

# 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](#)
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# 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.

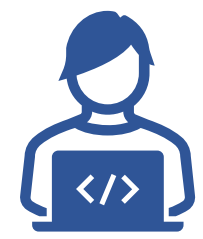
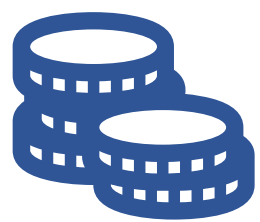
The Plans continue to evolve and have been refreshed this year to ensure greater consistency in reporting. The Plans will guide improvement activity enabling self-evaluation in order to allow us to look at actions and priorities. We are committed to utilising the Plans in an effective way and to that 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**

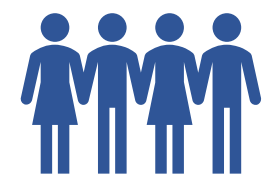
# Overview



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.

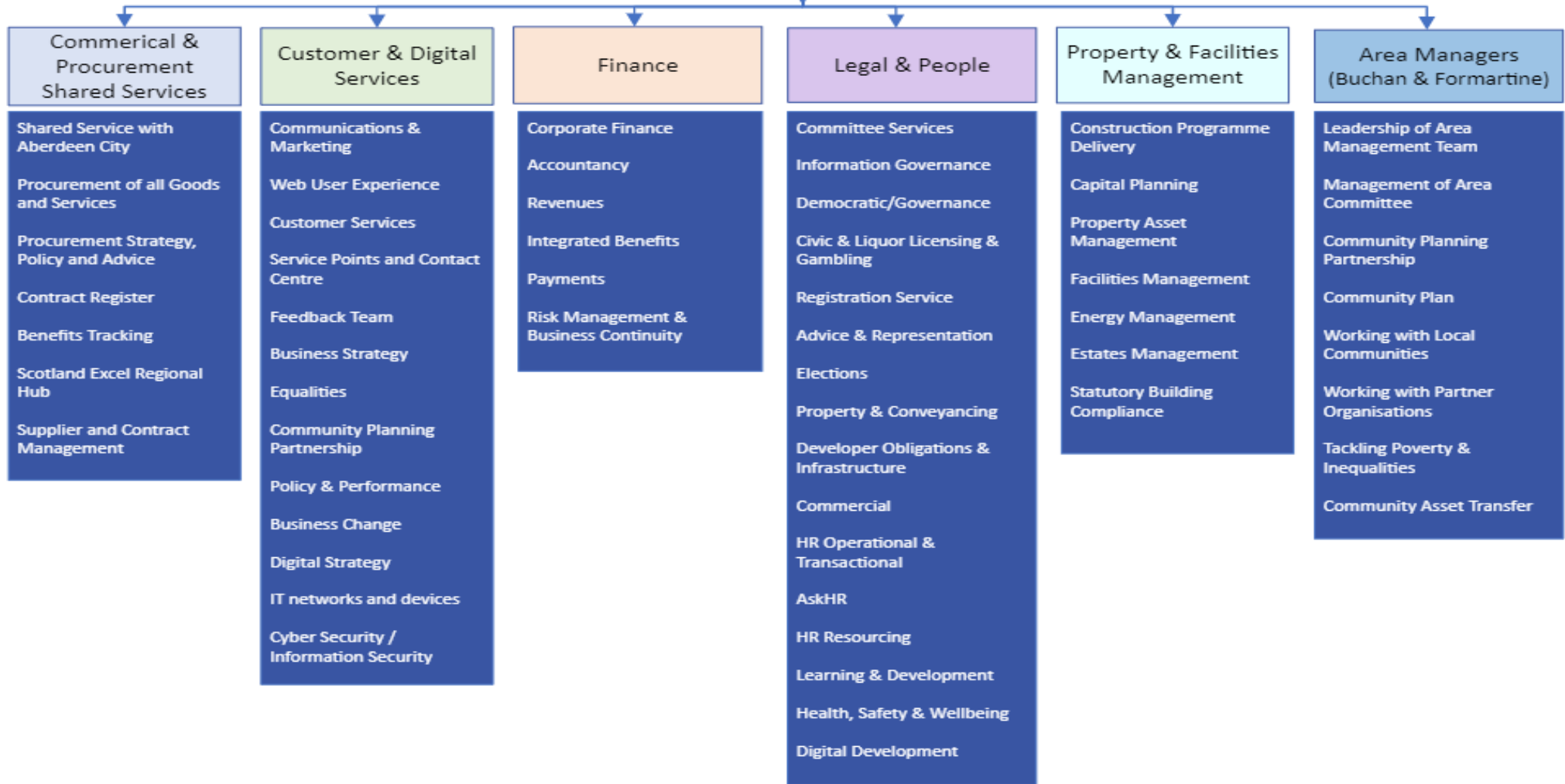


The 2024-2025 revenue budget for Business Services is £52.254m. Business Services priorities are aligned to the Council Priorities of Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.



# Structure and Functions

## Director of Business Services



## 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

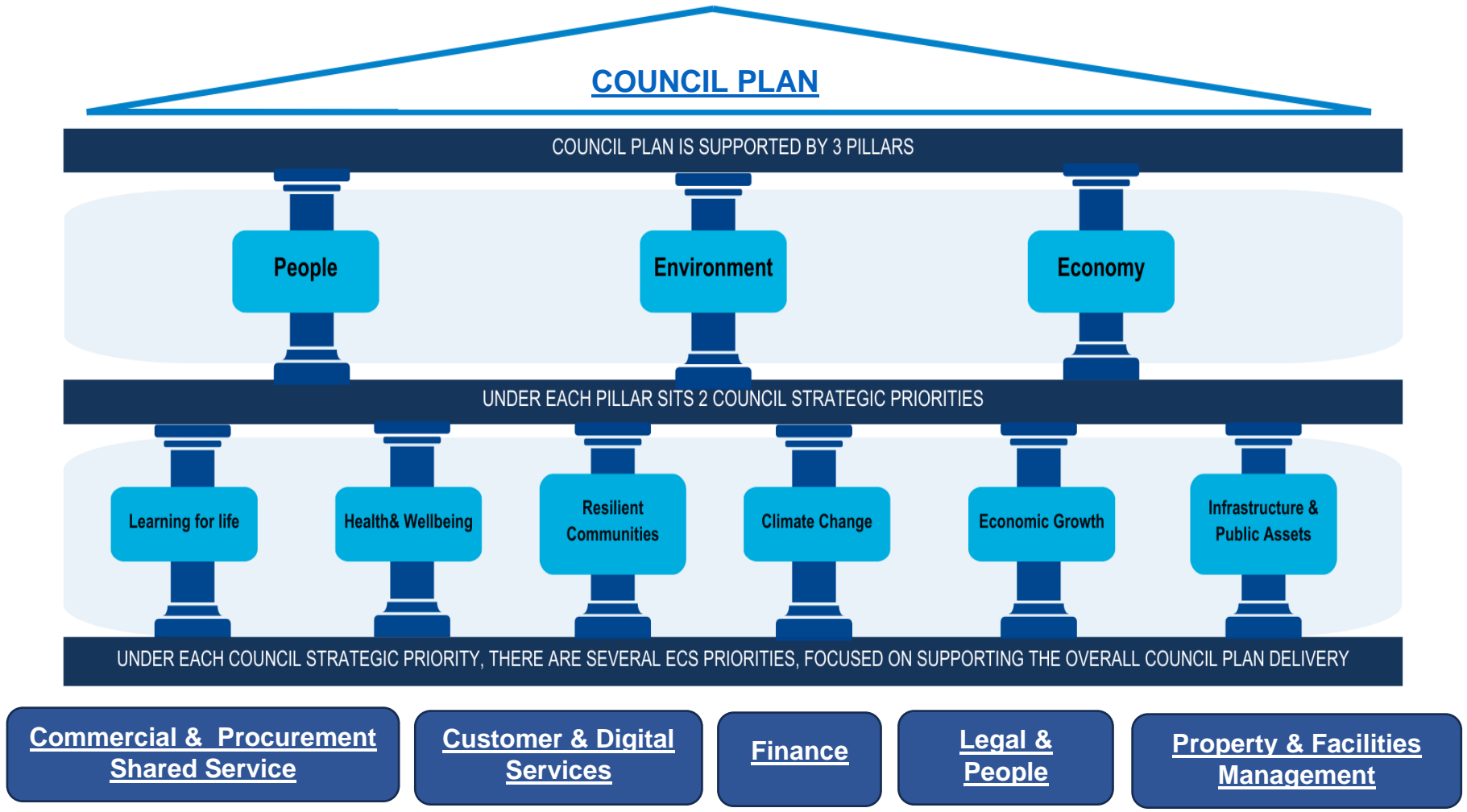
Business Services is not immune from recruitment challenges. As we transform across Aberdeenshire Council we would like to 'springboard' people into new areas of the business, upskilling, developing and creating opportunity. We will also look at how we deliver our services in order to competitively recruit 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><b>Council</b></p> <p><a href="#">Council Plan</a></p> <p><a href="#">Best Value Assurance Report</a></p> <p><b>Area &amp; Partnerships</b></p> <p><a href="#">Local Community Plans</a></p> <p><a href="#">Local Outcomes Improvement Plan</a></p> <p><a href="#">Connected &amp; Cohesive Communities</a></p>	<p><b>Customer &amp; Digital Services</b></p> <p><a href="#">Aberdeenshire Council's Digital Strategy 2020-25</a></p> <p><a href="#">Community Engagement</a></p> <p><a href="#">Communications Strategy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Customer Service Charter</a></p> <p><a href="#">Mandatory Code of Practice Acceptable Use IT</a></p> <p><a href="#">Customer Service Strategy</a></p>	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><a href="#">Corporate Charging Policy &amp; Framework</a></p> <p><a href="#">Financial Regulations</a></p> <p><b>Legal &amp; People</b></p> <p><a href="#">Scheme of Governance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Councillors Code of Conduct</a></p> <p><a href="#">Information Governance</a></p>	<p><b>Procurement</b></p> <p><a href="#">Procurement Governance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Joint Procurement Strategy</a></p> <p><b>Internal Audit</b></p> <p><a href="#">Internal Audit Charter</a></p> <p><b>Property &amp; Facilities Management</b></p> <p><a href="#">Corporate Asset Management Plan</a></p> <p><a href="#">Capital Plan</a></p>
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## 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
<b>Our People</b>	1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing
<b>Our Environment</b>	3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities
<b>Our Economy</b>	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:
<b>Delivery against Joint Procurement Strategy Themes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Food Procurement</li> <li>• Net Zero</li> <li>• Community Wealth Building (Procurement Pillar)</li> <li>• Commercialisation</li> </ul>	Health & Wellbeing Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets	31 March 2025  Strategy reviewed annually to ensure alignment with key priorities.
<b>Transformation Programme (Delivery of External Collaboration &amp; Partnership Thematic Priority)</b>	Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets	31 March 2025
<b>Development of a Community Benefit and Sustainable Procurement Policy</b>	Health & Wellbeing Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth	31 March 2025
<b>Revision of the Commercial Sponsorship Policy</b>	Infrastructure & Public Assets	31 March 2025
<b>Review and update Delegated Procurement E-Learning</b>	Learning for Life	30 September 2024
<b>Improve access to Contract Data (Roll out of new contract register platform)</b>	Infrastructure & Public Assets	30 June 2024
<b>Delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVIF) Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender</li> <li>• Contract Award</li> <li>• Commence Implementation</li> </ul>	Resilient Communities Climate Change Economic Growth Infrastructure & Public Assets	31 March 2025
<b>Delivery against Procurement Savings Target for 2024/25</b>	Infrastructure & Public Assets	31 March 2025
<b>Enablement of Service Savings for 2024/25</b>	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>

