>Conaltradh sgrìobhte Bithear daonnan a’ gabhail ri conaltradh sgrìobhte ann an Gàidhlig (litricean, puist-d agus na meadhanan sòisealta) agus thèid freagairtean Gàidhlig a thoirt seachad a rèir a’ phoileasaidh</p> | <p>Written Communication Written communication in Gaelic is always accepted (post, email and social media) and replies will be provided in Gaelic in accordance with the general policy.</p> | <p>Information is available in a central location on the council’s website in Gaelic: Gaelic language services -</p> | | |

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| choitcinn. | | Aberdeenshire Council |
| Ionad-fàilte agus am fòn Nuair as urrainn do luchd-obrach le Gàidhlig an t-seirbheis seo a thoirt seachad, gheibh iad taic airson sin a dhèanamh, agus thèid sanasachd a dhèanamh air an t-seirbheis am measg a’ mhòr-shluaigh. | Reception and phone Where Gaelic speaking staff are capable of providing this service, they are supported to do so, and the service is promoted to the public. | Where demand requires, this service is available. |
| Coinneamhan Thèid coimhead gu cunbhalach air na cothroman a th’ ann gus coinneamhan poblach a chumail gu dà-chànanach no ann an Gàidhlig, agus thèid sanasachd a dhèanamh orra. | Public meetings Opportunities to hold public meetings bilingually or in Gaelic are regularly explored and promoted. | This is regularly explored and promoted and has not been identified as a requirement for Aberdeenshire. |

| Fiosrachadh | Information | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Fiosan-naidheachd Prìomh fhiosan-naidheachd agus fiosan-naidheachd mu dheidhinn na Gàidhlig air an cuairteachadh sa Ghàidhlig agus sa Beurla. | News releases High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English. | | | High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English. |
| Na Meadhanan sòisealta Thèid susbaint Ghàidhlig a sgaoileadh gu cunbhalach sna meadhanan sòisealta, agus sin a rèir an uiread luchd-cleachdaidh Gàidhlig a th’ ann agus a dh’fhaodadh a bhith ann. | Social Media Gaelic content distributed regularly through social media, guided by the level of actual and potential users | | | Gaelic content is distributed through social media guided by demand of residents. |
| An Làrach-lìn Bu chòir susbaint Ghàidhlig a bhith ri faotainn air làrach-lìn an ùghdarrais phoblaich, agus prìomhachas ga thoirt do na duilleagan a dh’fhaodadh an àireamh as motha de dhaoine a tharraing. | Website Gaelic content should be available on the public authority’s website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach. | | | Information is available in a central location on the council’s website in Gaelic: Gaelic language services - Aberdeenshire Council Content can be found using |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | “Gaelic” as the key word in the “Search this Website” bar |
| <p>Foillsichidhean Corporra Thèid an ullachadh ann an Gàidhlig is Beurla, agus prìomhachas ga thoirt don fheadhainn a dh’fhaodadh an àireamh as motha de dhaoine a leughadh.</p> | <p>Corporate Publications Produced in Gaelic and English, with priority given to those with the highest potential reach.</p> | Corporate publications including the annual performance report and Gaelic language plan are produced in Gaelic and English. |
| <p>Tairbhe a’ Chànain Bidh pròiseas ann gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil a’ Ghàidhlig a gheibhear san fhiosrachadh chorporra uile aig deagh ìre agus gun gabh a tuigsinn</p> | <p>Language Utility A process is in place to ensure that the quality and accessibility of Gaelic language in all corporate information is high.</p> | A translation and interpretation supplier is in place. The contract includes Gaelic language to ensure that quality and accessibility in corporate information is high. |
| <p>Taisbeanaidhean Bu chòir beachdachadh gu cunbhalach air cothroman gus taisbeanaidhean poblach a shealltainn gu dà-chànanaich no ann an Gàidhlig, le prìomhachas ga thoirt don fheadhainn a dh’fhaodadh a’ bhuaidh as motha a thoirt air cùisean.</p> | <p>Exhibitions Opportunities to deliver public exhibitions bilingually or in Gaelic should be explored on a regular basis, with priority given to those with the highest potential impact.</p> | Opportunities continue to be explored with other authorities. |

| Luchd-obrach | Staff | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Sgrùdadh air sgilean Thèid sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air sgilean Gàidhlig an luchd-obrach agus na feumalachdan trèanaidh aca a thaobh Gàidhlig rè ùine gach plana.</p> | <p>Internal audit Conduct an internal audit of Gaelic skills and training needs through the life of each plan.</p> | An internal audit will be carried out under the current Plan. | | |
| <p>Fiosrachadh Inntrigidh Bidh fiosrachadh mu Phlana</p> | <p>Induction Knowledge of the public</p> | There is a training module | | |

| | | |
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| <p>Gàidhlig an ùghdarrais phoblaich mar phàirt den fhiosrachadh inntigidh a gheibh luchd-obrach ùr.</p> | <p>authority's Gaelic language plan included in new staff inductions</p> | <p>available on Aldo for Council staff to complete. The Gaelic Language Plan is published on the Council website</p> |
| <p>Trèanadh cànan Thèid cothroman trèanaidh is leasachaidh airson sgilean Gàidhlig a thabhann don luchd-obrach, gu h-àraidh mar thaic do bhith a' coileanadh Plana Gàidhlig an ùghdarrais phoblaich.</p> | <p>Language training Gaelic language skills training and development offered to staff, particularly in relation to implementing the public authority's Gaelic language plan.</p> | <p>All primary school staff have been signposted to the Gaelic Language professional learning available through the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative, alongside the introductory Gaelic course offered through the Authority's learning platform</p> |
| <p>Trèanadh le Fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig Trèanadh le fiosrachadh mun Ghàidhlig, le prìomhachas air luchd-obrach aig àrd ìre, luchd co-dhùnaidh eile agus luchd-obrach air a bheil dleastanas a bhith a' conaltradh leis a' mhòr-shluagh.</p> | <p>Awareness training Gaelic awareness training offered, with priority given to senior staff, other key decision makers and staff dealing directly with the public.</p> | <p>An action of the current GLP is to continue to provide Gaelic Awareness learning sessions for all employees and Elected Members.</p> |
| <p>Fastadh A' toirt aithne do is a' cur sùim ann an sgilean Gàidhlig an lùib nam pròiseasan fastaidh air feadh an ùghdarrais phoblaich.</p> | <p>Recruitment Recognising and respecting Gaelic skills within the recruitment process throughout the authority.</p> | <p>Services are aware it is their responsibility to make it known if they wish to advertise in Gaelic. This can then be arranged.</p> |
| <p>Fastadh Bidh Gàidhlig air a h-ainmeachadh mar sgil riatanach agus / no a tha na buannachd ann</p> | <p>Recruitment Gaelic named as an essential and / or desirable skill in job descriptions in order to deliver</p> | <p>There were previously two temporary posts created for</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>an tuairisgeulan obrach gus cuideachadh le bhith a' cur a' Phlana Ghàidhlig an gnìomh agus a rèir an stiùiridh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig airson luchd-obrach fhastadh.</p> | <p>the Gaelic language plan and in accordance with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig recruitment advice.</p> | <p>Gaelic Primary Teacher and Gaelic Development Officer, both of which had Gaelic in the Essential or Desirable Criteria.</p> |
| <p>Fastadh Bidh sanasan-obrach dà-chànanach ann no ann an Gàidhlig a-mhàin airson a h-uile dreuchd far a bheil Gàidhlig na sgit riatanach.</p> | <p>Recruitment Bilingual or Gaelic only job adverts for all posts where Gaelic is an essential skill.</p> | <p>Where a job has Gaelic as an essential criteria in the job profile, the job advert is posted with a Gaelic translation.</p> |
| <p>Corpas na Gàidhlig</p> | <p>Gaelic Language Corpus</p> | <p></p> |
| <p>Gnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig Thèid cumail ris an tionndadh as ùire de Ghnàthachas Litreachaidh na Gàidhlig anns na stuthan sgrìobhaidh uile a thèid fhoillseachadh leis an ùghdarras phoblach.</p> | <p>Gaelic Orthographic Conventions The most recent Gaelic Orthographic Conventions will be followed in relation to all written materials produced by the public authority.</p> | <p>The council's supplier for Interpretation and Translation services is used for Gaelic translations.</p> |
| <p>Ainmean-àite Iarrar agus gabhar ri comhairle bho Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba air ainmean-àite Gàidhlig.</p> | <p>Place names Gaelic place name advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba is sought and used.</p> | <p>It is understood and known that advice can be sought from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba if required.</p> |

REPORT TO BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024

ABERDEENSHIRE DRAFT BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2024-2030

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 The Scottish Government published the [National British Sign Language \(BSL\) Plan 2023-2029](#) on 6 November 2023 (“the national plan”). It is a requirement of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 that public bodies, including Aberdeenshire Council, produce and publish a local plan supporting the long-term goals in the national plan within six months of the publication of the national plan.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Consider and comment and agree the draft Aberdeenshire British Sign Language Plan attached to this report; and

1.2.2 Agree that, subject to any amendments requested by Committee, the Plan is published on the Council website in English and BSL.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The draft local plan, attached as **Appendix 1**, has been considered by Area Committees and Education & Children’s Services (ECS) Committee. Feedback from Area Committees, ECS and the Chair and Vice Chair of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board together with responses from the Service is attached as **Appendix 2**.

3 Discussion

3.1 The draft plan has been developed collaboratively with Education & Children’s Services, specifically Sensory Support Service, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Live Life Aberdeenshire, Transportation, Elections, Legal & People, and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership.

3.2 Consultation and engagement has taken place online using the Engage Aberdeenshire platform. The online consultation was shared with BSL users through SignVine, a social media page for the deaf community in Aberdeenshire and through the SeeHear strategy group.

3.3 Face to face engagement was carried out at the [Deaf Club](#) run by [North East Sensory Services](#) in Aberdeen on 13 January 2024 and 12 February 2024. Feedback from engagement is attached as **Appendix 3**.

3.4 The draft plan has been amended to take account of feedback from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

3.4 Progress on delivery of the local plan will be monitored and reported using the mechanisms in place for Equality Mainstreaming reporting.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This report helps deliver all 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 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 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 as a result of the draft plan. Actions will be carried out within existing budgets and resources.

4.4 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 4** and there are positive impacts as follows –

- Equalities – age (younger and older), disability
- Children's Rights & Wellbeing
- Health Inequalities

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

- ACORP002 – Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation
- ACORP006 – Reputation management (including social media)

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 B.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance to consider, comment on, make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its Area.

Rob Simpson

Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Fiona McCallum, Strategy & Innovation Manager
26 March 2023

List of Appendices –

- Appendix 1 Draft British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030
- Appendix 2: Feedback from Committees
- Appendix 3: Feedback from engagement
- Appendix 4: Integrated Impact Assessment

Aberdeenshire Council
British Sign Language (BSL)
Local Plan 2024-2030



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SECTION 1: Introduction

The Scottish Government published its [British Sign Language \(BSL\) National Plan 2023-2029](#) (“the national plan”) on 6 November 2023. The aim of the plan is to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL signers to live, work, visit, and learn.

The national plan focuses on ten priorities with an emphasis on children, young people and their families, health and wellbeing, celebrating deaf culture and tackling accessibility for BSL users. Each of the priorities has a mix of short, medium and long-term goals that will be delivered throughout the life of the plan that will build the foundations required to meet the longer-term ambition for BSL in Scotland.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to develop and publish a local plan which demonstrates how they will work towards supporting the implementation of the national plan.

This plan sets out the goals and actions for Aberdeenshire Council from 2024-2030 and is framed around the same priorities as the national plan. Additionally, the Aberdeenshire BSL plan (“the local plan”) aims to ensure equal access to services and support for BSL users across Aberdeenshire.

Consultation was carried out using the Engage Aberdeenshire platform from 18 December 2023 to 19 January 2024. The consultation was shared widely through SignVine, a social media page for the deaf community in Aberdeenshire, through Aberdeenshire See Hear strategy group. Face-to-face engagement took place with the deaf community through the Aberdeen Deaf Club, which includes BSL users in Aberdeenshire, on 13 January and 12 February 2024.

Engagement with BSL users will continue during the implementation and throughout the duration of this plan.

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to working in partnership whenever possible with Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and local organisations working with BSL users and the deaf community in the development of common approaches to the delivery of our local actions.

Scotland’s Census 2011 for the first time asked the question ‘Do you use a language other than English at home?’ [The results are analysed in the publication Census 2011 equality results: analysis, part two, which includes a section on BSL users](#). Based on the responses, the publication states that it is estimated that around 12,500 people in Scotland use BSL at home and that this makes it 24 BSL users per 10,000 individuals. [Scotland’s Census 2022 asked ‘Can you use BSL?’ for the first time](#). The results of the 2022 Census are expected to be published during 2024 and are expected to provide data at a local authority level.

SECTION 2: Short summary of the plan

Aberdeenshire Council BSL plan is framed around the same long-term goals as the Scottish Government BSL National Plan 2023-2029 which include:

- BSL Accessibility
- Children, Young People and their Families
- Access to Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Celebrating BSL Culture
- Transport
- Democratic Participation

The local plan aims to improve equality of access to services or support for services for BSL users in Aberdeenshire. The plan sets out actions that we are going to deliver during the period 2024-2030. The Plan supports the Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE) principles, which place the person at the centre of decisions that affect them, in accessing help and support when it is needed and to achieve the best outcomes based on a joined-up and consistent multi-agency approach at any stage of life. Here are the key outcomes with the actions in Section 4 that will help us achieve these:

1. Aberdeenshire Council will improve accessibility of its website for BSL users, providing information in an accessible format, consistently across the platform.
2. The [Getting It Right For Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with Deaf and Deafblind children and their families offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL.
3. Promoting Aberdeenshire Council as an employer of choice.
4. BSL users will have access to information and services with regard to Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing.
5. BSL users will have access to the cultural life of Aberdeenshire and will be encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Aberdeenshire.
6. BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Aberdeenshire.

SECTION 3: Where are we now?

