

Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Council

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 7 October 2024

RECONVENED COUNCIL

The Members of the **COUNCIL** are requested to meet in Council Chamber - Town House on **FRIDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2024 at 10.00am**. This is a hybrid meeting, therefore Members may also attend remotely.

***** Please note this agenda has been produced for the purposes of the website and webcast. If Members and officers could refer to the original agenda for the meeting of 2 October at 10.30am for any annotations made and associated page numbers, that would be appreciated *****

ALAN THOMSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

BUSINESS

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 9.1 Diversity in Recruitment Update - CORS/24/202 (Pages 5 - 32)
Carried forward from July and August meetings. Please note the report has been updated since those meetings.
- 9.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Council's General Fund, 2024 - CORS/24/283 (Pages 33 - 162)
- 9.3 2025 - 2055 HRA Business Plan - CORS/24/286 (Pages 163 - 210)
- 9.4 City Centre Transport Measures - CR&E/24/287 (Pages 211 - 318)
- 9.5 Proposal for the Torry Battery - F&C/24/284 (Pages 319 - 332)

- 9.6 Council Delivery Plan, Annual Review Report 2023-24 - CORS/24/281 (Pages 333 - 366)
- 9.7 North East Population Health Alliance: End of Year One Progress Report - CORS/24/280 (Pages 367 - 380)
- 9.8 Annual Performance Reports - 2023/2024 for all Tier 1 ALEOs: Aberdeen Performing Arts; Aberdeen Sports Village; Bon Accord Care; Sport Aberdeen - CORS/24/285 (Pages 381 - 486)

NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1 Notice of Motion by Councillor Watson

Notes that Council passed a notice of motion on 13 December 2023 recognising the importance of holding out a hand to those outwith our direct area. It called for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine/Israel, and for urgent humanitarian relief for the citizens of Gaza.

Since then, nine months have passed and tens of thousands more civilians have died. In March 2024 the United Nations Special Rapporteur found that *“There are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the crime of genocide...has been met.”* In July 2024, the prestigious medical journal The Lancet stated that *“it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 [7.9% of the total population in the Gaza strip] or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza”*. Later in July, the International Court of Justice, the United Nations' highest court, ruled that *“Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful”* and that Israel *“is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible”* and *“is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory”*.

This Council reaffirms its place as part of the common family of humanity, and:

1. Reiterates our call for a permanent ceasefire;
2. Calls on the Lord Provost to fly the Palestinian Flag on 29 November 2024, International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
3. Follows Barcelona and other cities and instructs the Chief Officer - Governance to report to Council by the end of 2024 on any direct or indirect links that Aberdeen City Council have with the State of Israel, with a view to stopping these;
4. Asks the North East Scotland Pension Fund to commission a study to identify any investments in companies that supply arms to Israel, as these investments may be at high risk due to the political instability;
5. Recognises the UK Labour Government’s suspension of 30 licences for arms sales to Israel;
6. Endorses the Scottish Government’s 2024 call for an arms embargo on Israel, and calls for the Scottish Government to act in all its available capacities to help prevent the production and transfer of weapons components for Israel from arms companies in Scotland; and
7. Instructs the Chief Executive to write to other Scottish Local Authorities informing them of this motion, and encouraging them to take similar actions.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Diversity in Recruitment Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/202
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Lesley Strachan and Sandie Scott
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In accordance with the decision on the Organisational Structure report from Council on 7 February 2024, the Chief Executive was instructed to bring a report to Council by July 2024 providing further detail on the activity which has been undertaken to improve diversity in recruitment, including leadership and management roles.
- 1.2 The report was deferred from the July and August meetings of Council, and the opportunity has been taken to provide additional progress updates in this most recent version.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

- 2.1 Note the actions contained in the report being taken to increase diversity in leadership.
- 2.2 Note the self-assessment and areas for further consideration contained within Appendix A.
- 2.3 Note that in the first appropriate committee cycle in 2025/26 the equality, diversity and inclusion action plan, first agreed in 2021, will be updated and reported to Staff Governance Committee for approval, as a result of the ongoing work, self-assessment exercise and new equality outcomes due to be presented for approval in April 2025.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Background and Context

- 3.1.1 In August 2022, Council approved the next phase and path for our transformation programme, with workforce strategy as a key element.

- 3.1.2 In October 2022, the Council approved the Interim Organisational Structure and also resolved that given the low proportion of Ethnic Minority employees in the Council compared to the UK, to agree that everything possible should be done by officers to ensure that employees who are suitably qualified and who identify as Ethnic Minority should be encouraged to apply for these senior posts.
- 3.1.3 The last [Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report 2017-2021](#) reported that Aberdeen City Council's senior leadership team consisted of fourteen members, seven male and seven female. At the time of writing this report, the Council has 23 employees at Chief Officer level or above (including interim arrangements and also the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership) - 12 male and 11 female. This shows a gender balance around 50%, which is higher than the national average of 37% for senior managers in local government. However, the 2017-2021 report also acknowledges that there is room for improvement in terms of other aspects of diversity, such as ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, and religion or belief.
- 3.1.4 In January 2023, our [Workforce Delivery Plan](#) was approved by Staff Governance Committee, which set out the detail for delivery of the workforce strategy aspect of the transformation programme, with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion clearly stated within the strategic objectives.
- 3.1.5 In June 2023, Staff Governance Committee approved an update on the progress being made towards our [Equality Outcomes](#) and [EDI Action Plan](#), first approved in 2021. Our current employment-related outcomes are:
- Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex.
 - Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Sex and Sexual orientation.
- 3.1.6 The first outcome focuses on ensuring equality of opportunity in our *recruitment and selection processes*. The second outcome confirms our commitment to create a feeling of safety and belonging when *employees are at work*. Both aspects are critical to improving diversity in our workplace, as we must identify and remove barriers in all aspects of the employee experience – from recruitment, through development and into promotion opportunities. Having an inclusive work environment will mean that our employees will want to remain in our employment and to develop and progress their careers.
- 3.1.7 In April 2024, Staff Governance Committee approved a refresh of our [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy](#), which enabled us to reflect changes in legislation and the expectations of our citizens, and adopt recommendations from the Scottish Government for public sector organisations to lead the way in our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

3.1.8 In April 2024, Staff Governance Committee also approved a [Workforce Deep dive](#) which set out a detailed programme of activity exploring challenges in ‘hard to fill’ posts, exploring areas of occupational segregation, and provided an update with specific case study examples of how we are building workforce capacity and organisational resilience through attracting, recruiting and promoting talent, including at senior leadership levels.

3.1.9 Wider and National Context

3.1.10 In their 2022 [Anti-Racist Employment Strategy](#), the Scottish Government clearly sets out the economic and moral imperative for all employers to proactively challenge the systems and processes that create inequality in the workforce – and an expectation for the public sector to lead the way.

3.1.11 As reported by the Institute of Governance and Public Policy (IGPP) there is a strong business rationale for employers have diverse and inclusive workplaces – and having workforces that are representative of the population.



3.1.12 Specifically for local authorities, diversity in senior leadership is important because:

- It reflects the diversity of our citizens, communities, and stakeholders, and enables us to better understand and respond to their needs and expectations.
- It fosters a culture of inclusion and belonging, where different perspectives, backgrounds, and identities are valued and respected.
- It enhances our innovation and creativity, as diverse teams can generate more ideas, challenge assumptions, and solve problems more effectively.
- It improves our performance and reputation, as diverse leaders can inspire and motivate others, attract and retain talent, and build trust and credibility with internal and external partners.

- It fosters good relations between the Council and communities – if they feel that they are represented in leadership.

3.1.13 It seems however that there remains a lack of diversity in executive leadership as the Scottish Government report in their 2022 A Fairer Scotland for All, that “37% of FTSE 100 companies surveyed do not have any ethnic minority representation on their boards” and that action needs to be taken by leaders and employers to address this.

3.1.14 The recent Scotland’s Local Government Workforce Report 2024 provides an insight into the challenges faced across all 32 Local Authorities in improving their workforce diversity profile. The report provides an overview of the overall picture of Scottish Council workforce characteristics and how this compares to the characteristics of the general populations within council areas. The data shows that across Scotland, Councils have an ageing workforce and an under-representation of employees from minority ethnic groups and employees with disabilities. Like ourselves, many Councils are actively working to improve diversity. As members of the national Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS), we benefit from the sharing of best practice on how Councils are tackling some of these issues.

3.1.15 Our commitment to improve diversity in recruitment, including leadership and management roles.

3.1.16 Aberdeen City Council is committed to increasing the diversity of our senior leadership team and ensuring that they represent the full spectrum of our workforce and society. One of the challenges identified in the Workforce Deep Dive was the difficulty of recruiting and retaining Chief Officers, who play a crucial role in leading and delivering the strategic objectives of the organisation, as there is a national shortage of experienced and qualified candidates for these senior roles, and the Council faces strong competition from other public and private sector employers.

3.1.17 Since 2019, we have focused on our internal workforce as a key mechanism to achieve our workforce goals and prepare for the future. Our approach to internal movement and recruitment of internal staff is to retain skills and experience within the organisation, whilst upskilling and developing our workforce to move to service critical roles as they arise.

3.1.18 This approach gives us agility and flexibility in our workforce, enabling us to meet periods of increased demand. It provides our existing workforce with opportunities for promotion, development and career transition and therefore supports retention of our committed and skilled employees. By tapping into the transferable skills, experience and knowledge of existing employees, the organisation also minimises the need to go to external market, thereby also avoiding the associated additionality in recruitment costs.

3.1.19 This also presents us with challenges on increasing the diversity – if the internal pool we are selecting from is itself lacking diversity.

3.1.20 Therefore, when we do go to the open market, it is crucial that our approach to recruitment has diversity and inclusion at its heart. We need to reach out to the widest possible pool of talent when we have external vacancies. We need to attract candidates from groups that are currently underrepresented at the council, such as minority ethnic groups, disabled people, LGBT+ people, and young people. We need to ensure that our application process is fair and accessible, and that we remove any unnecessary barriers or biases that may discourage potential applicants. We need to provide training and guidance to our recruiting managers on best practice recruitment, including unconscious bias and inclusive language. And, once we recruit someone, we need them to feel welcome and valued as part of One Team – Aberdeen, by providing a comprehensive and supportive onboarding and induction process, where new employees can learn about our vision, values, and culture, and connect with their colleagues and mentors.

3.1.21 This report therefore provides an update on how we are improving equality in recruitment internally, through a strategic approach to workforce planning to increase diversity in leadership and management roles; and how we are improving recruitment externally, to build diversity at all levels and in all roles in the council.

Progress Report

3.2 Improving diversity through workforce planning

3.2.1 Workforce planning is a key priority for Aberdeen City Council, with clear cognisance of, and practical action plans to mitigate against, the risks and challenges we face due to a contracting workforce, external factors and pressures, budgetary restrictions, and changes in the local economy. Failure to address these issues is acknowledged as having potential to significantly impact our capacity and capability to deliver services and on the resilience of our workforce.

3.2.2 In November 2021, a new approach to supporting Chief Officers and their Senior Management Teams with workforce planning was launched. This involved Senior Management Teams completing 'Cluster People Development Plans' to ensure they take a holistic, strategic approach to finding, recruiting and retaining talent in these roles, which takes account of statutory training needs, diversity training needs and digital and technological developments.

3.2.3 Since this time, Chief Officers and their teams of Service Managers (SMTs) now complete a template on an annual basis, this asks them to 'horizon scan' the needs, risks, legislative changes, and hard-to-fill posts within their cluster and update their Cluster People Development Plan to set out what continuous professional development, support and budget they require from People & Citizen Services to meet their workforce needs.

3.2.4 The Cluster People Development Plan requires Senior Management Teams to look at their workforce profile data and identify any areas of under-

representation of any groups in particular roles or at any particular level within their services and propose ideas or solutions that could increase diversity. This is captured and monitored corporately so that ideas and good practice examples can be shared.

3.3 Taking Positive Action to encourage diversity in leadership

3.3.1 Positive discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 – this means we cannot recruit or promote a person solely because they have a relevant protected characteristic.

3.3.2 It is permissible however for an employer to adopt **positive action** to meet the needs of under-represented or disadvantaged groups under section 158 of the Equality Act 2010. This means taking steps to improve equality in the workplace – such as including statements in recruitment advertising to encourage applications from under-represented groups; offering work experience or internships to help certain groups get opportunities or to progress at work; and offering shadowing or mentoring to groups with particular needs. It is accepted that these interventions do not always guarantee diversity and that it may take considerable time to see change.

3.3.3 With this in mind, we have taken proactive measures to adopt positive action and enable employees with any protected characteristics – to develop their skills and become suitably qualified and experienced, so that when senior posts become available, they are confident, capable and ready to undertake them.

3.3.4 For example, we have created talent pipelines to identify and develop potential leaders from underrepresented groups - for example minority ethnic, disabled, LGBT+, and young people - and provide them with opportunities for career development and personal growth.

3.3.5 A talent pipeline is a proactive and strategic approach to recruiting and developing employees for current and future roles within an organisation. It involves identifying, attracting, engaging, and nurturing potential candidates who have the skills, competencies, and values that align with the organisation's goals and culture. A talent pipeline can help an organisation fill critical roles quickly, reduce recruitment costs, improve retention, and foster diversity and inclusion.

3.3.6 Our Aspiring Leaders programme is one such talent pipeline. The 2023 cohort focused on Chief Officers, as a hard-to-fill role, and provided a year-long programme of intensive development for fourteen candidates, who were supported by their own Chief Officers as part of their Cluster's succession plan. Three candidates who participated in the 2023 programme have successfully stepped into a senior role, and their achievement is celebrated on our [intranet](#).

3.3.7 The programme was promoted to our Equality Ambassadors Network and Equality Working Groups, and [advertising for the programme](#) set out our aspirations to increase diversity in leadership:

“We want to improve on diversity at our leadership level in the organisation. One of our equality outcomes for 21-25 is to ensure that we focus on improving diversity with a particular focus on age, disability, race and sex. We would, therefore, encourage applications from those who are under 30 or over 60, those who consider themselves to have a disability, those from a minority ethnic background and females as we are conscious that we have diversity gaps in these areas at leadership level.

We are aware that there are barriers in place for certain people within those groups and would encourage anyone in those categories who wishes to apply, and is comfortable to do so, to get in touch with peopledevelopment@aberdeencity.gov.uk where a member of staff will happily have a discreet conversation with you and offer any additional support, guidance and advice available for you during the process.”

3.3.8 Whilst promoting the 2023 Aspiring Leaders programme to our Equality Working Groups, they provided the observation that we would not see diverse internal applicants for programmes aimed at Service manager / Chief Officer level unless we improved diversity within the applicant pools at lower grades in the council and take a more ‘grass roots’ approach to developing talent outside of management or leadership roles.

3.3.9 In response, we have developed an 'Accelerator Scheme' to coincide with our leadership and management development programmes. This Accelerator Scheme offers additional support and positive action for those with protected characteristics – to increase their confidence and ameliorate their participation in the programme. This support will be tailored to the individual and the programme and can include: enhanced support from the People Development team (e.g. one-to-one adviser, a coach, a mentor); adaptations and adjustments to the application process; and removal of barriers such as timings or format of delivery. Following feedback from the Equality Working Groups and Equality Ambassadors, the scheme is to be implemented in a way that does not identify the Accelerator participants on any programme, unless they choose to disclose it themselves.

3.3.10 By using the Accelerator Scheme, we hope to diversify our workforce at first line management level and develop a more diverse pool of candidates who are ready, confident, available and suitable for management roles when they arise. This, in time, will diversify our middle management ranks and lead to a more diverse internal pool of candidates available for Chief Officer development and progression.

3.3.11 To kickstart this grassroots diversification of our leadership and management roles, our [2024 Aspiring Leaders programme](#) seeks to select and develop candidates who are looking to make their *first steps* into people management,

and the Accelerator Scheme has been heavily promoted as part of this. 53 applications for this programme have been received – of which 28 candidates have requested that their application be considered under the Accelerator Scheme. See Figure 1. This response suggests that there is strong desire in the workforce for a programme that specifically seeks to increase diversity in leadership.

The Accelerator Scheme

Aberdeen City Council is committed to upholding the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in everything we do. As part of our EDI Action Plan, we have an Accelerator Scheme, which aims to improve diversity in leadership levels at Aberdeen City Council. There are 4 key groups that are currently underrepresented at leadership level, and applications are particularly encouraged from those who are under 30, those who consider themselves to have a disability, those from a minority ethnic background and women.

To enable us to take positive action to address under-representation from people with these protected characteristics, we can offer individuals who would like their application to be considered under the Accelerator Scheme the following:

- A guaranteed interview for a place on the Aspiring Leaders programme.
- Undertake development in alternative or more accessible ways
- Explore adjustments and additional support.

8. Would you like your application to be considered under the Accelerator Scheme? *

Yes

No

9. What barriers to progression or development have you experienced or observed in the past?

For example timings of courses clashing with caring responsibilities; format of delivery not adapted to ability or disability, perceived bias in the selection panel, etc?

Enter your answer

10. What additional support or adjustments could be put in place for the Aspiring Leaders programme that might make it easier for you to access the programme?

Enter your answer

Figure 1: screenshot to show Aspiring Leaders 2024 application form - with Accelerator Scheme questions

3.3.12 Another strategic use of our talent pipeline approach to progress and promote diversity throughout the organisation is through our Developing the Young Workforce initiatives. Specific programmes such as our Apprenticeship Programme, Career Ready Programme and ABZ Employability Pathways Programme enable us to tap into the rich seam of diverse young people in the city – and provide them with opportunities to experience work in a local authority, ensuring that their time with Aberdeen City Council is inspiring and attractive as a long-term career option. As well as work experience, these opportunities provide them access to support networks and opportunities to develop – all of which will help ensure they are in an optimal position to apply for any permanent job opportunities as they arise. We have many examples of success stories in this area, one being an employee who joined the Council as a Modern Apprentice and has gone on to complete a Graduate

Apprenticeship and has now progressed into a manager role. We anticipate reporting an increase in workforce diversity as a result of these schemes in our upcoming Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report in 2025.

3.4 Employee engagement to co-create a workplace that celebrates diversity

3.4.1 Our duty to improve diversity in recruitment does not stop once a candidate accepts a job with Aberdeen City Council. It is important that they feel a sense of belonging throughout their career – starting with a comprehensive and supportive onboarding and induction process that celebrates diversity.

3.4.2 To ensure we are getting this right for everyone, and meeting the diverse needs of our employees, we have co-created and are delivering an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan with employee working groups, as follows:

- Age Working Group
- Young Employee Network
- Disability Network
- LGBT+ Network
- Race Equality and Diversity Network (RED)
- Working Group for Sex as a Protected Characteristic
- Equality Ambassadors Network

3.4.3 These Employee Working Groups have been actively working on activities, communications, promotions and events which further promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

3.4.4 Summary of Recent Work

Protected Characteristic	Recent Activity
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on signing up to the Age Friendly Employer Pledge which is a nationwide programme for employers who recognise the importance and value of older workers. • Physical wellbeing programme, predominantly targeted at over 50s to try out sports facilities at Sport Aberdeen. • Physical Wellbeing Assessments at Altens targeted at older workforce. • The Young Employee Network was established in 2018 and since the end of 2023 work has been ongoing to re-energise the Network which has been supported by the Chief Executive.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised and facilitated a Year of the Disabled Worker event. • Reviewed the Council’s Disability Confident accreditation. • Various posts and awareness campaigns on the intranet • Supported the development and implementation of reasonable adjustment passports. • Supported the ABZWorks Job Fair for Disabled People • Provided suggested improvements for disability data capture on CoreHR

Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held a stall at Grampian Pride 2023, 2024 and participated in the city march. • Organised a pilot LGBT+ training session. • Added the option for gender neutral title (Mx) on CoreHR • Various posts and awareness campaigns on the intranet's EDI Hub
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised introduction of the diversity STAR award • Various posts and awareness campaigns on the intranet • Supported Aberdeen Mela 2023 • Organised and Facilitated a Black History Month 2023 event with planning for 2024 underway. • Reviewing possibility for an anti-racism strategy • Review of recruitment and selection process • Review of unconscious bias training • Review of multi-faith room • Provided intersectional content for International Women's Day 2023 (see section below)
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menopause Support Final.pdf (aberdeencity.gov.uk) • Extensive information, guidance and resources associated with menopause promoted across the organisation. • Pregnancy Loss Support Final.pdf (aberdeencity.gov.uk) • Campaign for International Women's Day 2023 with intranet pages with information, guidance and blogs from female leaders in the organisation

3.5 Commitment to Anti-Racism in Employment and Pay Gap Reporting

3.5.1 In 2020, Aberdeen City Council committed to the recommendations following the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee Inquiry which were:

The Committee recommends those in public authority leadership positions undertake an assessment of their organisation's understanding of racism and the structural barriers that may exist within their organisations. Public authorities should integrate their ambitions into their next strategic plan. Their strategic goal should be underpinned by specific outcomes and supported by timely monitoring. Public authorities should be transparent about their targets and their progress in delivering their outcomes.

3.5.2 **Action taken:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has been embedded into our workforce plans and delivery plans. Our race equality group has been set up to ensure that race equality is at the fore. They are currently developing a Race Equality Strategy that will be consulted on widely to co-create a final strategy.

The Committee recommends public authorities should review their recruitment procedures and practice against the Scottish Government's toolkit and make the necessary changes.

3.5.3 **Action taken:** The race equality group worked with the Talent team to review our recruitment and selection process against the toolkit and have since worked with the team to create an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Recruitment pack that is promoted on our social media platforms, and available on our website, forming part of all of our job adverts, and embedded within recruitment and selection training for managers.

The Committee recommends that all public authorities subject to the Scottish specific Public Sector Equality Duty should, as a minimum, voluntarily record and publish their ethnicity pay gap and produce an action plan to deliver identified outcomes.

3.5.4 **Action taken:** To meet this recommendation, People & Citizen Services and Data & Insights have developed a reporting mechanism in PowerBI so that Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting is ready for the next statutory reporting cycle where this is required (2025). Since this time, at the Society of Personnel & Development Scotland (SPDS) executive meeting in March 2024 it was agreed that all local authorities will move to a consistent approach for pay gap reporting from April 2025. This will provide us with a nationally agreed approach for calculating our Ethnicity Pay Gap, Race Pay Gap and Gender Pay Gap – and we commit to publishing these in our Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report in 2025.

3.5.5 **Management Training and Guidance**

3.5.6 Management training is important in improving diversity in recruitment because it helps managers to understand the benefits of having a diverse workforce, the challenges and barriers that some groups may face in accessing employment opportunities, and the best practices and tools to attract, select and retain diverse talent. Management training can also help to raise awareness of unconscious bias, stereotypes and discrimination that may affect hiring decisions, and provide strategies to overcome them. By equipping managers with the knowledge and skills to foster a culture of inclusion and respect, management training can contribute to building a more diverse and effective organisation.

3.5.7 To ensure that our recruiting managers are confident and competent in supporting diversity through recruitment, the following training courses are available:

- [Equality & Diversity for Managers E-Learning](#) (mandatory for all people managers)
- [Unconscious Bias E-Learning](#)
- [Recruitment and Selection Training for Managers](#) - Face to Face Course
- [Mental Health Awareness Tools for Managers – Virtual Course](#)
- [Managing People of all abilities](#) - E-Learning
- [Inclusive Language](#) – E-Learning
- [What are reasonable adjustments](#) – E-Learning
- [Introduction to Neurodiversity](#) – E-Learning
- [Gender Equity](#) – E-Learning

- [Responding to Microaggressions at work](#) – E-Learning

3.5.8 Our recruitment and selection guidance states that all managers involved in recruitment should undertake the Recruitment & Selection Training for Managers course, which includes equality, diversity and inclusion. The Chair of the Interview Panel must have completed this training to ensure processes are carried out fairly and in accordance with the recruitment and selection guidance.

3.5.9 In addition to training, we also provide managers with one-to-one guidance and advice from the People & Organisational Development Advisers and consultancy from the Equalities Officers to support their Integrated Impact Assessments and decision making. Self-help tools and guidance are available at all times including:

- [A Recruitment, Selection and Inclusion Guide](#): an online intranet page for managers on how to make their selection processes more inclusive.
- [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#): updated and approved by Staff Governance Committee May 2024
- [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Hub](#): information, advice and guidance, access to training, join networks and conversations, book onto events, and provide feedback or ideas. Employee groups have had significant input into the development of this hub.

3.6 Employer of Choice

3.6.1 Attracting diverse talent is a priority to ensure that our workforce and leadership mirror the rich diversity of the city we are here to serve. At the heart of our approach to recruiting a diverse workforce is ensuring that Aberdeen City Council is seen and promoted as an **employer of choice** where everyone feels valued.

3.6.2 Being an 'employer of choice' means that Aberdeen City Council has a positive reputation and image in the labour market, and attracts and retains high-quality employees who are committed, productive and engaged. It also means that the council offers a competitive reward package, provides opportunities for career development and learning, fosters a healthy and inclusive work environment, and values employee feedback and participation.

3.6.3 In today's digital age, social media is crucial for organisations to enhance visibility and connect with diverse candidates from different geographical locations, cultures, and professional backgrounds, who may not be reached through traditional recruitment methods. We therefore use social media platforms such as LinkedIn, and Facebook to showcase our culture and commitment to diversity through regular posts about job vacancies, employee stories, awards and recognition and strategic initiatives that focus on creating an inclusive workplace. This enables us to build our brand as an employer of choice, provide prospective employees with a transparent view of what it is like to work for the council and attract candidates whose personal values align with the organisation. We have a dedicated page on [MyJobScotland](#) to

showcase for potential applicants our commitment to diversity and are currently developing a short video to showcase the Council as an 'employer of choice' to attract as wide a pool of applicants as possible to come and work for Aberdeen City Council.

- 3.6.4 Another way we continue to present as an 'employer of choice', and to attract a diverse workforce, is by achieving, maintaining and advertising our accreditations and signed pledges that signal our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, such as Disability Confident, and Menopause Workplace Pledge. We also do this through developing, supporting and attending events such as Grampian Pride and Black History Month events. Work is ongoing in this area with employee working groups focusing on ensuring we take advantage of these types of initiatives.
- 3.6.5 We have published our [Fair Work First statement](#) on our website to show that we are aligned with the Scottish Government's requirements, and that we expect any commissioned sub-contractors to comply.
- 3.6.6 Another way we are increasing our reach as an employer to increase our talent pool is through our approaches to hybrid and flexible working, developing staff digital skills and use of technology.
- 3.6.7 By promoting our approach to hybrid working, we can demonstrate that we are a modern, progressive, and flexible employer that cares about its employees and the community. This can help us to attract and retain talent from diverse backgrounds, locations, and sectors, and to enhance our reputation and competitiveness in the market.
- 3.6.8 Research suggests that having effective family friendly policies in place supports women's equality in the workplace. With a workforce that is 70% female, a gender pay gap in favour of women, and 56% of the top 5% of earners at Aberdeen City Council being female, it is clear that our commitment to family friendly policies is currently effective. At the same time, it is important that we continue to update and upgrade our offering for parents in the workplace and identify any aspects where intersectionality may be at play. In the context of our family-friendly policies, this means that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of all employees who can experience multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage. Specifically, women from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities, and/or those in LGBTQ+ relationships might face unique challenges that are not fully addressed by older policies.
- 3.6.9 To address these challenges, a review is underway to ensure that our policies and initiatives are inclusive and considerate of the unique experiences of all employees. This will deliver the following:
- All of our in scope and available policies, provisions and guidance documents are consolidated, streamlined, readily available, easy to understand and clear for those who need it at point of need, packaged within a family friendly 'suite.'

- The documents within the family friendly 'suite' are updated so that the language is inclusive and contemporary, reflecting the organisation's Guiding Principles as well as all family types and circumstances, such as LGBTQ+ couples and kinship carers.
- Employee entitlements can be easily understood so that employees make the most informed choices and managers are able to provide consistent and appropriate support and decisions.
- The family friendly 'suite' is well-connected to, and makes the most of, government websites and toolkits that are available for employees.
- A communications and engagement plan will be developed to encourage more male employees to make use of family leave provisions.
- Support provisions, such as entitlements around pregnancy loss and counselling services, will be readily available at point of need so that employees will have easy access to support.
- The organisation will maintain its compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and any other legislative requirements.

3.7 Supporting Diverse Applicants Directly

3.7.1 An additional way that the Council is increasing its visibility and attractiveness as an employer is by interacting with the local community and schools, colleges and universities, raising awareness of the different career paths and opportunities available.

3.7.2 To attract and recruit high quality candidates directly from university and provide them with crucial workplace experience that can increase their likelihood to success when applying for senior posts, we continue to strengthen our partnership with local Colleges and Universities and support internships, work placements and regularly attend careers fairs and employer events and share our vacancies on their 'Jobs Boards'. For example, we are working with the University of Aberdeen on an Internship programme (funded by the University) where students will gain an insight and experience in an area of work related to their studies, the most recent example being the Countryside Ranger service. We are supporting the University's new Shadowing Programme that provides students with a day shadowing a Council service, aligned to their choice of study, providing an insight into that field and giving the student an opportunity to make connections in the world of work. Partnerships with universities allow the Council to connect with a diverse range of students, who may otherwise not consider the Council as a potential future employer.

3.7.3 To further broaden our reach and promote our vacancies, particularly for some of our harder to fill roles, we are now sharing our vacancies with a wider range of Universities across Scotland and the UK. We are also developing promotional material to promote Aberdeen as a city to live and work; to try to attract applicants from as wide a reach as possible and this will include a link to the [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Recruitment pack](#). For example, we have upcoming recruitment for Environmental Health Officers, which are very hard to fill roles. As part of the recruitment campaign, this additional

promotional material may help attract applicants outwith the Aberdeen area, who may otherwise not have considered a role in Aberdeen.

- 3.7.4 Through ABZWorks, the Talent Team has attended a number of recruitment fairs to support our minority ethnic community, people who are displaced, refugees, asylum seekers. We have also attended events run by Department of Work and Pensions for job seekers who are over 50 years, and mothers/carers who are seeking to return to work. In March 2023 we supported the [Unison Year of the Disabled Worker](#) initiative at an event to support people with disabilities in the workplace – this was designed to be as inclusive as possible for people who are neurodiverse, by ensuring the first hour is as quiet and calm as possible for their arrival and participation. Later in November 2023 we held an event to celebrate [Black History Month](#) and Year of the Black Worker, which included workshops to bring together Aberdeen City Council senior leaders and members of the black community, who shared their experience of interacting with the Council, including our recruitment processes.
- 3.7.5 Furthermore, the Council supports various initiatives and campaigns that align with its values and goals, such as the Living Wage, Fair Work principles, and the Scottish Business Pledge. These activities help the Council to build a positive reputation and relationship with the community, and to attract and develop talent for the future.
- 3.7.6 Aberdeen City Council has an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion recruitment pack available for potential applicants on webpage [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as an employer](#). This resource sets out our commitment and culture to welcoming and celebrating diversity, with a welcome from the Chief Executive, and provides potential applicants with information about equality, diversity and inclusion, their entitlements and also any adaptations to selection processes that can be requested, and how to do this. It has been promoted on social media, is available on our website, forms part of all of our job adverts on the myjobscotland website and is embedded within recruitment and selection training for managers.

3.8 Next steps

3.8.1 Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2025

3.8.2 In line with our Public Sector Equality Duty and Scottish Specific Duties, we are required to analyse and publish our workforce diversity data every two years as an Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report. The next report is due in March 2025 and this we will record progress made towards the previous Equality Outcomes and on all initiatives from 2021 to 2025 that have been in service of progressing ED&I, including those relating to recruitment and development, the Accelerator scheme, and the Aspiring Leaders programmes for 2023 and 2024.

3.8.3 The 2025 Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report will provide a snapshot of the current citywide and organisational context and demographics - and how we will continue to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of how we operate as a service provider, as an employer and in our collaborative work with partners through refreshed Equality Outcomes for the next four years.

3.8.4 Employee engagement will soon commence to gather *qualitative* data on all aspects of our employees' lived experience of diversity and inclusion within Aberdeen City Council, including relating to their recruitment experiences.

3.8.5 To ensure we have the *quantitative* data readily available for reporting purposes, and also to enable us to view live data to monitor trends and identify issues, colleagues from People & Citizen Services and Data & Insights are working together to view our workforce diversity data through PowerBI. This will also allow for live monitoring and analysis which at the moment is carried out only at annual intervals due to the manual intervention required. This will be anonymous and only for monitoring and analysis purposes, as well as to be able to target interventions and solutions.

3.8.6 We will continue to work in partnership with our equality partners - GREC, Abledeen and DeafBlind – and carry out Integrated Impact Assessments to build our capability and understanding of barriers, inequality and intersectionality for citizens, including around recruitment, to help shape our next Equality Outcomes and action plan.

3.8.7 Strategic Performance Indicators for the Improvement Service

3.8.8 As part of our commitment to work with partners to establish networks and understand inequality at a national level, gender pay gap data is provided to the Improvement Service annually, along with the percentage breakdown of our top 5% of earners by sex.

3.8.9 From 2025 onwards, we will be required to publish disability pay gap and ethnicity pay gap in addition to gender pay gap. At the Society of Personnel & Development Scotland (SPDS) Executive meeting in March 2024 it was agreed that all local authorities will move to a consistent approach for pay gap

reporting from April 2025. COSLA have shared a formula for calculations that all local authorities are required to pilot, and preparations for this are now well underway. This will provide us with a clearer picture on our pay gap for people in these protected groups – and also enable us to compare our progress against other local authorities in Scotland.

3.8.10 Knowing our workforce through data

3.8.11 Understanding our workforce data is key to any actions taken forward through an equality strategy.

3.8.12 Whilst we hold accurate and council-wide data on age and gender of our employees, as this information is captured at preferred candidate stage; the data held on an employee's ethnicity, sexuality, religion, or any disability is not captured at pre-employment stage. Employees can choose to provide this information as part of their diversity information held within our HR/ Payroll system. As a result of a poster and intranet campaign, currently 24% of our workforce has provided this data (this is higher than the national average of 11% in 2018 and 19% in 2021)¹. This means that our disability and ethnicity age gap reporting for 2024-25 may not be fully representative of the true diversity in our workforce.

3.8.13 In order to improve and increase the accuracy of reported statistics, proactive communication and engagement will take place with the workforce to increase self-identification and completion.

3.8.14 Even with proactive awareness raising with the workforce, it should be noted that some employees will then choose not to disclose their protected characteristics with their employer, for example due to privacy concerns, fear of discrimination, pervasive stigma, lack of understanding of benefits or rationale. Our intention therefore, to support both Equality Outcomes engagement and Pay Gap reporting in 2025, is to undertake a diversity-positive communications campaign throughout the workforce that celebrates diversity in all its forms.

3.8.15 We will continue to follow Scottish Government guidance on improving data disclosure on ethnic background and all other protected characteristics.

3.8.16 We will continue working towards Scottish Government guidance, resources and toolkits to ensure we are doing everything possible to improve diversity in recruitment, including leadership and management roles.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Initiatives are funded by the allocated Corporate Training budget held within People and Citizen Services, following careful budgeting and allocation of funds to support the diversity and inclusion initiatives outlined

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

¹ A Fairer Scotland for All: An Anti-Racist Employment Strategy

- 5.1 Positive discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 (except in very limited circumstances relating to disability or certain roles). Examples of positive discrimination would include recruiting or promoting a person solely because they have a relevant protected characteristic or setting quotas to recruit or promote a particular number or proportion of people with protected characteristics irrespective of merit.
- 5.2 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 states that Local Authorities must appoint on merit.
- 5.3 It is permissible for an Employer to adopt [positive action](#) to meet the needs of under-represented or disadvantaged groups under section 158 of the Equality Act 2010.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to meet strategic objectives due to lack of capacity.	The activities outlined in this report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver our strategic objectives.	L	Yes
Compliance	Failure to meet statutory requirements due to lack of capacity.	The activities outlined in this report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that	L	Yes

		there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver our statutory requirements.		
Operational	Failure to meet operational service delivery requirements due to lack of capacity. Flatter structures and reduced headcount could mean less opportunities.	The activities outlined in this report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver our operational service delivery requirements.	L	Yes
Financial	Financial and organisational constraints to diversity. Lack of money to support development activity. Lack of resource to develop and facilitate targeted programmes	The activities outlined in this report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that there is an appropriate level of internal movement and workforce talent pipelining.	L	Yes
Reputational	Inability to attract and retain employees through not being an employer of choice.	The activities outlined in this report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that Aberdeen City Council remains an attractive employer for prospective and existing employees.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Inability to meet climate	The activities outlined in this	L	Yes

	and environmental goals due to lack of capacity.	report are assurance that work is undertaken to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver our climate and environmental goals.		
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The work outlined in this report supports the below taken from the Council’s Policy Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the city’s universities, Northeast Scotland College and businesses to increase educational and training options and the number of care-experienced young people and young people from deprived communities, going onto positive destinations, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships. - Promote the number of apprenticeships on offer through the council • Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems. • Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The work outlined in this report supports the below Stretch Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four hundred unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026 • Five hundred Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move

	into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The work outlined in this report supports the below Stretch Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026 • 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2), will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026. • 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/ Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	The work outlined in this report will support the delivery of: Workforce Delivery Plan – January 2023

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	<p>An Integrated Impact Assessment for Recruitment and Selection has been created and referred to for this report:</p> <p>Individual incentives would have their own assessments as required.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	n/a

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Report to Staff Governance Committee 22 April 2024 - [Workforce Deep Dive – Approach to workforce capacity and hard to fill roles](#)
- 10.2 [Report to Staff Governance Committee 22 April 2024 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- 10.3 [Employers: what is positive action in the workplace? | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/business/employers-what-positive-action-workplace?return-url=https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/search?keys=positive+action>

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of actions taken to improve diversity in recruitment, including leadership and management roles

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A: Summary of actions taken to improve diversity in recruitment, including leadership and management roles

Improving diversity in recruitment is just one aspect of the broader efforts needed to enhance diversity at the leadership level; a holistic approach to the entire employee lifecycle and a thorough analysis of the steps taken are essential. Therefore a summary is provided below detailing the results of a self-assessment undertaken against guidance provided by the Scottish Government². This will be updated and progress against ongoing actions reported in our Equalities Mainstreaming report in early 2025, with a clear EDI Action Plan for the next four years which will seek to address gaps identified in the self-assessment, and through engagement with Equality Working Groups.

SG RECOMMENDATION	WHAT WE HAVE DONE	WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT
Consider available sources of quantitative and qualitative data to get a comprehensive picture of how staff are represented and how they feel about working in the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Poster campaign on self-identification of diversity information leading to 24% engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Utilise 2024 census data as part of 2025 Mainstreaming report <input type="checkbox"/> Further comms campaigns to encourage employees to self-disclose their diversity information to improve our data <input type="checkbox"/> Gathering insight into employee lived experience through Equal Opportunities Monitoring in employee surveys – next one due winter 2024/25.
Utilise voice of lived experience to identify barriers and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integrated Impact Assessment template updated and training rolled out to officers across 2024, with clear direction that consultation and engagement required with both citizens and employees. ✓ Diversity blogs published on intranet ✓ Equality Working Groups in place and effectively utilised for engagement on corporate campaigns and policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> IIA updated to include Consumer Duty and Sustainability Impacts. Further training with all stakeholders scheduled.
Analyse and assess data to identify any inequality in outcome between different groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gender Pay Gap SPI submitted for 2024 ✓ Collaborated with Data & Insights to establish PowerBI dashboards with dynamic data to show workforce equality data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap data to be available and published in 2025.

² [A Fairer Scotland for All: An Anti-Racist Employment Strategy \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

SG RECOMMENDATION	WHAT WE HAVE DONE	WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT
Engage with other organisations to determine what information already available and avoid repeated asks of those with lived experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Partnerships and regular review meetings in place with equality partners including GREC, AbleDeen and DeafBlind. ✓ Senior leadership support of Disability Equality Partnership meetings and Equality Participation Networks ✓ Aberdeen City Council have volunteered for Improvement Service's pilot group on Pay Gap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue adding value and developing networks and partnerships.
Work across sector/locale to share and learn practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collaborating and sharing best practice with colleagues in other local authorities as part of our Society of Personnel and Development (SPDS) professional networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing to collaborate and sharing best practice with colleagues in other local authorities as part of our Society of Personnel and Development (SPDS) professional networks
Assess the impact of action taken to understand effectiveness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis and impact to be reported in 2025 Equalities Mainstreaming Report
Branding and communication in advance of a recruitment campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on our website and on the myjobscotland website where all our vacancies are advertised. ✓ Developed an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Recruitment Pack that sets out our commitment to welcoming and celebrating diversity and provides potential applicants with information about their entitlements and also any adaptations to selection processes that can be requested. ✓ Pledges clearly advertised on our MyJobScotland pages for Disability Confident, Carer Positive, Armed Forces Friendly, Young Person's Guarantee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop our social media promotion of equality, diversity, inclusion and recruitment. <input type="checkbox"/> Developing promotional material to promote Aberdeen as a city to live and work – and attract candidates on a nationally.
Accessible language in advertised vacancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our application portal, MyJobScotland, has accessibility features that provide support to applicants with visual impairments. ✓ Recruitment and Selection training for managers covers equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the recruitment process, including using inclusive advert wording. 	

SG RECOMMENDATION	WHAT WE HAVE DONE	WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT
Target marketing and recruitment campaigns to attract minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attend careers fairs to promote our wide range of employment opportunities, tap into the rich diversity of children and young people, and engage with people to present Aberdeen City Council as employer of choice for those who may experience barriers to employment. ✓ Promoting vacancies on Social Media to increase the reach of candidates. ✓ Posting vacancies on University Jobs Boards to increase the reach of candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop our social media promotion of equality, diversity, inclusion and recruitment. <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing our vacancies with a wider range of Universities across Scotland and the UK.
Flexible working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A wide range of flexible working options available to employees across the organisation as set out within our Smarter Working Guidance ✓ Flexible Working is promoted on Myjobscotland on all our vacancies. ✓ Introduced advertising vacancies as having flexible working options, including hybrid, which may widen the candidate pool ✓ A wide range of family friendly policies / entitlements available to employees across the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Smarter Working policy currently under review <input type="checkbox"/> Family Friendly policies under review <input type="checkbox"/> In our promotion of vacancies, highlight if the role has the ability to work flexibly, including hybrid, to potentially increase the candidate pool.
Commitment to diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ EDI policy updated in 2024. ✓ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a mandatory training course for all employees. ✓ Online training courses for employees including gender equality, introduction to faith inclusion and unconscious bias. ✓ Set out our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer on our webpages on the myjobscotland website. ✓ Developed an equality, diversity and inclusion recruitment pack to set out our commitment to welcoming and celebrating diversity and to provides potential applicants with information about their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Update our mandatory ED&I training for all employees

SG RECOMMENDATION	WHAT WE HAVE DONE	WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT
	<p>entitlements and also any adaptations to selection processes that can be requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We have a number of guaranteed interview schemes that may be applicable to potential applicants. ✓ Equality, diversity and inclusion, including unconscious bias is part of the Recruitment and selection training for managers. 	
Anonymised applications and short-listing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our application forms do not ask applicants for their first name or date of birth to avoid unconscious bias ✓ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, including Unconscious Bias is part of the Recruitment and Selection Training for Managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explore any additional training needs for recruiting managers.
Establishing and supporting staff networks – support staff to share and voice concerns and experiences and be confident that something will be done about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Equality Working Groups established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to engage effectively with groups and identify additional future groups that could be supported.
Raising awareness of harm and implications of hate crime – calling out bullying, harassment, microaggressions and casual remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chief Exec blog raising awareness of domestic abuse and encouraging colleagues to support their peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Zero Tolerance policy and associated comms campaign to follow in winter 2024.
Increase leadership messaging that challenges discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chief Exec blog encouraging colleagues to report hate crime and pledging support for whistleblowing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communications campaign, shaped around our Guiding Principles, with sponsorship from senior leadership.
Providing relevant training to deal effectively with incidents of bullying and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and guidance for managers on how to approach bullying and harassment in the workforce, and signpost to our employee assistance programme. ✓ Dedicated People & OD Adviser to support managers on a case by case basis. ✓ A number of relevant online training courses on ACCLearn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Update training for managers to align with updated EDI policy.
Embedding trauma-informed and responsive practice in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trauma-informed capability introduced for all job families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Trauma-informed training officer role under development

SG RECOMMENDATION	WHAT WE HAVE DONE	WHAT WE ARE DOING NEXT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trauma-informed training programme available for all employees. 	
<p>Use positive action measures to address under-representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aspiring Senior Leaders programme delivered in 2023 ✓ Aspiring Leaders recruitment campaign to identify future People Managers for 2024 is now underway. ✓ Accelerator scheme in place for all leadership and management programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increase awareness of Accelerator scheme as available for all development opportunities.
<p>Work to ensure that policies and processes are impact assessed and considered in terms of the impact on minoritised staff and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Equality Working Groups and Equality Ambassadors engaged as part of all and any people policy reviews. 	
<p>Focus on addressing occupational segregation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Embedded as part of Cluster People Development Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Further analysis and reporting to be undertaken as part of Equality Mainstreaming Report in 2025
<p>Fair Work policy context and legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fair Work First statement and evidence published on website. 	
<p>Work with partners to establish senior leadership networks across the economy to build capability and understanding of racism and racial inequality and intersectionality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ North East Public Sector Equalities group established – bringing together EDI specialists from public sector organisations in Aberdeen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to develop network

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Council's General Fund, 2024
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/283
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Jonathan Belford
REPORT AUTHOR	Scott Paterson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to pull together in one place the known factors affecting the financial position and financial sustainability of an organisation's General Fund over the medium term. Furthermore, the purpose is to draw out the scenarios that the Council faces and to describe the approach to addressing the conclusions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council: -

- 2.1 Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund, 2024;
- 2.2 Note that the Scottish Government, in light of the July 2024 General Election and limited information provided by the UK Government in advance of the Autumn Budget Statement at the end of October 2024, has not yet published a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2024. The Scottish Budget for 2025/26 has been announced as being presented to the Scottish Parliament on 4 December 2024;
- 2.3 Note that the Scottish Government published its latest Programme for Government in September 2024, alongside announcements of several emergency spending controls and savings measures for 2024/25. This, in addition to the outcome of the Local Government Settlement for 2024/25 and information included in the previous MTFS from Scottish Government means the Central Scenario maintains a flat cash position for grant funding from the Scottish Government for future financial years. The MTFS model also includes previously approved savings of £9.155 million for 2025/26, and will be updated for the Council's Budget meeting in March 2025 with details of the actual financial settlement for 2025/26;
- 2.4 Note that the Strategy relies on delivering its intentions contained in the TOM1.2 report [Council, August 2022, CUS/22/171 and Council, February 2024,

- CUS/24/043] which describes the approach the Council intends to take through transformation and multi-agency working to contribute towards closing the gap between income and expenditure forecast;
- 2.5 Note that although inflation has fallen back to Bank of England target levels, the 2024/25 pay awards for Scottish local government have still to be agreed, and this may have an impact on the future funding gap;
 - 2.6 Note that the report Capital Programme Delivery: Projects Update – CR&E/25/273 was presented to the Finance and Resources Committee on 12 September 2024;
 - 2.7 Note that the Capital Programme, as included in the Council Financial Performance Quarter 1, 2024/25 report (CORS/24/223), is the basis for capital financing costs and debt levels referred to in the MTFS and following the regular review of the Loans Fund Repayment Policy, approve the policy for 2025/26 and beyond as described in Table 5 of the MTFS;
 - 2.8 Note the 2025/26 Budget will be discussed and set by the Council in March 2025 following an extensive public engagement exercise as required by the Scheme of Governance and Budget Protocol, and that details of the Phase 1 consultation exercise are contained in Appendix 4. For Phase 2 consultation, while the central scenario will be key, it will be prudent to identify the impact of options that address the Downside scenario shown in the MTFS 2024 and the results of the engagement will be reported to Council in December 2024;
 - 2.09 Note that the Council's Financial Resilience Framework shows that the General Fund has underlying resilience of £12m (uncommitted reserves) which is a falling percentage of the net General Fund budget. The Council should consider if, in the current financial climate, that is sufficient and decide during the 2025/26 budget setting process whether to budget for this to increase;
 - 2.10 Note that the strength of the Council Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 (net worth is £1.35bn) is reduced from to the year before. Key changes are in unusable reserves relating to the capital accounting and asset valuation changes;
 - 2.11 Note that the Resilience Framework identifies that the total value, and cost of servicing, debt is rising. Careful consideration will have to be given to each and every capital project to ensure it fits with the Council's Strategic priorities, ensures it delivers Best Value, as well as being affordable, sustainable, and prudent in compliance with the Prudential Code;
 - 2.12 Note that the options available to the Council for managing rising debt levels include reducing the scale and scope of the General Fund Capital Programme or extending the programme of projects over a much longer period. With the costs rising, these capital financing costs are forecast to become a larger proportion of the Council's net income. The Council approved a cap on the cost of capital financing of 12% of Net Revenue Expenditure and this will require difficult decisions if Revenue Funding from Scottish Government and Council Tax income does not increase in future years;

- 2.13 Note that the Chief Officer – Finance has an instruction to review the Council’s Long term Financial Strategy and this will be reported to Council later this financial year; and
- 2.14 Note that the Chief Officer – Finance will continue to develop the Financial Resilience Framework with a view to embedding it across the councils financial planning, financial monitoring, and financial year end reporting arrangements.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Council’s MTFFS 2023 was approved by Council on 23 August 2023, with the financial forecasts updated as part of the budget setting process for financial year 2024/25, approved in March 2024.
- 3.2 Having this overarching document is increasingly important in an environment that has continued to be more challenging and more complex, which has seen the effects of global events such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and resulting war, and the supply chain volatility and energy price shocks. The sudden rise in inflation towards the end of 2022 was replaced by a long slow decline in rates throughout 2023. While the initial turbulence appears to be over, the cost of living crisis it created still remains, with higher borrowing costs and higher prices leaves local government and public services with high demand and very limited funding.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government published its latest revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (SGMTFS) in May 2023, which followed 2022’s publication of the first Resource Spending Review since 2011. The spending review was accompanied by a Review of Capital Spending. The SGMTFS comments that it “...demonstrates that the fiscal environment has become even more challenging than when the Resource Spending Review (RSR) was published (May 2022).”
- 3.4 After taking account of the financial environment, the information provided by Scottish Government and the approved budget setting decisions for 2024/25 an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Council’s General Fund has been completed and is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The Target Operating Model (TOM1.2) [Council, August 2022, CUS/22/171 and Council, February 2024, CUS/24/043] presented the Council with a way forward to transform services and to contribute to closing the future budget gap. Programmes of work include eight on transformation of Council services and four that cut across the Council and our partners as part of our multi-agency transformation approach.
- 3.6 Together, the MTFFS and TOM1.2 documents represent the fiscal framework for Aberdeen.
- 3.7 The MTFFS provides the Council with an overview of the financial situation and how this is evolving in these uncertain times, and to consider how sensitive the

financial situation is to changes in income and exposure to demand and inflation.

- 3.8 The strategy draws on a range of information and data and relies on scenario planning to express a range of financial consequences that will only become certain with actual experience and with more and better information over time.
- 3.9 Scenarios do allow us to develop the actions and activities needed to balance our finances, and a Central Scenario is presented alongside Upside and Downside Scenarios, giving us an insight into the spectrum of difficulty that the Council faces.
- 3.10 The strategy sets out a range of principles for income, expenditure and capital investment that are designed to support financial resilience and financial sustainability, and these are included at paragraphs 1.1 to 1.20 of the Strategy.
- 3.11 The question of financial resilience is one that continues to be very important to local government, greater emphasis is being placed on the test of 'going concern' than ever and while local government is presumed to be a going concern it is clear from recent s.114 notices in England, for example, that this cannot be taken for granted. The report on the MTFs last year instructed the Chief Officer – Finance to continue to develop the framework for financial resilience and additional data has been included and this has led to further recommendations.
- 3.12 The Financial Resilience Framework was populated with information from the Council's Annual Accounts, for the four years up to 31 March 2023 and this has been updated to include the audited Annual Accounts for 2023/24. The information is therefore the cumulative effect of decisions taken over many years and does not by itself reflect what the future position may look like. I have made reference to the table at 6.36 of Appendix 1, to whether the ratio appears to be stable or improving or if we should be watching it. The figures on their own provide information to provide assurance to the Council that the underlying strength of the finances are healthy given the volatile and high-cost environment we are working in, i.e. it has financial reserves on which to draw in the event of further financial shock, but that resource is finite and non-recurring.
- 3.13 It is acknowledged that the benefits from having this data are yet to be fully realised, with further work and comparison required. That said there is sufficient insight to highlight indicators that should be carefully considered when making budget decisions going forward.
- 3.14 I have included Directors of Finance Section for Local Government in engaging in the development of the various strands of the framework with a view to the Financial Resilience Framework developed by the Council, being adopted sector wide.
- 3.15 I will again provide commentary and data as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process, and I will continue development work in conjunction with partners.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none arising directly from the report. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 sets out the financial implications for the Council's General Fund and will be the financial parameters within which the annual budget setting process will be undertaken.
- 4.2 The budget engagement and consultation that the Council will undertake, as Phase 2 of the Budget Protocol, will use the Central Scenario presented by in the MTFs, which is a gap of £54.768m over the next three years, the end of the current Council term. This sits in the context of the whole five year MTFs which presents the financial challenge as follows:

After Assumed Savings	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30
General Fund Budget Gap	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Downside Scenario	0	47	88	135	182	223
Central Scenario	0	29	44	55	70	78
Upside Scenario	0	6	13	20	28	34

- 4.3 This refreshed modelling includes previously approved savings of £9.155million for 2025/26, rising to £20.699million of previously approved savings by the end of 2027/28.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 While there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report, there are additional reporting requirements due to the London Stock Exchange listing, for example the requirement to notify them ahead of publication of the report.
- 5.2 The financial constraints that are now faced by local government sector and by the Council mean that serious questions have to be raised as to the affordability and sustainability of Council services and the scope, quantity, and quality of them going forward challenging at what point statutory services cannot be delivered.
- 5.3 The Council has a statutory duty to set Council Tax and a balanced budget, and the Strategy sets out the related challenges and the parameters within which this will have to be done. Any failure to comply with this duty would leave the Council open to legal action and/or regulatory intervention.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 While there are no direct environmental implications from the recommendations in this report, the development of the MTFs must have a reference to the environmental objectives and targets that the Council has a duty to deliver on. Those duties come at a cost and where possible the scale of the challenge has

been described, it is clear however that an enormous amount of further work is required in order to quantify the detailed proposals, business cases and funding solutions to meet of those duties.

- 6.2 The MTF5 will continue to take account of the latest information in relation to our actions towards Net Zero as it is regularly refreshed.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to recognise the consequence of the economic and local circumstance could lead to poor use of resources	The Strategy is in place to look forward into the medium term and plan for the future to improve the likelihood of resource allocation being aligned to strategic outcomes.	L	Yes
Compliance	Failure to set balanced budget.	A robust process is in place to ensure budgets are prepared and presented for approval by the Council at the start of March.	L	Yes
Operational	Failure to take account of the financial constraints described in the MTF5 and to change operational arrangements to be affordable could lead to unplanned spending reductions.	A robust process is in place to ensure budgets are prepared and presented for approval by the Council at the start of March.	L	Yes
Financial	The assumptions are insufficiently sensitive to the	The strategy is based on scenarios that present a range of	M	Yes

	situations that might arise, resulting in a larger financial challenge.	potential impacts for the Council's finances. It will be kept under review. Financial planning assumptions are subject to two reviews annually, the MTFS and the Annual Budget report.		
Reputational	There is a risk that through the reduction of expenditure the Council may be criticised that spending is not in line with public expectation of service delivery.	The Council has continued to address priority spending areas, and to protect people. It is equally accountable for the use of public funds and to ensure that they are managed robustly. There are a wide range of unknown external factors that require to be balanced to deal with the current operating environment. Regular reporting during the year provides an ongoing description of the position the Council is in and the situations it faces.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Failure to take account of the long-term objectives in relation to our climate and the associated costs may lead to unexpected or unplanned expenditure.	The Council has put in place appropriate strategies to target the Net Zero objectives and continues to work on the long-term costs and affordability. The MTFS will continue to be updated to reflect the latest information.	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report

Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement	Financial planning, budget setting and resource allocation are all enablers for the delivery of the outcomes and regular performance reviews ensure that the Council's stewardship and financial management are robust.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The Council continues to invest in front-line services across its statutory responsibilities as well as capital infrastructure. Investment in the city will have a positive impact on the economy.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Robust and effective management of the Council's finances will ensure that services can continue to be provided.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Investment will enhance the place by creating a better and more vibrant city in which to live.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Jonathan Belford, Chief Officer Finance on 10 September 2024.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Council's General Fund 2024

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*MEDIUM TERM
FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR
THE COUNCIL'S GENERAL
FUND, 2024*



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a 5 year plan which sets out our commitment to provide services that meet the needs of people locally and represents value for money. The MTFS is aligned to the Council Delivery Plan, which in turn aligns the Council's commitments to the vision and priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

1.2 The Local Outcome Improvement Plan's (LOIP) vision is:

'A place where all people can prosper'

1.3 The Council, 24 August 2023 [CUS/22/171], agreed the Target Operation Model (TOM) 1.2 for 2022-27 to support the necessary scale of transformation to deliver the level of savings required over the next 5 years, as outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The objectives of TOM 1.2 are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5-year funding gap of £134m as outlined in the [2023] MTFS.
2. Continue to exploit digital technologies within the Council's Digital Transformation agenda to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, thus enabling the Council to fully leverage technologies to accelerate their processes.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within the Council's operating model. :

1.4 Our approach to achieving this is by organising ourselves for the future. The key strategic linkages to create a future environment for the way in which we will operate can be summarised in the following dimensions:

- The nature of our work (why we work) - we work to prevent our citizens from experiencing negative and harmful outcomes and increasingly will be providing less direct service delivery and focusing more on helping our citizens, families, and communities to be empowered to help themselves and each other.
- Building our 'Workforce' of the future (how we work and how we behave) - enabled by technology, the public sector and partner organisations have, and will increasingly make use of, more varied work arrangements, accessing more diverse pools of skills and capabilities, both inside, outside and across organisational boundaries. As a result of the next phase of our digital maturity journey, our staff will undertake less and less transactional work, thereby creating more capacity for our workforce to focus on building relationships with citizens and supporting community capacity building. We will work with a singular focus on outcomes, working as groups of staff to make our contribution to those outcomes. And as teams, we will enjoy increased empowerment and flexibility.
- Re-imagining our 'Workplace' of the future (where we work) - technology, and new models for employing talent, are starting to redefine the workplace and its organisational supports. These changes have and will continue to impact physical

workspaces (including remote and hybrid work) along with policies that promote employee well-being. We will no longer define our workplace by a defined building and instead will view our workplace as wherever we can best serve our citizens

1.5 The key objectives of the MTFs are as follows:

- To ensure that effective financial planning and management contributes to the Council achieving the priorities in the Council Delivery Plan;
- To frame and define the parameters for financial decisions to be taken;
- To direct resources to the Council's priorities to support the achievement of the Council Delivery Plan;
- To highlight and promote the maximisation of income to support the priorities of the council;
- To identify the context within which decisions about resource allocation will have to be made;
- To highlight the need to improve value for money - managing our resources as efficiently as possible; streamlining processes and systems; getting better value from commissioning and procurement; whilst seeking to minimise the impact of budget savings on priority services; and
- To ensure the Council's financial standing is understood and identify where action is needed to enhance financial resilience.