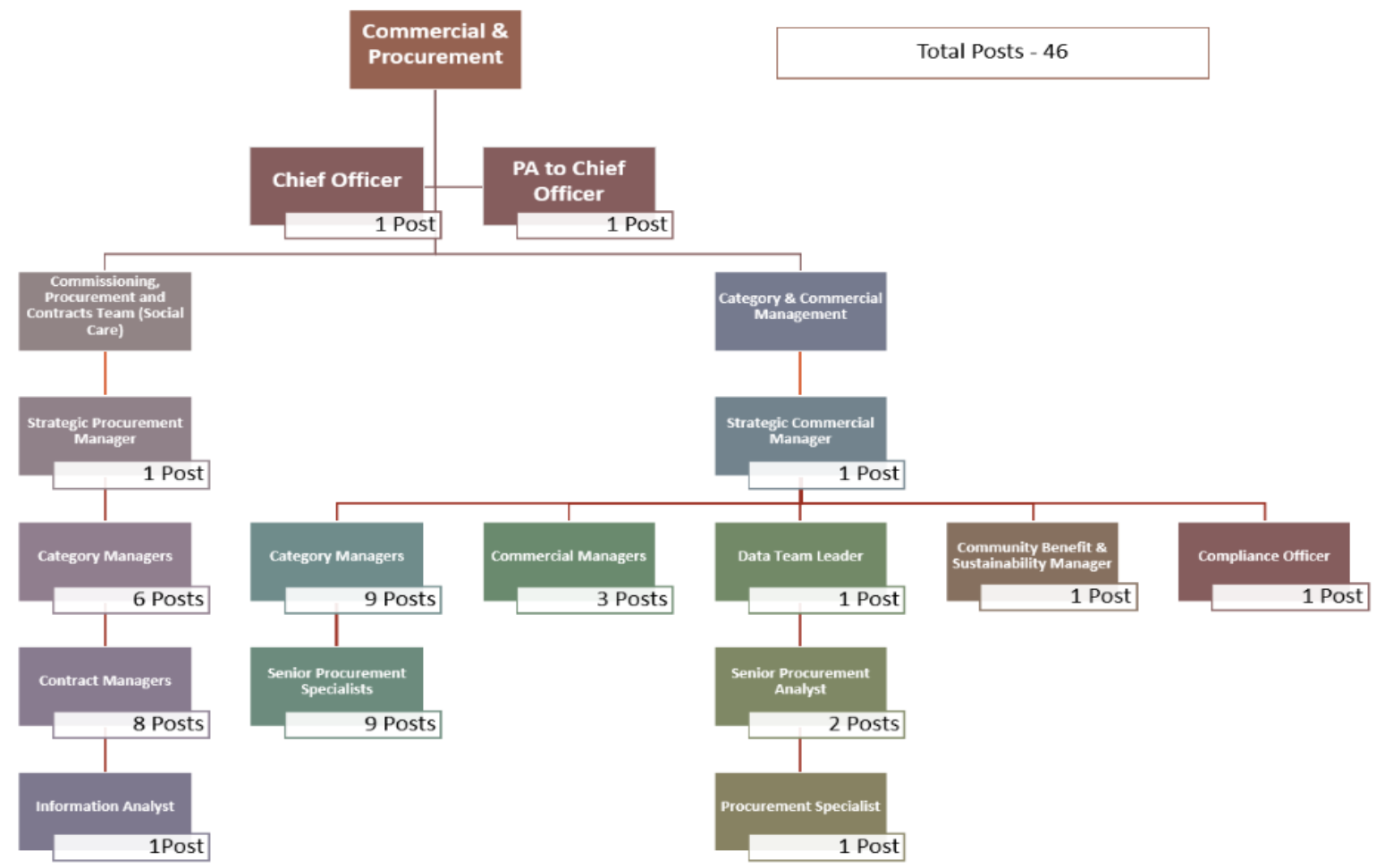
Budget Profile for 2024/25 is as per below:

<b>Commercial and Procurement 2024/25 Budget Profile</b>	
<b>Supplies and Services (inc. Scotland Excel Membership)</b>	<i>£184,000</i>
<b>Payment to Third Parties (Shared Service Costs)</b>	<i>£997,000</i>
<b>Grants</b>	<i>(£226,000)</i>
<b>Income</b>	<i>(£44,000)</i>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<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						
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>								
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<p>Absence rates for C&amp;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;"> <thead> <tr> <th>- Quarter 1 - 2023/24</th> <th>- Quarter 2 - 2023/24</th> <th>- Quarter 3 - 2023/24</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>- 0.8</td> <td>- 1.5</td> <td>- 1.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </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					
<b>Action(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Absence levels regularly reviewed by the CPSS Health &amp; Safety committee to identify concerns and highlight to SMT.</li> </ol>							
<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measurement of absence trends quarterly – with discussion at SMT on reasons to identify any further support measures which could be put in place.</li> <li>Attendance levels for Mental Health Training.</li> </ol>							
		31 March 2025						

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	Pressure of workload preventing team investment in Professional Development/Attendance at training.
	<b>Action(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of team training plans on a regular basis</li> <li>2. Ongoing discussion with individual team members during 1:1's</li> </ol>
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	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.
	<b>Action(s)</b>	<p>Identification of potential opportunities to include apprenticeship, graduate placements 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 and encourage female colleagues to consider progression into leadership roles.</p>
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor number of opportunities for apprenticeships, graduate placements</li> <li>2. Review and monitoring of data relating to recruitment</li> </ol>