Aberdeenshire Council has supported BSL users to be involved in all aspects of life. We have done this by:

- Ensuring that services can request BSL interpretation through our translation contract.
-

- Publishing a link to [Contact Scotland BSL](#) on our [website](#) which provides short contact designed to support initial access to services for BSL users who have internet access.
- Developed a Deaf Awareness Card and booklet to signpost BSL users to different services.
- Employed two full-time Communicators in the Education Sensory Support Service to support BSL users in schools, to promote the BSL skills of colleagues and to support parents who are BSL users in their interactions with nurseries and schools.
- [Deaf Action Scotland](#) is commissioned by the Health and Social Care Partnership to provide information and advice to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind, and to support access to equipment and support services. Information is provided in a range of formats and settings to maximise engagement with people who are deaf or have hearing impairments. This may include the sign-posting of people to other agencies including statutory and third sector organisations, and rehabilitation input for example training in relation to hearing aid use.
- The Elections Team have made information on the [Access to Elected Office Fund](#) available on the Council website.

SECTION 4: BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions

4.1 Aberdeenshire Council

We recognise that for BSL users BSL is their first language and it is a language of its own right with its own distinct grammar and syntax. We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the national plan:

To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.

We will:

1. Improve accessibility of the Aberdeenshire Council website for BSL users. We will publish BSL videos on services and key information.
 2. Continue to promote the use of Contact Scotland BSL, the BSL online interpreting video relay service to staff and local BSL users.
 3. Continue to promote the availability of BSL interpretation across the Council.
 4. Promote availability of Deaf awareness training on ALDO (Aberdeenshire Learning & Development Online) for Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership staff, and awareness training for frontline staff around use of Contact Scotland.
-

4.2 Children, Young People and their Families

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/ deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.

We will:

1. Where there are BSL users in the setting we will continue to provide Early Years staff with information about BSL and deaf culture and resources that are available in BSL.
2. Continue to deliver deaf awareness and basic signing to all staff i.e. teachers, nursery nurses/assistants, office staff, kitchen staff, visiting staff etc, prior to and during a BSL pupil being in the Early Years setting.
3. In settings where there are BSL users, we will continue to roll out BSL signage in nurseries e.g. in bathrooms and cloakrooms. We will facilitate the use of visual timetables using BSL signs.
4. Where appropriate, provide equipment to help the child access the curriculum.
5. At the time of referral we will continue to use the current induction programme to introduce families to the service. That includes: an initial call from a manager, visit from teacher of deaf children, sending a service leaflet or a BSL video and any information relevant to the child from other sources that might be helpful.
6. We will continue to offer regular visits to build up a relationship with parents/families, offer basic family signs and signed resources and offer deaf awareness to extended family, e.g. grandparents.
7. We will continue to promote deaf culture and to address social isolation by working with schools and nurseries and enabling families with deaf children to network.
8. Support parents who wish to access formal signing classes but cannot afford to, by collaborating with partner organisations.

4.3 Access to Employment

We share the long-term goal for access to employment set out in the BSL National Plan.

BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential and improve Aberdeenshire's economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.

We will:

1. Continue to support managers and staff to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
2. Continue to promote Aberdeenshire Council as an employer of choice through displaying our Disability Confident (Employer) logo and continuing to work towards achieving Disability Confident Leader Status.
3. Continue to signpost managers, staff and Elected Members who use BSL to the [Access to Work](#) scheme for information on support available to undertake their role.
4. Continue making full use of the information and support provided through Skills Development Scotland to assist pupils and students in their career choices through attendance and promotion at school and university career fairs.
5. Produce BSL videos on Aberdeenshire Developing the Young Workforce website.

4.4 Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan

BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.

We will:

1. Work with NHS Inform, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Live Life Aberdeenshire and local third sector and community groups to identify and promote a range of community healthy living opportunities to BSL users to reduce social isolation and to support individuals to live healthy independent lives (including healthy eating and healthy weight, active living and mental health and wellbeing).
2. Work with Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership to raise awareness of the availability of [Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People](#).

4.5 Celebrating BSL Culture

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan:

BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, equal opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with the people of Scotland.

We will:

1. Seek guidance from sector governing bodies regarding activity being supported and/or funded to support BSL users in other Local Authorities and services to Aberdeenshire.
2. Engage with the BSL community to understand how best to support inclusion and participation in Aberdeenshire cultural activities in conjunction with the Policy & Performance team.
3. Improve accessibility and raise awareness of BSL-supported events and programmes via Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) website & social media platforms.
4. Introduce BSL guidance to inform interpretation and customer experiences at the new Museum of Aberdeenshire (Peterhead).

4.6 Transport

We share the long-term goal for transport set out in the BSL National Plan

BSL users have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.

We will:

1. Follow guidance issued by Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework as much as is feasibly possible.
2. Seek to work with local transport operators to collaborate and identify practical solutions to make public travel more accessible for BSL users.
3. Promote existing services and support that can be accessed through THInC (Transport to Healthcare Information Centre for the NHS Grampian area) which provides advice on travelling to health and social care appointments, and also the Council's A2B service.

4.7 Democratic Participation

We share the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan

BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies.

We will:

1. Take opportunities to promote the Access to Elected Office Fund locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local, Scottish or UK Parliament elections.
2. Information on the Access to Elected Office Fund will be available on <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections> and highlighted within the nomination pack for any relevant election event.
3. Explore the use of BSL interpreters at Committee meetings.

SECTION 5: What happens next?

Aberdeenshire Council will continue to engage with the BSL community around implementing our actions. Progress will be reported through the Equality Outcomes mainstreaming progress reports.

Appendix 2: Aberdeenshire Draft BSL Plan 2024-2030

Feedback from Area Committees and ECS Committee and Chair and VC of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board

The Draft BSL Plan has been considered by all Area Committees during February and March 2024 and Education & Children's Services Committee on 21 March 2024 and from the Chair and Vice Chair of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|--|--|--|
| Garioch Area Committee 27 February 2024 | Feedback from engagement activity should be included to allow proper scrutiny of the plan and actions | Feedback from engagement activity has been shared with Members and is attached as an appendix to the Committee report. |
| | Query regarding data confirming the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire. | The census carried out in 2022 was the first census to ask a question around whether BSL was used in a household. When the census results are published we should have more clarity on the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire. This data is not currently available. |
| | The necessity of promoting Aberdeenshire as an employer of choice within the BSL plan was queried as this approach should apply equally to all. | There is desire to promote Aberdeenshire as an employer of choice to the BSL community to engage people from that community. |
| | Query around the governance route as the plan will go to all Area Committees as well as Education & Children's Services and the Integration Joint Board before Business Services for approval. | The monitoring officer for Education & Children's Services Committee has confirmed that due to the number of actions that fall within the remit of ECS and IJB it is appropriate for the Plan to be considered at these fora. Due to time constraints, it will not be possible to present the plan to IJB however feedback is being sought from the Chair and Vice Chair and will be included when received. |
| Buchan Area Committee 27 February 2024 | The commitment to explore BSL for Council and Committee meetings was welcomed. | There is a commitment to explore this option, however budgetary constraints as well as a shortage of BSL interpreters will dictate our response. This was not a priority identified by the BSL community. |
| Formartine Area Committee 5 March 2024 | The inclusion of "Can you use BSL" within the 2022 Census was welcomed. | Noted. |
| | It would be helpful to know if any changes were made to the proposed plan, following consultation and engagement. | Our plan was drafted based on the responses received. |
| | It would be useful to know who funds Deaf Action Scotland. | Deaf Action Scotland is a charity. |
| | It would be helpful to know if the responses received were representative of the cohort | The two main areas of feedback from engagement with BSL users were accessibility of information and health |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|----------------|--|--|
| | and if the responses differed from previous consultations. | and social care. Amendments were made to the plan to reflect feedback. |
| | It is vital that young people have support throughout their academic years, from staff across the board. | Hearing Support Staff provide support to identified individuals throughout a young person's time at school. Education staff work closely with multiagency staff and third sector partners as appropriate to provide holistic support to pupils who use BSL. |
| | The expansion of BSL being taught in primary schools was welcomed. | Noted. |
| | We should take forward the inclusion of BSL users being able to view our committee meetings | This option is being explored subject to budget and availability of BSL interpreters. This was not a priority identified through consultation with BSL users. |
| | It would be helpful to know if all consultations were held through Engage or if there were discussions with relevant user groups | Face to face consultation was carried out at the Aberdeen Deaf Club in January and February 2024, in addition to online engagement. |
| | It would be useful to have more information on how we are upskilling our current members of staff | <p>The Council has a Top Tips mini booklet with information to support staff working with anyone with a sensory loss or deafness. Physical copies are available through the Health and Social Care Partnership and Sensory Support Services. Digital copies are available via the ALDO course: Course: Sensory Impairment or Deafness (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)</p> <p>On ALDO, there are courses on Sensory Impairment or Deafness (Course: Sensory Impairment or Deafness (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)) and Hearing Support (Course: Sensory Support Services - Hearing Support (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)) which are accessible to all staff.</p> <p>BSL training was carried out for frontline staff at Service Points.</p> |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|---|---|---|
| | | <p>As part of this plan, awareness raising has increased with the engagement of Officers on the BSL National Plan and how our Local Plan can support. This will increase further when we make more information accessible to BSL users on our corporate website.</p> <p>In Education, school staff supporting BSL users work closely with Hearing Support Teachers/ BSL Communicator to upskill their own BSL/deaf awareness and skill set. All Aberdeenshire Education schools can access the Highland BSL resource and use this as training material.</p> |
| Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee 5 March 2024 | Promote links to community councils in reference to 'democratic life' | The plan will be shared with community councils and BSL users can be linked to community councils. |
| | Ensure BSL needs considered in recruitment processes. | A number of policies in place to support those with disabilities including Guaranteed Interview. Applicants are asked if they have a need for any Reasonable Adjustments to support them in attending interview. |
| | Aspiration that BSL will form part of all policies in future. | Noted. |
| | Raise awareness of the Plan via social media to the wider Aberdeenshire community. | The Plan when agreed will be published on the Council website and can be promoted through social media channels. |
| | Queried if BSL can be taught in mainstream schools and colleges as a qualification. | <p>SQA National Units - SQF Levels 3-6 in BSL are available through colleges and locally at NESCOL.</p> <p>There is national momentum to look at developing SQA courses for school pupils e.g. National 4/5 course This is still at the very early stages of development. There would be funding/staffing/ staff</p> |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|---|---|--|
| | | training implications were this to become an option locally in future. The Education Service has representation on various national fora and will continue to keep abreast of developments regarding any future rollout of BSL qualification availability in Scottish schools. |
| Banff & Buchan Area Committee 13 March 2024 | Welcome the report. | |
| Marr Area Committee 13 March 2024 | Welcomed the report. | |
| Education & Children's Service Committee 21 March 2024` | Query around the use of subtitles on Council videos. | Closed captions or subtitles are available on most Council videos including Committee meetings published on YouTube. |
| Feedback from Chair and Vice Chair of the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board | Section 1 – Introduction: In relation to the data currently provided by the 2011 census it highlights that there are 24 BSL users per 10,000 people within Scotland. Based on the number of residents in Aberdeenshire that equates to 630 (approx.) within Aberdeenshire. We would consider it helpful to see data relating to the BSL community within Aberdeenshire. | The Census carried out in 2022 was the first Census to ask the question around whether BSL is used in households. It is anticipated that data on the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire will be available when this is published. |
| | Section 2 – Short summary of the plan: We would propose the inclusion of an additional outcome relating to the Getting it Right For Everyone (GIRFE) Principles, aligned with the inclusion of GIRFEC. Aberdeenshire HSCP is a pathfinder in the development of this national approach and practice model. For example: 'The Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE) principles will also be supported, which place the person at the centre of decisions that affect them, in accessing help | Plan amended to include this suggestion at Section 2. |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|----------------|---|--|
| | and support when it is needed and to achieve the best outcomes based on a joined-up and consistent multi-agency approach at any stage of life.' | |
| | Section 3 – Where are we now? It is acknowledged that BSL interpretation has been included in the Council's Translation contract however it was noted by the SeeHear implementation group that it has not necessarily meant that people have access to a BSL interpreter when required. | Noted. There is a national shortage of BSL interpreters and work is ongoing with the Interpretation & Translation provider as well as Scottish Government to address this. |
| | <p>Section 3 – Where are we now? The current information under Deaf Action Scotland is incorrect. Please can this be updated to the following:</p> <p>'Deaf Action are commissioned by the Health and Social Care Partnership to provide information and advice to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind, and to support access to equipment and support services. Information is provided in a range of formats and settings to maximise engagement with people who are deaf or have hearing impairments. This may include the sign-posting of people to other agencies including statutory and third sector organisations, and rehabilitation input for example training in relation to hearing aid use.'</p> | Amended the Plan at Section 3 to reflect this feedback. |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|----------------|--|--|
| | Section 3 – Where are we now? We would suggest highlighting that the use of Contact Scotland BSL is an initial short contact designed to support the initial access to services. (It is important to remember that BSL users will only be able to use this service if they have appropriate technology, comfort with using technology and broadband coverage to allow access.) | Amended the Plan at Section 3 to reflect feedback. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – We would suggest adding that it is recognised that for BSL users BSL is their first language and it is a language of its own right with its own distinct grammar and syntax. BSL users’ first or preferred language is BSL, which is not written form therefore key information should be provided simultaneously in BSL and English. | Amended Section 4 to reflect feedback. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.1: We would request an additional action to include: ‘Work with the AHSCP when improving accessibility of the website for BSL users, specifically around the AHSCP pages that sit within the council’s website.’ | The Policy & Performance team within Customer & Digital Services will work with all Council Services to improve accessibility of the Council website for BSL users, including the Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership pages within the website. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.4.1 – We would request that this be removed as this is not within the Terms of Reference for the See Hear Group. The See Hear group is happy to consider actions which are within the remit of the group. | Plan amended to reflect this feedback. |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|----------------|--|---|
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.4.2: It was queried if this action relates to the HEAL (Health Eating Active Living) strand of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). If yes, it is suggested that further clarity and detail would be helpful as to what are the actions in relation to the BSL Community and how the impact of these actions will be measured. | Noted. The Policy & Performance team will work with Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership to develop actions and measures around this element. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – We would suggest it may be helpful to consider the inclusion of an additional action (similar to the NHSG Draft BSL Plan) in relation to raising awareness of the availability of Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People. | Plan amended to reflect feedback. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions 4.3 Is there scope to consider promoting access to Deaf awareness training on Aldo and also on Turas for Health & Social Care staff, as well as awareness training for frontline and admin staff around appropriate use of Contact Scotland BSL? | Plan amended to reflect feedback. |
| | Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions 4.6 Transport. We would suggest also highlighting that support can be accessed through THInC (Transport to Healthcare Information Centre for the NHS Grampian area) which provides advice on travelling to health and social care appointments, and also the Council's A2B service. | Plan amended to reflect feedback. |
| | Additional Action: Would there be scope to consider including an action around data | The Data & Analytics team within Customer & Digital Services are collaborating with NHS Grampian |

| Area Committee | Comment | Service response |
|----------------|--|---|
| | collection which would help to understand the access across Council and Health & Social Care Services? (Noting NHS Grampian have actions in their draft BSL Plan looking to collect and map data about BSL Users' service access, use of interpreters and appointments.) | analysts around data sharing. We will explore this proposal with them and work collaboratively to share data. |

Appendix 3 Draft Aberdeenshire BSL Plan 2024-2030

Feedback from engagement with BSL users

The engagement questions were developed to reflect the priorities within the National Plan directly to allow us to see how Aberdeenshire may be able to develop actions that will support the National Plan while addressing local needs.