1.6 The merits of medium and long-term financial planning are well documented¹ and a key component of the council's strategic framework, building on the medium-term focus that has underpinned annual budget setting. The aim of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to pull together in one place the known factors affecting the financial position and financial sustainability of an organisation over the medium term.

1.7 Supporting financial planning relies on national and local data, from which assumptions emerge, that can be applied to a range of scenarios. Due to the nature of a local authority, it is not in control of all the determinants of its income and cost base, and crucially this includes the financial support provided from public funds. Many statutory services are provided free at the point of delivery / use and therefore the scale, scope and shape of services is substantially determined by how much subsidy (grant) is provided in total. Complexity multiplies as the statutory duties and commitments increase.

1.8 The ability of a local authority to develop medium and long-term financial planning is significantly influenced by the following factors:

- the ratio between locally and nationally determined levels of taxation and fees and charges and the prospects of this changing over time; and

¹ Example, CIPFAs Looking Forward – Medium Term Financial Strategies for the UK Public Sector, 2016

- whether government provides certainty regarding the level of government grant beyond the immediate next financial year.
- 1.9 Global events have brought an immediacy to action in recent years, particularly the global health pandemic that occurred in 2020 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, to name but two, and therefore it continues to be difficult to look ahead of what is needed now. While the health pandemic continues to have a longer than expected impact on citizen, business and visitor behaviours it can be said that the impact of dispersal, asylum and welcome schemes is now a dominant factor on the cost and demand placed on the Council. This is something that is not short term, and will have an impact for the foreseeable future.
- 1.10 The recent sudden peak in inflation levels that the country had not seen for forty years, which are only now returning to pre Russian invasion and Bank of England target levels, makes the task of medium and long-term financial planning even more challenging. The long-term impact of higher costs of pay and commodity prices has added cost to the Council that changed the baseline, meaning the Council has to deal with future cost pressures that are greater than previously modelled.
- 1.11 The change in UK Government, as a result of the General Election in July 2024, has not changed the national need for financial support to address the ‘Cost of Living Crisis’. The review of UK public finances carried out by the incoming government has already resulted in the termination of some funding programmes such as the Winter Fuel Payment Allowance, and the Prime Minister has issued a warning that the UK Autumn budget will be “painful”. If this results in an expected reduction in household incomes then it impacts people and businesses and the Council receives more demand as a result.
- 1.12 With borrowing by the UK Treasury at levels not seen for many decades both the UK and Scottish Government will be required to make political choices in terms of what is affordable in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.13 The Scottish Government last published its full Medium Term Financial Strategy in May 2023². This provided the context for the Scottish Budget and the Scottish Parliament. This updated the country following the last Resource Spending Review³ that was published in May 2022. Priorities, commitments and actions for the year ahead were set out in the annual publication, Programme for Government 2022/23 which the First Minister refreshed in September 2024 with the 2024/25 update⁴. The Finance Secretary for Scotland also announced savings for the Scottish budget last month as a result of in-year financial pressures Further details which may impact for the 2025/26

² [SG Medium Term Financial Strategy, 25 May 2023](#)

³ [Investing in Scotland’s Future: Resource Spending Review, 31 May 2022](#)

⁴ [Scottish Government, Programme for Government 2024/25, September 2024](#)

financial year are not expected until the Scottish budget is announced on 4 December 2024.

- 1.14 The UK Government 2023 Budget⁵ followed the Autumn Statement 2022, which made decisions on tax and spending to counteract the financial shocks that had taken place in September and October 2022. The 2023 Budget described the “difficult decisions needed...to restore economic stability, support public services, and lay the foundation for long-term growth.” The Budget was ‘quiet’ compared to the Autumn Statement and revealed that while the shorter term economic picture has improved slightly, the longer term one is little different to before. In particular, the potential future growth rate of the UK economy remains very poor, at 1.75% a year. This means that in the medium term there is, at present, no room for giveaways, in terms of tax cuts or spending increases, without breaching the Chancellors own primary fiscal target, a declining debt ratio after five years.
- 1.15 The UK Government 2024 Budget⁶ was published in March 2024, though there may be significant changes announced in the Autumn by the new UK Government as it reviews the state of public finances.
- 1.16 The Council will recognise that with so much of its income outside of its control, the assumptions that underpin the MTFS cannot, by definition, be exact, they are subject to refinement and change over time. Therefore, a series of scenarios should be used to describe a range of income possibilities. This refresh of the MTFS focuses on the changes to a central scenario, while recognising upside and downside scenarios that have had to be revised to take account of the more extreme nature of the financial environment in which we operate. These scenarios are refreshed regularly as part of the budget setting and strategic planning processes.
- 1.17 The detail contained in this document reinforces the conclusion in the 2022 MTFS that the following principles are needed to guide our financial management approach, and there are additions given political developments in the last year.

1.18 *Principles the council should follow for planning its income are:*

- 1) Be prudent about the level of Scottish Government funding that will be provided in the local government settlement both in short, medium and long term.
- 2) Be prudent in the financial assumption regarding the funding of national priorities and commitments, and be agile to changes that the New Deal with Local Government (the Verity House Agreement⁷) may present – “From this point onwards, the default position will be no ring-fencing or direction of funding.”

⁵ [HM Treasury, Spring Budget 2023, March 2023](#)

⁶ [HM Treasury, Spring Budget 2024, March 2024](#)

⁷ [New Deal with Local Government, June 2023, Verity House Agreement](#)

- 3) Be aware of the potential threat of funding being removed if national priorities are not met.
- 4) Exercise the discretion it has over local taxation and increase the Band D charge for Council Tax annually to support future budgets.
- 5) Account for any income source that is non-specific as a corporate resource to support the whole revenue budget.
- 6) Identify and track funding streams being directed from UK Government such as the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds so that the Council can be pro-active in applying for funding that becomes available to support local outcomes.
- 7) Apply its Service Income Policy to support the effective and sustainable delivery of services where charges can be applied and exercise that discretion annually and collect the income that is rightfully owed.
- 8) Identify and evaluate emerging discretionary powers on a regular basis to determine their applicability to Aberdeen City, ensuring that decisions are taken in a timely manner to ensure maximum benefit is achieved.
- 9) Be aware in respect of the financial risks to the council from global events such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, resettlement and dispersal schemes and the funding that may or may not accompany them.
- 10) Apply its approved Reserves Policy, retaining recommended uncommitted General Fund Reserves and thereby avoiding the use of one-off income streams for recurring costs.

1.19 *Principles the council should follow for planning its expenditure are:*

- 1) Scenarios are developed and the Chief Officer – Finance will, in conjunction with the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT), establish appropriate financial assumptions to apply.
- 2) Recognise that there should be a deliberate shift of resources towards prevention and early intervention actions, which is in line with the three tier intervention framework⁸.
- 3) Develop its approach to strategic resource allocation to further shape where and how resources are deployed, noting the potential reduction in ring-fencing and direction through the Verity House Agreement. Through this approach we will attain greater understanding of how resources align to outcomes and the related impact and consequences of our decisions.
- 4) Local constraints should be minimised wherever possible to provide as much flexibility to achieve resource shift and deliver savings.

⁸ [Aberdeen City Council, March 2023, Prevention & Early Intervention \(CUS/23/064\)](#)

- 5) Align commissioning intentions, service standards and budget allocations thereby ensuring council focuses on the very highest of priorities and on the most important outcomes.
- 6) Decommission services and/or reduce service standards where funding levels cannot sustain existing commissioning intentions and service standards.
- 7) Increase the scale of service redesign to address the emerging financial scenarios.
- 8) Recognise and act on the reality that financial challenges of the scale reported are not deliverable from small service budgets, and all have to contribute to achieving balance budgets and ensuring financial sustainability is to be addressed.
- 9) Annual efficiencies from all operations must be delivered.
- 10) Financial Resilience Framework data must be considered as part of decision making, including reference to the Risk Appetite Statement.
- 11) Capital investment revenue implications must be incorporated into financial scenario plans, both from ongoing operational delivery and capital financing perspectives.

1.20 *Principles the council should follow for planning its capital investment are:*

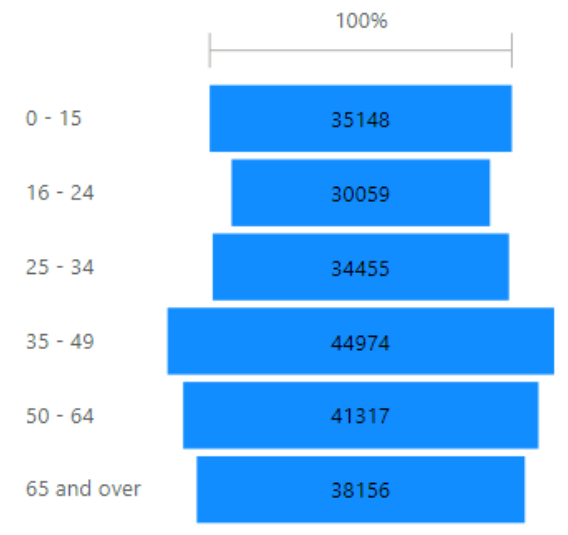
- 1) Capital investment must be prudent, affordable and sustainable, as defined by the Prudential Code.
- 2) The business case methodology must be used to document capital investment opportunities.
- 3) Revenue implications of capital investment opportunities must be identified and agreed with the Chief Officer – Finance to incorporate into the council’s financial scenario planning.
- 4) Financial Resilience Framework data must be considered as part of decision making, including reference to the Risk Appetite Statement.
- 5) Identify and pursue external funding opportunities to support approved capital investment and council priorities.
- 6) Give priority to the projects that will deliver the greatest return, and this can be measured both financially and socially.
- 7) Develop a resilience to the current operating environment (e.g. supply chain, inflation, pandemic) and incorporate a contingency into the Capital Programme.
- 8) Consider and document the financial, legal and reputation implications of proposing to withdraw from legally or partially committed capital projects.

1.21 *Aberdeen - Background and Context*

1.21.1 Some of the financial challenges affecting the financial sustainability of all local authorities is the pressure from demographic change and corresponding rising demand. The following section highlights some of the main sources of demand and projected future pressures.

1.21.2 Population – Since the previous Medium Term Financial Plan the 2022 Census data has been published. This shows a significant change from the most recent mid-year population estimates published by National Records of Scotland (NRS). Those estimates recorded Aberdeen’s population at 227,430, however, the Census figures show a population of 224,109. This difference (which is shown in the figure below) is, in the main, explained by NRS as an undercounting of outward migration in previous years. This methodological issue affected other Scottish cities similarly.

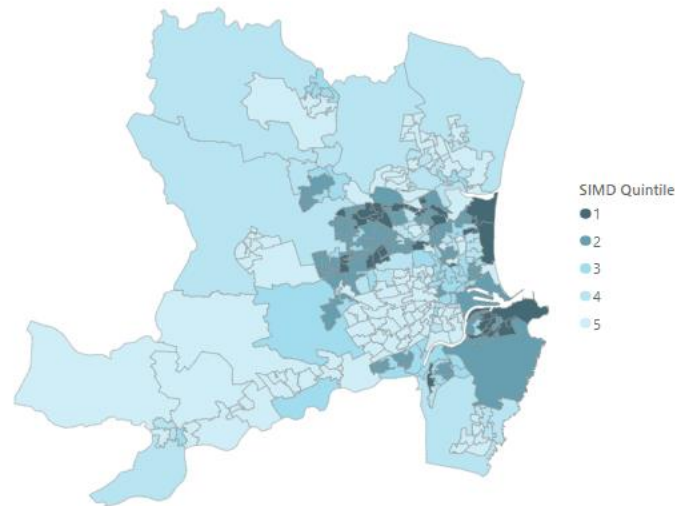
1.21.3 The age structure of the City’s population as reported in the 2022 Census is shown below.



1.21.4 Housing – In 2023 there were 111,024 households in Aberdeen City – an increase of 1,304 (1.2%) on the number of dwellings in 2021. Whilst there is a considerable demand for housing in Aberdeen, in 2023, the average purchase price for a residential property in Aberdeen City was £177,681 down from £187,169 in 2022 and considerably lower than the 2015 peak of £220,665. The number of properties sold in 2023 decreased from 4,718 in 2022 to 4,128 in 2023. In 2022, the average monthly rent in Aberdeen City and Shire (Broad Rental Market Area) was £518 for a one-bedroomed property, £720 for a 2-bedroomed property, £1,020 for a 3-bedroomed property and £1,493 for a 4-bedroomed property. This represented an increase on average of around 8% compared to the average rents in 2022. Rents for all property types are lower than pre-2015 levels.

1.21.5 Deprivation - Within Aberdeen there are areas of significant deprivation and inequality. Aberdeen continues to have deprivation ‘hot spots’ that are amongst some of the most deprived areas in the country and these can lie adjacent to some of the least deprived areas. In Aberdeen, 29 areas are among the 20% most deprived in Scotland in 2020, 7 more than in 2016. Highest levels of deprivation are recorded for crime, housing and education domains. Whilst deprivation is a key driver of demand, it has, proportionately, a smaller impact on funding allocated to the council.

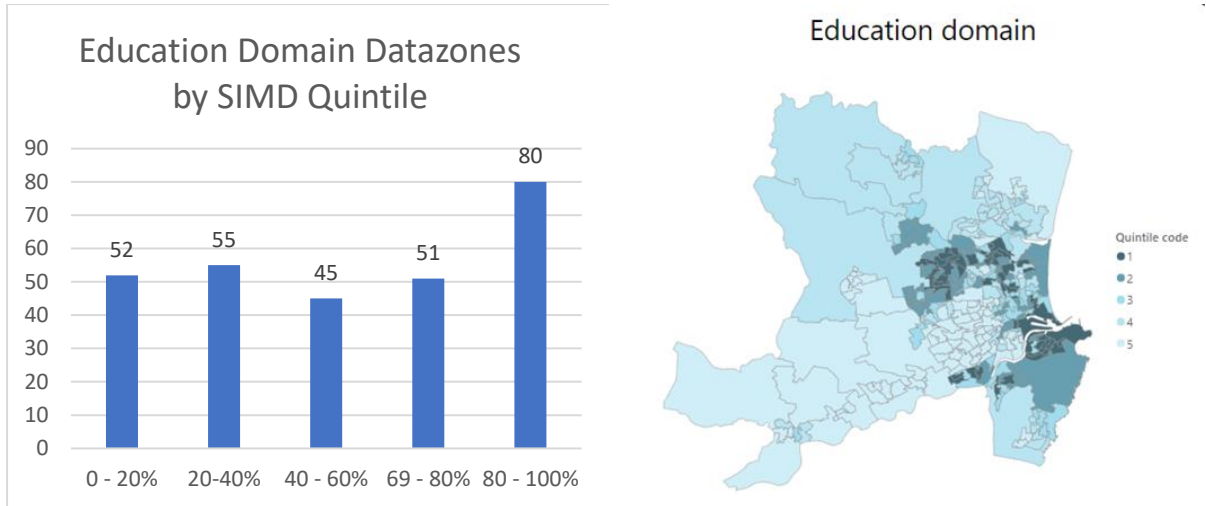
Areas of Multiple Deprivation 2020



1.21.6 Education - Significant investment has been made, and continues to be made, to modernise the city’s school buildings. In line with fluctuating population projections and the potential increase in digital methods of learning, the school estate will continue to be reviewed to ensure it matches future levels and nature of demand. Education is the single largest area of spend for the Council and most funding received is based on the population however due to the ‘floor’ mechanism in the distribution formula there is never a point at which funding ‘catches up’ with population increases.

1.21.7 There has been a considerable rise in demand for education and children’s services. In 2023/24 there were 15,135 primary school pupils, compared to 14,573 in 2022/23 and 10,897 secondary pupils, compared to 10,430 in 2022/23. There were also 130 pupils enrolled in Special Schools. 784 pupils were either declared or assessed disabled. More than 4,000 pupils had an additional support need as a result of “English as an Additional Language”.

1.21.8 There is significant variation in educational outcomes across different areas in Aberdeen with 52 datazones being classed within the 20% most deprived in Scotland for the education domain of the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation in 2020.



1.21.9 Children’s Services - Aberdeen has more than 500 children who are “looked after” by the authority (LAC). This is, proportionately slightly higher than the national average (2020 comparisons), a higher rate of the city’s LAC are placed either with foster carers or in residential accommodation and a significantly higher proportion of Aberdeen’s LAC have a recorded disability. The city is largely consistent with the national average of children on the child protection register (2020 comparisons).

1.21.10 The implementation of the National Transfer Scheme has seen an increase in the diversity of our children and young people with care experience. As a result, some unaccompanied minors require to be placed into our local residential children’s homes given their age and stage. As would be anticipated, there is a level of need apparent in those seeking sanctuary in the city. It is exceptionally difficult to predict ongoing demand with any certainty.

1.21.11 The Public Health restrictions of the last few years, downturn in the local economy and increased costs being experienced by families, is impacting on the needs of children and families. There is a notable rise in vulnerability and need and this is increasing demand for more specialist services.

1.21.12 Employment - The labour market in Aberdeen has seen both challenges and positive developments in recent times. In 2023, the employment rate was 74.7%, a significant increase from 2022 (71.2%). The most common reason for economic inactivity, however, changed from “Student” in 2022/23 to “Long Term Sick” in 2023/24.

1.21.15 Claimant count provides data on individuals receiving out of work benefit. In Aberdeen City this had risen from 4,165 individuals in March 2020 to 9,295 by years end. Since February 2021, numbers have decreased and from June 2022 have remained around 5,200. Still higher than pre-covid.

1.22 *Increased financial risk and sensitivity – What Covid-19 means for the short-term*

- 1.22.1 After over 3 years of the UK having to respond and start to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic it remains the case that the city and the council feel the lingering effects of the restrictions, the changes in lifestyle and behaviours and in market conditions. How long these will last and whether they are simply the start of shift in what will be the future normal is hard to say.
- 1.22.2 On 5 May 2023⁹, the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Committee on COVID-19 recommended to the Director-General, who accepted the recommendation, that given the disease was by now well-established and ongoing, it no longer fit the definition of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).
- 1.22.3 The UK, like many other countries, have spoken about "living with the virus" and wound down many of the tests and social mixing rules and Dr Mike Ryan, from the WHO's health emergencies programme, said the emergency may have ended, but the threat is still there. "We fully expect that this virus will continue to transmit and this is the history of pandemics" and "In most cases, pandemics truly end when the next pandemic begins."¹⁰
- 1.22.4 The financial settlement for Scottish Local Government now contains no additional funding for Covid-19 related pressures, with Councils relying on funds retained on the balance sheet at 31 March 2023 to provide resilience into and beyond 2023/24. Implications that remain in 2024/25 are the continued loss of income from parking and loss of income from events and commercial ventures such as Marischal Square and TECA, although the remaining Covid-19 implications are now intertwined with the cost of living crisis, a high inflation environment and local economy that has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.22.5 The impact on the next financial year and beyond is again difficult to predict with a high level of certainty. At a local government sector level, the speed and scale of economic bounce back economically is crucial to the financial settlement provided to local government, with 100% of the national non-domestic rates (NDR) income being allocated to local government. If the economic position doesn't demonstrate the ability to pay for NDR in 2024/25 then there must be concern over the adjustments that are needed to correct this in 2025/26 and beyond.
- 1.22.6 That said, the latest Scottish Government forecast¹¹, albeit now in need of refreshing, shows that the NDR pool is expected to increase by 9% in real terms between 2023/24 and 2027/28, showing more modest optimism than in 2022 when 20% increase was

⁹ [WHO, May 2023, Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

¹⁰ [BBC News, May 2023, Covid global health emergency is over, WHO says](#)

¹¹ [Scottish Government, May 2023, Scotland's Fiscal Outlook, The Scottish Government's MTF5](#)

forecast. While the Scottish Government must allocate the NDR to Local Government, all too often the increase attributable to NDR is deducted from the General Revenue Grant funding provided through the block grant resulting in the benefit funding other national priorities rather than core Local Government services.

1.23 Increased financial risk and sensitivity – Poverty and cost of living crisis

- 1.23.1 The recent Centre for progressive policy report¹² summarised the impact of the cost of living crisis in Scotland “Earlier this year, a report published by the Scottish Human Rights Commission set out in stark terms the scale of challenge faced in Scotland to reduce deprivation and inequalities.¹³ Poverty rates are rising, and as wages have struggled to keep pace with the minimum amount of income needed to cover the basics, some 60% of adults in Scotland living in poverty are in working households.”
- 1.23.2 Examples of what it really means for those in poverty was provided in the report “...high levels of food insecurity across the country, citing the significant increases in reliance on charitable food provision between 2008-2020, while data from the Trussell Trust suggests that the number of food parcels it has distributed in Scotland rose by 30% between 2021/22 – 2022/23.”¹⁴ On fuel and energy costs “...there is concern that the energy crisis will have decreased the likelihood that these targets¹⁵ [for reducing fuel poverty] will be met.”
- 1.23.3 The report¹⁶ continued “Poverty rates are rising, and as wages have struggled to keep pace with the minimum amount of income needed to cover the basics, some 60% of adults in Scotland living in poverty are in working households Irrespective of geography, virtually all households in Scotland will have been impacted, in some form, by high inflation. A recent poll conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that the cost of living crisis had pushed the majority of people in Scotland to cut back on essentials – 7 in 10 – with this figure rising to 8 in 10 for those living in lower income households.”¹⁷
- 1.23.4 The type of pressure being felt in Aberdeen City is extracted from the report¹⁸, where the comparison across all Local Authorities can be seen.

¹² [Centre for Progressive Policy, July 2023, The cost of living crisis across the devolved nations](#)

¹³ Scottish Human Rights Commission (2022). Submission to the United Nation’s Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Available at: <https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/2398/2023-icescr-pswg-submission-to-un-for-publication.pdf>

¹⁴ The Trussell Trust (2023). Emergency food parcel distribution in Scotland: April 2022 – March 2023. Available at: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/04/EYS-Scotland-Factsheet-2022-23.pdf>

¹⁵ *Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019*

¹⁶ [Centre for Progressive Policy, July 2023, The cost of living crisis across the devolved nations](#)

¹⁷ Cebula, C. & Birt, C. (2023). 10 cold, hard facts: Low-income Scottish families grow weary after another winter of the cost of living crisis. Joseph Rowntree Foundation [JRF]. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/10-cold-hard-facts-low-income-scottish-families-growweary-after-another-winter-cost-living>

¹⁸ [Centre for Progressive Policy, July 2023, The cost of living crisis across the devolved nations](#)

Heatmap of Vulnerability indicators for Scottish Local Authorities:

Local Authority	Fuel Poverty	Food Insecurity	Child Poverty	Claimant Count	Low Pay	Economic Inactivity	Housing Costs
Aberdeen City	26.1%	7.6%	20.5%	2.5%	9.9%	24.9%	23.8%
Fuel Poverty	The % of households spending more than 10% of income on fuel costs and if the remaining household income is insufficient to maintain an adequate standard of living						
Food Insecurity	The % of households within a local authority experiencing struggle with food insecurity						
Child Poverty	The % of children who are living in households with below 60% median income after housing costs						
Claimant Count	The % of the local population claiming unemployment-related benefits						
Low Pay	The % of jobs that pay at least two-thirds below the UK median gross hourly pay by local authority						
Economic Inactivity	The % of the working age population who are not in employment and not actively seeking employment						
Housing Costs	The % of monthly take home pay required for someone earning the median in a local authority, to rent a median 1-bed property in the local authority area						

1.23.5 The Council remains aware of the financial risks from its arm’s length external organisations (ALEOs), reliant on large income streams from our citizens and visitors. And although all have remained self-sufficient throughout the challenges of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and inflation/energy cost environment make trading conditions more and more difficult. The potential to require funding from the Council in economic shock situations remains a risk that cannot be fully mitigated.

1.24 Increased financial risk and sensitivity – Inflation and supply chain volatility

1.24.1 A combination of factors including ongoing market impacts from the pandemic, the UK’s exit from the European Union and the invasion of Ukraine affecting access to supply markets in Russia, Ukraine and surrounding area, led to a massive rise in inflation during 2023 and a cycle of market and price volatility and shortages across many commodities. Although recent figures from the Bank of England are indicating inflation has returned to pre-Russian invasion levels, the negative impacts on the delivery of capital projects, on budgets (General Fund and HRA), and on revenue expenditure in the delivery of services and procurement processes carried out for affected commodities have become the “new normal”

1.24.2 According to the Bank of England¹⁹, “Higher energy prices are one of the main reasons for this [inflation being higher than target]. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine led to large increases in the price of gas. Households’ energy costs have almost doubled since the start of last year [2022]. Higher prices for the goods we buy from abroad have also played a big role. During the Covid pandemic people started to buy more goods. But the people selling these have had problems getting enough of them to sell to customers. That led to higher prices – particularly for goods imported from abroad.”

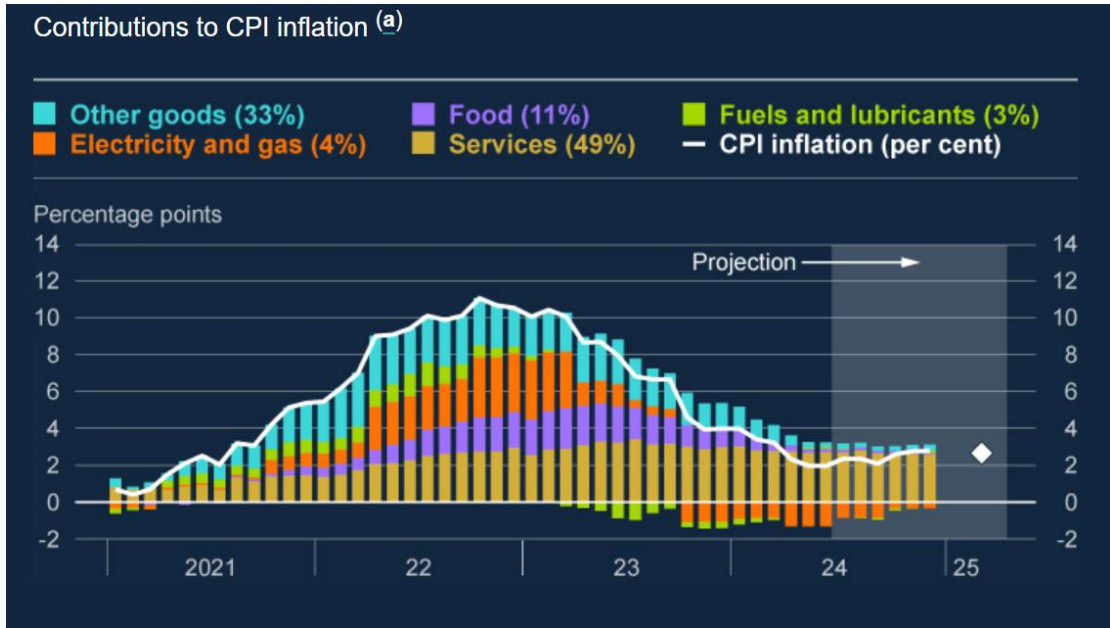
1.24.3 But is not just from products coming into the country, “There is also pressure on prices from developments at home. Businesses are charging more for their products because of the higher costs they face. There are lots of job vacancies as fewer people are

¹⁹ [Bank of England, May 2023, Monetary Policy Report](#)

seeking work following the pandemic. That means that employers are having to offer higher wages to attract job applicants. Prices for services have risen markedly.”

1.24.4 This has now been present in our economy for the last eighteen months and the impact on people and household budgets is significant. For the Bank of England “As a result, the UK economy is growing slowly.”

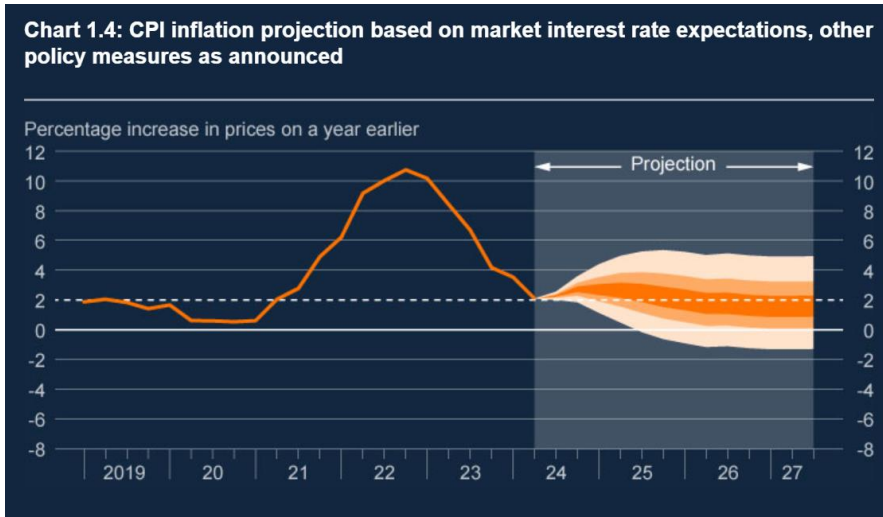
Chart 1: Contributions to CPI Inflation, Bank of England, August 2024



1.24.5 That forty-year high inflation across many parts of the world, including the UK, is presenting a significant challenge for organisations. The Monetary Policy Report²⁰ published by the Bank of England in August 2024 estimates that inflation peaked around the end of 2022 but only fell slowly through 2023 and into the first half of 2024. The long slow decline in inflation is now forecast out to 2027::

Chart 2: Inflation (CPI) Forecasts, Bank of England, August 2024

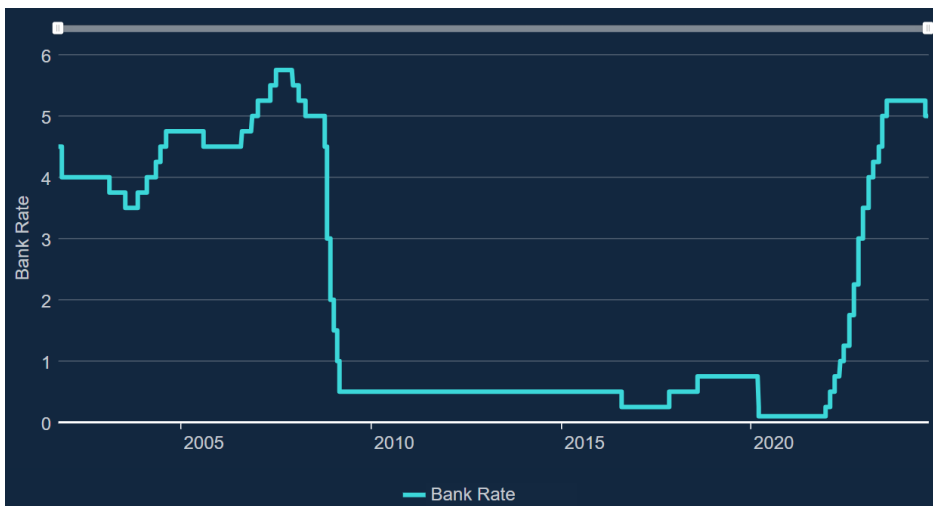
²⁰ [Monetary Policy Report - August 2024 | Bank of England](#)



1.24.6 Lower inflation means that prices will stop increasing as quickly as they were. The Bank of England are clear “Our aim is to bring back low and stable inflation. Low and stable inflation is vital for a healthy economy. An economy in which households and businesses can plan for the future with confidence and money holds its value.”²¹

1.24.7 As a result of the new inflation figures, in August 2024 the bank of England cut interest rates for the first time since August 2020, moving from 5.25% to 5%.

Chart 3: Bank of England Base Rates (%), May 2024



1.24.8 In pursuit of the low inflation goal the Bank of England acknowledge that they “...know that means that many people will face higher borrowing costs. Around one in three households in the UK have a mortgage. But high inflation that lasts for a long time makes things worse for everyone.”

²¹ [Bank of England, May 2023, Monetary Policy Report](#)

1.24.9 “Higher interest rates make it more expensive for people to borrow money and encourage them to save. That means that, overall, they will tend to spend less. If people on the whole spend less on goods and services, prices will tend to rise more slowly. That lowers the rate of inflation.”

1.24.10 For the Council, it must consume many of the same goods and services that we all purchase, from ingredients for school meals, to fuel for our vehicles and buildings, these cost increases have not been reflected in the funding received in the past two years and therefore present an ongoing and material financial risk to the Council. To deliver our services there must be the funding in place to pay for the components – our staff, the buildings they work in and machinery and equipment they use and the goods and services that purchase.

1.25 *Increased financial risk and sensitivity – External demand from population changes*

1.25.1 There has been a considerable rise in demand for education and children’s services. The 11% rise in school roll since 2019 can largely be attributed to the steep rise in international students attending Higher Education Institutions, around 2,500 dependants of international students were enrolled in our schools for the first time over school session 2022/23. Although the option for students to bring dependents into the UK was significantly restricted at the beginning of 2024²², it did not directly reduce the numbers already here. There is also a notable decrease in the number of children transitioning into private education and increasing evidence of families returning to Local Authority schools. Notionally that constitutes a £14m cost to the Council, with the real day to day cost of increased numbers of teachers, pupil support workers and teaching spaces in use, being managed school by school taking on the additional variable costs as they arise.

1.25.2 The implementation of the National Transfer Scheme has seen an increase in the diversity of our children and young people with care experience. As a result, some unaccompanied minors require to be placed into our local residential children’s homes given their age and stage. As a result, greater pressure is being placed on local resources resulting in the need for continued use of external and out of authority placements. Monitoring and assessing the young people, to determine the level of support required, places considerable pressure on children’s social work services.

1.26 *Increased financial risk and sensitivity – Council resilience*

1.26.1 To counteract some of the risk, mitigation in place includes retaining funding provided in previous years that the Council has been able to avoid spending. This remains

²² [Tough government action on student visas comes into effect - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tough-government-action-on-student-visas-comes-into-effect)

available as earmarked reserves on the Council Balance sheet at the end of March 2024.

- 1.26.2 The Scottish Government has approved a few fiscal flexibilities in recent years, and these have been in place to provide a degree of support to the Council. The Council used the deferral of debt in order to balance the budget in 2022/23 and approved the use of the service concession flexibility as part of the 2023/24 budget. There are no further flexibilities that the Council can turn to.
- 1.26.3 The Council's approved Reserves Policy confirms a commitment to retaining a minimum of £12m of uncommitted General Fund reserves to rely on in an emergency. As at 31 March 2024 that commitment was met, with £12.153m held in the General Fund Reserve. Given current economic conditions outlined, increasing the uncommitted reserve would be prudent.

1.27 *Increased financial risk and sensitivity – Scottish Government Grant Conditions*

- 1.27.1 The unexpected introduction of Fair Work First conditions into Scottish Government grants from July 2023, and the “flowing down” of those conditions to Scottish Government agencies and bodies, created complex new grant compliance procedures in 2023/24. New administrative processes were required, and there is clearly an expectation from Scottish Government that the Council will take action to change the circumstances which required exemptions from Fair Work First to be granted for 2023/24 and 2024/25. As one of the key issues involves the pay levels of Craft Apprentices, which are currently set by a national pay agreement, the challenges and resulting costs of being able to find an acceptable solution should not be underestimated. Failure to comply may put at risk the Council's ability to access several Scottish Government funding programmes which align with the Council's ambitions for affordable housing, transport, and Net Zero.
- 1.27.2 These new grant conditions arrived the year after the Scottish Government introduced a link between funding and Local Government being able to maintain teacher and pupil support assistant numbers, and highlights the challenges in being able to keep grant funding flowing, whilst attempting to manage savings that do not conflict with Scottish Government direction, and having to sustain Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board funding.
- 1.27.3 The Verity House Agreement, signed in June 2023, between Scottish Government and Local Government under the New Deal for Local Government was supposed to introduce more flexibility for Local Government to apply its funding to the services it chooses to. Within the first year of the agreement the then First Minister announced a freeze on Council Tax for 2024/25, and with it neutralised Local Government's ability to apply its key fiscal power, at the same time undermining the principles on which

the Agreement was based. To work in an environment where there is the threat of funding or powers being removed is not one that underpins positive working relationships nor delivers sustainable services or Local Government.

1.28 Conclusion

- 1.28.1 The council's operating environment remains extremely complex and multi-dimensional. The level of difficulty to manage current services with the constraints and financial pressures placed on the organisation is increasing.
- 1.28.2 A New Deal for Local Government was to be the springboard to improved relationships and also to improve the understanding of how our national and local outcomes are actually achieved over the medium and long term. At present however there are many risks hanging over the Council and not all of these can be addressed at a local level.
- 1.28.3 Demand and cost pressures arising from the financial environment are continuing and for the sustainability of the Council, we must find the balance between the limited funding that can subsidise our services and the level of services that we are able to provide. At a time of a cost of living crisis it is extremely difficult to find the right balance between finding savings and raising prices for our citizens and customers, those are the difficult decisions that Councillors must take, when there is increasing expectation of high ambition for improvement. This places pressure on the resourcing of all elements of council activity to the desired level and tension between where funds are deployed for best value.
- 1.28.4 Despite some funding from Scottish Government, to support pay awards since 2022/23, there is no recurring additional funding to support the legacy of the pandemic, nor additional funding to support our core services going forward. The Council is receiving one off funding for resettlement and asylum schemes which helps with the immediate need however the demand is not reducing and not expected to soon, so funding is squeezed further as we look forward over the medium term.
- 1.28.5 Drawing on the detail in Section 3, following the Scottish Government's Resource Spending Review, published in May 2022, and nothing contrary included in what is still the most recent Scottish Government MTFs, May 2023, the council must address the cost pressures it faces with a funding scenario that will offer no better than 'flat cash' for the foreseeable future. The potential of a 1% increase in cash in 2026/27 is in question given the forecasts and funding shortfalls that the Scottish Government has identified in its MTFs, and announcements about Scottish Government funding being made in September 2024. On an annual basis the Scottish Budget and associated Local Government Settlement will next confirm the full extent of the funding package for Local Government for 2025/26, and it is not expected that a multi-year settlement will be provided.

- 1.28.6 Council Tax remains the highest value financial lever that the council has, exercising an increase in the rate annually provides opportunity to increase income of a recurring nature although economic growth will have an impact on the value of uncollected sums and the overall rate of change in the number of chargeable properties.
- 1.28.7 Fees and charges (internal and external) should be expected to remain a positive contributor to the council although the impact of behaviour changes in our customers since the pandemic and also the cost of living crisis is certainly being felt in the current year and we should not be surprised by further shocks or unplanned changes to our income going forward.
- 1.28.8 Balancing the budget and MTFS using the mechanisms described in Section 5 will mean that proposals for a 2025/26 budget [and indicative budgets for the four subsequent years] will be submitted to council's budget meeting in March 2025. This will follow the second phase of public consultation on the various options that the Council has to balance budgets across the next four years. The second phase of consultation will take place in the Autumn and the results reported to Council in December 2024.

2. THE FUNDING CONTEXT BEYOND 2024/25

2.1 *Economic Outlook*

- 2.1.1 It is hard to believe that further financial shock and complexity would be added to our economy, so soon after a global pandemic, but the sheer extent of the cost of living crisis, the high inflation and high demand environment that has prevailed over the last year or more is evidence that the UK economy is still going through an escalated level of disruption and turmoil. This impact is felt by almost everyone through higher costs for energy, food, and daily living expenses. Additionally, housing costs are increasing, directly affecting those with variable or tracker mortgages and those renewing fixed-rate mortgages, and indirectly affecting tenants as private landlords pass on their cost increases.
- 2.1.2 The impact of the global pandemic, while now officially over²³, has brought about global changes in how we live our lives and the corresponding consequences for businesses and the economy. Today the legacy of the pandemic remains for individuals and for the economy and it is unclear what the medium to long term effects will be.
- 2.1.3 As the country, and the world, thought it was through the worst of the pandemic, this MTFs is presented in the context of continuing impact of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. This invasion has brought untold human misery to the people of Ukraine, who are caught up in a conflict that continues today with no end in sight. The UK has also been affected by this crisis, facing various economic and social challenges as a result.
- 2.1.4 The war has also brought repercussions for the global economy, which was already damaged by the pandemic, by supply bottlenecks and by rising inflation.
- 2.1.5 The OBR²⁴ observed that “A fortnight into the invasion, gas and oil prices peaked over 200 and 50 per cent above their end-2021 levels respectively.” As the UK is a net importer of energy, higher global energy prices will weigh down an economy that is only just returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- 2.1.6 The City Growth and Resources Committee reported on the extent of the impact on the supply chain, commodity costs, and inflation, detailing how this volatility is affecting the Council. The real impact is being felt not only by the public sector but also by individuals, families, and businesses. The added costs are very real, and the squeeze on household and business incomes is evident as the cost of living crisis continues.

²³ [World Health Organization \(WHO\), Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic, May 2023](#)

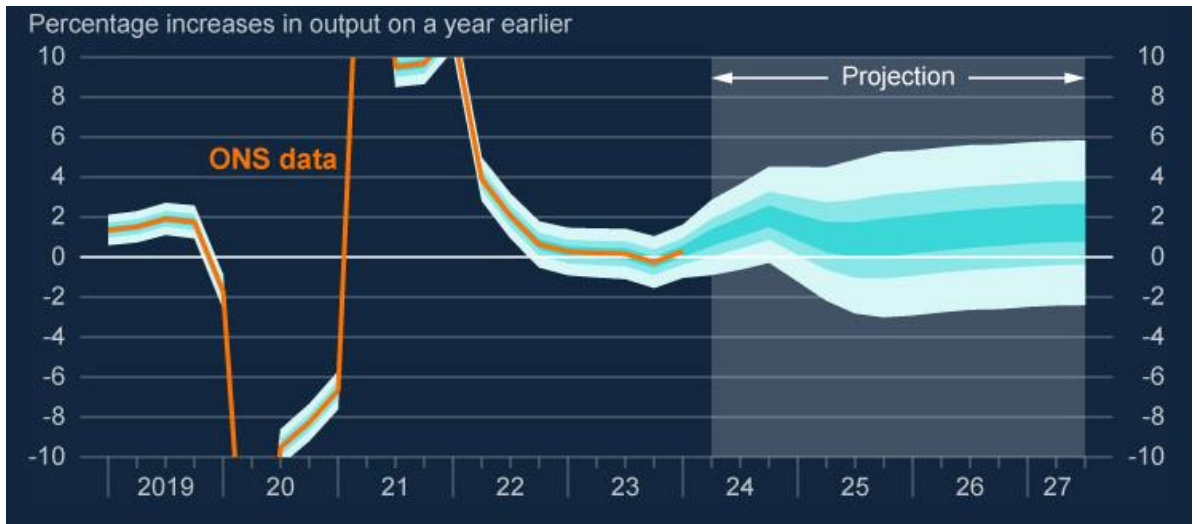
²⁴ [OBR, March 2022, Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#)

- 2.1.7 The OBR²⁵ forecasts that real household disposable income per person—a measure of real living standards—2022-23 remains the fiscal year with the largest year-on-year drop in living standards since ONS records began in the 1950s. However, the OBR now forecasts real household disposable income per person to recover its pre-pandemic peak by 2025-26.
- 2.1.8 Activity has picked up sharply this year, but underlying momentum appears weaker. UK GDP increased in Q1 2024 and is expected to have risen in Q2, though quarterly growth is projected to slow in the latter half of the year. The MPC’s August projections, based on the Spring Budget 2024, indicate that GDP growth will dip slightly next year but then increase over the forecast period. This reflects the diminishing negative impact of past Bank Rate increases and a favourable path for interest rates. Global growth rates have converged, with UK-weighted world GDP expected to grow steadily. Household spending growth is anticipated to be slightly positive this year, with the saving ratio peaking before falling back. Housing investment is expected to grow moderately, and business investment is projected to grow steadily throughout the forecast period²⁶.

²⁵ [OBR, March 2024, Economics and Fiscal Outlook](#)

²⁶ [Bank of England, August 2024, Monetary Policy Report](#)

Chart 5: GDP growth projection based on market interest rate expectations, other policy measures announced

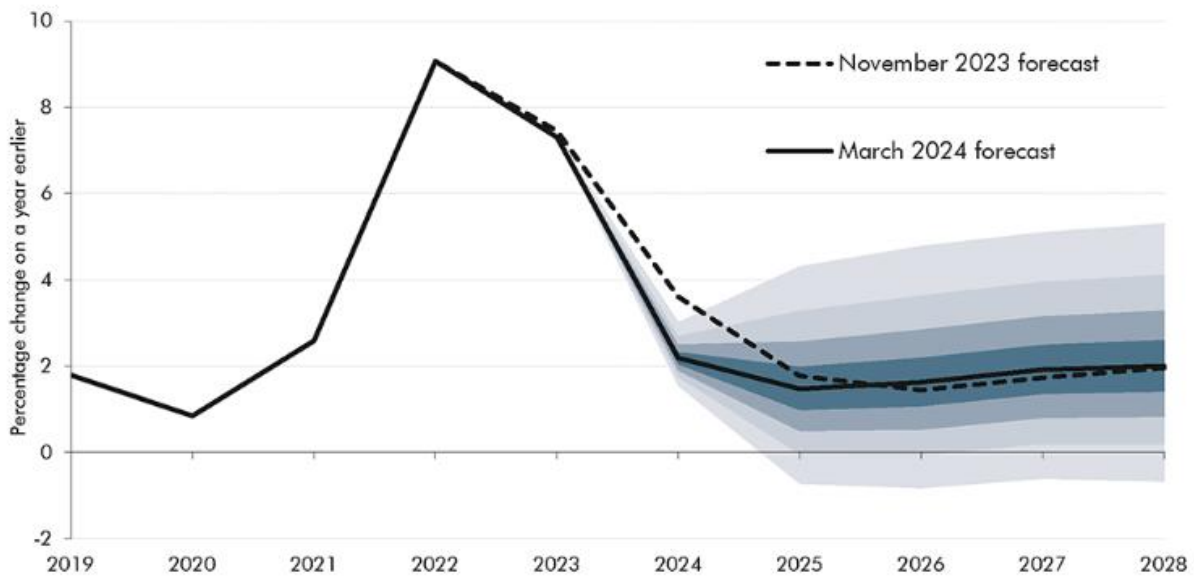


Source: Bank of England

2.1.9 CPI inflation dropped from a 41-year high of 11.1 per cent in October 2022 to 4.2 per cent in the final quarter of 2023. The OBR expect inflation to average 2.2 per cent over 2024, then slow to 1.5 per cent in 2025 before rising to the target rate of 2 per cent in 2028. But there is considerable uncertainty around this forecast from both domestic and external inflationary pressures, especially around energy prices²⁷. To quantify this uncertainty, the OBR construct a fan chart that illustrates the range of possible inflation outcomes if past forecast errors were a reasonable guide to future ones

Chart 6: CPI Inflation

²⁷ [OBR, March 2024, Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#)



Note: Successive pairs of lighter-shaded areas around our forecast represent 20 per cent probability bands.
 Source: ONS, OBR

2.1.10 The Bank of England, in their August 2024 Monetary Policy Report²⁸ forecast that CPI inflation will rise to around 2.75% in the second half of this year. This increase is expected as the declines in energy prices from last year fall out of the annual comparison, making the persistent domestic inflationary pressures more apparent. CPI inflation is then projected to fall back to 1.7% in two years and to 1.5% in three years, reflecting the continued restrictive stance of monetary policy and the emergence of a margin of slack in the economy.

2.1.11 They conclude that “The Committee continues to expect second-round effects in domestic prices and wages to take longer to unwind than they did to emerge. Higher interest rates have helped return inflation to target but inflation is likely to rise temporarily.”

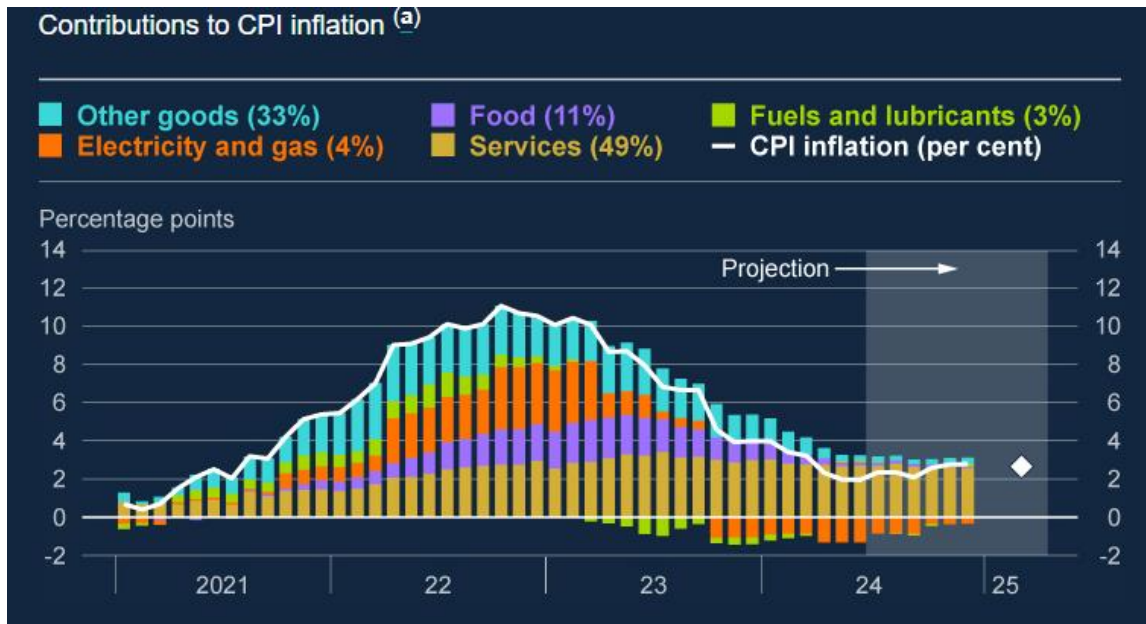
””.

Chart 7: CPI inflation projection based on market interest rate expectations, other policy measures as announced

²⁸ [Bank of England, August 2024, Monetary Policy Report](#)

2.1.12 To illustrate how the balance and impact of different goods and services are affecting the cost of living, the Bank of England²⁹ produced a report showing the shift from energy and fuel costs being the biggest contributors to inflation, to services now making up the largest proportion of forecast inflation. Prices of services – for example hotels and restaurants, insurance and rents for housing – are still rising at rates well above their past averages.

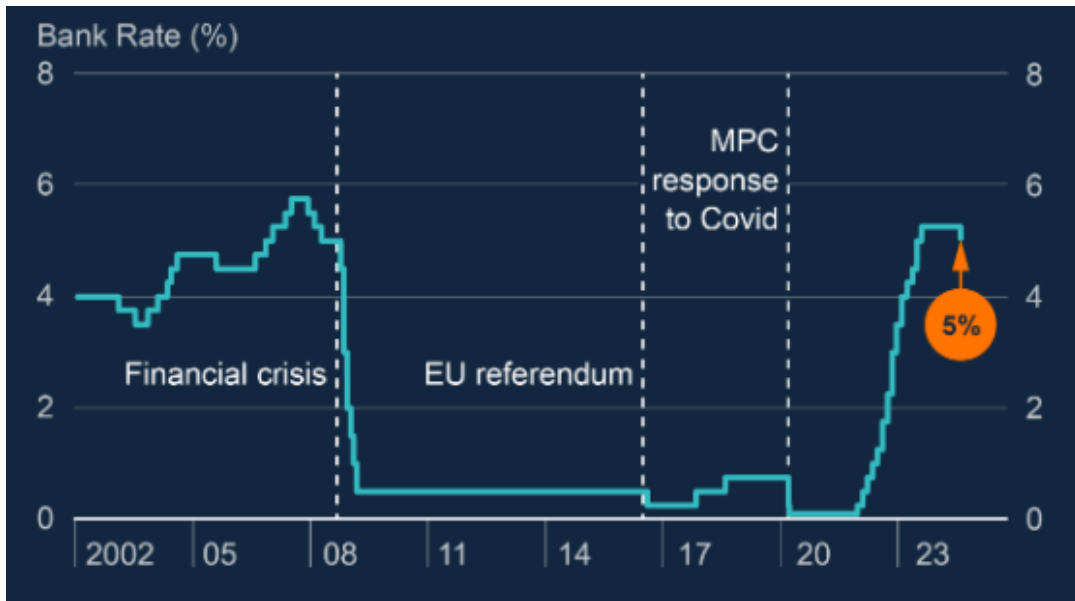
Chart 8: CPI Inflation components



2.1.13 To control inflation, the Bank of England has exercised its power to increase the cost of borrowing, encouraging people to save money. As a result, less is spent on goods and services, causing prices to rise more slowly and reducing the inflation rate. Since December 2021, the Bank has steadily increased the base interest rate, reaching a peak of 5.25%. However, following the August 2024 meeting, this was cut to 5%. Over the past 18 months, inflation has fallen significantly. In the UK, inflation fell back to our 2% target in May and June, partly due to the fading impacts of global shocks like the war in Ukraine and Covid, and partly due to higher interest rates.

²⁹ [Bank of England , August 2024, Monetary Policy Report](#)

Chart 9: Interest Rates

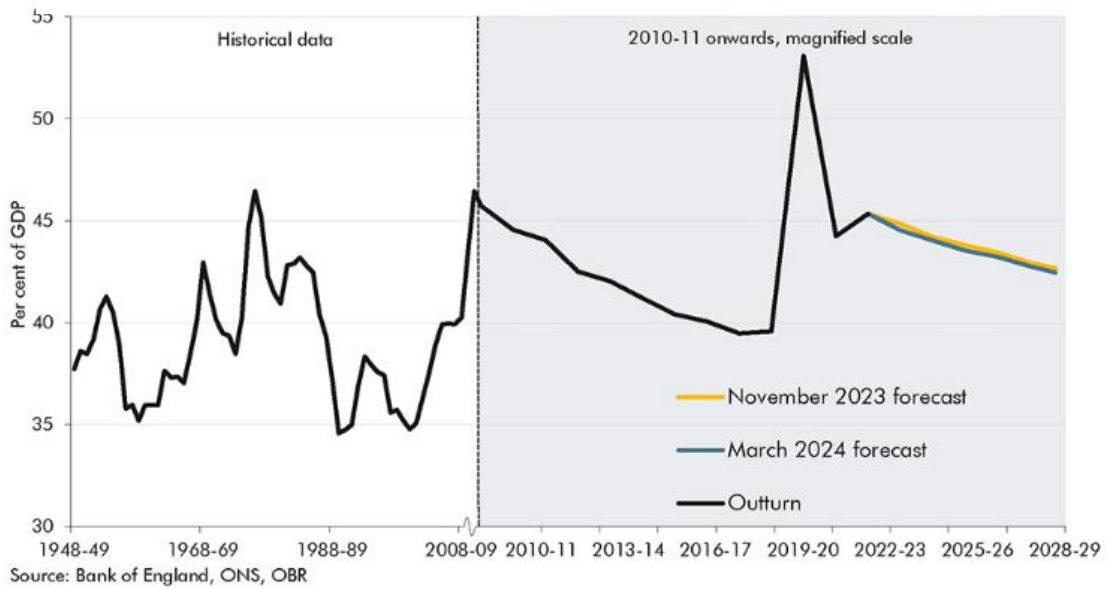


2.1.14 On public spending the Office for Budget Responsibility stated³⁰ “ From a post-war peak of 53.1 per cent of GDP in the midst of the pandemic in 2020-21, total public spending falls as a share of the economy to an estimated 44.5 per cent in 2023-24 [Chart 10].” And for the future, “We then expect it to continue to fall over the next two years with a decline in debt interest costs more than offsetting an increase in welfare spending. From 2025-26 onwards, the further decline is due to departmental spending (resource and capital departmental expenditure limits or DEL) growing more slowly than the economy, a gradual fall in forecast welfare spending as a share of GDP, and a decline in other elements of annually managed expenditure (AME), including unfunded public service pensions, environmental levies, and student loans.”

2.1.15 It remains to be seen if the reductions in spend will be sustained given the cost of living crisis and the additional costs of the war in Ukraine, whether that be in support to the war effort by the UK or in support of refugees coming to the UK for safety and security.

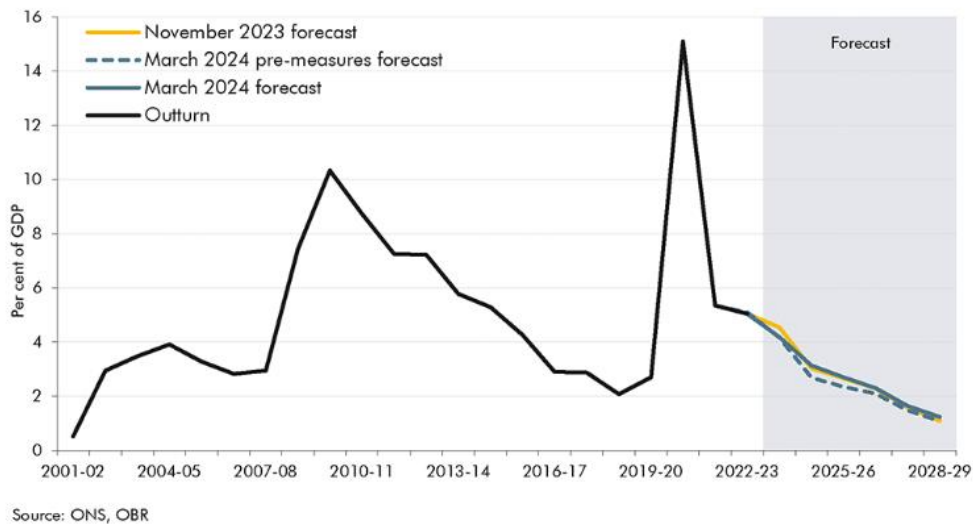
³⁰ [OBR, March 2024, Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#)

Chart 10: Public Spending as a percentage of GDP



2.1.16 Public sector net borrowing peaked at a post-war high of £314.7 billion (15.1% of GDP) during the height of the pandemic in 2020-21. It is expected to decrease to £114.1 billion (4.2% of GDP) in 2024/25. Headline public sector net debt is projected to peak at 98.8% of GDP in 2024-25 before falling to 94.3% of GDP by 2028/29. ³¹

Chart 11: Public Sector Net Borrowing



2.1.17 “The level of economic inactivity remains significantly higher than before the pandemic. Our July 2023 *Fiscal risks and sustainability report* considered upside and

³¹ [OBR, March 2024, Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#)

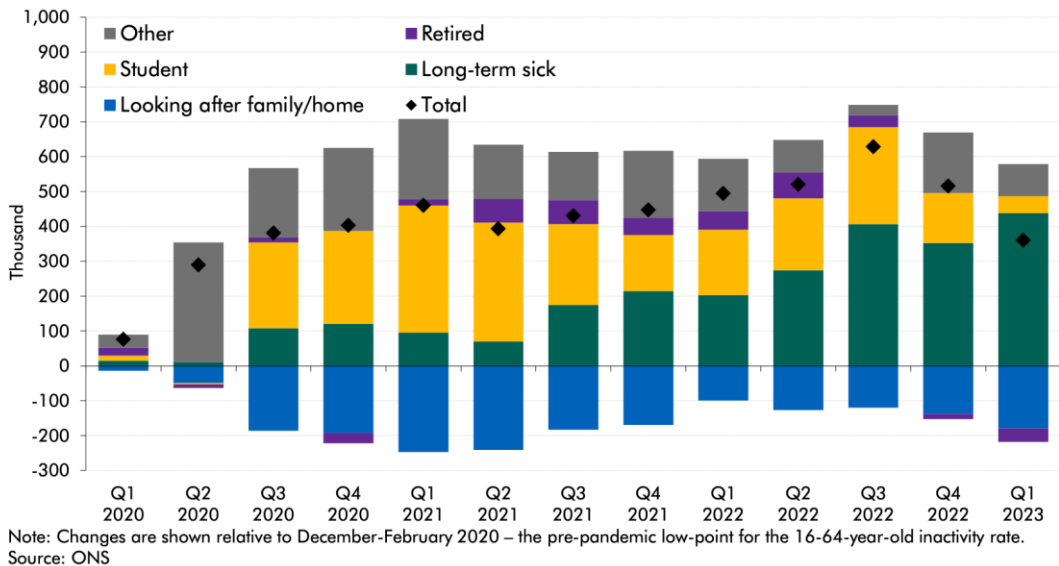
downside scenarios for future inactivity levels. The downside scenario assumed the working-age participation rate fell 1.2 percentage points by 2027-28, leading to a 1½ per cent fall in GDP, £21.3 billion higher borrowing, and a 3.4 percentage point rise in debt as a share of GDP.³²

2.2 Other Significant External Risks

2.2.1 The September 2024 Fiscal Risks and Sustainability report³³ by the OBR reiterates the aftershocks of three key risks that have crystallised since 2020 and although it “takes a fresh look” at their future fiscal implications, they are substantially unchanged from the 2023 report . The three areas are:

- **Health related inactivity** - Over the 2010s, the UK’s working-age employment rate rose from 70 to 77%. The pandemic saw a reversal of this trend, with those classified as inactive rising by almost 650,000. Today, working-age inactivity in the UK remains 350,000 above pre-pandemic levels, in contrast with the many other advanced economies, where such inactivity rates are now lower than before the pandemic hit. The largest and most durable source of this rise in UK inactivity has been among those citing ill-health as the principal reason for being out of the labour market. An influx of students into higher education and early retirements added 390,000 and 80,000 respectively to the ranks of the newly inactive at their peaks in 2021, but by early 2023 these temporary surges had run their course and the number of early retirees has fallen below pre- pandemic levels.

