



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Aberdeenshire Council: Annual Performance Report 2022-23

If you need a copy of this document in an alternative language or in large print or in Braille please telephone 01467 536139.

Jeśli chcesz otrzymać kopię tego dokumentu w innym języku, napisanego dużą czcionką lub w języku Braille'a, proszę zadzwonić pod numer 01467 536139.

Ja Jums ir nepieciešama šī dokumenta kopija citā valodā, lielformāta drukā vai braila rakstā, lūdzu, zvaniet pa tālruni: 01467 536139.

Если Вы нуждаетесь в копии этого документа на другом языке, укрупненным шрифтом или шрифтом Брайля, просим Вас позвонить по телефону 01467 536139.

Prašau skambinkite tel. 01467 536139, jei jums reikalinga į jūsų kalbą išversto dokumento kopija ar pageidaujate didelėmis raidėmis ar Brailiu.

Contents

WELCOME	4	MARR: What's Happening in your Area?	37
DELIVERING ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL SERVICES	5	GARIOCH: What's Happening in your Area?	38
INTRODUCTION: Our Council Plan 2020-22	6	BANFF & BUCHAN: What's Happening in your Area?	39
OUR COUNCIL PLAN 2022-27	7	FORMARTINE: What's Happening in your Area?	40
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: Summary	8	KINCARDINE & MEARNES: What's Happening in your Area?	41
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: People - Education	10	HOW DO WE COMPARE TO OTHERS?	42
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: People - Health & Wellbeing	12	EMERGENCY RESPONSE: Operation Unicorn	43
OUR PEOPLE: Directorate Overview	15	COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP	
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: Environment - Infrastructure	18	LOCAL OUTCOMES PLAN: (LOIP)	44
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: Environment - Resilient Communities ...	20	MANAGING OUR FINANCES	46
OUR ENVIRONMENT: Directorate Overview	24	DELIVERING BEST VALUE	48
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: Economy - Economy & Enterprise	26	CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN	49
COUNCIL PLAN 2020-22: Economy - Estate Modernisation	29	DELIVERING BEST VALUE: External Audit	50
OUR ECONOMY: Directorate Overview	31	WHAT YOU TOLD US: Reputation Tracker	51
COUNCIL PLAN 2022-27: Summary	33	WHAT YOU TOLD US: Complaints	52
BUCHAN: What's Happening in your Area?	36	WHAT YOU TOLD US: Compliments	53

Welcome



Jim Savege
Chief Executive

Aberdeenshire's Annual Performance Report remains a cornerstone of our unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability, providing a comprehensive overview of our accomplishments and areas for improvement during the reporting year.

This report covers the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, highlighting our key successes while identifying avenues for growth and development.

The environment that we are operating in continues to be extremely challenging, with increasing demands being made of an already stretched and exhausted workforce. I am immensely proud of the dedication of our staff throughout very difficult and uncertain times which look set to continue for years to come as we continue to navigate extreme budget pressures. Staff wellbeing remains a priority as we recognise the significant demands of work as well as personal challenges being felt by everyone.

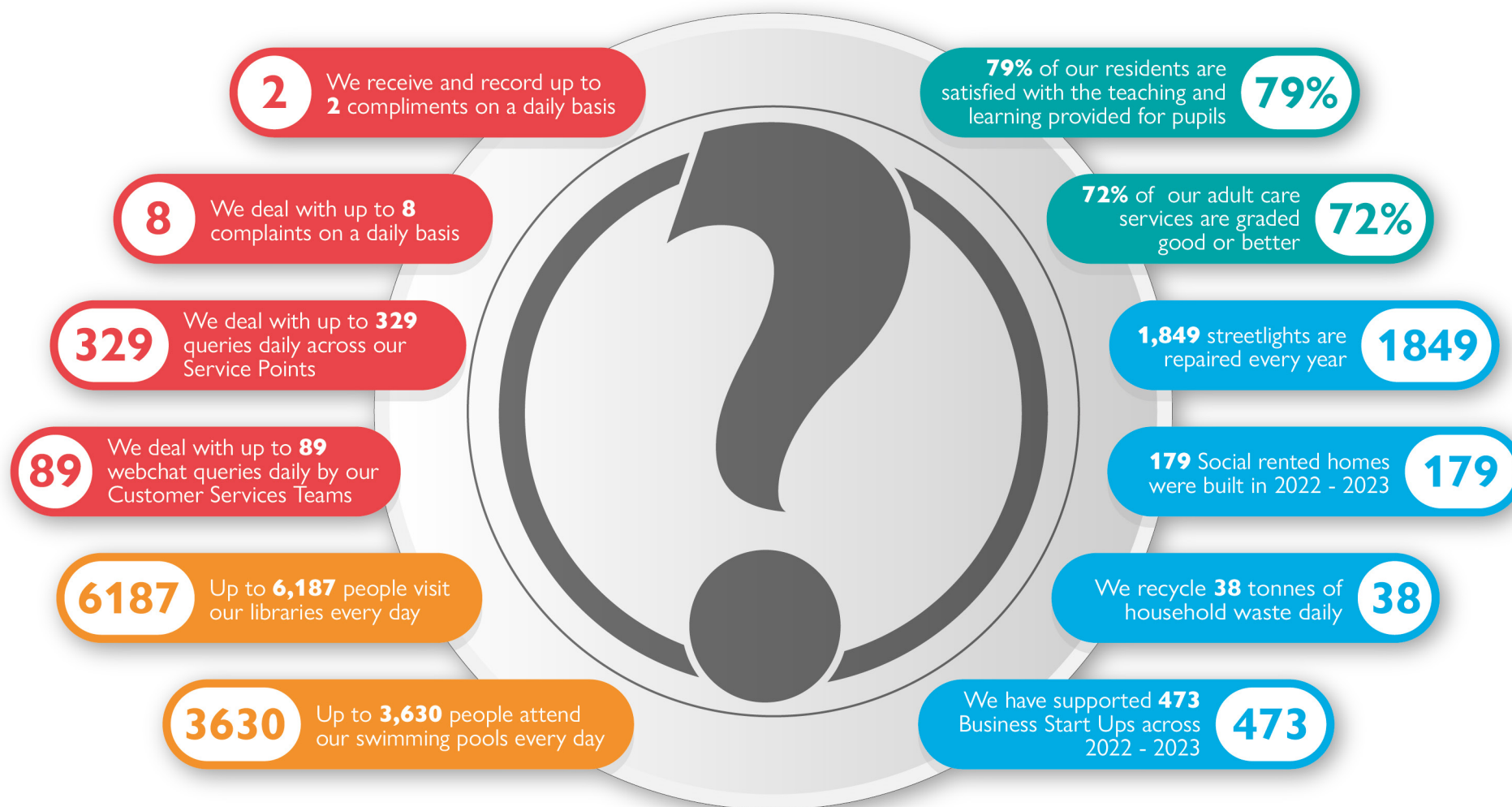
Within this report, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of both our successes and areas where we can improve our performance and ultimately the outcomes for the communities we serve. By delving into the past twelve months, we aspire to offer valuable insights that facilitate informed decision-making and drive our shared commitment to continuous improvement.

Building upon the solid foundations in the 2020 Council Plan, we have intensified our focus on performance and introduced a clearer, more focused Council Plan and priorities.

We hope that this report gives a flavour of some of our achievements over the last year and provides clarity around the work toward our priorities over the coming year and beyond.

Did you know...

Delivering Aberdeenshire Council Services:



Introduction: *Our Council Plan 2020-22*

In October 2020, Aberdeenshire Council refreshed its Council Plan due to the quickly changing landscape we were operating in at the time. The plan was centred around three pillars: Our People, Our Environment, and Our Economy. These pillars were supported by strategic priorities, which were further reinforced by directorate and area plans. This approach ensured that everyone within the organisation understood their role in delivering on the new priorities and contributing to meaningful change.

Our strategic priorities were a direct response to the challenges faced by the Council and our communities and played a pivotal role in shaping the new Medium-Term Financial Strategy. By establishing these strategic priorities, Aberdeenshire Council positioned itself with the best possible opportunity to achieve its ambitions.

Each of the council service priorities were aligned with the corresponding strategic priorities, demonstrating cohesion and synergies.

Our People

- Education
- Health & Wellbeing

Our Environment

- Infrastructure
- Resilient Communities

Our Economy

- Economy & Enterprise
- Estate Modernisation

Our Council Plan 2022-27

Following the election of the new Council in May 2022, the Administration identified new priorities for the upcoming years. The new Strategic Priorities were data-driven, based on our Strategic Assessment 2022/23 as well as data from our Community Impact Assessments and local manifesto pledges. Directors, in collaboration with the respective Policy Chairs, developed performance indicators that clearly demonstrated how Council Services would deliver on the Priorities and the expected outcomes. In November 2022, the new Council Plan 2022-27 was agreed.

Our Council Plan describes our priorities for the years ahead. It sets out our strategic approach to supporting Aberdeenshire communities and businesses to thrive, working with our partners to face the challenges of cost of living and the increasing inequalities, continue our recovery from the pandemic and respond positively to climate change, all whilst ensuring that Aberdeenshire is and remains a welcoming place to live, work and visit. Our focus is on growing the local economy and promoting healthy and resilient communities. We are ambitious in our aspirations and maximise opportunities to secure external funding for projects that will help us deliver our priorities. Our strategic priorities reflect the challenges being faced by the Council and inform our Medium-Term Financial Strategy to address what we know will be a significant financial shortfall. We make the most of opportunities to work with partners, drive efficiencies through all areas of the Council and ensure we are agile and responsive to the needs of our communities. We continue to invest in our workforce, so they are capable, skilled and adaptable. The following provides an overview of our new priorities and the outcomes that align with them:

This report covers a period of transition between two Council Plans. It presents the concluding performance information around our previous priorities as well as a high-level summary of performance against our current priorities. Performance reporting against the Council Plan 2022-27 is in its infancy with Policy Committees having agreed Business Plans and service performance indicators in Spring 2023. Regular reporting against our new priorities is expected to commence in Autumn 2023.



Learning for Life

- Children and young people are more prepared for the world of work through participating in pathways which support the development of skills for learning, life and work
- Care experienced Young People and those with additional support needs will thrive and be supported to fulfil their potential
- To support and nurture our young people and ensure they are actively involved in decision-making where possible
- Residents are equipped to meet key challenges and transitions in their lives through learning opportunities

Find out more about [Learning for Life](#)

Resilient Communities

- Develop and implement a Place Strategy that considers the current and future needs of communities
- Support communities to help themselves and encourage and assist in the delivery of community priorities
- Improve the life chances of people at risk of falling into poverty, or already living in poverty
- Promote greater participation by communities in decisions that impact them

Find out more about [Resilient Communities](#)

Economic Growth

- Improve digital connectivity across Aberdeenshire by lobbying for better infrastructure and providing advice and support for communities and business
- Enabling community organisations and businesses to access project funding
- Stimulate and nurture a culture of entrepreneurship within the region
- Support new and existing businesses to thrive, creating competitive advantage and providing fair work opportunities
- Develop our key sectors and secure inward investment to sustain economic growth

Find out more about [Economic Growth](#)

Health and Wellbeing

- Improve the health and wellbeing of people in our communities, providing care and support when needed
- Enable and deliver the provision of good quality, energy efficient and accessible housing
- Focus on improving mental health through physical and culture activities

Find out more about [Health and Wellbeing](#)

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
- Deliver a road network supporting varied and sustainable modes of travel
- Promote the safety of pedestrians and encourage active travel in all our communities

Find out more about [Infrastructure and Public Assets](#)

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
- Increase the quantity and quality of recycling collected in Aberdeenshire and reduce the volume of unnecessary waste going to landfill
- Support and promote sustainable and active travel

Find out more about [Climate Change](#)

Council Plan 2020-2022: Summary

OVERVIEW

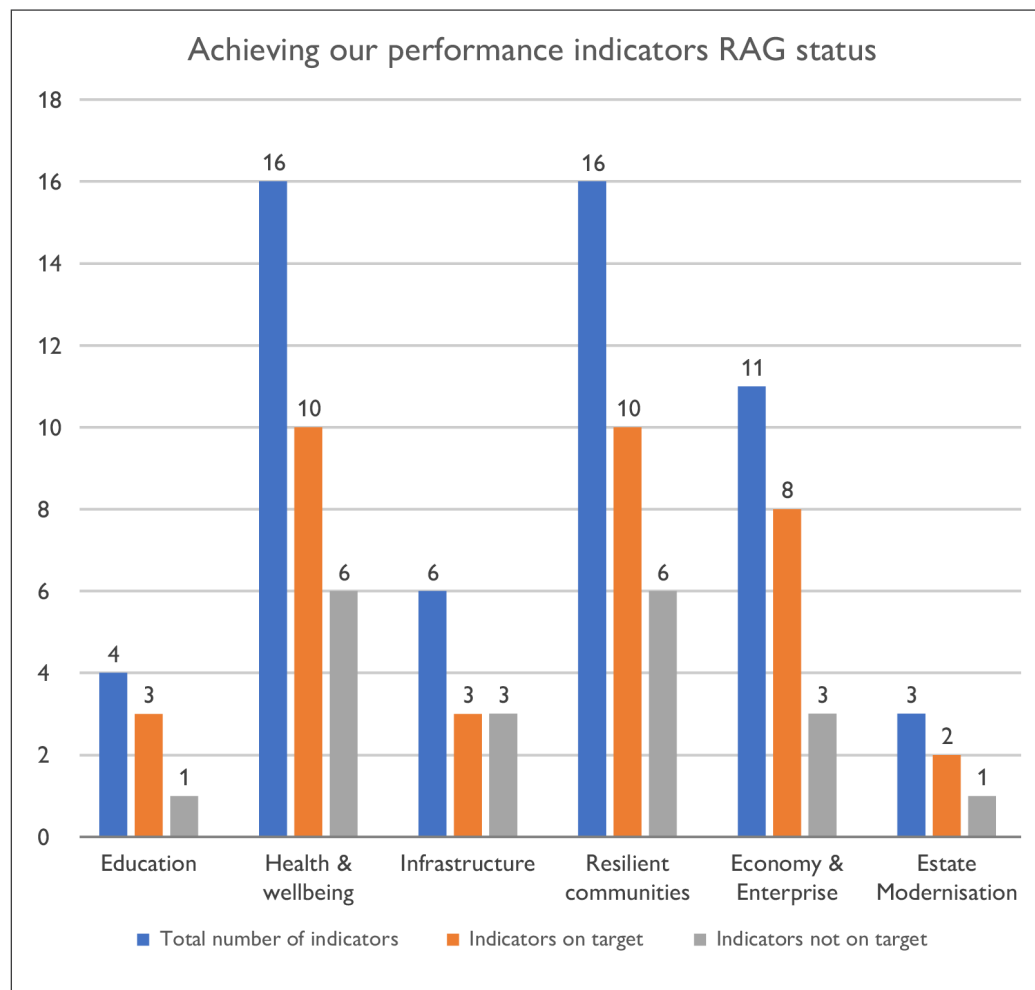
When our 2020 Council Plan was closed off in November 2022, we had made good progress across most of our strategic priorities and were performing well against the majority of our service priorities.