Council Officers with expertise within the priority areas fed into the development of the questions. The following Services provided support in developing questions -

- Education and Children’s Services - Sensory Support Team and the DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) (Developing the Young Workforce) team
- Health and Social Care Partnership
- Live Life Aberdeenshire
- Environment & Infrastructure Services - Transport team
- Legal & People - HR
- Legal & People - Elections Team

Engagement was carried out online through the Engage Aberdeenshire platform and targeted through social media designed specifically for BSL users. In person engagement was carried out at Aberdeen Deaf Club which includes BSL users in Aberdeenshire. There were 12 BSL users participated in the online engagement and 30 BSL users at the meeting of the Deaf Club.

The questions and responses are set out below:

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| <p><u>BSL Accessibility</u></p> <p>What information would you like to see readily available in BSL on Aberdeenshire Council's website?</p> | <p>There were 12 responses online, alongside feedback that was noted at the in-person meetings. The areas that BSL users would like more accessible information were are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Housing • Waste and Recycling • Health and Social Care <p>1 response also stated “Emergency Arrangements for Flooding”</p> |
| <p>Are you aware of ContactScotland-BSL, Scottish Government's BSL video interpreting relay service?</p> | <p>5 online users are aware of this service, 7 online users are not. Everyone in attendance at meetings of the Deaf Club is aware of this service.</p> |
| <p><u>Children, Young People and Families</u></p> <p>Are there any areas within Children, Young People and Families that are a priority for you that you would like to see continue or put in place?</p> <p>Are there provisions in place already within Family Support that you would like to continue?</p> | <p>There were no responses to these questions.</p> |

| Question | Responses |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Health and Social Care</u></p> <p>Are there any aspects within the provisions of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing you would like to see continued, improved, or added within Aberdeenshire?</p> | <p>3 responses were received online, with feedback noted at the in-person meetings.</p> <p>The responses to this priority area were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear information on the website in BSL for how to contact various departments. • While equipment is supplied to the deaf community, there is a lack of social care services available in Aberdeenshire |
| <p><u>Celebrating BSL Culture</u></p> <p>Are there any specific areas in culture and the arts you would like to see Aberdeenshire Council support in terms of BSL accessibility?</p> | <p>There was 1 response to this priority area, which was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interpreters to classes through the council - Art groups and art projects. Any meditation/mindfulness sessions, things to help with mental health |
| <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>Do you feel you have safe, fair, and inclusive access to public transport?</p> | <p>There were 3 responses online and none noted from the in-person meetings. The feedback was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport in rural areas • Communication challenges, for example, if transport is delayed or cancelled |
| <p>There is a Bus Forum that takes place on a regular basis? Have you taken part before?</p> | <p>No participants take part in the bus forum</p> |
| <p><u>Access to Employment</u></p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council uses the myjobscotland website for recruitment. If applicable, please provide feedback on the accessibility of the site.</p> <p>If applicable, for deaf and deafblind young people, what support or information do you feel you need to help you develop your skills and to learn about transitioning into work?</p> <p>For those transitioning into work through schemes such as Developing Young Workforce, are there additional information or resources you would like to see in place?</p> | <p>No responses were received to these questions.</p> |

APPENDIX 4

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

BSL Local Plan

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Assessment ID | IIA-001816 |
| Lead Author | Kakuen Mo |
| Additional Authors | Jane Wilkinson |
| Service Reviewers | Fiona McCallum, Jane Wilkinson |
| Subject Matter Experts | Susan Forbes, Kakuen Mo, Caroline Hastings, Annette Johnston, Christine McLennan |
| Approved By | Kate Bond |
| Approved On | Thursday February 15, 2024 |
| Publication Date | Thursday February 15, 2024 |

1. Overview

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

Scottish Government published the BSL National Plan on 6 November 2023. The British Sign Language Act requires public bodies in Scotland to publish a local plan within 6 months of the publication of the National Plan. This IIA relates to the Aberdeenshire BSL Plan 2024-30 and has been developed collaboratively with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Health& Social Care Partnership. Consultation has taken place with the deaf community in Aberdeenshire via the Engage platform as well as face to face with Aberdeen Deaf Club. We have promoted the development of the local plan using SignVine a social media page specifically for the deaf community in Aberdeenshire, through Aberdeenshire See Hear strategy group and the Lived Experience Forum.

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:

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

In total there are 11 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 3 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by kate.bond@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

| | |
|--|---|
| UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy | Article 2 - Non-discrimination Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 4 - Protection of rights Article 6 - Life, survival and development Article 12 - Respect for the views of the child Article 23 - Children with disabilities Article 28 - Right to education Article 29 - Goals of education Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture |
|--|---|

4.3. Positive Impacts

| Impact Area | Impact |
|-------------|--|
| Achieving | The BSL Plan actions enables children who are deaf to achieve within Education by having mechanisms in place to ensure they are included |
| Healthy | The BSL Plan action encompasses the Health and Wellbeing of children |
| Included | The BSL Plan actions enables children who are deaf to achieve within Education by having mechanisms in place to ensure they are included |
| Nurtured | The BSL Plan allows children to grow and develop in an environment that develops their resilience and a positive identity. |
| Respected | The BSL Plan actions enables children who are deaf to be respected |

4.4. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|------|--------|----------|-----------|
|------|--------|----------|-----------|

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| Other Evidence | Scottish Government consultation and BDA research | Priorities developed to ensure children and young people who are deaf, are included, and accessibility issues overcome | Local Plan reflects these priorities enabling them to learn and be included, taking away barriers. |

4.5. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Working closely with the Sensory Support Team who are in daily contact with the children

4.6. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

The BSL Plan supports children and young people's health and wellbeing as a priority area and the actions reflect this

4.7. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

The BSL Plan will enable children to be included and their needs met, ensuring they have access to the support they require

4.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The BSL Plan has only positive outcomes for the deaf community

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 | | |
| 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 (Older) | The BSL plan will have positive impacts to Age (Older) as the actions look to ensure they have access to services mirroring the priorities nationally. |
| Age (Younger) | The BSL plan will have positive impacts to children and young people due to the actions that provides the support within education and transitioning into work |
| Disability | Our Local BSL Plan has a positive impact to everyone in the deaf community |
| Disability | The BSL Plan has positive impacts on BSL Users across Aberdeenshire as the actions covers the priorities stated in the National plan within a local context. |

5.4. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|------|--------|----------|-----------|
|------|--------|----------|-----------|

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| External Data | Scottish Government data | Meeting the priorities will ensure Scotland is the best place to live, visit and learn | Our Local Plan will meet the needs of the deaf community |

5.5. Engagement with affected groups

Internal and external Engagement has been carried out through Engage Aberdeenshire, as well as engaging the deaf community in person at the deaf club. The sensory support team have also been involved as they have front line experience of needs.

5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

The deaf community have been involved through the sensory support service, seehear group, the Deaf Club and through an online Engagement exercise.

5.7. Evidence of engagement

Engagement took place via Engage Aberdeenshire and was shared with the Lived Experience Forum. Findings have been documented and have fed into the development of our Local BSL Plan

5.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The BSL Plan provides positive outcomes to the deaf community

5.9. Improving Relations

Ongoing engagement and consultation is taking place to ensure the lifetime of the plan evolves as needs change

5.10. Opportunities of Equality

Learners and those transitioning into employment are one of the priorities alongside access to culture and arts.

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 |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Exercise and physical activity | Working with NHS Inform and the local third and community sectors to identify and promote the range of community opportunities available for physical activity to BSL users. We will also work with Live Life Aberdeenshire to support people who are deaf to be physically active |
| Mental health | Working locally to look at supporting the national BSL plan to tackle Social Isolation. |

6.3. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Internal Consultation | Services across Aberdeenshire and HSCP | What we can support BSL users on in the area of Health and Wellbeing | The actions reflect the national BSL plan at a local level |

6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

There are no negative impacts in the Local BSL Plan

7. Action Plan

| Planned Action | Details | |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Seek approval of our Local BSL Plan at the Committees | Lead Officer | Kakuen Mo |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Monday March 18, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Thursday May 30, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | Local BSL Plan approved |
| | Resource Implications | Staff time |
| Publish BSL Plan | Lead Officer | Kakuen Mo |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Monday May 06, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Monday May 06, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | Local BSL Plan Published |
| | Resource Implications | Staff time |
| Local BSL Plan translated into a BSL video and published | Lead Officer | Kakuen Mo |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Friday March 01, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Monday May 06, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | Local BSL Plan video published on Aberdeenshire Council website |
| | Resource Implications | Staff time |

REPORT TO BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024

REVIEW OF COMMON GOOD POLICY COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 - CREATION OF COMMON GOOD REGISTER

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

- 1.1 Aberdeenshire Councillors act as “Custodians” of the Common Good Funds in Aberdeenshire, which is like their role as “Trustees” in respect of the Trusts administered by the Council.
 - 1.1.1 There are 17 Common Good Funds covering different parts of Aberdeenshire. There is no Common Good Fund that covers Aberdeenshire as a whole.
 - 1.1.2 The Common Good Funds are administered by the relevant Area Committee in terms of Section B2 of [Part 2A](#)¹ of the Scheme of Governance – List of Committee Powers.
 - 1.1.3 All Policy decisions relating to Common Good sit with the Business Services Committee in terms of Section C2.6 of Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance.
 - 1.1.4 [Part 4B](#)² of the Council’s Scheme of Governance – Policy Development and Review Framework establishes a process for the review of Council Policies once they have been established [Section 3.6].
 - 1.1.5 A review of the Council’s [Common Good Policy](#)³ fell due to be undertaken in 2023, as identified by this Committee’s list of policies for review. This review will be conducted in compliance with the requirements of Part 4B of the Scheme of Governance.
 - 1.1.6 An Internal Audit report of Trusts and Common Good has also been published in 2023 seeking to build and improve on the good practice established under the current Common Good Policy.
 - 1.1.7 The Council also has a legal duty under [Section 102](#)⁴ of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (“2015 Act”) to publish a Register of Common Good Property and Assets. Work to establish this Register has been undertaken alongside the review of the Common Good Policy.

¹ <http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/c8044f6f-e327-499f-bbc7-94ae9d699559/resource/13a6ffc6-dda1-4410-b43f-9d053688b4a0/download/list-of-committee-powers.pdf>

² <http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/c8044f6f-e327-499f-bbc7-94ae9d699559/resource/0118bb67-2c5e-4725-bde9-683f1b393060/download/policy-development-and-review-framework.pdf>

³ <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/22530/common-good-policy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/part/8/crossheading/registers/enacted>

1.1.8 This report seeks to inform the Committee of the outcome of the review of the Common Good Policy and public consultation on the creation of the Common Good Asset Register.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.2.1 Agree that no changes are required to the terms of the current Common Good Policy;**
- 1.2.2 Acknowledge the creation of a new Common Good landing page on the Council's website and the proposed use of social media to highlight the location of the webpage and the availability of common good funds;**
- 1.2.3 Endorse that officers report to the relevant Area Committees on an annual basis on the Asset Register, Common Good financial information and applications made and the benefit arising from those applications;**
- 1.2.4 Endorse the online publication of the Common Good Asset Register and acknowledge that information on how to access the Register will be circulated to Service Points and Libraries. Paper copies will also be available on request; and**
- 1.2.5 Acknowledge that the Common Good Asset Register will identify the type of asset registered.**

2 Decision Making Route

- 2.1 An initial report seeking approval to conduct the review of the Common Good Policy and to seek the public's views on the creation of a Common Good Asset Register was considered by this Committee at the meeting on [20th April 2023](#)⁵.
- 2.2. The Policy review followed the process set out in the Policy Development and Review Framework in [Part 4B](#) of the Scheme of Governance.
- 2.3 Area Committees were consulted as part of the engagement process on the review.
- 2.4 This report seeks to finalise the review process.

⁵ <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=7534&Ver=4> [item 9]

3 Discussion

Common Good Policy

- 3.1 The last review of the Common Good Policy was approved by this Committee in 2017. It has now been reviewed and it is acknowledged that the review has taken longer than anticipated to complete.
- 3.2 Internal Audit conducted a review of Trusts and Common Good Funds for the Year 2022-23. A final report was published on 28th February 2023, and presented to the Audit Committee on 22nd March 2023 ([Item 6 – Appendix F⁶](#)). The Chief Internal Auditor advised that the report provided a positive outcome and that substantial assurance had been provided over what was classed as a minor risk area. The report identified 2 recommendations, 1 of which related to the Common Good Policy as follows:
- Legal and People to arrange for the Common Good Fund Policy to be reviewed as a matter of best practice.
- 3.3 The review also considered enhancing publicity about Common Good Funds and the application process to raise awareness of the availability of the Funds at community level.
- 3.4 The current Common Good Policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this Report. The procedural documents that support the policy have not been attached to this report as they were attached, for information purposes only, to the reports circulated to the Area Committees and links to those reports have been embedded within this report.

Register of Common Good Property and Assets

Overview

- 3.5 [Part 8⁷](#) of the 2015 Act aims to "increase transparency about Common Good assets and community involvement in decisions taken about their identification, use and disposal".
- 3.6 [Section 102⁸](#) of the 2015 Act places a duty on the Council to establish and maintain, after consultation, a register of property which is held by it as part of the Common Good.
- 3.7 [Section 104⁹](#) of the 2015 Act imposes the requirement for public consultation before the disposal or change of use of a Common Good property.