Chart 12: the rise in UK working-age inactivity since early 2020



By contrast, the number of people outside the workforce for health reasons has continued to rise, reaching 440,000 in the three months to April 2023, making this

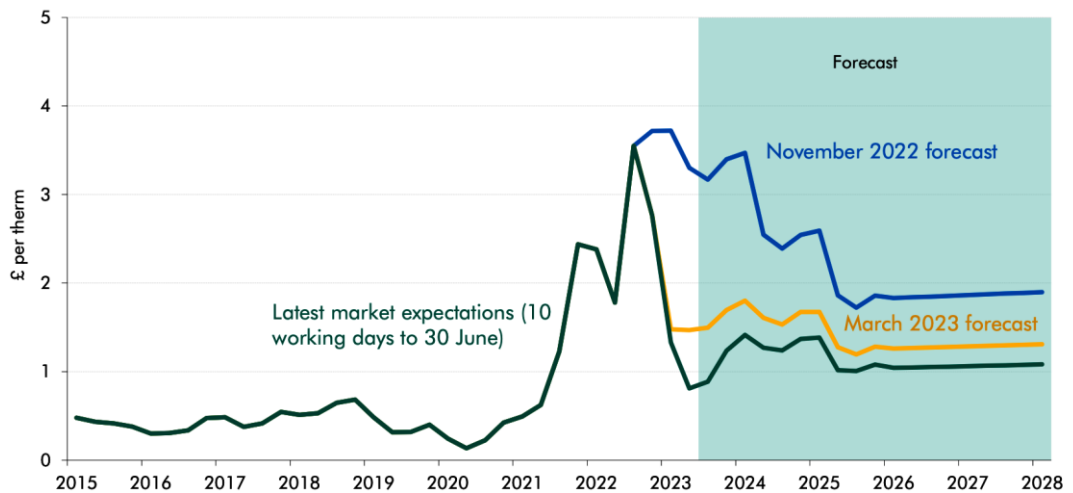
³² [OBR, March 2024, Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#)

³³ [OBR, September 2024, Fiscal risks and sustainability](#)

group the single-largest segment of the economically inactive population. Such a change in labour market patterns puts added pressure on the public finances via higher health care and welfare spending as well as through lower tax revenues. As a result there is considerable pressure on governments to find ways of reversing this trend. Unfortunately, the OBR estimate that increased NHS activity will have a limited impact as only a small proportion of those inactive for health reasons are on the NHS waiting list. (Note: in general, similar inactivity trends have been observable for Scotland.)

- **Rise in energy prices** - While gas prices have fallen back from their thirteen fold increase in 2022, they are expected to remain at over twice their historical average into the mid 2020's.

Chart 13: gas prices

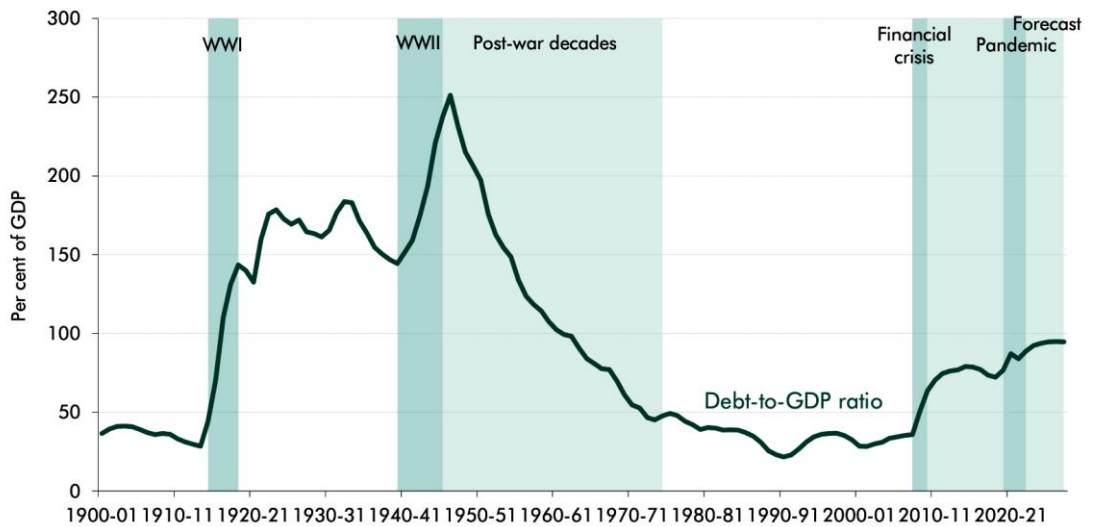


Note: As in our March 2023 forecast, latest market expectations from the first quarter of 2026 are held constant in real terms.
Source: Datastream, Eikon, OBR

While this has made renewable energy sources cheaper than gas for the first time, there is so far limited evidence of a strong supply side response in the UK i.e. of any step-change in renewable energy investment that might result in lower overall energy prices in the future. This lack of investment could also prove costly in the event that geopolitical events raise the price of gas again.

- **Vulnerability to rising debt levels** - UK Government debt levels have risen three-fold since the start of this century and, at around 100% of GDP, are at their highest level in over 60 years. This dramatic increase in public debt is largely due to the series of crises the UK has faced so far this century, which has also hindered any attempts to manage the debt back down to more acceptable levels.

Chart 14: debt-to-GDP ratio since 1900



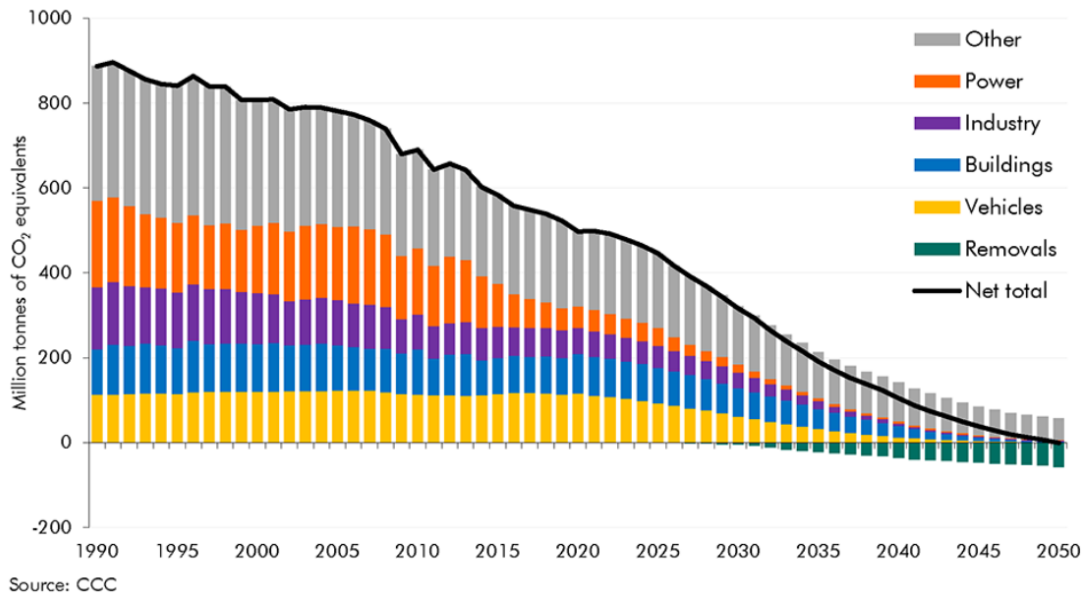
Note: This is for underlying debt, i.e. excluding Bank of England.
Source: ONS, OBR

- While other governments also face rising interest rates on debts close to or in excess of 100 per cent of GDP, the UK’s public debt position makes it more vulnerable as it has: -
 - the shortest average maturity on its public liabilities on record;
 - the highest proportion of inflation-linked debt of any major advanced economy;
 - more of its debt in the hands of private foreign investors than most other G7 countries (which renders the UK public finances more vulnerable to sudden changes in global investor sentiment over the attractiveness of UK sovereign assets).
- This greater vulnerability has been illustrated by a) UK government borrowing costs have risen more than in any other G7 economy and been more volatile than at any time in the past 40 years, and b) the rise in global interest rates feeding through to the UK’s debt servicing costs more than twice as fast as in the past or elsewhere.

2.2.2 **Climate Change** – The OBR³⁴ says that “While the UK’s territorial CO₂ emissions have fallen significantly since 1990, thanks in large part to the switch from coal to gas power generation, achieving the Government’s net zero target by 2050 will become increasingly difficult. Vehicles, buildings, industry, and power make up the majority of emissions remaining in 2020, and these four sectors plus the yet-to-be-developed removals sector are the largest source of future abatement in the Climate Change Committee’s (CCC’s) balanced net zero pathway.”

³⁴ [OBR, July 2023, Fiscal Risks and Sustainability](#)

Chart 15: Emissions in the CCC's balanced net zero pathway



- 2.2.3 The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has responsibility for monitoring the progress and risks to meeting the UK's declared national ambitions (known as 'nationally determined contributions', or NDCs, under the Paris Agreement) and legislated carbon budgets, and publishes a yearly progress report to this end.
- 2.2.4 The OBR also points out that emerging risks include longer-term trends are becoming near-term realities. This is exemplified in relation to climate change and progress toward net zero as "Efforts to tackle climate change by transitioning away from fossil fuels are rapidly eroding the £39 billion the Government currently receives in tax revenues from petrol and diesel driven vehicles. And the rapid normalisation of interest rates over the past 18 months has added £22 billion to what the Government will need to spend on servicing its growing stock of debt in 2022-23, consuming fiscal headroom available to respond to other threats and pressures."
- 2.2.5 **Exit from the European Union (EU)** - The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 and entered an 11-month period of transition during which the UK effectively remained within the EU's customs union and single market and continued to be subject to EU rules. That came to an end on the 31 December 2020. The latest assumptions and judgements³⁵ from the Office for Budget Responsibility were used relating to EU exit to underpin the Economic and Fiscal Outlook report and forecasts in March 2023.
- "The post-Brexit trading relationship between the UK and EU, as set out in the 'Trade and Cooperation Agreement' (TCA) that came into effect on 1 January 2021, will reduce long-run productivity by 4 per cent relative to remaining in the EU.
 - Both exports and imports will be around 15 per cent lower in the long run than if the UK had remained in the EU.

³⁵ [OBR, April 2023, Brexit Analysis](#)

- New trade deals with non-EU countries will not have a material impact, and any effect will be gradual.
- the Government’s new post-Brexit migration regime would reduce net inward migration to the UK.”

2.2.6 **Pressures on other public sector organisations** - All public sector organisations are under increasing financial pressure as changes in funding and increases in demand are not supported by funding. Whilst Aberdeen City has a strong record in working with partners to improve outcomes, prevent harm and increase public sector efficiency, the additional pressure on all public sector agencies may raise the risk that preventative activity, which is necessarily multi-agency in nature, may be more difficult for partners to sustain when facing increasing pressure to support responsive services. Behaviours which are not based on a whole system approach and are narrowly defined by attribution of cost benefits to individual organisations should be avoided.

2.2.7 **Emergency Response** - Covid-19 was the primary focus of emergency response in 2020, but other emergency events and situations are likely to occur. These may include, for example, incidents related to climate change; terrorist attacks; infrastructure issues with national implications (e.g. Grenfell Tower); further pandemics, etc. The council’s own plans to respond and recover quickly and effectively from longer term emergency incidents are being further strengthened and may require further financial investment.

2.2.8 **Corporate Liabilities** – Local authorities are exposed to several liabilities which have significant financial pressures if they occur. For example, the cashflow and cost impact of Developer Obligations not being paid to support required asset enhancement; litigation and claims against the council; and fines can be imposed on councils by the Health & Safety Executive, the Information Commissioner and other regulators.

2.2.9 **Banking Sector Failures** – The failure, last year, of three small American banks (Silicon Valley Bank (SVB); Signature Bank and Silvergate) caused much concern in financial circles. The chaos soon spread to other banks, in particular the Swiss bank Credit Suisse, which has now been taken over by UBS. While no other failures have arisen so far the situation remains uncertain.

2.2.10 There are two implications of note with regards to these events:

- i. the banking sector remains fragile and at risk of further failures. The risks are not as high as in 2008, due to new and tougher regulations being introduced which made Banks stronger, but they are still there. Any such loss of confidence could again have knock on impacts for the wider economy via tighter lending; and
- ii. with regards to the future setting of interest rates. The higher rates introduced over the past year by central banks (the Federal Reserve, the Bank of England (BoE) and the European Central Bank (ECB)) are thought to have impacted on the ability of SVB to survive and weakened the position of other banks, especially smaller US ones.

Further rate rises could therefore put yet more pressure on ‘at risk’ financial institutions and so central banks may be more cautious than before in introducing higher rates.

2.3 *The Funding Outlook – UK*

2.3.1 Following the UK General Election on 4 July 2024, the incoming Chancellor of the Exchequer announced she had “instructed Treasury officials to undertake a rapid audit of public spending”. The outcome was published at the beginning of August, and led to the statement by the Prime Minister of the “£22 billion hole”³⁶ in public finances at Prime Minister’s Questions. The HM Treasury report³⁷ detailing the issues also stated “The government is taking action to address the pressure by: (i) identifying immediate savings to manage the pressure; (ii) setting out a clear process to the autumn and the Spending Review for reducing the pressure further; and (iii) making reforms to the spending and fiscal frameworks to prevent this happening again.”

2.3.2 These immediate actions from the audit are for the 2024/25 financial year, and there has been no comment to date on the potential impact on 2025/26 or future financial years. The UK Autumn budget is now expected on 30 October 2024, alongside and update from the Office for Budget Responsibility, and setting out of the new government’s fiscal policy. The narrative around these has persistently described these as “difficult decisions”. Departmental spending plans are critical because it will be the consequential of the UK Budgets, flowing into and through the Barnett formula and Fiscal Framework, that will frame the Scottish Budget.

2.3.3 With the Scottish Budget continuing to be heavily reliant on the Barnett formula that distributes the Block Grant to Scotland – approximately two thirds comes to Scotland from the UK Treasury – then any changes in UK Government funding policy and the size of the UK Tax Revenues will have a material impact on Scottish public services. From the Block Grant perspective, it was notable that the immediate actions outlined by the Chancellor did not materially alter the funding for the devolved administrations, and which suggests it is not promising for the Scottish Budget next year.

2.4 *The Funding Outlook – Scotland, Local Government and Aberdeen City Council*

2.4.1 The primary source of funding for the delivery of Council Services is the Scottish Government through the allocation of general revenue and capital grants, and the distribution of national non-domestic rates income. In Scotland local government

³⁶ [Is there a £22bn ‘black hole’ in the UK’s public finances? - BBC News](#)

³⁷ HM Treasury, Fixing the Foundations: public spending audit 2024-25

funding accounts for approximately a quarter of the total discretionary fiscal budget³⁸, in 2024/25, approximately £13.9 billion³⁹ (revenue and capital).

- 2.4.2 With approximately three quarters of the Council's net revenue funding being received through government grant it is simple to see why UK and Scottish Government policies and economic forecasts impact on the level of Council funding.
- 2.4.3 The Scotland Block Grant from UK Treasury is based on the Barnett Formula, adjusted to take account of taxation and fiscal powers now devolved to the Scottish Government. This adjustment is captured under the Fiscal Framework between the UK and Scottish Governments. In 2022/23 the Scottish Government announced that there would be a new deal for local government and on 30 June 2023 the Verity House Agreement was signed between Scottish Government and COSLA. The Agreement sets out principles for working together to empower local communities, tackle poverty, transform the economy and provide high-quality public services. It includes, amongst other things, a commitment to agree a new Fiscal Framework governing how local authorities' funding is allocated, reducing ring-fencing and giving them greater control over their budgets to meet local needs. And to regularly review councils' powers and funding, with the expectation that services will be delivered at a local level unless agreed otherwise.
- 2.4.4 The Scottish Government, having published a single year budget in December 2021 for financial year 2022/23, published a further suite of documents to support a multi-year funding framework for the public sector in Scotland. These documents were:
- Investing in Scotland's Future: Resource Spending Review
 - Scotland's Fiscal Outlook: The Scottish Government's Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - Capital Spending Review
- 2.4.5 Following another single year budget for financial year 2023/24, the Scottish Government produced a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy⁴⁰ in May 2023 and it highlights that while the Scottish Resource Budget is increasing up to 2027-28, in both cash and real terms, it is not expected to rise at the same rate as the spending bill, creating a growing funding gap over time. The issues raised at UK Government level over summer 2024 have meant no updates to the Scottish Government's MTFs are expected in advance of the UK Autumn budget in October.
- 2.4.6 For financial year 2024/25 Scotland's Budget, excluding Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)⁴¹, amounts to £55.4 billion, when presented to Parliament in

³⁸ [Scottish Government, December 2023, Scottish Budget 2024/25](#)

³⁹ [Scottish Government, February 2024, Finance Circular 2/2024](#)

⁴⁰ [Scottish Government, May 2023, Scotland's Fiscal Outlook](#)

⁴¹ AME is specific grant funding paid by UK Government to cover costs such as NHS and teacher pensions and student loans. It amounts to about £9 billion per annum.

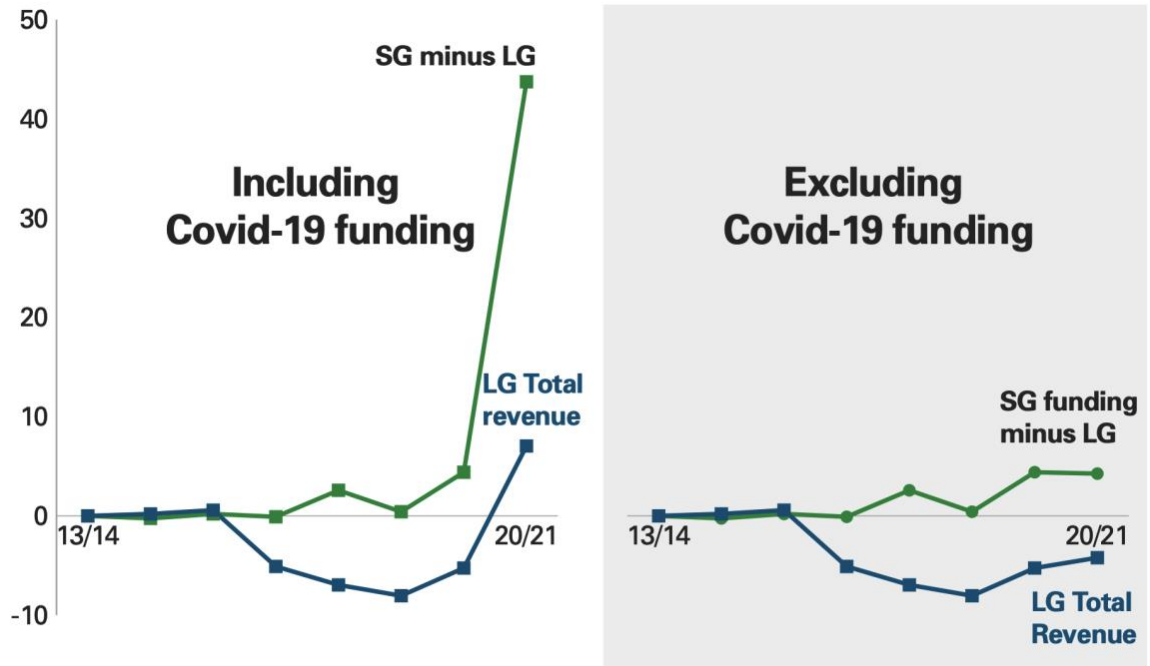
December 2023. This is the element of the budget the Scottish Parliament can make decisions about.

- 2.4.7 From 2020/21 the Scottish budget reflects the changing picture of devolved powers, including devolved social security payments and farm payments, previously funded by the EU.
- 2.4.8 Notable is the adjustment to the block grant for the devolved tax raising powers that now sit with the Scottish Parliament. The size of the Scottish Budget is therefore directly affected by economic performance, through taxation revenues, in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK. Diverging economic performance could place added pressure on the Scottish Budget in future years.
- 2.4.9 The Scottish Fiscal Commission, in their report from May 2023⁴² stated that “...we continue to expect a large and negative income tax reconciliation for the Budget year 2021-22. Comparing our and the OBR’s latest forecasts indicates a large negative reconciliation for 2021-22 of -£712 million. Final outturn data should be available in July 2023, with the resulting reconciliation being applied to the Scottish Budget for 2024-25.” Adjustments like this will adversely affect the amount of funding available for public services, and as an unprotected public service, Local Government can anticipate feeling the pain.
- 2.4.10 At this point worth of note is that it is impossible to get away from the shortfall in funding that has been provided to Local Government in Scotland for the last decade. The Accounts Commission published, its Local Government in Scotland Overview report⁴³ on 25 May 2022, which continued to highlight the long-term position that Local Government is the poor relation of other parts of the Scottish public sector, excluding the effects of Covid-19 pandemic funding “...councils’ underlying cumulative funding has fallen by 4.2 per cent in real terms since 2013/14. This is in contrast to an increase of 4.3 per cent in Scottish Government funding of other areas of the budget over the same period.” This can be illustrated in the following chart.

Chart 17: Comparison of real terms changes in revenue funding in local government and other Scottish Government areas (including and excluding Covid-19 funding)

⁴² [Scottish Fiscal Commission, May 2023, Scotland’s Economic and Fiscal Forecasts \(revised June 2023\)](#)

⁴³ [Accounts Commission, May 2022, Local Government in Scotland Overview 2022](#)



Source: Finance Circular 5/2021 and Scottish Government budget documents

2.4.11 This has not been corrected in the last two years and in the Accounts Commission’s report on Local Government in Scotland : Overview 2023⁴⁴ with only 2.6% increase in real terms in funding over the decade from 2013/14. This covers a period when Council Tax was frozen and funding was being provided instead. This means that the key fiscal lever that Local Government has could not be exercised to mitigate the demand and cost pressures, and it was neutralised again by the First Minister’s announcement for 2024/25.

Chart 18: Scottish Government revenue funding to local government (in real terms) and year-on-year percentage change, 2013/14 to 2023/24

⁴⁴ [Accounts Commission, May 2023, Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2023](#)



Notes:

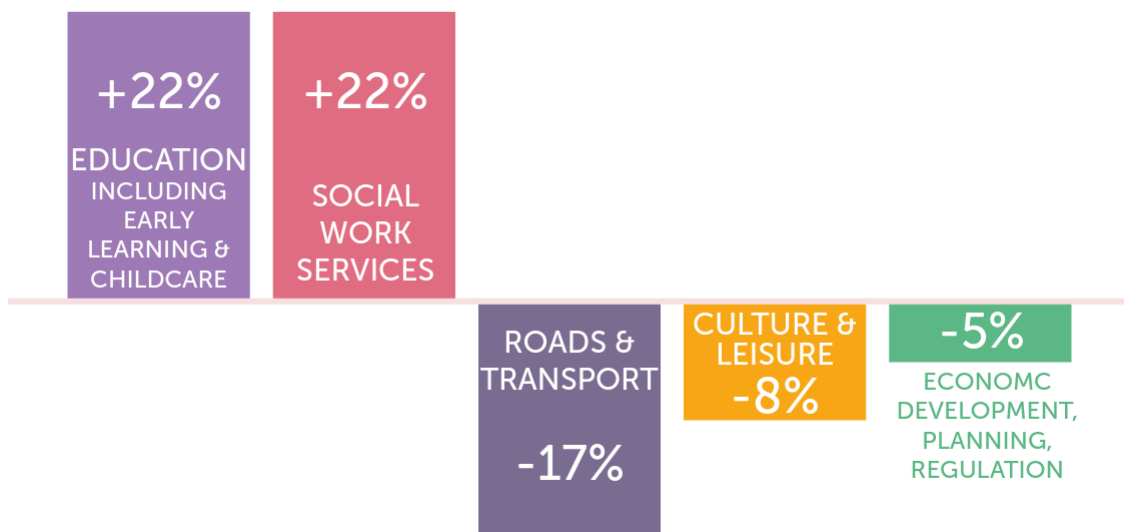
1. Non-recurring funding refers to Covid-19 related funding in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and cost-of-living support for council tax bills in 2022/23.

2. We use the finance circulars to compare the funding position year-on-year as we believe this is the most accurate comparison. These figures include funding for national policy initiatives and transfers from other portfolios. Figures calculated at 2023/24 prices.

Source: Scottish Local Government Finance Circulars

2.4.12 The quantum of the local government settlement is not the only issue arising, as the funding context for Scotland is one that is driven strongly by national policy and commitments. This is seen in the extent to which the local government budget is truly determined locally. According to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), in its “Live Well Locally” budget campaign documentation⁴⁵ states that “Over recent years, Local Government’s total funding has reduced in real terms – and at the same time, Scottish Government has prioritised & ring-fenced spend in areas like education & social work. So while spend in these areas has gone up, less resource overall means it has been at the expense of areas like economic development, roads & transport, all critical in attracting investment, developing businesses, creating jobs and addressing climate change.” Information collected for Scotland shows how stark the disparity is.

Chart 19: Change in net revenue expenditure between 2013/14 and 2021/22 (Estimate)



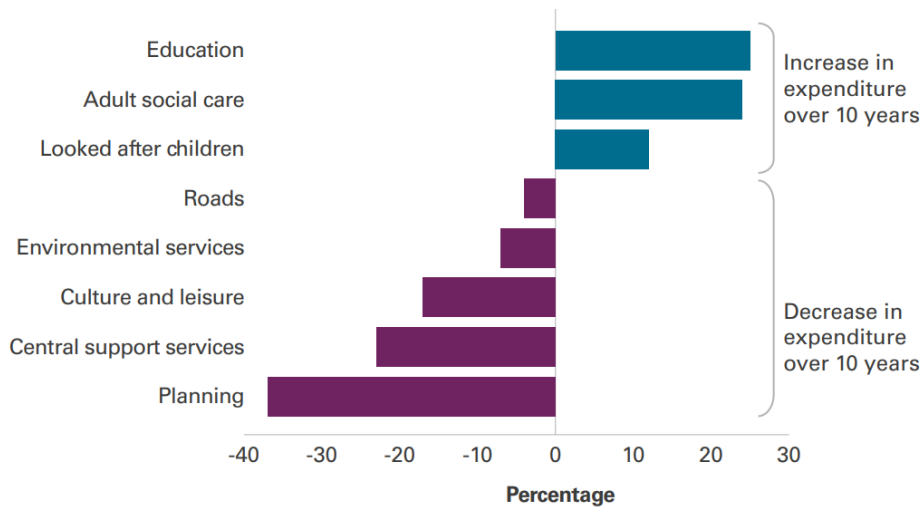
⁴⁵ [COSLA, December 2021, Live well locally campaign](#)

Source: COSLA, Live well locally

2.4.13 The Accounts Commission⁴⁶ presented a similar picture in its 2023 report, reinforcing the extent to which national policy is shaping the allocation of resources at a local level.

⁴⁶ [Accounts Commission, May 2023, Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2023](#)

Chart 20: Percentage change in expenditure (in real terms) by service from 2012/13 to 2021/22



Note: Economic development and Tourism services have seen a 43 per cent increase over the period. We have excluded this from the chart as year-to-year expenditure is volatile and there is not a consistent trend in spending over this period.

Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework, 2021/22

2.4.14 With national policy at the forefront, it is impossible to ignore the impact that the National Care Service (NCS) will have on local government. The NCS (Scotland) Bill⁴⁷ has been published and allows Scottish Ministers to transfer social care responsibility from local authorities to a new, national service. This could include adult and children’s services, as well as areas such as justice social work. Scottish Ministers will also be able to transfer healthcare functions from the NHS to the National Care Service. The Bill has completed Stage 1 – where Parliamentary Committees examine the Bill and gather views – and is now at Stage 2 – where MSPs can propose amendments to be considered by committee. The Committee’s call for views closed on 20 September 2024, and the amended Bill will require to be published following Stage 2 proceedings. There are still many unknowns. Details of the arrangements have yet to be finalised and the scale of the costs involved in the financial memorandum are estimates with many caveats. The affordability of the vision set out is not certain given the actual scale of the costs are not yet clear. It is difficult for councils to plan current services with such uncertainty.”⁴⁸

2.4.15 The Accounts Commission summarise in that report “While there is consensus that fundamental reform is essential for long-term sustainability, there is not agreement about what that reform looks like and how it will be implemented.”

⁴⁷ [Scottish Parliament, 20 June 2022, National Care Service \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

⁴⁸ [Accounts Commission, May 2023, Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2023](#)

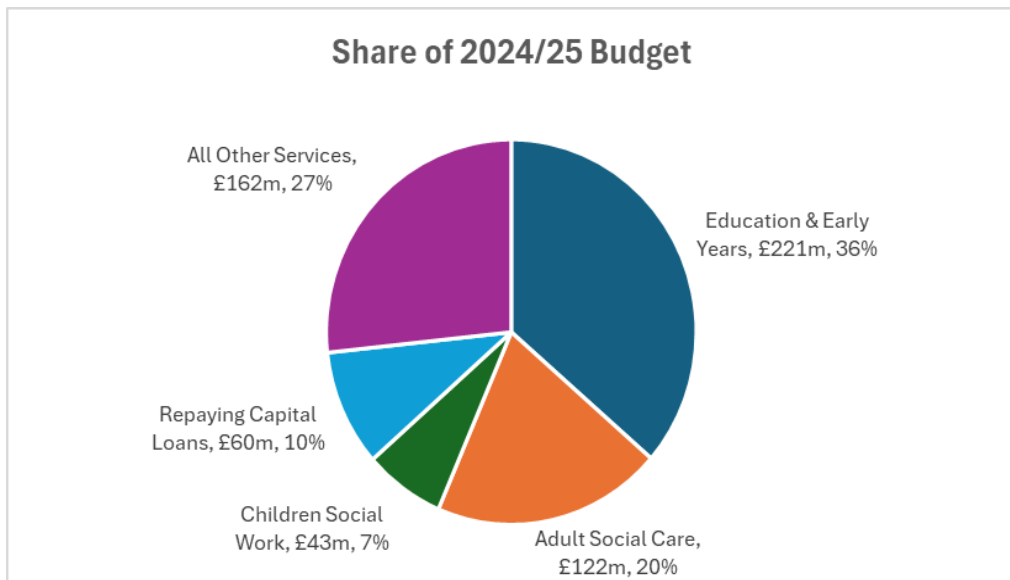
2.4.16 In terms of impact COSLA initially described the Bill, “The inclusion of Children’s Services within the Scottish Government’s National Care Service Consultation went far beyond the scope of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, and it was clear in the analysis of the consultation that many respondents agreed with COSLA’s view that there was a significant lack of evidence and data to justify the inclusion of children’s services in a National Care Service.”

2.4.17 While there is process and procedure to go through it is necessary that assumptions, from our financial perspective, have to be made about what it means for our financial planning. To do this the Council has examined the accompanying Financial Memorandum⁴⁹ and extrapolated this alongside the other demand and cost assumptions that are contained in the MTFs models. Assuming that all of the identified services are removed from local government then the shape of councils will shift dramatically.

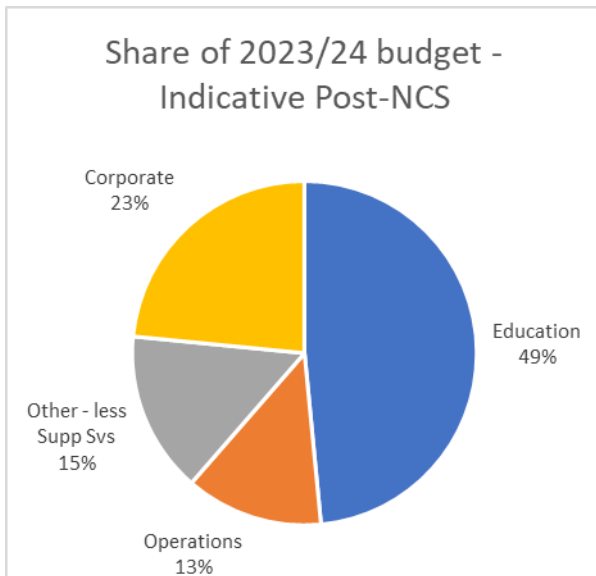
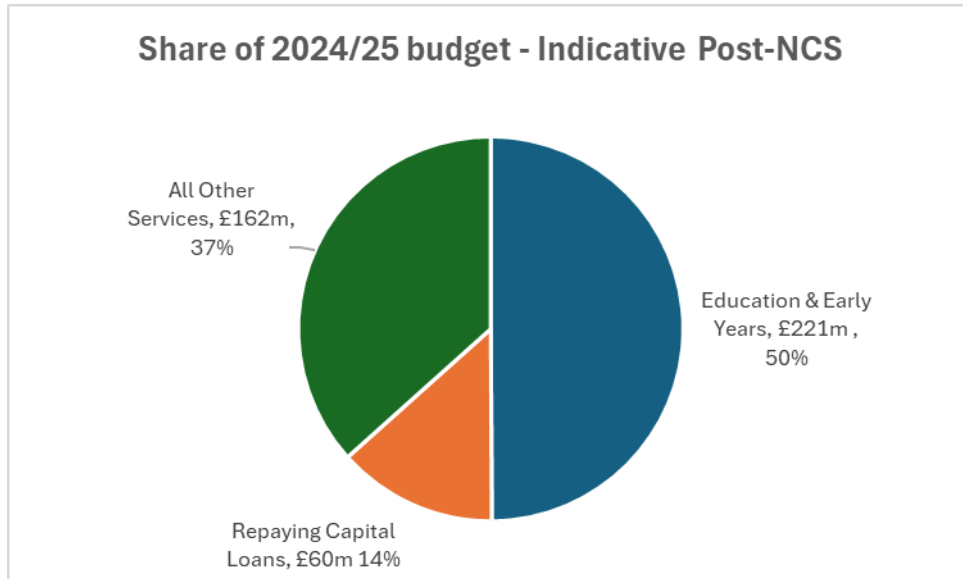
2.4.18 The Council currently budgets to spend approximately £165m on Adult, Children and Justice Social Work and associated central support services, from a net budget of £607m, representing 27% of net expenditure this year. That spending is expected to rise to approximately £168m for the first year of operation of the NCS, 2025/26.

2.4.19 Removing the spending results in Education being the dominant service provided by the Council, with half of the remaining net expenditure being allocated to deliver education and early years services.

Chart 21: General Fund Budget 2024/25, including and excluding proposed NCS services



⁴⁹ [Scottish Parliament, 20 June 2022, National Care Service \(Scotland\) Bill FM](#)

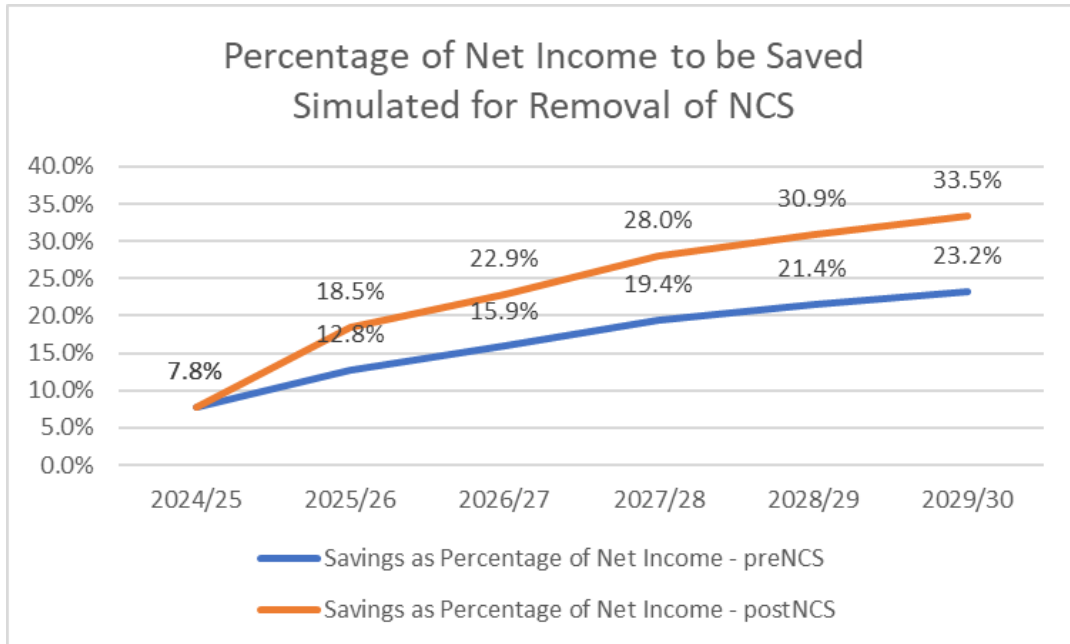


2.4.20 In July 2023 an agreement was reached between the Scottish Government, the NHS and COSLA that legal responsibility will be shared between the health service, councils and the Scottish government, and that staff, assets and the delivery of services will remain part of Councils. The analysis remains relevant as it is unclear to what extent local authorities will be able to apply / influence and control the funding for the services that are included under Care Boards. Fundamentally if these services are protected (by Scottish Government through the financial settlement) from local decision on funding and resource allocation then the shift towards this post-NCS position is unchanged.

2.4.21 The dominance of Education presents a major challenge given the extent of national policy driving prioritisation and national conditions that are in place for these services, whether these be teacher pay and conditions, financial settlement conditions on pupil teacher ratios. It potentially limits the extent to which local decisions can make changes to the way our resources are allocated, likely shifting the focus for savings

and income generation to those that are of a different nature, operational, support and enabling services. The following chart shows that the demand and cost pressures are not shared equally by all services and the Council is left with a higher value of savings to be found against a lower value of Net Income. This results in savings of almost 10% more having to be achieved from the post-NCS services.

Chart 22: Proportion of Net Income to be Saved Compared to post NCS



2.4.22 In addition to the obvious revenue budgets that are prepared annually, a National Care Service will have an impact on support services, with the likely untangling of support service budgets, staff and contracts having to be quantified and acted upon once more information is known. Beyond this, there will be questions that need to be answered in relation to assets, debt, contingent liabilities (including pension liabilities and historic child abuse cases) and group entities/subsidiaries (that would relate to Bon Accord Care and Bon Accord Support Services).

2.4.23 With reference to the income the Council receives, it has been assumed that grant funding would be reduced by the value of expenditure being incurred in the delivery of the various services. Local Government will need to be aware of the value of grant that is being removed, as the funding mechanism does not necessary match the spending profile of Councils at present. Local Government should not accept, as a given, that the value of grant funding should be the full cost of current services.

2.4.24 The Scottish Governments publication of multi-year financial forecasts in the Resources Spending Review⁵⁰ (RSR) provided much more about the future, that the Council can learn from, in particular the shape of local government finance for the

⁵⁰ [Scottish Government, May 2022, Resource Spending Review](#)

coming three years. Last year was the first time that local government has had a multi-year financial plan since 2011, when a three year settlement was announced for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15.

2.4.25 The RSR was accompanied by a letter to COSLA from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Kate Forbes. This provided greater insight into the allocation of funds to local government than is detailed in the Resource Spending Review itself.

2.4.26 While setting out the Scottish Governments priorities and describing the need to allocate resources towards achieving those priorities, the RSR demonstrates a further deprioritisation of local government, despite the huge role that Councils can play. The priorities spelt out are:

“...four key challenges – reducing child poverty, addressing the climate crisis, building a strong and resilient economy and helping our public services recover strongly from the pandemic.”⁵¹

2.4.27 For local government the message was simple. A commitment to flat cash settlements for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26, with an additional £100m (c.1%) in 2026/27.

2.4.28 The detail is of course far from simple and local government receives its current funding from a variety of portfolios, spread across the Scottish Budget (i) a core ‘Local Government’ allocation; and (ii) additional sums transferred from other ministerial portfolios, such as Education, Justice and Health. The RSR confirms that the core allocation of £10.6bn will be maintained throughout the period of the spending review, with that additional £100m in the final year. It is not until the letter from the Cabinet Secretary is read carefully that a sum of £1bn per annum is guaranteed to be transferred from those portfolios during the period of review can any assurance be secured that the local government settlement will be anything like flat cash.

2.4.29 The 2023 MTFS from the Scottish Government did nothing to dilute the risks facing local government and suggest any improvement in our prospects of additional core funding. As previously noted, the 2024 update has been delayed until after the UK Autumn budget statement. The Central Scenario financial modelling has therefore been maintained over the period to reflect flat cash settlements.

2.4.30 While it is important to take from the Scottish Government documents the financial conclusions, it also worth highlighting other points associated with Local Government:

“...key elements of this vision will not directly apply to local government...”

“...a ‘new deal’ for Local Government in Scotland through the development of a Partnership Agreement and Fiscal Framework.”

⁵¹ Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Scottish Government, Resource Spending Review, 31 May 2022

2.4.31 On 30 June 2023, the First Minister and the COSLA President signed a Partnership Agreement that by both see as a landmark. Known as ‘The Verity House Agreement’, it signifies a shared vision for a more collaborative approach to delivering our shared priorities for the people of Scotland.

2.4.32 It sets out principles for working together to empower local communities, tackle poverty, transform the economy and provide high-quality public services. It includes commitments to:

- agree a new Fiscal Framework governing how local authorities’ funding is allocated, reducing ring-fencing and giving them greater control over their budgets to meet local needs
- regularly review councils’ powers and funding, with the expectation that services will be delivered at a local level unless agreed otherwise
- incorporate the European Charter of Local Self-Government into Scots Law
- reform public services, building on the partnership working established during the pandemic recovery
- develop a framework for collecting and sharing evidence to ensure progress is maintained.

2.5 *Scottish Government Funding*

- I. The allocation of resources by Scottish Government across the Scottish public sector portfolios is somewhat clearer following the publication of the Resource Spending Review. This is the basis for assumptions.

Table 1:

Upside Scenario	Central Scenario	Downside Scenario
<p>2024/25 to 2028/29 – flat cash settlement for underlying duties and obligations, with between 0.5% and 1.5% cash increase annually over and above central scenario to support core services.</p> <p>Switch of capital to revenue funding in 2024/25.</p> <p>Assumed that additional funding will be received</p>	<p>2024/25 increase of 1.1% due to an expected switch from capital to revenue funding.</p> <p>2025/26 – flat cash settlement for underlying duties and obligations.</p> <p>Distribution uncertainty resulting in 0.1% reduction annually.</p> <p>Assumed that additional funding will be received for additional expenditure</p>	<p>2024/25 to 2028/29 – flat cash with additional impact of distribution formula leading to lower grant, estimated at 0.25% annually.</p> <p>Assumed that additional funding will only be received for additional expenditure commitments through policy changes.</p>

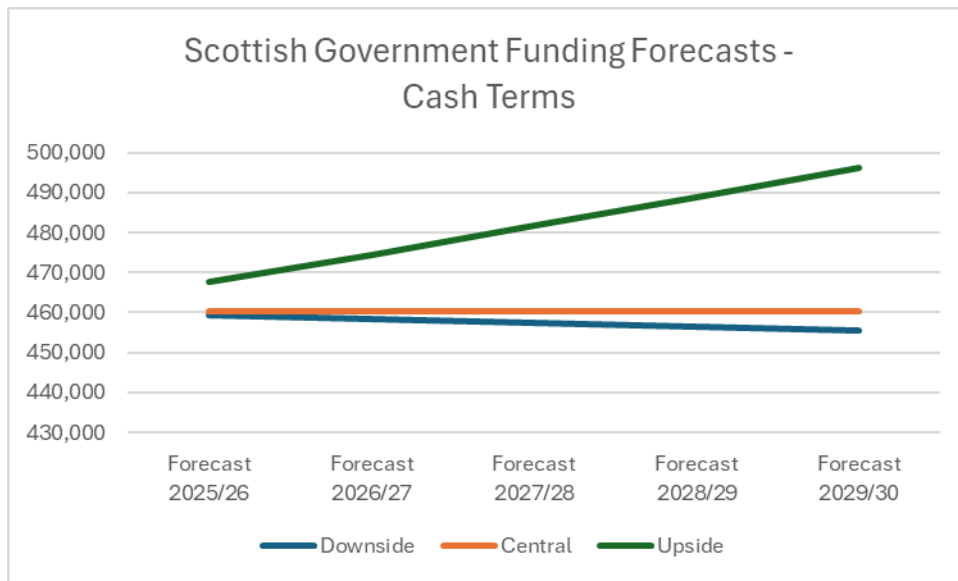
for additional expenditure commitments. No change incorporated for National Care Service.	commitments through policy changes. 2026/27 and 2028/29 1% cash increase annually. No change incorporated for National Care Service.	
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II. The level of “protection” that Scottish Government applies to its political priorities delivered by local government is also quantified. The direction increase from Scottish Government in 2023/24 with the direction in regard to teacher numbers and pupil support hours, add this to ring-fenced grants, such as Early Learning and Childcare, and the requirement to maintain health and social care funding there is significant impact of this direction.

Table 2

Upside Scenario	Central Scenario	Downside Scenario
Mainstream national priorities and provide flexibility shifting resource protection to less than 10%.	Current level of protection continues, 45% of resources directed nationally. The Verity House Agreement moves this towards the upside scenario by middle of MTFS period	Greater control directed nationally to deliver national priorities, raising protection to over 50% of local government resources.

Chart 23: Scottish Government Grant Scenarios



III. From an approved 2023/24 budget level of government funding of £412m, the upside and central position track similar funding levels during the first 3 years of the RSR, the upside scenario more optimistic that additional funding will be found, however marginal at best. A 1% increase in funding in 2026/27 will be distributed and will be maintained into the following years is assumed for the central scenario, but will rely on a great deal to remain unchanged. The downside shows a regular reduction in funding. By year 5, 2029/30 there is a funding range, upside to downside of £41m.

2.6 Council Tax

- 2.6.1 Limits placed on funding local government receives means that local authorities must turn to the fiscal levers they have, to exercise control and to influence the level of income they have, to pay for services. Primarily this means looking carefully at the power to raise funds locally from Council Tax, and to review / apply fees and charges for services that are delivered.
- 2.6.2 Exercising discretion over these fiscal levers is, again, not straightforward. The local government financial settlement has, for over a decade put restrictions on the most significant fiscal lever local authorities have, setting the Council Tax. A cap on Council Tax increases was introduced in 2017/18, following a nine-year Council Tax freeze, from 2008/09. The initial cap condition was absolute in cash terms at 3% and in 2019/20 a real terms limit of 3% was introduced, the cash limit therefore being higher. Despite this it offers local authorities limited opportunity to raise the funds they need to meet rising costs. For 2021/22 the council again was offered funding to avoid an increase in Council Tax. For Aberdeen City this was the equivalent of a 3.3% increase in the rate. The Council accepted this offer (as all local authorities did).

- 2.6.3 In 2022/23 the cap was removed and for the first time since 2007/08 the Council was free to set a Council Tax rate for Aberdeen. An increase of 3% was approved, in the context of the concerns around the cost of living and affordability locally, and this has been followed by a 5% increase in the rate for 2023/24.
- 2.6.4 For 2024/25 the Council Tax freeze was reintroduced, the First Minister's response to the cost of living crisis. This removal of the fiscal lever, supposed to be in the control of individual local authorities, led to widespread criticism by Cosla⁵² and two Councils (Argyll and Bute, and Inverclyde) initially voting to increase Council Tax as part of their 2024/25 budgets, before reversing those decisions and accepting the offer of additional funding from the Scottish Government.
- 2.6.5 Limiting the value and / or missing the opportunity to increase Council Tax undermines the future value of this funding stream for the council. The underlying assumption is that Council Tax income will have to be increased.
- 2.6.6 It is worthy of note that the Scottish Government's Programme for Government⁵³, published in 2023 commits "...to reforming Council Tax to make it fairer, working with the Scottish Green Party and COSLA to oversee the development of effective deliberative engagement on sources of local government funding, including Council Tax, that will culminate in a Citizens' Assembly." The dissolution of the SNP / Green alliance at Holyrood, and the Council Tax freeze for 2024/25 appear to have resulted in a pause on any progress concerning the review of Council Tax Bands E-H. The updated Programme for Government: Serving Scotland announced by John Swinney in early September 2024⁵⁴ is silent on any future plans for Council Tax reform, and so we may assume these are unlikely to be progressed within the life of the current Parliament..
- 2.6.7 Conclusion:
- I. The Council Tax valuation roll is anticipated to increase with additional housing continuing to be built in the city. For this reason the underlying value of Council Tax collectable before increasing the Band D rate tracks an upward trend. The upside and downside scenarios reflect greater or fewer houses being added to the roll annually.
 - II. The chart below does not include the impact of a rate increase; however the recommendation is that the real terms increase in Council Tax should be approved annually to enable the Council to in part recover the increasing cost of services, through pay, price and contract inflation.

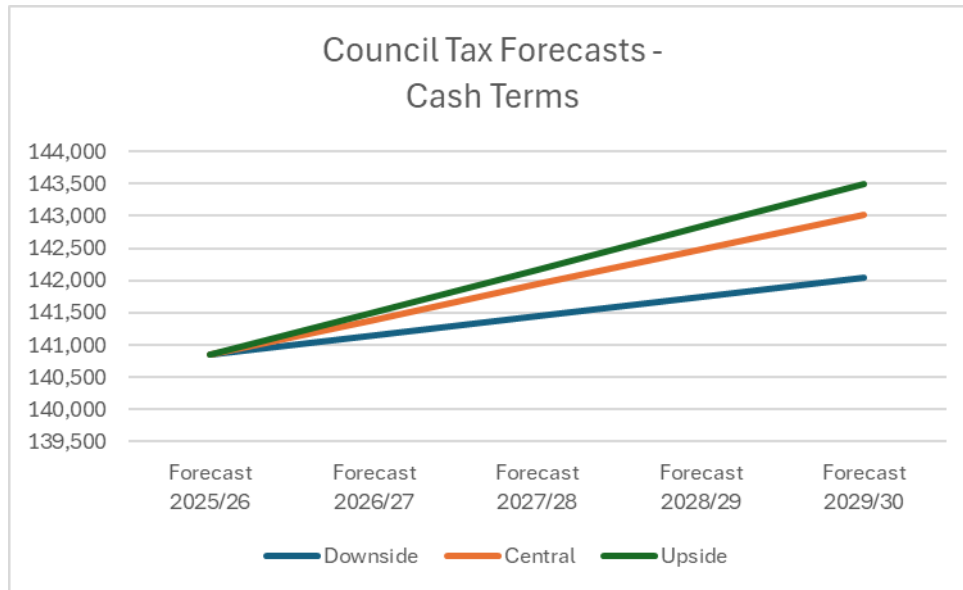
⁵² [Cosla declares 'dispute' with ministers over funds - BBC News](#)

⁵³ [Scottish Government, Programme for Government, 7 September 2021](#)

⁵⁴ [Scottish Government, Programme for Government, 4 September 2024](#)

III. The future of Council Tax reform is not clear.

Chart 24: Council Tax Scenarios

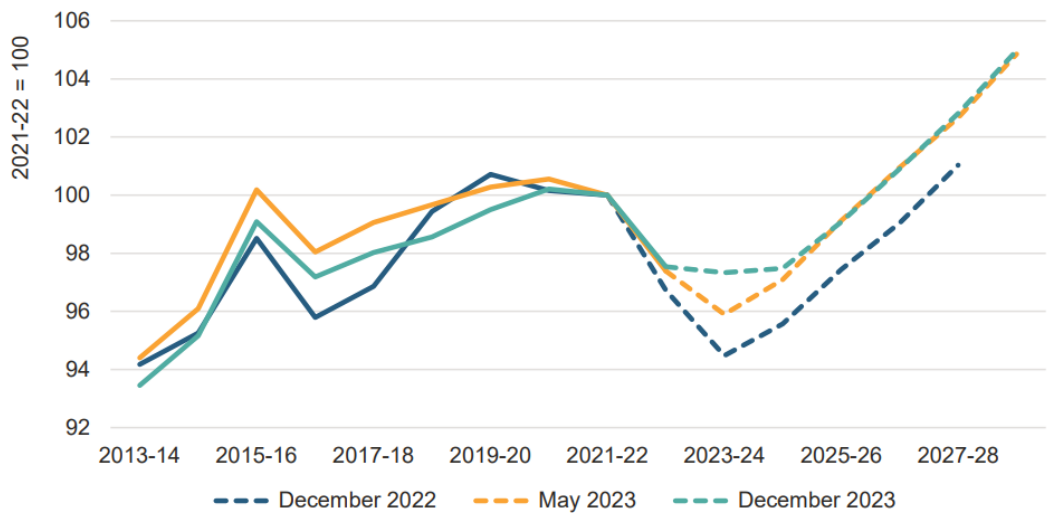


3.7 Fees and Charges

- 3.7.1 Fees and charges are an important source of funding for local authority services, and some provide a positive inflow of cash to support the overall revenue budget, a common example being car parking income. Other external income raised through fees and charges will often recover a proportion of the cost of delivering a specific service, lowering the overall cost to the General Fund revenue budget. Securing an income from a strong customer base, with repeat use can help to avoid public subsidy for discretionary services.
- 3.7.2 Statutory and regulatory limits do hinder local government and in areas of planning and licensing, for example, the price paid by the customer is not set by the council and does not cover the cost of services delivered.
- 3.7.3 In the post-pandemic changed environment forecasts for income from fees and charges is far from certain and continues to be affected by on-going behaviour changes from customers, citizens and visitors, as well as economic conditions. While this will be captured in the current year through the quarterly financial performance reports, looking ahead it is clear that careful consideration of the opportunities and gaps that exist in our income base need to be considered. The forecasts for now are prudent.
- 3.7.4 The resilience framework (Section 6) looks at the income streams on which the Council relies, and Appendix 1 provides details of the top 20 funding streams that shows just how important that customer income is to the Council.
- 3.7.5 There is an undoubted challenge with balancing the need for income by the Council in the context of a cost of living crisis and the signs the household disposable income is

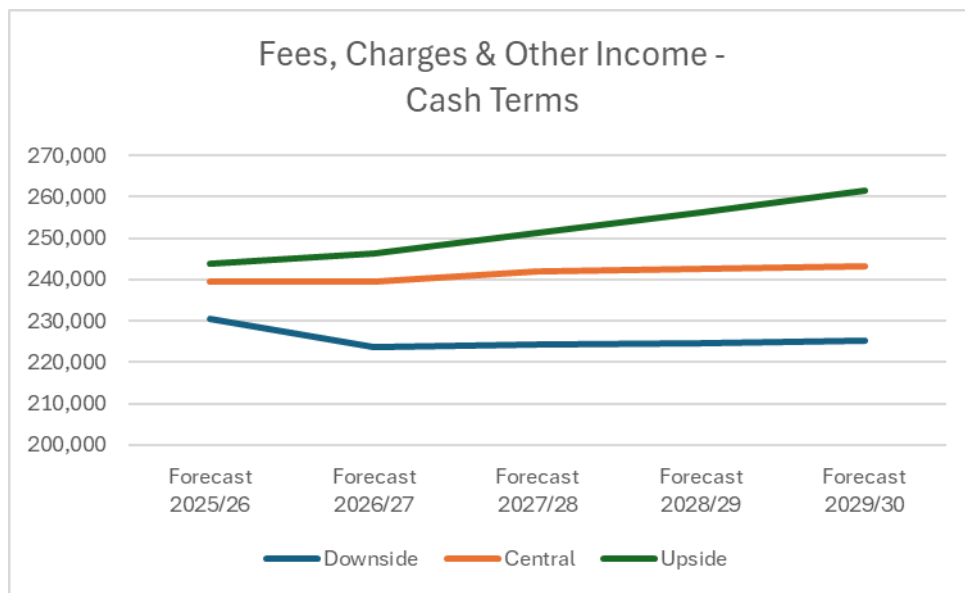
reducing. The Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC) stated in their recent report⁵⁵ that “Lower-income households and some mortgage holders are likely to see a further fall in their living standards in 2024-25...” And it will not be a quick fix, they predict that “...by 2025-26, real disposable income per person will be no higher than a decade earlier.”