What we've done well

- Supporting people to lead active and healthy lifestyles
- Encouraging active travel
- Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding
- Effective delivery of the Council's priorities through a programme of digital innovation and web-based services
- Developing person-centred care which is delivered sustainably
- Providing support for those facing homelessness

Where we need to do better

- Community involvement and participatory budgeting
- Reducing inequality of outcome across our communities
- Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required
- Making sure our waste and recycling supports our attractive environment and reduces emissions
- Delivering community based services in health and social care



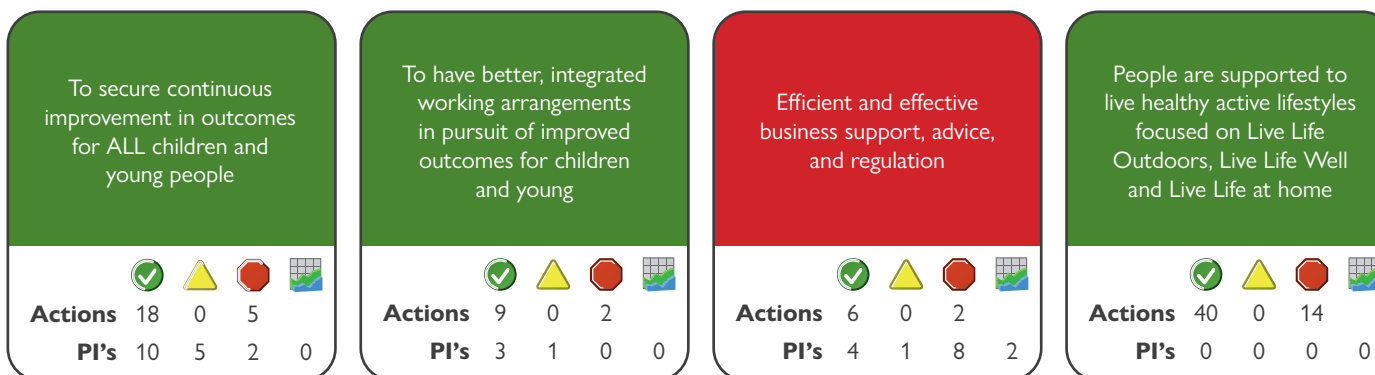
Council Plan 2020-22

How did we do?

Service Priorities: ● 3 ⬢ 1

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, it is likely that 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

People: Education



PI & Action Key: ✔ on track ▲ Slightly off target ⬢ off target 📊 data only/not available/ other

Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target

People: *Education*

Key council priorities aligned to Education include:

- Secure continuous improvement in outcomes for ALL children and young people
- Have better integrated working arrangements
- Have improved business support and recourse management in place
- Develop and deliver a revised LLA

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

■ EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

PROVISION: Over 90% of two-year-olds, and over 97% of three-, four- and five-year-olds that are accessing a funded place are receiving more than 900 hours of funded early learning and childcare provision this year. Given the understanding that developmental gains can be achieved in advance of children attending primary school when younger children access their funded entitlement, Aberdeenshire continues to support increases in accessibility and flexibility of provision.

■ CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

FUTURE DELIVERY PLAN: The Deliver the Children's Social Work Service Future Delivery Plan project action was marked as 100% complete during Q3 2022/23, with all 14 priority areas outlined in the Future Delivery Plan and the three-year progress report all complete. A revised Future Delivery Plan for 2022-25 was being finalised with the three-year cycle of self-evaluation embedded, with a robust cycle of quality assurance/audit activity found to have led to significant improvement in key practice areas such as duty.

■ **MULTI- AGENCY WORKING:** There continues to be very positive examples of multi-agency collaboration on individual projects to benefit young people. For example, collaboration between social work and housing in relation to Youth Housing Forums and to develop the new Stepping Stone project which supports young people to move on to independence. Additionally, the collaboration between children's homes and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to deliver monthly consultations for each children's home. A further example of collaborative work is the work between social work and North East Scotland College (NESCOL) to develop the Youth Education Forum.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **COMBINED LEVELS OF LITERACY:** Although across the three primary year/stages collected in the annual Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels (ACEL) Return for school session 2021/22, Aberdeenshire combined levels for English Literacy have increased compared to session 2020/21, they are below the levels achieved nationally (67.5% compared to 70.5%). However, improvement activity is ongoing with strategic next steps in place for establishing stretch aims which include promoting research-based Pupil Equity Fund interventions, sharing good practice in teacher professional judgement moderation practices, and strengthening effective multi-agency working.
- **SERVICE PRESSURES:** There is pressure around the capacity to drive forward improvement activity across the Local Getting it Right For Every Child groups given challenges around recruitment, retention, and increased demand at times slow progress.

Reports:

[Progress against priorities](#)

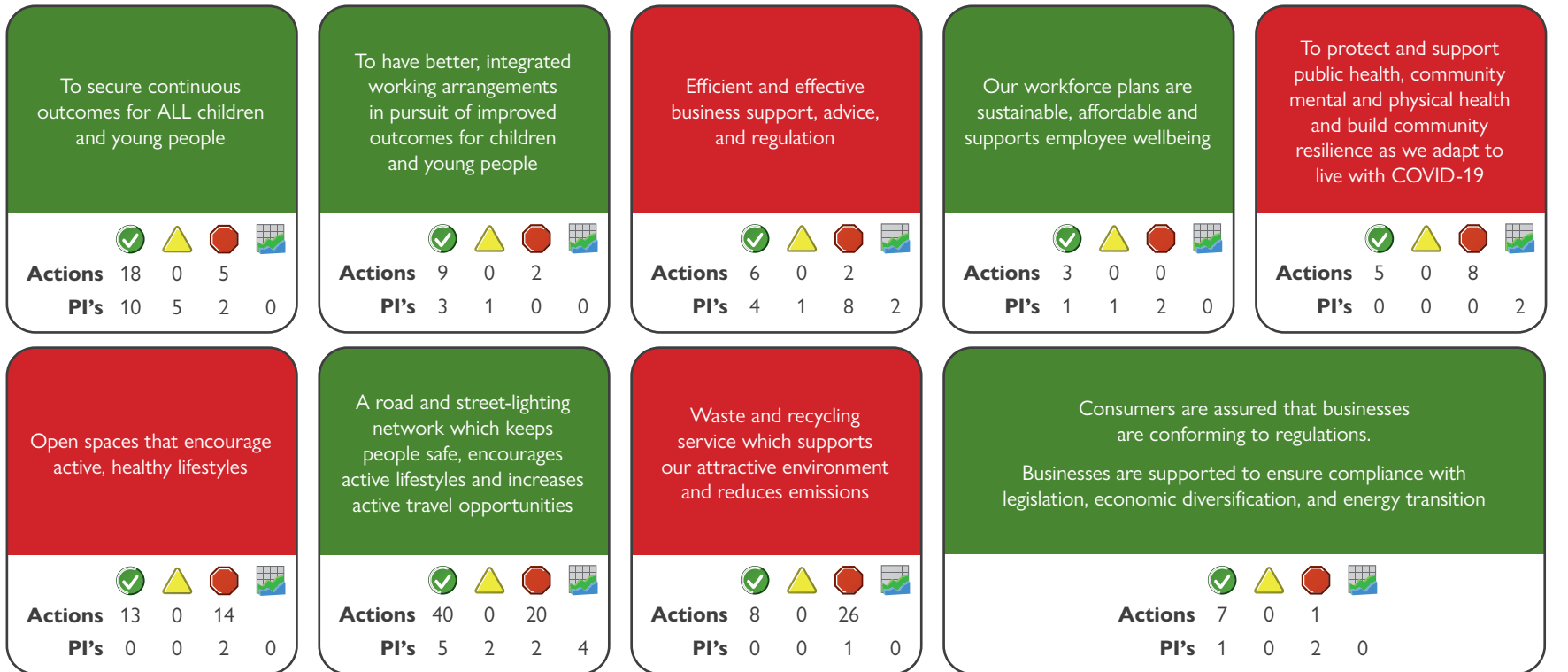
Council Plan 2020-22

How did we do?

Service Priorities: 9 7

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, it is likely that 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

People: Health and Wellbeing



Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

People: Health and Wellbeing

It's easy and safe to move around local areas using good-quality active travel routes, streets, and roads

Actions	6	0	17	
PI's	0	0	0	0

Community-based services are delivered in health and social care

Actions	1	0	3	
PI's	2	2	1	0

Person-centered care is delivered in a sustainable way

Actions	1	0	0	
PI's	3	0	0	0

Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness

Actions	2	0	0	
PI's	1	0	0	0

Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required

Actions	11	0	31	
PI's	1	0	1	0

Tenancies are sustained/ community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enabled

Actions	13	0	1	
PI's	0	0	2	0

Develop existing partnerships and build new ones with our key stakeholders

Actions	3	0	1	
PI's	0	0	0	0

Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

People: *Health & Wellbeing*

Key council priorities aligned to Health & Wellbeing include:

- Our workforce plans are sustainable, affordable and supports employee wellbeing
- To protect and support public health, community mental and physical health and build community resilience as we adapt to live with
- COVID-19 Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles
- People are supported to live healthy active lifestyles focused on Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life at home
- Community-based services are delivered in health and social care



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

■ THROUGH-CARE AND AFTERCARE TEAM:

The Throughcare and Aftercare team have experienced a notable uptick in young people engaged with the team through regular six-monthly Pathway Reviews that were in education, training, or employment during 2022/23 (+18.2% compared to 2021/22).

The team were much less adversely affected by the restrictions in place during the Covid-19 pandemic response of the previous two years and were able to offer a wide range of promotional activities and increasingly face-to-face support. The team continues to engage with a wide range of employers, third sector and voluntary organisations, and also collaborating with our partners in Skills Development Scotland to provide a more targeted service.

■ SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE:

There has been successful support provided to over 32 unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who have been welcomed to Aberdeenshire by our newly developed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Team. The team spend time with the young people to help them adapt to their new home and town. The approach taken to support unaccompanied young people in Aberdeenshire has required close and effective partnership working with colleagues from education, housing, Police

Scotland, CLD, NESCOL and the third sector. This approach ensures that all young people have access to appropriate supports within their local community. This has included regular ‘social cafes’ facilitated by Community Learning & Development (CLD) partners and social events facilitated by Children’s Services Social Work at the Fraserburgh Family Centre. .

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE (LLA):** Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) did not reinstate the normal arrangements for gathering customer feedback on the impact of the service on people’s physical and mental health, or fully re-engaged the internal satisfaction survey usually carried out directly during a physical visit on-site to determine customer satisfaction ratings of excellence

Reports:

[Progress against priorities](#)

Our People: Directorate Overview

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

Aberdeenshire has seen an increase in the uptake of funded Early Learning and Childcare places among 2-year-olds as well as an increase in uptake for 3- and 4-year-olds further to the expansion of early learning and childcare.

Aberdeenshire has continued to have high levels of positive participation post school with positive destination figures above 96%, above the national and regional figures. The overall combined percentage figures for young people achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy and P1, 3 and 7 have also been above the current targets set. Through Live Life Aberdeenshire, holiday recovery sessions have been offered to support young people post pandemic across Aberdeenshire.

Closing the poverty related attainment gap remains a key area of improvement and work is underway aligned to the Scottish Attainment Challenge with ambitious Stretch Aims for improvement being set. Supporting the physical and mental health of the population remains a challenge in a post Covid environment and services across Education & Children's Services are working to address health and wellbeing needs. Staffing in certain parts of Education & Children's Services, specifically secondary teacher staffing remains a significant concern and this shows no sign of improvement. During 2022/23, the service focused on several areas of improvement activity, including the redesign of the Instrumental Music Service, tests of change in relation to whole family wellbeing, delivering the revised Devolved School Management scheme and reshaping the Community Learning and Development Service to best meet targeted local need. Improvement activity was also undertaken to reset the review of school catering provision and to increase improvement capability and capacity across Education & Children's Services teams. Live Life Aberdeenshire staff have worked on the 2023 - 2028 Business Plan which sets out how the service will support improved physical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes for all, with a focus on those who have traditionally struggled to access services.