⁶ [Meeting of Audit Committee on Wednesday, 22nd March, 2023 - Aberdeenshire Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/part/8/enacted>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/part/8/crossheading/registers/enacted>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/section/104/enacted>

- 3.8 [Statutory Guidance](#)¹⁰ published by the Scottish Government sets out the procedure for establishing the Register, and for subsequent consultations on the use or disposal of common good land and places duties on the Council in relation to the creation of the Common Good property.

Engagement Exercise

Committee Consultation

- 3.9 The Area Committees were consulted as part of the consultation process as follows:

Banff and Buchan – [13th June 2023](#)¹¹

Marr – [13th June 2023](#)¹²

Buchan – [20th June 2023](#)¹³

Garioch – [20th June 2023](#)¹⁴

Formartine – [27th June 2023](#)¹⁵

Kincardine & Mearns – [27th June 2023](#)¹⁶

As a result of the lack of awareness of what Common Good is, the reports to Area Committee included a summary of background information for Members on Common Good, which formed Appendix 1 to the Area Committee Reports. Links to the Committee Reports have been included above, so the information is not reproduced with this Report.

- 3.10 The responses of the Area Committee are attached as **Appendix 2** to this Report. The following themes emerged from the responses:

- Members, in the main, were happy with the terms of the Common Good Policy in its current format;
- The need for greater transparency and clearer information on Common Good;
- The proposal for better reporting on Common Good to include assets, financial information and feedback;
- The Register of Assets to include reference to the type of asset held;
- An assumption that all historical assets, such as regalia, artwork, cannons, held by the Council are Common Good assets;

¹⁰ [https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-common-good-property-guidance-local-authorities/#:~:text=is%20common%20good,-Community%20Empowerment%20\(Scotland\)%20Act%202015,their%20identification%2C%20use%20and%20disposal.](https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-common-good-property-guidance-local-authorities/#:~:text=is%20common%20good,-Community%20Empowerment%20(Scotland)%20Act%202015,their%20identification%2C%20use%20and%20disposal.)

¹¹ <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=283&Ver=4> [item 10]

¹² <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=296&Ver=4> [item 7]

¹³

<https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?MID=3683&F=Meeting%24SubIndex%24embed%24%201.htm&DF=20%2f06%2f2023&A=1&R=0> [Item 6]

¹⁴ <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=150&MId=290&Ver=4> [Item 7]

¹⁵ <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=147&MId=289&Ver=4> [Item 7]

¹⁶ <https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=145&MId=293&Ver=4> [item 6]

- The need for further information for Members on what Common Good is and their role in relation to Common Good, to aid their understanding so that they can engage in a more informed way with their local communities.

Public Consultation

- 3.11 Officers used the engage platform to engage with members of the Public and with Community Councils and other community organisations identified by the Area Manager's Teams across the Council. Seven responses were made in relation to the public consultation. An extract from the Engage Platform outlining the responses made forms **Appendix 3** to this report. The Appendix is fronted by a table summarizing the responses made. This table also includes questions lodged by an individual Councillor as part of the process. The following themes emerged from the responses made:
- Respondee supported the terms of the current Common Good Policy;
 - The need for greater transparency and clearer information on Common Good;
 - Respondee supported the format of the current application pack;
 - The need for better information on who can apply, how to apply and what funds were available to apply for;

Note: The dates of the public consultation exercise shown in **Appendix 3** are incorrect. The engagement exercise ran from 1st July until 3rd October 2023. The page was visited 371 times during that period but only 7 visitors lodged responses to the consultation.

Outcomes

Review of the Common Good Policy

- 3.12 Having reviewed the responses made in relation to the review of the current Common Good Policy, Officers are making the following recommendations to this Committee:
1. No changes are required to the terms of the current Common Good Policy;
 2. No changes are required in respect of the Officer or Committee Powers set out in the Scheme of Governance;
 3. Officers will create a new Common Good landing page on the Council's website with appropriate links to the Common Good Asset Register, the Policy and information about what Common Good is and to the Area Pages on how to make a Common Good application and relevant financial information;
 4. Officers will report to the relevant Area Committees on an annual basis with information on additions/deletions to the Asset Register, financial information in respect of income and expenditure and a note of what applications have been made, reasons for any that have been rejected, amounts awarded and the benefit to the good of the community that those applications have made.

Creation of the Common Good Asset Register

- 3.13 Having reviewed the responses made in relation to the creation of the Common Good Asset Register, Officers are making the following recommendations to this Committee:
1. Officers will publish a Common Good Asset Register which will be found on the Council's website, either on the Common Good landing page or accessible via a link from that page to a specific Asset Register Page. It is hoped to have this live by the end of April 2024.
 2. Information on how to access the page will be given to all Service Points, and Libraries and paper copies will be made available, free of charge, in line with the Council's Publication Scheme, on request.
 3. The Asset Register will identify the type of asset i.e. land, art, buildings etc.
- 3.14 The Common Good Asset Register is a living document and shall change over time, as further research identifies other property, land, or assets the Council considers to be Common Good, or if an asset is determined by a Court to be Common Good. The Council may also remove an asset from the Register if it is no longer considered to be Common Good. The web pages will be updated to reflect any changes made to the Asset Register so that the web page reflects the current position.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 *The following Council Priorities are relevant to this report.*

| Pillar | Priority |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Our Environment | Resilient Communities |
| Our Economy | Infrastructure and public assets |

- 4.2 The publication of the Register of Common Good Property and Assets is a statutory requirement under the 2015 Act.
- 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 review has identified that the existing procedures in place for appropriate and prudent use of Common Good Funds and Assets within Aberdeenshire are appropriate. However, it also identified that there was a need to be more transparent about the processes that exist both within the Council and in relation to the communities where Common Good Funds exist.

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, nor have any of the responses made to the consultation. Therefore, an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this matter.

4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level, as set out in the [Corporate Risk Register](#).

:

- ACRPOO2 Changes in Government Policy, legislation and Regulation – compliance with the 2015 Act requirements
- ACRP004 - Business and Organisational Transformation – ensuring that the Common Good Policy remains fit for purpose
- ACORP006 – Reputation Management – increasing public knowledge of what Common Good, awareness of what Common Good Funds can be used for, what Common Good Assets the Council holds and how they can be utilised or disposed of

4.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level [Business Services Directorate Risk Register](#)

- BSSR003 – We live within our means and use public money to maximise outcomes for our communities – ensuring proper administration of Common Good Funds
- BSSR004 – Our assets, property and land are managed to the best financial effect, supporting delivery of our priorities and services ambitions in the medium to long term – compliance with our duties under the 2015 Act and raising public awareness of what Common Good Assets are, how they are managed, how they can be used and how they can be disposed of.
- BSSR005 – One Aberdeenshire – creating a landing page for the public that links to all Council Services involved in processing applications for Common Good to highlight public awareness and simplify the process for people/groups needing to access Common Good Funds
- BSSR006 – Staff working close to the communities they serve – ensuring the Policy and processes assist Area Committees making informed, evidence based decisions in relation to Common Good matters under their Scheme of Governance Powers and to establish a more coherent and transparent process of providing feedback in relation to the Policy.

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 C2.6 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance which enables the Business Services Committee to approve policies for the management of common good funds under the control of the Council.

Rob Simpson

Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Fiona Stewart, Senior Solicitor (Governance)
14th March 2024

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current Common Good Policy
Appendix 2 – Area Committee Responses
Appendix 3 - Public responses

APPENDIX 1



Aberdeenshire Council

Common Good Fund Policy

What are Common Good Funds?

Common Good Funds are generally made up of property (including land, buildings, investments and movable items) that belonged to the previous burghs of Scotland.

The responsibility for administering these funds now rests with the local authorities throughout Scotland. Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for administering 17 Common Good Funds, the details of which are listed below:

| AREA COMMITTEE | NAME OF COMMON GOOD FUND AND AREA COVERED | APPLICABLE COUNCIL WARD |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| BANFF AND BUCHAN | Aberchirder | 1 |
| | Banff | 1 |
| | Fraserburgh | 3 |
| | Macduff | 2 |
| | Portsoy | 1 |
| | Rosehearty | 2 |
| BUCHAN | Peterhead | 5/6 |
| FORMARTINE | Oldmeldrum | 8 |
| | Turriff | 7 |
| GARIOCH | Inverurie | 11 |
| | Kintore | 12 |
| KINCARDINE AND MEARNS | Inverbervie | 19 |
| | Laurencekirk | 19 |
| | Stonehaven | 18 |
| MARR | Ballater | 15 |
| | Banchory | 16 |
| | Huntly | 14 |

These Common Good Funds, although, held by the Council are legally distinct from the Council's other funds, and any money held within these Funds, including the income from any assets which make up these Funds, are to be used solely for the overall benefit of the people who reside in the area covered by the applicable Fund.

The Council, however, does retain discretion in terms of how these funds and their income is used and, for example, may decide to acquire land for public use (e.g. formation of a public park) or maintain a publicly owned building (e.g. maintaining the local town hall) using the funds where the action taken is deemed to be for the overall benefit of the local community.

Further to this the Council also considers applications for funding in respect of each of the aforementioned Common Good Funds, from individuals or organisations who live or operate in the area covered by the specific Fund and who provide services which are aimed at benefiting their community.

The 17 Funds listed in the table above vary in size and as a result what can be achieved in each area using these funds will differ as will the opportunity for individuals or organisations to secure funding.

The Council has therefore developed the following policy and procedures when it comes to administering these Funds.

What can Common Good Funds be used for?

The actual use of Common Good funds has been determined by the Courts over the years, and local authorities have a very wide discretion as to how the funds are distributed, provided that local authorities honestly exercise their discretion and that the use of common good funds is not contrary to policy¹ or for unlawful purposes².

The Courts have decided that Common Good monies may be used for the following:-

a) **“Upholding the dignity of the Burgh”**

This involves matters relating to civic ceremonies and related hospitality for appropriate officials and guests, such as town twinning events.

b) **The prudent management, upkeep and improvement of common good fund property, whether such property is used by the general public or held for investment purposes**

This relates to the management and maintenance of Common Good land and buildings for public use

c) **Safeguarding the corporate rights of the community and defending its interests**

This could be used to develop or promote a coat of arms or civic identity.

d) **Granting donations to public institutions or charities**

Such donations must be granted to benefit the interests of the general public of the relevant area.

¹ Test set out in *Graham v Glasgow Corporation* (1936)(SLT) 145

² *Kemp v Glasgow Corporation* (1920)SC(HL) 73

- e) **Any other purpose which in the bona fide and reasonable judgement of the council, is for the good of the community as a whole, as opposed for the interest and benefit of any particular group or individual.**

The Courts have stated that they will “*only interfere with Local Authorities discretion if its acting’s are shown to be (1) ultra vires³, (2) illegal, (3) contrary to public policy, (4) contrary to the general interests and welfare of the community as a whole, (5) not within their proper discretion (6) not an honest exercise of their discretion (7) vitiated⁴ by abuse or malversation⁵”.*

Aberdeenshire Council has determined that Festive Light Displays and Town Twinning fall into this category.

Festive Light Displays

The following eligibility criteria apply to applications for Festive Light Displays:-

1. Groups can apply for new lights only. Repair, maintenance, installation and storage costs will not be supported,
2. Groups can source 50% of the total cost of the purchase of new lights from this fund to a maximum of £1,500,
3. Groups can only access this fund once every three years,
4. Support will only be given for displays which use energy efficient technology and focus on town centres or the main village thoroughfares

LOCAL VARIATION – This criteria does NOT apply within the Buchan Area of Aberdeenshire

Town Twinning

Applications for funding may be acceptable for contributions towards the establishment of new Town Twinning Schemes where evidence is shown

³ ultra vires – beyond the powers

⁴ vitiated - invalidate

⁵ malversation – corruption

that there will be benefits to the whole community. This may include travel expenses for an initial visit only.

Funds distributed from the Common Good will be recovered from the applicant if not used as applied for.

What can't Common Good Funds be used for?

Common Good Funds **cannot** be used for –

- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs
- Travel costs for exchange visits or trips unless it can clearly be demonstrated that there is a benefit to the wider community.
- Administrative costs for community councils over and above their annual grant from Aberdeenshire Council
- Applications to cover an organisation's running costs or capital investments
- Applications for projects which another organisation has a legal right or duty to provide
- Projects that do not benefit the wider community
- Applications from individuals or organisations that do not live or operate within the area covered by the particular Common Good Fund
- Organisations seeking to make a profit using Common Good Funding where those profits are not reinvested back into the project.

Who makes decisions about distributing Aberdeenshire's Common Good Funds?

Aberdeenshire Council's Scheme of Governance sets out the powers available to Committees and Officers in relation to Common Good Funds within Aberdeenshire.

The power to approve policy

Section C of Part 2A– List of Committee Powers Section 2.6 gives power to the **Business Services Committee** to approve policies for the management and investment of any funds including the common good.

The power to administer Common Good Funds

Section B of Part 2A – List of Committee Powers Section 2.1 gives **Area Committees** authority to administer Common Good Funds and trusts controlled by the Council for the benefit of their Area.

All Area Committees have been consulted on this policy and have agreed to administer the Common Good Funds for their Area in accordance with this Policy.

Practicalities

Part 2A – List of Committee Powers – General Provisions Section 7 permits an Area Committee to delegate to an Officer any of the functions which have been delegated to the Committee.

Section 8 allows a Committee to delegate to Sub-Committees.

Part 2B – List of Officer Powers – Section D Business Services

Section 1.4 gives Area Managers authorisation to process applications in terms of the Council's Common Good Fund Procedures, as follows:

- 1.4 process applications for financial assistance requests from the Council's common good funds in terms of the Council's common good procedures; and to
 - a. Determine the competency of applications in terms of the Council's Common Good Policy, following consultation with the Head of Finance and Head of Legal and Governance; and
 - b. Approve awards of financial assistance from common good funds, following consultation with the relevant Ward Members, where there is majority agreement:
 - (i) that an awards can be made; and
 - (ii) as to the amount of money that is to be awarded;failing which the matter is to be referred to the relevant Area Committee for determination.

In terms of the Financial Regulations, Section 4.10.1 states that the Council shall make the necessary arrangements for the proper administration of each Trust Fund in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Trust or other deed.