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	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.
	<b>Action(s)</b>	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.
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	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



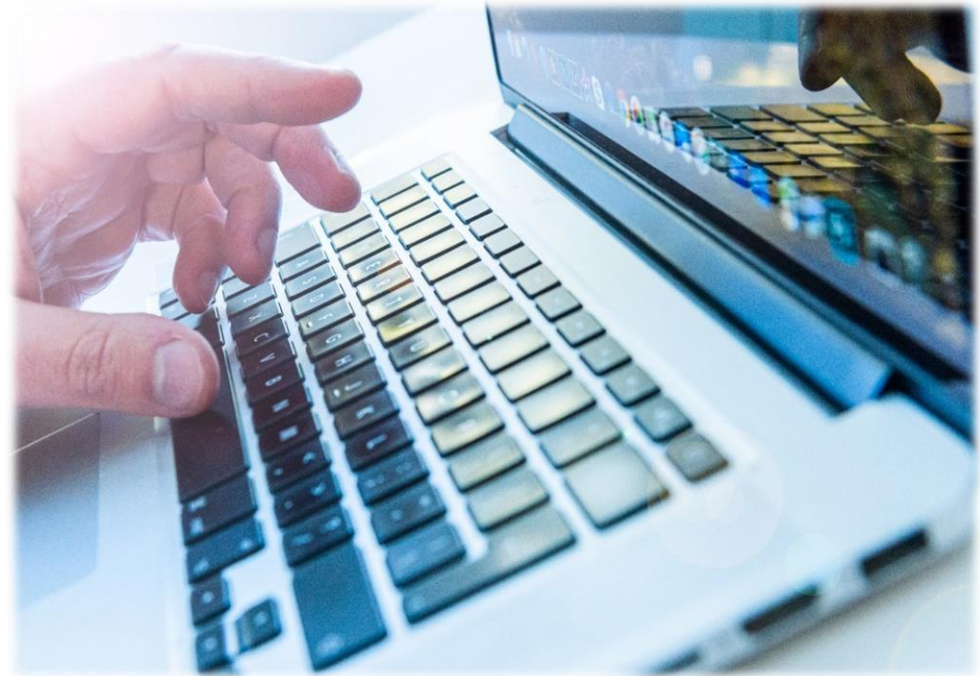
Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use)</b>	<b>Issue/Risk</b>	Turnover rates in C&PSS have remained low across 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.
	<b>Action(s)</b>	Continue to monitor turnover.  Monitor demands/workload across the team to continue to balance workloads/give variety/responsibility.
	<b>Progress/Measures</b>	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
<b>Our People</b>	1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing
<b>Our Environment</b>	3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities
<b>Our Economy</b>	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
<b>Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting medium term financial sustainability by delivering the transformation Date, Digital and technology workstream</li> </ul>	<b>ST1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of a new Council Plan</li> </ul>	<b>ST2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support delivery of the Place Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>ST3</b>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the new Customer Service Strategy, supported by stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<b>CS1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer of face-to-face queries from 5 Service Points to signposting/support at agreed LLA venues</li> </ul>	<b>CS2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the criteria and potential alternatives for a CRM system to effectively support the Customer Service Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>CS3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the whole customer journey to ensure appropriate responses to customer enquiries are provided within relevant timescales</li> </ul>	<b>CS4</b>
<b>Comms &amp; Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entire refresh of comms strategy, with a focus on internal comms.</li> </ul>	<b>CM1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrate all web content as part of ground-up web content review</li> </ul>	<b>CM2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on team wide involvement in Transformation strategy communications</li> </ul>	<b>CM3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed creative and accessibility skills across the organisation.</li> </ul>	<b>CM4</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a framework for Place-based community planning</li> </ul>	<b>SI1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement data strategy and data hub</li> </ul>	<b>SI2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop equality outcomes 2025</li> </ul>	<b>SI3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Big Data, Digital and Tech Transformation workstream</li> </ul>	<b>SI4</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the Digital Programme</li> </ul>	<b>SI5</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support transformational change through the application of service design and change management best practice and governance</li> </ul>	<b>SI6</b>
<b>IT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of the Next Generation Local Area Network</li> </ul>	<b>IT1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review corporate device provisioning and funding</li> </ul>	<b>IT2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Microsoft 365 licence functionality &amp; allocations</li> </ul>	<b>IT3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the council in the delivery of key projects including Transformation &amp; Ward Pages replacement</li> </ul>	<b>IT4</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new IT strategy and team structure</li> </ul>	<b>IT5</b>

# 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

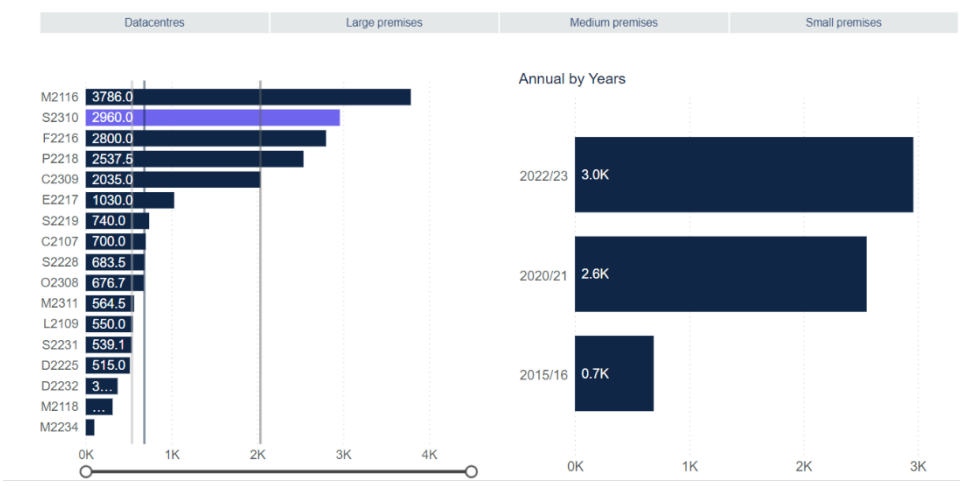
Users per ICT	□□□□■
Devices per 'support specialist' FTE	□■□□□
No. of users per service desk FTE	□■□□□
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Number of workstations per user	□□□□■
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Users per printer	■□□□□
Users equipped for flexible working	■□□□□
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.

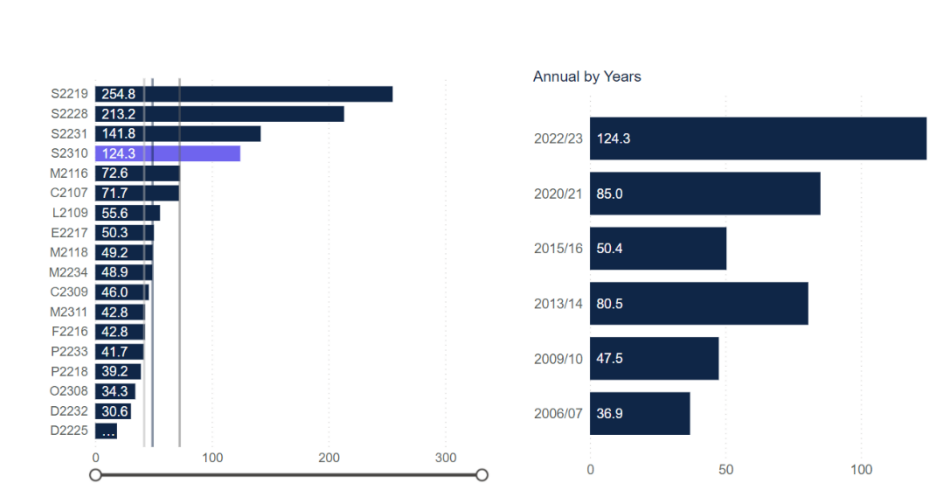
Some data is directly interpretable:

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.