The "Summer of Play 2022" delivered over 2,600 sessions for children and young people across Aberdeenshire, with over 69,000 participants. Evaluations have been positive with young people commenting on the positive impact on their confidence and health and wellbeing. The whole family wellbeing pilot in Peterhead has resulted in an increase in pupil attendance and family engagement for 14 families and has resulted in further proposals being developed for wellbeing hubs in Peterhead and Fraserburgh. The first projects by Aberdeenshire Youth Music Service have been completed and there is an increase in delivery as a result of video conferencing lessons, a positive development which has arisen from the pandemic.



ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES:

Planning and Economy forged partnerships, leading to the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2023 adoption, as well as tangible outcomes such as: new homes, businesses, and jobs.

Regeneration projects earned awards, fostering sustainable, vibrant communities. Housing & Building Standards prioritised the vulnerable, lowering homeless cases, while Rent Arrears/Housing Revenue Account (HRA) progressed amidst cost-of-living pressures. Affordable Housing Supply added tailored properties and repurposed vacant homes, and void management improved cutting losses and turnover times. A

proactive involvement from Kincardine & Mearns area, utilising the Place Standard toolkit connected with residents and the Primary School. This laid the foundation for a Community Action Plan addressing health and wellbeing needs in Johnshaven.

Planning & Economy tackled significant demands amidst staff shortages. Housing & Building Standards grappled with homelessness amid housing scarcity, as Rent Arrears/HRA pressures arise from restrained rent increases and broader economic challenges. Affordable housing's hurdle lies in escalating costs, with relief possible through increased grant funding. Voids continue to pose a challenge due to low sheltered housing demand, causing income loss. Addressing these issues demands strategic intervention and collaborative effort to uplift and empower the community. Within some of our communities we face higher deprivation indices, representing real challenges which require unique solutions.

In Planning & Economy, we are revitalising our efforts through the re-launch of the Team newsletter, to increase visibility of our team's work. Embracing digital innovation, our policy planning and LDP process is undergoing a transformation. Housing and Building Standards are pursuing improvements through a HRA Business Plan Review Member Officer Working Group (MOWG.) In voids management, we are upgrading procedures, culminating in reduced completion times. This reflects our commitment to continuous enhancement of services and the community's well-being. We are committed to bolstering communities by empowering them to identify projects and fundraising efforts.

Our dedication in Johnshaven fosters stronger community connections leading to improved local services. Adopting LDP 2023 ensures certainty for effective decision-making and seamless development delivery.

Homelessness efforts yield high-performance and significant savings, reducing reliance on costly accommodation and benefit expenditure, enhancing housing sustainability. Rent arrears management, driven by early intervention and external funding, places us in the top quartile. Our Rent Strategy Group sustains tenancies and supports tenants in need. Expanding affordable housing addresses demand, ensuring permanent, quality housing for specific needs groups, promoting inclusivity. Improved void management boosts HRA income.

BUSINESS SERVICES:

The Property & Facilities Management Service continues to work with Education & Children's Services to deliver the Education New Build programme with Passivhaus design development and governance for:

- Peterhead Community Campus
- Fraserburgh Primary School
- Stonehaven Additional Support Needs (ASN) School & Primary School
- Chapelton Primary School

During 2022-23, the Finance Service continued to reduce the time taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims. The average number of days to process community care grants reduced from 25 to 19 days. The main area of focus for improvement will be to reduce the processing time for community care grants as outlined above and to maintain the improvement shown within Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. There continues to be a focus on reducing the processing times for community care grants to meet the legislative timelines as set out within the regulations. Processing requests for financial assistance in a timely manner will better enable financially vulnerable households to manage their household budgets.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP:

Health and social care teams have continued to deliver high quality care to our communities through an extremely challenging period. New services have been developed to meet increasing demand and in response to national directives. Examples include the Mental Health and Wellbeing Improvement Service to support people with their mental wellbeing, and development of local 'Step-in' services across Aberdeenshire as part of implementation of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards, offering responsive and intensive care from a multi-disciplinary team for anyone requiring support with problematic drug or alcohol use.

Locally and nationally, health and social care services have continued to face unprecedented challenges throughout the year, not just over the winter period (where the sustainability of the health and care system is already under significant pressure

due to demography, population health need and workforce pressures.) The most significant pressure presents in the system's ability to effectively and safely manage the flow of patients and to address unmet need, where our capacity in Aberdeenshire has been compromised in terms of both bed availability and care at home capacity.

Continued implementation of the HSCP's Social Care Sustainability Programme will seek to address challenges around capacity for adult social care in Aberdeenshire, involving a number of different workstreams to create self-improving and sustainable social care services.

Work is underway with Public Health Scotland Local Intelligence Support Team to understand and support planning around population and demographic need/ changes in demand across Aberdeenshire within available resources.

At operational level, work continues on a variety of initiatives to maintain people safely in the community wherever possible, monitoring activity and demand datasets (for example, the Virtual Community Ward model bringing together multi-disciplinary teams to offer wrap around care in the community to prevent unnecessary admissions).

The Social Care Sustainability Programme will aim to ensure sustainable and fit for the future services, which address unmet need. The In-House Care at Home workstream is implementing innovative approaches creating posts that enable adaptability across the health and social care system and allow the opportunity for carers to learn different skills.

Embedding the intake model of rehabilitation and enablement for older people and people with physical disabilities ensures teams work together to support people to regain and maintain their abilities. Aberdeenshire HSCP is a pathfinder participant in the national GIRFE (Getting It Right For Everyone) approach, working with communities that places people at the heart of decision making in relation to their care.



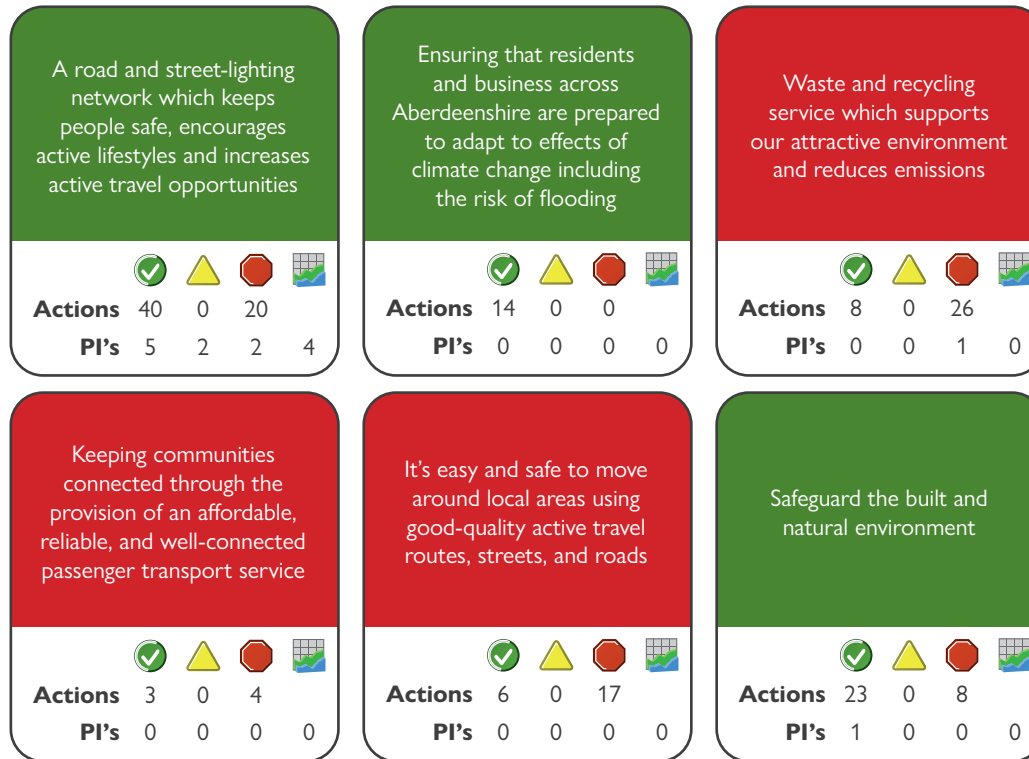
Council Plan 2020-22

How did we do?

Service Priorities: 3 3

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, it is likely that 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

Environment: Infrastructure



Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

Environment: *Infrastructure*

Key council priorities aligned to Infrastructure include:

- A road and street-lighting network which keeps people safe, encourages active lifestyles and increases active travel opportunities
- Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding
- Waste and recycling service which supports our attractive environment and reduces emissions
- Keeping communities connected through the provision of an affordable, reliable and well-connected passenger transport service
- It's easy and safe to move around local areas using good-quality active travel routes, streets and roads Safeguard the built and natural environment

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **EXTERNAL FUNDING SECURED:** We successfully secured external funding from Sustrans for the Banff and Macduff Active travel bridge. External funding was also secured to develop hydrogen as an alternative transport fuel source, and in rural transport - at almost no cost to the

council - through the participation in Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas (GPatra) and HyTrEc2 (a transnational project within the Interreg VB North Sea Region Programme 2014-2020) projects.

- **NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR BIKEABILITY:** National Recognition received for our Transport Safety Engineering Officer for their role in Aberdeenshire Council's role in developing Bikeability in primary schools.
- **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEAM:** The creation of the Natural Environment Team, within Environment and Sustainability, involved bringing together and embedding a new team, new processes and work planning to ensure the benefits of creating a single team to drive forward nature-based solutions to climate change are achieved. Delays on the announcement and uncertainty on the scale of external funding being received from Scottish Government through the Nature Restoration Fund meant that rapid planning and spending was required to deliver projects before the end of the financial year.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **ABERDEENSHIRE STREET LIGHTING FAULTS:** Performance in relation to street lighting repairs has continued to decline, primarily due to lack of qualified operatives. The current percentage

of streetlights repaired within 7 days sits at 57.8% which is below the target of 62.5% and a decline on the 2021/22 figure of 79.6%. The Service has been unable to recruit electrically qualified staff. The lighting maintenance team should comprise six operatives, but the Service is currently carrying two vacancies. A review of the job profile, the tasks undertaken, and the level of qualifications required is underway in an effort to attract applicants. External contracts have been established for more major planned lighting work, to ensure our in-house electricians can concentrate on repair work.

- **ACTIVE TRAVEL AND ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES:** Internal staffing is a key challenge with delivering active travel and road safety initiatives. Reductions in budget not only for Landscape Services but other services such as Roads will create a challenge with maintaining these areas. Potentially, alternative machines will be required and this may increase costs as team may have to do multiple journeys to a settlement to cut the grass rather than one.

Reports:

[Progress against Priorities](#)

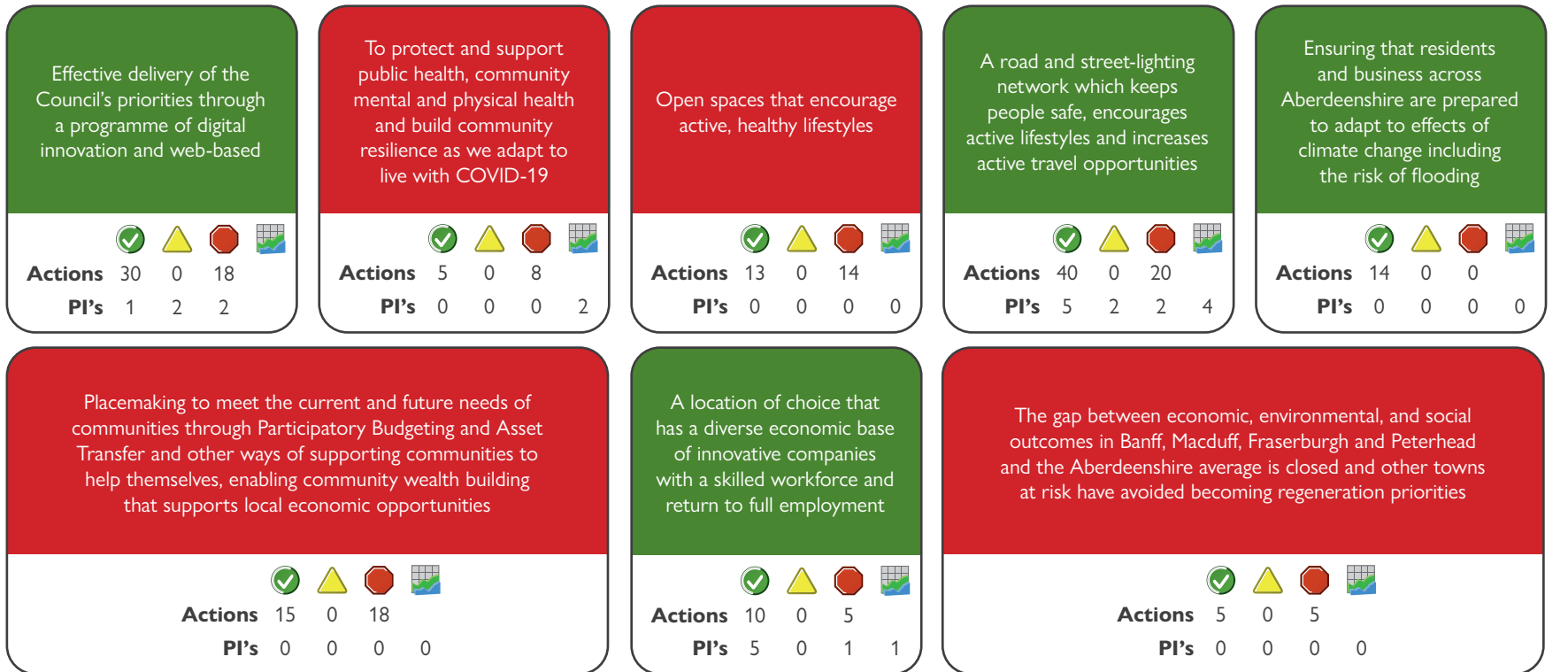
Council Plan 2020-22

How did we do?