Capital Expenditure

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to keep the scale of their capital investment under review.

The Finance Service must be consulted on the implications when appraising any request which has or may have a capital implication.

Payments from Revenue

Payments made from any particular Common Good Fund in any one year should not exceed the level of income it is anticipated will be generated in that year. This is a prudent view which seeks to ensure the ongoing viability of the Fund.

There are, however, times when Members may wish to make a payment of a level greater than the income generated in that year. In order to allow for this any unspent revenue income from previous years can also be considered available to spend.

| | |
|---|---|
| Policy Status (circle as appropriate) | <i>Approved and Finalised</i> |
| Responsible Officer | <i>Fiona M. Stewart Senior Solicitor (Democratic Services) Governance Team Legal and Governance Business Services</i> |
| Policy Sponsor | <i>Director of Business Services</i> |
| Authorised by | <i>Business Services Committee</i> |
| Approval Date | <i>20th April 2017</i> |
| Review Date | <i>April 2019</i> |

Appendix 2 – Area Committee Responses

| Committee | Comments | Officer Response | Comments or Changes to Policy |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| Banff & Buchan | <p>Commend officers on the report and work to support review of the Common Good Policy; and</p> <p>Comments to Business Services Committee as undernoted:</p> <p>1. Request greater level of detail and information on income and expenditure and what is available to spend.</p> <p>2. Propose annual report for Members' consideration of outcome of applications.</p> | <p>Noted</p> <p>1. Partially Agreed.</p> <p>2. Agreed. The Council needs to be more transparent in what funds are contained within Common Good Funds and on how many applications have been received and processed and the benefits arising from those applications.</p> | <p>N/A</p> <p>1. The Policy is clear on what is available to spend – no change recommended to policy - financial information within the Policy will be updated annually</p> <p>1. More financial Information will be included in the new Annual report to Area Committees (see No 2 below)</p> <p>1. Financial information will be provided on the new landing page on the website (see No 2 below)</p> <p>2. New format of annual report on each individual Common Good Fund to be presented to Area Committees for comment and consideration rather than circulated as a briefing paper enabling Members to see what income/expenditure is available for each fund and reporting back on the number of applications received – reasons for any rejected applications, amounts awarded and the</p> |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| | <p>3. Encourage greater publicity of funds available and how the funds can be accessed.</p> <p>4. Register of Assets should be listed by types (e.g., property/ land/ art etc.)</p> <p>5. Where possible assets should be kept/ returned to their own area. (e.g.,</p> | <p>3. Agreed and this was recommended by Audit as the reason for the review of Policy</p> <p>4. Accepted. Register of Assets per Common Good Burgh shall be listed by types as suggested.</p> <p>5. Members have assumed that these items are Common Good assets.</p> | <p>benefit arising to the Community to help raise the profile and to show transparency in the decision-making process</p> <p>3. A new Common Good landing page is being created for the Council website which will provide information on what Common Good is for, how to apply and what funds are available. It will have links to the Asset Register and the existing pages for each Area Committee on how to apply for Common Good funding. It will also have links to financial information.</p> <p>3. Once the page is live, we will liaise with comms to run an article on Common Good in the press and on social media</p> <p>3. Members also have a role to play in raising the profile of the existence of Common Good funds that exist within their areas.</p> <p>4. This does not impact on the terms of the Common Good policy.</p> <p>5. Some of the assets referred to by Members may not be Common Good assets but assets belonging directly to the</p> |

| Committee | Comments | Officer Response | Comments or Changes to Policy |
|------------------|---|--|---|
| | Deskford carnynx/ cannon).jack | Officers have found no information to date that they are Common Good assets | Council. Work will be done on a priority basis, as resources permit, to establish whether such items are Common Good or Council assets, as well as researching the terms of any agreements for the loan of these assets to outside bodies. |
| Marr | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern that some assets on the asset register seemed to be undervalued 2. Concern that no assets in Marr were listed on the asset register. 3. Recommended that the regularity in which the register would be updated be quantified rather than “updated periodically”. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. Specification from those concerned is needed to know which assets are thought to be undervalued. 2. Not all of the Common Good funds have identified or confirmed physical assets, some, such as Marr, only have monetary capital and revenue available. 3. While further items will be added if it is found that they tick all the boxes for Common Good there is no means of predicting when such putative items will appear. Further entries will be added when the question is raised of whether a given area of land or property may be Common Good and | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any work required in relation to valuation of assets is a procedural matter and does not impact on the terms of the Policy. 2. This does not impact on the terms of the Common Good Policy. 3. This does not impact on the terms of the Common Good Policy. As indicated in the officer comments, the Common Good Register will be updated when assets are identified that meet all of the Common Good criteria. |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <p>4. Suggested further clarification was required on the Common Good Fund criteria e.g. who could apply.</p> | <p>investigation undertaken concludes that all the relevant criteria for Common Good delineation have been satisfied.</p> <p>4. The criteria in the Policy are clear. Further work is to be done around raising the profile, the applicant pack online</p> | <p>4. A new Common Good landing page is being created for the Council website which will provide information on what Common Good is for, how to apply and what funds are available. It will have links to the Asset Register and the existing pages for each Area Committee on how to apply for Common Good funding. It will also have links to financial information.</p> <p>4. Once the page is live, we will liaise with comms to run an article on Common Good in the press and on social media</p> <p>4. Members also have a role to play in raising the profile of the existence of Common Good funds that exist within their areas.</p> |
| Garioch | <p>Committee suggested that the wording be changed regarding the action to be taken by the Area Manager following a decision by the</p> | Noted | <p>The Flowchart will be corrected in the Officer's Procedural Information Pack.</p> <p>This does not impact the terms of the Common Good Policy itself.</p> |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Ward Members Ref. Flowchart on Page 71. | | |
| Buchan | <p>Further agreed to request</p> <p>(1) that when Peterhead Common Good Fund applications come forward to Peterhead Members for consideration, that a note of the current interest rate be included along with the income generated and current balance, and</p> <p>(2) to request that Buchan's Funding Page on the Council's Website be updated and publicised</p> | <p>The provisions within the Scheme of Governance apply.</p> <p>1. Finance and Legal Officers are consulted on every application made and Finance Officers provide financial information for every application made so this information is already provided prior to an Area Manager liaising with Local Members before deciding if an application should be granted and how much should be awarded.</p> <p>2. Agreed</p> | <p>1. No changes are required to the Scheme of Governance Powers, the relevant procedures are already in place and implemented by Officers.</p> <p>2. This will be done as part of the creation of the new website landing page designed to raise public awareness – links will be included to the appropriate Area Funding Pages. The financial information will be updated bi-annually.</p> <p>2. Once the web page is fully functional, comms will run an article on social media highlighting the Common Good funds, who can apply and what funds can be used for.</p> |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| | (3) Agreed to advise Business Services Committee that the Buchan Area Committee welcomes and accepts the terms of the current Common Good Policy and has no further comments or recommendations. | 3. Noted | 2. Members also have a role to play in highlighting awareness of Common Good within their areas. 3. Not applicable |
| Formartine | (i) The proposed regular reporting to Area Committees was welcomed (ii) The funds need to be promoted more widely | 1. Noted 2. Agreed this was recommended by Audit as the reason for the review of Policy | 1. New format of annual report on each individual Common Good Fund to be presented to Area Committees for comment and consideration rather than circulated as a briefing paper enabling Members to see what income/expenditure is available for each fund and reporting back on the number of applications received – reasons for any rejected applications, amounts awarded and the benefit arising to the Community to help raise the profile and to show transparency in the decision-making process 2. A new Common Good landing page is being created for the Council website which will provide information on what common good is for, how to apply and |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| | | | <p>what funds are available. It will have links to the Asset Register and the existing pages for each Area Committee on how to apply for common good funding. It will also have links to financial information.</p> <p>2. Once the page is live, we will liaise with comms to run an article on Common Good in the press and on social media</p> <p>3. Members also have a role to play in raising the profile of the existence of Common Good funds that exist within their areas.</p> |
| Kincardine & Mearns | <p>1. Paper copies of the Register should be made available from all Service Points across Aberdeenshire.</p> | <p>1. Noted.</p> <p>The Council is moving away from paper copies being available however all service points and local libraries will be made aware of the Policy and the application forms and where they are located on the website and paper copies will be printed upon request free of charge – a provision already contained with the Council’s Publication Scheme.</p> | <p>1. No changes required to the Policy.</p> <p>1. All service points and local libraries will be made aware of the Policy and the application forms and where they are located on the website and paper copies will be printed upon request free of charge</p> |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| | <p>2. Clarity is required around financial procedures for communities claiming funds specifically if copies of receipts are required prior to payments being made</p> <p>3. Noted that area Committee could recommend local variations to Business Services Committee in respect of the handling of financial applications for Common Good Funds within their area of Aberdeenshire</p> | <p>2. No change is being made to the practices already in place to ensure proper financial management of the Common Good funds. This is standard practice through the Financial rules around awarding money to outside bodies/persons. Money is awarded retrospectively upon evidence being produced by the applicant that payments have been made.</p> <p>3. Noted. However, variations relate to the criteria that can be applied under the Policy. The handling or processing of applications is set out within the Scheme of Governance across all 6 areas.</p> <p>4. Noted that the status of this piece of land needs</p> | <p>2. No changes required to the Council's financial procedures.</p> <p>3. No changes to the powers in the Scheme of Governance required and no specific recommendations made by the Committee relating to a local variation of the criteria set out in the Common Good Policy.</p> <p>4. Work will be done in relation to this land by the Conveyancing Team as work</p> |

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | 4. Requested that Legal Officers confirm the Council position on common good ownership in response to a query raised regarding Memorial Park, Laurencekirk | to be investigated further | priorities and resources permit. If established as a common good asset it will be added to the Common Good Asset Register. Indications are that it is Common Good. |

Appendix 3 - Public Responses

Full summary of responses attached

1. 2 Members of the public
2. 2 Community Councils
3. 2 Community Organisations
4. 1 representative of a Council Service

7 responses in total

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you support the Council's position in respect of the policy? | 100% of 6 replies - yes | Noted | Not Applicable |
| Do you think a landing page is a good idea | 100% of 5 replies - yes | Officers recognised the need for a landing page with links to specific areas of common good | The web page is in progress The creation of the web page does not impact on the Policy |
| Do you have suggestions on raising profile and awareness of common good | 80% of 4 replies – Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure it is available on the Council website and easily searchable • Use of social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers recognised the need for a landing page with links to specific areas of common good • Social media will be used to publish an article once the website is live | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The web page is in progress. The creation of the web page does not impact on the Policy • Social Media will be used to publicise the common good once the website is live. |

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|--|--|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing more information in the particular locality and • be more transparent about our strategy • Something local like the STP fund finder would be helpful • Once a quarter list of funds distributed to local groups <p>20% of 4 replies - no</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landing page will have links to the funding pages for the Six Areas • There are rules governing how common good funds are managed. The landing page hopes to include more information relating to management of funds where it is possible to do so • STP has not been defined by the respondent, but officers believe it is the Scottish Town Partnership Fund. • This information will be included in the annual/bi-annual report to Area Committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The web page is being created and by reporting to the Area Committees on the number of applications made, amounts awarded and benefit to the community will put more information into the public domain locally. • It is hoped to provide basic information on the landing page about how common good funds are maintained in relation to financial management. This does not impact on the policy. • There are rules around how common good funds are to be maintained. The Council complies with these rules in how it manages such funds. • This will be included in the annual/bi-annual report to Area Committees |
| Are you able to provide evidence of why this would work? | 25% of 4 replies – yes | | The Council complies with the guidance and rules relating to the management of common good funds therefore no impact on the policy |

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|---|---|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of managing funds and programmes <p>75% of 4 replies - no</p> | <p>The respondent indicated they held experience but provided no actual evidence.</p> <p>There are rules relating to the management of common good funds with which the Council must comply</p> | |
| Could the Applicant Pack be improved? | 100% of 5 replies – no | Noted | Officers will always endeavour to keep the Applicant Pack up to date, understandable and relevant to the current Common Good Policy |
| Do you have a view on the level of funding available? | <p>20% of 5 replies – yes</p> <p>A more strategic approach</p> <p>The amount of funding is paltry because management is paltry</p> <p>Attempts should be made to invest leading to more substantial and long-term revenue payments into the common good fund which could be bolstered to deal</p> | <p>There are guidelines and rules around the management of Common Good Funds with which the Council complies. Common Good Funds must be kept separate from other Council funds.</p> <p>Some of the Common Good Funds do hold very limited amount of money but the Council is limited what it can do to increase those amounts. Once all funds have been expended those Common Good Funds will cease to exist</p> | The Council complies with the Guidance and rules relating to the management of Common Good Funds |

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|---|--|---|--|
| | more comprehensively with local issues 80% of 5 replies - no | | |
| Are there assets not on the list that you believe to be Common Good Assets? | 16.7% of 6 replies – yes Aboyne Green 83.3% of replies - no | Officers have established that Aboyne Green is NOT common Good | Not applicable |
| Are there assets on the list that you believe are NOT Common Good Assets? | 100% of 6 replies – No | Noted | Not applicable |
| Any other comments | 16.7% of 6 replies - yes Having the register is good but it is limited by the scope of this project. There should be a “public good” register that covers both these closely defined items, but also all public lands/buildings, as well as land/buildings held in trust or for public use. This is outside | Noted. The legal requirement is to have a specific asset register for common good assets | The Council is complying with legal requirements to have a Common Good Asset Register. |

| <u>Question</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | the remit of this exercise but would add more value to a future exercises 83.3% of 6 replies - no | | |