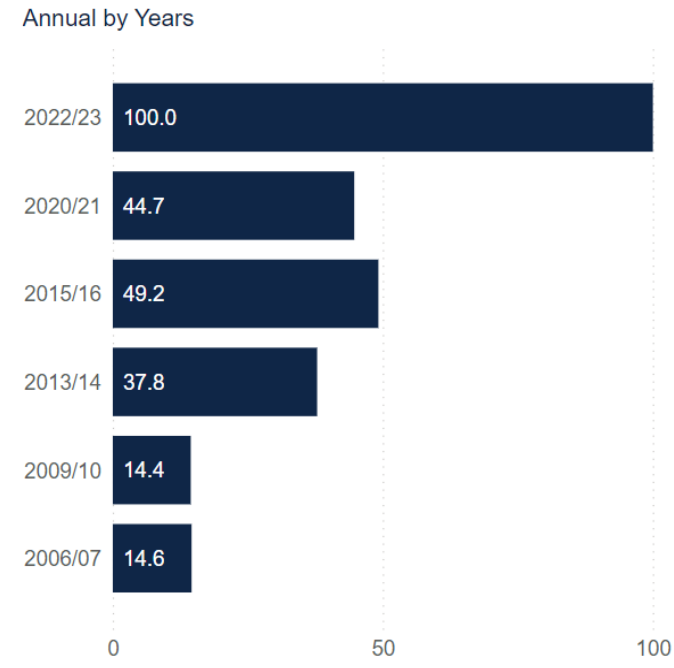
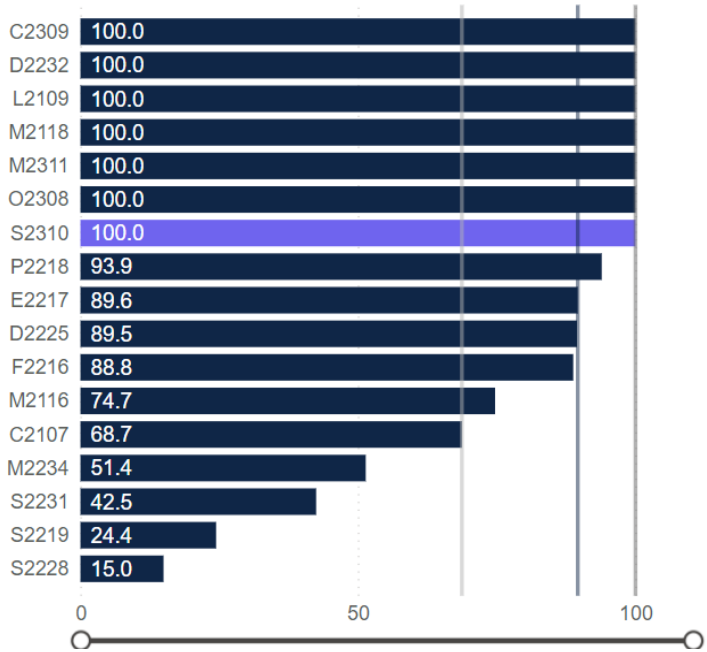
Some other data requires further narrative and interpretation. For example, the users equipped for flexible working result within the 2022/23 Delivery results shows a low-level result, a reduction from 2021/22:



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
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### Local Authority Complaints Handling Network Data

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

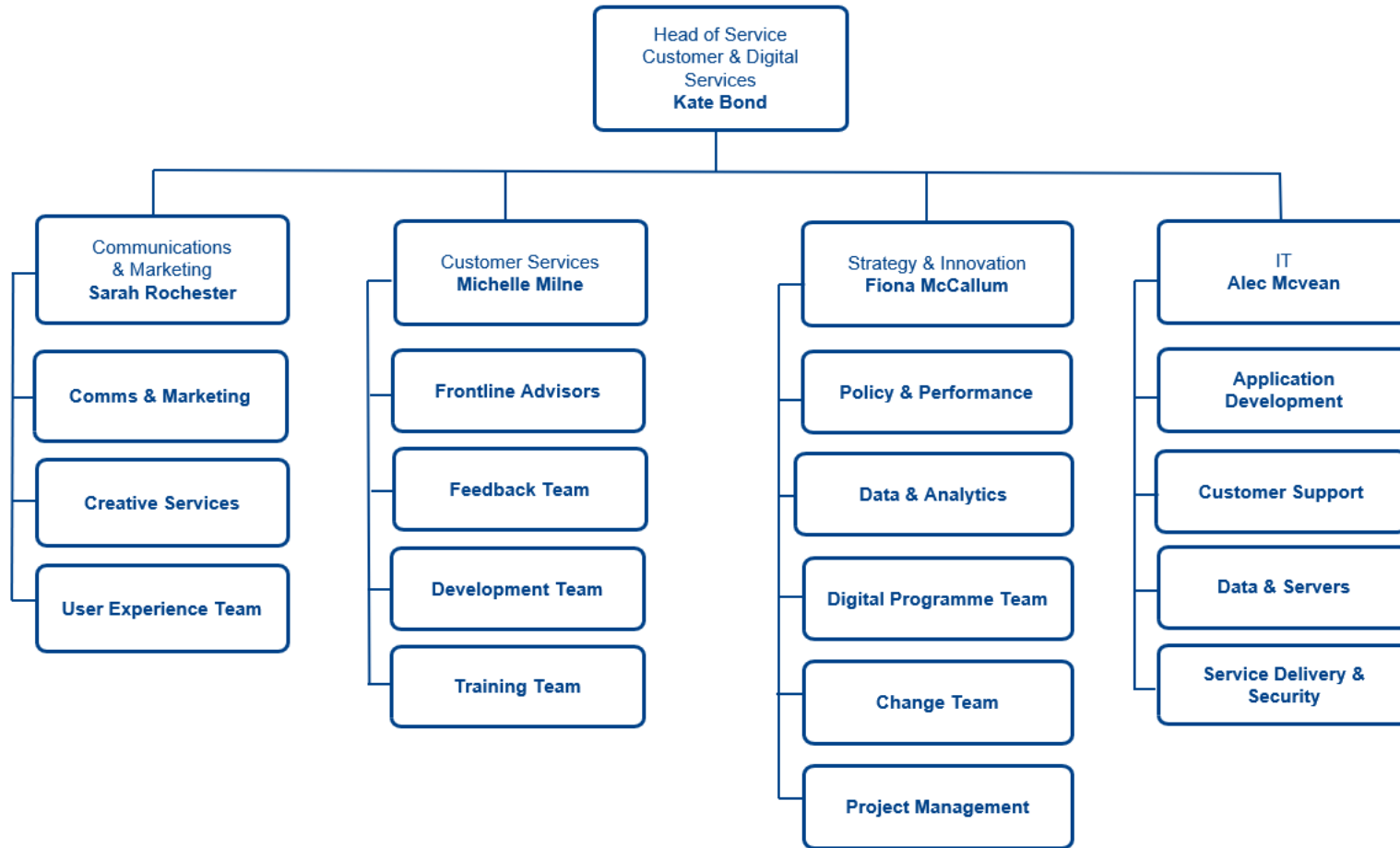
**Customer & Digital Services Budget for 2024/25**

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

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**

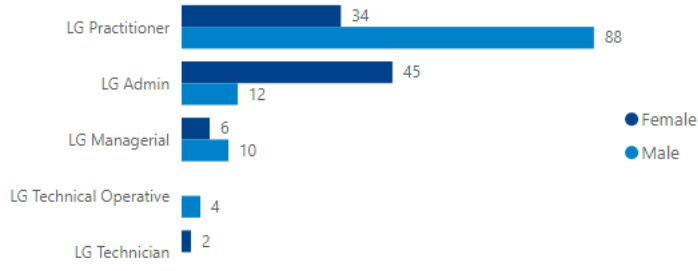
- Customer Services piloted new ways of working. Following the pilot period, this is now being rolled out across the team. Customer Services will continue to monitor the impact.
- Regular monitoring and delivering on PSIF activities take place.
- In Strategy & Innovation regular reviews of performance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

## Workforce Plan

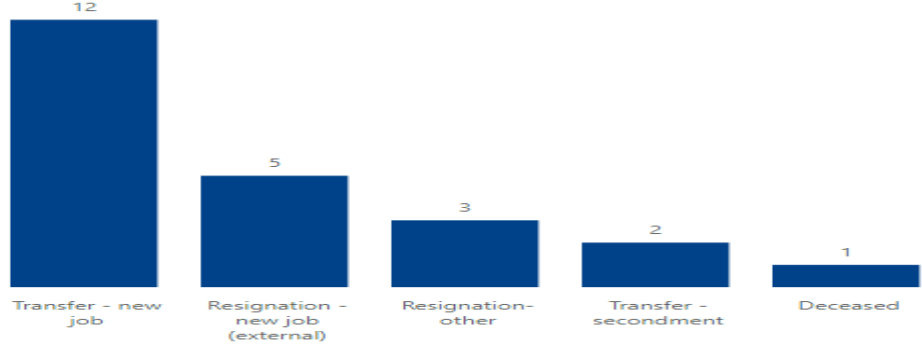
Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Issue/Risk</b>	<p>During 2023, 38 C&amp;DS employees signed up to use the 87% app.</p> <p>Less than 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.</p> <p>In November 2023, a pulse survey was available to staff to rate their own wellbeing. The results from this show C&amp;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.</p>
	<b>Action(s)</b>	<p>87% Wellbeing Platform and App to continue being discussed and promoted to every team.</p> <p>Support information to continue being highlighted and provided to the whole service via the Virtual Staffroom (C&amp;DS Team SharePoint page) allowing all employees to be aware of the range of support available to them.</p> <p>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.</p>
	<b>Progress/Measure</b>	<p>Monitored at C&amp;DS Management Team by quarterly analysis and insights from Workforce Power BI and 87% Wellbeing data.</p>
		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates</p>