Service Priorities: 10 6

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, it is likely that 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

Environment: Resilient Communities



Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

Environment: Resilient Communities

<p>Consumers are assured that businesses are conforming to regulations. Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification, and energy transition</p> <p>Actions 7 0 1 </p> <p>PI's 1 0 2 0</p>	<p>Develop existing partnerships and build new ones with our key stakeholders</p> <p>Actions 3 0 1 </p> <p>PI's 0 0 0</p>	<p>Community-based services are delivered in health and social care</p> <p>Actions 1 0 3 </p> <p>PI's 2 2 1 1</p>	<p>Person-centered care is delivered in a sustainable way</p> <p>Actions 1 0 0 </p> <p>PI's 3 0 0 0</p>	<p>Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness</p> <p>Actions 2 0 0 </p> <p>PI's 1 0 0 1</p>
<p>Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required</p> <p>Actions 11 0 31 </p> <p>PI's 1 0 1 0</p>	<p>Tenancies are sustained/ community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enabled</p> <p>Actions 13 0 1 </p> <p>PI's 0 0 0 0</p>	<p>People are supported to live healthy active lifestyles focused on Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life at home</p> <p>Actions 40 0 14 </p> <p>PI's 0 0 0 0</p>		

Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

Environment: *Resilient Communities*

Some key council priorities aligned to Resilient Communities include:

- programme of digital innovation and web-based services
- To protect and support public health, community mental and physical health and build community resilience as we adapt to live with COVID-19
- Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding
- Placemaking to meet the current and future needs of communities through Participatory Budgeting and Asset Transfer and other ways of supporting communities to help themselves, enabling community wealth building that supports local economic opportunities
- A location of choice that has a diverse economic base of innovative companies with a skilled workforce and return to full employment
- Tenancies are sustained/community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enable

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **ONLINE SERVICES:** We have introduced a broader range of online services to our website including: Waste - reporting abandoned vehicles; Breach of Planning control; and Roads – streetlight reporting.
- **BIODIVERSITY:** Several areas of open space are now being managed with biodiversity as the driver and many of these areas have been well received and are delivering on the habitat and species diversity.
- **AVERAGE TIME TO RESOLVE HOMELESS CASES:** The average time to resolve homeless cases, at Q4 2022/23 sits at 84.5 days, which is beating our target of 90 days. We have bettered our target in Q1,3 & 4 and were only slightly above our target at 91.7 days in Q2.
- **THE UKRAINE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM:** supported a complex and wide-ranging cross service response, covering all aspects of the programme including property and safeguarding checks and support to hosts and clients. The pace and scale of arrivals in 2022 required us to focus on ensuring all families were safeguarded and had the safety and sanctuary they needed to settle in Aberdeenshire. Essential integration areas were addressed including benefits, health, employability, schooling, English for

Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and housing with the invaluable support and guidance of hosts. Families were safeguarded and had the safety and sanctuary they needed to settle in Aberdeenshire. Since the launch of Homes for Ukraine in March 2022, the Refugee Resettlement Team and partners have resettled in the region of 500 Ukrainians into Aberdeenshire. Our Aberdeenshire communities responded generously resulting in one of the biggest sponsor offers per head of population in the UK.

- **TOWARDS A FAIRER ABERDEENSHIRE:** The Towards A Fairer Aberdeenshire Annual Report and refreshed Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-26 were considered and approved by Communities Committee on 30th March 2023. Prior to approval by Communities Committee, the Annual Report and draft Child Poverty Action Plan were considered by all Area Committees and Education & Children’s Services Committee. Both the Annual Report and Child Poverty Action Plan are available on the Community Planning Partnership website.

Environment: *Resilient Communities*

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED IN 2022:

- **INCREASE EXPERTS OF EXPERIENCE AND COPRODUCTION:** Local people being key partners in developing services, policies and influencing change. In 2022, 60, individuals shared their experiences, with over 250 being young people. These experts of experience informed practice around the stigmatisation of poverty, ensure information was available by development of a Worried About Money Leaflet, Young Scot Tackling Poverty & Inequalities website and the 4th Child Poverty Action Report. They have informed national research on food insecurity and health conditions such as obesity, informed local charges set for recreation activities, explored issues that affected them such as fuel poverty and made recommendations for the future.
- **INCREASE ACCESS TO INTEGRATED SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES:** The total number of people who have participated in services, opportunities and events that partners have collectively delivered in 2022 is 26,073 of which 3,272 are children and young people.

- **IMPROVE HEALTH INEQUALITIES:** Partners have reported an increase in request for support around them being empowered to access health services and increase skills and knowledge to improve their own health & wellbeing. Over the last year 567 individuals have reported an improvement in their own health & wellbeing as a result of the support that has been put in place.
- **REDUCING HOUSING COSTS:** There are a number of workstreams that support low-income households to reduce housing costs. These are support with food, fuel, wellbeing funds and information & Advice services. The number of households supported to reduce their housing costs is 21,731 with a client financial gain of £6,509,323.
- **IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS:** There are a number of programmes delivered through Aberdeenshire Employability partnership who have supported over 1,200 to enhance their employability skills through targeted training programmes, work experience and delivery of supported employment schemes.
- **SECURED ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:** Partners have used the funding they received through Tackling Poverty & Inequalities to collectively secure an additional £3, 928,794

KEY CHALLENGES

- **BRIDGES ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATION - AS A % OF COST OF IDENTIFIED WORK:** The allocated budget for 2022/2023 was £9,293,000. The estimated cost of identified work was £100,000,000. The % of the budget allocated of estimated cost of identified work was 9.3%.
- **PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** The average time to process a business and industry planning application rose this year to 14.2 weeks which is above last year's figure of 11.4 weeks. There have been some variations in performance in some of the area teams and this is attributable to varying factors including the actions of teams proactively increasing throughout and seeking to reduce backlogs that have built up, and in conjunction with staffing changes that the teams have experienced.

Reports:

[Progress Against Priorities](#)

Our Environment: Directorate Overview

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

Many aspects of the work led by the Community Learning & Development (CLD) team cut across all six of the previous Council priority areas. In relation to resilient communities and the environment, some specific work has been undertaken via the New Pitsligo Family Fun and Food initiative led by the Adult Learning and Communities team. Furthermore, the "Over 2 Youth 22" project led by the Youth and Communities team brought together nine young people from different youth forums to plan their event and prepared speeches for the event and provided wellness and recipe bags and a designed a logo for the event. An ECS Strategy for Sustainability has been developed for our schools to ensure a clear focus in making improvements in this area.

A key challenge in relation to the environment has been on supporting behaviour change and one key element of the carbon reduction strategy has been the recording of pupil climate change ambitions as it is clear young people are keen to lead the way in this area. There are several projects underway such as improved waste management recycling in schools, recycling and re-using, but these are being affected by budget constraints and the service is looking into the potential for sponsorship to support some of the initiatives we are keen to see progressed.

Resilience is a feature which runs through several ECS strands of work. This includes the work being led through our Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Strategic Group in terms of supporting young people to have thriving mental health and through providing trauma informed services to all children, young people and families, particularly those in the greatest need of our support, such as our care experienced population. As a specific example, our Children's Services teams are committed to delivering GIRFEC through developing meaningful relationships with children, young people, and families to support and enable them to lead their own change, which is crucial in developing resilience.

The "Over 2 youth 22" event allowed young people to understand what can be achieved by working together and enhanced their knowledge and understanding of

how local organisations can work together to support communities and the role young people can play in this. Those young people involved also now feel more confident in being able to challenge discrimination, inequalities, and prejudice. The New Pitsligo Family Fun and Food initiative has supported families in learning about their local environment, how to grow their own vegetables, how to harvest, prepare and cook food and how to effectively compost and recycle, ensuring no unnecessary wastage.

ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES:

Some of the service's key successes include:

- Securing a Network Support Grant of more than £200,000 from Transport Scotland to support the provision of community transport, providing affordable and reduced fares and additional accessible services.
- Roads and Infrastructure maintain network integrity via steady-state road maintenance and LED streetlight rollout, curbing energy use.
- Stonehaven Flood Protection Scheme completion shields a vital community stretch from floods.
- In Kincardine & Mearns £82,000 from the Committee budget empowers 20 local groups, sparking transformative projects.

Planning & Economy fuels continuous improvement through Positive Planning Performance Framework feedback aligned to a digital planning process. The pinnacle is the F2021 Project, securing two Royal Town Institute (RTPI) Planning Excellence awards in 2022. Planning & Economy's focus lies in fortifying the Planning and Economy Service through innovative employment pathways, in collaboration with further and higher education institutions.

The area of reactive road maintenance and defect management has presented challenges, resulting in a substantial backlog which is currently being addressed. There is need for enhanced promotion of community initiatives to attract more applicants, fostering broader engagement.

More resources will be directed towards reactive road maintenance with the aspiration to stabilise the level of the backlog. The council will be linking successful local groups and applications to ongoing 'Place initiatives' to maximise our holistic place approach. A working group is to be set up to improve communication and liaison between the Historic Environment team and Planning Enforcement to ensure breaches in planning enforcement are addressed timeously. An enhanced recruitment process has been developed to maximise opportunities for Aberdeenshire residents to gain employment within the Planning and Economy Service. Kincardine & Mearns Communities feel empowered to take ownership of local initiatives and expand their future capacity. Eight new planners recruited into the Planning & Economy Service. A more visible roads maintenance offering is being seen in terms of reactive and proactive maintenance.

BUSINESS SERVICES:

Property and Facilities Management has increased activity on the Carbon Reduction Agenda, with oversight of the Housing Improvement Programme, New Build Programme and commenced work on identified levelling up projects.

Customer & Digital Services continue to progress the digital strategy to enable communities to utilise self-service while striving to ensure improved broadband access for communities. Digital services provide efficient processes and reliable online services that can be accessed 24/7 ensuring convenience for our communities. We will continue to deliver the digital strategy, ensuring equality of access for our communities.

Efficient and well-planned handling of an election event creates confidence in democracy and local governance. The Legal and People Service led on all the internal planning to

ensure smooth elections and inductions following the Local Government elections of May 2022. The induction of new Councillors has been effective, by ensuring Councillors are able to support their communities and the work of the Council.

There is a continued focus on ensuring the most efficient travel options are available for officers across services with a rollout of vehicles to additional areas within Aberdeenshire, allowing a further uptake amongst employees.

The Travel Team within Legal & People will continue to analyse business mileage data to identify where Car Club vehicles should be located in order to meet staff demand and maximise their usage. It is recognised that there has been an increase in the number of business journeys undertaken within Car Club vehicles, thus, assisting the Council to meet its Carbon Budget commitments through reduced CO2 emissions.

Aberdeenshire Council has worked to ensure that the messaging around the need for individual, household, family and community resilience is accepted. The Risk & Resilience Team continues to work on the development of a Community Resilience Strategy to help communities respond to a major incident according to their capacity and level of engagement.

Further Improvement activity that is being progressed includes:

- The implementation of a Persons at Risk Distribution database
- The launch of the Community Resilience Strategy
- A Community Resilience Conference held jointly with Aberdeen City.

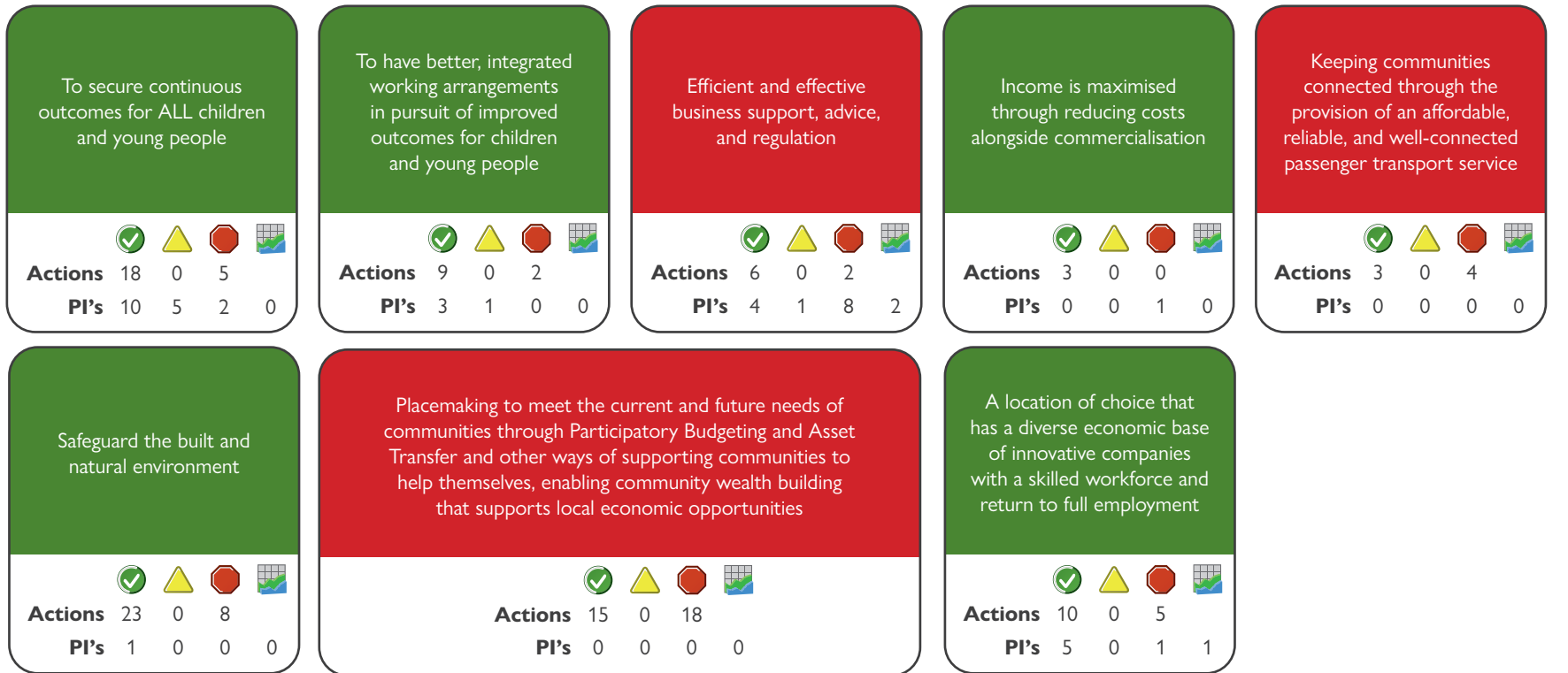
Council Plan 2020-22





How did we do?