Comments made by an Individual Councillor

| <u>Councillor Comment</u> | <u>Officer Response</u> | <u>Comments or Changes to Policy</u> |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Some clarity regarding the use. For example, relocation or removal of CG artefacts would imply a change of use by some, word on the street Banff Silver etc going to PD centre. This should not happen. | <p>Any relocation or removal of artefacts that are established as common good artefacts would require approval and the relevant Area Committees would be consulted (less than 12 months) or asked to give approval (more than 12 months). There would need to be an agreement in place between the Council and the person or body seeking the artefact on loan regarding the loan and upkeep of the artefact.</p> <p>There has been an assumption by Members that all artefacts held by the Council are common good assets, this is not the case, some are</p> | <p>This does not impact on the Common Good Policy.</p> <p>Committee Power B2.2 governs the sale or lease of any common good asset of more than 12 months requiring Committee consent.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>2. A principle of historic gifts to a town should remain and be taken back if they have been on loan.</p> <p>3. Oppose any request to centralise CG artefacts</p> <p>4. Clarity on assets. Land, Buildings, Art, Artefacts, Liquid assets, Cash value and asset values.</p> | <p>artefacts that are owned directly by the Council.</p> <p>Not all historic gifts to a town will be common good assets. They may have been gifts made directly to a Council that Aberdeenshire Council has inherited.</p> <p>Officers are not aware of any request to centralise common good assets</p> <p>This is a vast piece of work and extremely resource intensive for services given the amount of research that needs to be done to identify whether an asset is common good or owned directly by the Council.</p> <p>It is reiterated that not all assets held by the Council are Common Good Assets.</p> | <p>No specific historic gifts have been mentioned in the Councillor's comments. Whether the gifts are common good assets or owned directly by the Council, investigations would need to be undertaken to identify the terms of the loan of such assets and when these assets are due to be returned to the Council. This is outwith the remit of this review.</p> <p>This is outwith the remit of this review.</p> <p>As outlined in the Area Committee response Appendix, officers have agreed to identify Common Good Assets by type in the Common Good Asset Register.</p> <p>Further entries will be added when the question is raised of whether a given area of land or property, item, may be common good and investigation undertaken concludes that all the relevant criteria for common good delineation have been satisfied. This will be done as resources permit.</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>5. Final decisions on funding applications to be decided by ward councillors. Officers to present assessment of application only, a historic principle but seems to have changed without any governance process.</p> | <p>The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 only permits the Council to delegate decision-making to a Committee, Sub-Committee or an Officer. Decision making by Ward Members is not therefore permitted.</p> | <p>The Scheme of Governance - Officer Powers - appropriately permits the Area Manager to determine common good applications, following consultation with local Ward Members.</p> <p>Any application that cannot be agreed following consultation, is contentious, or where the applicant is a Council Service, is then referred to the Area Committee for determination in terms of the Area Committee powers under the Scheme of Governance.</p> |
| <p>6. Raise awareness of CG funds to attract applications for funding.</p> | <p>Agreed</p> | <p>No changes are being recommended to the Scheme of Governance powers.</p> <p>A new landing page is being created on the Council's website An article will be published via Social Media when the website is live Local Members also have a role to play in raising the profile of the common good funds where they exist</p> |
| <p>7. Produce a summary of town's historic CG, e.g. lands gifted from King Robert, Carnyx, Legacy, Gifts</p> | <p>Noted. This is outwith the scope of this review</p> | <p>This is outwith the scope of this review. All identified common good artefacts are included in the Common Good Asset Register.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>8. A register of artefacts as well as land and property.</p> | <p>Noted. This is outwith the scope of this review</p> | <p>This is outwith the scope of this review. All identified common good artefacts are included in the Common Good Asset Register.</p> |
| <p>9. Clarity on using funds from disposal. E.g. Canal Park.</p> | <p>Noted</p> | <p>New format of annual report on each individual Common Good Fund to be presented to Area Committees for comment and consideration rather than circulated as a briefing paper enabling Members to see what income/expenditure is available for each fund and reporting back on the number of applications received – reasons for any rejected applications, amounts awarded and the benefit arising to the Community to help raise the profile and to show transparency in the decision-making process</p> |
| <p>10. Any funds from a disposal should increase in value. For example, land sold used for community benefit. replace land lost.</p> | <p>(1) Officers are considerably less than sure as to what the respondent's answer would involve. A decision taken by the Council should achieve the desired end – but at what level?- Area Committee or full Council ?</p> <p>(2) if the Council already owns appropriate, dedicatable, land then no cost will be involved, or if the Council identifies appropriate land owned by a third party the sale receipt would be the source for the purchase funds.</p> | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>11. I read Moray are using CG funds to address seagull problems. Can we?</p> | <p>However, if the receipt is insufficient, the appropriate means of making up the shortfall would be the relevant common good fund but what happens if (a) the fund is insufficient or (b) the owner holds out for an over the top price in the belief that he/ she has the Council over a barrel?</p> <p>Moray has a common good fund that covers all of Moray. On that basis, officers can only presume that the Council has permitted use of common good funds in this manner as it benefits the whole of the Moray Area.</p> <p>There is no common good fund that covers the whole of Aberdeenshire.</p> | <p>It is not proposed to add seagull issues to the criteria for common good at this time. To do so would totally wipe out some of the smaller common good funds and permitting this use would not be able to address the problem across Aberdeenshire as a whole.</p> |
|---|---|---|

Common Good - Consultation

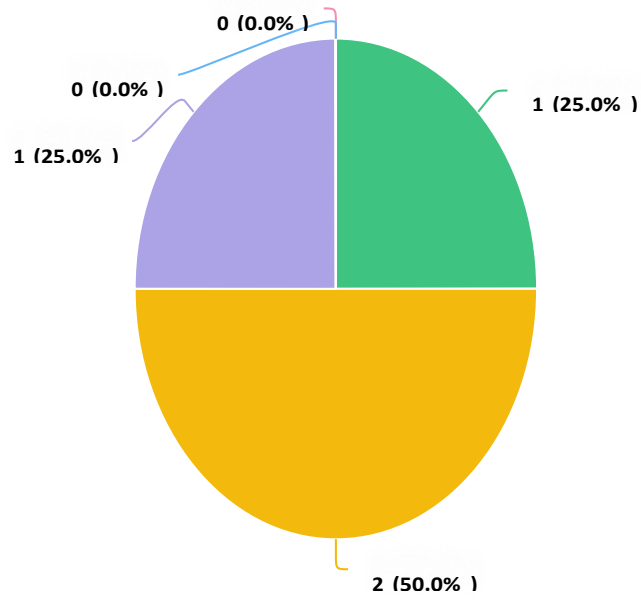
SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

04 February 2021 - 27 July 2022

PROJECT NAME:
Common Good Register

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 Are you a:



- Question options**
- Representative of a Community Council.
 - Representative of a Community Organisation.
 - Representative of a Council Service. Member of the public.
 - Other.

Optional question (4 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q2 Which Community Council?

[REDACTED] Alvah and Forglen
7/17/2023 11:44 AM

Optional question (1 response(s), 3 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

Q3 Which Community Organisation?

[REDACTED] Cruden Bay Community Association
7/12/2023 08:46 AM

[REDACTED] Aboyne Local Place Plan Group
7/18/2023 02:53 PM

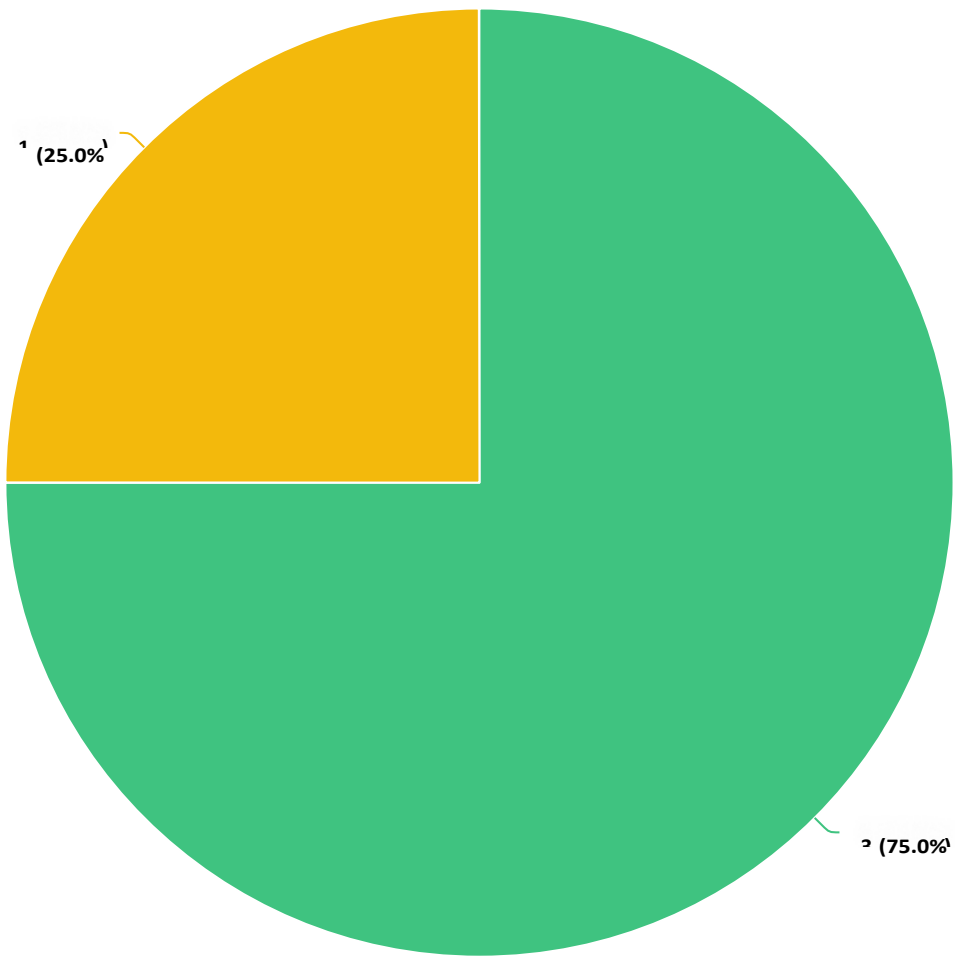
Optional question (2 response(s), 2 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

Q4 Which Council Service?

[REDACTED] business services
7/18/2023 09:05 AM

Optional question (1 response(s), 3 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

Q6 Do you wish to answer this Part of the survey?



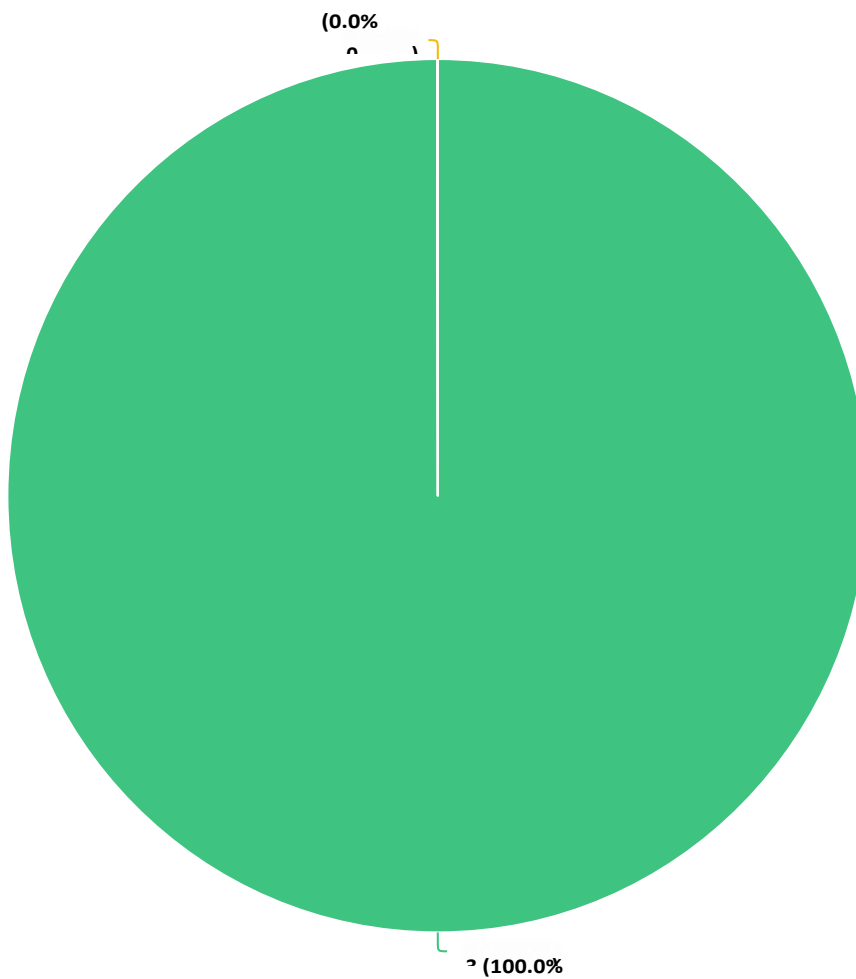
Question type: Radio Button Question

Question options

- Yes.
- No.

Mandatory Question (4 response(s))

Q7 Do you support the Council's position in respect of this policy?



Question options

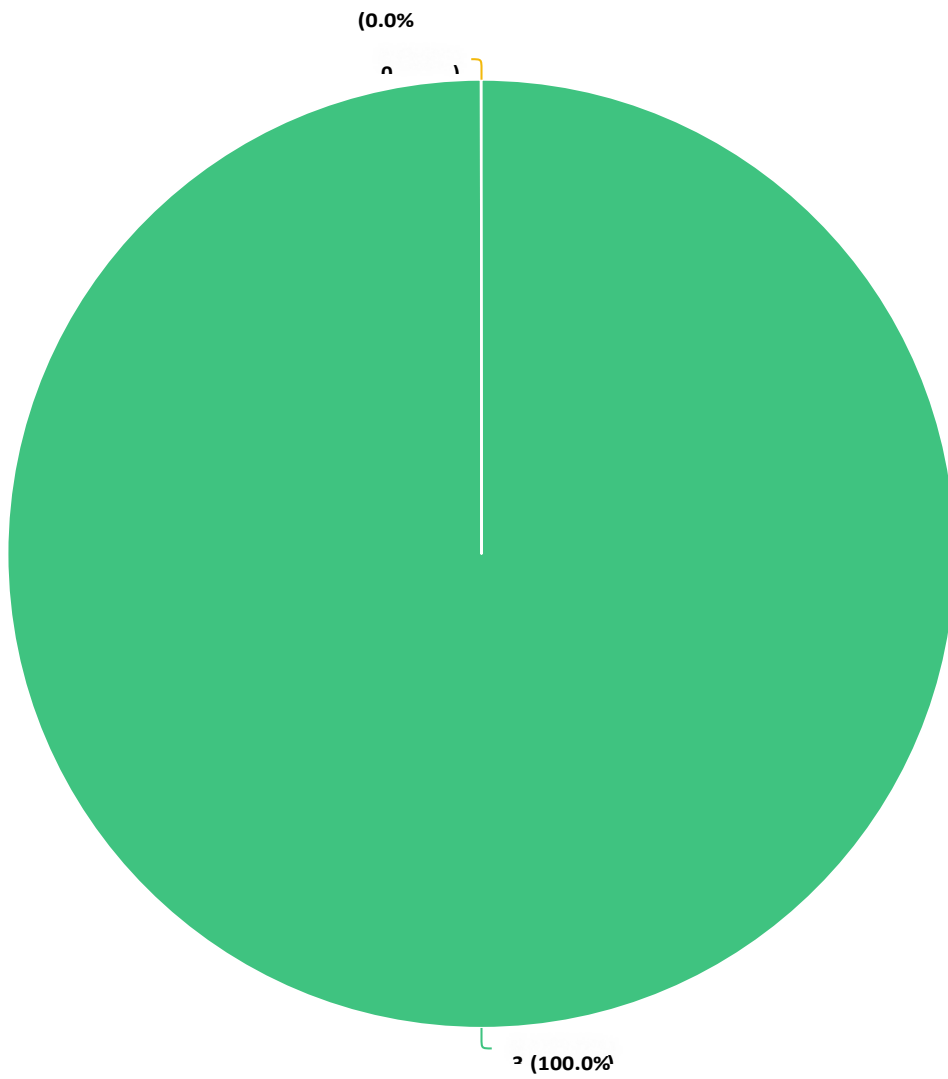
Question type: Radio Button Question

Yes. No.