Living standards to take until 2026-27 to recover from the fall between 2021-22 and 2023-24



3.7.6 Conclusion:

Chart 25: Fees and Charges Scenarios



⁵⁵ [Scottish Fiscal Commission, December 2023 \(revised version April 2024\), Scotland’s Economic and Fiscal Forecaststs](#)

3.8 *Discretionary Powers*

- 3.8.1 Beyond these fiscal powers local authorities have very limited access to raise monies. Recent actions to open opportunities to local authorities has centred on infrastructure-based levies, including road pricing, workplace parking and an infrastructure levy included in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill⁵⁶ was passed on 28 May 2024, and became an Act on 5 July 2024. The enacted legislation gives local councils the ability to add a tax to overnight accommodation if they wish to do so. This will be based on a percentage of the cost, with the rate set by individual councils. The Act confirms that there must be at least 18 months between the date of a local authority publishing a report stating it intends to proceed with such a scheme, and the scheme coming into force. This means the earliest any Visitor Levy Scheme could come into force in Scotland is 5 January 2026, and only once the required consultation exercises under the Act have been completed.
- 3.8.2 While there is a mixed picture of legislation already in place to support these levies, further regulation and statutory instruments are required to provide local authorities the powers to implement them and it is going to be some time before local authorities can draw any benefit from such fiscal freedom.
- 3.8.3 The Programme for Government committed the Scottish Government to devolving the Empty Property Relief in connection with Non-Domestic Rates. The intention being to level the playing field for all non-domestic properties, the Scottish Government will help local authorities tackle a known avoidance tactic on empty non-domestic properties. This came into effect from April 2023.
- 3.8.4 The Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill⁵⁷ was passed on 26 June 2024 and became an Act on 8 August 2024. The purpose is to introduce measures as part of the transition to a circular economy that require primary legislation, and to modernise Scotland's waste and recycling services. This includes Reducing waste; Increasing penalties for littering from vehicles; and Making sure individual householders and businesses get rid of waste in the right way.
- 3.8.5 Conclusion:
- I. Table 3: Analysis of Emerging Discretionary Powers

⁵⁶ [Scottish Parliament, May 2023, Visitor Levy \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

⁵⁷ [Scottish Parliament, August 2024, Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

Discretionary Powers	Primary legislation in place (yes/no)	Required statutory regulation in place (yes/no)	Anticipated year we can expect to be able to use power?
Visitor Levy	Yes.	Yes	2026/27, subject to required consultation exercises
Workplace Parking Levy	Yes. Transport (Scotland) Act 2019	No.	Unclear
Infrastructure Levy	Yes. Planning (Scotland) Act 2019	No. The power to make regulations about an infrastructure levy is not yet in force and, as such, no regulations have been made.	Unclear. Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provides that the power to introduce a levy will lapse by 25 July 2026.
Non Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief	Yes.	Yes.	2023/24. Power exercised as part of budget.
Circular Economy	Yes	Yes	Estimate 2026/27 at earliest, requires Parliamentary process allowing 90 days for representations to the first set of proposed regulations

- II. As the underlying statutory framework is not yet in place the scenario plans have not been affected by additional income arising from exercising these powers.
- III. The council should continue to identify and evaluate emerging discretionary powers on a regular basis to determine their applicability to Aberdeen City.

3. THE CONSOLIDATED MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK FOR THE GENERAL FUND

3.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy – Quantification of the Funding Gap

3.1.1 Overall, the medium-term outlook is that increasing demand and pay and price inflation will drive costs up at a faster rate than the council can expect to raise income. This has only got more difficult as inflation increased and peaked at levels not seen for forty years. While inflation is forecast to fall in the short term, it doesn't mean that prices are not continuing to increase. Unless funding is provided through the range of income streams, but fundamentally from Scottish Government grant then there is a question of the sustainability of local government. It is difficult to see the same level of services being delivered over the course of the medium term horizon as are in place today.

3.1.2 Details of the key assumptions are contained in the tables below. The calculations that flow from these assumptions reveal a particular sensitivity to Scottish Government funding levels and general pay and price inflation assumptions, while key components of the demand underpin rising costs, such as population demand changes.

Table 4: Funding and Income (percentages are shown in cash terms)

Source	Description	Upside Scenario	Central Scenario	Downside Scenario
Scottish Government Revenue Grant	Combined grant income from General Revenue Grant and Non-Domestic Rates.	Year 1 1.6% Year 2-5 0.5-1.5%	Year 1 0.0% Year 2 0.0% Year 3-5 0.0%	Year 1 -0.2% Year 2-5 -0.2%
Council Tax	Increasing the rate is a council decision made at budget setting time, the Band D rate has therefore not been increased in any scenario, The budget decision will provide a solution to address the scenarios. It is expected that Council Tax income will be increased in 2025/26 to reflect a real terms increase, and while there is no imposed Council Tax cap now applied to the rate by Scottish Government, this support the funding of the rising cost of services and inflation in pay and prices that cannot be absorbed by the Council.			
Council Tax	Tax base increase from additional chargeable properties.	Year 1-5 total 3,250 properties	Year 1-5 total 2,845 properties	Year 1-5 total 2,000 properties
Fees, Charges and Other Income	External income raised from customers. Approval for rate increases is a council decision, therefore rates charged in 2024/25 have continued to be applied to each scenario. The budget decision will provide a solution to address the scenarios. Similar to Council Tax, careful consideration of the full cost recovery, the impact that inflation is having on the cost of delivering chargeable services must be taken into account when setting annual charges across the MTFs period.			

Fees, Charges and Other Income	External income changes due to economic conditions.	Year 1 -5 Additional £2.5m	Year 1 Stable income	Year 1 £6m loss & return to current over 8 years
One-off funding streams	2023/24 Budget made use of Balance Sheet resources and one-off funding streams these must be replaced as they are non-recurring. Assumption for 2024/25 only, £5.5m.			

Table 5: Expenditure (percentages are shown in cash terms)

Source	Description	Upside Scenario	Central Scenario	Downside Scenario
Inflation	Pay	Year 1-5 2% Pay award funded by SG grant if greater than assumptions	Year 1 3%; Year 2-5 2% Pay award funded by SG grant if greater than assumptions	Year 1-4 4%; Year 5 2.5% Pay award funded by SG grant if greater than assumptions
Government Policy	National Insurance	Year 1-5 0% No further increases beyond 2024/25	Year 1-5 0% No further increases beyond 2024/25	Year 1-5 0.5% Reintroduce an increases following reversal in 2022/23
Inflation	Price – including contracts, grants and ALEOs	Between 0% and 2.5% p.a.	Between 1.25% and 2% p.a.	Between 3% and 9% p.a.
Inflation	Utilities, including Gas, Electric, Heating Oil, Water	Gas 0% Electricity 2.5%	Gas 3% falling to 1% Electricity 5.7%	Gas 15% falling to 5% Electricity 15% falling to 8%
Population Demand	Children, schools impact	School roll slower	Total Year 1-5 Stable	School roll increases
Capital Investment Demand	Capital Financing	Year 1 2.5% Year 2 3% Year 3 3% Year 4 3% Year 5 0.5%	Year 1 9% Year 2 10% Year 3 6% Year 4 4% Year 5 -2%1.7%	Year 1 10% Year 2 7% Year 3 14% Year 4 10% Year 5 5%
Capital Investment – Local Policy	Loans Fund Repayment		Asset Useful Life = Average 40 years; and	

			Interest Rate = Average 5%	
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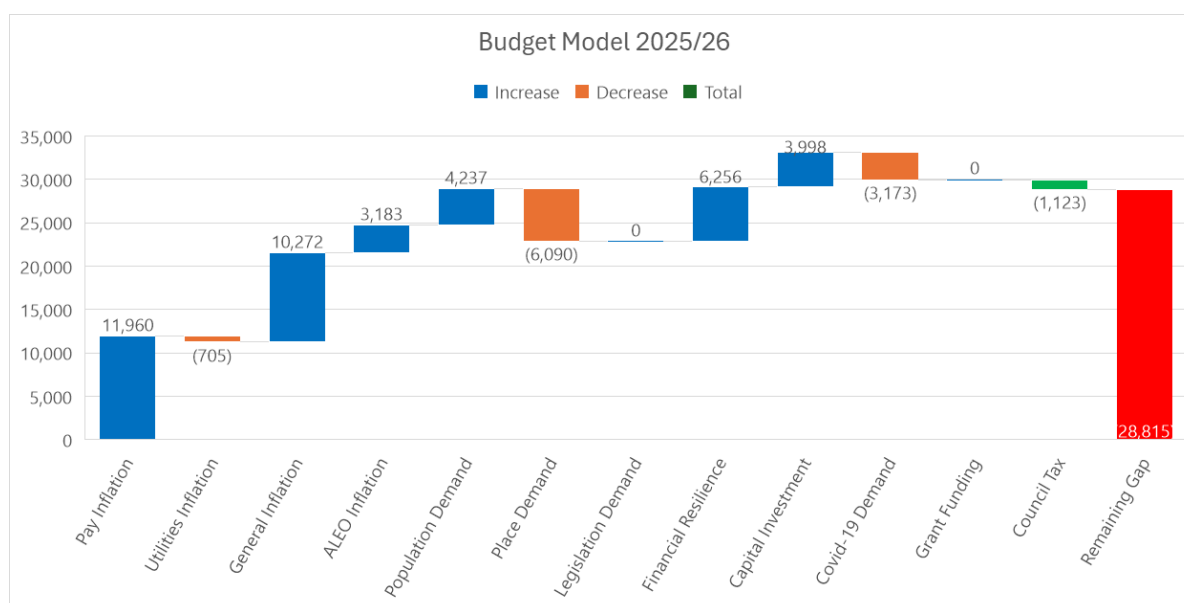
3.1.3 Figures for the Council’s Functional structure are presented in the following table, reflecting the changing costs for the Central Scenario.

Table 6: Central Scenario Forecast from 2024/25 to 2029/20 (Gross)

Budget Forecasts - General Fund	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
City Regeneration & Environment	30,235	38,598	43,667	46,152	48,052	49,992
Corporate Services	43,487	44,132	43,151	41,461	43,144	44,890
Families & Communities	307,384	324,681	328,710	332,260	338,374	341,152
Integrated Joint Board	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932
Corporate	104,429	102,558	112,712	120,322	126,447	128,162
	607,467	631,901	650,172	662,127	677,949	686,127
Funded By						
General Revenue Grant	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)
NNDR	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)
Council Tax	(139,727)	(140,850)	(141,393)	(141,937)	(142,480)	(143,023)
Use of Reserves	(7,569)	(2,065)	(4,821)	(5,252)	(5,423)	(5,419)
	(607,467)	(603,086)	(606,385)	(607,359)	(608,074)	(608,613)
Gap (Cumulative)	0	28,815	43,787	54,768	69,876	77,514

3.1.4 The forecast position changes in the different elements of the central scenario, can be represented by the graph in Chart 26.

Chart 26: ACC General Fund 2025/26



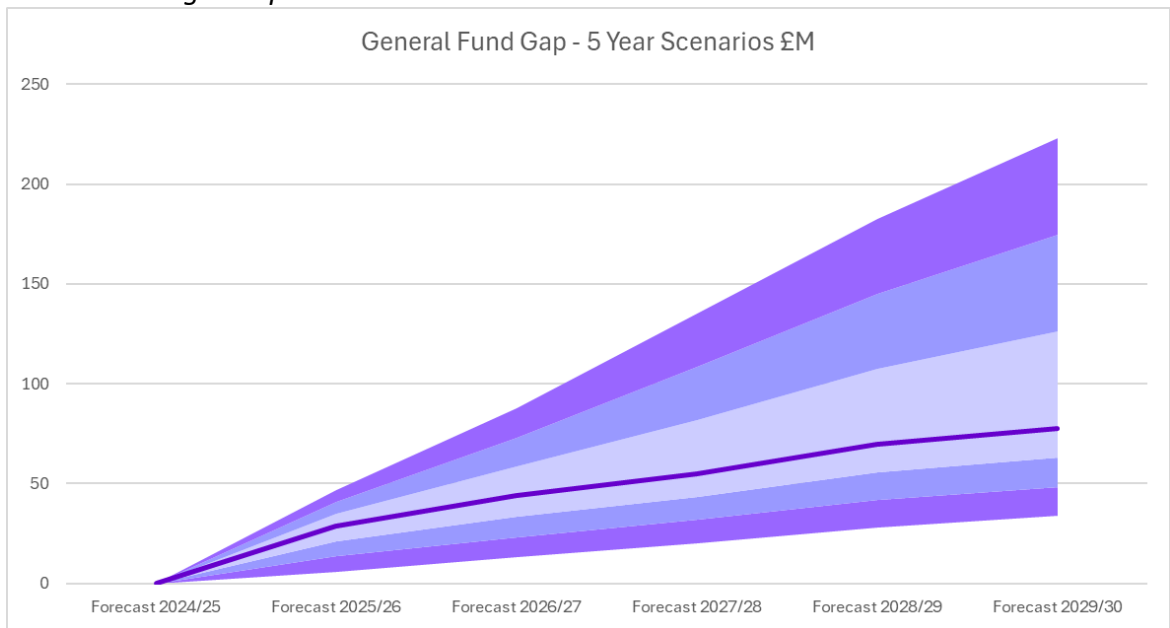
3.1.5 The impact of income and expenditure assumptions over the next five years, with the Upside and Downside scenarios quantified is shown in the table below.

Table 7: Budget Gap Scenarios (before Savings are applied)

After Assumed Savings	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30
General Fund Budget Gap	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Downside Scenario	0	47	88	135	182	223
Central Scenario	0	29	44	55	70	78
Upside Scenario	0	6	13	20	28	34

3.1.6 More clearly shown in graphical form, below, it shows the range of scenarios that may happen over the course of the years ahead.

Chart 27: Budget Gap Scenarios



3.1.7 The scenario plans reveal a range for 2025/26 of between £6m and £47m, with a central scenario that has moved (from last year’s MTFs) towards the upside set of assumptions, as a result of the stabilisation of inflation forecasts, but still no improvement in funding forecast assumptions. These remain based on a strongly directed spending profile by Scottish Government and flat cash assumptions that are supported by the 2022 Scottish Government Resource Spending Review and reinforced by the 2023 Scottish Government MTFs. The updated Scottish Government MTFs is not expected until after the UK Government Autumn budget at the end of October 2024.

4. CAPITAL FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

4.1 *The Funding Outlook – Scotland, Local Government and Aberdeen City Council*

- 4.1.1 Drawing on the funding outlook for the UK, described in Section 2, the overall expectation for capital funding being made available has the added dimension that capital investment can stimulate the economy and be a lever to support businesses, supply chain and economic growth in times of crisis.
- 4.1.2 The Chancellor set out in his 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review a budget that is multi-year, as referenced earlier, and this included the capital funding commitments that provides the information the public sector requires to plan for capital investment. The three-year budget figures were linked to the Levelling Up agenda, so that for many areas of the UK there was relevant and specific reference to funding commitments being made.
- 4.1.3 This included Scotland, where outside the Scottish Block funding announced there was also £170m of capital investment made directly by the UK Government into Scotland, through Scottish Local Authorities. This link between UK Government and Scottish Local Government provides an opportunity to tap into additional funding, not currently available. For the Council this resulted in the award of the full £20m from the Levelling Up Fund, for the Aberdeen Market project.
- 4.1.4 It was thought this source of funding was of particular importance as the Levelling Up Fund is not a ‘once only’ Fund, but one that will seek bids in the future. To this end the Council submitted a second bid for funding, in respect of the Beach Masterplan and was unsuccessful in being awarded any funding. Funding for second round bids was directed to local authority areas that had not been successful in round one, and funding for third round bids directed to local authority areas that had not been successful in either of the previous rounds. While the Council remains agile and aware of the opportunities that exist in accessing the valuable funding stream it is perhaps realistic that until Levelling Up has reached all parts of the UK, there will be less likelihood of a further award. Following the General Election in July 2024, it is not clear if there will be a fourth round for the Levelling Up Fund, as we await details from the new UK Government.
- 4.1.5 Other Funds have emerged with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund being announced and funding decisions now beginning to be taken to award funding locally⁵⁸ within the criteria that has been set out. The allocation to Aberdeen City Council area is £7.2m

⁵⁸ [Aberdeen City Council, July 2023, UK Shared Prosperity Fund report](#)

for the period to 2024/25 and the Council has been regularly approving applications for use of the Fund⁵⁹. No details for 2025/26 or beyond have been announced.

4.1.6 The Scottish Government published its Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021/22 to 2025/26⁶⁰ on 4 February 2021. The Scottish Government described the purpose of this as “Our Infrastructure Investment Plan covers 2021-22 to 2025-26 and delivers our National Infrastructure Mission commitment to boost economic growth by increasing annual investment in infrastructure by 1% of 2017 Scottish GDP by 2025-26.”

4.1.7 Investment in infrastructure can provide stimulus and economic growth, evidenced through increases in GDP, therefore having this national picture is important to understand financial commitments, resource allocation decisions and to provide context for local decisions being made. Following the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections the Scottish Government published its Programme for Government⁶¹ where capital investment continues to be expanded but noted that prioritisation of health and social care continues to dominate with a commitment, for example, to “Capital investment of £10 billion over the next decade will see health facilities built and refurbished across Scotland.”

4.1.8 In May 2022 the Scottish Government published, alongside the Resource Spending Review, a Targeted Review⁶² of the Capital Spending Review. This highlighted that three things had changed in the period since February 2021:

- Scotland received a lower than expected capital settlement from the UK Government's Autumn 2021 Spending Review – reducing the funding envelope by over £750 million;
- the establishment of the new Scottish Government in 2021 with an increased commitment to tackle global climate and nature emergencies, reinforced by COP 26; and
- Scotland faces the additional impacts of high inflation, supply chain pressures and business disruption due to a combination of the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union, the pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine.

4.1.9 The reliance on the UK Government for capital grant allocations, with limited capital borrowing powers, means the Scottish Government has concluded that it is not possible to immediately fund all the commitments from the existing spending review and those set out in the Programme for Government.

⁵⁹ [UK Shared Prosperity Communities and Place Fund | Aberdeen City Council](#)

⁶⁰ [Scottish Government, Infrastructure Investment Plan 21/22-25/26, February 2021](#)

⁶¹ [Scottish Government, Programme for Government, 7 September 2021](#)

⁶² [Scottish Government, May 2022, Targeted Review of Capital Spending Review 2023/24-2025/26](#)

4.1.10 The latest Scottish Government MTFS presented an indication of the funding that it expects to have for Capital investment over the next four years. As shown in the table below, significantly that even under the Upside variant there remains a large capital funding shortfall vs the spending outlook.

Table 8: Illustrative Upside and Downside Capital Funding Scenarios (£m)⁶³

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Central funding outlook	6,004	5,873	5,882	5,902	5,909
Upside scenario	6,004	5,873	6,033	6,209	6,378
% variation	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	5.2%	7.9%
Downside scenario	6,004	5,873	5,835	5,808	5,769
% variation	0.0%	0.0%	-0.8%	-1.6%	-2.4%

Source: Scottish Government

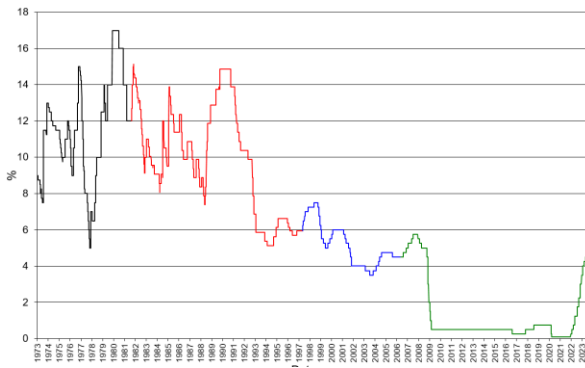
- 4.1.11 It can be determined from this, and the lack of any detailed update in the latest Programme for Government published in September 2024⁶⁴ that there is no more funding for the Council to support increased investment locally and all of the additional cost associated with capital investment will have to be met by partners or by the Council borrowing more. The alternative is to reprioritise or reprofile the Capital Programme, as has been done several times in the last 2 years. The latest report to Finance and Resources Committee saw minor changes approved to the General Fund Capital Programme by the Committee in September.
- 4.1.12 The final bullet point is one that has been laboured throughout the earlier pages of this document, and evidence of the capital effect was clear last year as contracts and sites were paused to retender, stop and delay incurring costs that are extremely high. The report on supply chain volatility⁶⁵ that was considered by City Growth and Resources Committee remains relevant today, if not more relevant. That report presents a highly challenging capital investment environment, with costs of projects and timescales for projects rising higher and faster than has been seen for many years. The impact of actions taken to control inflation by the Bank of England, by increasing the cost of borrowing, means that there are multiple layers of financial effect. Although those measures must now be seen as successful, due to the lowering of the inflation rate over the last year, prices did not fall back to level seen prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, so the baseline movements in costs still remains. In historic terms the cost of borrowing has now risen to levels not seen in over a decade, raising the cost of future borrowing and countering the sense that we live in a low cost environment that will continue as the norm.

Chart 28: Bank of England base rate/minimum lending rate since 1973

⁶³ [Scottish Government, May 2023, Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)

⁶⁴ [Scottish Government, September 2024, Programme for Government 2024-25](#)

⁶⁵ [Aberdeen City Council, June 2022, Supply Chain Volatility report](#)



Source: Bank of England

4.1.13 Projects costing more, requiring additional funding to support delivery and borrowing costing more than it did, it adds up to a reason to review the purpose, progress and value of the capital programme.

4.1.14 Paying for the cost of Capital Programmes has become more and more challenging, with increasing levels of external debt and a requirement to meet those commitments, as well as recent increases in borrowing costs. The level of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) that the Council General Fund had at 31 March 2024 was £1.25billion⁶⁶, this includes the Council long-term borrowing and for the assets financed through PPP and Finance Lease arrangements. The cost of servicing all this borrowing is funded by the Revenue Budget annually, therefore increasing borrowing adds cost to the General Fund budget.

4.1.15 The Capital Programme approved by the Council in March 2024 was accompanied by future CFR projections (as part of the required Prudential Indicators), and these are shown in the following table.

	Capital Financing Requirement						
	2022/23 £'000 Actual	2023/24 £'000 Estimate	2024/25 £'000 Estimate	2025/26 £'000 Estimate	2026/27 £'000 Estimate	2027/28 £'000 Estimate	2028/29 £'000 Estimate
Gen Fund	1,258,748	1,269,917	1,445,177	1,602,410	1,705,392	1,756,853	1,785,586

4.1.16 Following a recommendation by the Chief Officer – Finance to agree a cap of 10.5% on the annual cost of capital financing as a percentage of the General Fund Net Expenditure the Council agreed at the budget meeting in March 2024 to a 12% cap. This rising CFR shown above will challenge that cap, as can be seen from the forecasts included as part of the March 2024 Prudential Indicators, shown in the table below:

	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream						
	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate	2028/29 Estimate
Gen Fund	6.9%	9.8%	10.9%	12.4%	13.9%	15.1%	15.9%

⁶⁶ Aberdeen City Council 2023/24 Audited Annual Accounts

- 4.1.17 As the funding to support capital expenditure is not in place the Council must maintain a robust approach to consideration and scrutiny of business cases, and will be increasingly important. Care must also be taken when external funding is offered or available and a full assessment of the circumstances should be applied as part of the business case approach taken.
- 4.1.18 The eyes of the world were on Scotland when COP26⁶⁷ took place in Glasgow in 2021. Clear commentary from both UK and Scottish Governments demonstrates both funding being available, and investment required within the “Green Economy”. The Scottish Governments Infrastructure Investment Plan has as its first Theme: Enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability. It describes why this is important “Public infrastructure investment has a critical role to play in tackling the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. We will increase spending on low carbon measures, climate resilience, and nature-based solutions.” The targeted review maintains that emphasis, with Climate change being included as an enduring priority.
- 4.1.19 One of the Verity House Agreement shared priorities is **transform our economy through a just transition to deliver net zero**, recognising climate change as one of the biggest threats to communities across Scotland. It is clear this remains uppermost in the minds Scottish and Local Government and action has to be taken. The overriding concern for the MTFS is the funding of this transition, as there are no clear routes for this and we should expect this to be iterative over a period of many years rather than something that will be funded now.
- 4.1.20 On 22 February 2023⁶⁸, the Council agreed to “Join local authorities across the world which have responded to the twin crises of climate change and nature loss and declare a “Climate and Nature Emergency”; acknowledging the urgency of the crises, their cascading impacts and commit to address these emergencies.”
- 4.1.21 The commitment extends to a number of specific points:
- Commit to tackling the climate and nature emergencies together; recognising the many and various societal, economic and environmental co-benefits that can be achieved from taking action on climate change and nature recovery; including for skills, products, services, placemaking, health and wellbeing.
 - Reaffirm its commitment to take effective action through the current and successive Council Climate Change Plans to limit the impact from Council assets and operations and meet the Council’s net zero targets, climate resilience and nature recovery priorities.
 - Commit to continuing proactive work with other public, private, third and community sector partners towards Aberdeen becoming a net zero city by 2037 and to build climate resilience and nature recovery, delivering the Net Zero

⁶⁷ [COP26](#)

⁶⁸ [Aberdeen City Council, February 2023, Notice of Motion by Cllr Yuill](#)

Aberdeen Routemap, enabling strategies; and Aberdeen Adapts, Climate Adaptation Framework⁶⁹.

- Plan, develop and manage a Just Transition response to the climate and nature emergencies to ensure fair and positive societal change, tackling inequality and injustice.
- Consider and address the impact, challenges and opportunities of climate and nature in all Council decisions, policies, strategies, plans and projects.

4.1.22 With Council ambition contained in the Net Zero Vision, the Council must seek to harness this over the medium term and is well placed to capitalise on its position within the energy market. In February 2022 the Council approved⁷⁰ the city-wide approach to addressing climate change, as articulated through a *Net Zero Routemap* which sets a net zero target for Aberdeen City by 2045 across six themes and the refreshed *Aberdeen Adapts*, providing a climate adaptation framework for Aberdeen.

4.1.23 Clear alignment within the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the future investment within the city (both by the public and private sector) are critical to providing land availability to allow future investment to take place.

4.1.24 The LDP clearly has ear-marked land for the Energy Transition zone and outline business cases are already in development to bring this aspect of the planning regime to life.

4.1.25 This is coupled with the already approved Strategic Investment Plan⁷¹ approved by the Council and begins to articulate the future investment required to ensure the city is at the forefront of future energy sources as well as moving towards a net zero carbon footprint.

4.1.26 Investment in electric and hydrogen vehicles, sustainable energy sources for heating as well as Low Emission Zones will all be key to delivering a successful city of the future. All these investment strands are being brought forward at a pace to help deliver against this climate change backdrop. The Capital Programme continues to support several initiatives, including investment in electric and hydrogen vehicles, charging infrastructure and the hydrogen hub (a joint venture with bp).

4.1.27 However, a city must be able to offer a much more diverse offering to attract the investment to make it a city of choice in terms of where to live and work. While pre-Covid-19 urbanisation was seen as the future in a post Covid-19 world this becomes blurred as human behaviour may well have changed forever.

4.1.28 As individuals and businesses seek to find a new “norm” the pressure on cities to redefine themselves will become ever more important. As people potentially work

⁶⁹ [Net Zero Aberdeen & Aberdeen Adapts: Annual Report 2023/24](#)

⁷⁰ Council, 28 February 2022, Climate Change: Citywide strategy and Council carbon budget [COM/22/054]

⁷¹ [Net Zero Vision and Infrastructure Plan, UBC May 2020](#)

from home, children are educated out with a traditional school setting, on-line shopping becomes even more prevalent and other health issues begin to manifest themselves traditional capital investment by a local authority needs to be paused and re-examined.

4.1.29 Where people live and the type of housing they live in will no doubt change in the future. For example, people working from home and children being educated in a blended way means the Council will have to adapt.

4.1.30 The current house building programme approved by the Council in February 2020, presciently, set a new “Gold Standard” which would ensure space in a residential setting would provide for:

- Space to work from home;
- Energy Efficiency and tackling fuel poverty;
- Dedicated space for children to learn at home;
- Dedicated “Green Space”; and
- Encouraging fit and healthy lifestyle (cycling and walking).

4.1.31 In support of the vision, the Net Zero Vision prospectus recommends five co-dependent strategic objectives that will support the economic imperative to transition to a different energy future beyond oil and gas anchoring talent and the energy supply chain; innovation and technology transfer; a new energy destination of choice; and leading and advocating for the city and energy sector:

- i. Leading the Global Transition - Our city is a world-class destination for inward investment in alternative energy research, innovation, and commercialisation, underpinned by our credentials and track record;
- ii. Accelerating Transition Demand - Our city and its institutions are an anchor of demand and aligned local investment for alternative energy technologies, infrastructure and services, particularly those relating to hydrogen, offshore wind, carbon capture, utilisation and storage, and decommissioning;
- iii. Resilient, Productive and Dynamic Place - Our city is recognised the world over as the resilient, productive and dynamic place at the heart of a world-class energy transition cluster;
- iv. Climate Positive Exemplar - We play our full part – as a climate positive advocate and exemplar – in meeting the headline global goal of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by limiting average global warming to no more than 1.5oC above pre-industrial levels;
- v. Putting People First - Everyone contributes to and shares in the proceeds of an equitable, sustainable and prosperous transition and future.

4.1.32 The plan aligns to the overall objective of Aberdeen meeting the net carbon zero target by 2045 and, ultimately, to achieve climate positive status, and the goals of:

- Clean energy supply for the city, UK and internationally
- Aberdeen's infrastructure is adaptable to changes in climate
- Sustainable mobility
- Building Energy Efficiency
- Sustainable Waste Management

4.1.33 Building on all of this, capital investment decisions on the future infrastructure requirements of the city will have to align to these principles.

4.1.34 The current Capital Programme for the General Fund was approved in March 2024 with investment of £814m in city projects over the five years to 2027/28. Details of the programme are shown in Appendix 2 and includes significant future investment in education and school estate, while supporting the modernisation of technology infrastructure over the five years. Funding for transport and for the City Centre and Beach Masterplans remains a core part of the approved programme, shifting the emphasis on transport towards alternatives to the car, prioritising public transport and infrastructure for electric and hydrogen technologies, as the same time supporting the transformation of the City Centre and the Beach areas. As referred to above, the programme is again being reviewed in light of economic conditions and capacity and supply chain challenges.

4.1.35 Shaping the future, taking account of the ambition described above will be managed within the framework of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, which requires this to be prudent, affordable and sustainable. With the financial challenge so significant in revenue terms, a choice will be to decide on the level of capital investment that is affordable and sustainable. Options would be to stop potential investment projects, reduce the scope or quantity of investment provided, and delay and extend the period of investment. These options would have an impact on both the financing costs of the projects but also the revenue implications of new facilities and assets being created and becoming operational.

4.1.36 The financial environment across the Scottish public sector is challenging, with the Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasting that if public services in Scotland continue to be delivered as they are today, government spending over the next 50 years will exceed the estimated funding available by an average of 1.7% each year⁷². All local authorities will be affected by such pressures. Aberdeen's successful economy and well-run governance provide some resilience. However, the ageing population is putting additional demands on services, particularly in healthcare and adult social care. With more over 65s than under 16s in Scotland, local government budgets are increasingly strained as they prioritise funding for these essential services.

⁷² Scottish Fiscal Commission, March 2023

5. RESPONSE TO THE CONSOLIDATED MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK FOR THE GENERAL FUND

5.1 2024/25

5.1.1 The Council's allocation of resources and budget is set annually within the context of a commissioning cycle which aligns available resources to a broad range of commitments which are described through:

- Statutory duties;
- Implementation of the Council's Partnership Agreement;
- Commissioning intentions which support the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and other strategic outcomes; and
- Service standards which specify the level of service to be delivered.

5.1.2 It is essential that the Council balances its budget in-year and does not add unplanned expenditure into the financial modelling and MTF5. The monitoring of the current year is being carried out in line with the Council's quarterly financial reporting. Based on the Quarter 1 Financial Performance Report⁷³ the Committee noted that "...the General Fund full year forecast position remains on track to achieve a full year outturn of 'on budget'. Continuing action.....will remain in place for the financial year." In addition, "...the Council relies on the Integration Joint Board (IJB) achieving a balanced budget, and that the IJB retains reserves to mitigate unplanned additional costs arising during the year..."

5.1.3 This does assume that pay negotiations do not create additional cost to the Council and that any additional monies required to reach an agreement are fully funded by the Scottish Government. While Teachers bargaining group have resolved the position for part of 2024/25, resetting their pay award date to 1 August each year, for all other staff the pay negotiations are ongoing. The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to partially support all the pay negotiations.

5.2 2025/26 and beyond

5.2.1 Resource allocation for future years will be derived from the council's commissioning cycle. Specifically, the services which the Council delivers will be reviewed annually with **analysis** of the operating environment through:

- Horizon scanning
- Scenario planning

⁷³ [Finance and Resources Committee, August 2024, Council Financial Performance Quarter 1, 2024-25 – CORS/24/223](#)

- Strategy review
- An analysis of statutory duties
- An analysis of current and projected demand
- Performance levels achieved
- An analysis of financial data
- An analysis of contracts
- An analysis of workforce data

5.2.2 Delivering a balanced budget across the Medium Term Financial Strategy must be tackled through a range of different approaches, using all of the opportunities that the Council has at its disposal where and when they are available. The tools that Aberdeen City has and has put in place to do this include:

- The Target Operating Model (TOM 1.2) and transformation of the Council
- Multi-Agency Transformation
- Efficiency Savings
- Changing Service Standards
- Exercising discretion to increase income
- Statutory Function Review
- Reserves and Fiscal Flexibilities

5.3 *Future Transformation Priorities*

5.3.1 From 2017 Phase 1 of the Council's transformation shifted the organisation to a new way through the Target Operating Model (TOM). With the implementation of the TOM and delivery of the digital strategy, along with the delivery of required savings and a balanced budget over the five years (2018/19 to 2022/23), the Council refreshed our transformation journey and the next phase of our Target Operating Model – TOM 1.2⁷⁴ was agreed in August 2023.

5.3.2 While transformation is not only about delivering the necessary savings; there is an even more crucial need for organisational culture to be strategically oriented towards the capabilities envisaged by the Council's Operating Model, for example, preventing customer demand, anticipating demand, supporting customers to manage their demand, and in the event, responding to the demand ensuring that staff are working with a focus on outcomes. A very deliberate attempt has been made, and will continue to be made, towards influencing the culture of the organisation as well as ensuring that all staff have the right skills and working environment practices to operate within a changing environment.

⁷⁴ [Council, 24 August 2022, Council Target Operation Model \(TOM\) 1.2](#)

5.3.3 TOM 1.2 focuses on further embedding the design principles and capabilities, supporting deeper and broader service redesign, with digital as an enabler. Crucially it will enable the organisation to deliver savings required for the next 5 years from 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in this Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

5.3.4 The objectives of TOM 1.2 are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5-year funding gap of £134m as outlined in the MTFS 2022. (Now revised as per 3.1.5 above)
2. Continue to exploit digital technologies within the Council's Digital Transformation agenda to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, thus enabling the Council to fully leverage technologies to accelerate their processes.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within the Council's operating model.

5.3.5 In addition to the Council's own transformation programmes, we have established a Multi-agency Transformation Management Group and have worked collaboratively with partner agencies on transformational activity relating to digital services; use of assets; early intervention and prevention through the management of demand; and the design of specific services, with a particular focus on children's services.

5.3.6 Looking forward and within the context described by this medium-term financial strategy, the Transformation Programme has been reviewed and refocused on the capabilities and actions to support deeper and broader service redesign which will be required to ensure financial stability in future years. The priorities for the next phase of the Transformation Portfolio will build upon our systemic redesign of services to ensure we respond to and shape future demand. Specifically, this transformation activity will focus on:

- Taking full advantage of the opportunities which are presented through the rapid acceleration of digital technology, the availability and management of data and how this can support both planning and transactional services for our customers. The council has, and will continue to, invest in new IT systems and technologies, to increase productivity and efficiency through end-to-end processes, customer journey and improvements in information and technology;
- The flexibility of our workforce and the ability to respond to different demands and a different environment. We will continue to invest in the culture, training and development that will deliver a diverse and inclusive workforce for the future;
- The use of our physical assets to support transformation of our services and deliver an increased return for the Council. The council holds significant physical resources such and through the implementation of an updated Asset Strategy we will continue to work to optimise the use of our assets. We will improve the use of data

to ensure we fully understand the nature and value of our assets to support informed decision making; and

- Working closely with our partners, customers and communities to deliver inclusive, whole system redesign. Building on our work to identify and reduce negative demand, much of the demand which local authorities experience can only be effectively reduced through early intervention and prevention activity delivered jointly with our partners including, where appropriate “co-production” of local services with communities. Our partnership work will be driven through both Community Planning Aberdeen and the North East Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group.

5.3.7 In recognition of this approach the initial activity that has been done on our programme of work has resulted in a range of workstreams. While the detailed discovery, planning and analysis is carried out, working towards decisions being taken, a judgement of the value that the Council should be aiming to achieve has been forecast. This covers the transformation workstreams of the Council and also the Multi-Agency transformation that is being worked on.

5.3.8 The value that the Council places against those transformation programmes is included in the table below, which estimates the timescale for when those savings and income streams may be delivered. As the detail is worked through and decisions are taken on specific actions these values will be firmed up and locked in.

Table 9: Proposed Savings / Income Generated from Transformation Programmes

Assumed Savings/Income Generated through Transformation Programmes of Work	2024/25 Indicative budget saving £'000	2025/26 Indicative budget saving £'000	2026/27 Indicative budget saving £'000	2027/28 Indicative budget saving £'000	Total 4 Years Indicative budget saving £'000
Transformation of the Council	(7,611)	1,367	(2,699)	(12,744)	(21,687)
Multi-Agency Transformation	(500)	(1,025)	(1,285)	(1,200)	(4,010)
Total	(8,111)	342	(3,984)	(13,944)	(25,697)

5.3.9 This is not the total extent of what the Council expects to achieve from transformation. Opportunities to close the funding gap will arise that will impact directly on service levels and standards and may affect our commissioning intentions. These have not been baked into the MTFs 2024 and will instead continue to be developed into specific budget options for 2025/26 and beyond.

5.4 *Linked Strategies*

5.4.1 The Strategic Commissioning Committee agreed in November 2019 a revised Strategy Framework⁷⁵ which reframed the formal strategies of the Council to ensure their full alignment to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and their consistency with each other. Through the adoption of the commissioning cycle, the council's strategies have a fundamental role in the strategic allocation of resources. This Strategy is a key plan which provides context and sets principles which must be reflected within the council's strategies. The council's updated strategy frameworks are shown at Appendix 3.

5.5 *Efficiencies*

5.5.1 These have been a necessity of local government financial settlements, that the sector does more with less year on year, and this has been essential given the real terms cut in funding that local government has received over the last decade, referenced earlier in the document.

5.5.2 Experience shows that managers year on year are able to deliver savings as part of business as usual, based on decisions to not purchase the same volumes of goods and services, to change the product or commodity that is purchased, to negotiate and tender for better prices, to identify if work can be done in a different way that improves productivity or removes inefficiency of historic work or procedural processes.

5.5.3 These do not have to be described as transformation or be a fundamental redesign, these can be achieved through behaviour, through capability and through access to

⁷⁵ [Strategy Framework, SCC, November 2019](#)

advice and guidance on options. All this points in the direction of the principles of the TOM but results in savings that can be captured because the Council does things more cost effectively.

- 5.5.4 Part of the solution to the MTFs budget gap is to year on year secure savings from business as usual, to capture a significant efficiency improvement that results in a lower cost base for the in-year and future service delivery. These efficiency savings are getting more and more difficult to identify. The assumption that has been made by the Council is that it should expect the following savings from achieving efficiencies going forward. These are summarised in the table below:

Table 10: Proposed Savings / Income Generated from Efficiencies

Assumed Savings/Income Generated through Efficiencies	2024/25 Indicative budget saving £'000	2025/26 Indicative budget saving £'000	2026/27 Indicative budget saving £'000	2027/28 Indicative budget saving £'000	Total 4 Years Indicative budget saving £'000
Efficiencies	(335)	(1,412)	0	0	(1,747)
Total	(335)	(1,412)	0	0	(1,747)

5.6 Raising Income

- 5.6.1 As described earlier the most significant fiscal lever at present is the Council Tax and the ability now for Councils to adjust this unconditionally means that it is an important tool to address rising costs on a recurring basis so that financial sustainability is also addressed, in part at least.
- 5.6.2 A key principle of the MTFs is to exercise the discretion it has over local taxation and increase the Band D charge for Council Tax annually to support future budgets. In the current climate the strategic position to take is to plan for a real terms increase in the rate that Council Tax is charged so that the value keeps up with the rising costs that have to be funded. To address a significant budget gap in the future this provides an excellent means of doing so.
- 5.6.3 Other fees and charges, both internal and external, are valuable sources of funding. The description earlier in the document forecasts the change in the underlying value of the customer base and use of services that are charged, the MTFs does not present the options or assume the value of additional income that can be generated as this is subject to the discretion of the Council. The principle is clear, that the Council must apply its Service Income Policy to support the effective and sustainable delivery of services where charges can be applied and exercise that discretion annually and collect the income that is rightfully owed.

- 5.6.4 Further insight into the core income streams that the Council relies upon is included in the Financial Resilience Framework, described in Section 6.
- 5.6.5 Overall financial sustainability is improved where there is income being received to cover costs and that the income is recurring. With the ability to exercise discretion over only on a number of the lower value funding streams from fees and charges (i.e. excluding Council Tax) the Council should do what it can to secure additional revenue annually in support of the budgets.

5.7 *Statutory Function Review*

- 5.7.1 Local authorities have a wide variety of duties and powers under Scottish and UK legislation – these are our statutory functions. Most of the services delivered by Councils are statutory functions. A sample of those functions was provided in the report to Council in December 2022⁷⁶ for illustrative purposes. It was noted that this is not an exhaustive list - there are many hundreds of duties and powers vested in councils making the task of capturing these considerable.
- 5.7.2 The purpose and in response to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, is a review of the Council's main statutory functions by Legal Services, in consultation with Chief Officers. This review seeks to identify opportunities for how these functions could be delivered through alternative mechanisms and not by the Council in other words, transferred, or rearticulated within the relevant legislation to alter the requirement. In either scenario, changes would be required to the law to remove duties and powers from local authorities. There will be income and expenditure implications for Councils but it does not prevent the review establishing what is possible.
- 5.7.3 At present there are no assumptions or judgements made about the potential financial benefits or costs that may arise from the exercise. It provides an opportunity for shifting the Council, as funding fails to keep up with rising costs.

5.8 *Reserves and Fiscal Flexibility*

- 5.8.1 The opportunity to use reserves, while a legitimate funding source, it must always been seen and dealt with as one-off in nature. The Council position on Reserves is included in Section 6.
- 5.8.2 The emergence of fiscal flexibilities over the last two years, brought on or progressed at pace because of the impact of the pandemic, has provided local government with opportunity to take one-off savings or income streams to assist in managing the financial position. The Council has taken advantage of these in recent years, using capital receipts to support the voluntary severance and early retirement of staff rather

⁷⁶ [Aberdeen City Council, December 2022, Statutory Function Review COM/22/288](#)

than charge that to revenue budgets; in 2022/23 the Council deferred the repayment of debt principal (or more accurately, it did not have to account for the repayment, thereby meeting legal obligations to repay debt as it falls due while achieving a saving); and finally in 2023/24 the Budget⁷⁷ meeting of Council agreed to exercise the final flexibility, the Service Concession.

- 5.8.3 As stated earlier these are legitimate and appropriate sources of income or achieving savings provided they are treated properly and responsibly. This includes consideration of the benefits that are achieved from a one-off source of funding – it is recommended that a return is received in the form of financial (and non-financial) benefits from what can be classified as investment, spend to save being a well-used term to describe it. Transformation for example will require a level of investment to make the change take effect and an example where the Council has undertaken this has been using a Transformation Fund, where money is committed and drawn down to support technology or skills investment that once purchased delivers a saving or new income stream. In respect of the Service Concession Flexibility, the reserve that was created has funded capital expenditure in the Capital Programme and the remainder is committed to funding the reduction of the workforce, through the Voluntary Severance / Early Retirement Scheme which requires upfront funding for longer term financial benefit.
- 5.8.4 No other fiscal flexibilities are available for the Council to implement.

5.9 Conclusion

- 5.9.1 The challenge set out in the MTFs is increasingly significant and increasingly uncertain with the gap in the scenarios growing. The Council will have difficult decisions to make to balance the budget gap over the 5 years, particularly in light of the economic environment, the ongoing and extreme market conditions in which we operate and a reinforcement, through the SG MTFs, that the Scottish Government are not going to, or cannot afford to, provide additional funding to meet the rising cost of services over the medium term.
- 5.9.2 The solutions come from a mixture of actions. The work that was started 5 years ago through the Target Operating Model entered a new five-year period last year with the ambition to contribute towards the 2022 budget gap, referencing the central scenario outlined in this. The Council needs the Transformation programmes outlined in TOM 1.2 to deliver the savings required in the timeframe and is determined that these programmes of work deliver cashable benefits as outlined above.

⁷⁷ [Aberdeen City Council, March 2023, General Fund Revenue & Capital Programme 23/24-27/28 RES/23/085](#)

- 5.9.3 Multi-agency work, through our engagement and working together with partner organisations also provide the opportunities to use resources more effectively across organisations, savings must be delivered from these programmes of work too.
- 5.9.4 Efficiencies will play an enduring part of managing the budget position and to drive out where efforts can be taken to be more cost effective, productive and efficient in what the Council does, this is across the Council not just a select few.
- 5.9.5 On a regular and consistent basis the use of the discretion that the Council has to increase income to support the cost base it has should be taken, whether fees and charges, new discretionary powers or Council Tax. Securing income is a fundamental part of making the Council sustainable over the medium to long term.
- 5.9.6 Finally there is the option to consider how one-off funding streams (that may be available) are applied to the financial position, and care will need to ensure that these finite resources are used to the medium and long term benefit of the Council's financial position, preference being for receiving a clear financial return from investment of one-off funding.
- 5.9.7 Through a combination of all these mechanisms the Council aims to find the solutions that balance the financial challenges over the next five years.
- 5.9.8 The net position for the Central Scenario, taking account of the assumptions and judgements about what the transformation programmes and efficiencies will deliver over the next four years provides a revised budget gap as shown in the following table:

Table 11: Central Scenario Forecast from 2024/25 to 2029/30 (Net)

Budget Forecasts - General Fund	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
City Regeneration & Environment	30,235	38,598	43,667	46,152	48,052	49,992
Corporate Services	43,487	44,132	43,151	41,461	43,144	44,890
Families & Communities	307,384	324,681	328,710	332,260	338,374	341,152
Integrated Joint Board	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932	121,932
Corporate	104,429	102,558	112,712	120,322	126,447	128,162
	607,467	631,901	650,172	662,127	677,949	686,127
Funded By						
General Revenue Grant	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)	(252,057)
NNDR	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)	(208,113)
Council Tax	(139,727)	(140,850)	(141,393)	(141,937)	(142,480)	(143,023)
Use of Reserves	(7,569)	(2,065)	(4,821)	(5,252)	(5,423)	(5,419)
	(607,467)	(603,086)	(606,385)	(607,359)	(608,074)	(608,613)
Gap (Cumulative)	0	28,815	43,787	54,768	69,876	77,514

5.9.9 If the values assumed as savings are included in the Upside and Downside Scenarios too then the financial challenge is summarised as follows:

Table 12: Revised MTFs Budget Gap Scenarios (after Savings, above, are applied)

After Assumed Savings	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30
General Fund Budget Gap	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Downside Scenario	0	47	88	135	182	223
Central Scenario	0	29	44	55	70	78
Upside Scenario	0	6	13	20	28	34

5.9.10 Given the low likelihood of the Council facing the Upside scenario given all that is described in this report the Central Scenario remains the focus of attention. However recent announcements and the level of financial uncertainty, the changing nature of the financial and economic conditions mean that the Council must be aware of and able to respond to a shift towards the Downside scenario.

5.10 Consultation & Engagement

5.10.1 The Central Scenario will be subject to consultation and engagement in line with the Budget Protocol, approved as part of the Scheme of Governance⁷⁸.

5.10.2 Phase 1 of engagement has taken place during the summer, with an online survey tool being deployed to the Council website to gather an understanding of the preferences and priorities of the general public. Scoring and feedback were generally on a scale of

⁷⁸ [Aberdeen City Council, June 2023, Scheme of Governance Review COM/23/162](#)

High / Medium / Low/ No Impact, with an option for the consultee to provide additional commentary beyond this. Additional in-person and on-line sessions were held in early September to allow questions to be asked of officers and capture further responses. The consultation concluded on 15 September 2024.

- 5.10.6 The Council collected demographic information that provides an additional level of detail. Some graphs based on the data have been produced in Appendix 4 to represent the information that has been collected. The Council is working on producing additional information to enable comprehensive disclosure of the data received.
- 5.10.7 In the Autumn the Council will publish the second phase of the consultation and engagement and will give people the chance to explore detailed options for producing a balanced budget, including finding necessary savings and raising income.
- 5.10.8 The Central Scenario, shown above at 5.9.10 will be the primary focus for the phase 2 consultation exercise, covering the period 2025/26 to 2028/29, however given the level of uncertainty the consultation will look at options that could assist the Council to address the Downside scenario, with for example lower levels of grant funding receivable.

6. RESERVES AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Useable Reserves

- 6.1 Local authorities must consider the level of reserves needed to meet estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. The Chief Officer - Finance is required, as part of the budget setting process each year, to provide a statement on the adequacy of reserves that is subject to an external audit review to assess value for money and a going concern opinion.
- 6.2 The Council keeps a level of reserves to protect against the risk of any uncertainties or unforeseen expenditure. This is considered best practice and demonstrates sound financial planning. Much like using savings to offset monthly household bills the use of financial reserves cannot solve a budget problem outright but allows for smoothing of impacts or allows the Council time to ride any short-term situations before returning to normal.
- 6.3 Therefore, reserves are mainly available to;
- ✓ Manage the impact of cuts over a longer period;
 - ✓ Invest in schemes that allow services to be delivered cheaper;
 - ✓ Take “one-off hits” for the council as a whole without the need to further reduce service budgets;
 - ✓ Provide capacity to absorb any non-achievement of planned budget reductions in each year;
 - ✓ To temporarily roll over unused portions of grants that can legally be used at a later date;
 - ✓ To insure against major unexpected events (such as flooding);
 - ✓ To guard against general risk (such as changes in contingent liabilities);
 - ✓ To guard against emergent specific risks (such as Covid-19).
- 6.4 The likelihood of these risks arising is predicted to continue to increase.

Reserves Statement⁷⁹

- 6.5 The council’s policy on reserves is outlined within the MTFS principles as follows:
- The council will maintain its general reserve at a minimum of £12m to cover any major unforeseen expenditure. The council will aim to balance its revenue budget over the period of the MTFS without reliance on the use of the unearmarked General Fund Reserve.
 - The council will maintain earmarked reserves for specific purposes which are consistent with achieving its key priorities. The use and level of earmarked reserves will be reviewed annually.

⁷⁹ [Council Reserves Statement, March 2024, Report Number 4, Appendix 6](#)

- The council's general reserve is available to support budget setting over the period of the MTFS and usage should be linked to the achievement of financial sustainability over the medium term.

Review of Reserves

6.6 A review of reserves is undertaken twice a year and covers:

- The purpose for which the reserve is held,
- An assessment of the appropriate level of the reserve to meet potential future liabilities, in line with the Council's reserves policy and aligned to the risk management framework,
- Procedures for the reserve's management and control,
- A process and timescale for future reviews to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.

6.7 The Audited Annual Accounts for 2023/24⁸⁰ show the balance of General Fund usable reserves of £94m (including earmarked reserves of £82m).

6.8 An explanation of each earmarked reserve and values as at 31 March 2024 can be found in the council's audited annual accounts for 2023/24.

6.9 For financial resilience the council should consider use, replenishment and increase of the unearmarked General Fund Reserve over the MTFS period.

6.10 The overall level of financial resources available to the council is finite and therefore any continued use of reserves cannot be sustained in the longer term without placing the council's financial position at risk. The MTFS recognises that the council's financial reserves are maintained at a prudent level to protect present and future council services.

6.12 The council accepts that while balancing the annual budget by drawing on general reserves can be in certain circumstances a legitimate short-term option it is not considered good financial management to finance recurrent expenditure in this way. Where this approach is adopted, the council will be explicit as to how such expenditure will be funded in the medium to long term to achieve financial sustainability. The council recognises that usage of reserves is one-off in nature and must be linked with expenditure and income plans to support financial sustainability in the medium term.

Financial Resilience Framework

6.13. **Introduction**

6.14 For Local Authorities generally, the measure of financial resilience has been to rely on in-year contingencies and its Reserves Policy.

⁸⁰ [Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee, June 2024, Audited Annual Accounts 2023/24 \(CORS/24/200\)](#)

- 6.15 The Council acknowledged, in the reports to the Urgent Business Committee and City Growth and Resources Committee in 2020, that financial resilience was a crucial aspect of financial management that became more important in times of crises, such as a global pandemic.
- 6.16 It was recognised that financial resilience was more than about its reserves and there was a need to be more comprehensive in the assessment of the measures of resilience. In the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020, approved on 28 October 2020 it was agreed that the Council's approach to financial resilience was to be developed further.
- 6.17 While the Covid-19 pandemic brought a specific focus to the subject, it was not the sole reason for further work. The ongoing national debate on the financial sustainability of the local government sector in Scotland, the increasing number of local authorities in England in recent years that have found themselves in financial difficulty, resulting in Chief Financial Officers having to prepare formal s114 notices.⁸¹
- 6.18 There has been greater emphasis from external auditors on the assurance and demonstration of the concept of 'going concern' for local authorities and this being a key area of audit activity now.
- 6.19 All of this adds up to the need for greater attention to be paid to the financial resilience of the Council and to consider what financial resilience is, how it is defined and measured and what it leads us to do.
- 6.20 The development of a financial resilience framework to shape the Council's understanding of key aspects of financial strength is the starting point and to define the areas that are most appropriate to consider. Further work will be done to develop this further, to look at the comparators and where this applies, and to consider in more detail the exposure the Council has from its Group entities.
- 6.21 The framework is developing in terms of the data that we are collecting, and it will continue to be further developed to support our approach to financial resilience.
- 6.22 **Background**
- 6.23 The Council has always reviewed and paid attention to its usable reserves, those that it can draw on in a time of need. To this effect the Council has in place its Reserves Policy, which it reviews annually as part of the budget setting process. This is done in the context of assessing the level of reserves needed to meet estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. The Chief Officer - Finance is required, as part of the budget setting process each year, to provide a statement on

⁸¹ Section 114 notices are the mechanism through which English local authorities report that they are unlikely to achieve a balanced budget for the financial year.

the adequacy of reserves that is subject to an external audit review to assess value for money and a going concern opinion.

6.24 The Council keeps a level of reserves to protect against the risk of any uncertainties or unforeseen expenditure. This is considered best practice and demonstrates sound financial planning. Much like using savings to offset monthly household bills the use of financial reserves cannot solve a budget problem outright but allows for smoothing of impacts or allows the Council time to ride any short-term situations before returning to normal.

6.25 Therefore, reserves are mainly available to;

- ✓ Manage the impact of cuts over a longer period;
- ✓ Invest in schemes that allow services to be delivered at lower cost;
- ✓ Take “one-off hits” for the council as a whole without the need to further reduce service budgets;
- ✓ Provide capacity to absorb any non-achievement of planned budget reductions in each year;
- ✓ To temporarily roll over unused portions of grants that can legally be used at a later date;
- ✓ To insure against major unexpected events (such as flooding);
- ✓ To guard against general risk (such as changes in contingent liabilities);
- ✓ To guard against emergent specific risks (such as a pandemic or financial crisis).

6.26 The Council looks at financial resilience as a much wider subject as it is about our ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to the changing financial environment, derived from internal decisions and external factors. To be financial resilient, is to know what would be available in the time of crisis, is to understand the exposure to loss of income, and commitment to expenditure, as well as understanding the flexibility the Council has in terms of accessing funds when they are needed.

6.27 In this strategy financial resilience has been broken into the following four areas:

- Review of the Council’s Balance Sheet
- Capital financing; investment, and borrowing
- Build financial resilience and independence
- Identify those that should pay by minimising fraud and avoidance

6.28 Maintaining a strong balance sheet provides the assurance that the Council can respond in the time of crisis, it can meet its obligations and provides confidence in the Council’s ability to participate with our full range of stakeholders. They include our external auditors, our bond holders, credit rating agency, contractors and suppliers, and ALEOs. Notably the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF), in the analysis of 2019/20 it started to incorporate financial sustainability information which

is of a similar nature. This provides a Scotland wide comparison of some of the key elements that are included in the Council Framework.

6.29 Supporting our resilience in our balance sheet includes:

- In-year financial performance to manage the budget position, including cashflow;
- An annual review of the balance sheet by our treasury advisors, with a focus on capital financing requirement, liquidity and long-term borrowing;
- Regular review of usable reserves and the appropriateness of sums earmarked; and
- Regular review of provisions held.

6.30 Bringing all of this together to provide the information to the Council in a form that it can take account of in its decision making is an important next step. To inform that, further consideration has been given to the LGBF financial sustainability measures, CIPFA Resilience Index that has been prepared with English Local Authorities, Moody's credit rating assessment reports and careful thought about what is important to the resilience of the Council the areas will be refined to be more specific.

6.31 **Framework**

6.32 The framework has the following components:

- Council reserves and liquidity (*the availability of resources*);
 - Reserves
 - Net Worth
 - Liquidity
 - In this section further work is anticipated regarding the Council exposure to its Group
- Capital financing; investment, and borrowing (*the creation of resources and gearing*);
 - Capital Finance Requirement
 - Debt
 - Prudential indicators
 - Investment
- Build financial resilience and independence (*the longevity and trends in resources*);
 - Top income streams
 - Top expenditure commitments
 - Operational Cashflow understanding
 - Exposure to areas of high demand (e.g. Adult and Children Social Care, Education), with consideration also to be given to the proposals for a National Care Service in Scotland
 - In this section further work is anticipated regarding the Council exposure to its Group

- Identify those that should pay by minimising fraud and avoidance (*the security of resources*).
 - Counter fraud policy and procedure
 - Counter fraud resource
 - National Fraud Initiative
 - Internal and external audit assurance
- 6.33 The Council’s financial resilience framework now sits within this document and has been populated based on the audited annual accounts up to 31 March 2024.
- 6.34 The framework uses relevant information to measure the Council finances using the Financial Statements and additional information obtained from the Annual Accounts. This provides the data to calculate a consistent set of relevant ratios that are important to measuring the strength and depth of the Council finances.
- 6.35 The intention is to go further and understand other aspects of the Council’s financial position using trend data to consider the impact of history and where possible to look forward based on Council approved plans and strategies. This remains work in progress with resources required to consider fully.
- 6.36 The relevance and purpose of ratios needs to be carefully considered as they should all have a purpose. The proposal is to avoid simply listing lots of calculations just because they can be calculated, they will have a defined purpose. Examples of the type of ratio that are likely to be included are:

Ratios/Measures	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Availability of Resources						
Usable Reserves / Net Revenue inc. HRA (%)	10.8%	16.4%	22.0%	25.0%	23.6%	☑
Usable Reserves - GF / Net Revenue (%)	7.7%	14.2%	15.7%	16.4%	16.7%	☑
Usable Reserves - HRA / HRA Revenue (%)	12.7%	14.3%	14.7%	16.0%	13.5%	☑
Reserves Sustainability Measure	6.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	☑
Level of Usable Reserves	10.8%	16.4%	22.0%	25.0%	23.6%	☑
Change in Usable Reserves	-31.4%	50.7%	128.5%	159.4%	59.6%	☑
Council Tax Requirement / Net Revenue (%)	26.9%	24.5%	25.5%	25.4%	25.0%	☑
Unallocated Reserves	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	☑

Ratios/Measures	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Earmarked Reserves	5.1%	11.7%	13.3%	14.1%	14.5%	☑
Change in Unallocated Reserves (over last 3 years)	5.4%	10.0%	16.1%	0.8%	-2.9%	☑
Change in HRA Reserves (over last 3 years)	13.3%	24.6%	23.6%	22.7%	-3.6%	⚠
Current Ratio	77.2%	81.6%	63.6%	49.7%	47.1%	⚠
Working Capital	£0k	£0k	£0k	£0k	£0k	⚠
Creation of Resources & Gearing						
Net Worth / Net Direct & Indirect Debt (%)	88.1%	101.8%	101.9%	97.4%	78.3%	⚠
Net Direct & Indirect Debt / Net Revenue inc. HRA (%)	247.6%	228.9%	235.8%	248.2%	256.7%	⚠
Capital Financing Requirement / Total Gross Income (%)	119.7%	115.8%	121.9%	142.2%	127.9%	⚠
Short-Term Direct Debt / Direct Debt (%)	16.9%	18.8%	17.6%	22.4%	26.3%	⚠
Interest Payments - GF / Net Revenue (%)	10.0%	7.9%	8.5%	9.7%	10.6%	☑
Interest Payments - HRA / HRA Revenue (%)	7.4%	5.7%	6.5%	10.0%	13.3%	⚠
Interest Payments / Net Revenue inc. HRA (%)	9.6%	7.5%	8.1%	9.7%	11.1%	☑
Net Worth	£1,216m	£1,413m	£1,461m	£1,501m	£1,350m	☑
Gross External Debt	£1,380m	£1,388m	£1,434m	£1,542m	£1,723m	⚠
Longevity & Trends in Resources						
Adult Social Care Ratio	19.6%	18.7%*	20.9%	23.4%	21.4%	⚠
Children Social Care Ratio	10.4%	8.7%*	8.7%	n/a	n/a	☑
Education Ratio	39.0%	36.5%*	35.9%	n/a	n/a	⚠
* Note: 2020/21 figures show the impact of increased government funding to support the Covid-19 pandemic, which means that Net Revenue for the year was increased beyond the approved Local Government financial settlement, money was received late in the financial						

Ratios/Measures	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
	year and remained unspent at 31 March 2021, also resulting in increased useable reserves. This should be considered when reviewing the indicators – 2020/21 was not a regular year.					