Service Priorities:  8  3

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, it is likely that 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

Economy: *Economy and Enterprise*



Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target
 PI & Action Key:  on track  Slightly off target  off target  data only/not available/ other

Economy: *Economy and Enterprise*

The gap between economic, environmental, and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities

Actions	5	0	5	
PI's	0	0	0	0

Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through pandemic, Brexit, and energy transition

Actions	10	0	0	
PI's	0	0	0	0

Consumers are assured that businesses are conforming to regulations. Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification, and energy transition

Actions	7	0	1	
PI's	1	0	2	0

PI & Action Key: on track Slightly off target off target data only/not available/ other

Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target

Economy: *Economy & Enterprise*

Some key council priorities aligned to Economy & Enterprise include:

- Efficient and effective business support, advice and regulation. Income is maximised through reducing costs alongside commercialisation
- Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through pandemic, Brexit and energy transition. Consumers are assured that businesses are conforming to regulations.
- Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification and energy transition.
- Keeping communities connected through the provision of an affordable, reliable and well-connected passenger transport service.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **BUSINESS GATEWAY START UPS:** The number of business start-ups per year through assistance provided by the Business Gateway is 473. This is above the target of 371 and an increase on the 2021/22 figure of 460. A new contract was started on 1 April 2023 and the number of business start-ups supported for Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City was 743 for 2022/23.

■ BUSINESS RECOVERY AND GROWTH

SCHEME: In September 2022 the Council launched a new grant scheme to help existing businesses in the region develop and diversify. The Business Recovery and Growth Scheme (BRAGS), which is being funded by the Scottish Government's Local Economic Covid Recovery Fund (LACER), will support businesses which have been trading in Aberdeenshire for at least six months. Designed to aid recovery from the Covid pandemic, grants will encourage and enable businesses to:

- Maintain income streams and future proof the business
 - Capitalise on product and market development opportunities
 - Be innovative in outlook and practice
 - Promote economic recovery
 - Sustain and enhance existing jobs
 - Create new employment opportunities
- Grants of £2,500, £5,000, £10,000 which are available which are based on a 75% grant contribution to the total project costs

Businesses must provide at least 25% of the funding. The grant scheme is open to all businesses based and operating in Aberdeenshire for at least six months including sole traders, partnerships, limited liability partnerships, limited companies, registered charities and third sector organisations.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY:** The proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband is 85% which is below the target of 94%. Aberdeenshire does, however, continue to benefit from the R100 roll out, with an additional 3,814 premises benefitting from connection upgrades. The Digital Engagement team continue to work with premises and 320 Scottish Broadband vouchers have been used to improve individual connections. This represents 10% of eligible households and is the highest rate in Scotland owing to the rurality of our region and the efforts of the Digital Engagement team. Aberdeenshire remains one of the poorest connected of all Scottish Local Authorities and ranks 27th out of 32.
- **HIGH-RISK PREMISES:** This relates to the percentage of High-Risk Premises visited within the timescales by Trading Standards. High Risk Premises are large food packers, feed mills, weighbridges and other premises with a history of non-compliances. 27 High Risk premises were identified but only 23 were able to be visited within the timescale. This equates to 85.2%, which is below the target of 95%.

Reports:

[Progress Against Priorities](#)

Council Plan 2020-22





How did we do?

Service Priorities:  2  1

Note: Figures are based on the most up to date information available on 31 March 2023. Where indicators are benchmarked externally, this can lead to a delay in receiving the verified information. Therefore, for indicators included in the LGBF and other similar benchmarking groups, 2021-22 stats are provided. Some indicators are only reported quarterly, where this is the case, Q4 of 2022-23 status has been provided. Scorecards are based on directorate plan actions, area plan actions and directorate plan PI's.

Economy: Estate Modernisation



PI & Action Key:  on track  Slightly off target  off target  data only/not available/ other

Priority Key: Red Threshold: 50% not meeting target

Economy: *Estate Modernisation*

Some key council priorities aligned to Estate Modernisation include:

- Efficient and effective business support advice and regulation
- We have an estate that is sustainable, efficient and fit for purpose
- People are supported to live healthy active lifestyles focused on Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life at home.



KEY SUCCESSES

■ PROPORTION OF INTERNAL FLOOR AREA IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION:

The proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition is at 91.82%, which is higher than our target of 89.2% and is slowly and consistently improving each year. As underperforming assets are reviewed or form part of ongoing strategies (Depot, Office Space Strategy) this figure should continue to improve.

■ PROGRAMME OF ASSET DISINVESTMENT:

There has been ongoing activity with several potential asset releases progressing through the Asset Disposal Procedure. For year 2022/23 a total of 5 sales were concluded in addition to the transfer of 3 facilities to HRA for redevelopment. Several other sales are progressing, with missives concluded subject to any suspensive conditions e.g., purchaser securing Planning consent etc.

■ CARBON BUDGET:

The carbon “route map” has been developed and was approved on 29 September 2022. The route map identifies measures to reduce carbon in operational buildings such as fabric improvements, air-source heat pumps, LED lightings, PV panels. The route map details the estimated capital costs and carbon emissions. Feasibility studies are

being developed to ensure that the proposed measures are practicable and that the estimated costs are robust.

KEY CHALLENGES

■ OPERATIONAL BUILDINGS SUITABLE FOR CURRENT USE:

Aberdeenshire Council’s operational portfolio extended to 612 assets – a reduction of 7 from April 2022. Overall performance indicator show slight improvement with 478 operational assets/features assessed as suitable for their current use – equating to 78.1% (an improvement of 0.23%). A number of underperforming assets are subject to review with Services and/or form part of ongoing strategies being implemented e.g. Depot, Office Space Strategies etc. Further, a number of underperforming assets are also progressing through the Asset Disposal Pipeline

Reports:

[Progress Against Priorities](#)

Our Economy: Directorate Overview

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

The Learning Estates team has continued to focus on ensuring we make best use of our current learning estate and in making appropriate plans for our future estate requirements. In the past year, the team has continued to work hard to ensure our estate is fit for purpose and fit for the future, aiming to ensure it is efficient and effective and promoting educational benefits for learners. The team has specifically made positive progress in relation to plans for school provision in South Formartine, Chapelton and Fraserburgh.

Our Foundation Apprenticeship programme continues to expand, with around 800 young people now undertaking these programmes across our academies at Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 4, 5 and 6. We see this as a key feature of our Developing our Young Workforce (DYW) approach and central to ensuring a sufficient talent pipeline in appropriate local employment sectors.

We continue to see a decrease in primary school rolls in some areas, leading to an increase in "one class" schools. This leads to challenges maintaining an ageing estate in line with existing resources whilst providing a vibrant 21st century learning experience for learners. Similarly, historical underinvestment in our leisure estate has resulted in some facilities requiring upgrades at a time of budgetary constraints. Live Life Aberdeenshire has continued to adopt a commercial approach to its provision to ensure best value but this remains a challenging area.

The main areas of focus for improvement will be in relation to the Peterhead Community Campus project, the Fraserburgh primary school project and ongoing works in relation to provision in South Formartine and Chapelton. The team in Live Life Aberdeenshire are working on ambitious Levelling Up plans for Macduff Aquarium and the cultural quarter project in Peterhead as well as reviewing the use of all Live Life Aberdeenshire facilities to ensure we are making the best possible use of available resources.

The reduction in the learning estate has the dual advantage of reducing our carbon footprint whilst also providing an enhanced educational experience for young people. Furthermore, the new school buildings which are being planned are being designed to the latest specifications ensuring they are as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. Our ongoing investment in Foundation Apprenticeship provision has seen the percentage of school leavers exiting school with at least one vocational qualification at Level 6 at 18% (compared to the Scottish figure of 10%). At SCQF Level 5 the Aberdeenshire figure is 34% compared to the Scottish figure of 27%.

ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES:

Our Directorate achievements include:

- Hosting the prestigious Tour of Britain cycling event twice, elevating Aberdeenshire's cultural status
- Planning & Economy secured £1.7M for 9 regional projects and £1.5M for Friends of Tarlair Pavilion
- Completing the Fraserburgh Beach Masterplan
- Startup grants have boosted 130 businesses within the area
- Our employability efforts ensured we created 41 hires, 54 long-term unemployed placements and 270 employments or apprenticeships
- External funding totalled £29.3M from 107 applications
- LACER, the Scottish Government Local Economic Recovery Fund, aided 313 jobs and £600,000 in business investment
- The Investment Zone status unlocked £80M in investments
- The Regional Economic Strategy 2035 has been approved
- Housing & Building Standards invested £34.2M, upgrading 3,526 council houses

Within Kincardine & Mearns there is the opportunity to further improve supporting events relating to specific occasions e.g., Tour of Britain, to ensure they can develop into a spectacle that attracts an increasing number of visitors from a non-cycling interest and go on to share the lessons learned.

Planning and Economy will revise the Service Plan and Aberdeenshire Economic Action Plan and realign the Service to ensure resources are allocated to economic priority areas.

With regard to impact, there has been an increase in the number of visitors to Aberdeenshire have improved; improved profile of Aberdeenshire and indirect positive impact on the number of people participating in healthy lifestyles.

Through the realignment of resources to specific areas and sectors of the economy, the Aberdeenshire business community is provided with greater support. Additionally, the repurposing of resources to create an external funding team in 2021 has significantly increased the level of external funding brought into Aberdeenshire in the last 12 months. The result has been a greater level of funding available to deliver capital programmes and providing community groups the opportunity to deliver community infrastructure programmes.

BUSINESS SERVICES:

The Council is the largest construction client in the region. It has the largest portfolio of property assets in the Northeast, 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.

Aberdeenshire re-procured a Hard FM contract delivering essential repairs and maintenance to Council properties.

Some of our achievements include:

- Designing and implementing a Minor Works Framework, utilising local contractors to support the development of a local supply chain –there were 2,700 orders issued to a value of £3.9m.
- Creating a Dynamic Purchasing System as a procurement route – 27 projects awarded to a value of £4.2m.
- Developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023-28, in conjunction with Services and Members.

With regard to areas for improvement, Operation Oyne – an Asset Disinvestment programme- was set up to facilitate the optimisation of the Council built environment. This is a new way of pulling together the Asset Disinvestment programme and will seek to introduce speed and efficiency to the overall process.

Finance will continue to work with services and Strategic Leadership to identify areas of greatest financial risk and introduce appropriate mitigation. Furthermore, they are working with services on areas being considered for Transformation to identify areas of budget savings going forward. There will also be an ongoing review of the Capital Plan to ensure that it is deliverable, sustainable, and affordable going forward.

There are plans to move to paperless direct debits for Sundry Debts, Council Tax and Business Rates self-service, including e-billing.

The impact will be measured as we work towards a balanced budget for 2024/25 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. In overall terms we are seeing reduced costs and customer contact from service improvements.

Council Plan 2022-27: Summary

OVERVIEW

Learning for Life: 1 indicator aligned to Learning for Life, *relating to developmental milestones*, that has not been reported on or contained within appendix 3 for Q4, as there is currently no data at this time.

The percentage of care experienced young people achieving awards and positive destinations is measured by 2 indicators one which is amber and one which is green.

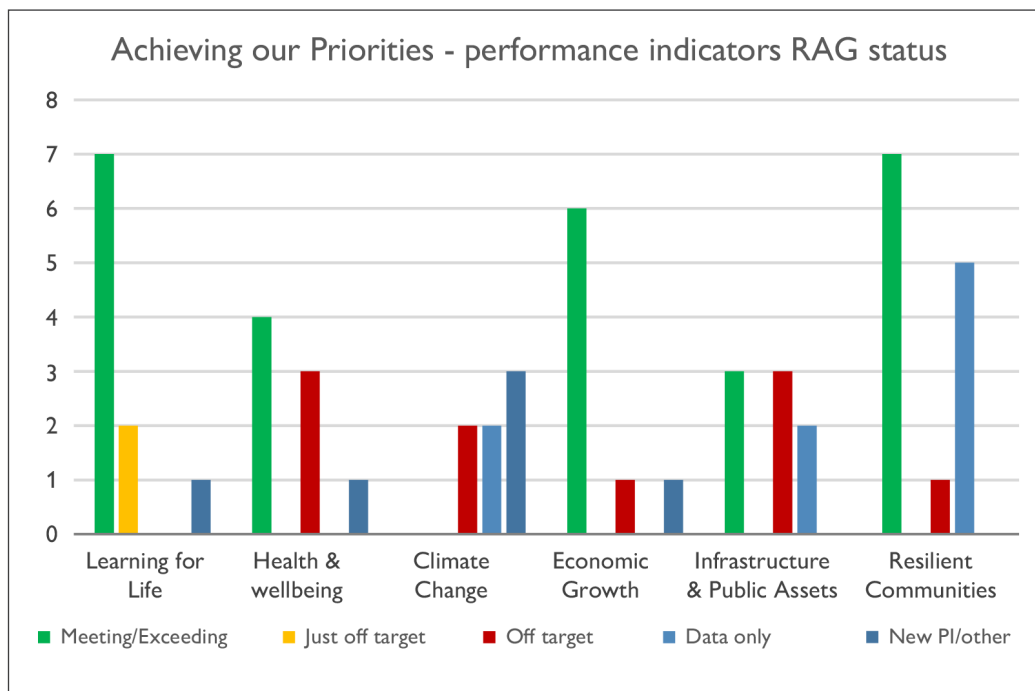
Climate Change: There are 2 indicators that make up the **Council Energy Consumption** measure contained within the council plan. These indicators are both data only.