Priority	Key Actions		Target Date
Skills	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	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.	
	<b>Action (s)</b>	<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
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	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																		
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>																				
<p><b>Diversity</b></p>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></p> <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	
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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	<b>Action(s)</b>	<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
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	Monitor the diversity profile of the workforce through the Workforce Profile Dashboard and report to CDSMT on changes.	
Succession Planning	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<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												
	<p><b>Action (s)</b></p>	<p>Identify business critical roles for which potential successors are required.</p> <p>Identify growing talent to fill these roles in the future.</p> <p>Provide clear development pathways, a wide range of activities and a dedicated succession plan programme nurturing internal talent.</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>												
	<p><b>Progress/ Measure</b></p>	<p>Monitor the % of roles filled internally.</p> <p>Monitor the use of PPP conversations to identify personal development, employee engagement and job satisfaction</p>	<p>Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates</p>												
<p><b>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use)</b></p>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></p>	<p>Customer Services continues to have a much higher turnover than the rest of C&amp;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"> <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&amp;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
<b>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use) cont'd</b>	<b>Action(s)</b>	Continue to monitor turnover in line with indicators above.  Monitor demand on priority areas and take corrective action where possible.  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.	Ongoing
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	Reduction in turnover through supportive and corrective measures as highlighted above.	Report and monitor through CDSMT-updates

## 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)

<b>ASAT</b>	<b>Accounts Payable</b>	<b>Risk &amp; Resilience</b>	<b>Financial Management System</b>	<b>Development &amp; Financial Training</b>
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"> <li>• Customer Queries</li> <li>• Housing Benefit</li> <li>• Council Tax Reduction</li> <li>• Discretionary Housing Payments</li> <li>• Crisis Grants</li> <li>• Community Care Grants</li> <li>• Free School Meals</li> <li>• School Clothing Grants</li> <li>• Blue Badge applications</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Educational Trust</li> <li>• Appeals</li> <li>• HB Estimates &amp; Subsidy Claim</li> <li>• Document Management</li> <li>• Process development and mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process supplier invoices</li> <li>• Queries from suppliers and services</li> <li>• Payment Runs</li> <li>• Purchase Cards</li> <li>• Supplier Records</li> <li>• Construction Industry Scheme Payments</li> <li>• Foreign Payments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Contingencies</li> <li>• Emergency Planning and response</li> <li>• Counter terrorism</li> <li>• Serious Organised Crime</li> <li>• Royalty Portfolios</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Business Continuity</li> <li>• Event Safety Consultee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain, test and control the Council's financial management system – Oracle E-Business</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Provision of financial data and analysis</li> <li>• Liaise with software supplier.</li> <li>• Operational support to users of Oracle</li> <li>• Maintain, test and control I-Procurement the Council's purchasing system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing of Power BI Reports</li> <li>• Oracle E-Business Upgrades</li> <li>• Training on use of Oracle E-Business</li> <li>• Training on the use of Power BI Reports</li> <li>• Developing Robotic Process Automation for Payables</li> <li>• GDPR Compliance</li> <li>• Developing virtual centralised automated invoice processing option</li> <li>• Working with E&amp;IS on the SAVE Replacement</li> </ul>



**Revenues - 82 FTE**

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

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

**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

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

**Payroll & Rewards – 34.86 FTE**

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

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and respond to payroll-related queries and calls submitted by employees and services (approx. 25,000 per annum).</li> <li>• Participate in projects and working groups that have staffing and payroll implications, e.g., TUPE transfers, review of pay &amp; conditions etc.</li> <li>• Respond to requests for information from a range of external bodies including HMRC, SPPA, NESPF, Courts, Solicitors, Landlords, Mortgage Lenders and Credit Reference agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>relevant employment and ITEPA regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model the impact of pay awards and Living Wage increases on the pay structure.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a range of toolkits and calculators used by employees and services.</li> <li>• Maintain and update the organisational structure held within the iTrent system.</li> <li>• Extract, model and communicate a range of management information and analytics to inform strategic and operational decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Participate in projects and working groups that have staffing and payroll implications, e.g., TUPE transfers, review of pay &amp; conditions etc.</li> </ul>	<p>updating) and monthly basis (i.e., creating ledger files).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure system users have been set up with the correct security and develop &amp; maintain validation processes to ensure that data entered into iTrent is complete and in the correct format.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Build and maintain relevant processes and procedures within Cherwell that relate to the employee lifecycle.</li> <li>• Test new system upgrades and provision of regular reporting on Cherwell and Talentlink.</li> <li>• Build and enhance platforms and processes for a range of Finance and Legal &amp; People teams and customers utilising new (i.e., Chatbot, RPA) and existing functionality.</li> </ul>	<p>eligibility checks, amendments, removals, and associated administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Provide guidance and administrative support in relation to the two corporate relocation schemes which are in operation.</li> <li>• Undertake statutory reporting obligations in respect of all taxable benefits, including payments to HMRC.</li> </ul>
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# 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
<b>Our People</b>	1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing
<b>Our Environment</b>	3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities
<b>Our Economy</b>	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
<b>SCORP04: The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax</b>	2022/23	£6.84	£5.62	TBC	TBC	10	<b>Two</b>
<b>SCORP07: Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year</b>	2022/23	96.2%	96.9%	Improving	Improving	14	<b>Two</b>
<b>SCORP08: % of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days</b>	2022/23	90.6%	91.5%	Improving	Improving	16	<b>Two</b>
<b>SFINSUS1 Total useable reserves as a percentage of council annual budgeted revenue</b>	2022/23	24.5%	12.9%			31	<b>Four</b>

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
<b>SCORP11 Proportion of SWF Budget Spent</b>	2022/23	130%	139.9%			12	Two
<b>SCORP12 Proportion of DHP funding spent</b>	2022/23	94.4%	75.5%			30	Four
<b>Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population</b>	2023/24	3.1%	1.8%			4	One
<b>Claimant Count as % of 16-24 Population</b>	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
<b>HB: Average number of days to process a new claim</b>	2023/24	19	15			10	Two
<b>SCORP12 Proportion of DHP funding spent</b>	2023/24	7	5			7	Two

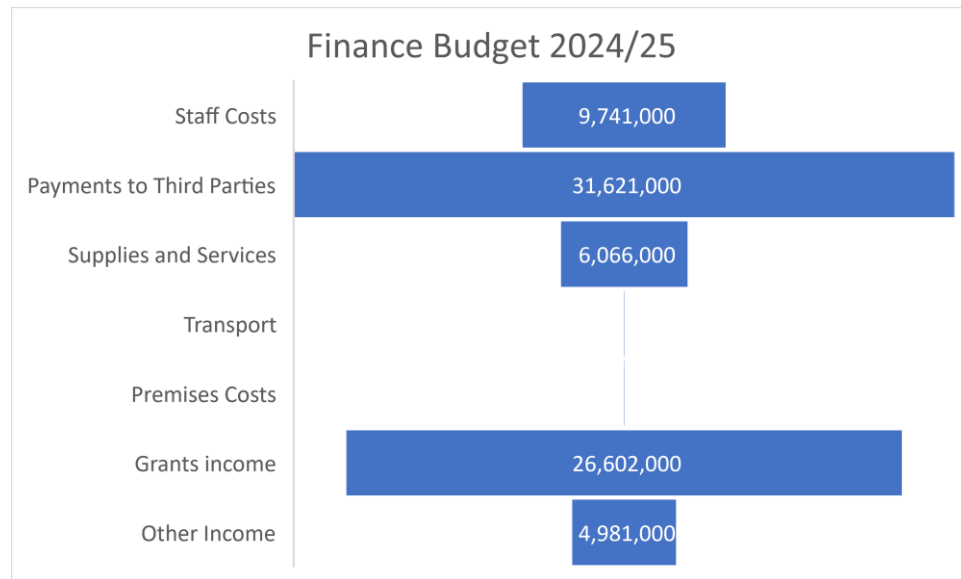
## Self-Evaluation

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.