Optional question (3 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 Do you think a landing page is a good idea?

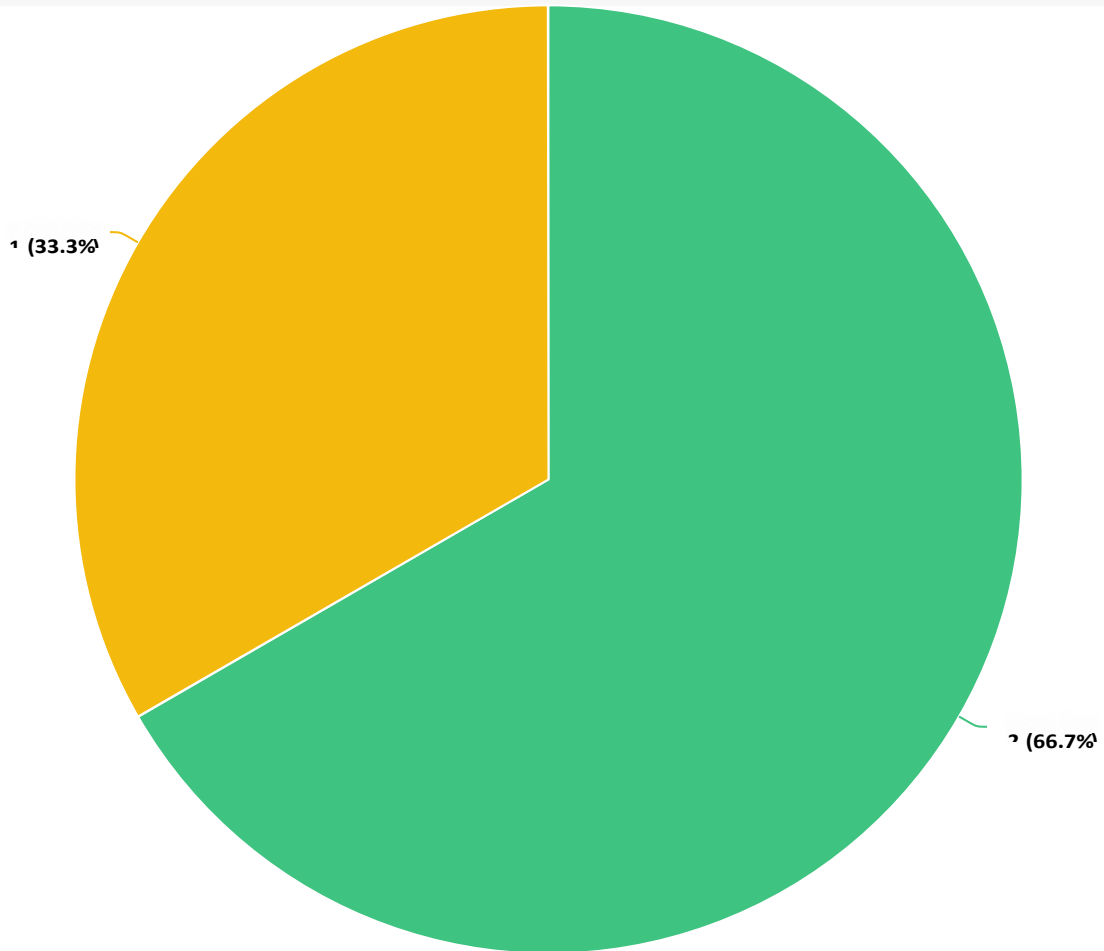


Question type: Radio Button Question

Question options
● Yes. ● No.

Optional question (3 response(s), 1 skipped)

Q14 Do you have any suggestions as to how the Council can raise the profile and community awareness of Common Good Funds?



Question options
● Yes. ● No.

Optional question (3 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q15 How can the Council raise the profile and community awareness of Common Good Funds?

[REDACTED]

7/12/2023 08:46 AM

Make sure it is available on the Council website and easily searchable.

[REDACTED]

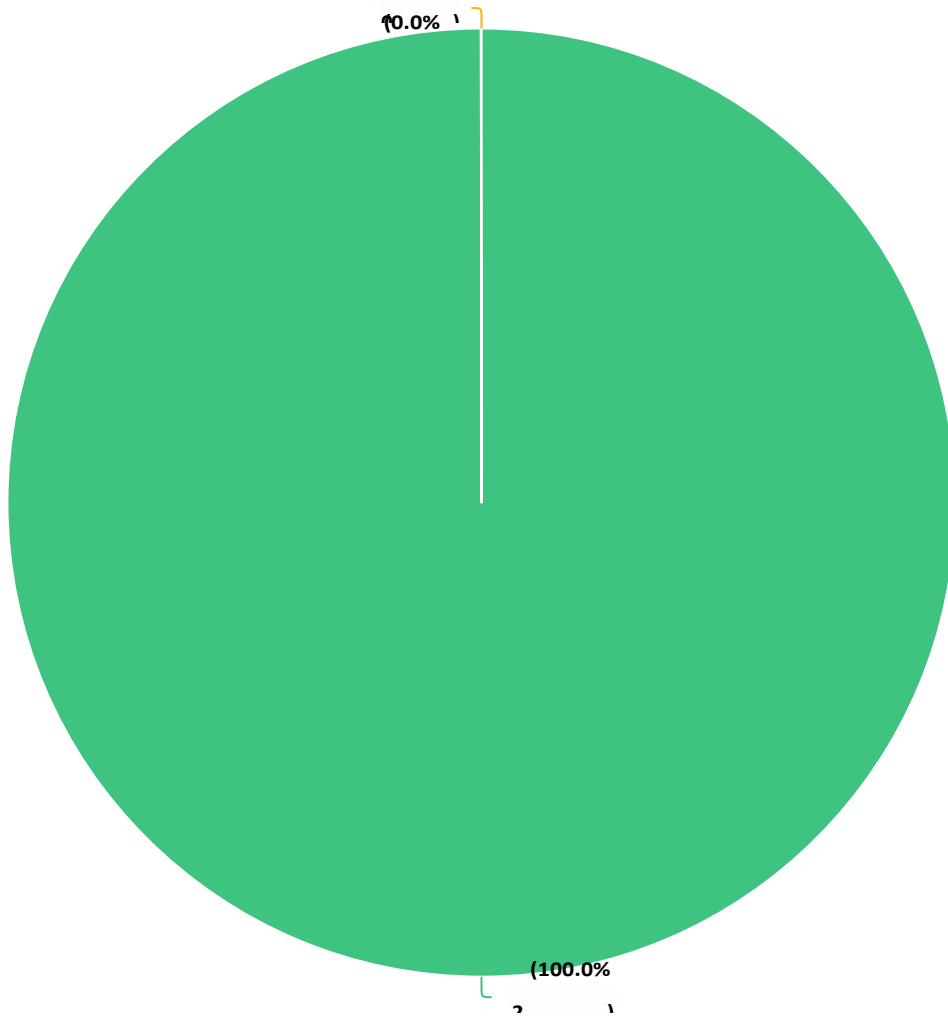
7/17/2023 11:44 AM

Use of social media

Optional question (2 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q16 Are you able to provide evidence of why this would work?



Question options



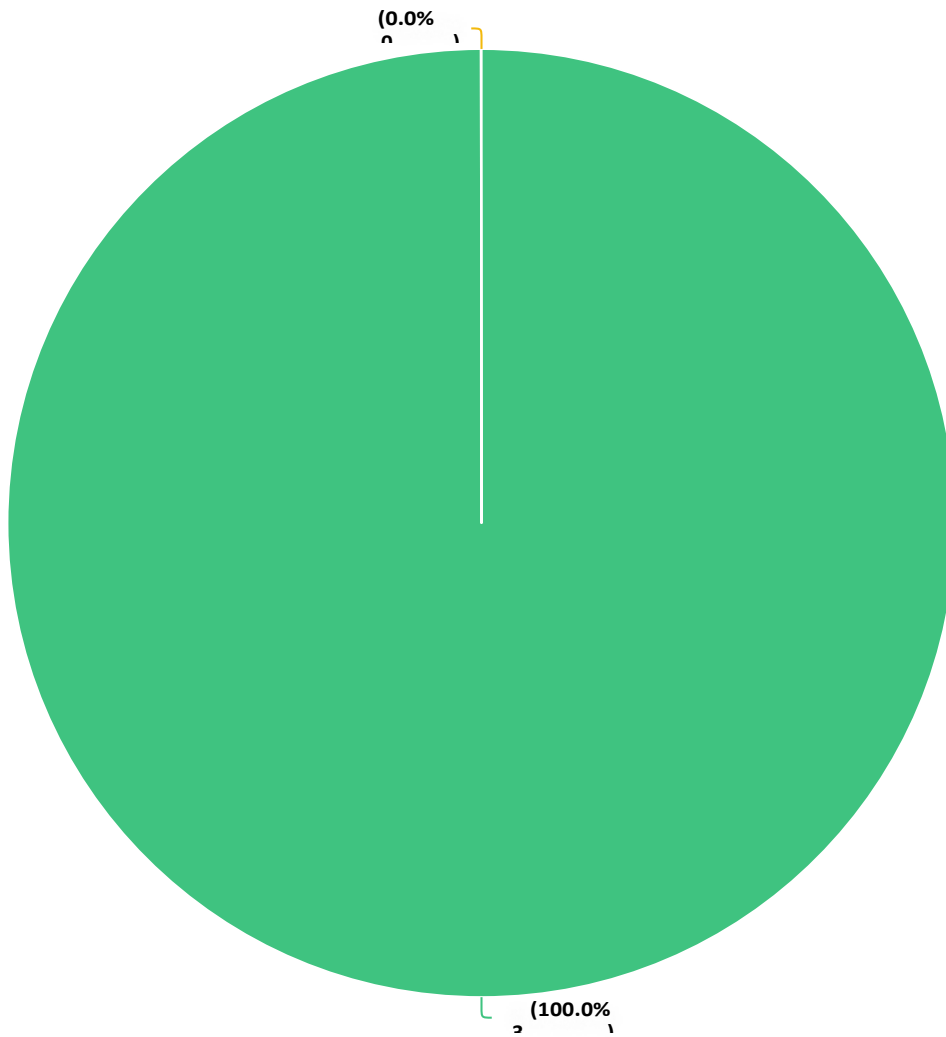
Optional question

Question type: Radio Button Question

No. Yes.

(2 response(s), 2 skipped)

Q18 Do you think the Applicant's Information Pack could be improved?



Question options



Optional question

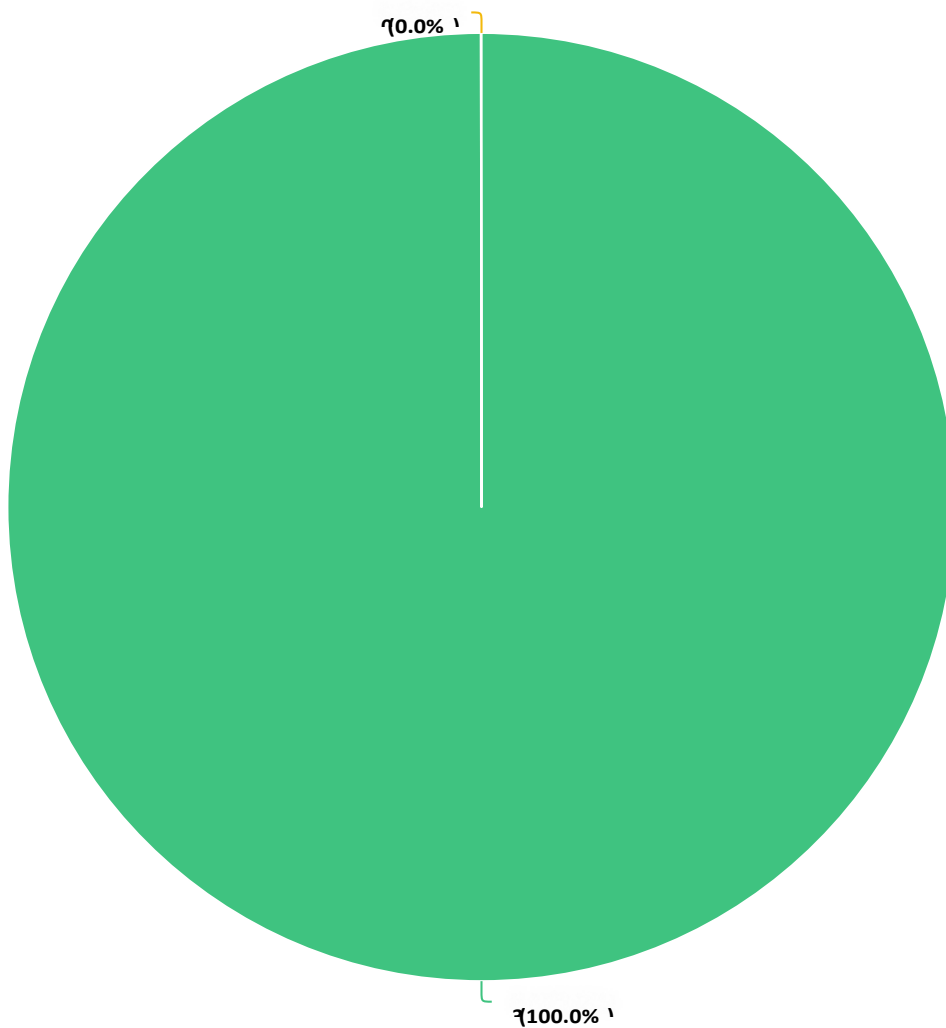
Question type: Radio Button Question

Question options

- No.
- Yes.