- 6.37 The data on income and expenditure trends has been taken from audited Annual Accounts, budgets, CIPFA and Scottish Government returns, the contracts register and Scottish Government finance circulars.
- 6.38 For the purposes of materiality and relevance, we have focused on the highest value ‘top 20’ income streams and expenditure commitments that the Council has (Appendix 1).
- 6.39 Security of resources will rely on the three lines of defence in the Risk Assurance Maps, including findings and the opinion of internal and external auditors.
- 6.40 **Using the Financial Resilience Framework**
- 6.41 Financial resilience ratios, trends and data collated to support a comprehensive view of the Council is not about there being one answer, nor is about a statement of right or wrong. Instead, it is about providing context for decision making and planning. Through understanding other aspects of Council finance, it’s expected the Council can consider more than simply balancing the budget. This might include decisions to grow reserves or address an adverse trend in expenditure commitments or reduce borrowing. This will assist the Council to be well informed and can make the choices it is entitled to make.
- 6.42 Councils have a very long history and decisions have been taken at different times for different reasons both at a local and national government level that leaves each Council today in the situation it is. Therefore, every Council is in a different position, no two Councils will have experienced the same history and it is inevitable the financial resilience of all will be different.
- 6.43 The financial resilience framework is be used as the basis for understanding the underlying financial position of the Council, from which decisions must be taken, to provide the basis for highlighting where action is required or where it should be considered. The opportunity to get an insight into aspects of Council finance that may only emerge over time and that on an annual cycle could be overlooked or not given sufficient consideration.
- 6.44 Some ratios having a direct impact on the short-term financial planning of the Council, while other being considered with aspiration and objectives stretching out over the medium to long term.

- 6.45 The data can act as triggers for action, with the final chosen ratios, where appropriate, to have in place some parameters to define or describe the urgency, scale and pace of action that is required. As the information accumulates then it can act as an early warning of emerging pressures.
- 6.46 Interpretation of the data has been indicated in the table at 6.36 and if the ratio appears to be stable or improving ☺ or if we should be watching it ☹.

Chief Officer – Finance : Summary

- 6.47 In relation to the “Availability of Resources” indicators there is an unnatural financial position created by the funding provided to support the Covid-19 pandemic as at the end of March 2021. Increased income was paid late in financial year 2020/21, resulting in large sums of funding being carried forward by the Council and this was replicated in all other Scottish Local Authorities. The indicators do show that the Council has maintained its strong reserves position going into subsequent financial years with healthy values of usable reserves and an appropriate sum uncommitted for specific purposes. Rising reserves in 2021/22 and again late funding in respect of resettlement programmes for Ukrainians in 2022/23 pushed reserves further upwards, as did a revaluation of long term investments and a recategorization of capital grants, which are all committed for future projects. Working capital values and the standard affordability test don’t present what would be seen as an ideal position (i.e. under 100%) but given the Council’s statutory position and treasury management strategy there are no concerns about being unable to meet short-term obligations.
- 6.48 The Council has maintained strong financial performance into 2024/25 and based on the assumptions within the Quarter 1 Financial Performance results, referred to earlier, the Council aims to maintain a balanced budget although this relies on continued delivery of the budgeted savings and no exposure to additional financial shocks or liabilities. At present use of earmarked reserves is limited to the purposes they are held for and the Council continues to hold uncommitted usable reserves, which it expected to be retained at the end of the financial year.
- 6.49 The ‘Creation of Resources & Gearing’ indicators show the cost of capital investment tracking upwards, with the cost of interest on both the General Fund and HRA borrowing now over 10% of net revenue. Upward pressure has also been applied from the higher inflation levels in the last two years and this applying to financing arrangement such as the Bond where the additional cost, alongside rising interest rates has the effect of increasing the future Loans Fund pooled interest rate. This is important as this underpins the calculation of changes that the General Fund and HRA will have to fund in the future. The means of reducing this would be through reducing expenditure (reducing the capital programmes) increasing external grant funding or

contributions from partners. The Council has applied all the most recent accounting policy options in respect of the capital financing costs and prudently extending the useful lives of assets to better reflect the actual consumption of the assets a few years ago.

- 6.50 The value of total external debt must be viewed in the context of the overall assets and resources of the Council as debt arises from investment in our assets. The Net Worth of the Council, after accounting for the debt owed, has reduced to £1.35bn at 31 March 2024. The value of debt has increased over the years in line with the capital programme decisions that have been made for both General Fund and Housing. Through reference to the approved Prudential Indicators, that accompanied the 2024/25 budget in March 2024, the capital financing requirement (CFR, as referenced in section 4) is planned to increase and there will be corresponding increases to the annual repayment values. These have been included in the financial scenario planning within this strategy. Rising interest rates have also been factored into forward projections in the MTFs for the cost of financing debt however the cost of borrowing is continuing to increase and inflation impacts approximately 25% of the external debt, the remaining 75% being based on fixed interest agreements.
- 6.51 The longevity and trends in resources is the least developed currently, and while there is information available it requires further analysis before fully presenting it. That includes the schedule of most valuable income streams and highest value contractual obligations and have been updated to show 2023/24 as the base year. These are shown in Appendix 1.
- 6.53 An overview of the top 20 income streams shows a picture of generally increasing income on major areas of the budget. Notable however is the extent to which high value income is often associated directly with spend on specific functions and obligations, such as Housing Benefit (where the downward trend is to be expected due to the rollout of Universal Credit), and the Aberdeen Roads Ltd Contract payment, which matches the expenditure also incurred.
- 6.54 General Revenue Grant shows the impact of additional funding being provide and passported to the Health and Social Care Partnership through the financial settlement and direction of Scottish Government. There has also been funding to support pay awards now for the last two years and this is making a difference. None of this represents an underlying increase in funding for core/current services making the analysis complex. Council Tax increases in recent years was showing as a positive development, however the acceptance of the Council Tax freeze grant provided by Scottish Government for 2024/25 will shift the emphasis further towards reliance on Revenue Grant Funding to support services.

- 6.55 Over the 20 categories of income it represents over £850m of income to deliver the gross cost of Council services amounting to approximately £900m, or 94% showing how much the Council relies on these very specific funding streams.
- 6.56 Looking at the expenditure table, there is substantial fixed cost associated with the top 20 commitments, determined and influenced by national conditions, contractual obligations and statutory duties. Representing over £730m of expenditure it demonstrates the categories of spend that need to be influenced and changed to support major resource changes, savings and cost reductions.
- 6.57 As noted above there are many of these expenditure categories or contracts that need to be looked at as cost neutral as the income is funding the delivery of our services. The Council should continue to ensure that is the case and not commit additional expenditure/cost to these fully funded areas of spend.
- 6.58 Similar to the income the influence of potential change coming in the future from statutory or policy changes and review is an important factor, and the Council should use this as a means of determining how cost reduction can be incorporated alongside the changes.
- 6.59 **Future development**
- 6.60 As referred to above, the Council has group entities that are incorporated into its accounts and therefore holds risk and reward from the relationships that it has. Given the cost of living, inflation and supply chain challenges plus the legacy impact of the pandemic on the group entities, to work with them and analyse their balance sheets and income and expenditure sensitivities, will be an important next step in understanding the relevant exposure that the Council has to each and to document this in an appropriate way. Prioritisation of this work is required when resources allow. This is more important as the resources and demand for social care services continue to be under increased pressure and financial constraint.
- 6.62 The ambition is that with further development and engagement with stakeholders in Scotland this can become more meaningful. Work already published in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) from 2019/20 onwards shows the extent of variation in respect of some of the key indicators that support sustainability and care needs to be taken in interpreting the results, particularly differences between Councils where, for example, some no longer have Housing Revenue Accounts.
- 6.63 Further work will have to be done on appropriate comparison with other Councils to set the Aberdeen City data in context, rather than for direct comparison, as each Council is following a different strategic plan and are at different stages in those plans and by using information from a common data set, prepared using the same

accounting standards it gives the opportunity to compare the Council with its peers. Taking this forward, our Framework has been shared with the Director of Finance Section for Scottish Local Government and has been added to their work plan. Conclusions and recommendations from that work will be updated as part of future strategies.

APPENDIX 1 : TOP 20 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES

Top 20 Revenue Income Sources by Value 2023/24							
Title	Type of Income	2023/24 Actual Value £'000	last 3-year change (21/22) £'000	last 5-year change (19/20) £'000	Continues for at least 5 years?	Subject to regulation/ policy change in next 2 years?	Dependencies
1 GRG + NDR Distribution	Non-Specific Grant	424,275	48,255	90,005	Yes	Yes	Barclay review - Spending Review
2 Council Tax	Fiscal Powers	141,475	13,074	18,658	Yes	Yes	SG / LG Fiscal Framework Outcomes
3 Building Services	Fees & Charges	56,556	17,539	25,682	Yes	No	HRA work programme
4 AWPR / Aberdeen Roads Ltd	Specific Grant	44,301	(10)	(65,396)	Yes	No	Contract terms and conditions
5 Housing Benefit	Specific Grant	38,066	(3,311)	(10,664)	Yes	No	Universal Credit & Economic Conditions
6 NHS Grampian	Specific Grant	37,869	(7,848)	915	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
7 Property Letting	Fees & Charges	21,730	5,586	7,018	Yes	Yes	Economic conditions in Aberdeen
8 ELC Expansion	Specific Grant	19,935	(7,613)	14,067	No	Yes	To become part of general settlement
9 Aberdeenshire Council Charges	Fees & Charges	14,282	(6,938)	(14,390)	Yes	No	Capital programmes
10 Capital cluster - General Fund Capital	Fees & Charges	11,387	(7,436)	(16,546)	Yes	No	Capital programmes
11 Adult Social Care Residential	Fees & Charges	11,051	1,867	(245)	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
12 Parking Charges/Fines	Fees & Charges	9,326	3,193	1,424	Yes	No	Customer behaviour
13 Capital cluster - Housing Capital	Fees & Charges	6,163	3,891	3,023	Yes	No	Capital programmes
14 Common Good Charges	Fees & Charges	4,055	2,434	(190)	Yes	Yes	Council review of Common Good
15 Moray Council Charges	Fees & Charges	3,878	(2,033)	(3,109)	Yes	No	Capital programmes
16 NESPF Charges	Fees & Charges	2,293	482	698	Yes	Unknown	National LGPS Review in Scotland remains a commitment
17 Planning / Building Control Fees	Fees & Charges	2,200	(49)	(453)	Yes	Yes	Statutory basis, resourcing consultation summer 2024
18 Bereavement Services Fees	Fees & Charges	2,014	219	191	Yes	No	Competition
19 Garden Waste Charges	Fees & Charges	1,102	(15)	489	No	Yes	Charges reviewed by Council at Budget 2024
20 Ukrainian Integrated Support	Specific Grant	786	786	786	No	Yes	No of Ukrainian refugees
		852,744	62,073	51,963			

APPENDIX 1 : TOP 20 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES (cont.)

Top 20 Revenue Expenditure Commitments by Value 2023/24							
Title	Type of Expenditure	2023/24 Actual Value £'000	last 3-year change (21/22) £'000	last 5-year change (19/20) £'000	Continues for at least 5 years?	Subject to regulation/ policy change in next 2 years?	Dependencies
1 Pay bill - non teachers	Staff	231,198	37,217	44,961	Yes	No	Local Terms & Conditions & National pay negotiations NCS (Scotland) Bill
2 Pay bill - teachers	Staff	123,321	20,997	31,939	Yes	No	National Terms & Conditions & pay negotiations
3 Care Home Placement - Adults	Contracts	65,472	16,798	18,855	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
4 Capital Financing Costs	Capital Financing	53,636	15,510	18,141	Yes	Yes	Capital programme
5 AWPR / Aberdeen Roads Ltd	Contracts	44,301	(10)	(65,396)	Yes	No	Contract terms and conditions
6 Housing Benefits	Transfer	41,122	(970)	(8,786)	Yes	No	Universal Credit & Economic Conditions
7 Bon Accord Care - ALEO	Contracts	34,637	282	4,258	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
8 Waste Disposal Contracts	Contracts	23,464	7,577	7,694	No	Yes	Contract terms and conditions
9 Unitary Charge - Schools	Assets	21,948	2,391	2,722	Yes	No	Inflation & Number of Buildings
10 Utilities	Assets	21,523	9,919	9,847	Yes	No	Inflation
11 Care Home Placement - Children	Contracts	14,083	1,771	3,843	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
12 Non-domestic Rates	Assets	13,376	986	1,245	Yes	Yes	Number & Value of Buildings
13 External Rents	Assets	8,915	3,094	1,998	Yes	No	Contract terms and conditions
14 Fostering Payments - External	Contracts	8,191	(1,434)	(2,222)	No	Yes	NCS (Scotland) Bill
15 ELC Provider Payments	Contracts	7,738	(2,502)	3,947	Yes	Unknown	Living Wage & sustainable rate
16 Software Licences	Contracts	7,273	2,505	3,885	Yes	No	Inflation
17 Hire of Vehicles	Contracts	4,909	320	105	Yes	Yes	Number of Employees
18 Sport Aberdeen - ALEO	Contracts	3,852	(1,043)	(267)	Yes	No	Budget decisions
19 Homeless - Hotel & B&B Charges	contracts	3,263	3,180	3,042	Yes	No	Rapid Re-housing programme
20 Provision for Bad Debt	Contracts	2,758	(252)	1,793	Yes	No	Collection levels
		734,981	116,334	81,605			

APPENDIX 2 : 2024 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Forecast		Updated General Fund Capital Programme	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	5 Year
Outturn			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
2023/24	NHCP No.		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Projects Due for Completion in 2023/24								
0	807	A96 Park & Choose / Dyce Drive Link Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
488	809	New Milltimber Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	848	JIVE (Hydrogen Buses Phase 2)	0	0	0	0	0	0
5,557	886	Bus Prioritisation Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
398	888	Nature Restoration Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
49	893	RFID Communal Bin Tag System	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	898	King's Gate & Forest Road Pedestrian Crossings	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	899	Lighting in St Nicholas Kirkyard	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	901	Upgrade of Paths in Newburgh Estate	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	903	Investment in Chapel Street Car Park	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	905	Gaist Footway Survey	0	0	0	0	0	0
900	906	Waste : Sclattie Segregation Bays	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	942	Webcasting of Committee Meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0
309	950	School Aged Childcare	0	0	0	0	0	0
7,839			0	0	0	0	0	0
Rolling Programmes								
8,867	294	Corporate Property Condition & Suitability	9,212	8,785	8,295	8,000	8,000	42,292
1,685	551	Cycling Walking Safer Streets	986	0	0	0	0	986
1,335	765G	Nestrans Capital Grant	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
754	779	Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG)	550	600	600	600	600	2,950
4,500	784	Fleet Replacement Programme	6,000	6,000	6,000	5,911	4,500	28,411
5,000	789	Planned Renewal & Replacement of Roads Infrastructure	5,738	5,486	5,336	4,452	4,000	25,012
1,871	789E	Street Lighting	1,000	1,000	800	800	800	4,400
4,055	861	Additional Investment in Roads	3,000	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	21,000
3,901	875	Investment in Digital Transformation	4,500	1,300	1,300	0	0	7,100
31,968			31,986	28,671	27,831	25,263	23,400	137,151
City Region Deal								
(0)	825	City Deal	20	0	0	0	0	20
0	845	City Deal: Strategic Transport Appraisal	910	0	0	0	0	910
194	847	City Deal: Digital Infrastructure	1,500	0	0	0	0	1,500
494	852	City Deal: City Duct Network	1,900	0	0	0	0	1,900
1,000	854	City Deal: Transportation Links to Bay of Nigg	3,360	9,119	8,750	2,000	0	23,229
27	862	City Deal: Digital Lead	82	0	0	0	0	82
500	909	City Deal: Wellington Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
2,214			7,772	9,119	8,750	2,000	0	27,641
Fully Legally Committed Projects								
57	587	Access from the North / 3rd Don Crossing	760	0	0	0	0	760
0	806A	South College Street (Phase 1)	484	0	0	0	0	484
8,670	810K	Energy from Waste (EFW) Construction	4,500	0	0	0	0	4,500
5,647	810K	Torry Heat Network	0	0	0	0	0	0
(0)	819	Tillydrone Community Hub	479	0	0	0	0	479
1,642	824	City Centre Regeneration	3,722	0	0	0	0	3,722
0	828	Greenbrae Primary Extension and Internal Works	82	0	0	0	0	82
(0)	831	Stoneywood Primary	489	0	0	0	0	489
12,000	840	Tillydrone Primary School	16,400	500	0	0	0	16,900
10,372	841	Greyhope School and Hub	351	0	0	0	0	351
698	855	Early Learning & Childcare	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	859	ICT: Human Capital Management System	92	0	0	0	0	92
206	865	Countesswells Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0
443	871	Low Emissions Zone	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	878	St Peters RC Primary Relocation (Design Development)	410	0	0	0	0	410
787	884	Torry Development Trust - Former Victoria Road School	622	0	0	0	0	622
493	885	Place Based Investment Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
(0)	889	CO2 Monitors	124	0	0	0	0	124
582	890	Dyce Library Relocation	0	0	0	0	0	0
9,980	894	Joint Integrated Mortuary	19,100	0	0	0	0	19,100
649	896	Bucksburn Academy Extension (temporary solution)	0	0	0	0	0	0
490	949	Tillydrone Cruyff Court	35	0	0	0	0	35
2,143	998	Final Retentions & Snagging	6,386	0	0	0	0	6,386
54,859			54,036	500	0	0	0	54,536
Partially Legally Committed Projects								
876	791	Strategic Land Acquisition	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	4,000
663	806B	CATI - Berryden Corridor (Combined Stages 1, 2 & 3)	2,800	3,475	12,275	12,273	1,487	32,310
10	806D	Berryden Corridor - Ashgrove Connects	965	840	0	0	0	1,805
0	808B	New Academy to the South - Infrastructure Improvements	280	0	0	0	0	280
10	810J	Bridge of Don Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)	3,000	1,159	110	0	0	4,269

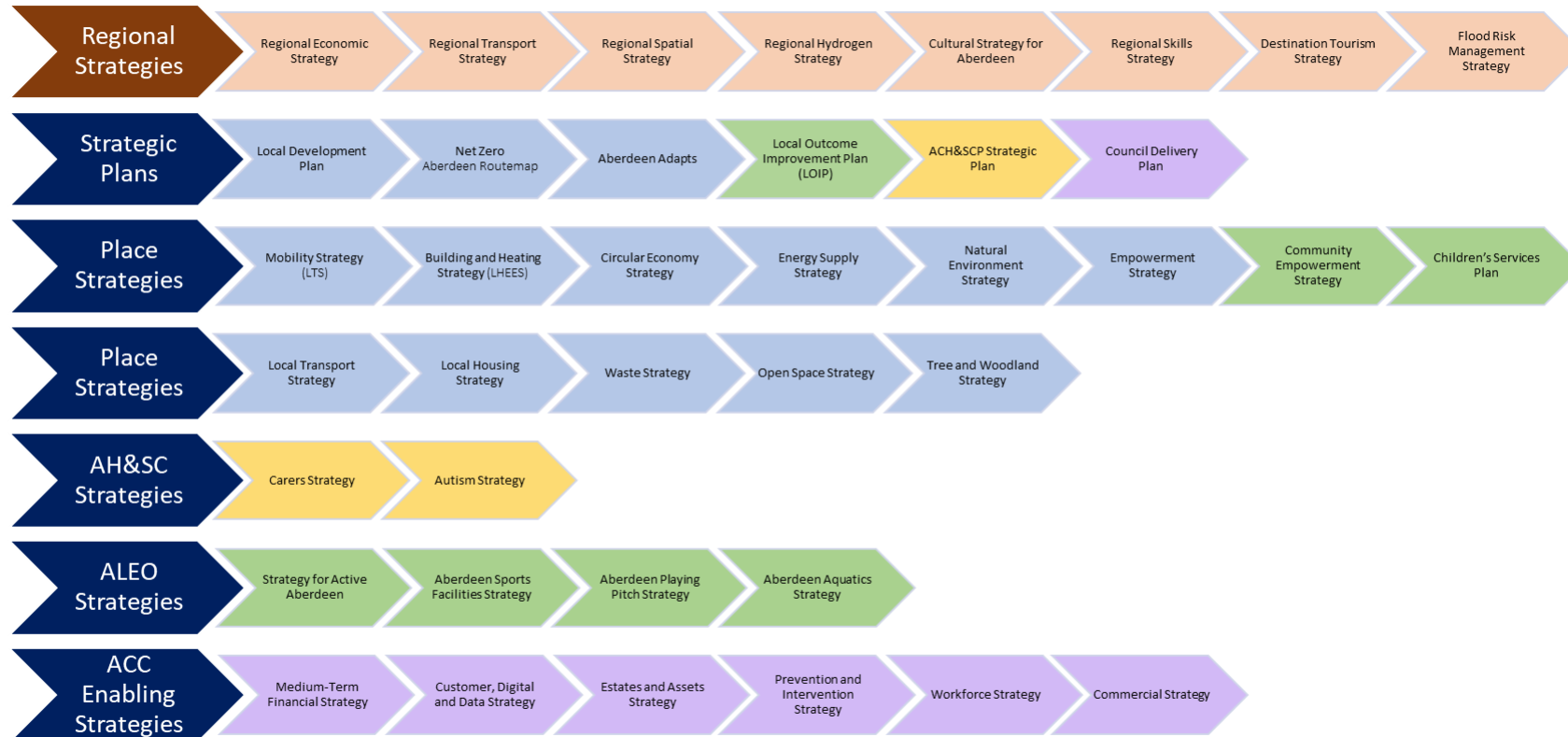
(0)	820	Investment in Tenanted Non-Residential Property Portfolio	865	0	0	0	0	0	865
0	836	Flood Prevention Measures: Flood Guards Grant Scheme	100	100	100	100	58	0	458
0	844	Sustrans Active Travel Infrastructure Fund	400	465	0	0	0	0	865
170	868	Car Parking Infrastructure	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,000
100	869	Safety and Security Measures (including CCTV)	942	0	0	0	0	0	942
0	872	Smart City	270	0	0	0	0	0	270
150	873	Queen Street Redevelopment (Phase 1) - Urban Park	3,311	7,500	6,000	0	0	0	16,811
61	874	B999 Shielhill Road Junction Improvements	100	510	0	0	0	0	610
2,000	881	Hydrogen Programme	11,810	0	0	0	0	0	11,810
1,701	883A	City Centre and Beach Masterplans: Market Redevelopment	20,674	12,950	5,000	0	0	0	38,624
800	883B	City Centre and Beach Masterplans: Union Street Central	10,354	6,569	2,000	0	0	0	18,923
4,783	883C	City Centre and Beach Masterplans: Beachfront	37,160	19,641	5,000	0	0	0	61,801
2,275	883D	City Centre and Beach Masterplans: Other Projects & Grants	7,812	10,840	3,000	0	0	0	21,652
302	887	Play Park Renewal Programme	639	932	0	0	0	0	1,571
1,975	891	Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub (Joint Venture with bp)	11,088	4,500	0	0	0	0	15,588
50	892	Defibrillators	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	895	St Peters RC Primary Relocation	1,668	17,014	7,945	0	0	0	26,627
0	904	Photovoltaic Systems	300	300	0	0	0	0	600
285	907	School Estate Plan - Fesibility Studies	293	0	0	0	0	0	293
500	908	Expansion of Free School Meals	2,727	0	0	0	0	0	2,727
62	911	A5 - Review signage in all schools	62	0	0	0	0	0	62
55	918	H3 - Ferryhill School Suitability Improvements	580	12000	4,300	220	0	0	17,100
3,050	920	HF2 - Hazlehead / Countesswells Secondary Provision	2,717	18,457	42,051	43,258	14,926	0	121,409
406	930	Road Safety Fund	250	200	200	200	0	0	850
130	931	New Cycle Lockers	10	10	10	10	0	0	40
70	933	Installation of New Bus Shelters	214	142	142	142	0	0	640
500	935	Electric Vehicle Charging Network	1,810	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0	10,810
150	937	Extend Aberdeen's district heating network - Market Street Link	6,000	16,480	5,960	5,950	0	0	34,390
3,000	939	Investment in Education ICT	6,300	2,800	2,800	2,800	0	0	14,700
121	940	Bairns Hoose Business Case	1,629	1,250	0	0	0	0	2,879
0	943	Union Street Empty Shop Units	800	200	0	0	0	0	1,000
500	944	Asset Rationalisation - Site Preparation & Clearance	3,500	1,300	0	0	0	0	4,800
0	948	CCMP Phase 3: Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate	0	0	1,000	3,000	10,000	0	14,000
25	951	Denburn Restoration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
150	952	Coastal Change Adaption Grant	60	0	0	0	0	0	60
24,931			144,490	144,634	100,893	70,953	26,471	487,441	
		Projects with indicative budgets							
0	838	Flood Prevention Measures: Millside & Paddock Peterculter	800	1,600	0	0	0	0	2,400
250	910	Inchgarth Community Centre	1,515	750	0	0	0	0	2,265
0	912	AG1 - Aberdeen Grammar School increasing roll	0	150	0	0	0	0	150
0	913	B1 - Bucksburn Academy Extension	2,164	11,100	7,702	269	0	0	21,235
0	914	B2 - Bucksburn / Newhills additional primary school	0	0	0	0	1,795	0	1,795
0	915	CA1 - Victorian School Buildings	400	0	0	0	1,000	0	1,400
0	916	H1 - Rubislaw & Harlaw Rd Sportsfields review	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	1,500
0	917	H2 School Estate Plan and Improvements	750	4,000	2,000	350	0	0	7,100
0	919	HH1 Countesswells 2nd new Primary School	0	0	0	0	1,795	0	1,795
0	921	L1 - Loirston Loch additional primary provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	922	N2 - Northfield ASG Primary School Excess Capacity	0	0	500	0	0	0	500
0	923	NA1 - Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don secondary provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	924	O1 - Grandhome additional primary schools	0	0	0	1,795	8,100	0	9,895
0	925	O3 - Oldmachar ASG Primary School Excess Capacity	0	0	500	0	0	0	500
0	926	RC2 - Denominational Primary Schools Feasibility	0	500	0	0	5,000	0	5,500
0	927	S3 - St Machar Academy outdoor space improvements	800	700	0	0	0	0	1,500
0	928	NA2 - Bucksburn & Dyce secondary provision	0	0	0	0	500	0	500
0	929	N1 - Westpark & Heathryburn Schools increasing rolls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	932	Expansion of mandatory 20mph limits in residential areas	400	400	400	400	400	0	2,000
0	934	Options for New River Dee foot and cycle bridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	936	Kittybrewster Feasibility and Condition Suitability	2,950	0	0	0	0	0	2,950
0	938	Play Park Maintenance and Investment	0	0	175	175	175	0	525
0	941	Burial Grounds	0	1,850	0	0	0	0	1,850
0	945	Great Western Community Trust - Holburn West Church Grant	250	0	0	0	0	0	250
0	946	Net Zero Adaptations - Public Buildings - Feasibilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
75	947A	Council Climate Plan Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy	75	0	0	0	0	0	75
300	947B	Council Climate Plan Feasibility studies for net zero	300	300	300	300	0	0	1,200
60	947C	Council Climate Plan Increase natural grassland and wildflowers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	947D	Council Climate Plan Community run greenspaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

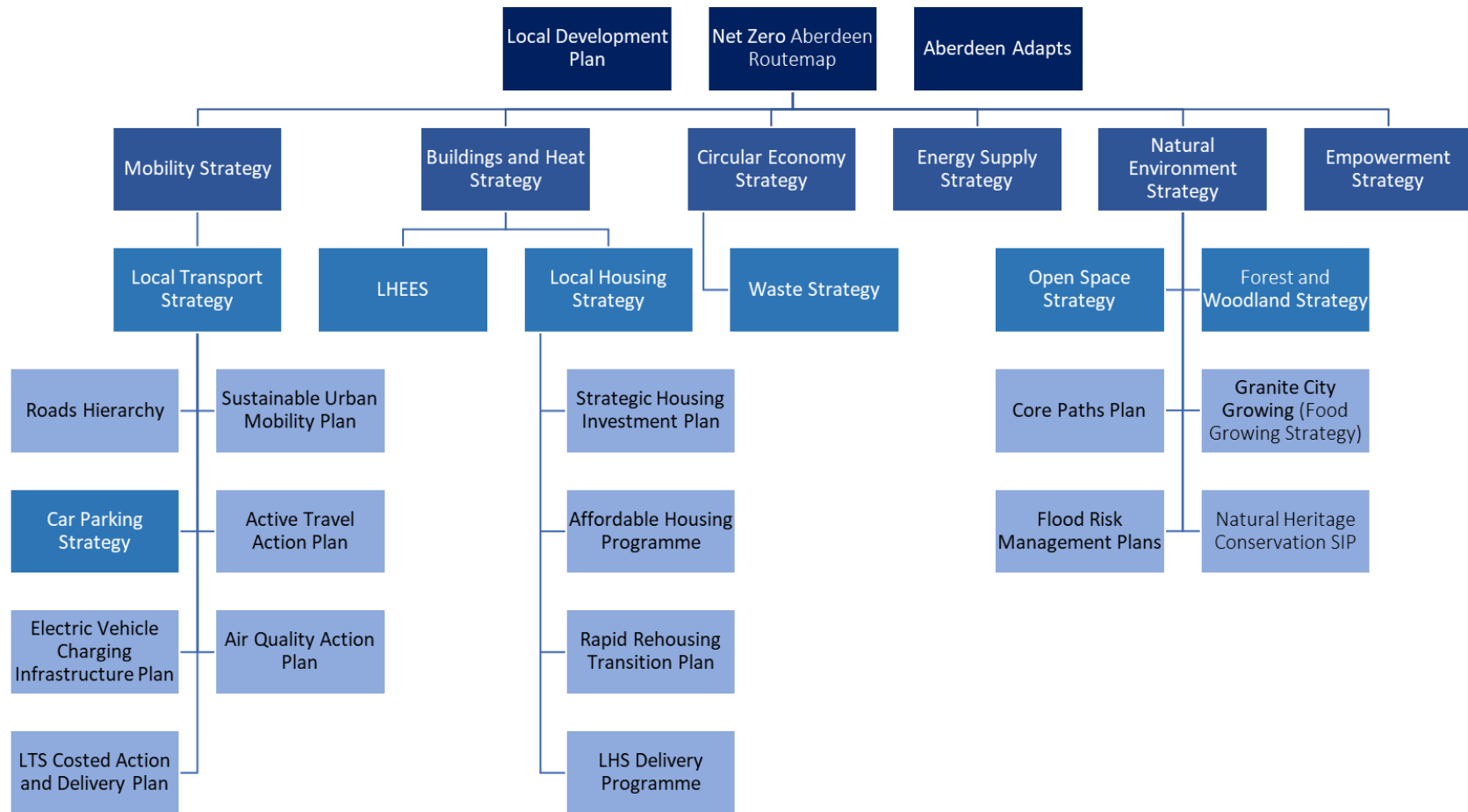
100	947E	Council Climate Plan Increase food growing	0	0	0	0	0	0
100	947F	Council Climate Plan Redesign Car Club	0	0	0	0	0	0
100	947G	Council Climate Plan Climate Data Tool	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	953	Community Bus Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	954	Bucksburn Pool Refurbishment	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
0	883E	CCMP Phase 4: Castlegate	1,000	2,000	6,000	6,500	0	15,500
0	883F	CCMP Phase 4: Union Street East & Justice Street	0	0	0	0	13,000	13,000
0	883G	CCMP Phase 5: Union Street West and West End	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	883H	CCMP Phase 6: Market Street to Guild Street Phases 2 & 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	883J	Beach MasterPlan Phases B & C up to end of RIBA 4	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	955	Aberdeen City Heritage Trust	150	150	150	0	0	450
0	999	Contingency	1,390	4,500	4,790	0	0	10,680
1,089			15,444	28,000	22,517	9,789	31,765	107,515
122,900		Totals	253,728	210,924	159,991	108,005	81,636	814,284

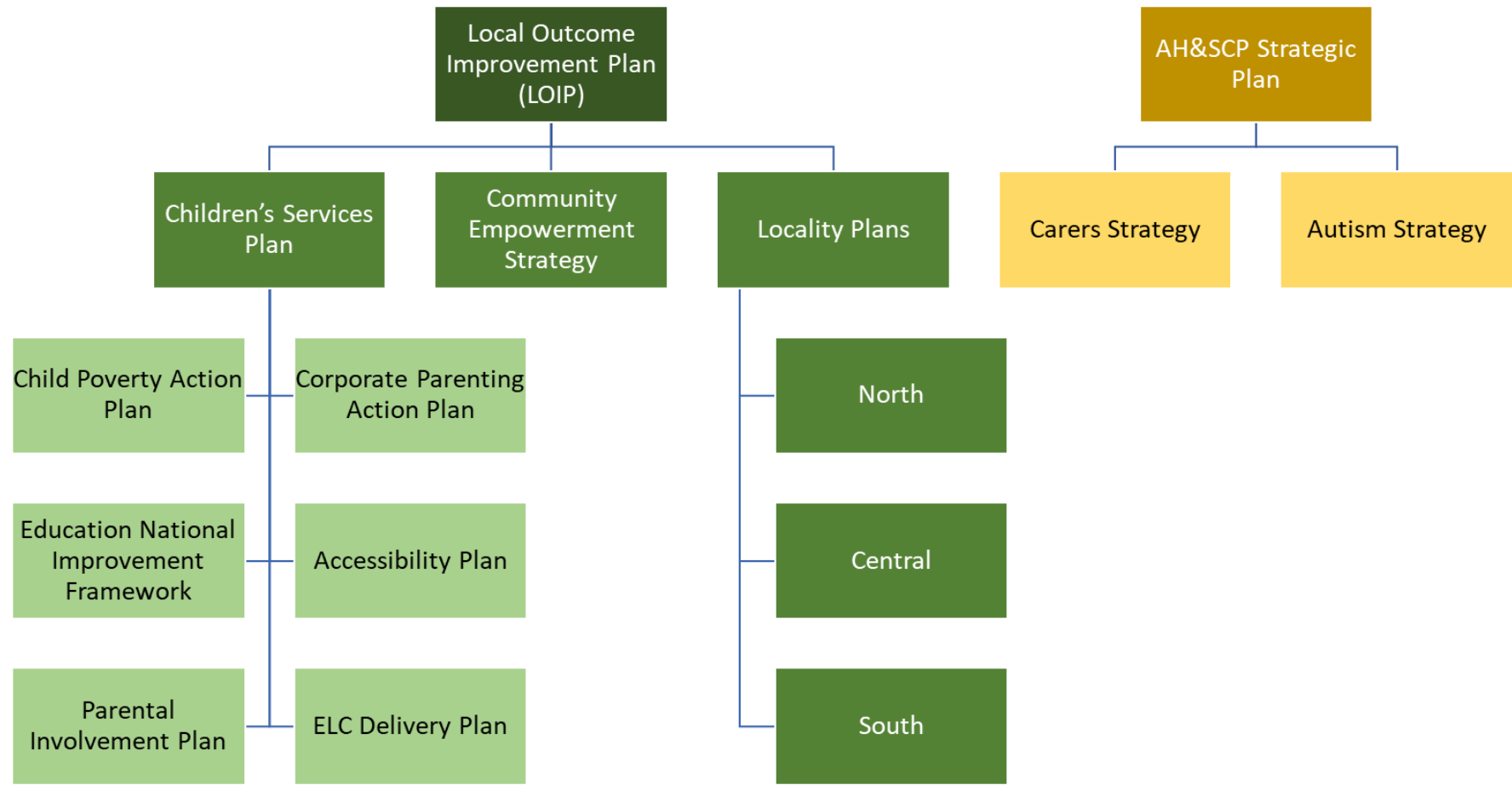
Forecast		General Fund Capital Programme - Funding		Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	5 Year
Outturn				2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2027/28	Total
2023/24	NHCP No.			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
(295)	294	Corporate Property Condition & Suitability		0	0	0	0	0	0
(1,685)	551	Cycling Walking Safer Streets		(986)	0	0	0	0	(986)
0	587	Access from the North / 3rd Don Crossing		(2,000)	0	0	0	0	(2,000)
(6)	789	Planned Renewal & Replacement of Roads Infrastructure		0	0	0	0	0	0
(10)	806D	Berryden Corridor - Ashgrove Connects		(965)	(840)	0	0	0	(1,805)
(0)	809	New Milltimber Primary		(1,632)	0	0	0	0	(1,632)
(672)	810K	Energy from Waste (EFW) Construction & Torry Heat Network		(530)	0	0	0	0	(530)
0	828	Greenbrae Primary Extension and Internal Works		(115)	0	0	0	0	(115)
0	831	Stoneywood Primary		(3,408)	0	0	0	0	(3,408)
0	836	Flood Prevention Measures: Flood Guards Grant Scheme		(80)	(80)	(80)	(80)	(46)	(366)
0	838	Flood Prevention Measures - Peterculter		(800)	(1,600)	0	0	0	(2,400)
(494)	852	City Deal: City Duct Network		(1,900)	0	0	0	0	(1,900)
(1,000)	854	City Deal: Transportation Links to Bay of Nigg		(3,360)	(9,119)	(8,750)	(2,000)	0	(23,229)
(27)	862	City Deal: Digital Lead		(82)	0	0	0	0	(82)
(262)	865	Countesswells Primary		(2,500)	(1,442)	(1,080)	0	0	(5,022)
(443)	871	Low Emission Zone		0	0	0	0	0	0
(70)	873	Queen Street Redevelopment including Mortuary		0	0	0	0	0	0
(211)	874	B999 Shielhill Road Junction		0	0	0	0	0	0
(1,500)	881	Hydrogen Programme		(9,000)	0	0	0	0	(9,000)
(16,882)	883	City Centre and Beach Masterplans		0	0	0	0	0	0
(787)	884	Torry Development Trust - Former Victoria Road School		(622)	0	0	0	0	(622)
(493)	885	Place Based Investment Fund		0	0	0	0	0	0
(5,557)	886	Bus Prioritisation Fund		0	0	0	0	0	0
(591)	890	Dyce Library Relocation		0	0	0	0	0	0
(49)	893	RFID Communal Bin Tag System		0	0	0	0	0	0
(9,980)	894	Joint Integrated Mortuary		(13,963)	0	0	0	0	(13,963)
(3)	903	Investment in Chapel Street Car Park		0	0	0	0	0	0
(30)	905	Active Travel Direct Resource Grant		0	0	0	0	0	0
(900)	906	Waste : Sclattie Segregation Bays		0	0	0	0	0	0
(500)	909	City Deal: Wellington Road		0	0	0	0	0	0
(250)	910	Inchgarth Community Centre		(900)	(750)	0	0	0	(1,650)
0	913	B1 - Bucksburn Academy Extension - OBC		0	0	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(3,000)
0	914	B2 - Bucksburn / Newhills additional primary provision - OBC		0	0	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)
0	919	HH1 Countesswells 2nd new Primary School		0	0	0	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
0	920	HH2 - Hazlehead / Countesswells Secondary Provision - OBC		0	0	0	0	0	0
0	921	L1 - Loirston Loch additional primary provision - OBC		0	0	0	0	0	0
0	923	NA1 - Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don secondary provision - OBC		0	0	0	0	0	0
0	924	O1 - Grandhome primary schools		0	0	0	(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)
(256)	930	Road safety Fund		0	0	0	0	0	0
(120)	931	New Cycle Lockers		0	0	0	0	0	0
0	932	Expansion of mandatory 20mph limits in residential areas		(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(2,000)
0	935	Electric Vehicle Charging Network		0	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	0	(9,000)
(121)	940	Bairns Hoose Business Case		0	0	0	0	0	0
(35)	949	Tillydrone Cruyff Court		0	0	0	0	0	0
(309)	950	School Aged Childcare		0	0	0	0	0	0
(25)	951	Denburn Restoration		0	0	0	0	0	0
(30,000)	new	Use of Service Concession Reserve		0	0	0	0	0	0
(73,561)		1. Programme Funding Streams Sub-Total		(43,243)	(17,231)	(14,310)	(7,480)	(4,946)	(87,210)

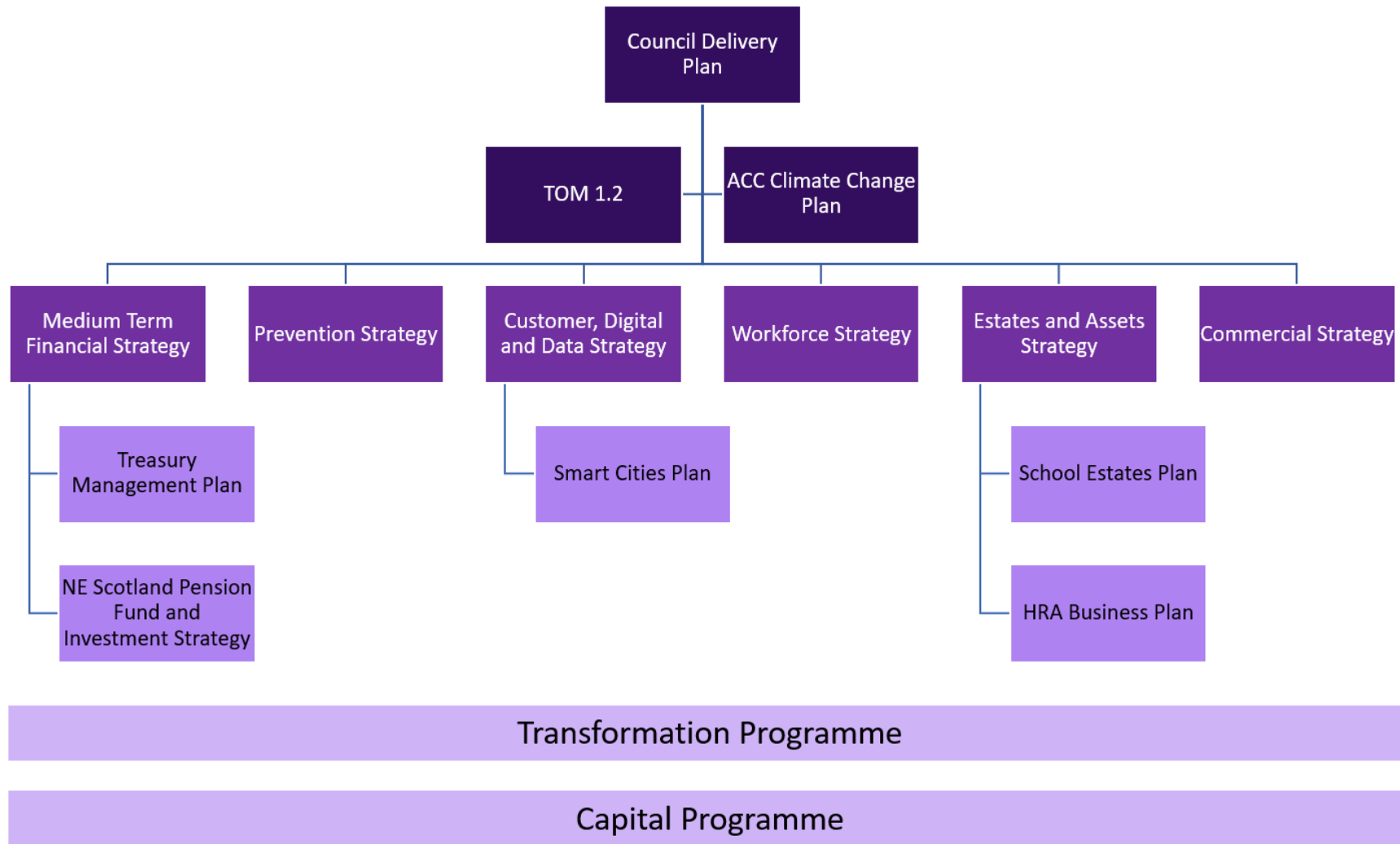
(29,801)	2. Capital Grant	(17,067)	(18,932)	(18,000)	(18,000)	(18,000)	(89,999)
(19,538)	3. Borrowing	(193,418)	(174,761)	(127,681)	(82,525)	(58,690)	(637,075)
(122,900)	Sub-total	(253,728)	(210,924)	(159,991)	(108,005)	(81,636)	(814,284)
0	Net Position	0	0	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX 3 : STRATEGY FRAMEWORK









APPENDIX 4 : PHASE 1 BUDGET CONSULTATION RESULTS

Analysis of Responders

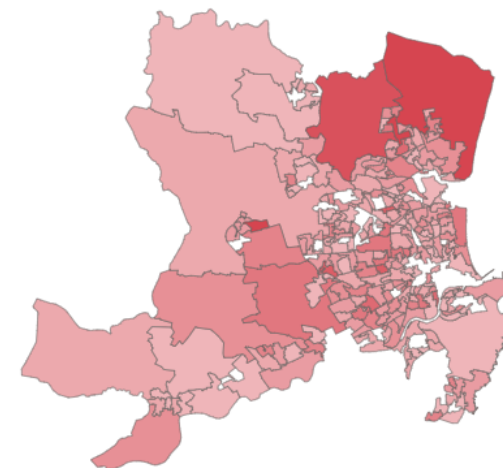
There were 4 parts to the online consultation. Responses to each were as undernoted.

2463	603	390	822
Budget Options	Council Tax	Capital	Prioritisation

Demographic Information

1,921 respondents gave, at least partial, demographic information. Of those:

- **Sex:** 44% stated they were female and 38% male. Almost all others selected no option or "Prefer not to say".
- **Age:** 9% were under 25; 13% between 25 & 34; 20% between 35 & 44; 20% between 45 & 54; 18% between 55 & 64; 12% between 65 & 74; and 4% over 75 or over
- **Ethnicity:** 75% stated they were white; 2% Asian; 1% African; 1% mixed / multiple; < 1% other ethnic group. Others selected no option or "Prefer not to say"
- **Religion:** 47% selected "None"; 13% Church of Scotland / England; 6% other Christian; 3% Roman Catholic; 1% Muslim. All other options <1%
- **Health:** 15% stated they had a health problem or disability which limited day to day activities
- **Carer:** 20% stated they provided some care for a family member or friend
- **Employment:** 61% stated they were in full or part time employment
- **Location:** Of those who gave a postcode (746), 93.2% were in the City; 6.6% in Aberdeenshire. A heat map of those located in Aberdeen is shown opposite.



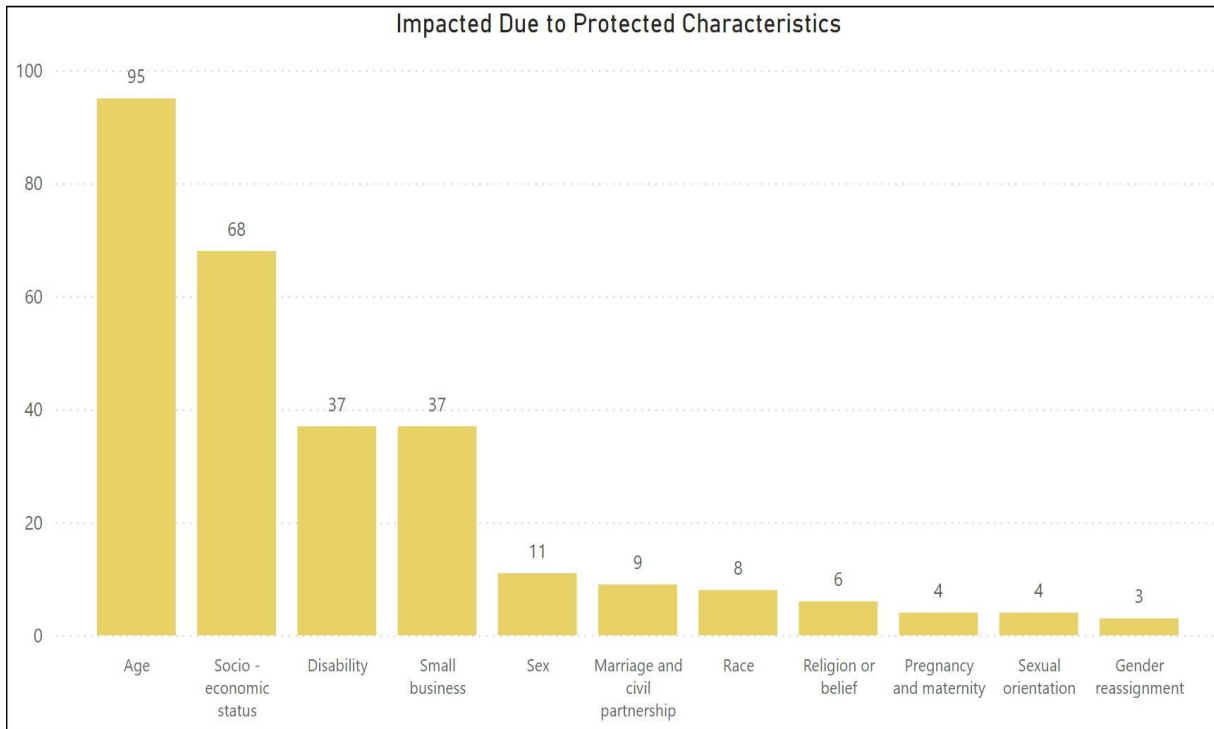
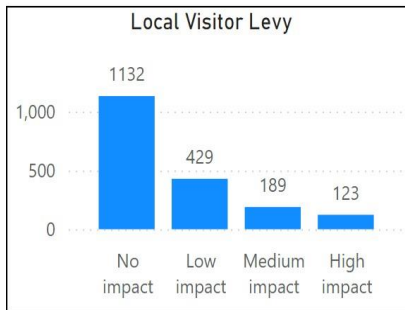
Culture and Sports



Summary from 571 comments on personal impact:

- **Impact on Community Health:** Some respondents highlighted that reducing funding to ASV and Sport Aberdeen would negatively impact physical and mental health, especially for older adults, students, and those with disabilities.
- **Affordability Concerns:** There is a concern that increased costs or reduced services would make sports facilities unaffordable for low-income families, retirees, and students.
- **Importance of Swimming Facilities:** Some comments emphasized the critical role of swimming facilities in teaching life-saving skills and maintaining health, with specific mentions of ASV.
- **Social and Community Benefits:** ASV and Sport Aberdeen are seen by some as community hubs that offer social interaction, reduce loneliness, and foster community spirit.
- **Impact on Children and Youth:** Cutting funding could limit opportunities for young people to engage in sports, potentially leading to increased antisocial behaviour and long-term health issues.
- **Concerns about Reduced Operating Hours:** Respondents are worried that reduced operating hours would make it difficult for working individuals to access facilities, affecting their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- **Impact on Competitive Athletes:** Several comments noted that reduced funding would harm competitive athletes who rely on ASV for training, including those at national and international levels.
- **Economic Impact:** There is a belief that investing in cultural and sports facilities can attract tourists and boost the local economy, making cuts counterproductive.
- **Support for Disabled Individuals:** Some commented that ASV and Sport Aberdeen provide essential services for disabled individuals, helping them maintain mobility and health.

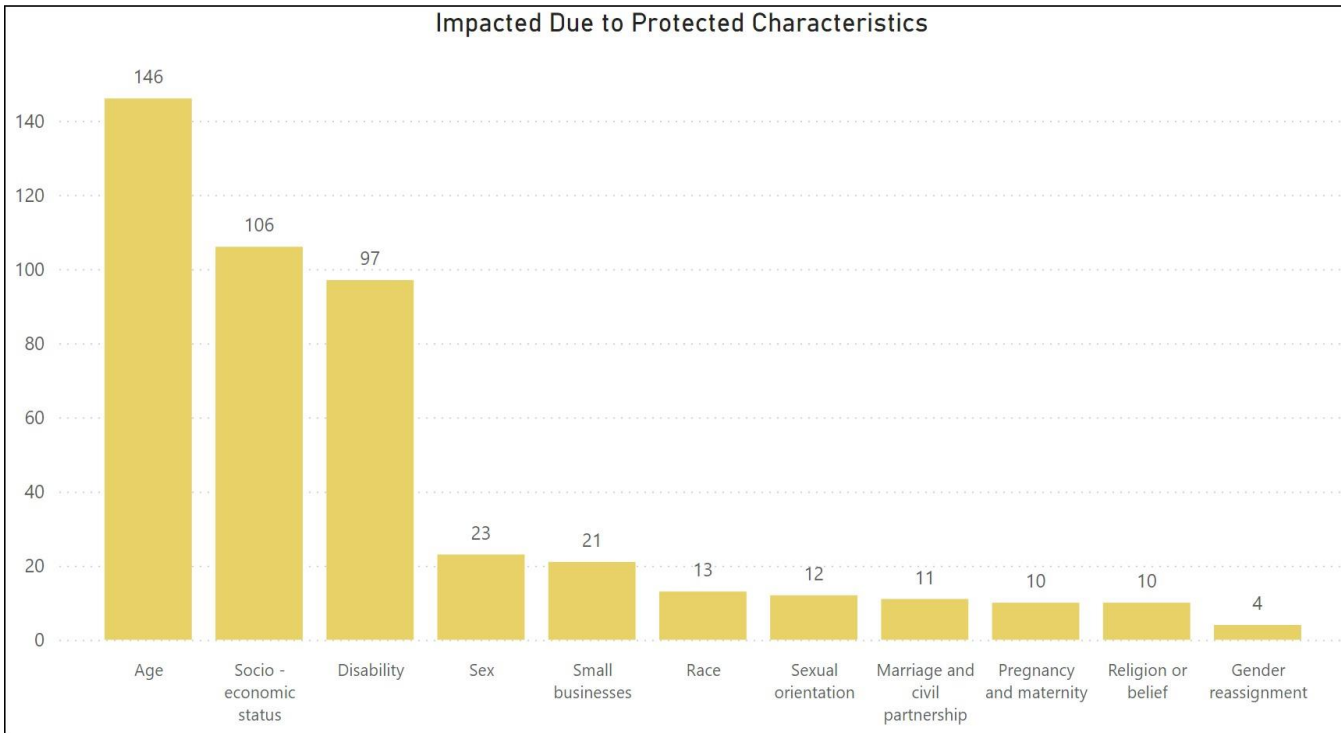
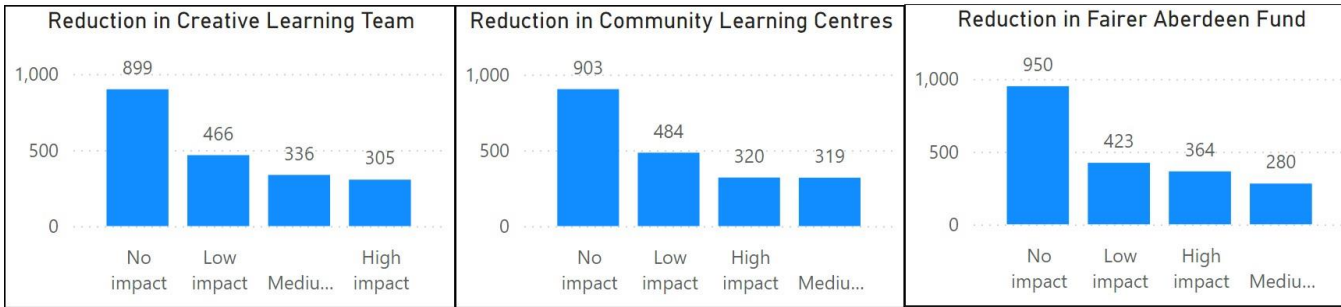
Local Visitor Levy



Summary from 321 comments on personal impact:

- **Support for Visitor Levy:** Several respondents support the visitor levy, noting it could generate much-needed income for the city and is a common practice in other European cities.
- **Concerns About Tourism Impact:** Many express concerns that the levy would deter visitors, particularly because Aberdeen is not seen as a major tourist destination compared to cities like Edinburgh.
- **Economic Impact on Local Businesses:** There are worries that fewer visitors would negatively impact local businesses, especially those in the hospitality sector, which are already struggling.
- **Suggestions for Levy Implementation:** Some suggest that the levy should be applied to specific groups such as international visitors or cruise ship passengers, rather than all visitors, to minimize negative impacts.
- **Potential Benefits for Public Services:** Proponents argue that the levy could fund improvements in public services, such as sports and cultural facilities, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.
- **Mixed Opinions on Personal Impact:** Individuals vary in how they believe the levy would personally affect them, with some seeing minimal impact and others worried about increased costs for visiting family and friends.
- **General Acceptance of Levy Concept:** Despite concerns, there is a general acceptance among some that a visitor levy is a reasonable measure if kept at a modest rate and clearly explained to the public.