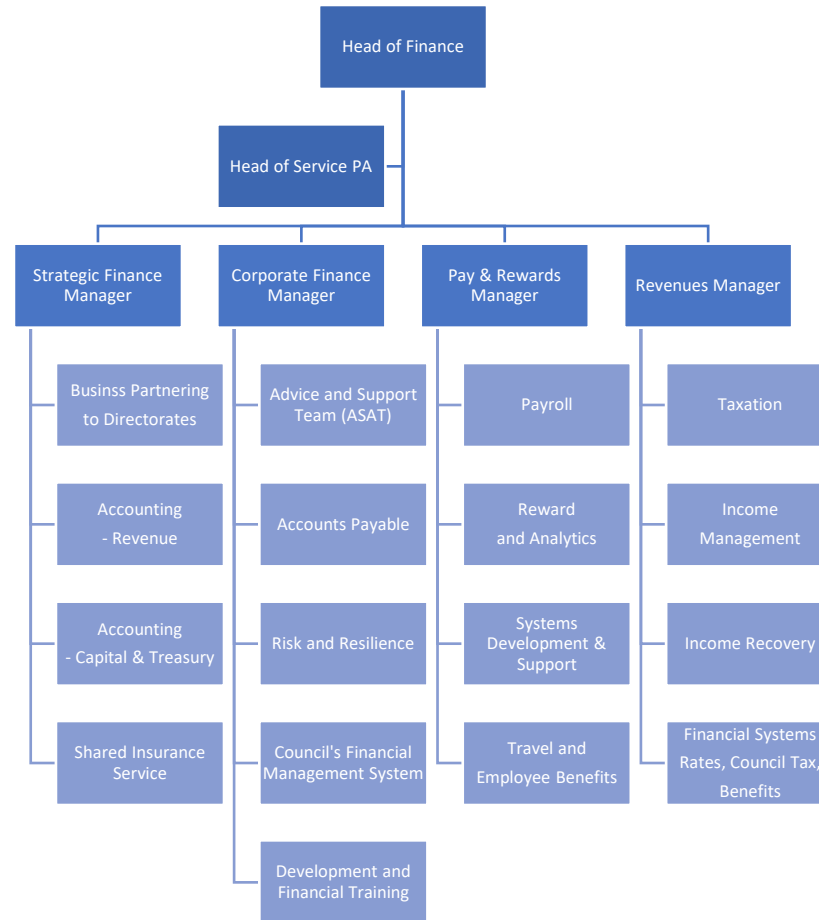
# Financial Profile

## 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																		
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>																				
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></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>																			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Employee Rating of Wellbeing - Finance</b></p> <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>~45</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>~1</td> <td>~1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Wellbeing Category	2023	2022	Excelling	~2	~1	Thriving	~62	~45	Surviving	~45	~35	Struggling	~5	~12	In Crisis	~1	~1
Wellbeing Category	2023	2022																		
Excelling	~2	~1																		
Thriving	~62	~45																		
Surviving	~45	~35																		
Struggling	~5	~12																		
In Crisis	~1	~1																		

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
	<p><b>Action(s)</b></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>	<p>Continual process throughout 2024/25</p>
	<p><b>Progress/ Measure</b></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"> <li>• An improved level of awareness of support resources throughout the whole service, measured through Wellbeing Assessments.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of employees saying they receive constructive feedback from their line manager.</li> <li>• A reduction in the number of days lost due to work-related stress from 2024 and onwards.</li> </ul>	<p>Quarterly monitoring</p>

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date	
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>			
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<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>	
	<b>Action (s)</b>	<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>	<p>Started in FY2023/24 to be fully complete in 2024/25</p>
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	<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>	

Priority	Key Actions		Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>			
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<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>	
	<b>Action(s)</b>	<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>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Several apprenticeships recruited to in 2023/24, more planned in 2024/25</p>
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	<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>	
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>			
	<b>Action (s)</b>	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
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	Review the percentage of business-critical roles filled internally.	
<b>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use)</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	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).	
	<b>Action(s)</b>	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
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	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.

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

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

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

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

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



# 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
<b>Our People</b>	1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing
<b>Our Environment</b>	3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities
<b>Our Economy</b>	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

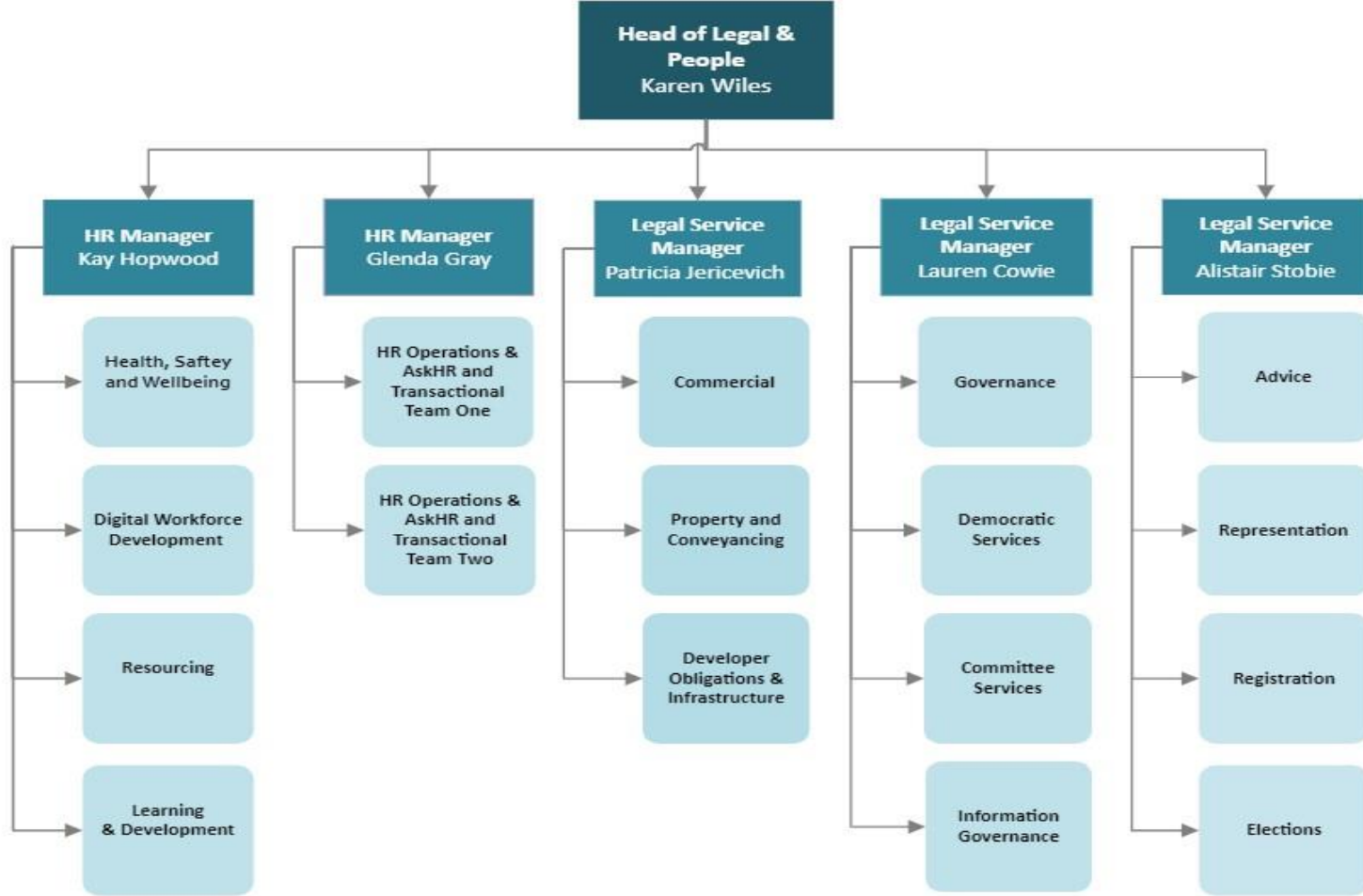
## Legal & People Budget for 2024/25

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.