Optional question (3 response(s), 1 skipped)

Q23 Do you have a view on the level of funding available?



Question options

-
-

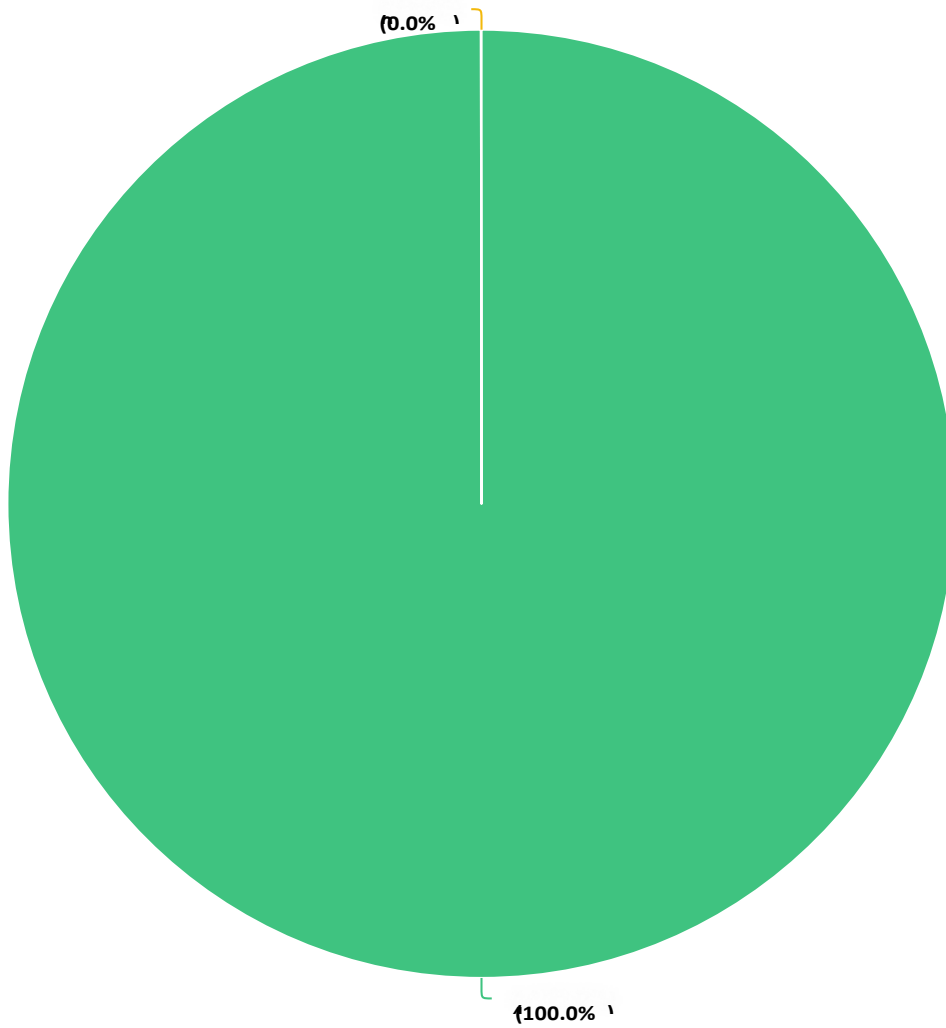
Optional question

Question type: Radio Button Question

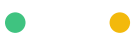
No. Yes.

(3 response(s), 1 skipped)

Q25 Do you wish to answer this Part of this survey?



Question options



Optional question

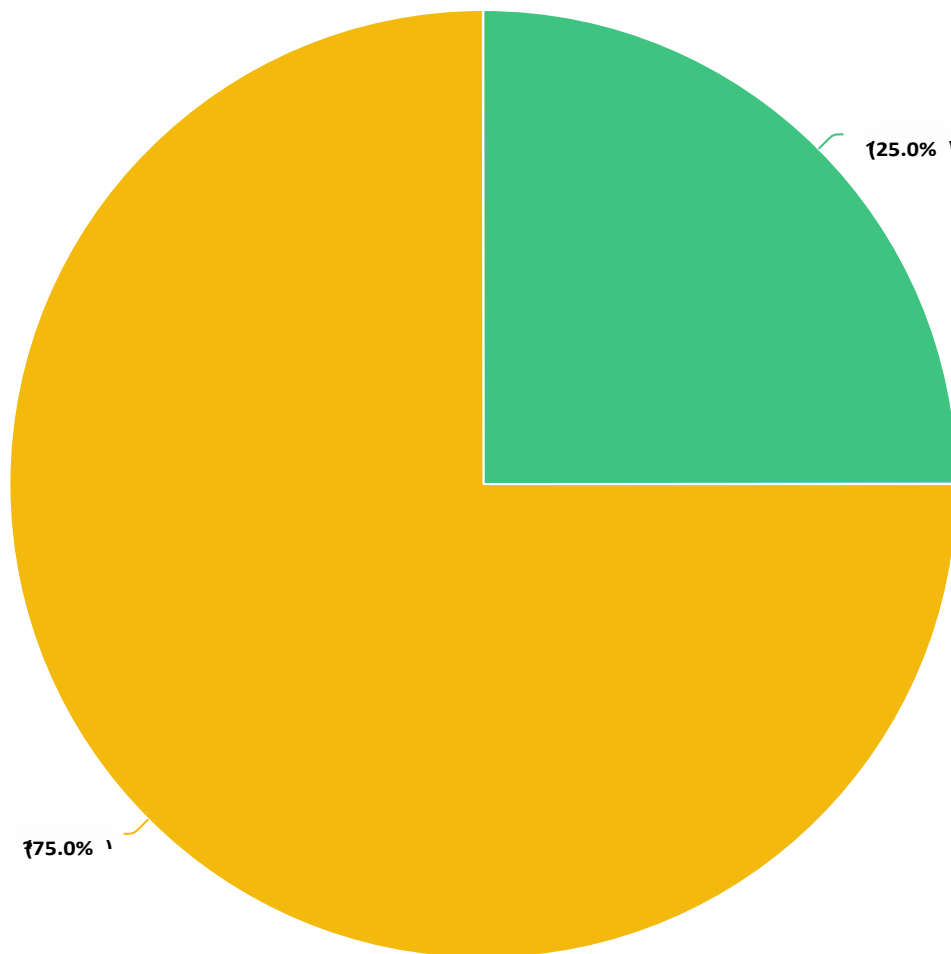
Question type: Radio Button Question

Question options

- Yes.
- No.

Mandatory Question (4 response(s))

Q26 **Are there assets not on the list that you believe to be Common Good Assets?**

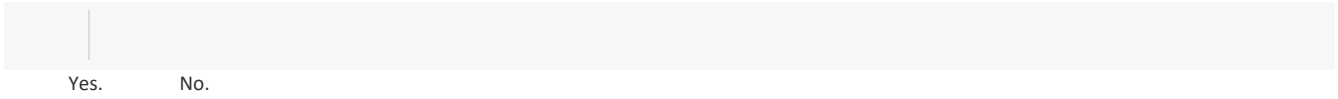


Question options

-
-

Optional question

Question type: Radio Button Question



(4 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question options



Optional question

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q27 Please provide details of the assets which you believe are not listed:



Aboyne Green

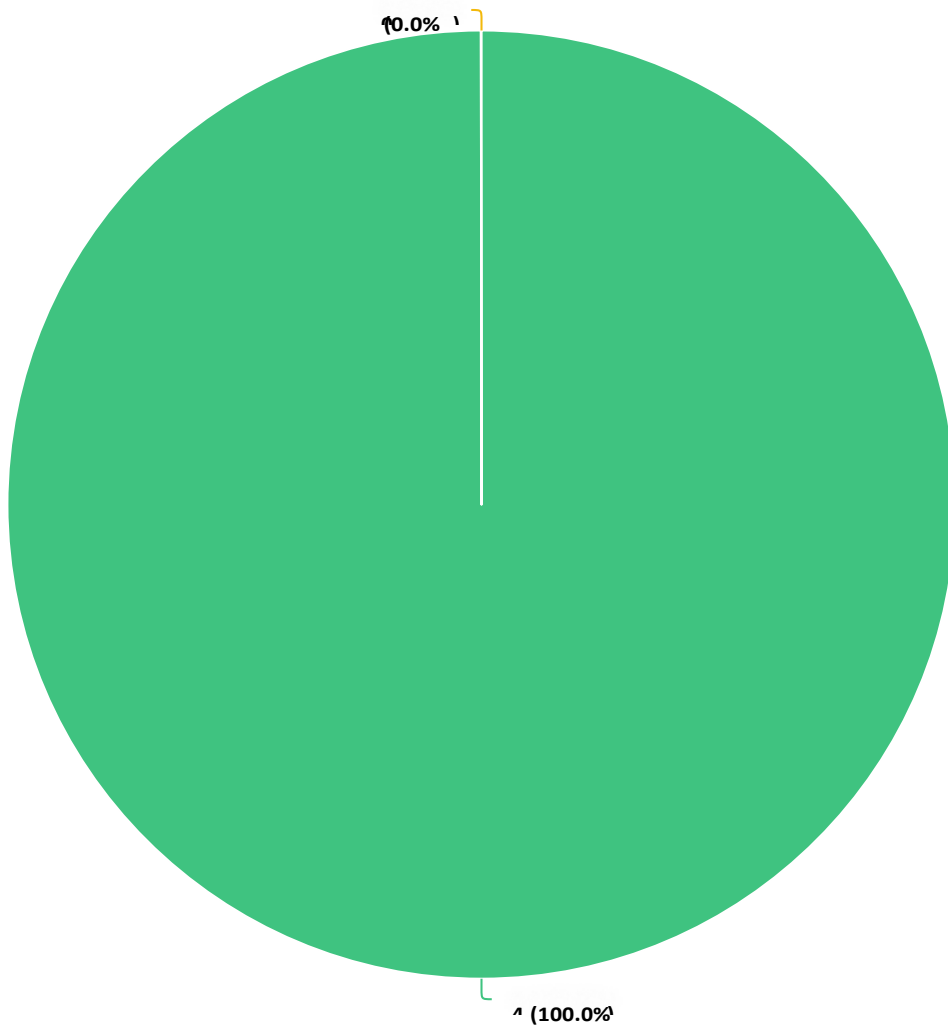
7/18/2023 02:53 PM

Optional question (1 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q29

Are there assets on the list that you believe are not Common Good Assets?



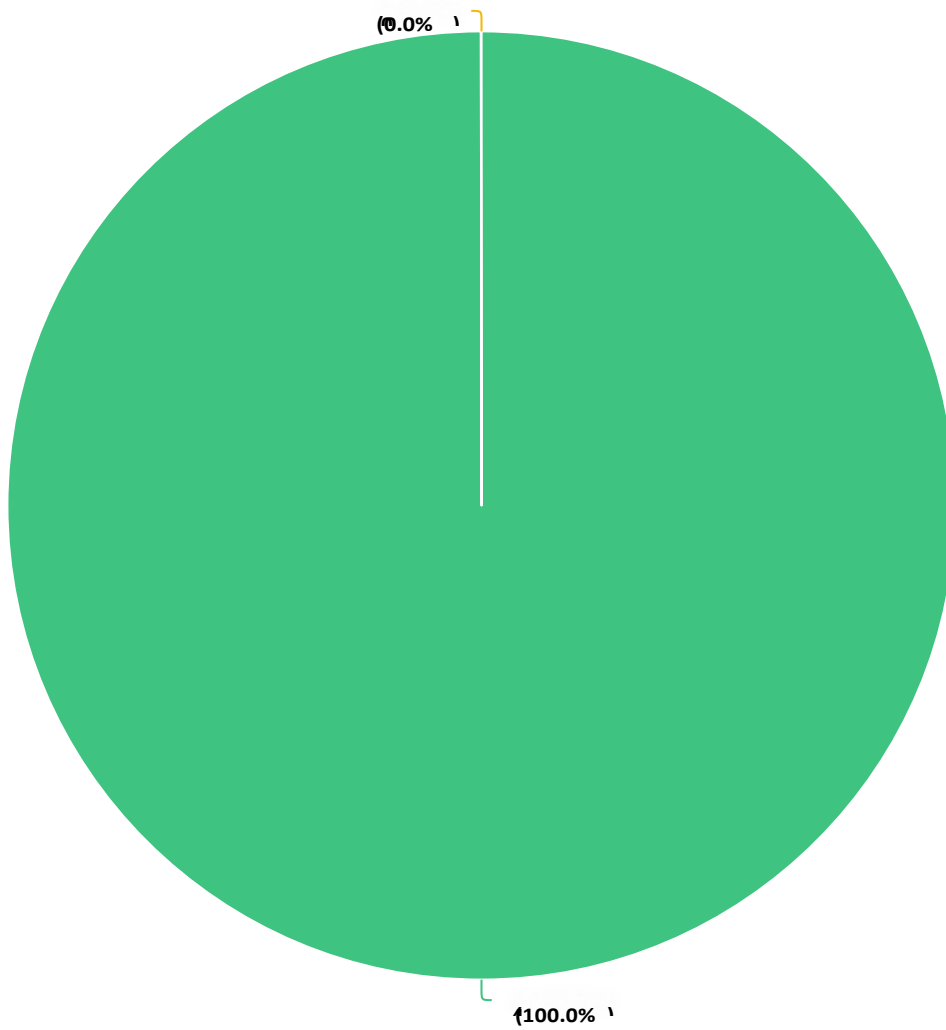
Question options

- No.
- Yes.

Optional question (4 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q32 Do you have any other comments?



Question options

- No.
- Yes.

Optional question (4 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

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