Economic Growth: *The number of businesses surviving at 1 year and 5 year* is measured using two separate indicators, both of which are green.

Infrastructure & Public Assets: *Capacity meets demand and efficient use of any under-utilised estate* is made up of two measures- one of which is green and once of which is data only.

Resilient Communities: 5 indicators make up the measure: *increased number of households supported through the roll out of income maximisation, money advice & welfare rights accessibility approach* - all of which are green.

The total benefit claims each month (housing/Council Tax reduction) measure is made up by two indicators- both of which are data only.



Note: There are some Council Plan measures that rely on more than one indicator to accurately reflect our performance in that area. This may result in the count within the graph, showing higher than the number of indicators contained within the Council Plan. To provide further context, please see the below details on each additional indicator contained within appendix 3 and tallied within the above graph.

SUCCESSSES

LEARNING FOR LIFE: During school session 2021/22, 96.7% of all school leavers secured a positive post-school destination, indicating an improvement on levels experienced pre-Covid pandemic (96.4% session 2018/19) and remaining above the national level (95.7%) and also above the [Northern Alliance](#) rate (95.4%).

HEALTH & WELLBEING: People over 75 spend 490 days in hospital when they are ready to be discharged (per 1,000 population). This is well below the Scottish Average of 919 and below the family group average of 499.

CLIMATE CHANGE: There are numerous new indicators to measure the success of our actions to tackling climate change that we will begin recording and reporting on over the next year.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: 18.3% of Unemployed people have been Assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes. This is a dramatic improvement on the 2021/22 figure of 6.8% and succeeds the 2022/23 target of 12.6%.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC ASSETS: 91.82% of internal floor area of operational buildings is in satisfactory condition. This remains above our target of 89.2%.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: 1,018 households were assisted to maximise their income. This is above our target of 700. Aberdeenshire Council's contract with SCARF enables home visits to be made by their Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) to carry out a full Home Energy Check (HEC). The householder is provided with beneficial advice on how simple behaviour changes can reduce their energy costs and maximise their income.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

LEARNING FOR LIFE: The percentage of our Care Experienced Young People school leavers during session 2021/22 securing a positive post school destination is reporting just off target at 82.3% and has reduced compared to the preceding three years(-8.3% compared to the average of the previous three years for this small cohort (average 36 young people). Although this remains at over four fifths of the given cohort, it is below latest national level (86.0%).

HEALTH& WELLBEING: Although the total number of participants using Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) services across Sport and Physical Activity (SPA) and culture continue to report below target over the latter months of 2022/23 (achieving approx. 25% below Q4 target), across the year participation was nearly a third higher than the year before (+32.1%). LLA continue building on the positive upward trend towards recovering attendance numbers experienced pre-Covid pandemic.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Q4 of 2022/23 indicated that only 38.7% of household waste is currently being recycled – this is below the target of 45%.The drop in percentage is due to a seasonal trend with the lack of garden waste during this period of the year. There are also still ongoing reduced amounts of building/DIY materials such as rubble and soil which can also be associated with the seasonal trend or a decline in home improvements due to the cost of living crisis.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: The proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband is currently at 85%. While this is an increase from 2021/22 (83.75%) it is below the target of 94%. Aberdeenshire remains one of the poorest connected of all Local Authorities and ranks 27th out of 32.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC ASSETS: 478 of operational buildings are suitable for their current use. This is not meeting our target of 82.31%. Aberdeenshire's operational portfolio extended to 612 (a reduction of 7 from April 2022). Overall performance indicator shows slight improvement with 478 operational assets/features assessed as suitable for their current use – equating to 78.1% (an improvement of 0.23%).

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: £1,923,780 of the revenue budget was allocated via participatory budgeting (latest data available is 2021/22). This is well below the target of £ 6,624,000.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

OPERATION OYNE: Operation Oyne will focus on creating and sustaining a Council Estate that is fit for purpose to provide modern public services that meet the current and future needs of our communities. There are currently around 85 vacant assets, with a further 80 operational assets within the asset disposal schedule. In addition, there are 140 properties out with the current asset disposal schedule identified for review.

BROADBAND: The Digital Engagement team continue to work with premises and 320 Scottish Broadband vouchers have been used to improve individual connections. This represents 10% of eligible households and is the highest rate in Scotland owing to the rurality of our region and the efforts of the Digital Engagement team.

ENGLISH LITERACY & NUMERACY: Strategic next steps in establishing stretch aims include promoting research-based PEF interventions, sharing good practice in teacher professional judgement moderation practices, and strengthen effective multi-agency working.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE: Building capacity and partnership in relation to employer engagement for the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships, and review of the Work Placement Unit.

Reports:

[Council Plan 2022-27 Scorecard Report \(Q4\)](#)

What's happening in your area?

BUCHAN

A VISION FOR PETERHEAD 2040: A Vision for Peterhead 2040: The development of a vision for Peterhead 2040 is being undertaken in three stages:

Stage 1 - research completed by Aberdeenshire Council;

Stage 2 - seek collaboration with Stakeholders in broadening Peterhead 2040

Stage 3 - Community engagement using a range of methods

Stage 1 is now complete and focused on information gathering and understanding what we already know through service workshops, data analysis, engagement & plans review, investment mapping.

Stage 2 is now underway. It is expected that Peterhead 2040 will include some of the Local Living goals such as increasing opportunities for active travel and improving local access to facilities. However, ultimately, the aim of Peterhead 2040 is to align all policy, investment, and service delivery – not just planning and land use - around Peterhead as a place, so that all action on poverty, inequality, learning, health and climate change is co-ordinated for maximum positive impact in Peterhead and for its communities.

ADEN CHANGING PLACES: Construction Changing Places Facility at Aden Country Park supported by funding from the Visit Scotland Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. These facilities will not only help to address the increased demand for high quality visitor facilities, but also support inclusive communities, and improved facilities for marginalised groups. Indeed, it is hoped that the new Changing Places facilities will make the difference between a short visit, or the chance to relax and enjoy the park facilities for much longer. For some families they are the deciding factor in a decision to visit the park at all. The Changing Places facility is located in the main car park and offers a hoist, shower, bed, privacy screen, handrails and everything required to meet the needs of people with complex care needs.

PETERHEAD COMMUNITY CAMPUS: Work on the first phase of the new Peterhead Community Campus which will encompass a primary, secondary and the Anna Ritchie school on the Kinmundy Road site continued with work on concept and technical designs and full business case completed. Construction of the first phase is expected to take around two and a half years, with completion of the community campus expected in March 2026. A second phase of works for a community hub on the existing academy site would then follow.

PETERHEAD CULTURAL QUARTER: A successful UK Government Levelling UP Fund bid this year is enabling the delivery of the Peterhead Cultural Quarter. The ambitious project will enable Arbuthnot House, a landmark building in the town centre, to be sensitively restored and extended to house both the town's library and a new regional museum. The facility will also feature a café and restaurant with views of the harbour, and the building's former walled garden will be transformed into a new public green space. The existing Arbuthnot Museum and Library Carnegie building will also be restored and converted to ensure it has a continued and vibrant role in the community. Completion is expected in 2026.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

What's happening in your area?

MARR

ALFORD VALLEY COMMUNITY RAILWAY: The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process has supported and strengthened a community group to take on the former railway station and line from Alford to Haughton Park, raise funds close to half a million pounds and revitalise a former community asset.

The project is a small railway operation linking the town to the country park.

IMPACT:

- Strengthened community group
- Huge community buy in
- Significant volunteer base
- Will attract larger numbers of visitors and the associated economic benefits
- Provides opportunities for community folk and visitors to learn and engage with the heritage, work opportunities for managing and running the railway with social interaction of all ages

FINAL STAGE OF TOUR OF BRITAIN: The Tour of Britain professional cycling race was successfully delivered despite a difficult lead in period with uncertainty around covid restrictions. Crowds of spectators were present throughout the route with larger numbers at Aboyne and Ballater.

Live television coverage and wider media interest saw lots of positive coverage.

IMPACT:

- Will attract larger numbers of visitors and the associated economic benefits
- Provides opportunities for community and visitors to learn and engage with the opportunities cycling brings

POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS: The percentage of Marr school leavers securing a positive post school destination has further improved on the pre- Covid pandemic levels this year at 98.1%. This is a 3.8% increase and notably higher than the national rate of 95.7% for 2021/22.

FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS (FA): The percentage of young people successfully completing a FA in Marr schools as part of either an Aberdeenshire managed or FE College managed FA programme reported for school season 2021/22 of 79.2% remains notable ahead of the latest national figures for a full cohort (46.5%) and indicates improvement compared to the previous year, with an increase of 5.9% on 2021/22.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

What's happening in your area?

GARIOCH

AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET – ENERGY EFFICIENCY FUND: Garioch Area Committee agreed an allocation of £ 20,000 in 2021/22 and £34,040 in 2022/23. Community facilities supported by the Council's Energy team have undertaken audits and have been supported in decision making about energy and energy efficiency.

IMPACT:

This project has now run for two financial years and has provided funding for 9 community facilities (as well as advice for more) to allow them to become more sustainable by reducing their operating costs. Monitoring is taking place with the community facilities. The committee agreed a further £20,000 for 2023/24 as there is interest and need from Garioch community facilities.

INVERURIE PLACE BASED REVIEW: The work was commissioned and commenced in December 2022 with an estimated schedule of output provided in June 2023. This has been achieved and a place brief, narrative and strategic delivery programme will form part of the output.

IMPACT:

The work was commissioned and commenced in December 2022 with an estimated schedule of output provided in June 2023. This has been achieved and a place brief, narrative and strategic delivery programme will form part of the output.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS: The Garioch Area Office along with a commissioned consultant is supporting the delivery of multiple community action plans. Oyne has been published. Kirkton of Skene, Westhill and Echt are in progress and there is interest from other communities with Newmachar being next to be started with the plan to produce a Community Action Plan (CAP) that is also a Local Place Plan.

IMPACT:

The development of a CAP supports building of capacity, delivery of projects, brings clarity and focus for community groups, gives a voice to a community and supports decision making. CAPS are referenced in the LDP for instance and are used for local funding decisions and also by council services and community planning partners as a valid evidence base.

SUPPORTING RE-ELECTION PROCESS FOR WE ARE INVERURIE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID):

Economic Development, supported by the Area Office, ran the election process. The BID was re-elected following the ballot. We are Inverurie BID have now commenced its five-year business plan. BID is a key stakeholder in the Inverurie Place Based Review and place planning. It supports Inverurie Events and provides excellent support for local businesses and community. A key partner for the Garioch Area Office in ward 11.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

What's happening in your area?

BANFF & BUCHAN

FRASERBURGH SKATE PARK: The Council supported the Fraserburgh community group to build skills and confidence to apply for funds, enabling the construction of Fraserburgh Skate Park project. This resulted in a new facility, designed to incorporate sustainable products and method of construction.

IMPACT:

This has resulted in improved facilities for young people; reducing numbers of young people putting themselves at risk.

INSTALLATION OF PAINTED STONES AT THE FRASERBURGH SPORTS & COMMUNITY CENTRE:

During lockdown, Primary School pupils painted stones to reflect their feelings about lockdowns and the pandemic. Working with North East Scotland College (Nescol) students and the Boys Brigade, pavers were made on which to mount the stones which were installed in the gardens at the Fraserburgh Sports & Community Centre.

IMPACT:

This provided a method of expression for young people affected by lockdowns as well as creating an opportunity for Nescol construction students and members of the Boys Brigade to produce purpose-made pavers, thereby utilising their skills.

PARTNERING BANFF ACADEMY IN THE ACCELERATE

PROGRAMME: The Council provided students with introductions to local businesses and organisations. This provided a variety of ways in which the students could learn about businesses and how it might feel to work in those scenarios.

IMPACT:

Building confidence in pupils to speak to new people they would not otherwise meet; enabling a first-hand experience of various business settings; learning what skills are required for particular jobs.

POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS: The percentage of Banff & Buchan school leavers securing a positive post school destination has improved on pre-Covid pandemic levels this year at 95.6%. This is a 1.5% increase and in line with the national rate of 95.7% for 2021/22.

FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS (FA): The percentage of young people successfully completing a FA in Banff & Buchan schools as part of either an Aberdeenshire managed Further Education (FE) College or Council managed FA programme reported for school session 2021/22 of 82.5% remains notably ahead of the latest national figures for a full cohort and indicates an improvement of 19.6% compared to the previous year.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

What's happening in your area?

FORMARTINE

DEVELOPING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: The council worked with resilience groups to develop Terms of Reference to ensure clarity around responsibilities, communication, and develop an information hub to allow easy access to relevant and most recent information.

IMPACT:

Communities will be better prepared for adverse events, know who to turn to, and services have key links to connect with. Direct support to 11 community groups developing resilience plans.

COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING – OLDMELDRUM: The council supported a community group to identify a suitable location for allotments/ community growing in Oldmeldrum. We are now progressing the Community Asset Transfer application and then progressing the commercial lease of land.

BALMEDIÉ COUNTRY PARK IMPROVEMENTS: The council have been working through the multi-agency group, with local community groups, to develop a new management plan for the park and identify key opportunities for the future.