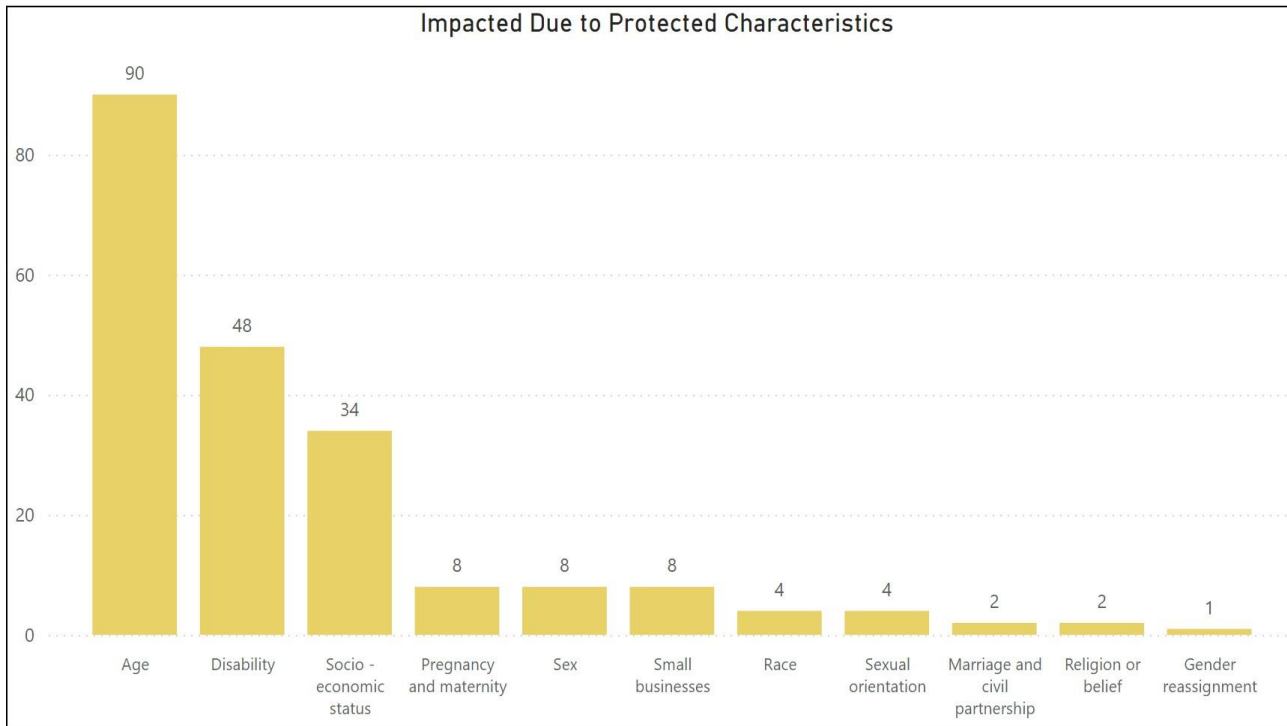
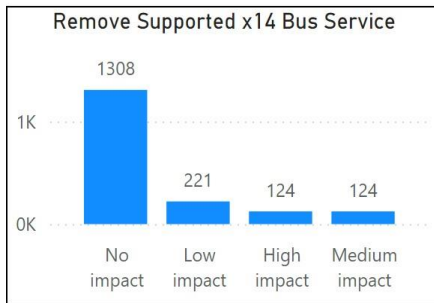
Communities



Summary from 355 comments on personal impact:

- Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** Many respondents emphasize that cuts to the Fairer Aberdeen Fund would severely affect vulnerable groups, including low-income families, people with disabilities, and those experiencing mental health issues.
- Community Services and Support:** Community centres and services funded by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund play a crucial role in providing support, social interaction, and essential services to disadvantaged communities.
- Educational and Social Benefits:** Respondents highlight the importance of educational and social activities funded by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund in enriching lives and preventing future societal problems.
- Negative Long-term Effects:** Many believe that cutting these funds would lead to worse outcomes in the long term, including increased poverty, crime, and strain on other public services.
- Personal Testimonials:** Numerous individuals share personal stories about how the Fairer Aberdeen Fund and related services have positively impacted their lives, emphasizing the potential negative effects of funding cuts.
- Economic and Employment Benefits:** Projects supported by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund have been successful in helping individuals find employment and improve their economic situation.
- Mental Health Concerns:** Several comments stress that reducing funding would exacerbate mental health issues among vulnerable populations, leading to increased isolation and deteriorating mental health.
- Support for Children and Youth:** Funding cuts would negatively impact programs for children and youth, which are essential for their development and keeping them engaged in positive activities.
- Community Cohesion:** Maintaining funding is seen as vital for community cohesion, providing spaces and opportunities for people to come together and support each other.
- Call for Continued Support:** Overall, there is a strong call for continued support and investment in these community services to ensure the well-being of all residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

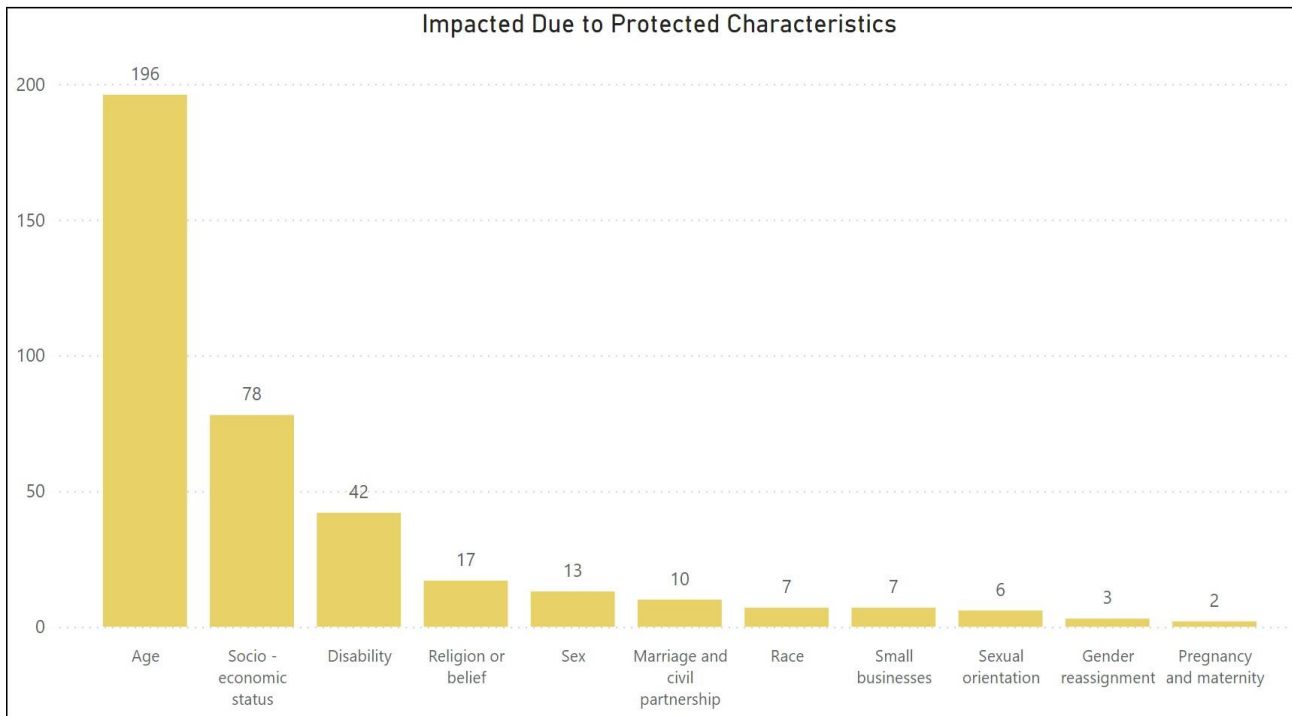
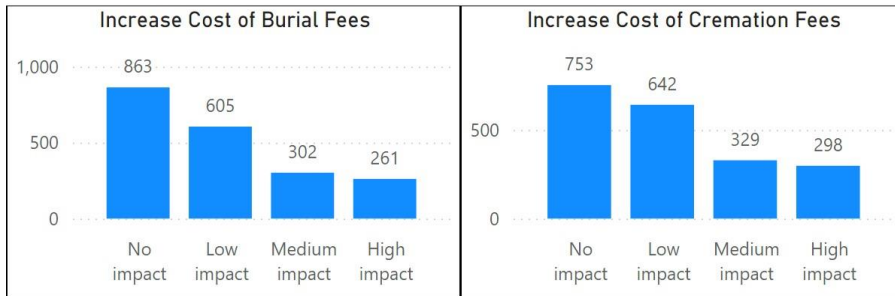
Remove Supported x14 Bus Service



Summary from 250 comments on personal impact:

- **Public Transport Essential:** Many respondents emphasize the importance of the bus service for accessing work, education, and healthcare, especially for those who cannot afford cars or taxis.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** The removal of the bus service would particularly affect the elderly, disabled, and low-income families who rely on it for essential travel.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Several comments highlight that cutting the bus service would lead to increased car usage and pollution, counteracting efforts to promote public transport and reduce environmental impact.
- **Economic and Social Impact:** Respondents note that the bus service supports local businesses and helps maintain social connections, and its removal could lead to economic and social isolation.
- **Criticism of Subsidizing Private Companies:** Some feedback criticizes the council for subsidizing a private transport company, arguing that public funds should not support private profits.
- **Calls for Better Alternatives:** There are suggestions for assessing the usage of the bus service and exploring better alternatives before making a decision, ensuring that any changes do not disproportionately impact certain groups.
- **Concerns About Hospital Access:** Many respondents stress the importance of maintaining a bus route to the hospital, as it is crucial for patients, visitors, and healthcare workers.
- **General Dissatisfaction with Bus Services:** There is a general sentiment of dissatisfaction with the current state of bus services in Aberdeen, with calls for improvements rather than reductions.

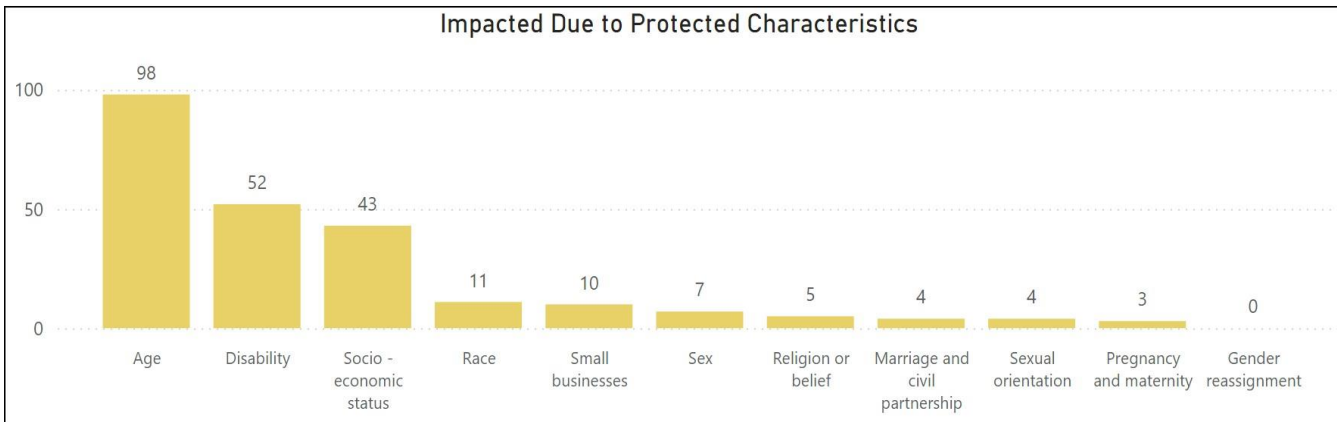
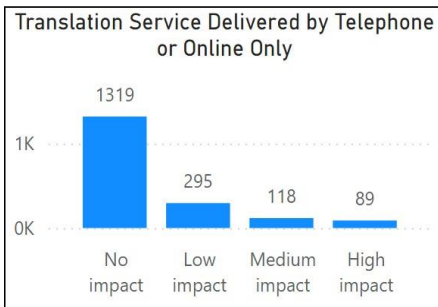
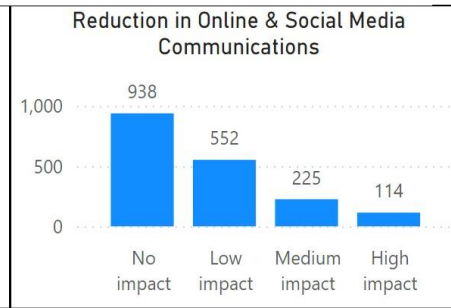
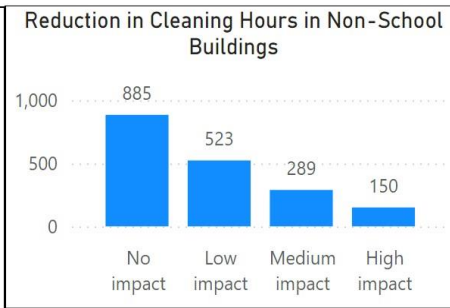
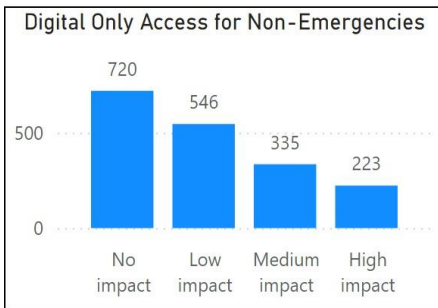
Citizen Services (1)



Summary from 336 comments on personal impact:

- **Support for Fee Increase:** Some individuals agree with the fee increase, suggesting that it is a necessary cost that should be planned for during one's working life.
- **Concerns About Affordability:** Many people express concerns that the increased costs would burden families already struggling with the cost of living, making it harder to afford respectful end-of-life services.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** There is a strong sentiment that increasing fees would disproportionately affect low-income families and those dealing with financial hardships, adding stress during a difficult time.
- **Alternative Funding Suggestions:** Some respondents suggest finding other ways to generate funds rather than increasing burial and cremation fees, considering the sensitivity of the matter.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Several comments highlight the ethical issues of profiting from death and the financial burden it places on grieving families.
- **Prepaid Plans and Insurance:** Some individuals mention having prepaid plans or insurance to cover funeral costs, but worry that increased fees could still impact their families.

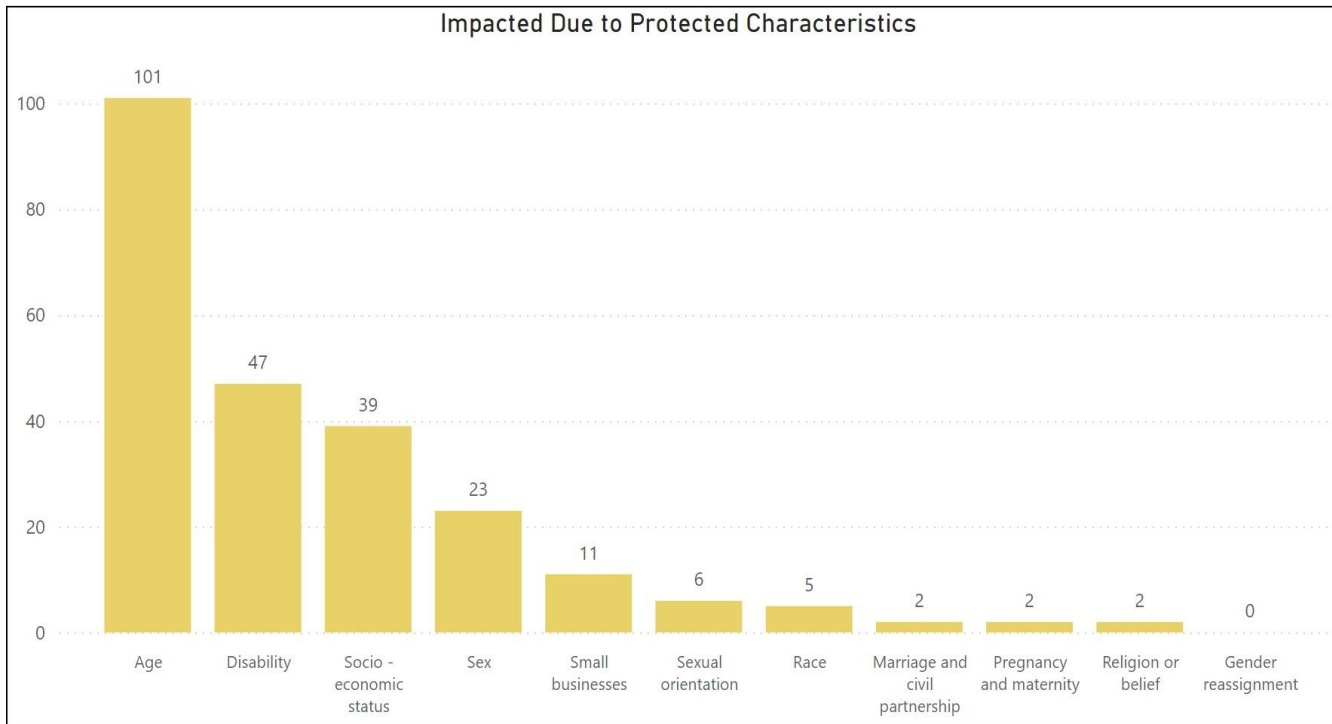
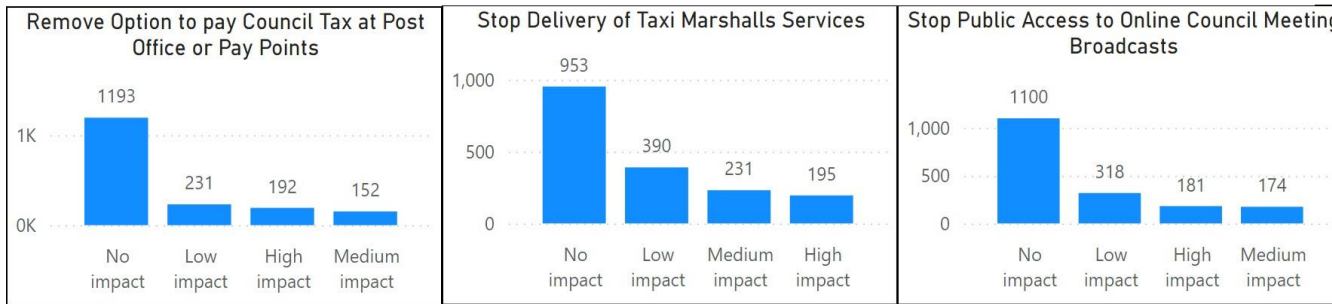
Citizen Services (2)



Summary from 291 comments on personal impact:

- **Concerns About Digital-Only Access:** Many respondents highlighted that digital-only access would exclude those without internet access or digital skills, particularly affecting older and vulnerable populations.
- **Importance of Cleaning Services:** There are significant worries about reducing cleaning hours in schools and other facilities, as this could lead to increased illness and a decline in hygiene standards.
- **Social Media and Communication:** Respondents emphasized the need for effective social media and digital communications to keep citizens informed, though some questioned the high costs associated with these services.
- **Translation Services:** Mixed opinions were expressed about translation services; some see them as essential for non-English speakers, while others believe they should not be provided free of charge.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Feedback stressed that moving services online could disproportionately impact those with disabilities and the elderly, making it harder for them to access essential services.
- **Experience with Current Digital Services:** Several respondents noted that the current digital services are already inefficient and frustrating, suggesting that further reliance on them could exacerbate these issues.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** There is a strong concern that digital-only access would particularly disadvantage the most vulnerable and poorest citizens.
- **Preference for Human Interaction:** Many people prefer speaking to a person rather than using digital services, finding it more effective for resolving issues quickly.
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Reducing cleaning services is seen as a potential health risk, especially in the context of preventing the spread of diseases like COVID-19.
- **Need for Transparent Communication:** Respondents called for more transparency and better communication from the council to build trust and ensure citizens are well-informed about services and changes.

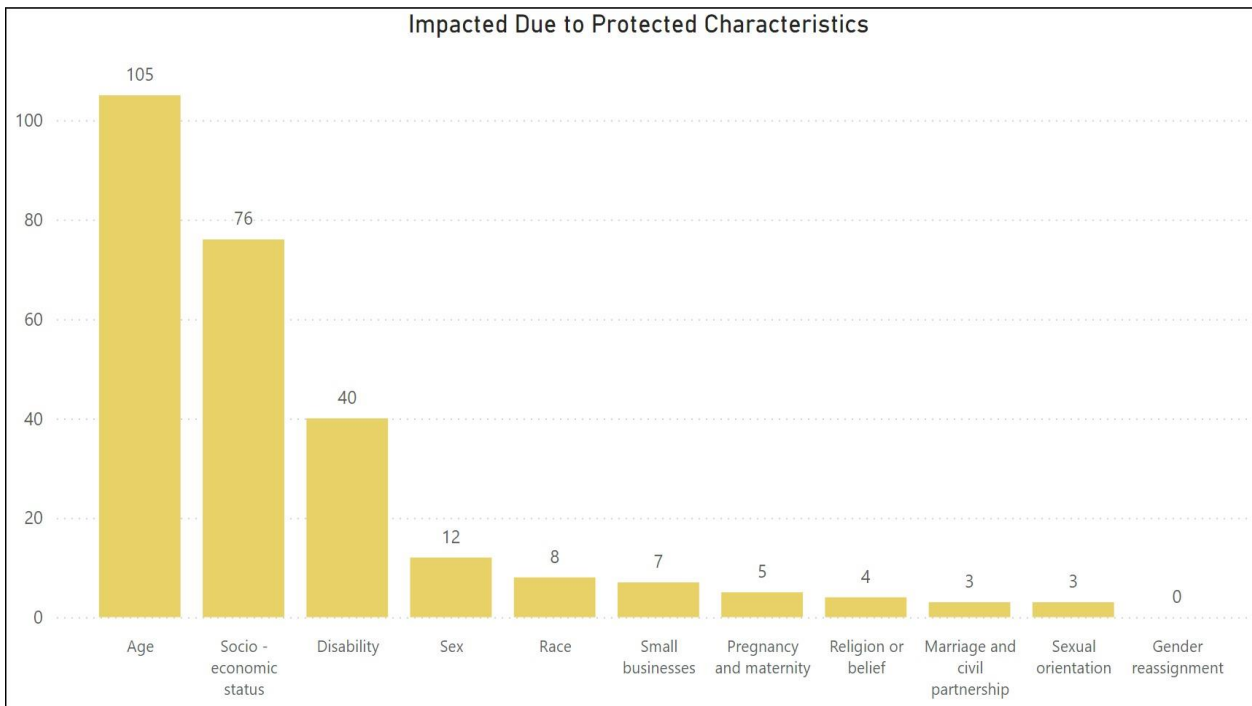
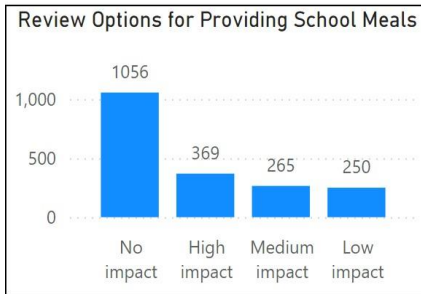
Citizen Services (3)



Summary from 286 comments on personal impact:

- Transparency and Democracy:** Many respondents feel that removing online access to council meetings would reduce transparency and democracy, making it difficult for citizens to stay informed and hold the council accountable.
- Safety Concerns:** The taxi marshall service is widely regarded as essential for public safety, especially at night, to prevent violence and ensure orderly taxi queues.
- Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** Several comments highlight that cutting payment options for council tax at post offices and pay points would disproportionately affect elderly and digitally excluded individuals.
- Cost vs. Benefit:** Some respondents question the actual cost savings from these cuts, suggesting that the benefits of maintaining these services outweigh the financial savings.
- Alternative Solutions:** Suggestions include allowing Uber to operate in the city to reduce the need for taxi marshalls and finding more cost-effective ways to broadcast council meetings.
- Public Safety:** Many believe that removing taxi marshalls would lead to increased violence and anti-social behaviour at taxi ranks, putting additional strain on emergency services.
- Accessibility Issues:** Concerns are raised about the accessibility of council meetings for those who cannot attend in person, such as disabled individuals or those with other commitments.
- Financial Implications:** There is a worry that reducing payment options for council tax could lead to increased non-payment and financial difficulties for the council.

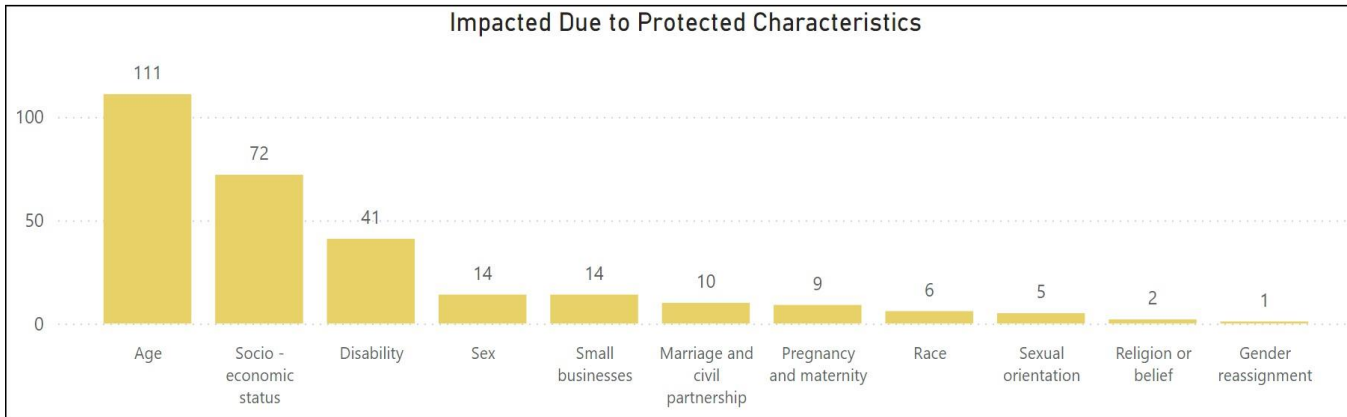
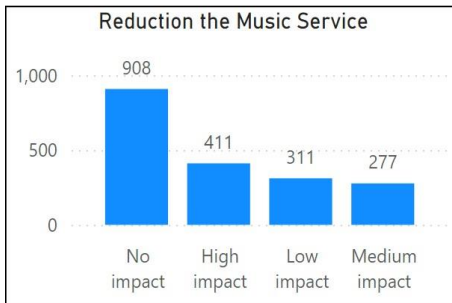
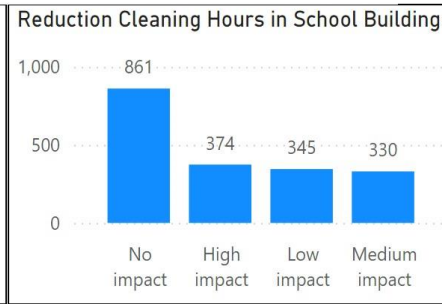
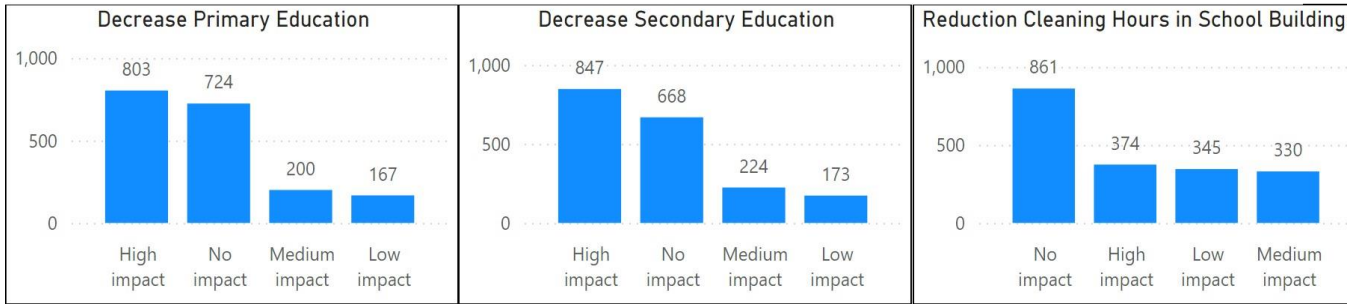
School Meals



Summary from 313 comments on personal impact:

- **Importance of Free School Meals:** Many respondents emphasize the importance of free school meals for children, particularly for those from low-income families who may rely on these meals as their only substantial food for the day.
- **Concerns About Removing Free Meals:** Several people express concerns that removing free school meals or increasing their cost could exacerbate inequality and negatively impact children's health and academic performance.
- **Support for Means Testing:** Some respondents suggest that free school meals should be means-tested to ensure that only those who genuinely need them receive them, thus reducing unnecessary expenditure.
- **Pre-ordering Meals:** There is support for pre-ordering meals to reduce waste and improve efficiency, though some parents and children may find it inconvenient.
- **Impact on Local Businesses:** Allowing students to leave school for lunch could affect local businesses that rely on student customers, but it might also lead to unhealthy eating habits.
- **Administrative Savings:** Some respondents believe that administrative changes could save money without compromising the quality or availability of school meals.
- **Quality of School Meals:** There are mixed opinions on the quality of current school meals, with some calling for improvements to ensure they are nutritious and appealing to children.
- **Potential Risks of Leaving School:** Concerns are raised about the risks associated with allowing children to leave school during lunch, including safety issues and unhealthy food choices.
- **Financial Strain on Families:** Increasing the cost of school meals could place additional financial strain on families, particularly during the current cost-of-living crisis.
- **Inclusivity and Equality:** Ensuring that all children have access to nutritious meals at school is seen as a way to promote inclusivity and reduce bullying related to socioeconomic differences.

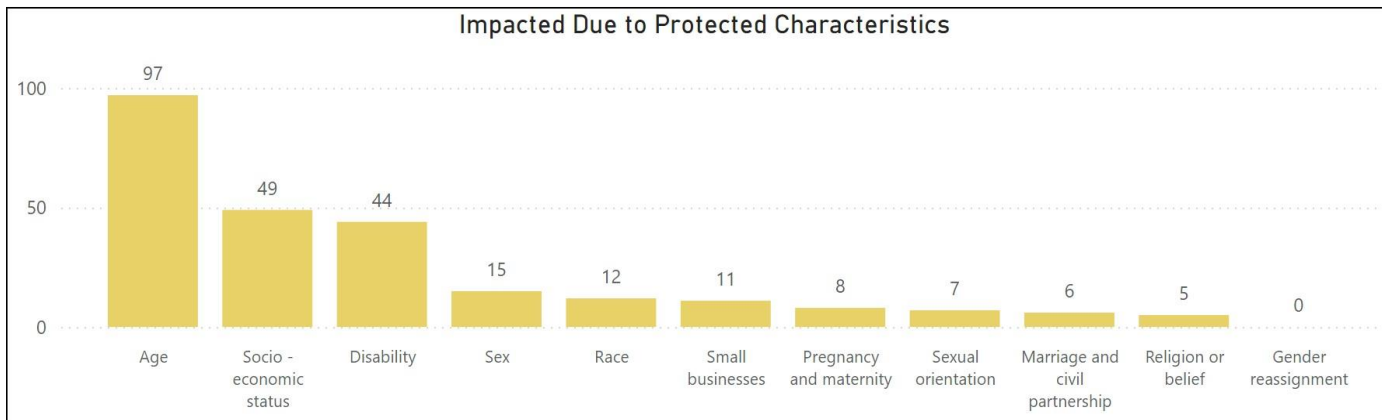
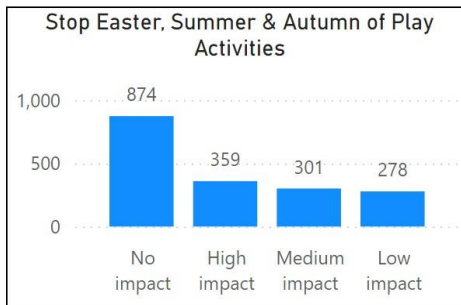
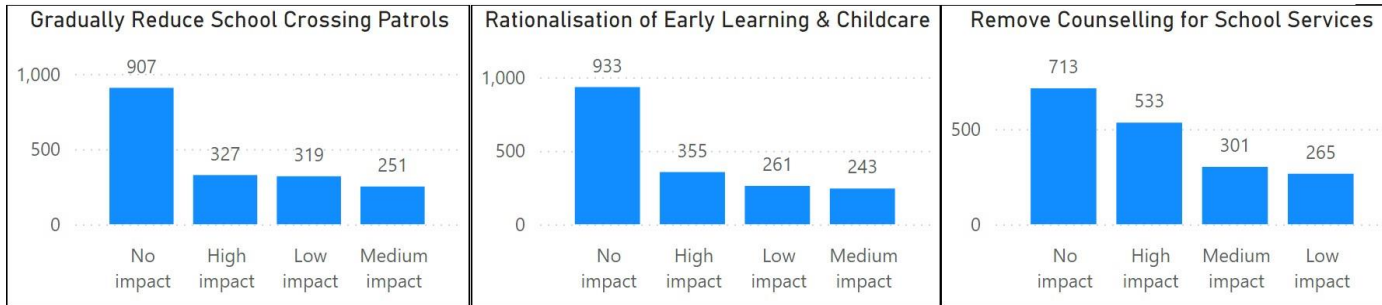
Education (1)



Summary from 477 comments on personal impact:

- **Increased Childcare Costs:** Many respondents expressed concerns that reducing school hours would lead to increased childcare costs, making it unaffordable for many working parents.
- **Impact on Music Education:** There were numerous objections to cutting music services, highlighting the importance of music for children's development, mental health, and providing opportunities for those from low-income families.
- **Concerns About School Cleanliness:** Reducing cleaning services in schools was seen as a major health risk, potentially leading to the spread of germs and illnesses among students and staff.
- **Negative Impact on Education Quality:** Many respondents believe that reducing school hours would negatively affect the quality of education, leading to lower academic performance and future opportunities for students.
- **Legal and Ethical Concerns:** Some participants questioned the legality of reducing school hours and argued that it sends a poor message about the value placed on education.
- **Economic and Social Implications:** There were concerns about the broader economic and social implications, including the potential increase in unemployment and the long-term impact on the economy due to a less educated workforce.

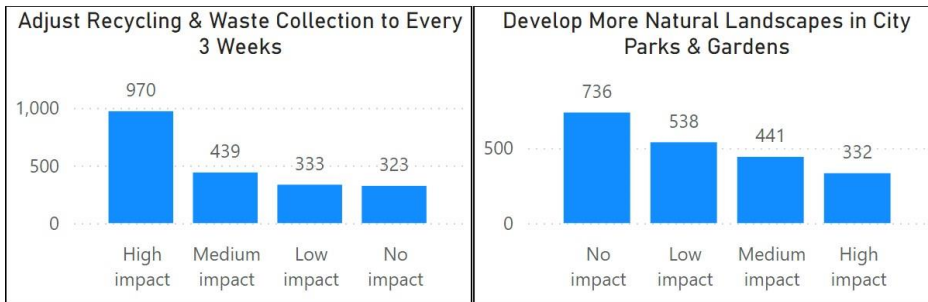
Education (2)



Summary from 319 comments on personal impact:

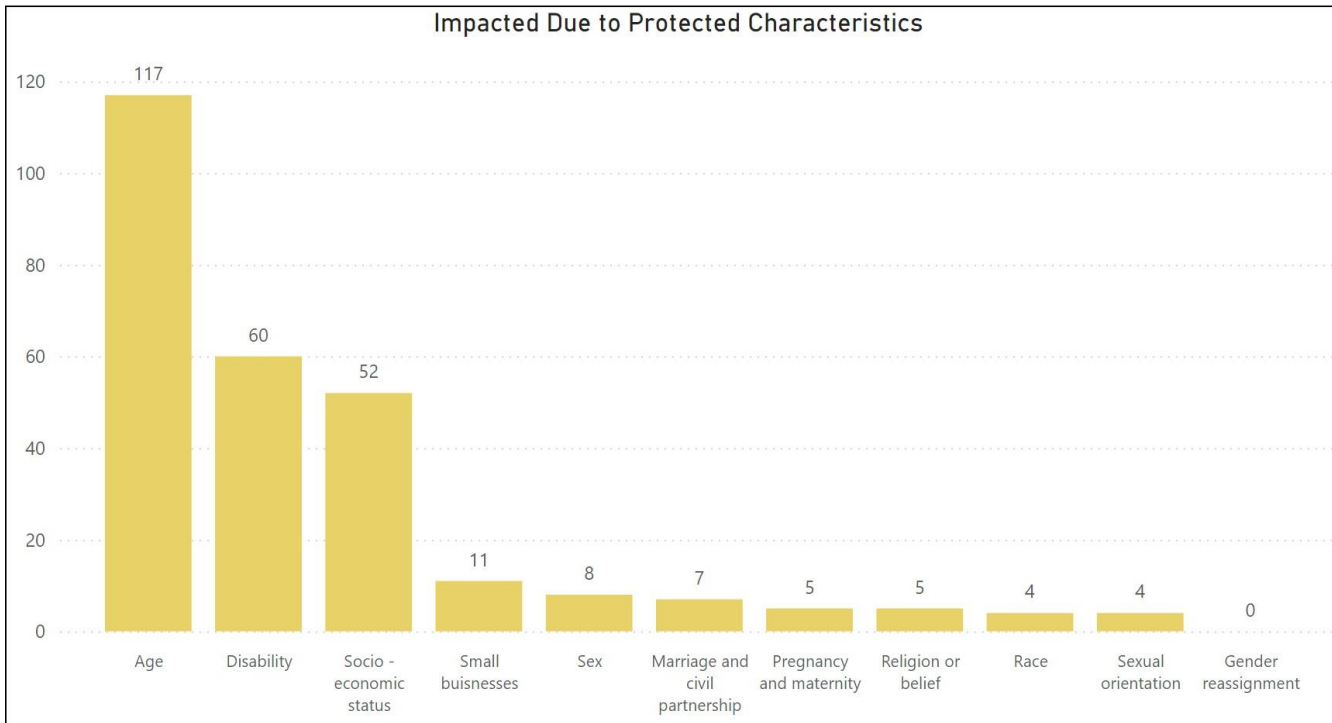
- **Concerns about Safety:** Many respondents are worried that removing school crossing patrols will jeopardize children's safety, leading to potential accidents and increased danger when crossing roads.
- **Mental Health Support:** There is significant concern about the removal of school counselling services, with many emphasizing the rising mental health issues among young people and the critical role these services play.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Families:** Cutting holiday activities and early learning childcare is seen as detrimental, especially for low-income families who rely on these services for support and childcare during school breaks.
- **Short-Sighted Decisions:** Several respondents believe that these cuts are short-sighted and will have long-term negative effects on children's development, safety, and well-being.
- **Economic Impact:** There are concerns that reducing these services will force parents to take unpaid leave or leave their jobs, thereby increasing financial strain on families and potentially increasing dependency on benefits.
- **Support for School Crossing Patrols:** While some believe that school crossing patrols are essential for child safety, others suggest replacing them with more permanent solutions like pedestrian crossings.
- **Importance of Counselling:** Many emphasize that school counselling is vital for addressing mental health issues early, preventing more severe problems, and reducing the burden on other services like the NHS.
- **General Disapproval:** Overall, the majority of respondents disapprove of the proposed cuts, viewing them as detrimental to the safety, mental health, and development of children.

Roads, Waste & Environment (1)



Summary from 524 comments on personal impact:

- **Waste Collection Concerns:** Many residents express concerns that reducing waste collection to every three weeks would lead to overflowing bins, increased vermin, and potential health hazards.
- **Recycling Frequency:** There is a strong preference for maintaining the current two-week recycling collection schedule, as many households already struggle with overflowing recycling bins.
- **Impact on Parks:** Opinions are divided on the proposal to develop more natural landscapes in city parks, with some residents supporting the idea for environmental benefits while others worry it will make parks look neglected and reduce their usability.
- **Environmental and Health Risks:** Several comments highlight the potential environmental and health risks associated with less frequent waste collection, including increased littering and fly-tipping.
- **Community Impact:** Residents emphasize the importance of well-maintained parks for mental health and community well-being, expressing concerns that reduced maintenance will negatively impact these benefits.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Some residents suggest that any reduction in waste collection frequency should be accompanied by provisions for larger bins or additional resources to manage excess waste.



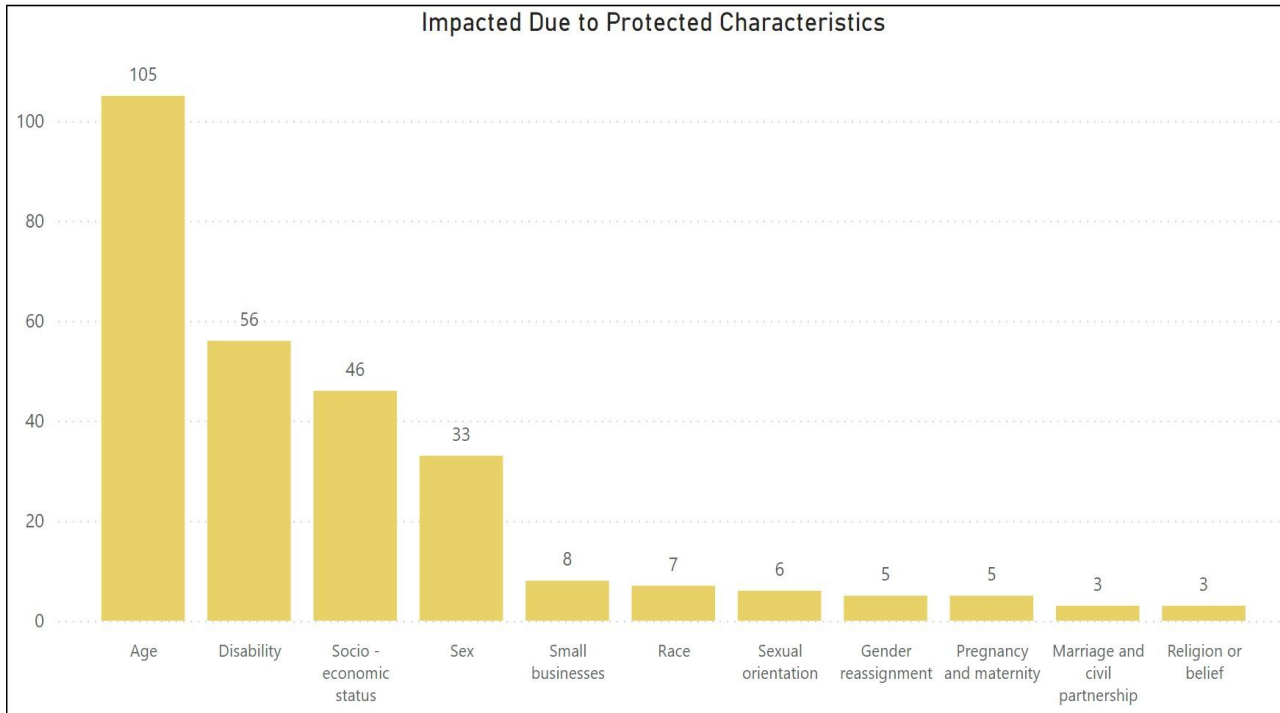
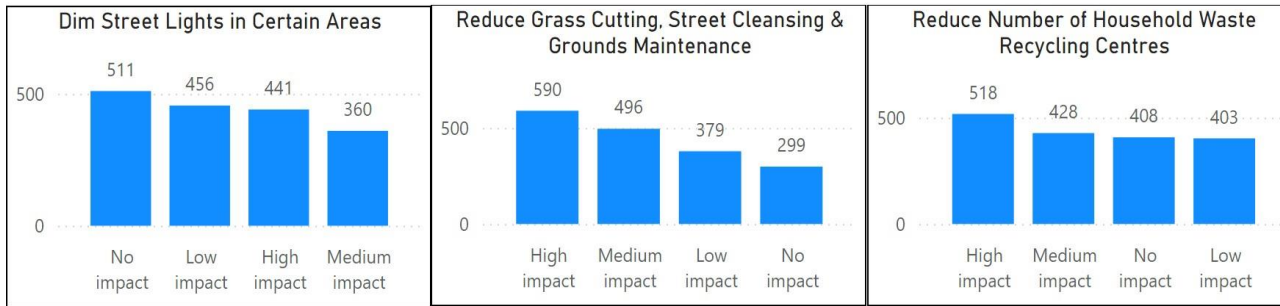
Roads, Waste & Environment (2)



Summary from 483 comments on personal impact:

- **Opposition to Beach Parking Charges:** Many respondents are against introducing parking charges at the beach, arguing it will deter visitors and negatively impact local businesses.
- **Concerns Over City Centre Parking Costs:** There is significant opposition to increasing parking charges in the city centre, with many believing it will further reduce footfall and harm businesses.
- **Impact on Workers:** Several comments highlight that increased parking costs and workplace parking levies would financially strain workers, particularly those who rely on cars due to inadequate public transport.
- **Support for Garden Waste Charges:** Some respondents support reinstating the garden waste charge, viewing it as a reasonable measure to generate revenue.
- **Negative Impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Concerns are raised about the negative impact on mental health and wellbeing if people are discouraged from visiting the beach and other recreational areas due to parking fees.
- **Effect on City's Appeal:** Many believe that increasing parking fees and introducing new charges will make Aberdeen less appealing, driving people and businesses away from the city.
- **Public Transport Issues:** Numerous comments highlight the inadequacy and high cost of public transport as a barrier to reducing car usage, suggesting that improvements are needed before implementing higher parking charges.
- **Opposition to Workplace Parking Levy:** There is strong opposition to the workplace parking levy, with many arguing it would unfairly penalize employees and potentially lead to job losses or businesses relocating.
- **Concerns Over Residential Parking Permits:** Residents express frustration over the high cost of parking permits and the potential for further increases, which they feel are unfair and financially burdensome.
- **Suggestions for Alternative Measures:** Some respondents propose alternative measures such as targeting specific vehicles like campervans for charges, or improving enforcement of existing parking regulations to raise revenue.

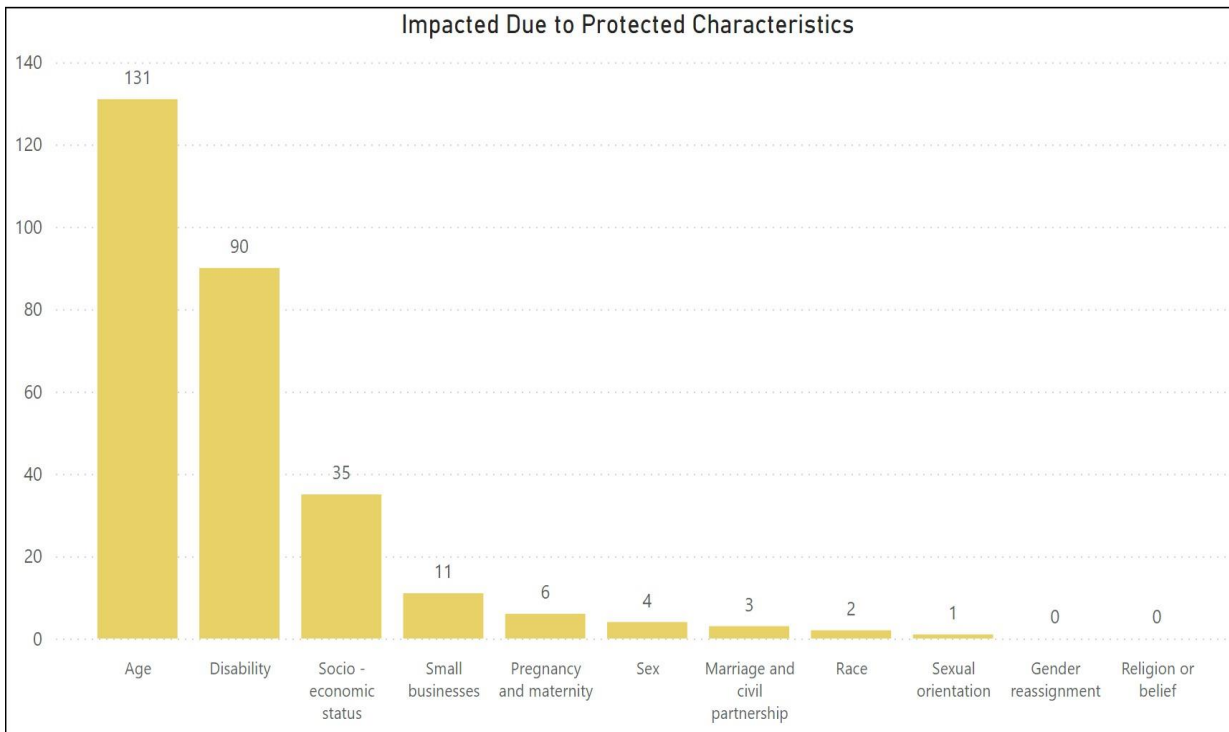
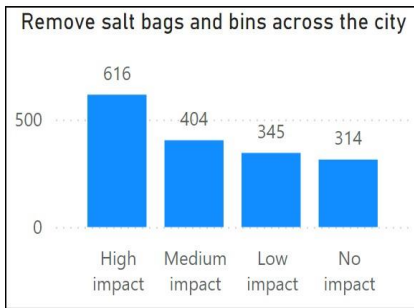
Roads, Waste & Environment (3)



Summary from 403 comments on personal impact:

- Concerns About Safety:** Many respondents express that dimming or reducing street lighting would make them feel unsafe, particularly women and the elderly, who fear increased crime and accidents.
- Impact on Cleanliness:** Residents are worried that reducing street cleaning and grass cutting will make the city look unkempt and unattractive, potentially deterring visitors and lowering residents' quality of life.
- Fly-Tipping Concerns:** There is a strong belief that reducing the number of recycling centers will lead to an increase in fly-tipping, which would be costly to manage and detrimental to the environment.
- Recycling Center Usage:** Several residents mention that they regularly use the recycling centers and would be negatively impacted by their closure, leading to more waste in general bins.
- Support for Grass Cutting Reduction:** Some residents support reducing grass cutting in favor of promoting wildflower areas, which they believe would benefit biodiversity.
- Economic and Environmental Impact:** Residents note that a cleaner and well-maintained city is essential for attracting tourists and maintaining civic pride, suggesting that cuts in maintenance are a false economy.
- Mixed Opinions on Lighting:** While many oppose the reduction in street lighting, some residents believe that dimming lights in less critical areas could save money and benefit the environment.
- Health and Safety:** Concerns are raised about how reduced maintenance and lighting could lead to more accidents, injuries, and health issues, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- Impact on Mental Health:** Some residents express that a well-maintained environment positively affects mental health and community spirit, while neglect could lead to a decline in these areas.
- Alternatives and Suggestions:** Suggestions include using LED lights instead of dimming, maintaining essential cleaning services, and encouraging community involvement in maintaining green spaces.

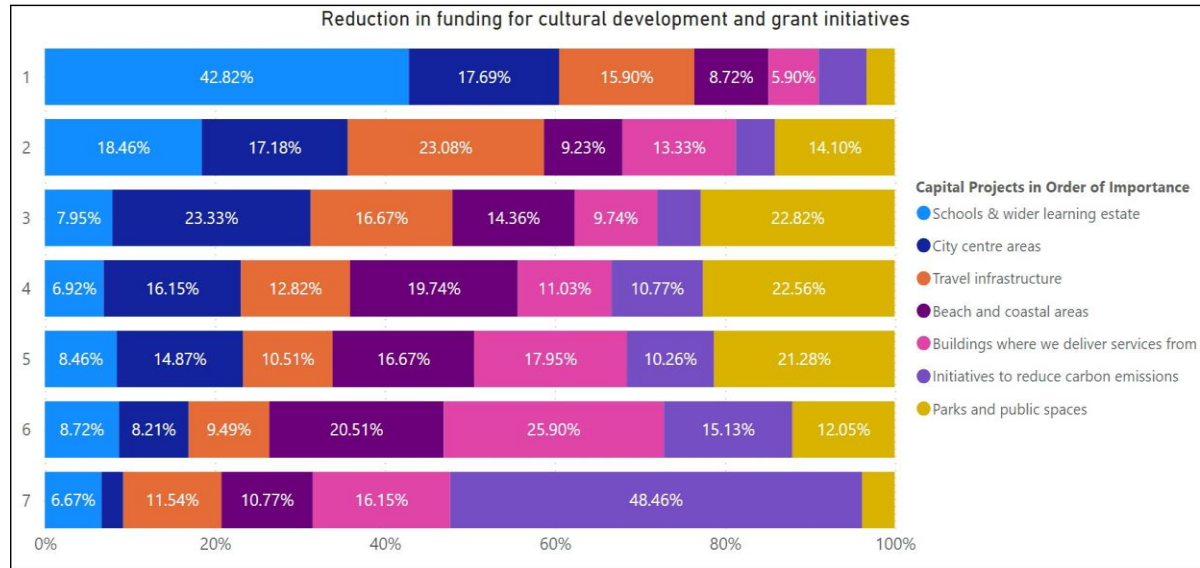
Roads, Waste & Environment (4)



Summary from 375 comments on personal impact:

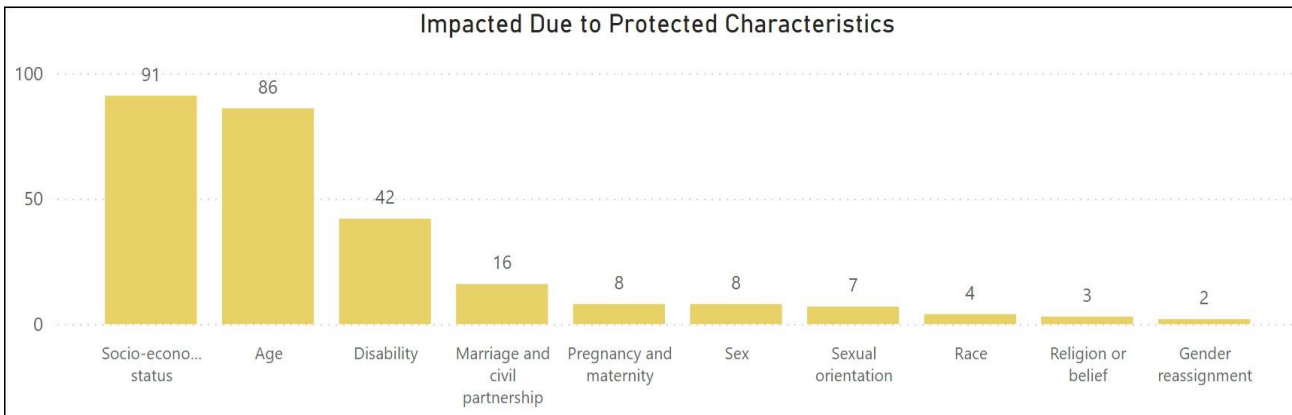
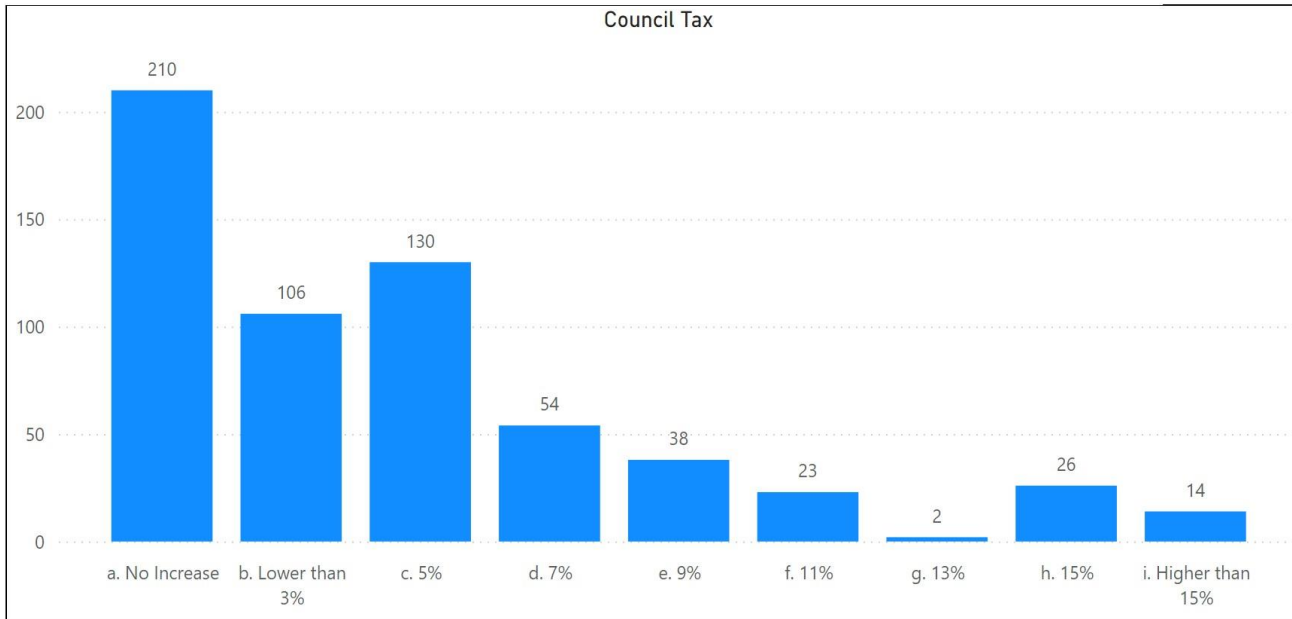
- **Safety Concerns:** Many comments highlight the increased risk of accidents, falls, and injuries, particularly among the elderly and disabled, if salt bins and bags are removed.
- **Impact on Healthcare:** Several respondents mention that removing salt bins would likely increase the burden on healthcare services due to more accidents and falls, leading to higher costs for the NHS.
- **Community Efforts:** Residents often use community salt bins to grit their local areas, ensuring the safety of their neighbours, especially the elderly and those with mobility issues.
- **Criticism of Proposal:** Many comments criticize the proposal as short-sighted and dangerous, suggesting it is not a cost-effective measure given the potential for increased accidents and healthcare costs.
- **Dependency on Salt Bins:** Numerous respondents mention that they rely on salt bins to ensure their streets and pavements are safe during icy conditions, as council gritting services are often insufficient.
- **Environmental Considerations:** One suggestion includes using more sustainable alternatives to salt, such as ash, to reduce environmental impact while maintaining safety.
- **Economic Arguments:** Some comments argue that the cost savings from removing salt bins are minimal compared to the potential increased costs from accidents and healthcare expenses.
- **Personal Impact:** Individuals share personal stories of how the absence of salt bins would affect their daily lives, emphasizing the importance of these bins for maintaining mobility and safety.

Capital Projects



Responders were asked to put these 7 options for capital projects in rank order. With 1 the most important to them and 7 least important.