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

# 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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></p> <p>Overall, indicators are showing a levelling out of the improvements that were being seen in the wellbeing of the L&amp;P workforce and some indicators beginning to suggest a reducing trend in wellbeing in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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%.</li> <li>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%.</li> <li>The overall sickness absence trend for L&amp;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.</li> </ul> <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																		
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>																				
	<div data-bbox="770 354 1715 721" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Employee Wellbeing Rating - Legal &amp; 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="562 759 1872 831">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="562 865 831 898"><u>Sickness Absence</u></p> <p data-bbox="562 901 1944 1155">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&amp;P is showing signs of being less well, the aim of steadying absences due to stress has been achieved.</p> <p data-bbox="562 1190 786 1224"><u>Transformation</u></p> <p data-bbox="562 1227 1944 1367">The resilience of the workforce in L&amp;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																		
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Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
	<p><b>Action(s)</b></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&amp;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&amp;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>

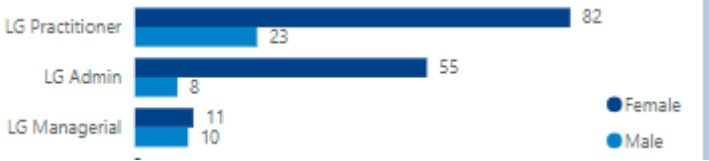
Priority	Key Actions	Target Date	
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>			
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	<p>Sickness Absences directly attributed to stress to start to see a reduction in days lost 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&amp;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>
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<p>L&amp;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&amp;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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
	<p><b>Action (s)</b></p> <p>Inconsistent digital confidence and ability among L&amp;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 &amp; 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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <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.	
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	
	Digital Skills development CPD session to present range of digital skills development options available to L&P colleagues.	April 2024
	M365 TNA to be issued to all L&P staff (as early adopters of new app)	May 2024
	Digital Skills development to be discussed in PPP conversations.	Ongoing
	Business System owners to ensure appropriate user/superuser groups in place to share best practice and consider opportunities for system enhancement / integration / automation.	Ongoing
	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.	Ongoing

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Diversity</b>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></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&amp;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&amp;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&amp;P suggesting the service are not attracting young people into the workforce.</p> <p>The overall L&amp;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>	

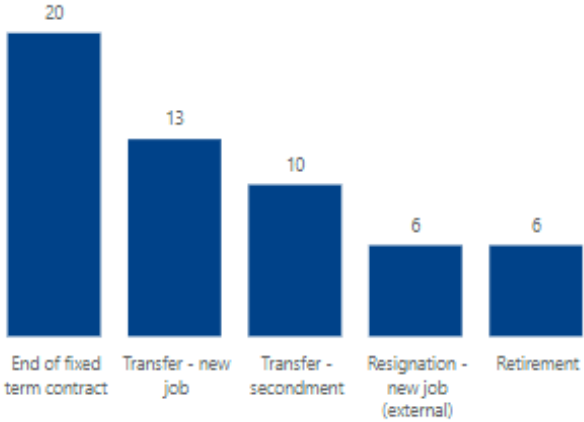


Priority	Key Actions	Target Date												
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>														
	 <table border="1" data-bbox="566 451 1272 611"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Female</th> <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	
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LG Practitioner	82	23												
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	<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>Improve quality of data available and reporting for meaningful use. Staff to be encouraged by their line managers and posts to L&amp;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&amp;P Extended Management Team and L&amp;P Management Team twice a year.</p>												

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <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>
	<p><b>Progress/ Measures</b></p> <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&amp;P Extended Management Team twice a year</p>
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<p><b>Issue/ Risk</b></p> <p>Good practice exists across L&amp;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&amp;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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <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&amp;P are unable to fill leadership and business critical positions. Age profile of L&amp;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><b>Action (s)</b></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><b>Progress/ Measure</b></p> <p>Monitor the % of leadership roles filled internally.</p> <p>Monitor the uptake of the various development opportunities.</p>	<p>Reported through L&amp;P Management Team and L&amp;P Extended Management Team twice a year</p>

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date																									
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>																											
Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use)	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<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><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>178</b></td> <td><b>191</b></td> <td><b>148.48</b></td> <td><b>13.34</b></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	<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>148.48</b>	<b>13.34</b>
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Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
	 <p>The turnover rate for Legal &amp; 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 &amp; 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&amp;P and other critical posts across Services.</p>	

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
	<p><b>Action(s)</b></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><b>Progress/ Measures</b></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
<b>Our People</b>	1. Learning for life 2. Health and Wellbeing
<b>Our Environment</b>	3. Climate Change 4. Resilient Communities
<b>Our Economy</b>	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 <sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup>	205 kWh per M <sup>2</sup>	205 kWh per M <sup>2</sup>	Iain Wylie, Engineering Services Manager	Reported annually
	CO <sup>2</sup> emissions – Kg per M <sup>2</sup> gross internal area of council operational buildings	Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045	36 Kg per M <sup>2</sup>	40 Kg per M <sup>2</sup>	40 Kg per M <sup>2</sup>	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	<a href="#">Hard FM KPI's</a>	Hard FM	98%	90%	98%	Emma Plunkett, Facilities Manager	Monthly monitoring. Contract term 2022-2027
	<a href="#">Housing Programme KPI's</a> 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
<b>SCORPAM01:</b> Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use %	2019/20	82.47%	74.96%	Improving	Improving	29	<b>Four</b>	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	<b>Four</b>		
	2021/22	85.30%	77.87%	Improving	Improving	27	<b>Four</b>		
	2022/23	TBC	78.1%	Improving	Improving	TBC	<b>TBC</b>		
<b>SCORPAM02:</b> Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition %	2019/20	88.62%	87.56%	Improving	Improving	21	<b>Three</b>	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	<b>Two</b>		
	2021/22	90.12%	91.59%	Improving	Improving	17	<b>Three</b>		
	2022/23	TBC	91.86%	Improving	Improving	TBC	<b>TBC</b>		

**APSE Building Cleaning 2022-23 Performance**

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

# 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

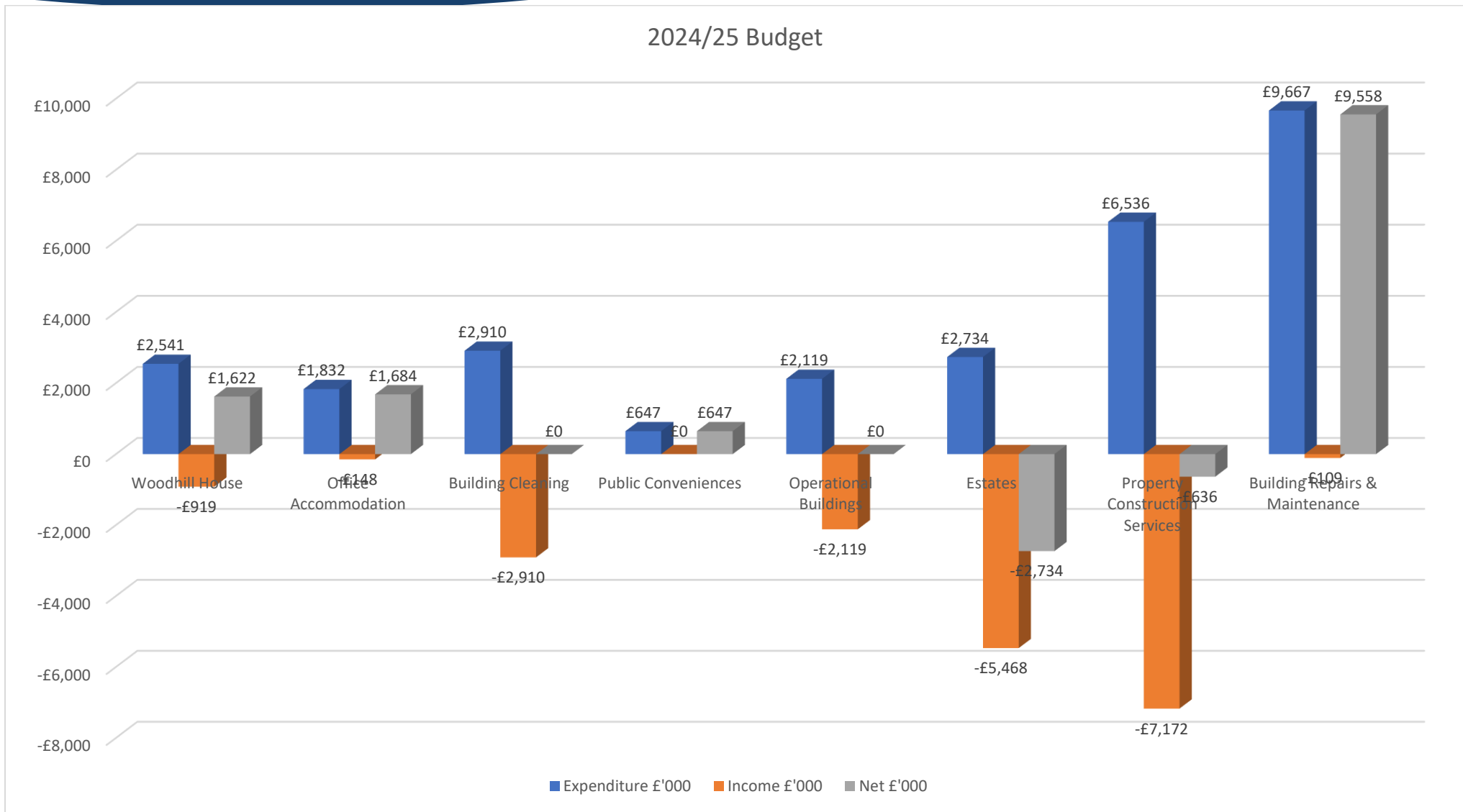
The Property & Facilities Management Service undertakes significant financial activity across both revenue and capital budgets, the details of which are noted below.