IMPACT:

Closer working between Council services and community groups and opportunity to identify opportunities to come forward utilising Coastal Communities Funding

IMPROVED ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT: The council addressed the issue regarding access to the bus stop and bus services at the re-aligned roads at Blackdog.

IMPACT:

Improved access for public transport users.

INTEGRATED TRAVEL TOWN, ELLON: The council have been working to improve walking and cycling in Ellon. Caroline's Well Woods path to Deer

Park and Castle Road is now under construction. Work on the MacDonald Park Path, including replacement crossing, is due to begin following completion of Caroline's Well Woods path. Soft interventions such as led rides and cycle training are delivered in partnership with Cycling UK under the Aberdeenshire Bothy banner. Ebike hire is also now available from the Ellon Community Campus

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMMES ENCOURAGING GREATER PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES DELIVERED UNDER PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT, CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT, ACTIVE SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS AND OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS: Oldmeldrum and Ellon Libraries are now offering Memories Scotland sessions, and staff at the care homes are appreciative with one saying it's clear the residents really enjoyed the session, some of the residents are highly educated (although suffering from dementia now) and an opportunity for them to partake in discussions that mirrors past behaviour of having in-depth discussions and conversations. These activities are for older people who are unable to physically attend events in Formartine libraries. The resources are linked to local and social history giving those taking part a feeling of community and friendship as they remember positive and rewarding elements of their past and share memories and stories with others.

COUNTRYSIDE RANGER: The council has increased the availability of rangers at Balmedie Country Park. Support has been given to the Community trust with their activities in the park. Support has also been given to the development of a new Park Management Plan.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

What's happening in your area?

KINCARDINE & MEARNNS

DEVELOPING WAYS OF TACKLING POOR MENTAL HEALTH:

Aberdeenshire Council have undertaken a project around developing ways of tackling poor mental health. The focus of the project has been on improving access to services that combat social isolation, whilst also improving access to: Mental health training; Mental Health awareness; stress management and resilience awareness.

IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

At the end of 2022, the council had completed the improvements to the customer facing aspect of Portlethen Pool. The improvements to Portlethen Pool have 'opened up' the entrance area and modernised the feel of the facility – encouraging higher usage.

STONEHAVEN OPEN AIR POOL: The council have invested in Stonehaven Open Air Pool. More than £100,000 has now been invested in Stonehaven Open Air Pool which has secured the pool basin for at least another 20 years.

PROGRESS STONEHAVEN FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME:

Aberdeenshire Council have been making progress with the works to the Stonehaven scheme. It is hoped that the works being carried out will reduce the risk of flooding in future and ease travel around Stonehaven.

IMPROVED PLAY APPARATUS IN INVERBERVIE, FETTERCAIRN AND DRUMOAK:

Aberdeenshire Council have carried out work to improve the play apparatus in Inverbervie, Fettercairn and Drumoak by working with multi agency groups, local community groups and utilising the Scottish Government Play Park Renewal Funding (£155,000). This is hoped to increase the attraction of the playparks and encourage visitors. Other benefits may include improved health and fitness opportunities for the very young and their families.

SUITABLE ESTATE: At a local level, the total gross internal floor area for operational assets/features within Kincardine and Mearns extends to 107,780sqm, which equates to 15.98% of Aberdeenshire's total operational portfolio. Of Kincardine and Mearns operational floor area 105,806sqm (or 98.17%) is assessed as being in satisfactory condition.

DEVELOP PROGRAMMES THAT IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

The Council is working to develop and implement health and well-being programmes, encouraging greater participation in services delivered under Physical Engagement, Cultural Engagement, Active Schools & Community Sports Hubs and Outdoor and Adventurous. As part of this:

- Stonehaven Library has introduced chatty crafts sessions and Blethers and Board Games.
- Live Life Aberdeenshire have commenced delivery of new improved Learn to Swim scheme, which sees lessons delivered year-round and is improving take-up and learn to swim rates amongst our young people.
- The Tour of Britain legacy event held in Stonehaven, which has subsequently raised the profile of cycling in Kincardine & Mearns.

COUNTRYSIDE RANGER: The council has increased the availability of Countryside Rangers in key parts of Kincardine and Mearns to increase their visibility and interaction with visitors.

Reports:

To see how these actions/information contribute to our overall council priorities please review the council's [Area Action Plans and Area Performance Reports](#).

How do we compare to others?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF):

A suite of indicators is reported annually by all local authorities within Scotland and the results are published by the Improvement Service. Each year, services are asked to review their performance against other council's and provide commentary on possible improvement actions to ensure we are improving in areas that will help achieve our priorities. The Improvement Service offer a [useful tool](#) on their website which allows for a direct comparison of Aberdeenshire Council's performance against the Scottish Average or against similar councils. Some of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators are contained within the council plan/ old directorate plans/ new Head of Service Business Plans and assist in measuring our performance against

our priorities. Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators are reported by each directorate as part of their yearend performance updates performance update.

There are 105 indicators published for Aberdeenshire Council under the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. The table below is based on the information available on 31 March 2023. A refresh of the information will be published in due course. Of the 105 indicators, 22 do not have data for 2021/22. Short trends show that 50 indicators have improved since last year's reporting period, two have remained the same and 31 have declined.

Reports:

[Progress against Service Priorities & LGBF](#)

2 YEAR TREND OF QUARTILE POSITIONS ACROSS ALL SERVICES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS:

Directorate	Year	No. indicators in Quarter 1 1-8	No. indicators in Quarter 2 9-16	No. indicators in Quarter 3 17-24	No. indicators in Quarter 4 25-32	Not yet published for current year	Total
Business Services	2021/22	7	6	4	4	1	22
Business Services	2020/21	9	2	6	5	0	22
Education & Children's Services	2021/22	3	7	5	7	16	38
Education & Children's Services	2020/21	8	10	8	11	1	38
Environment & Infrastructure Services	2021/22	8	9	8	4	5	34
Environment & Infrastructure Services	2020/21	9	10	9	6	0	34
Health & Social Care Partnership	2021/22	4	2	5	0	0	11
Health & Social Care Partnership	2020/21	2	1	3	1	4	11

Emergency Response: *Operation Unicorn*

On 8 September 2022, Her Majesty the Queen passed away whilst in residence on the Balmoral estate in Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Council worked collaboratively with partners to deliver Operation Unicorn.

RESULTS & IMPACT:

- Approximately 8,500 people made use of the Park & Ride Services provided from Ballater and Braemar to Crathie/Balmoral, with an additional 2,000 people estimated to have made their own way to Balmoral, in order to pay their respects.
- Between 18,500 to 24,000 people attended along the cortege route in Aberdeenshire.
- We supported and managed media representatives in attendance at Balmoral, including domestic and international news outlets.
- 15,300 people visited the Queen Elizabeth content on our website.
- Our social media posts about the death and subsequent operational impacts reached 880,000 users on Facebook alone. One of our posts was shared 576 times.
- Aberdeenshire Council hosted the Lord Lieutenant’s Tribute at Ballater, one of three such events in Scotland hosted also at Aberdeen City and Dundee City. This was followed by the Proclamation of the King delivered by the Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council to the Lord Lieutenants of Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and Kincardineshire, on behalf of the people of those areas.

We have taken several learnings from the delivery of Operation Unicorn and have wrapped parts of our planning and strategic response into other elements of emergency planning.

Partnership working was fundamental to the delivery of Operation Unicorn and we are immensely proud of all Officers who played a part in ensuring its success.



Community Planning Partnership Local Outcomes Improvement Plan: (LOIP)

Under Sections 8 and 12 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) are required to have in place Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). These plans, developed jointly by community planning partners, and based on three priority workstreams identify what communities have said are the issues for them and ensures residents across all parts of Aberdeenshire have a voice. These workstreams focuses on priorities and actions which address poverty and inequality, which are problematic issues that can only be addressed by collaborative working by partners. The Local outcome improvement plans provide the framework within which every partner can make an active contribution to meeting the agreed shared priorities.

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

Following a three-year review of the LOIP priorities in 2020, the decision was made to update the LOIP priorities to reflect the current climate, based on what the data was telling us. The three current LOIP Priorities are:

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

The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report is published in September on the Community Planning Partnership website. Below demonstrates current projects that these priorities have delivered across 2022 - 2023:

Connected and Cohesive Communities (Locality Plans)

FRASERBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESILIENCE GROUP FOOD LARDER – opened in April 2021 and has steadily built up a membership of over seventy members. Run by volunteers and operating out of a temporary location made available by a local business, membership is open to residents of Fraserburgh and the surrounding area enabling weekly visits to stock up on key items. During 2022/2023, the initiative achieved its short-term plan to provide an inviting and non-stigmatised shopping experience, partnership work continues to achieve the long-term plan to secure a larger, permanent building with a view to enhancing the service available to members.

Reducing Poverty

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

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

“It’s like having the old days back when the van used to come, it’s great. I can buy all my fruit and veg for the week and the additional food we get offered is really appreciated”

S, Edzell Woods

“The recipe for soup I got last week is great and it lasted me 2 days, I am looking forward to getting more recipes and it’s great that we can get the ingredients too”

M, Banff

“We eat well and we don’t have to go to supermarkets and the fruit and veg is much better quality so we are eating more fruit and veg because it is much fresher.”

Resident, Turriff

Health and Wellbeing

MIND YER MIND – The ‘Mind Yer Mind’ campaign to help raise awareness of good mental wellbeing. This campaign was led through the Health & Wellbeing LOIP, with the NHS taking the lead on this campaign. This was to remind communities of the importance of looking after their mental wellbeing and promoted some simple ideas to manage this. Activities progressed included:

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

Managing Our Finances

Key Facts

- £1,339.83 Band D Council Tax 2022/23 (increase of 3% from 2021/22)
- £1,336.44 Band D Scottish average 2022/23 (increase of 3% from 2021/22)

Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) supports the delivery of the Council Plan and associated priorities by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council. In doing so, it incorporates all revenue and capital funding and use of reserves. As part of the MTFS, the Council set its budget for 2022/23 on [9th March 2022](#) with a funding gap being met through a range of budget savings, use of Reserves and a 3% increase in [Council Tax](#).

The financial performance monitoring process reporting to Policy Committees and then to Council is an integral part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. It compares the assumptions that were used to develop the budget to the actual expenditure incurred or income received, allowing for the identification of areas where the assumptions used to set the budget differ from the reality. It allows the monitoring and reporting of risks that may have crystallised during the year, which, in turn helps inform the following years budget setting process.

GENERAL FUND REVENUE 2022/23

The General Fund sets out the cost of running the day-to-day services (excluding Council housing) and shows where the money comes from to fund these costs.

The Revenue Budget for 2022/23 was set at £661.563m which included £11.603m of savings and efficiencies and a net transfer from Reserves of £4.569m.

The Council continued to show strong financial management during 2022/23 with an overall break-even position. This was despite the many challenges faced during the year, including the volatile economic situation resulting in high energy prices and consistently high inflation, together with rising interest rates and pay award demands.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic also continued to have an impact during 2022/23 in relation to resident behaviours and habits. This has been particularly prevalent within our Live Life Aberdeenshire and out of school care facilities which have continued to see reduced income as we see changes in demand post-covid.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2022/23

The Council owns or leases 13,207 housing properties, the income and expenditure associated with the management of these properties is reflected in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), a statutory account that the Council must maintain separate to the General Fund. All

expenditure incurred, and tenant rents and service charges income received in the provision of rented accommodation must be retained in the HRA. This income must be sufficient to cover the expenditure on the HRA.

The HRA budget was set on [23 February 2022](#) (item 5) at £67.973m. At the end of the financial year a break-even position was achieved. Despite Rent Collection rates falling from 99.55% in 2021/22 to 99.17% in 2022/23, Aberdeenshire’s collection rates remained higher than the Scottish Local Authorities average of 98.67% (based on 2021/22 figures). Similarly, overall arrears performance remains relatively strong with Gross arrears equal to 5.42% of our total rent due in 2022/23. Whilst this is an increase compared to the 4.98% reported in 2021/22, it is substantially less than the Scottish Local Authority average of 7.89% in 2021/22 and Aberdeenshire remains one of the strongest performers amongst Scottish Local Authorities on this measure.

NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE 2022/23

2022/23	Net Expenditure £	Cost per head of population* £
Business Services	46,757,000	178
Communities	168,017,000	640
Education & Children's Services	388,965,000	1,481
Infrastructure Services	70,621,000	269

* based on Aberdeenshire population 2021 – 262,690

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2022/23

Capital expenditure differs to revenue expenditure in that rather than being day-to-day expenditure on delivering services, it is expenditure incurred on acquiring or improving existing assets such as buildings or roads.

The Council’s capital investment plan considers the capital investment requirements to deliver the Council’s priorities against the affordability within the overall MTFS. The effective use of capital resources, including asset management, is fundamental to the Council achieving its medium and long-term strategic objectives.

In 2022/23 the Council spent £84.439m on Capital projects, this was £62.538m below the revised budgeted position or 43% lower than had been planned. The lower than planned spend extended across many projects within the capital plan arising from supply chain challenges around shortages of labour, products and raw materials.

The main areas of investment were on the following projects:

- Energy from Waste Facility
- Roads resurfacing and reconstruction
- Lifecycle maintenance (General Service Council buildings)
- Infrastructure Fund
- Vehicles

FUNDING OF THE CAPITAL PLAN

The General Fund Capital Plan is funded by a combination of General Capital Grant from Scottish Government, Capital Receipts and Borrowing.

HRA CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The HRA Capital Budget was set on 23 February 2022 (item 5) at £84.664m. Council agreed to carry forward £0.879m from 2021/22, and also approved additional budget of £0.530m, taking the revised HRA capital budget to £86.073m. The actual expenditure incurred during the year was £67.388m or £18.685m lower than budget. As with the General Fund capital programme, the HRA programme was also impacted by the ongoing shortage of labour, supply chain challenges, raw material availability and pricing. The lower than planned spend in 2022/23 will be reprofiled for use in future years, with projects undertaken later than planned having a cumulative effect for resources budgeted in the later years.