Council Tax

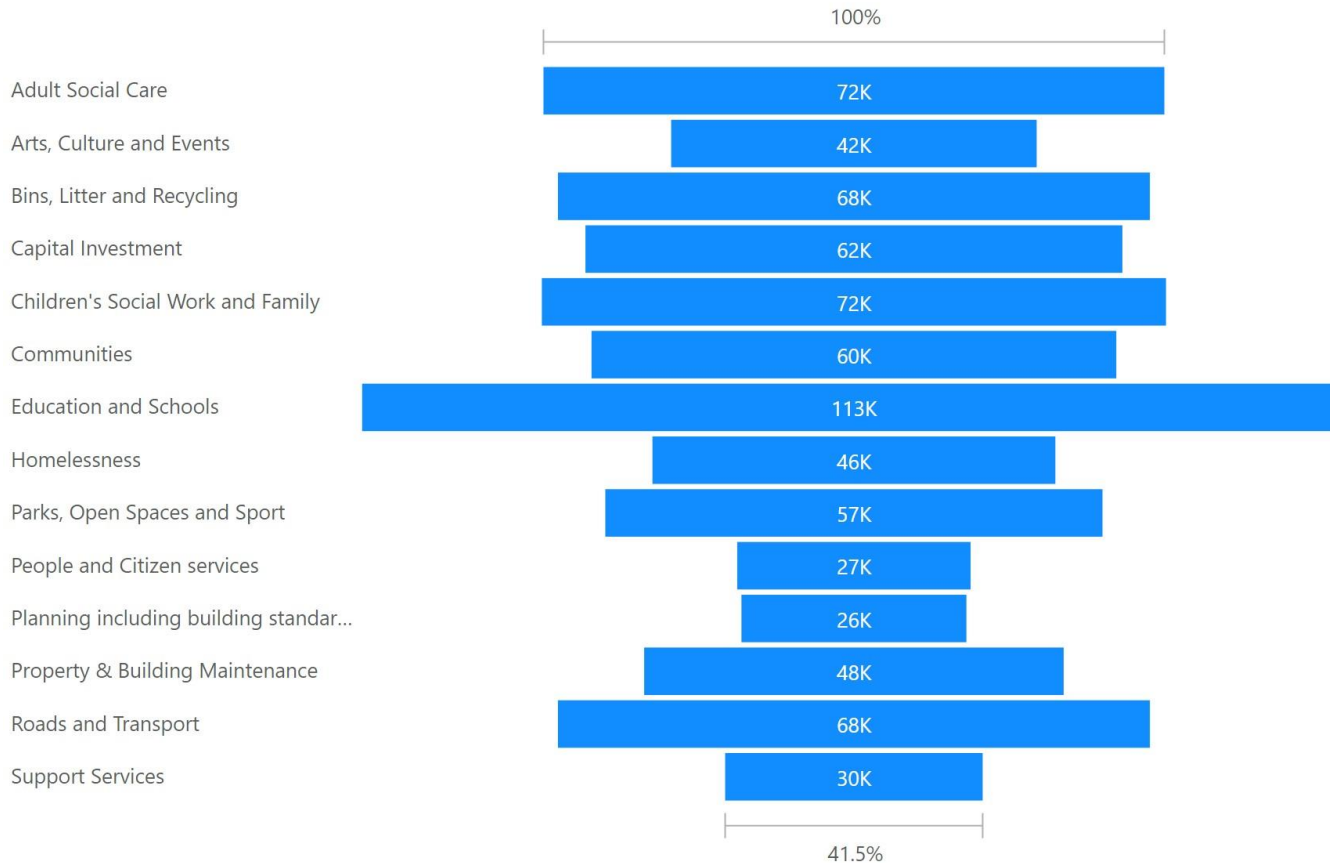


Summary from 216 comments:

- **Financial Strain on Residents:** Some commented that many residents are struggling with the current cost of living and fear that an increase in council tax will exacerbate their financial difficulties, making it harder to afford essentials like food and energy bills.
- **Impact on Low-Income Households:** Low-income families, single parents, and individuals on benefits are particularly concerned that a council tax hike will significantly impact their already tight budgets.
- **Discontent with Council Services:** Several residents feel they are not getting value for money from the council, citing poor maintenance of roads, inadequate public services, and inefficient use of funds on projects.
- **Calls for Fairer Taxation:** Some suggest that higher council tax bands should bear a larger share of the increase, while others argue for a flat rate increase across all bands to ensure fairness.
- **Suggestions for Alternative Funding:** Residents propose alternative measures such as better collection of unpaid taxes, reducing council waste, and reallocating funds from less essential projects to cover budget shortfalls.
- **Support for Service Maintenance:** Some are willing to accept a council tax increase if it means preserving essential services and improving the quality of life in Aberdeen.
- **Concerns Over Inequality:** There is a concern that the current system unfairly burdens single occupants and those in higher tax bands despite their potentially lower disposable incomes.
- **Impact of Housing Market:** Residents highlight the disparity in council tax bands based on outdated property valuations, causing inequities in tax burdens between older and newer properties.
- **Desire for Transparency:** People want more transparency and justification for any tax increases, including detailed explanations of how the additional funds will be used to benefit the community.
- **Potential for Relocation:** Some residents express that continuous tax increases without corresponding improvements in services may drive them to consider moving away from Aberdeen.

Prioritising our Money

What would you prioritise?



Summary from 178 comments:

- **Homelessness and Social Care:** Many comments emphasize the need to prioritize homelessness and social care, citing antisocial behaviour in central areas and the need for better support for vulnerable populations.
- **Education and Schools:** Education is frequently highlighted as a crucial area, with concerns about overcrowded and understaffed schools and the need for better facilities and funding.
- **Infrastructure and Maintenance:** There is significant concern about the state of roads, housing repairs, and general city maintenance, with many calling for better upkeep and more efficient services.
- **Public Safety and Cleanliness:** Comments reflect a need for increased public safety measures and cleanliness, particularly in central areas plagued by drug use and antisocial behavior.
- **Against Vanity Projects:** Several respondents criticize spending on large-scale projects like the beach masterplan and cycle lanes, advocating for funds to be redirected to essential services.
- **Community and Recreational Facilities:** There is support for investing in community centres, parks, and recreational facilities to enhance community engagement and well-being.
- **Financial Transparency:** Many comments call for greater transparency in budgeting and spending, with some suggesting that current budget allocation methods are confusing and lack context.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Environmental issues, such as waste management and recycling, are highlighted as important, though some argue that climate change initiatives should be deprioritized in favor of immediate concerns.
- **Public Transport and Accessibility:** Improving public transport and road conditions is a common theme, with many advocating for better bus services and road maintenance.
- **Calls for Efficient Use of Resources:** Respondents urge the council to use resources more efficiently, suggesting measures like reducing consultant fees and subcontracting, and focusing on essential services.

Online Virtual Session – 2nd September 2024

The virtual engagement session for the budget consultation aimed to gather feedback on the proposed budget options for 2025/26 and understand their potential impacts on the community.

Participants' Concerns:

Staffing Levels and Debt Repayment: A participant raised concerns about staffing levels, noting that 60% of the budget is spent on wages, and inquired about the overall management of debt repayment. They emphasised that this area has a significant impact and inquired about the overall management of debt repayment. Additionally, participant mentioned that there have been significant staffing reductions in the past year and questioned whether this trend would continue.

Health and Social Care Impact: A participant emphasised the importance of collaboration between the council and health services to mitigate the health impacts of budget proposals. A participant also highlighted the need for visual representations of budget data to help the public understand the impact of spending decisions.

Specific Budget Options:

Car Parking Charges at Beach Blvd: A participant expressed concerns that introducing car parking charges at Beach Blvd could deter visitors, impacting local businesses and the overall attractiveness of the city.

Waste Collection Frequency: A participant mentioned that adjusting recycling and waste collections to every three weeks, as done in Aberdeenshire, might not be problematic and could save money.

Removal of Salt Bins: Participants pointed out that removing salt bins could lead to more accidents during winter, increasing the burden on health services.

Grass Cutting and Rewilding: A participant discussed the potential positive aspects of rewilding areas of the city, such as environmental sustainability and the benefits to local wildlife.

Impact on Deprived Areas:

A participant highlighted the need to consider the impact of budget decisions on deprived areas, emphasising that some areas might be disproportionately affected by changes in services.

A participant raised concerns about the impact of budget decisions on deprived areas, specifically mentioning Torry as one of the poorest areas in Aberdeen. They highlighted that there is a perception in Torry that during winter, most of the roads never get touched, and the footpaths become hazardous, leading to a high number of slips and trips. This results in increased visits to clinics and A&E, thereby shifting the financial burden to the NHS.

A participant emphasised the need for the council to consider the broader implications of their budget decisions, particularly how they affect health, well-being, and the environment in deprived areas. They also mentioned that there is a perception that Torry does not receive the same level of treatment as other areas, which contributes to a sense of inequality.

A participant supported this point by discussing the importance of collaboration between the council and health services to mitigate the health impacts of budget proposals. A participant also highlighted the need for visual representations of budget data to help the public understand the impact of spending decisions.

Overall, the concerns raised during the session reflect a need for the council to carefully consider the impact of budget decisions on deprived areas and to ensure that these decisions do not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities.

Capital Programme and Debt:

Managing Capital Projects: A chief officer explained the council's approach to balancing new projects with the maintenance of existing infrastructure, emphasising the need to gather feedback on what the community considers important.

A participant raised concerns about debt repayment. They inquired about the overall management of debt repayment, asking how the debt is being managed and in which direction it is going.

Third Sector Involvement:

Mitigating Public Sector Cuts: A participant highlighted the importance of the 3rd sector in mitigating the impact of public sector cuts and suggested the council consider wider consequences of reductions.

Consultation Participation:

Broader Public Engagement: Participants noted the need for broader public engagement in the consultation process, including reaching out to younger people and marginalised communities.

Visual Representation of Data:

Understanding Budget Impact: A participant suggested that the council provide more visual representations of budget data to help the public understand the impact of spending decisions.

Online Virtual Session – 4th September 2024

At the virtual engagement session for the budget consultation, various officers and participants discussed the impact of potential budget cuts on community services and funding.

Concerns About Digital-Only Services: Participants expressed concerns about the accessibility of digital-only services, especially for older and disabled individuals who may struggle with online systems. This could create barriers for individuals who struggle with online communication or prefer face-to-face interactions. A participant highlighted that many community members find it challenging to communicate online or over the phone, especially when dealing with sensitive issues like financial struggles.

Street Lighting and Safety: Concerns were raised about the proposal to dim street lighting, with participants noting potential safety issues during early morning and late-night hours.

Early Years Provision: A participant inquired about potential reductions in early years provision, particularly regarding eligible two-year-olds and the associated challenges.

School Hours Reduction: Discussions about reducing school hours focused on the potential impact on working parents, after-school care, and children with special needs.

School Meals and Holiday Funding: Participants discussed the importance of school meals and holiday funding for low-income families, emphasising the need to maintain these services to support children's nutrition and reduce vandalism.

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund: A reduction in the Fairer Aberdeen Fund would significantly impact community services, including those supporting poverty alleviation, employability, and food banks. A reduction in funding would end the No Recourse to Public Funds Tackling Destitution project, which provides training for public and third sector organisations and addresses gaps in support for victims of gender-based violence, people seeking asylum, and international students. A reduction in Fairer Aberdeen Funding would have a significant impact on these services, affecting families who rely on food banks and other community support. A participant mentioned that the fund supports the Big Bang drum group, which is particularly beneficial for children with additional support needs. Cutting this fund would mean losing this valuable service. The fund also supports partnerships with other community organisations, and a reduction would impact the ability to provide varied opportunities and services to the community. Discussions focused on the potential impact of cuts to the Fairer Aberdeen Fund on various community projects, including those supporting poverty alleviation, employability, and food banks.

Participants expressed concerns about the impact of budget cuts on services for disabled individuals, including:

Concerns About Digital-Only Services: Participants highlighted that many disabled individuals struggle with online communication or prefer face-to-face interactions. The proposal to make non-emergency services accessible only through digital channels could create barriers for these individuals.

Housing Benefit: A participant raised concerns about the potential impact of budget cuts on housing benefits for disabled individuals. Emphasising that any reduction in housing benefits could lead to homelessness, which would be particularly detrimental for disabled individuals.

BSL Session at Town & County Hall – 10th September 2024

A face to face engagement session for the budget consultation with British Sign Language (BSL) translation, various officers and participants discussed the impact of potential budget cuts on community services and funding. Contributions from participants provided the following feedback:

Reduce Cultural Development & Grant Initiatives – A participant stated that reducing grants would have a significant impact on the wider community. Projects support many groups including those with dementia. Reducing grants would add additional demand and strain on other services, organisations (NHS, Education, 3rd Sector) and adverse knock-on costs. It would also reduce sense of community, retention of jobs and talent.

Aberdeen Performing Arts – A participant believed this have a wider negative community impact.

Fairer Aberdeen Fund – A participant stated that the Fund was gold dust to many organisations who have limited staffing as it is. They asked if there was a method to truly comprehend the wider ramifications of this option, stating that, options should consider both direct and indirect effects.

Fairer Aberdeen Fund – Another participant stated that removing this would will generate more costs in the future.

Education – A participant argued that teachers might leave the profession because of additional workload.

School reduction in hours – Parents might need to seek different jobs to align with school hours and could face longer commutes, possibly needing to travel from areas like Aberdeenshire. They believed the proposal would most likely effect women employment as well as families. It may increase in crime due to boredom. They stated that it would impact staff because fewer would be needed. Impact families who can't afford to pay for children clubs, with more people pushed into disadvantage.

They suggested looking at a different model in Japan which has an optional extra. Increase extracurricular, alternatively think of a broader option that can fill the 2.5 hours. This might come from another fund and involve the 3rd sector. This might support working parents. They believed this would impact low- and no-income families most.

School reduction in hours – Officers gave examples of how this proposal might look. A participant raised the following potential impacts: On parents: Working families face stress and might reduce work hours, potentially leading to fuel poverty. Low-income families and single parents could also be adversely affected. Suggested supporting student [teachers] to cover the time e.g. with sports, beneficial for both parties. Impact would be on colleges and universities with children's literacy in early years, on children going on trips to beach, learning other things. Impact on staff – stress / mental health at risk of job cuts. Teachers might give up with workload and this might be a risk for jobs, particularly women. Impact on families: will increase stress resulting in an increase in mental health. Worry for the children, this would cause additional stress, would impact on long term outcomes, by putting children's future and careers at risk. A participant asked is there would be an option for cutting subjects. It was confirmed that this wasn't planned.

School reduction in hours – Another participant expressed concern, indicating that this may lead to increase in crime due to boredom. They felt there should be other ways of keeping those hours, suggesting other partners come in and support schools. They highlighted the need for specialist teachers and

that due to the extra support that deaf children need, they would be hit harder by this proposal. This would apply to other children with Additional Support Needs. The participant was concerned that the impact of cuts in England would be seen in Aberdeen and that children with a disability need the extra support. They also felt that this would impact support staff, and non-teaching staff, as well as on parents who may need to adjust their hours.

Free school meals – A participant felt that young people depend on this meal and that some don't get it at home. This, they said, would impact on families in poverty and especially on deaf children.

Remove face to face pay points – Concern for people with disabilities, it's not accessible. People in poverty won't have technology, limited money. Deaf people will struggle significantly with this. One centre point is not an option for deaf / blind.

Rationalisation of the early learning childcare provision in the City – will impact those who can't travel to further away schools, poverty.

Reduction in funding to Visit Aberdeenshire and Local Visitor Levy – A participant expressed concern about the range of things for visitors and tourists to do in Aberdeen already and that there should be more available year round. They also thought the proposal would impact businesses.

Parks and capital programmes - A participant stated that tourists in Aberdeen have nothing to do and that proposed budget cuts would make it worse. They referenced the beach leisure centre.

Parks & Green spaces – They raised concerns about reductions to retaining and maintaining parks and green spaces and the potential for increasing industrial space which could have an impact on health and wellbeing.

Webcasting – A participant stated that not everyone can attend meetings and referenced Nolan principle of public life, giving people the right to view.

Waste & Recycling – They suggested that waste policies options should be reviewed and that recycling centres next to school are harmful and was poor planning by the council. They suggested the council look at models from abroad (such as Italy) for recycling and waste.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	2025-2055 HRA Business Plan
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/286
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy McDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Jonathan Belford
REPORT AUTHOR	Helen Sherrit
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council at the meeting on 14 December 2023 agreed to “to instruct the Chief Officer - Finance, in consultation with the Chief Officers - Corporate Landlord and Early Intervention and Community Empowerment (now Chief Officer – Housing) to prepare an updated 30-year HRA Business Plan, commissioning external support where necessary, and reporting back to the Finance and Resources Committee before the end of September 2024” This report fulfils this recommendation. It should be noted that Finance and Resources Committee agreed on 12 September 2024 that the 30 Year HRA Business Plan could be taken at Council alongside the Medium Term Finance Plan for the General Fund.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- 2.1 Approve the HRA Business Plan at Appendix A to this report;
- 2.2 Agree the HRA Business Plan will be updated on an annual basis and reported to Council;
- 2.3 Note the requirement for the Council to maintain HRA reserves for financial resilience and sustainability purposes and that the Plan builds in an annual surplus to support the value of HRA Reserves as time passes;
- 2.4 Approve the terms of proposed consultation with tenants as detailed in paragraph 3.4 and instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to consult with the tenants, and note that the Chief Officer – Finance will include the results as part of the HRA Budget 2025/26 presented to the Council on 11 December 2024: and

- 2.5 Note that the Council will receive reports on the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Asset Management Plan in 2025 and these will inform future updates to the HRA Business Plan.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Business Plan sets out Aberdeen City Council's plans for managing and maintaining the housing stock of over 23,000 rented properties held in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 3.2 It also addresses how the fund will be managed to ensure maximum value is achieved throughout the projected 30 year cycle. Its fundamental purpose is therefore to demonstrate and ensure the efficient use of the Authority's housing assets and rental income. The Business Plan is designed to set out the strategic goals of the Council's Housing Service and measure progress toward achieving these goals, and provides a realistic appraisal of how these strategic goals will be achieved within the limitations of available funding and the predicted economic climate.

30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

- 3.3 The Business Plan (attached as Appendix A) details the following –
- The context of the national, regional, and local factors affecting our provision of housing stock.
 - The vision and core objectives of our housing management plans that are linked to the strategic aims of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and other strategies and policies affecting our service.
 - The asset management assessment is based on the basis of continuing to invest and maintain the stock at the current level, this will increase borrowing and the level of debt that has to be financed annually, and has been included in advance of the Housing Asset Management Plan work, which is currently ongoing being completed, as this will inform future HRA Business Plans.
 - Our financial plans to provide a realistic assessment of our potential to meet our objectives within the limitations of funding available.
 - Our improvement plans and actions to work towards meeting our vision and core objectives.

TENANT CONSULTATION

- 3.4 The Council must consult tenants on proposed rent increases and other charges as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This refreshed Business Plan provides the basis for that consultation for financial year 2025/26. Emerging from the Business Plan, it is proposed that the Council seek the views from tenants of the following:

- A rent increase of 10% in 2025/26, noting that a multi-year increase will be considered following the completion of the Housing Asset Management Plan next year.
- Amending the rent differentials between bedroom sizes 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 3 and 4 based on the average Scottish Cities analysis included in the Plan.
- Charging a premium of 15% for new build properties handed over to ACC after 1 April 25 for 15 years.
- Extending the life of kitchens from 20 to 25 years and bathrooms from 30 to 35 years.

3.5 The consultation will seek to obtain an understanding of the impact of rent increases and changes for those with protected characteristics to support the Council’s approach to complying with the public sector equality duty.

3.6 Below is a table which details the changes and which tenants will be impacted-

2025/26 Consultation proposals and where they could impact tenants				
Bedrooms in Property	Annual Rent Increase	Change Differentials	New Build Premium*	Kitchen & Bathroom Life extensions
0	10%	0%	n/a	Yes
1	10%	0%	15%	Yes
2	10%	10%	15%	Yes
3	10%	12%	15%	Yes
4	10%	7%	15%	Yes

* New Build homes are those handed over to the Council after 1 April 2025

3.7 Tenant consultation is scheduled to commence in October 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All financial implications are contained within the Business Plan as they relate specifically to the 30 year Financial Plan which contains assumptions on rental and debt levels, capital and revenue expenditure.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 requires local authorities to maintain a Housing Revenue Account.

5.2 Section 25 (4) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, indicates that a local authority must:

“..to increase the rents or any other charges payable by all, or any class of, its tenants it must, before giving notice under subsection (1)—
 (a) consult those of its tenants who would be affected by the proposal, and
 (b) have regard to the views expressed by those consulted”

5.3 Aberdeen City Council must comply with the public sector equality duty as prescribed in the Equality Act 2010. An Integrated Impact Assessment will be

prepared to assess the impact of the proposed rent increases on persons with relevant protected characteristics and which will include the results of the consultation.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The housing capital budget has several areas where energy improvements are recommended, or monies set aside to identify sustainable energy solution in the future.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	<p>Management of the Housing Revenue Account not achieving intended strategic objectives.</p> <p>Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee on 23 March 23 refreshed the Risk Appetite Statement. The RAS sets out how the Council will balance its risks and opportunities in pursuit of delivering the outcomes set out within the Local Outcome Improvement</p>	<p>Through the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan</p> <p>The recommendations and risk assessment carried out are consistent with the Council's RAS.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	Plan and associated strategies.			
Compliance	Non-compliance with Housing Revenue Account Guidance.	Review process undertaken as part of 30 Year Business Plan	L	Yes
Operational	Housing Revenue Account should be effective in enabling the most efficient method to provide housing to the 22,772 tenancies and maximising the efficiency of the account to provide Best Value.	Ensure Best Value is achieved for the over 23,000 tenancies.	L	Yes
Financial	Every organisation has to manage the financial risks inherent in the operation of large and complex budgets. In relation to capital projects there is a risk that following the procurement	These risks are minimised by the regular review of financial information by services and corporately by Elected Members. Increase rents regularly will protect against unsustainability and rising costs over time. Maintaining and increasing HRA reserves over time provides resilience in the face of financial stress in the HRA. Quantification and review of indicative projects costs by suitable qualified staff or external body, where appropriate.	H M	Yes

	process tendered costs will vary from that assumed at the time of project approval.			
Reputational	The reputational risks to the Council are minimised by the regular review of financial information by CMT, the Performance Board and Elected members throughout the Financial year.	All staff and Elected Members advised.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	The 30 Year Plan has incorporated energy improvements for sustainable energy solutions in the future.	Risks minimised if report recommendations are approved	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-2025</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Housing Revenue Account should be effective in enabling the most efficient method to provide housing to the over 23,000 tenancies and maximising the efficiency of the account to provide Best Value.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	

Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The housing capital programme is delivering works on loft insulation, replacing old/obsolete boilers with modern equivalents, external wall insulation, heat pumps and photo voltaic panels all enhancing the energy efficient of homes which will assist tenants with affordable warmth. In addition the HRA Budget in 2024/25 introduced a Pilot Rent Assistance Fund the aim of which is to assist Council tenants facing financial hardship.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The health outcomes for older people, people living with long-term conditions and people with disabilities is enhanced by the provision of accessible and adapted properties. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan includes a wheelchair accessible target of 15% of all new build affordable properties. The council's new build programme has delivered new wheelchair and accessible properties in excess of this target.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty to house those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with the Council's housing stock playing a key role in providing accommodation.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The council new build homes are some of the most energy efficient homes in Aberdeen which will contribute to addressing climate change.
Regional and City Strategies	The HRA is sustainable through the HRA business plan this delivers the sustainability of over 23,000 tenancies.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	Not required.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

ALACHO Rental uplifts 2425 –and benchmarking from Scottish Housing Regulators data sets

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 30 year HRA Business Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2025-2055



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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out Aberdeen City Council's plans for managing and maintaining its housing stock of over 23,258 (as of 31 March 2024, this may include those RAAC properties which were not taken off the charge at this date) rented properties held in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It captures the financial framework within which the fund will be managed to ensure maximum value is achieved throughout the projected thirty year cycle.
- 1.2 Its fundamental purpose is therefore to demonstrate and ensure the efficient use of the Council's housing assets and rental income, and how we will ensure high quality customer services for tenants. The Business Plan is designed to set out the strategic goals of the Council's Housing Service and measure progress toward achieving these goals. It provides a realistic appraisal of how these strategic goals will be achieved within the limitations of available funding and the predicted economic climate. The Local Housing Strategy and Housing Asset Management Plan are currently being refreshed which may mean the Business Plan may require further refining as these documents are finalised.
- 1.3 The Business Plan details the following:
 - the context of the national, regional, and local factors affecting our provision of housing stock.
 - the vision and core objectives of our housing management plans that are linked to the strategic aims of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and other strategies and policies affecting our service.
 - an assessment of our housing management and maintenance in terms of asset management, our service performance and tenant participation. .
 - our financial plans to provide a realistic assessment of our potential to meet our objectives within the limitations of funding available.
 - our improvement plans and actions to work towards meeting our vision and core objectives.

Business Plan Conclusions

- 1.4 The HRA cannot demonstrate that there is financial viability over the 30-year life of the Business Plan without rents increasing by 10% in the short term, or a reduced increase in rents paired with changes to the rent value criteria, for example introducing a change to differences in rents between properties and a new build premium.
- 1.5 Service improvements are required in such areas as Repairs and Maintenance, Voids and Debt Management and Tenancy Sustainment to ensure the long-term viability is achieved.
- 1.6 The financial modelling enables the Council to be clear that the financial demands on the HRA over the short to medium term are the maintenance of the existing Housing stock, managing debt and maintaining reasonable rent increases. All new build requires additional borrowing as funding from Scottish Government and/or Council Tax 2nd home Funding/Developer Obligations will only cover a proportion of the total costs. In order to

meet capital investment requirements around being affordable, sustainable and prudent, the scope for new build projects needs to be developed in light of these requirements.

- 1.7 The reduction in funding for the affordable housing supply programme has had serious implications for the Business Plan. Phases 5 to 8 at Cloverhill are currently unfunded through the affordable housing supply programme, with no certainty around funding for future years being available at the time of writing the Business Plan. This means the financial affordability test cannot be met.
- 1.8 The Business Plan reflects the impact of recent higher than forecast pay, price and construction inflation alongside the continuation of capital investment to upgrade and improve the housing stock. The Plan will be reviewed annually and will be updated to reflect the Housing Asset Management Plan that is due to be completed in 2025, which will underpin cost projections for financial year 2026/27 and beyond. This will be reported to the Council through the HRA budget process.

2. Strategic Context

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

- 2.1 Community Planning Aberdeen recently undertook a review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) to ensure it remained relevant and focussed on priority outcomes. This was the third refresh of the LOIP since it was first published in 2016.
- 2.2 The refresh included a new Stretch Outcome 12 introduced to reduce homelessness and ensure a multi-agency response to the new Housing Bill published on 27 March 2024. This stretch outcome is subject to change as a result of further work taking place with the Royal Foundation as part of the Homewards Aberdeen Coalition. Contained in the refresh are the following stretch outcomes which are relevant to Housing:

Economy

- 2.3 Stretch Outcome 1: 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/or not be able to heat their home by 2026.

The housing capital programme delivers a range of works to improve stock condition and energy efficiency including loft insulation improvements, replacing old/obsolete boilers with modern more efficient equivalents, external wall insulation, heat pumps and photo voltaic panels all enhancing the energy efficient of homes which will assist tenants with affordable warmth. In addition the HRA Budget in 2024/25 introduced a Pilot Rent Assistance Fund the aim of which is to assist Council tenants facing financial hardship and the HRA funds SCARF to support tenants with heating and other energy requirements..

People (Adults)

- 2.4 Stretch Outcome 10: Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026. The health outcomes for older people, people living with long-term conditions and people with disabilities is enhanced by the provision of accessible and adapted properties.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan includes a wheelchair accessible target of 15% of all new build affordable properties. The council's new build programme has delivered new wheelchair and accessible properties in excess of this target. The HRA commits over £1 million per annum to allow adaptations to tenants homes to meet their changing requirements.

- 2.5 Stretch Outcome 12: Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.

The Council has a statutory duty to house those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with the Council's housing stock playing a key role in providing accommodation.

Place

- 2.6 Stretch Outcome 13: Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.

The council new build homes are some of the most energy efficient homes in Aberdeen which will contribute to addressing climate change along with continued investment in energy efficiency measures.

Local Development Plan

- 2.7 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies a range of sites across the city to deliver both mainstream and affordable housing and includes policies to promote affordable build HRA properties however we must prove further new build properties are affordable and sustainable.

Local Housing Strategy

- 2.8 The Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is currently being refreshed and due for implementation in 2025. The Local Housing Strategy provides the strategic direction to respond to housing need and demand and informs the future investment in housing and housing related services across the city. The LHS identified an affordable housing target of 342 homes per year in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and 385 per year in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. These targets were exceeded each year of the LHS.
- 2.9 Work has started on the new updated LHS which will be drafted in 2024. Revised housing supply targets will form part of the refreshed LHS based on housing need and demand.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan

- 2.10 The core purpose of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is to set out strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over a 5-year period to achieve the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The SHIP reinforces the local authority as the strategic housing authority and details how investment priorities will be delivered.

2.11 The SHIP should:

- Set out the investment priorities for affordable housing
- Demonstrate how these will be delivered
- Identify the resources required to deliver these priorities
- Enable the involvement of key partners.

2.12 The SHIP 2024 – 2029 has the potential to provide up to 2,814 new affordable homes which will deliver significantly more units than are suggested in the affordable housing supply targets identified in the Local Housing Strategy. This would significantly help meet housing need and demand across the city, however, the affordable housing supply programme budget has been reduced by 24% in 2024/25, with no certainty around funding in future years. Papers issued by COSLA suggest that the revised resource planning assumptions are to be 80/60/40% of the 2024/25 level. This will have a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver affordable homes across the city.

2024/25	2025/26 (80%)	2026/27 (60%)	2027/28 (40%)
12.133	9.706	7.280	4.853

2.13 Assuming that each property attracts in the region of £100k per unit in grant, this will mean that around 97 homes could be delivered in 2025/26, 72 homes in 2026/27 and 48 in 2027/28. When compared to waiting list figures for council housing and 806 affordable completions in 2023/24, this reduction will have significant and far-reaching implications.

2.14 Aberdeen City Council's new build programme has attracted grant for all developments apart from phases 3A, 4A, 5, 5A, 6, 7, 8 at Cloverhill. Currently no grant funding is earmarked for these phases which has significant implications for the HRA.

Phase 5 – 58 homes to be delivered in Summer 2025

Phase 6 – 70 homes to be delivered in Winter 2025

Phase 7 – 30 homes to be delivered in Summer 2026

Phase 8 – 23 homes to be delivered in Autumn 2026

Phase 3A – 45 homes to be delivered in Autumn 2024

Phase 4A – 37 homes to be delivered in Winter 2025

Phase 5A – 34 homes to be delivered in Summer 2026

2.15 Should this funding not be delivered it will create approximately an £18m deficit to the HRA.

Market Position Statement

2.16 Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership produced a [Market Position Statement](#) in 2022 for people with complex care needs. This highlights the requirement for 30 homes, rising to almost 80 by 2028. 10 homes are currently being built at Stoneywood at a cost of circa £4.7m. Significant investment is still required for this type

of accommodation and will require discussions with Aberdeen City Health and Social Partnership on how to fund this work as there is a premium on construction and operating costs to meet the needs of the people who require this type of accommodation. The reductions to the affordable housing supply programme will have significant impacts on how to deliver these types of homes.

Empty Homes Officers

2.17 A full-time Empty Homes Officer has been in post since November 2018 to reflect the changing requirements of empty homes across the city and to ensure empty homes are brought back into use. A second full-time Empty Homes Officer was recruited in February 2023. The Empty Homes Officers work with owners to bring empty properties back into use. Since the post was created, over 700 empty properties have been brought back into use. Work is ongoing with landlords and letting agents across the city to “match” people from housing waiting lists with owners/letting agents of empty properties through the council’s Matchmake to Rent Scheme.

Population & Household Change

2.18 Following the oil price reduction in 2014, 2015-2018 saw a reversal in the rate of positive in-migration to the city, with more recent signs of recovery. However, these trends have influenced future household projections. The number of households is projected to increase by 3% in Aberdeen City over the next decade.

2.19 In Aberdeen City the largest projected increase is in single adult households (+4.4%). The largest percentage increases are in older households, particularly those aged 75+, with projected increases of 18.8%.

Household Income

2.20 The OBR¹ forecasts that real household disposable income per person—a measure of real living standards—2022-23 remains the fiscal year with the largest year-on-year drop in living standards since ONS records began in the 1950s. However, the OBR now forecasts real household disposable income per person to recover its pre-pandemic peak by 2025-26. Median income is currently below that of Edinburgh and Glasgow but above Dundee, where Aberdeen previously had the highest median income in Scotland.

Benefits

2.21 Claimant count provides data on individuals receiving out of work benefit. In Aberdeen City this had risen from 4,165 individuals in March 2020 to 9,295 by years end. Since February 2021, numbers have decreased and from June 2022 have remained around 5,200 which is still higher than pre-covid levels. Aberdeen City has 11th highest rate of claimant count receipt as a proportion of working age population of the 32 Scottish local authorities.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

2.22 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). If an area is identified as ‘deprived’, this can relate to people having a low income but it can also mean fewer resources or opportunities. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing.

¹ [OBR, March 2024, Economics and Fiscal Outlook](#)

- 2.23 SIMD is the Scottish Government's standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland. It can help improve understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. It can also allow effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation.
- 2.24 SIMD ranks data zones from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). People using SIMD will often focus on the data zones below a certain rank, for example, the 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland. SIMD is an area-based measure of relative deprivation: not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be experiencing high levels of deprivation. According to the SIMD 2020 results, Aberdeen City saw an increase in deprivation levels compared to previous years. In Aberdeen, several data zones are among the most deprived in Scotland. The SIMD ranks areas based on factors such as income, employment, health, education, access to services, crime, and housing.

3. Demand

Private Rented Sector

- 3.1 Aberdeen Quarter 2 2024 Citylets report detailed below shows that Private Rented Sector (PRS) rents have increased by 6.1% in the last 12 months. The table below shows the annual change, along with 5 and 10 year changes and whilst rents are still lower than they were 10 years ago, they are still unaffordable for many people, particularly those who require 3+ bedrooms or more. This results in demand for social housing increasing due to unaffordable rents in other tenures of housing.

Beds	Monthly Average Rent	Rent Change 1yr	Rent Change 5yrs	Rent Change 10 yrs	Average Time To Let (TTL) (days)	TTL Change YoY	Let within a week	Let within a month
1 bed	£553	5.1%	21.5%	-18.9%	27	2	17%	65%
2 bed	£800	7.1%	21.0%	-21.3%	28	3	14%	66%
3 bed	£1,177	5.2%	15.2%	-21.8%	33	2	8%	58%
4 bed	£1,703	2.9%	14.6%	-17.1%	29	-7	12%	63%
All	£886	6.1%	20.7%	-18.3%	28	2	14%	64%

Aberdeen City Council Waiting Lists

- 3.2 As at August 2024 there are 5,841 applicants waiting for housing, including around 520 homeless households. 2,123 properties were let in 2023/24 and 809 properties have been let to end of August 2024. The number of lets will be higher than usual due to the new build programme.
- 3.3 Demand as at August 2024 for each size of property from those on the housing lists is illustrated in the table below. A number of applicants may appear twice in the table below as they may be on more than one list.

- 3.4 Housing need is defined by three main principles; homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness; people who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions; and tenants of houses which are held by a social landlord, which the social landlord selecting its tenants considers to be underoccupied.

Housing Demand at 05 August 2024			
Bedroom Size	Total Housing Need	Without Housing Need	Total
1	2,433	954	3,377
2	531	840	1,371
3	580	295	875
4	198	20	218
Total	3,732	2,109	5,841

4. Regulatory Framework

Scottish Government

- 4.1 The Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide and to support the Government's long-term aims. Also the guidance within the [Scottish Government Guidance on Operation of Local Authority Housing Revenue Account](#) brings together in one place, the role of the HRA, how it must operate, who the resources contained within it are meant to benefit and what outcomes can be expected from those resources.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government published in March 2021 - [Housing to 2040](#), which is Scotland's first long-term national housing strategy with a vision for what housing should look like and how it will be provided to the people of Scotland, no matter where they live and what point in their life they are at.
- 4.3 It was recognised that Scottish Government cannot deliver the ambitions in Housing to 2040 alone and they state they will work with local authorities, housing providers, landlords and the construction and house building sectors to do this.
- 4.4 This vision aims to put housing firmly at the centre of other objectives for people in Scotland, such as tackling poverty and inequality, creating and supporting jobs, ensuring that energy efficiency and fuel poverty targets are met, along with tackling the climate emergency, and making sure there are connected, successful communities to live in.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government's [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#), published on 07 October 2021, outlines a pathway to net-zero emission homes and buildings by 2045. A Social Housing Net Zero fund has been established to assist social landlords.
- All homes must be at least EPC band C by 2033.
 - All social housing must be at least EPC B by 2032.
 - All homes that use high emission oil, LPG and solid fuels have to convert to zero emissions heating by 2030.

Scottish Housing Regulator

- 4.6 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) regulates registered social landlords (RSLs) and the landlord and homelessness services of local authorities. It is an executive agency of

the Scottish Government and it exercises independently the regulatory powers of Scottish Ministers. Its overall purpose is regulating to protect the interests of tenants, people who are homeless, and others who use social landlords' services.

- 4.7 Scottish Housing Regulator for both local authorities and RSLs, monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) on their performance of housing activities. This means how they deliver housing services to:
- Tenants;
 - People who are homeless;
 - Gypsy/Travellers who use official sites provided by these landlords; and
 - Owners in factored buildings.
- 4.8 The Scottish Housing Regulator has an established Regulatory Framework relating to housing services' performance. The Regulatory Framework includes the need for social landlords to:
- Submit an Annual Return against the Charter (ARC) in May of each year
 - Publish an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) by the end of October of each year and make it available to tenants and other service users
 - Undertake a Customer Satisfaction Survey at least every three years
 - Notify the Regulator in year of any material changes to the assurance in its Annual Assurance Statement.

Aberdeen City Council Governance

Housing Board

- 5.1 A Housing Board has been established by senior officers to oversees progress in housing outcomes. The Board has agreed an agile High Level Plan to guide focus on areas of vulnerability identified. Significant time is currently being invested in establishing the data architecture that is required to enable more effective real time monitoring, this will better enable the Council to take more timeous action based on emerging trends.
- 5.2 The needs of tenants continue to change, needs are far more complex now than pre-pandemic. Mental health needs are particularly prevalent. Given the changing landscape, it is of critical importance that we evaluate the impact of our current arrangements to ensure that our approaches best meet the needs of our tenants today. Several evaluations are currently being prepared to support our decision making. As a result, the Housing Board Plan is subject to regular review and each completed evaluation triggers a review of the Plan.
- 5.3 Progress against the Housing Board Plan is reported in detailed bi-annual Housing Board reports to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee.

Housing Emergency

- 5.4 Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 05 September 2024 agreed that Aberdeen City Council are in a housing emergency, the following recommendations were agreed:
1. Commits to the creation and implementation of a Housing Emergency Action Plan, through the work of the Housing Board, which will be refreshed and reported bi-annually to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee – this

- Action Plan will draw together ongoing work, existing strategies and council teams, aligning these behind the shared goal of tackling the housing emergency;
2. Recommends to Council to establish a cross-party working group to monitor the progress of the Housing Emergency Action Plan, to be chaired by the Convener of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee;
 3. Will take a human rights-based approach to delivering the Action Plan, embedding participation, accountability, non-discrimination and empowerment into the process; and
 4. Commits to working with communities, individuals with lived experience of the housing emergency, and internal and external partners to deliver the Action Plan and develop solutions to the housing emergency.

Objectives and Strategic Links

Objectives

- 6.1 The objective for housing management is:

To operate a sustainable HRA into the future that provides fair, accessible and high quality services to be delivered to our tenants and applicants at an affordable cost, demonstrating value for money while improving our staff experience, citizen experience and use of resources.

Strategic Links

- 6.2 The Business Plan aims to align corporate and service strategic documents to demonstrate how the service will operate into the future and to continue to provide services that meet the core objectives set out above.

TOM 1.2 Organisational Structure Update

- 6.3 The Council on 07 February 2024 approved TOM 1.2 Organisation Structure, this made changes at Director and Chief Officer level. This impacts on the Housing Revenue as a result of the creation of the Families and Communities Function. This function leads the development and delivery of a Family Support Model to enable delivery of The Promise and closer multi-disciplinary working at locality and neighbourhood level. It will provide vision, leadership, strategic direction and professional advice to enable successful delivery the council's and Community Planning Partnership's priorities for children, families and our communities. The function will facilitate multi-agency working at the most local level to support children and families; and ensure readiness and effective implementation of anticipated reforms to further strengthen the model of Family Support. The function comprises of Education & Lifelong Learning, Children's Social Work & Family Support, Corporate Landlord, and Housing. The function will ensure that services are delivered in an integrated manner to achieve better outcomes for people in Aberdeen City, within the framework of statutory responsibilities and consistent with the Council's strategic objectives.
- 6.4 Within this function the role of Chief Officer – Housing was created in TOM 1.2, the Housing cluster delivers housing strategy and services for families and aims to reduce inequalities by taking account of what we know about the wider determinates of good health. It has a key role in understanding community need, increasing community capacity and resilience, and working with partners to tackle the cause rather than the consequences of failure demand.

Service Assessment

Asset Management

- 7.1 Aberdeen City Council's ambition is to deliver a housing asset base which is sustainable, in good condition and meets housing need and demand through evidence based decision making and will be achieved through the creation of an Integrated Asset Management model which is being developed in conjunction with Arneil Johnston with a completion date of December 2024.
- 7.2 This means this refresh of the 30 Year HRA Business plan includes capital spend based on the REM life of the current assets no account has been taken of the City Centre Multi Storey review or the potential rebuild of the properties on the demolished site of the RAAC properties.
- 7.3 The 5 Steps to developing an integrated asset management model:
1. Define, measure & classify assets
 2. Identify asset performance measures
 3. Establish an asset scoring system
 4. Scrutinise asset performance outcomes
 5. Appraise options to inform future investment decisions
- 7.4 An asset scoring system will be established by and outcome system: Red/Amber/Green traffic lights applied to each asset group to define the most sustainable assets. The investment options will be –
- Status Quo
 - Remodel asset/accommodation type
 - Change of use
 - Implement interventions for reducing management costs and improving efficiency
 - Change of tenure
 - Demolition
 - Demolition/New Build
 - Disposal/Market sale
- 7.5 The Integrated Asset Management plan will be incorporated in the HRA Business Plan in 2026/27 refresh.

Repairs

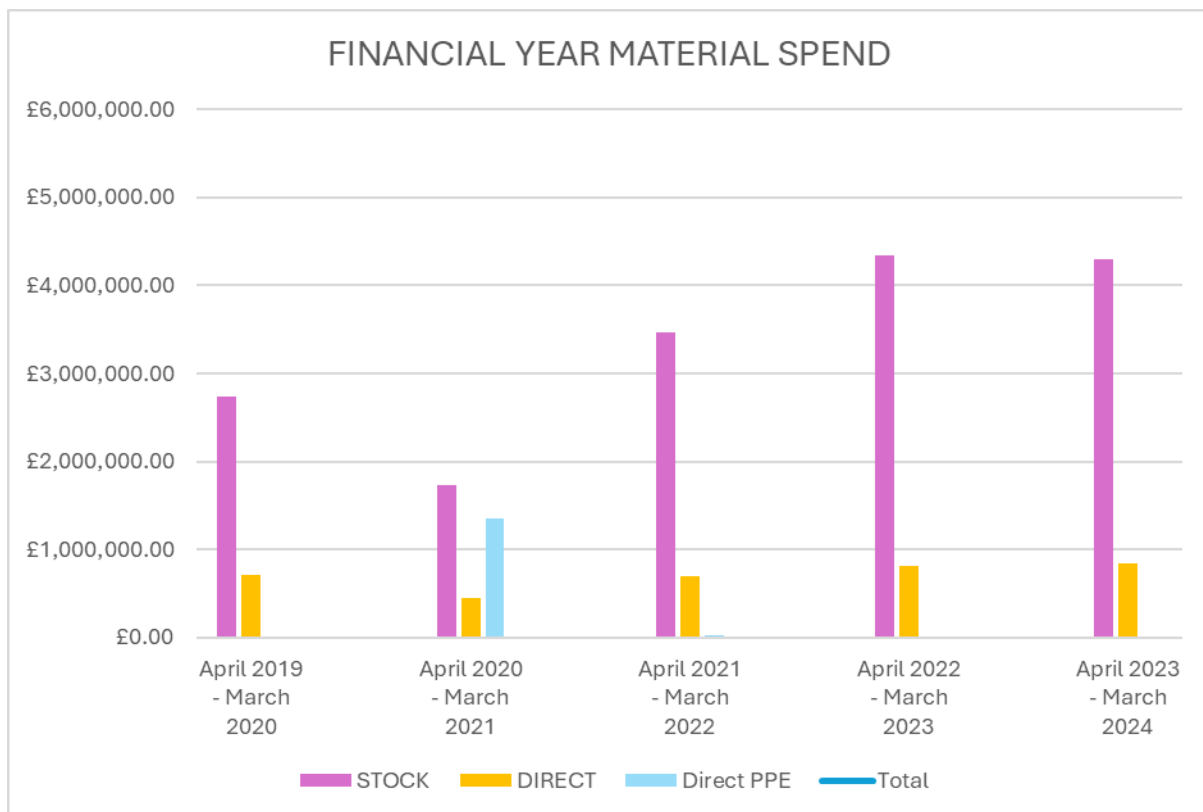
- 7.6 The cost of repairs has increased significantly as you will see from the table below, this is a challenge felt by many other local authorities due to the level of price and wage increases over the last few years triggered by inflation, COVID, BREXIT and the Ukraine war.

Spend over 5 years Repairs & Maintenance				
2023/24	2022/23	2022/21	2020/21	2019/20
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
43,855	36,194	30,383	27,159	26,105

7.7 Ignoring the voids repairs in 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the way they were recorded this shows that the number of emergency and non-emergency repairs have fallen which implies that the reason for the increase is the cost is pay and material prices below.

Craft Workers - Pay Increases	
	%
23/24	7.59
22/23	8.04
21/22	3.64
20/21	3.00
19/20	2.95

7.8 In total 25.22% increase on pay for craft workers, with a potential pay award in 2023/24 of 4.2% for craft workers.



This graph shows the cost of stock materials has increased from 2019/20.

- 7.9 The Business Plan currently assumes there will be no reduction in repairs and maintenance with an annual increase of 5% each year to reflect pay and material increases. A cost reduction could be achieved by the reintroduction of Planned Maintenance, a report was presented to Communities, Housing and Public Protection on 5 September 2023 regarding a [Planned Maintenance Pilot Project](#) this detailed proposals for the re-introduction of a planned preventative maintenance programme for the Council's housing stock and to proposed a pilot scheme for such a programme in the Lang Stracht area of the city.
- 7.10 Planned Maintenance is a proactive approach to maintenance which will achieve long term cost savings across both revenue and capital budgets. However, this practise has been reduced significantly within the Council's housing stock for a significant period of time, re-establishing the process will have a significant short term resource and cost pressure on the Housing Revenue Account. The need to divert resource from other areas to focus on the RAAC rehousing programme has led to delays in re-introducing a more comprehensive planned maintenance programme will be progressed through 24/25. A pilot project is currently being progressed.

Minimum Letting Standard

- 7.11 Changes to the Minimum Letting Standard (MLS) was introduced in January 2022 as part of a review of Housing performance through the Housing Improvement Group. The previous policy was approved in 2015 and made a significant reduction from previous standards to try and improve void periods. A number of high level reasons drove this review in particular the following issues had been highlighted within the Housing Improvement Group, the main ones being the high number of refusals for properties and abortive offers being made, properties being returned in very poor condition and the introduction of Choice Based Letting and the requirement to include internal photographs.
- 7.12 The enhanced standards introduced in 2022 included the painting of internal walls and woodwork, floor coverings, and undertaking some capital and repair works during the void period and ensuring the external condition of the property is to a certain level. This was to address access and refusal issues whilst properties were occupied.
- 7.13 A review is currently ongoing of the Minimum Letting Standard, to ensure it is a proportionate response to refusals and the other issues highlighted and whether this standard is affordable given the rising repairs and maintenance costs and the levels of void rental income. This will include reviewing the levels of decoration and the condition of properties handed back. The outcome of this review will be reported to Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 21 November in the Housing Board Bi Annual Report.

Voids

- 7.14 The level of Voids remains a challenge for ACC in both monetary and numbers and continues to be influenced by high numbers of stock churn (864 properties returned between April and August 2024), contractors and trades availability, rising construction costs, requirements to address refused capital works during void periods, pressure on voids process from buy back properties, scale of works required to individual properties

prior to re-let. As at 14/08/24 the number of voids is 2,244 (this includes a number of properties which are available for let but are held for Ukraine refugees and those affected by RAAC), the table below provides an analysis of the property type and the number of bedrooms. The new build programme has added over 1,000 new properties to the stock. At any one time there will be in excess of 200 properties under offer.

Property Type	No of Bedrooms					Total
	0	1	2	3	4	
Amenity Cottage	16	80	1			97
Amenity Flat		11	1			12
Amenity Multi-Storey Flat		19	6			25
Cottage	1	11	62	97	11	182
Flat	137	490	411	99	7	1,144
Four In Block		78	71	27	1	177
Maisonette			42	12		54
Multi-Storey Flat	2	66	135			203
Multi-Storey Maisonette			51			51
Sheltered Cottage		18				18
Sheltered Flat	3	53	3			59
Sheltered Multi-Storey Flat		61	15			76
Split Level Cottage				51	10	61
Split Level Flat		70				70
Very Sheltered Flat		14	1			15
Grand Total	159	971	799	286	29	2,244

7.15 Cost of the void rent loss in 2023/24 was £7.8m this was a significant increase from £5.2m in 2022/23, this has continued in 2024/25 as at 30 August 24 rent loss was £3.9m

7.16 The information below was taken from the Scottish Housing Regulator Charter Indicators and data for 2023/24, you will see Aberdeen City Council has the highest % of rent due lost through empty properties out of all the Scottish Local Authorities who have HRA properties.

Financial Year 23/24 Local authority	18 - Percentage of rent due lost through empty properties
Aberdeen City Council	7.91
Dundee City Council	2.16
City of Edinburgh Council	1.97
Stirling Council	1.52

7.17 the voids process is under review and a number of improvement activities are underway to better understand and improve the situation. This includes:-

- Engaging with external contractors to undertake works
- Set aside voids where there are significant repair works (time or cost) aligned with demand.
- Review of minimum letting standard
- Review of capital improvement works undertaken during void period

- Prioritisation of work to void properties in areas where demand is highest
- Evaluation of Choice based letting and prioritisation of improvement activity
- Investment in digitised voids management system reflecting streamlined approval process.
- Pause of buy back process

Income Collection/Arrears

7.18 The in year rent collection rate for Aberdeen City Council in 2023/24 was 97%. This means a small proportion of rent remains uncollected annually. Gross rent arrears are as shown in the table below at £18.25 Million. The information below was taken from the Scottish Housing Regulator Charter Indicators and data for 2023/24, you will see Aberdeen City Council has the highest % of gross rent arrears of rent due out of all the Scottish Cities Local Authorities who have HRA properties. These figures represent former tenancy arrears and rent due from existing tenants, i.e. arrears that have arisen over a number of years.

Financial Year 23/24	27 - Percentage gross rent arrears of rent due
Aberdeen City Council	18.25
City of Edinburgh Council	13.85
Dundee City Council	10.70
Stirling Council	9.35

7.19 We have recognised the need to address the level of tenancy arrears and a number of processes have been put in place in order to improve this position. This includes, enhancing tenancy support through a new combined Housing & Support Officer role and the establishment of a Corporate Debt Specialist Debt Recovery Team which includes the recovery of Rent Arrears. As part of the creation of these new teams/roles the recovery policies and procedures have been reviewed and benchmarked via the Local Authority Rent Forum. Digital Case Conferencing has been introduced at targeted stages through the recovery process to ensure stakeholders are involved in the decision making. There has been improved contact with tenants for whom English is not their first language and increased and targeted communications around rent payment.

7.20 There are further changes planned, these include:

- Review and improve our pre-tenancy and early tenancy support to tenants to set them up to succeed. This includes having a Financial Assessment as part of the Tenancy Sign Up process. Ensuring Universal Credit is up to date as appropriate. Making Direct Debits mandatory at sign up where the tenant has a bank account. Introducing Quality Assurance for Housing and Support functions.
- Undertaking a Direct Debit campaign
- Review the Write Off process and benchmark with other councils.
- Review the Housing Support Model to include twilight working and increase contact and maximising early engagement opportunities.

7.21 Former Tenancy Arrears have increased from £4.7m 2022/23 to £6.1m in 2023/24. Sheriff Officers are now being engaged to support the recovery of unpaid debts, the first part of this process being assessing the likelihood of recovery, with the intention of improving the overall rent collection position. Benchmarking information within the

Council's 'family group' identifies and average debt write off rate in the region of 30% over the last 5 year period compared with a rate of below 10% by Aberdeen City Council. As such the overall rent arrears position should be viewed in this context.

- 7.22 In addition, on 14 December 2023 Council approved the creation of a £500k Rent Assistance Fund (RAF) pilot as part of the HRA Budget 2024/25. The Pilot was requested to respond positively to tenants who, through no fault of their own, have difficulty in meeting all of their rental obligations. The aim of the Pilot Rent Assistance Fund is therefore to assist Council tenants facing financial hardship where it has been identified that their tenancies may be at risk. The criteria and management of this fund is detail in the report 'Rent Assistance Fund 2024/25' to Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee report on 28 March 2024 ([Rent Assistance Fund](#)). The evaluation covering the full 12 months of the pilot will be presented to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee after one full year of operation. Other LA's with our 'family group' have more established rent assistance funds, many at significantly higher levels. This is a further contributing factor to the overall arrears position.
- 7.23 Since going live on the 22 April 2024 the Rent Assistance Fund there has been –
- 78 referrals made to RAF
 - 38 referrals approved
 - Average award £1,146.20
 - Total paid £43,555.77
 - 9 referrals declined
 - Total rent arrears of £143,581.41 from the RAF referrals received.

Rent Setting/Cost of living crisis

- 7.24 In December 2023 the Council took the decision to increase rents for 2024/25 by 4.7%, which was below the recommended rent increase of 8.5%. For this to be affordable the Council is using £3.161m of HRA reserves. This meant a reduced cost to tenants, but did not address the underlying costs being experienced by the HRA.
- 7.25 In addition there were rent freezes in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to support tenants at a time of the COVID pandemic, and the enormous uncertainty in respect of the economy and living standards. The HRA was able to absorb this loss of income in the short term by diverting money from paying for capital investment. The impact of rent freezes has a cumulative effect, and took £360m out of the HRA 30 year business plan.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

- 7.26 The presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) panels within roofs has been confirmed at circa 504 addresses in the Balnagask area of Aberdeen. This is the only area where RAAC has been identified across the Council's housing estate.
- 7.27 The 504 addresses are made up of 372 individual buildings which are a mix of houses and ground/first floor flats. In the case of the flats, although it is only the top flat which has the RAAC panels in the roof, it is evident and accepted that the bottom flat will also be impacted in terms of any potential planned remedial works.

- 7.28 Our records show that the RAAC impacted properties are a mix of council ownership (366) and private ownership (138).
- 7.29 [Council on 21 August](#) agreed to proceed with the option of demolition and rebuild of homes on the site detailed above and Chief Officer – Capital was instructed to proceed with the demolition aspect of this, and report back to the next appropriate meeting of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on the initial phasing of demolition and landscape details.
- 7.30 The Council also agreed to -
- Undertake a detailed master planning exercise assuming the site is vacant to determine future redevelopment;
 - Look at a range of delivery options for new housing on the site including opportunities to work with partners to meet the masterplan aspirations, and the requirement of the Housing Revenue Accounts 30 year business plan;
 - Take forward negotiations with private owners to acquire their properties voluntarily at Market Value, noting that this would be a valuation of the property at the current date and be on the same basis as the CPO process. In addition to Market Value the Council would be willing to meet reasonable legal and professional costs along with home loss and disturbance payments;
- 7.31 The full recommendations are found in the following link - [Full recommendations](#).
- 7.32 It should be noted that in 2025/26 we will continue to vire funding from the mainstream housing capital programme for the demolition of the RAAC properties, following the review of the asset management plan we will look to incorporate any decisions on the masterplan.

City Centre Multi's

- 7.33 A report was presented to Communities, Housing and Public Protection on 16th May 2023 to update the committee on progress toward the production of a full option appraisal of the city centre multi storey blocks as instructed by Council at its budget meeting on 10th March [City Centre Multi Storey Blocks - Progress on Full Options Appraisal](#).
- 7.34 A range of detailed technical appraisals and surveys have been undertaken including an assessment of the life cycle costings, buildings surveys, energy assessments and modelling, mechanical and electrical installation surveys, external structural surveys and new build replacement analysis to support a future report along with some consultations with tenants and owners which were very well supported.
- 7.35 This Report was scheduled to be reported to the Committee in the summer of 2024, with recommendations as to potential decisions that may then be made. Unfortunately due to a requirement to divert resources to the RAAC Project, and the pressure that this has created across the Housing stock this has been delayed. The findings are now scheduled to be reported in November

2024. This Business Plan will require to be updated to reflect future decisions on the investment requirements within this property group.

Complex Care

- 7.36 Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership produced a [Market Position Statement](#) in 2022. A further market statement is being worked on for complex care this also makes reference to homelessness as well this will be presented to Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 21 November 2024 in the Housing Board Bi Annual Report, the impact of this statement will be incorporated into the refreshed 30 year HRA Business Plan in 2025.

Management Costs

- 7.37 The management costs with the HRA include elements of the following services

- Chief Officer time related to housing
- Legal
- Finance
- Financial Inclusion Team
- Housing Access
- Regional Communications Centre
- Family Support
- Commercial and Procurement
- Digital and Technology
- People and Organisational Development

- 7.38 The above is not a complete list of all of the costs associated with Management and Administration but it provides an understanding that almost all areas of the Council are involved within supporting the HRA. We are currently reviewing a number of the services currently charged to the HRA to ensure that the HRA is the best place for these costs to sit.

- 7.39 Any pay awards agreed must be funded by the income within the HRA there is no additional funding provided by the Scottish Government, and there are no subsidies that can be provided by the General Fund, and Council Tax payers.

Choice Based Letting

- 7.40 Choice Based Lettings (CBL) was introduced in 2022 it allows mainstream tenants to make an informed decision about where they would like to live by bidding (registering interest) on ACC's available properties online. We advertise available homes on our website each week (called a bidding cycle).
- 7.41 At the time of initial consideration of a CBL process for Aberdeen City Council officers understood a link between void rent loss and refusal rates and sought to understand

approaches other local authorities and RSLs were using to allow active participation and choice around a person's eventual home. During the initial scoping exercise, it became clear that most Local Authorities and RSLs had adopted a version of choice based letting, to varying degrees, with some routing all stock through this process, and others adopting a hybrid approach.

- 7.42 CBL was introduced to provide a route for applicants to take an active part in their application, providing an online platform for applicants to view available vacant properties and register an interested in these. It was anticipated that by introducing a system that allowed for active participation the following benefits would be realised:
- **Refusal rates** would reduce. The anticipated reduction would reduce the time officers spent generating offers and processing refusals.
 - **Void rent loss** would reduce and there would be improved demand for lower demand stock.
 - **Tenancy sustainment** would increase due to applicants having a choice about their future home, and the wider community would benefit from greater level of sustainment.
 - **Applicant satisfaction** would be improved due to increased choice, control, and greater transparency regarding available stock.
- 7.43 Further to this since its implementation we have had unexpected demands which have shifted our initial planned operating context, with approximately 997 properties being routed away from the standard allocation approach to be allocated to people fleeing conflict in Ukraine and tenants impacted by the discovery of RAAC within their home.
- 7.44 As a local authority with a considerable focus on digital options, transparency, participation, empowerment, and choice, CBL does provide a platform to meet and continue to support and encourage a greater level of these across our residents actively seeking housing options in the city. This participation is realising improvement across a number of areas where citizens have engaged with the system, this is supported by feedback from tenants and staff.
- 7.45 It is clear that we need to increase the number of applicants participating in their CBL bidding process due to the lower refusal rates and less abandonments evident in those who do. We also need to think about how we support those with a higher level of vulnerability who currently have auto bid applied to determine how best to support more positive outcomes for this group.

Tenant Participation and Consultation

- 7.46 Consulting with tenants is not only set in legislation and monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator but is seen as good practice. In terms of rent consultations, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires social landlords to consult tenants and take account of their views when making decisions about proposed rent increases. Previously we have emailed tenants with an outline of the current issues facing the HRA and provide options for a particular percentage rent increase and what these increases would provide in terms of maintaining/enhanced services etc. Tenants without digital access are sent letters. The consultation period can be anything from 2-4 weeks. During this period, the consultation is promoted in order to maximise participation. This will include the use of Newsbite, press releases, social media, posters, drop – in sessions, SHMU

Radio and the Housing and Support Officers. Results of the consultation are included in the HRA Budget report presented to Council in December.