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

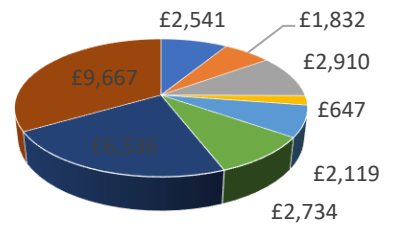
<b>2024/25 Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>Income £'000</b>	<b>Net £'000</b>
Woodhill House	2,541	(919)	1,622
Office Accommodation	1,832	(148)	1,684
Building Cleaning	2,910	(2,910)	-
Public Conveniences	647	-	647
Operational Buildings	2,119	(2,119)	-
Estates	2,734	(5,468)	(2,734)
Property Construction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

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

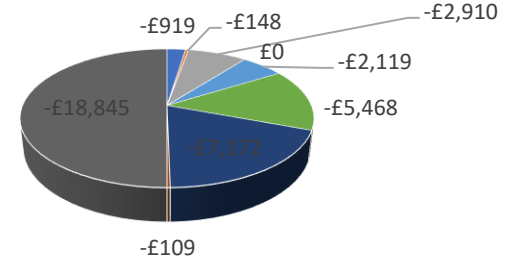


2024/25 Budget Expenditure £'000



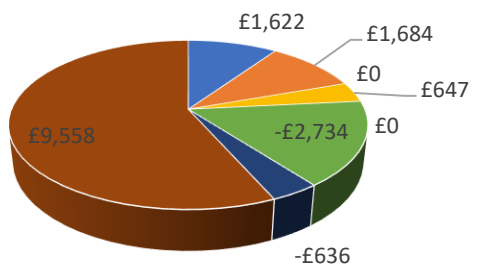
- Woodhill House
- Building Cleaning
- Operational Buildings
- Property Construction Services
- Office Accommodation
- Public Conveniences
- Estates
- Building Repairs & Maintenance

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)**

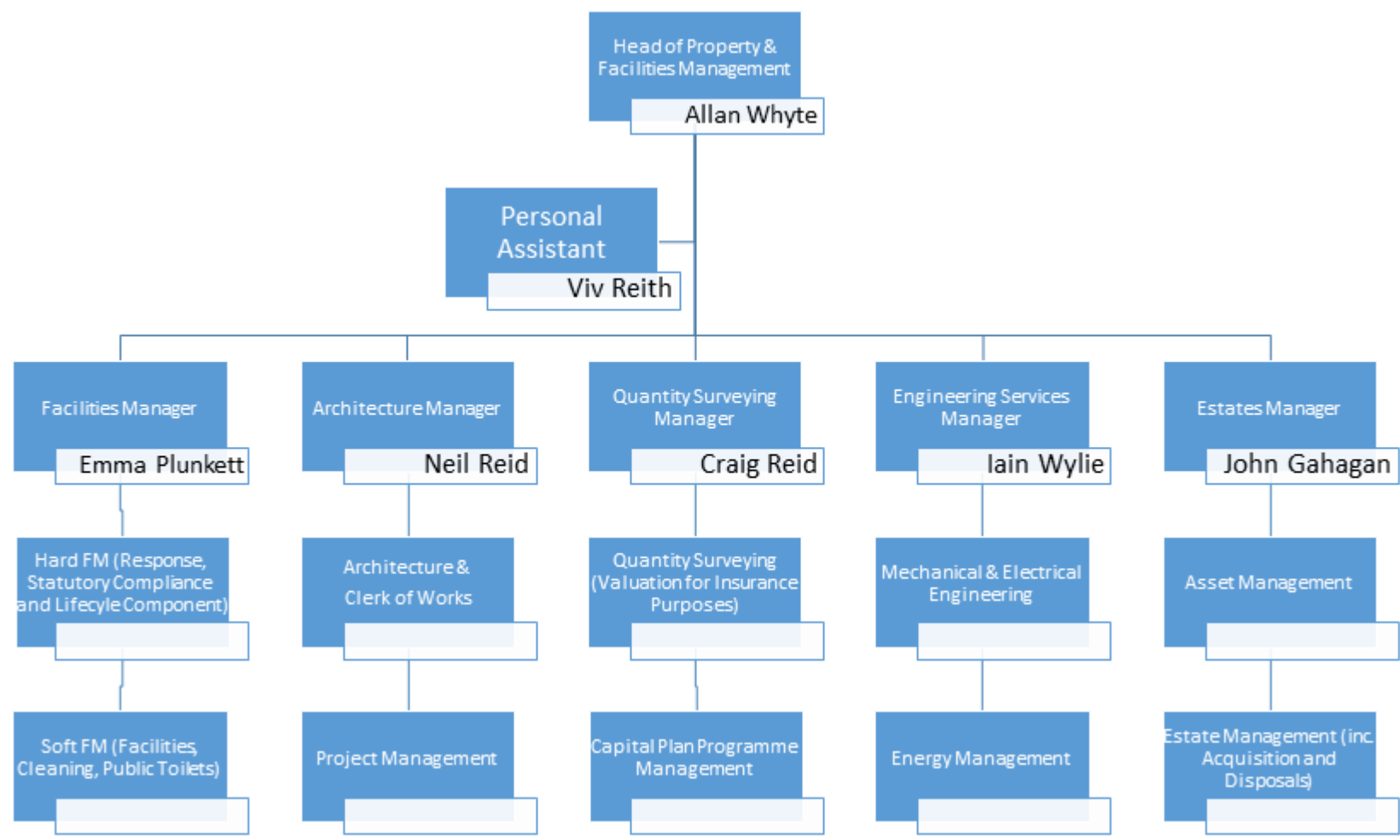
<b>Capital Plan Line</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>
Carbon Reduction - Council Wide Objectives	354
Depots	1,297
Development of Industrial Portfolio & Factory Units	666
Fraserburgh Lighthouse Museum	326
Health & Safety - Council Wide Objectives	600
Information Communications Technology	1,450
Lifecycle Maintenance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

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

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

# 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)
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>34.5</b>

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

Priority	Key Actions	Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	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.
	<b>Action (s)</b>	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.
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	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
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>		
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. P&amp;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.</li> <li>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."</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>
	<b>Action(s)</b>	<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>
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	Continue to monitor the diversity of the team.
		<p>Quarterly monitoring</p> <p>Report and monitor through Property Policy Group (PPG)</p>

Priority	Key Actions		Target Date
<b>Corporate Workforce Planning Priorities</b> <i>All Services to identify actions for the following corporate Workforce Planning Priorities:</i>			
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	Ensure that there is capacity and capability linked to future roles for personnel to meet the future service needs.	
	<b>Action (s)</b>	Analysis of workforce to be undertaken, identify high performing individuals. Recruitment planning. Training Plan.	December 2024
	<b>Progress/ Measure</b>	Training plan for all posts has been implemented and key priorities identified above. Monitor the percentage of roles filled internally.	Quarterly monitoring
<b>Establishment Control (FTE, Agency, Overtime use)</b>	<b>Issue/ Risk</b>	Lack of personnel to fill all functions and delivery on key priorities	
	<b>Action(s)</b>	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	Quarterly monitoring
	<b>Progress/ Measures</b>	Consultancy Framework in place Monitor turnover	December 2024



## 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
				
				