The main areas of investment were on the following projects:

- New build programme
- Housing improvement plan
- Internal net zero programme.

Delivering Best Value

Corporate Improvement Plan

Our Corporate Improvement Plan incorporates the council's high level improvement action plans which relate to Best Value & Self Evaluation. The progress of the plan is reported to Audit Committee on a three-monthly basis.

How are we Progressing?

55 Actions

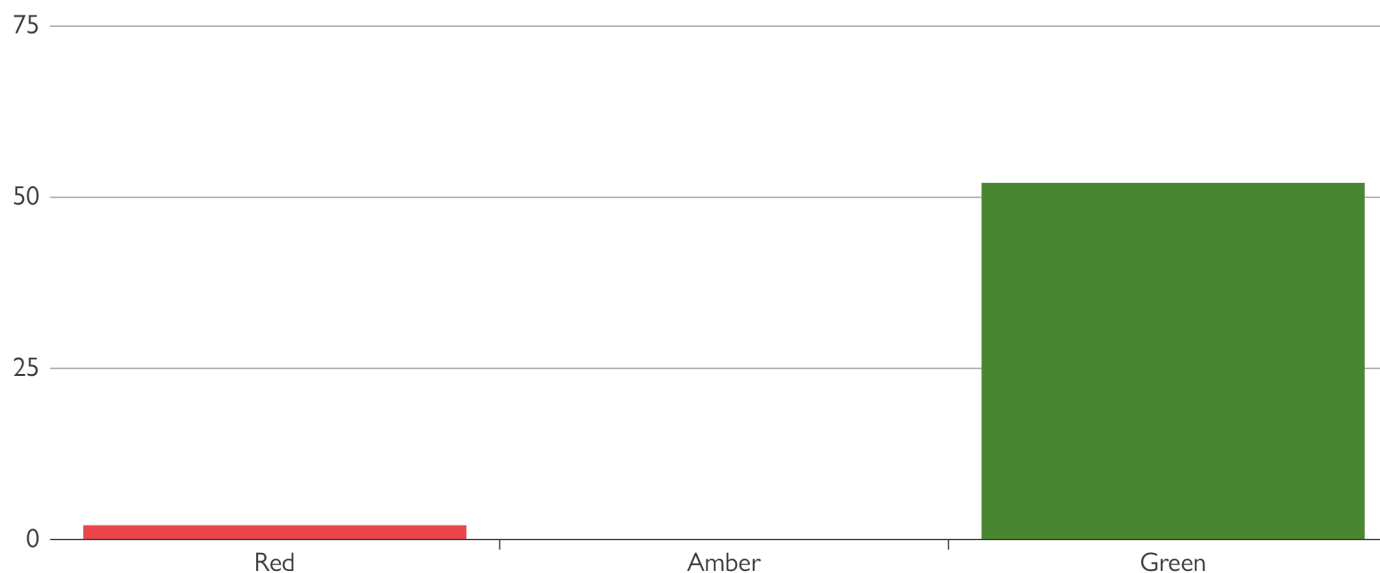
9 Completed in the last 12 months

2 Overdue Actions

8 Due in the next 12 months

0 Cancelled Actions

Traffic Light



*Figures are based on all actions within the Corporate Improvement Plan, including sub actions and their overarching actions.

■ on track/complete ■ off target

Corporate Improvement Plan

KEY IMPROVEMENTS:

RESPONSIBILITY & RESILIENCE: The Council has developed an approach to increase awareness across the organisation for corporate initiatives, including individual responsibility and resilience

NEW COUNCIL PLAN: The Council have worked hard to deal with increased workload and manage expectations of customers and Councillors. The new Council Plan agreed in November goes a long way to address this. Reporting on the new Council Plan began in January 2023, with reports being taken to committee in May/June 2023.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: Action has been taken to build community resilience to ensure communities are ready for an emergency, that they are informed of what's happening and they know who and where to go to for help. The agreed promotion of material about being prepared for winter and emergencies as an individual and household was implemented in December 2022.

WORKFORCE PLANNING: Regular workforce planning action plan reporting is now established practice and workforce planning actions are reported to committees and trade unions every 6 months. The Strategic Change Board regularly considers the impact of workforce planning and reviews the organisational methodology.

NEW SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS AND AWARENESS: We have promoted awareness of the new scrutiny arrangements amongst Elected Members and officers through training, guidance and support and develop and agree scrutiny programmes with all Area and Policy Committees. A session on scrutiny was held with all six Area Committees in early 2022. Training on scrutiny was also held as part of the new Council induction on 27 June 2022, and a recording of this session will be made available on Aldo, along with

updated training materials and guidance for both Members and Officers. Scrutiny programmes have been developed and agreed with all four Policy Committees, and four Area Committees, with the remaining two to be reported in August.

WE CONTINUE TO WORK ON:

- We continue to develop a corporate data hub to promote robust data analysis as well as smart service design based on the needs of our citizens across partner organisations
- We continue to develop a procurement strategy that ensures resources are used effectively and efficiently with a focus on climate change and sustainability
- We continue to develop a more consistent approach to dealing with poor employee performance

KEY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR:

- We will work with citizens to help them to realise their digital aspirations through delivery of the Digital Strategy
- We will demonstrate how we are using benchmarking to make service improvement
- We will review budget-setting process to include longer-term financial planning, more stakeholder engagement (including communities) and participatory budgeting
- We will explore data-sharing opportunities with partners

Reports:

[Corporate Improvement Plan Updates](#)

Delivering Best Value: *External Audit*

ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT:

External Audit Annual Audit Report: Each year the council is audited by Audit Scotland, or an external auditor appointed by Audit Scotland. The external audit focuses on whether the council is managing its finances to the highest standards and achieving the best possible value for public money.

KEY FINDINGS:

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS: Audit opinions on the annual accounts of the council, its group and the four section 106 charities administered by the council are unmodified. The annual governance statement and remuneration report were consistent with the financial statements and properly prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations and guidance. Arrangements for the preparation of the management commentary need to be improved to ensure compliance with relevant statutory guidance and a co-ordinated approach for reporting the council's performance.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: Capacity within the finance function needs to be strengthened and may require the council to consider innovative solutions. Financial management arrangements are largely appropriate. Given the challenges experienced across the public sector in delivering capital programmes, there is scope to be more transparent in reporting both in terms of an achievable capital plan and the financial implications of slippage and delays.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: The council continues to prepare 5-year indicative budgets as part of its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The latest forecast has identified a cumulative funding gap of £48m to 2026/27. A refresh of the processes used to develop the MTFS has commenced.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23: Our annual governance statement was approved by Audit Committee in June 2022 and signed off by our Chief Executive and Council Leader.

GOVERNANCE & TRANSPARENCY: The council continues to prepare 5-year indicative budgets as part of its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The latest forecast has identified a cumulative funding gap of £48m to 2026/27. A refresh of the processes used to develop the MTFS has commenced.

BEST VALUE: New council priorities, agreed in November 2022, are clearer in their intention. The identification of associated performance indicators to be reported from 2023 should enable the council to report on progress against priorities and identify where improvement is necessary. Targets have yet to be set for each indicator. Comprehensive directorate plans were developed to support the council's 2021/22 priorities. However, limited progress has been made in demonstrating whether the council is delivering on its priorities. It was difficult for the council to give a clear picture of its performance through the annual performance report. The council has an increased awareness of the need for continuous improvement, there is more evidence of the use of performance information and benchmarking but this needs to become embedded as part of decision making. The pace of change, in response to the council's Best Value Assurance Report, has been slower than anticipated due in part to the need to divert resources to major incidents. Whilst some good foundations have been established, more focus is now required on delivering outcomes and demonstrating impact.

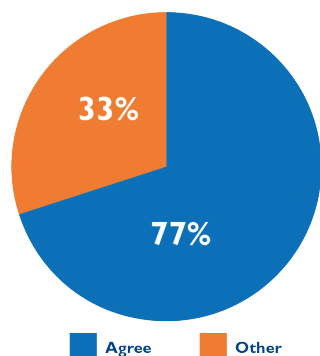
Annual Audit – 2021/22 information will be published when made available in 2023.

Reports:

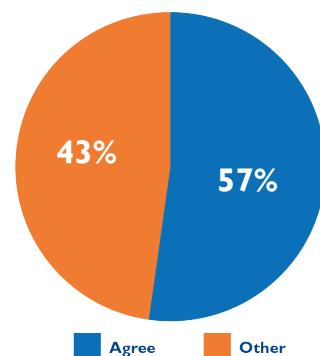
Audit Scotland: [Annual Audit Report 2021/22](#)

What you told us: *Reputation Tracker*

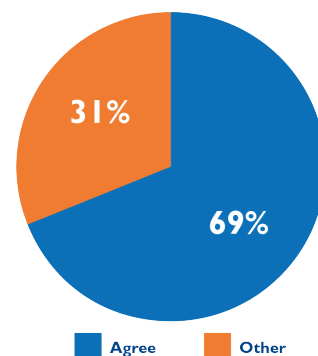
I am satisfied with the services Aberdeenshire Council deliver



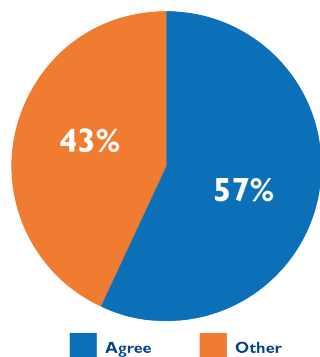
The Council takes account of resident's views



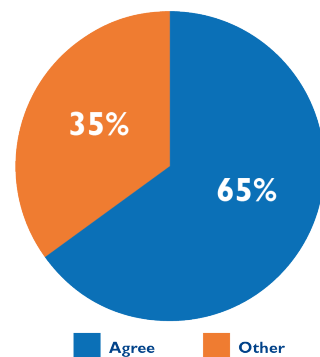
I would speak highly of Aberdeenshire Council



Aberdeenshire Council services are value for money



Aberdeenshire Council is efficient and well run



Reports:
[Reputation Tracker Reports](#)

What you told us: Complaints

COMPLAINTS:

How many complaints did we receive?	2133
How many complaints did we close?	2096
How many complaints were upheld/partially upheld?	860 (41 % of complaints closed)
How many complaints were escalated to the SPSO?	53 (2.5% of complaints closed)
How many complaints that were escalated to the SPSO were upheld/partially upheld?	2 (4.4% of complaints escalated to the SPSO)
How many investigations were initiated by Scottish Public-Sector Ombudsman?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: 53 • Upheld: 2 • Not upheld: 2 • Partially upheld: 0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action taken as no service failure or maladministration found by SPSO: 41 • Awaiting decision: 8

How many complaints did we receive per service?

Complaints Received by Directorate		
Directorate	2021/22	2022/23
Business Services	192	256
Education and Children's Services	303	310
Health & Social Care	87	66
Infrastructure Services	1319	1402
Live Life Aberdeenshire	103	94
Total	2004	2128

Case Study:

Ms V (Housing – Tenancy Services / Options & Homelessness)

Ms V complained to the Council about the way in which they had handled their reports about anti-social behaviour by their neighbours, and later, having been offered a housing transfer to remove them from the situation, Ms V complained about the way this had been managed due to concerns about it not being fair. The Council investigated and responded to Ms V's complaints, however Ms V and their advocates continued to complain to the Council about matters which were considered closed following the local complaint investigation. Having brought their complaints to the SPSO, they found the steps taken by the Council to resolve Ms V's complaint to be reasonable and, on recognising Ms V's vulnerabilities and it being unlikely the dispute between the neighbours would be resolved, the SPSO found the subsequent handling of Ms V's housing transfer also to be reasonable. During the SPSO's investigation it was noted the Council had invoked our Unacceptable Actions Policy in principle in relation to one of Ms V's advocates. However, as they had indicated they would not be contacting the Council again, the advocate was not formally notified they were being managed in line with this policy. The SPSO gave feedback to the Council on this matter, reminding that complainants and their advocates should be informed when their behaviour is considered unhelpful and challenging to ensure they have the opportunity to engage more meaningfully. Overall, the SPSO found the actions taken by the Council to be reasonable and they did not uphold Ms V's complaints. The SPSO acknowledged that this was a complex case involving multiple parties with several different complaints being made over an extended period of time. They found the complaint file to be well organised and there was evidence of different departments and agencies collaborating well with a view to resolving Ms V's complaints

Reports:

[Quarterly & Annual Complaint Reports](#)

What you told us: Compliments

"Having recently moved to Westhill, I have been really impressed at how clear the paths around the town were made during the recent snow fall, it has made everyone's lives a lot easier and no worry of going out and slipping on ice. I just want to say thank you!"

"The Officer and OT did an outstanding job in both cases, they were approachable, helpful and answered all queries promptly and efficiently. The local tradespeople also did a great job. We would not have accomplished this project without the work done by all those mentioned above."

"Well I just want to say a huge thank you for the work carried out on the at the entrance to my driveway on the road..."

"The A2B dial-a-bus is wonderful. I discovered it just at the time when I lost my driving license due to developing tunnel vision. The bus is a God send. use it twice a week to travel from Torphins to Banchory. If it ran on other days I would use it then too."

"A well done to the team who maintain the female public toilets in Banchory. I just wanted to say how clean and well-kept they were when I visited at the weekend."

"Having moved recently to Portlethen and in the process of moving into a new house I have had to make a number of trips to the Portlethen Recycling Centre. On each visit I have found the centre staff extremely helpful and the centre run in a very efficient and convenient way."