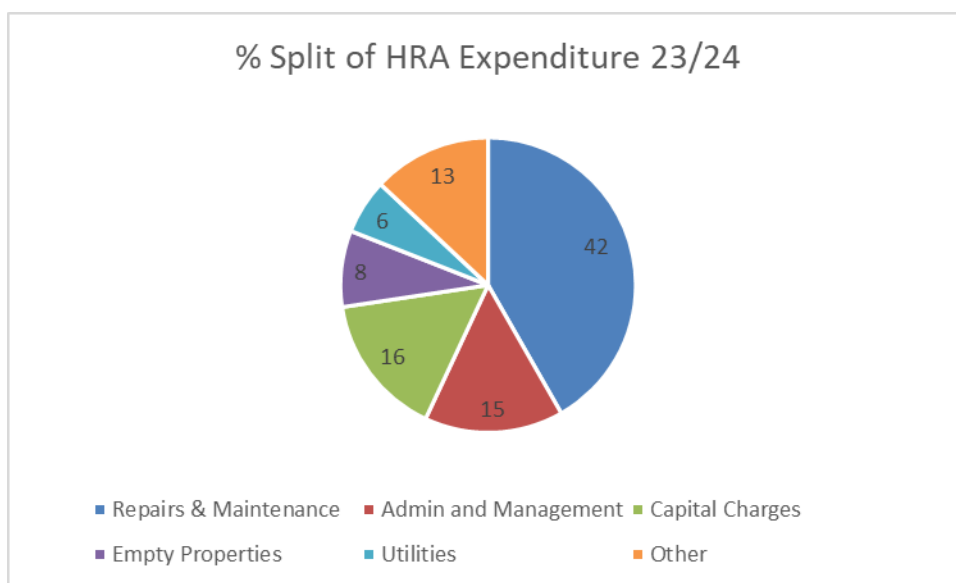
8. Financial Strategy

Introduction

- 8.1 This refreshed HRA Business Plan is based on the current Housing Asset Management Plan as detailed in the Asset Management section above. Once this is completed we will revisit the HRA Business Plan taking cognisance of the plan findings for our overall stock and rent setting policy.
- 8.2 The HRA is a statutory requirement for all local authorities that provide a housing landlord service. It is a ring-fenced account with income mainly being generated from tenants' rents. Expenditure is incurred through the management and maintenance of, as well as investment in, the housing stock to ensure that tenants' homes are safe, secure, warm free from defects and meet current standards.
- 8.3 The HRA is divided into Capital and Revenue items:
- Expenditure on Capital items is where money is invested in major works (such as external refurbishment, replacement roofs, full house heating and insulation upgrades) to improve the physical quality of the houses.
 - Revenue income is predominantly the rent that tenants pay to the Council and Revenue expenditure is associated with the day-to-day management and maintenance of the houses. Further detail on the revenue income and expenditure is provided within Figures A and B below.

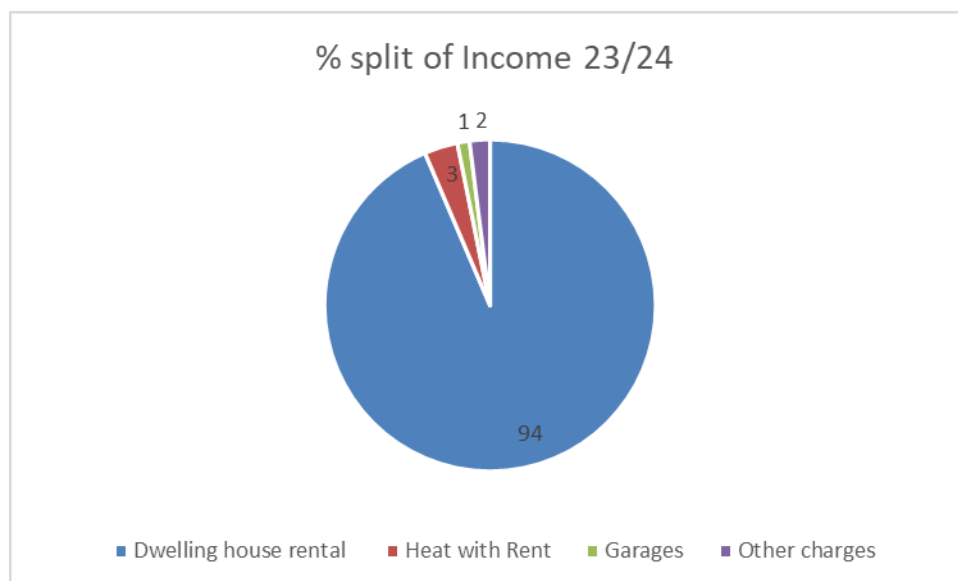
(Figure A – 2023/24 Actual HRA Expenditure)

The greatest proportion (42%) of revenue spend is on repairs and maintenance, followed by Capital charges (16%).



(Figure B – 2023/24 Actual HRA Income)

The greatest proportion 94% of the income comes from Dwelling House rental.



8.4 It should be noted that homelessness services and housing support services are funded from the Council’s General Fund and do not form part of the Housing Revenue Account.

30-year Position

8.5 The primary focus of the financial modelling which underpins the Business Plan was to ensure that the HRA can be sustained over the 30-year period, with more detailed focus on the medium term (3-5 years). The model has allowed the review and assessment of the required level of funding over the medium to long term. Financial modelling has been done, taking the 2025/26 HRA budget as the base year. The actual housing stock numbers as at 23,258 have been used to model opening stock.

Stock Valuation

8.6 The 2023-24 Annual Accounts of Aberdeen City Council shows the valuation of Council Dwellings on the HRA at £1.003bn. Council Dwellings are valued using the Beacon Method which involves full inspection of a sample of properties (Beacons). Full inspection of every property owned is not considered necessary due to the similarity of the property types covered by the Beacons. The process arrives at a market value for each properties with appropriate end allowances to reflecting use as social housing.

Rent Income

8.7 The HRA is funded by tenants rents, no funding is received from the Scottish Government with the exception of capital grants for new build. The long term Council house rent policy ran out on 31st March 2023, consultation was undertaken in 2023/24 on a one year rent increase in 2024/25, the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment was to undertake a similar consultation for inclusion in the

2025/26 budget process and consider if there is any benefit in a longer term Council house rent policy. A sustainable rent policy must be implemented to secure the long term financial position of the 30-year business plan.

- 8.8 A rent structure should be simplistic, transparent and fair, ACC currently fifteen different rent levels across the city, see below. This is based on whether a property is a multi/flat/maisonette or four in a block or a house/cottage and the number of bedrooms.

2024/25			
Base Rent		57.34	
Criteria 1 - Bedroom	Add rent	Criteria 2- Dwelling Type	Add rent
0		0 Multi/flat/maisonette	13.64
1	13.64	Four in a block	20.47
2	20.47	Cottage/House	27.31
3	27.31		
4	34.12		
5	40.95		
6	47.80		
7	54.61		

Note: The [Rent Restructure Report](#) to Housing and Environment on 28 August 2012 sets out the original methodology.

- 8.9 As part of the HRA budget recommendations on 14 December 2023 the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord, in consultation with the Chief Officer - Finance and the Chief Officer - Early intervention and Community Empowerment (following TOM 1.2 this is now Chief Officer – Housing), was instructed to undertake a review of the rental differentiations per property type, including any premium that may be applied to properties with high energy efficiency levels reporting the outcome to a future meeting of the Communities Housing and Public Protection Committee and thereafter as part of the 2025/26 HRA budget process.
- 8.10 As part of the Business Plan we have undertaken a review of potential rental differentiations fulfilling the above recommendation albeit it has been included within this report and not reported to Communities Housing and Public Protection Committee. Through an officer working group we have looked at a number of potential rental differentiations such as EPC ratings, district heating, age, rental differentiations per property type based on other Local authorities and type of properties and made conclusions. We believe that our rent criteria is robust, as it is clear, simple and easily understood, there is the potential to add back a rebuild premium and aligning our differential between bedroom size with the a Scottish Cities Average which we will consult on as detailed in the covering report, we will revisit this decision following the completion of the asset management plan.
- 8.11 Currently our differential between the bedroom size is the following – 0 and 1 Bedroom 19%, then 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 3 and 4 are 7% each step. We have looked at the Scottish Cities which have a HRA and the bedroom differentials (Dundee, Stirling and Edinburgh) they have on average the following bedroom size differential 0 and 1 Bedroom 11%,

then 1 and 2 10%, 2 and 3 12%, 3 and 4 7%. This analysis (excluding the movement between 0 and 1 bedrooms) could be adopted for ACC and generate potential additional income of £2.2m.

- 8.12 In order to service the additional borrowing incurred for the new build properties a new build premium could be introduced of 15% for those properties handed over to ACC after 1 April 2025, this is in line with the premium previously implemented. It is difficult to justify a rental premium for new properties once significant component replacements start to happen which would normally be around 15 years therefore the premium would apply for 15 years. This would generate additional income of £140k in 2025/26 based on the new builds due to be completed post 1 April 2025.
- 8.13 The additional income for differentials along with the new build premium could reduce the overall rent increase of 10% down to 7.2% in 2025/26, However there should be a recognition certain tenants will be incur multiple increases in their rent if the Council were to implement options contained within this plan.
- 8.14 The table below shows the movement from the existing rent structure to one which is adapted to reflect a Scottish city average differential.

2024/25 rent levels	0 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
	£	£	£	£	£
Multi/flat/maisonette	70.98	84.63	91.46	98.29	105.11
Four in a block	77.81	91.46	98.28	105.12	111.94
Cottage/house	84.65	98.29	105.12	111.96	118.78
Using Scottish City Average Differentials			10%	12%	7%
	0 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
	£	£	£	£	£
Multi/flat/maisonette	70.98	84.63	93.09	104.26	111.56
Four in a block	77.81	91.46	100.60	112.67	120.56
Cottage/house	84.65	98.29	108.12	121.10	129.57
Weekly increases-					
Multi/flat/maisonette	-	-	1.64	5.97	6.45
Four in a block	-	-	2.32	7.55	8.62
Cottage/house	-	-	3.00	9.14	10.80

- 8.15 It is acknowledged that there are many ways in which rent policy and criteria can be structured. These are links to Moray Council's reports on Rental Policy, which shows similarities to our current policy, evidencing that the Council may not have to undertake wholesale change to our policy to achieve our outcomes: [Moray Rental Policy / Moray Council Report](#)
- 8.16 In 2024/25 the following rental increases were approved by Local Authorities, as you will see Aberdeen City was below the Scottish Average.

ALACHO				
AVERAGE WEEKLY RENT LEVELS Mainstream Housing 2024/25				
Council	Average Weekly Rent INCREASE			
	2023/24	2024/25	Amount	%
	£	£	£	%
Aberdeen	86.18	89.65	3.47	4.7
Aberdeenshire	88	92.46	4.46	5
Angus	75.91	80.75	4.84	6.6
Clackmannanshire	80.24	85.62	5.38	6.7
Dundee	82.9	85.81	2.91	3.5
East Ayrshire	79.65	84.83	5.18	6.5
East Dunbartonshire	85.95	90.07	4.12	4.8
East Lothian	76.73	80.53	3.8	7
East Renfrewshire	88.15	93.35	5.2	3.5
Edinburgh	105.06	112.41	7.35	7
Falkirk	74.92	78.67	3.75	5
Fife	85.04	89.29	4.25	5
Highland	76.77	82.93	6.16	7.95
Midlothian	89.11	93.39	4.28	4.8
Moray	67.5	72.7	5.2	7.7
North Ayrshire	82.77	87.74	4.97	6
North Lanarkshire	80.56	86.45	5.89	7
Orkney	88.06	93.96	5.9	6.7
Perth & Kinross	75.23	79.74	4.51	6
Renfrewshire	90.82	96.27	5.45	6
Shetland	85.71	89.97	4.26	5
South Ayrshire	80.5	84.12	3.62	4.5
South Lanarkshire	79.11	84.29	5.18	6.5
Stirling	73.99	78.43	4.44	6
West Dunbartonshire+	88.48	94.4	5.92	6.7
West Lothian+	83.22	86.13	2.91	3.5
Scotland Average	82.71	87.46	4.75	5.75

8.17 Aberdeen City Council approved a rent freeze in 2021/22 and 2022/23, resulting in a loss of £360m (in cash terms) over the 30 years. As you will see from the table below only a few councils implemented a rent freeze for two years, City of Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian Councils.

8.18 Rent increases 21/22, 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25

Year and Rent Increase	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Local Authority	%	%	%	%
Aberdeen City Council	0	0	4	4.7
Aberdeenshire Council	2.8	1.5	2.5	5
Angus Council	2	1	4.1	6.6
City of Edinburgh Council	0	0	3	7
Clackmannanshire Council	0	3.1	3	6.7
Dundee City Council	1.5	1.5	3	3.5
East Ayrshire Council	1.5	1.5	4	6.5
East Dunbartonshire Council	0.5	2.5	4.2	4.8
East Lothian Council	0	0	5	7
East Renfrewshire Council	1	1	5	3.5
Falkirk Council	2	2	2	5
Fife Council	1.5	2.5	5	5
Midlothian Council	0	0	4.8	4.8
North Ayrshire Council	1.9	2.5	6.42	6
North Lanarkshire Council	5	3	5	7
Orkney Islands Council	2	2	3	6.7
Perth & Kinross Council	1	3	2.2	6
Renfrewshire Council	1.5	2	5.5	6
Shetland Islands Council	1	0	4.5	5
South Ayrshire Council	1.5	1.5	1.5	4.5
South Lanarkshire Council	2.2	2.2	3.5	6.5
Stirling Council	1.3	1.1	2.9	6
The Highland Council	2	1	4	7.95
The Moray Council	3	1.5	3.5	7.7
West Dunbartonshire Council	1.5	2	5	6.7
West Lothian Council	3	3	3.5	3.5

- 8.19 Evidence of how other Councils are addressing the higher costs within the HRA, this is an extract from the City of Edinburgh Council's website about how they are ensuring they are in a sustainable financial position following a two year rent freeze.

"The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Strategy 2024/25 - 2028/29 was considered by City of Edinburgh Council at its budget meeting on 22 February 2024.

After two years of rent freezes followed by a 3% rent increase last year, officers recommended that rents be increased by 8.4% in 2024/25 (year one of a five-year rent strategy; requiring annual increases of 8.4% for the subsequent four years). This was in order to deliver the pre-Covid investment plan and ensure the HRA remained in a healthy financial position.

Council agreed a 7% rent increase for each of the next five years in 2024/25 to 2028/29, with an assumption that 7% a year rent increase over the following five years would also be required to achieve the outputs indicated in the draft ten-year capital investment programme – to bring all Council homes up to Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (ESSH2) standards over the lifetime of the business plan and deliver 3,560 new social rented homes over the next ten years.

Council also approved the continuation of the Tenant Hardship Fund to support tenants experiencing financial hardship, including those who cannot access benefits.”

Use of Reserves

- 8.20 The Council has a working balance, the HRA Reserve, which has been built up over several years created from surpluses achieved by the HRA. This reserve is necessary to ensure the HRA is financially resilient and can meet any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances for example inflationary pressures, or the emergence of new risks like RAAC. In 2024/25 budget it was agreed to utilise £3.161m of the reserves to approve a lower increase in rents to be approved, 4.7% instead of 8.5%.
- 8.21 Where a one-off solution, such as the use of reserves, is filling a budget gap, enabling services to continue as currently delivered, for example, then due consideration of the long-term implications must be taken, identifying where and when they are being used and adjusting future financial planning to reflect the decisions taken. The Council's reserves statement, as approved by the Council in March 2024, identifies that reserves are primarily for financial resilience and financial risk management. The policy of the Council has been to increase the HRA reserve over time without being excessive. That policy has been challenged in 2024/25 by making use of reserves to support the budget. The financial modelling over 30 years aims to put the HRA reserves back into a position where a small annual surplus can continue to support financial resilience and protect the HRA from financial shocks, recognising inflation is a constant.

Borrowing

- 8.22 In the past a high percentage of capital expenditure has been met from annual rental income, this is known as Capital From Current Revenue (CFCR). By funding capital as it arose the need to finance capital expenditure over the long-term, by borrowing, was reduced. In recent years due to the rent freezes and the high inflation environment that has been experienced, there has been a reducing amount that can be used from current rent income to pay for capital. This means that more money is being borrowed.
- 8.23 Construction inflation and the supply chain challenges that have emerged over the last three or four years has also increased the cost of capital works, including the new build homes. The balance of the cost for capital projects, with limited support from Scottish Government grant funding and the Council's affordable home reserve that it has from specific Council Tax income for the new build homes, is being predominantly paid for by borrowing. This means that the cost of capital in any particular year is spread over a number of years in line with the conditions of borrowing (potentially up to 60 years). This results in an annual charge for borrowing which is met from rental income received

annually – the HRA revenue budget. Any borrowing is undertaken in line with the current Council’s Borrowing Policy and the Prudential Code.

8.24 Long-term borrowing relies on funds being raised by the Council, normally through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLb).

8.25 As a result of the new build programme our level of debt has increased since 2020/21, this can be seen through the information below extracted from the Scottish Government Local Government Finance return 22-23, the information for 23-24 is currently being collated. This information shows that out of all the Local Authorities who have a HRA in 22-23 we had the 13 highest debt level per dwelling.

LFR 22-23 HRA Debt Data							
Local Authority	Number of HRA dwellings	Loans Fund Advances Outstanding, GBP thousands	Credit Arrangements, GBP thousands	Total, GBP thousands	Loans Fund Advances Outstanding, GBP's per dwelling	Credit Arrangements, GBP's per dwelling	Total, GBP's per dwelling
1 Midlothian	7,490	211,198	-	211,198	28,197	-	28,197
2 West Dunbartonshire	10,013	265,337	-	265,337	26,499	-	26,499
3 East Lothian	9,153	240,065	-	240,065	26,228	-	26,228
4 Highland	14,396	365,235	-	365,235	25,371	-	25,371
5 Aberdeenshire	12,939	297,765	-	297,765	23,013	-	23,013
6 City of Edinburgh	19,460	422,580	-	422,580	21,715	-	21,715
7 West Lothian	14,243	282,411	-	282,411	19,828	-	19,828
8 Perth & Kinross	7,855	132,626	-	132,626	16,884	-	16,884
9 East Dunbartonshire	3,776	58,199	-	58,199	15,413	-	15,413
10 East Renfrewshire	3,053	46,034	-	46,034	15,078	-	15,078
11 Moray	6,250	90,354	-	90,354	14,457	-	14,457
12 Dundee City	12,421	178,141	-	178,141	14,342	-	14,342
13 Aberdeen City	22,595	321,528	-	321,528	14,230	-	14,230
14 Falkirk	16,719	234,278	-	234,278	14,013	-	14,013
15 Fife	30,882	426,272	-	426,272	13,803	-	13,803
16 East Ayrshire	11,826	156,093	-	156,093	13,199	-	13,199
17 Stirling	5,960	78,612	-	78,612	13,190	-	13,190
18 North Lanarkshire	35,063	438,252	1507	439,759	12,499	43	12,542
19 North Ayrshire	13,253	164,255	-	164,255	12,394	-	12,394
20 South Lanarkshire	25,394	292,693	-	292,693	11,526	-	11,526
21 Orkney Islands	911	8,990	-	8,990	9,868	-	9,868
22 South Ayrshire	7,890	76,953	-	76,953	9,753	-	9,753
23 Renfrewshire	11,763	110,696	-	110,696	9,411	-	9,411
24 Shetland Islands	1,641	11,553	-	11,553	7,040	-	7,040
25 Angus	7,610	39,076	-	39,076	5,135	-	5,135
26 Clackmannanshire	4,998	21,761	-	21,761	4,354	-	4,354

8.26 The table below shows that over the three years 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 ACC has risen from having the 21st highest level of debt of the 26 LA’s to the 13th. We have estimated the potential figure for 23-24 based on information in the annual accounts for 23-24.

Ranking compared to other LA's	Local Authority	Number of HRA dwellings	Loans Fund Advances Outstanding, GBP thousands	Total, GBP thousands	Loans Fund Advances Outstanding, GBP's per dwelling	Credit Arrangements, GBP's per dwelling	Total, GBP's per dwelling	Year	% increase from previous year
Note 1	Aberdeen City	23,095	454,530	454,530	19,681	-	19,681	23/24	38
	13 Aberdeen City	22,595	321,528	321,528	14,230	-	14,230	22/23	29
	19 Aberdeen City	22,519	248,651	248,651	11,042	-	11,042	21/22	25
	21 Aberdeen City	22,514	198,172	198,172	8,802	-	8,802	20/21	
Note 1	This is based on the information in the annual accounts, LFR is yet to be completed for 23/24 therefore this could be subject to change								

8.27 The HRA’s capital financing requirement in future years, as quantified in the Council’s Prudential Indicators (March 2024) shows that the requirement for borrowing will

continue and this has the impact of increasing annual costs, that have been captured in the 30 year modelling. The two key indicators are as follows:

	Capital Financing Requirement						
	2022/23 £'000 Actual	2023/24 £'000 Estimate	2024/25 £'000 Estimate	2025/26 £'000 Estimate	2026/27 £'000 Estimate	2027/28 £'000 Estimate	2028/29 £'000 Estimate
Gen Fund	1,258,748	1,269,917	1,445,177	1,602,410	1,705,392	1,756,853	1,785,586
HRA	366,911	443,337	536,370	629,320	716,701	782,972	851,936

	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream						
	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate	2028/29 Estimate
Gen Fund	6.9%	9.8%	10.9%	12.4%	13.9%	15.1%	15.9%
HRA	10.7%	15.3%	18.8%	22.5%	28.1%	31.4%	37.9%

Debt Profile and investments

8.28 The plan assumes an interest rate of 3.82% in year 1 25/26, assuming to 3.8% from year 4 and then held at this level throughout the life of the model. The Council's investment Strategy is undertaken for the whole of the Council and not specifically the HRA.

9. Asset Investment

Housing Capital 2024/25 achievements:

- 9.1 The following list demonstrates the improvements that are continuing to be made to the housing stock:
- Completing the programme to install higher rated fire doors to all Council owned multi storey flats
 - Commenced the refurbishment of 206 Union Street to deliver 28 one bedroom city centre flats, this will be completed by the end of the financial year
 - Installing defibrillators to all sheltered and very sheltered housing schemes
 - Continuing to fund adaptations to housing stock to ensure that residents are provided with the facilities required to ensure they can continue to live independently in their own homes
 - Initiating the transition from fossil fuelled heating systems in ACC owned properties in Torry to systems fuelled from Energy from Waste
 - Replacing approximately 1100 old/obsolete gas central heating boilers with modern equivalents
 - Delivering whole house energy efficiency measures including external wall insulation, air source heat pumps and photo voltaic panels to 17 properties through Project DORIC
 - Increasing the level of loft insulation to current standards in 80 properties as at 20 August 2024/ 68 properties with external wall insulation.

- Replacing windows in all ACC owned flats in listed tenement blocks in Rosemount Square
- Through the capital works so far this financial year 6 blocks have had new flat roofs, 206 properties have had windows replaced, 82 properties have been re-wired, 137 new kitchens, 69 new bathrooms and 19 properties have had new kitchens and bathrooms.

New Affordable House Building

9.2 As at 29 August the following new builds have been completed -

Site	Units
Summerhill	369
Wellheads	283
Auchmill	92
Tillydrone	70
Kaimhill	35
Cloverhill	203
Total as at 29/08/24	1,052

9.3 Work remains ongoing on three sites – Craighill, Kincorth and Cloverhill, progress detailed below

Craighill

9.4 The enabling works (ground works) are complete, value engineering has been carried out, and a new planning application was submitted and approved which required re-design of tender documentation for the outstanding construction works.

9.5 The tender documents have been issued to the market and following completion of the tender process, CHAP Construction were appointed as the Principal Contractor . The final contract documents are now being put in place with a site start likely to be in Q3 2024.

9.6 This project will deliver 87 new units.

Kincorth

9.7 The enabling works (ground works) are complete, value engineering has been carried out, new planning application submitted and approved which required re-design of tender documentation.

9.8 The tender documents will be issued in the coming weeks, and allowing for due diligence the expectation is for works to commence in Winter 2024/2025.

Cloverhill New Build Housing

- 9.9 The project continues to progress well on site with the latest 35 houses handed over as part of Phase 4 in July 2024. A total of 203 units have been handed over to ACC with the next handover being for 10 units in October 2024.

Complex Care

- 9.10 Individuals with learning disabilities and complex care needs require the provision of suitable, robust accommodation, which is currently unavailable within our existing housing stock. Unsuitable environments can lead to challenges in the management of need and communication, often resulting in challenging behaviour. This requires the development of sustainable and robust accommodation which will meet the profile of need for those with complex care requirements. These requirements are evidenced through good practice and wider learning on a local and national basis.

- 9.11 This project aims to deliver:

- 8 individual homes which meets the environmental specifications for individuals with complex care needs through a new build delivery approach as considered within the project options appraisal. In addition, this accommodation will provide adequate office/respite space for care provider employees who will provide 24/7 onsite support.
- Adequate community and service links to allow individuals with complex care needs to integrate and participate in their local community.
- Learning and a model for further development for unmet and future need that will allow the operating model to be as flexible as possible for the unknowns' future delivery.

- 9.12 Progress over the next period should see the substructure works drawing to a conclusion and the commencement of the erection of the timber kits.

10 Risk Assessment

Financial Risks

- 10.1 There are many variables in the financial modelling to be considered. The assumptions made in the financial modelling have been tested, but financial risks still remain. Assumptions include inflation at 2%, void rates 8% and utilities 5%.

- 10.2 Potential risks

- Interest rates have been at a high level and look likely to start reducing, but over the lifetime of the model there will be variations. This is mitigated to some extent with the use of a pooled rate of interest, which are less likely to show major fluctuations.
- Voids may increase further due to the due to the availability of alternative housing options from other providers and the age of the stock.

- Arrears could continue to increase to rise due to the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis.
- Construction prices increase, recent experience has shown us this can be triggered by unforeseen world events such as the Ukraine war.
- There is no control over pay inflation of ACC staff who deliver HRA services such as Grounds Maintenance, Cleaning, Repairs and Maintenance.

10.3 Mitigating Actions are as follow:

- Review Minimum letting standard, this potential could reduce the repairs and maintenance costs.
- By extending the life of assets such as kitchens and bathrooms this would reduce the cost of the annual capital programme.
- Soft market test services such as Grounds Maintenance, Cleaning, Repairs and Maintenance.
- Developing the Housing Support Model to reduce the level of arrears

No rental increase

10.3 If no rent increase was to be implemented you will see below each year is in deficit this is not sustainable.

Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HRA Summary 30										
Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	17,929	18,256	18,622	19,023	19,372	19,665	19,993	20,265	20,571	20,933
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	43,092	45,247	47,509	49,884	52,379	54,998	57,747	60,635	63,667	66,850
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	14,901	15,410	15,936	16,484	17,054	17,612	18,193	18,798	19,429	20,087
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	24,621	30,550	36,734	46,394	57,327	67,616	78,824	90,427	101,966	113,573
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	14,431	14,461	14,494	14,527	14,563	14,593	14,625	14,658	14,692	14,728
Total	114,973	123,924	133,294	146,312	160,694	174,483	189,382	204,782	220,325	236,170
Deficit/(Surplus)	7,417	16,309	26,001	37,739	51,942	64,680	79,442	94,700	110,095	125,786
Years	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
HRA Summary 30										
Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	3038/39	2039/40	2040/41	2041/42	2042/43	2043/44	2044/45
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	21,209	21,529	21,895	22,186	22,521	22,902	23,208	23,560	23,966	24,330
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	70,192	73,702	77,387	81,256	85,319	89,585	94,064	98,768	103,706	108,891
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	20,773	21,488	22,233	23,011	23,822	24,668	25,551	26,473	27,435	28,440
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	125,046	136,832	148,654	160,671	172,322	183,962	195,968	207,565	219,847	232,274
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	14,765	14,803	14,843	14,884	14,927	14,971	15,018	15,066	15,116	15,168
Total	251,985	268,354	285,012	302,008	318,912	336,089	353,810	371,431	390,071	409,103
Deficit/(Surplus)	141,440	157,643	174,128	190,944	207,661	224,643	242,162	259,573	277,994	296,799
Years	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
HRA Summary 30										
Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2045/46	2046/47	2047/48	2048/49	2049/50	2050/51	2051/52	2052/53	2053/54	2054/55
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	24,651	25,024	25,448	25,787	26,178	26,619	26,976	27,385	27,844	28,221
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	114,336	120,053	126,055	132,358	138,976	145,925	153,221	160,882	168,926	177,373
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	29,489	30,584	31,728	32,923	34,172	35,477	36,840	38,266	39,755	41,313
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	244,173	256,537	268,813	281,201	293,460	305,768	318,635	331,615	344,422	357,387
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	15,222	15,278	15,336	15,396	15,459	15,524	15,592	15,662	15,735	15,811
Total	427,870	447,476	467,380	487,666	508,244	529,312	551,265	573,809	596,683	620,104
Deficit/(Surplus)	315,329	334,689	354,338	374,358	394,660	415,441	437,094	459,329	481,879	504,964

Rental increases to sustain the long term future of the HRA

10.4 A more sustainable approach would be the following -

Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HRA Summary 30 Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	17,929	18,256	18,622	19,023	19,372	19,665	19,993	20,265	20,571	20,933
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	43,092	45,247	47,509	49,884	52,379	54,998	57,747	60,635	63,667	66,850
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	14,908	15,425	15,960	16,517	17,097	17,665	18,258	18,876	19,520	20,192
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	24,621	30,111	35,970	45,334	56,031	66,153	77,113	88,435	99,702	111,044
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	15,779	17,292	18,955	20,783	22,792	24,776	26,937	29,292	31,856	34,649
Total	116,328	126,330	137,016	151,541	167,670	183,257	200,048	217,501	235,316	253,668
Deficit/(Surplus)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)
Years	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
HRA Summary 30 Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2035/36	2036/37	2037/38	2038/39	2039/40	2040/41	2041/42	2042/43	2043/44	2044/45
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	21,209	21,529	21,895	22,186	22,521	22,902	23,208	23,560	23,966	24,330
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	70,192	73,702	77,387	81,256	85,319	89,585	94,064	98,768	103,706	108,891
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	20,890	21,618	22,376	23,166	23,991	24,849	25,745	26,680	27,656	28,675
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	122,300	133,844	145,434	157,151	169,000	180,428	192,251	203,726	215,807	228,031
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	37,024	39,564	41,898	44,372	46,993	49,315	51,752	54,311	56,997	59,817
Total	271,615	290,258	308,991	328,132	347,824	367,079	387,021	407,044	428,132	449,744
Deficit/(Surplus)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)
Years	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
HRA Summary 30 Year	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2045/46	2046/47	2047/48	2048/49	2049/50	2050/51	2051/52	2052/53	2053/54	2054/55
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Staff Management & Operations	24,651	25,024	25,448	25,787	26,178	26,619	26,976	27,385	27,844	28,221
Property Planned & Response Maintenance	114,336	120,053	126,055	132,358	138,976	145,925	153,221	160,882	168,926	177,373
Other Operational Costs (Grounds/Cleaning etc)	29,739	30,851	32,012	33,225	34,492	35,812	37,192	38,634	40,142	41,717
Cost of Repaying Borrowing	239,858	252,124	264,301	276,576	288,820	301,130	314,003	327,011	339,903	352,916
Loss of Rent – Voids and Bad Debt	62,777	65,885	69,147	72,572	76,167	79,200	82,354	85,634	89,045	92,592
Total	471,360	493,936	516,962	540,518	564,633	588,686	613,747	639,546	665,860	692,818
Deficit/(Surplus)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)	(720)

- 10.5 To achieve the position above – balanced each year, a contribution towards the capital borrowing and returning the reserve to a sustainable position, this would involve rent increases of the following –

Years	Annual % rent increase
1-5	10
6-10	9
11-12	7
13-15	6
16-25	5
26-30	4

- 10.6 Tenants have benefited over the years from rental freezes in 21/22 and 22/23 a below inflation increase in 24/25, the HRA in this time has been faced with high inflation within the construction industry, wage and contractual increases as described in this document. The table below shows over the last 5 years the cumulative impact of the rent increases is 13.24%, spreading this across the 5 years would equate to an annual increase in rent of approximately 2.65%.

%Rent Increases	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Cumulative rent increase spread over the 5 years
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Actual	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.70	
Cumulative	4.00	4.00	4.00	8.16	13.24	2.65

- 10.7 If as suggested by the Business plan in 2025/26 a rental increase of 10% is implemented, this would result in a cumulative impact over the 6 years of 24.57%, and again, spreading this across the 6 years would equate to an annual increase in rent of approximately 4.09%.

%Rent Increases	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Cumulative rent increase spread over the 6 years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Actual/Forecast for 25/26	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.70	10.00	
Cumulative	4.00	0.00	0.00	8.16	13.24	24.57	4.09

- 10.8 Below is an analysis of the ratio of net revenue stream to the level of debt charges, if rent increases by 10% in Years 1 to 5 and 9% in Years 6 to 10, this shows an increase of 23% over the 10 years, which will be difficult to sustain without a reduction in the underlying costs, therefore it is reasonable to see a requirement for the prioritisation and constraint of the capital programme, if rent costs are to be mitigated. Further information on the Housing Asset Management strategy will be available next year and will be incorporated into revisions of the 30 Year HRA Business Plan.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream										
Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HRA - Net Revenue Stream	116,328	126,330	137,016	151,541	167,670	183,257	200,048	217,501	235,316	253,668
HRA - Debt Charges	24,621	30,111	35,970	45,334	56,031	66,153	77,113	88,435	99,702	111,044
Ratio	21%	24%	26%	30%	33%	36%	39%	41%	42%	44%

11 HRA Financial Plan Assumptions

Inflation

- 11.1 The model has used the longer-term expected rate of 2% inflation over the 30-year period this is reasonable for an average over the 30-years.
- 11.2 CPI inflation is expected to increase to around 2.75% in the second half of this year, as declines in energy prices last year fall out of the annual comparison. Thereafter, domestic inflationary persistence is expected to fade away over the next few years, with the modal value falling below 2% by the second quarter of 2026 - followed by the mean value later in the year - and to reach 1.5% by the first quarter of 2027. As with previous MERs, the longer term forecasting of inflation at persistently below target (2%) levels suggests that the Banks economic model may still have in-built, negative, biases.

HRA Costs

- 11.3 The main expenditure items on the HRA are maintenance (including repairs and maintenance, grounds maintenance & energy costs), management and administration, central support (including Corporate Services such as Finance, Digital and Technology, People and Organisation) and debt charges.

Repairs and maintenance

This covers the cost of the responsive and cyclical maintenance provided by Building Services.

Management and Administration

The HRA requires proper supervision and management in order to ensure that its properties are effectively managed, maintained and let to tenants.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure includes the cost of major component replacement and the approved new builds. ACC in conjunction with Arneil Johnston are developing an Asset Management Plan. Currently the 30-year Finance Plan shows an investment of £4.8bn over the 30-years.

Borrowing Costs

Historically, borrowing has been required to fund the HRA and where possible the CFCR has been maximised. In 2023/24 due to the level of expenditure incurred no CFCR could be made this results in a higher borrowing requirement. By increasing the rents by 10% this will allow a level of CFCR to be made which is necessary to keep borrowing to a minimum.

It is expected that borrowing will be undertaken at the Council's internal pooled rate, on which interest has been estimated at 3.8% for the majority of the plan for the purpose of the financial modelling.

Stock Profile

- 11.4 As at 31st March 2024 (this may include those with RAAC), the Council's housing stock on the HRA numbered 23,258 properties.

HRA Housing Stock by Type – 31st March 2024

	2023/24
	Number
Type of Property	
Sheltered Property	1,981
Cottage	4,243
Flat	9,911
Four in Block	2,161
Maisonette	572
Multi Storey Flat	2,237
Split Level Flat	130
Multi Storey Maisonette	445
Amenity	1,578
Total	23,258

Misc Stock by Type – 31st March 2024

Other Assets	
Hostel	1
Garage Sites	241
Lock Up Garages	2,023
Parking Spaces	907
Travelling Peoples Sites	21
	3,193

Stock Age as at 31 March 2024

Period	Number	% stock
Pre: 1919	1,229	5.28
1919 – 1944	4,096	17.61
1945 – 1964	6,077	26.13
1965 – 1982	9,165	39.41
1983 – 2002	1,268	5.45
Post: 2002	1,421	6.11

Component Replacement

11.5 Major components are replaced on an age basis the lifecycle is listed below

Component	Lifecycle (years)
Bathroom	30
Kitchen	20
Heating systems – boiler	15
Heating systems – radiators	15
Windows	30
Doors	30
Wiring	30
Pitched Roofs	60
Flat Roof	30
Downpipes & Gutters	60

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	02 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	City Centre Transport Measures
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/24/287
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	David Dunne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the feasibility and impact of amending elements within the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order (ETRO) 2023, and to request approval to make the ETRO a permanent order.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Note that the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 was implemented to achieve the safe and efficient movement of active travel and public transport users through the city centre, and that the measures originated from the City Centre Masterplan 2015 Movement Strategy.
- 2.2. Note that at the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee in February 2021, Committee instructed Officers to submit a bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund, and included specific instructions to:-
- ii) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, that in the context of the corridor options within the bid terminating in the City Centre, and in light of the recommendations from the Economic Policy Panel and ongoing transport projects, to seek to accelerate the City Centre elements of the bid. This should include any necessary enabling works for approved schemes, for example South College Street and Berryden, to help drive recovery, improve the transport system and ensure integration of current transport projects; and
 - iii) instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, to explore options to improve access and integration of the Aberdeen bus station as part of the bid, to help improve the customer experience.

- 2.3. Note that at the Council meeting in June 2022, all Members of Council present either explicitly voted for the inclusion of bus priority measures contained within the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023, or proposed an amendment that would have also resulted in the measures being included.
- 2.4. Note that, as instructed by Council in July 2024, additional work has been undertaken by Officers to investigate the feasibility and impact of reopening Bridge Street to all vehicles in one or both directions; and, the feasibility and impact of removing the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct (Appendix 1).
- 2.5. Note that the output of the additional work referenced in Recommendation 2.4 (above) does not provide Officers with sufficient certainty that amending bus priority measures on Bridge Street and Union Terrace would not prejudice the further delivery of key projects within the City Centre & Beach Masterplan 2022.
- 2.6. Note that the output of the additional work referenced in Recommendation 2.4 (above) does not provide Officers with sufficient certainty that amending bus priority measures on Bridge Street and Union Terrace would guarantee there would not be a need in the near future for the measures to be reintroduced as traffic levels begin to rise once more.
- 2.7. Agree that any amendments to the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 would detrimentally impact on bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre and would roll back on the improvements to service delivery reported by both bus companies as having been evidenced since the bus priority measures were introduced in August 2023, thus impacting negatively on bus users.
- 2.8. Note that, according to Scotland's 2022 Census Data, 30.7% of households in Aberdeen do not have a car or van in their household.
- 2.9. Agree that any amendments to the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 would make the city centre a less desirable place for pedestrians and cyclists – the most vulnerable of street users - due to increased levels of traffic in the city centre, resulting in a higher risk of serious or fatal injury, and amplified levels of noise and air pollution.
- 2.10. Note that, in February 2023, Aberdeen City Council added its voice to the growing number of local authorities around the world to have responded to the global climate change and nature loss crises by declaring a climate and nature emergency.
- 2.11. Agree that, in accepting grant funding from Transport Scotland for the South College Street project, there was an expectation from Scottish Ministers that bus priority measures would be installed within the city centre and, should this not be the case, the conditions of the grant award letter explicitly provide for Transport Scotland to recover funding from the Council (Appendix 2).

- 2.12. Note that, should the various bus prioritisation measures implemented following the South College Street improvements change, there is risk that Transport Scotland will seek to recover funding they have provided for the project. The Chief Officer – Finance advises that a contingent liability will have to be recorded in the Council financial performance reports until clarity from Transport Scotland is received, with an expectation that if this is not resolved by 31 March 2025 a provision will have to be included in the Council’s 2024/25 draft Annual Accounts for the repayment of grant funding.
- 2.13. Agree that the level of financial risk associated with removal of the bus priority measures contained within the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order 2023 would not be consistent with the Council’s risk appetite as set out in the updated Risk Appetite Statement, as approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in February 2024.
- 2.14. Therefore, agree to approve the making of The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023 as a permanent Order, with continued monitoring in terms of the ongoing City Centre Masterplan.
- 2.15. Instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to commence the procedure for the Order to be made permanent.
- 2.16. In recognising that the ability sits with Council to use Bus Lane Enforcement surplus to assist city centre businesses so long as doing so also supports the delivery of the Local Transport Strategy, agree to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Convenors of the Net Zero, Environment & Transport and Finance & Resources Committees, to use Enforcement surplus monies (capped at £200,000) to reinstate a Night Bus service from the city centre to key destinations across the city and into Aberdeenshire.
- 2.17. Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with Aberdeen Inspired to determine what, if any, additional city centre focused projects the Bus Lane Enforcement surplus could be used for, and report a list of competent projects to a future Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee within the next six months.
- 2.18. Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with the Chief Officer – Operations to explore opportunities to enhance the accessibility of wayfinding in the city centre for people with disabilities.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1. Aberdeen's city centre plays a major role in the commercial, economic, social, civic and cultural life of Aberdeen and the wider North East. It is an important regional centre providing a focus for employment, business and social interaction. The city centre offers access to a wide range of goods and services and is a place where many people meet socially and choose to live and visit.
- 3.2. The principal concentration of retail/service uses across the City Region is within Aberdeen City Centre, and it represents the most important location for retail goods floorspace and turnover within the City Region. Planning policy within Aberdeen has a long established 'town centre first' principle - this means that the city centre is the preferred locations for retail, office, hotel, commercial leisure, community, cultural and other significant footfall generating development serving a city-wide or regional market. This, along with a presumption of refusal for out of centre retail proposals, unless in set circumstances, aims to support the vitality and vibrancy of the city centre.
- 3.3. The adopted Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2023 recognises that it is vital for the future prosperity of Aberdeen that the city centre is enhanced and promoted as a resilient, safe, attractive, accessible and well-connected place which contributes to an improved quality of life.
- 3.4. The approved vision for the area included within the Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan 2022 is to create a world-class city centre and beach that puts people at its heart while respecting and enhancing the city's unique qualities.

City Centre Transport Strategy and Improvements: Key Events

- 3.5. The Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme was approved unanimously in 2015. Its purpose was to create a regeneration blueprint to transform the city centre while conserving Aberdeen's proud heritage, and to ensure greater economic prosperity and a better quality of life for all.
- 3.6. Under a theme of 'The Connected City', the City Centre Masterplan recognised the need to relocate car movements from the city centre and to prioritise walking, cycling and bus movements, specifically referencing a need for bus priority measures on Union Street, Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street. Engagement with the public and stakeholders at the time found that 67% of respondents supported the projects under the 'Connected City' theme, with only 9% not supporting them (with 24% undecided).
- 3.7. In a report to Council in May 2016 on the Transport Implications of City Centre Masterplan Projects, it was noted that: *To deliver the full City Centre Masterplan (key measures), it is anticipated that there would require to be approximately a 20% reduction in the anticipated traffic demand. This traffic would have to relocate out-with the City Centre or change travel mode in order to allow the network to operate satisfactorily.* While some of this traffic reduction was

anticipated to be achieved by delivery of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and Berryden Corridor Improvements, the report identified the further enabling measures required to achieve this reduction, including South College Street Junction Improvements, and public transport priority measures in the central core.

- 3.8. The Council's approved Local Transport Strategy in 2016 also recognised that, in order to facilitate the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan and its projects, the way that people currently move around the city and its centre must change radically with a focus on people, rather than vehicular, movement by ensuring that appropriate and alternative options are made available so that access to the city centre is maintained for all.
- 3.9. In December 2019, the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee approved the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) which looked to complement and further develop the transport principles of, and proposed projects identified in, the City Centre Masterplan. The SUMP re-affirmed the Council's commitment to delivering city centre bus priority on Union Street, Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street.
- 3.10. In February 2021, Aberdeen City Council, on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance, submitted a successful bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund for development of a Bus Rapid Transit system for the city, including supporting measures such as the improvements to South College Street and bus priority measures.
- 3.11. In May 2021, the City Growth and Resources Committee instructed a review of the City Centre Masterplan in conjunction with the development of a new Beach Masterplan. The review re-affirmed the commitment to bus priority on Bridge Street, Guild Street, Market Street and Union Terrace, and recommended that a Traffic Management Plan be developed.
- 3.12. A Traffic Management Plan was subsequently reported to the City Growth and Resources Committee in November 2021 and concluded that the bus priority measures on Bridge Street, Guild Street and Market Street and supporting traffic management measures would support the delivery of a more people-friendly city centre, with more space dedicated to people walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport.
- 3.13. Traffic modelling undertaken at the time suggested that the measures would improve bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre, by reducing congestion, especially around the bus station, encouraging more people onto public transport and benefitting existing bus users.
- 3.14. In February 2022, Council resolved to:
 - *Reopen Union Street between its junctions with Union Terrace and Market Street to service buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and pedal cycles only, all as soon as is practicably possible;*

- *Remove the existing bus gate on Union Street, just East of Market Street and introduce new bus gates on Union Street between Bridge Street and Market Street;*

Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

- 3.15. In Autumn 2023, the following changes were introduced to allow the above instructions to be carried out:
- Bus priority and local access only restrictions on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street;
 - Pedestrian and cycle priority measures on Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate; and,
 - Introduction of a right-turn ban (except cycles, buses and taxis) from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct.
- 3.16. The measures were introduced via an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which allows changes to be made swiftly, followed by a period of consultation and monitoring while they are in effect, and prior to making a decision over whether to keep, change or amend the measures. The ETRO process allowed the expeditious execution of the long term plan for bus priority, as expressed through the Connected City theme within the City Centre Masterplan 2015.
- 3.17. The Scottish Government amended the statutory procedure for establishing ETROs in November 2021, thereby adopting the same long-established procedure in England and Wales. Prior to this, and for context, they were seldom used in Scotland, as they could often involve multiple procedures that, in practical terms, defeated the purpose of their use. As stated, they can be an ideal way of testing traffic management measures, and anecdotally, since the procedure was modified, their use in Scotland is now on the rise.
- 3.18. Since the ETRO was introduced, the Council has been engaging with city centre users and businesses, receiving and considering objections, and gathering data to help inform a thorough consideration of the performance of the measures. This has been through an online Citizen Space consultation, roundtable meetings, and other dedicated business meetings with organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, Our Union Street and Aberdeen Inspired.
- 3.19. The objections and feedback received during the statutory ETRO consultation period were summarised in a [report to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee in June 2024](#). In this report officers advised the Committee that the measures were doing what they primarily set out to do, with significant bus journey time and reliability improvements achieved, so far translating into bus passenger growth of +5% for Stagecoach and around +16.5% for First Bus. Members of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee considered the report, however the decision on next steps was referred to Council.
- 3.20. At a requisitioned meeting of Council in July 2024, Members subsequently agreed to instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, using funding from the Bus Lane Enforcement reserve, to report as soon as possible on the

following in order to allow Council to make a decision on the future of the measures:

1. *the feasibility and impact of reopening Bridge Street to all vehicles in one or both directions.*
2. *the feasibility and impact of removing the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct.*

3.21. This report to Council presents Members with the outcome of this exercise, and presents further context in order to assist Members in making a decision on the future of these transport improvements.

Impact of Suggested Amendments on Bridge Street and Union Terrace

Transport Modelling

3.22. In response to the instruction from Council in July 2024, officers engaged transport consultants to undertake and analyse a series of traffic model tests using the existing City Centre microsimulation model. These tests considered the impacts on traffic flows and bus journey times and reliability associated with removal of, or changes to, bus, taxi, cycle and service vehicle priority measures on Bridge Street and Union Terrace.

3.23. Tests were undertaken on a near future (end of 2025) scenario to understand the impact of any changes once Union Street Central re-opens fully to buses, taxis, service vehicles and cycles. The outputs to this exercise are presented in Appendix 1. In summary, the following impacts were observed:

- The redesign of Union Street Central, including its junctions with Bridge Street and Market Street, has been progressed to operate with bus priority measures in place and the envisaged reduction in general traffic levels. Modelling which simulates the removal of measures and increases in traffic volumes, sees traffic demand at the Union Street / Bridge Junction exceed its capacity, inducing congestion.
- If general traffic is permitted to route southbound on Bridge Street, traffic increases are observed on Bridge Street, Union Terrace and Union Street West, with significant queueing observed extending from the Bridge Street junction east over Union Bridge and west beyond Bon Accord Street, with congestion also extending up side streets. Model observations show this is due to the higher demand for traffic to turn right from Union Street to Bridge Street. The time available within the traffic signal cycle at Bridge Street / Union Street results in the junction being unable to cater for the volume of traffic seeking to turn right, hence large queues develop through the model period as the junction is over capacity. This has a significant impact on bus journey times and reliability for those buses routing along Union Street eastbound (with delays of 8-14 minutes observed within the model tests). Traffic signal constraints mean that there is no capacity to provide Union Street West with more signal green time to facilitate this manoeuvre.

- When allowing general traffic to route northbound only on Bridge Street, there appears to be low impact to the operation of the bus network, however the overall volume of traffic on Bridge Street is observed to more than double in the model, and traffic increases are also observed on Union Terrace and Union Street West.
- Similarly, allowing traffic on Union Terrace to turn right onto Rosemount Viaduct has limited impact on bus journey times and reliability, but results in traffic increases on Union Street West and Union Terrace.
- While the impacts of the removal of the northbound restrictions on Bridge Street and the right-turn ban from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct appear to be manageable in the short term, in the medium to long term it is likely that traffic growth will be encouraged with a risk of congestion and delays to buses returning to the city centre, undermining the improvements that have been experienced since the introduction of the ETRO. Furthermore, re-introducing through-traffic to these streets conflicts with the North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy and risks reversing the benefits experienced by people walking, wheeling and cycling on these streets since the ETRO was introduced, particularly in terms of improved road safety, and development of a more attractive environment for active travel.

3.24. Caution should be applied when interpreting the traffic model data. The short-term model scenarios simulated current suppressed traffic demand (relative to 2019), which is associated with adjusted travel patterns tied to hybrid working etc following the Covid-19 public health emergency. When considering medium and long term performance, which has not been assessed, the prediction of future demand currently spans two future outcomes:

- the more optimistic where Scottish Government Net Zero and City Centre Masterplan Connected City targets are achieved, reducing general traffic demand; and,
- a second where decisions to limit or slow modernisation of the network, such as public transport prioritisation, result in a failure to hit these targets due to growth in general traffic demand.

3.25. These two future outcome predictions create an uncertainty in the future generalise traffic demand of 12% at 2030 and 20% at 2040. Failure to achieve the more optimistic outlook will result in increased traffic along city centre streets and consequently an increased risk of congestion, slower journey times and reduced reliability of the bus network.

3.26. The model also assumes all vehicles comply with traffic laws and surrounding traffic management measures, so the model does not reflect instances where this is not the case and rules are abused, such as drivers blocking junctions or forcing their way into queueing traffic, which was often observed and caused problems prior to the introduction of restrictions at Union Terrace / Rosemount Viaduct and College Street / Guild Street. The impacts of such abuses, which traditionally have caused problems, are not reflected in the model.

3.27. Other key points to note are that:

- The traffic measures delivered through the ETRO have allowed a high degree of futureproofing and resilience against future traffic growth. If any of these measures are removed in the short term, there is a significant risk that any future traffic growth will impact on the envisioned operation of the city centre in terms of air quality, active and sustainable transport operation, safety and placemaking. There is therefore a risk that any measures removed in the short-term will ultimately have to be reintroduced in order to enable the next phases, resulting in driver confusion and frustration.
- The current traffic measures also allow futureproofing for further City Centre Masterplan streetscape projects to take place in the future – for example the Union Street East and Union Street West improvements. A Business Case for these projects was reported to Council in February 2024, with Council agreeing to refer the projects to the capital planning and budget process for future years' delivery. Removal of any of the measures would threaten the viability of these planned improvements.
- The modelling exercise is focused only on weekday periods and only on short term impacts. Traffic demand through Union Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace may be higher at the weekend due to a higher volume of traffic looking to access city centre car parking, therefore any negative impacts observed in the model could be exacerbated at the weekend.

3.28. In summarising the above, it is the professional view of officers that the removal of the Bridge Street southbound bus priority measures would immediately be highly detrimental to the operation of the road network and public transport services. The removal of northbound bus priority measure on Bridge Street and allowing traffic from Union Terrace to turn right onto Rosemount Viaduct would have more limited impacts in the short term, but likely endanger future aspirations for city centre transformation.

3.29. Amending these measures will likely preclude the future delivery of key projects within the City Centre & Beach Masterplan 2022 that Council has already publicly agreed to, but may also result in the ETRO measures having to be reinstated in the future due to the reintroduction of through traffic causing additional congestion to the detriment of those vehicles who do have an origin or destination in the city centre, hence making the city centre less attractive for people to visit. Additional congestion would also result in a detrimental impact on bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre by public and active transport. As will be discussed further in paras 3.47 – 3.53 (below) these detrimental impacts to public transport would also put future Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) proposals at risk.

3.30. Reintroduction of additional through traffic would also reintroduce negative impacts on pedestrians and cyclists - the most vulnerable street users.

The “Common Sense Compromise”

3.31. In June 2024, supported by local media, a consortium of city centre businesses and business representatives encouraged the Council to adopt what they termed a “Common Sense Compromise”, comprising the following:

- Retention of Guild Street bus gates, and restrictions on Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate;
- Removal of the bus gates at the Adelphi and Market Street, allowing access in both directions through Market Street;
- Removal of the bus gates on Bridge Street, allowing full access in both directions;
- Removal of the right turn ban on Union Terrace;
- Issuing of a warning rather than a fine to first time offenders; and
- Using fines to help city centre businesses via transport initiatives.

3.32. As shall be discussed further below, to supplement the modelling work discussed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.30 and in the context of the “Common Sense Compromise” proposals outlined above, an additional assessment of various options for the future of the bus priority measures has also been undertaken by officers against a range of local, regional and national policy aims and objectives. This is presented in Appendix 3.

3.33. The policy context at Appendix 3 wholly supports the conclusions that officers have reached following the additional modelling exercise that any amendments to the bus priority measures on Bridget Street or Union Terrace would fundamentally undermine the purpose of the measures and are, therefore, not recommended.

3.34. Taking each point of the “Common Sense Compromise” in turn:

- *Retention of Guild Street bus gates, and restrictions on Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate;*

As noted in the Policy Assessment (Appendix 3), officers strongly agree that these measures should be retained. Retaining bus priority measures on Guild Street assist with public transport access to and from the bus station, and also assist with pedestrian movements, making it easier to cross and move around, and helping accessibility between Union Square and Union Street.

Retaining the measures on Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate ensure that “to not through” principles for city centre access are retained within this area. These measures would also maintain pedestrian priority in these spaces, making it easier to cross and move around.

- *Removal of the bus gates at the Adelphi and Market Street, allowing access in both directions through Market Street;*

In the context of the ongoing construction works on Union Street and around the new Market development, in July 2024 Council instructed the

Chief Officer - Operations to introduce a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) to suspend Bus Gates on Union Street (westbound only) / Market Street (southbound only), between its junctions with Adelphi and Hadden Street.

This Order will allow all classes of vehicle to turn left from Union Street onto Market Street, thereafter restricting general traffic to a left only turn at the bottom of Market Street onto Trinity Quay (Virginia Street). This measure will provide an additional option for access and servicing of the businesses on Market Street and Shiprow throughout the remaining period of construction of the New Market building.

No further interventions in the area are recommended by officers at this time.

- *Removal of the bus gates on Bridge Street, allowing full access in both directions;*

Discussed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.30, above. In summary, changes to the measures on Bridge Street would not be recommended by officers. Removing the measures on Bridge Street (particularly southbound) is anticipated to result in increased traffic volumes on key city centre streets and additional congestion, to the detriment of public and active transport modes, even if restrictions on Guild Street are retained. Changes to the measures could prejudice the future delivery of key projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022. Allowing private car access on to Bridge Street would re-introduce the ability for private vehicles to route *through* the city centre, in conflict with the North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy.

In relation to Bridge Street, the parallel route through the Denburn Road corridor provides an alternative higher quality function for general traffic with fewer conflict points arising with people walking, wheeling and cycling as the route passes under the core area of the city centre. The Denburn Road corridor has shown that it can easily cater for traffic volumes displaced from Bridge Street.

- *Removal of the right turn ban on Union Terrace;*

Discussed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.30, above. In the case of the restricted turn from Union Terrace into Rosemount Viaduct, this was introduced to:

- Reduce traffic demand on Union Terrace to improve the sense of place around Union Terrace Gardens;
- Protect Schoolhill and Upperkirkgate (an area of high pedestrian activity) from the impacts of re-routing traffic. While additional traffic management measures have been introduced on these streets to protect pedestrians and cyclists, these are routinely abused by drivers, and this situation may worsen if more traffic is able to route through Rosemount Viaduct; and,

- Reduce traffic demand on Union Street West, in anticipation of future streetscape improvements agreed by the Council which will restrict road capacity.

Changes to the priority measures on Union Terrace would not be recommended by officers. Changes to the measures could prejudice the future delivery of key projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022 by increasing traffic volumes on Union Street West and Union Terrace. Furthermore, this could have safety disbenefits for active travel users and potentially negative impacts on bus journey times and reliability in the future.

- *Issuing of a warning rather than a fine to first time offenders; and*

The Council ran a three month grace period when the measures were first introduced, and frequent and consistent communications were released by the Council's Communication Team in advance of (and after) the measures going live to advise people of the implementation date and to highlight alternative routes to allow people to reach key destinations. The grace period was introduced to allow people to become familiar with the bus priority measures before enforcement commenced. During the grace period anyone who drove into the bus priority areas was issued with a warning letter, not a fixed penalty notice.

There is no stipulation in Scottish legislation, or associated guidance, that a driver should be issued with an initial warning for their first instance of contravening a Bus Lane or Bus Gate.

No change to the enforcement process is recommended by officers at this time. The enforcement process in place is consistent with that of other Scottish cities, and introducing a second round of warning letters would raise a risk of legal challenge from those who have previously received and paid a charge notice.

Using fines to help city centre businesses via transport initiatives.

The legislation governing bus lane enforcement is clear that any surplus income can only be used to support the delivery of the Council's Local Transport Strategy, which primarily seeks to support and encourage more active and sustainable travel.

At the time of launching the "Common Sense Compromise" no specific transport initiatives were listed under this heading. One opportunity that has since been raised by partners such as Aberdeen Inspired has been to use a proportion of Bus Lane Enforcement surplus to reinstate a Night Bus service from the city centre to key destinations across the city and into Aberdeenshire. This option is recommended to Members at Recommendation 2.16 as an opportunity to allocate surplus to a city centre measure which would also help support the delivery of the Local Transport Strategy.

A report on Bus Lane Enforcement is due to be presented to the Council's Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee later this year. Members will be asked at that meeting to consider how additional surplus income be best spent.

Additional Considerations - Blue Badge Exemption

- 3.35. At Council's Requisitioned meeting on 16 July 2024, Council Co-Leader Cllr Yuill asked officers an additional question about whether Blue Badge access to bus priority areas in the city centre could be permitted.
- 3.36. Regarding this question, the regulatory sign type that provides for a Bus Gate is specified by Statutory Instrument. Beyond buses, only certain classes of vehicle are available for inclusion on the sign. Vehicles associated with a disabled 'Blue Badge' is not an included exemption. Although it would be possible for the Council's Roads Authority to request a variation on a regulatory sign via a non-prescribed authorisation from the Scottish Ministers, it is considered that this would be unsuccessful in the national context of how the 'Bus Gate' sign is deployed.
- 3.37. There are also significant risk in relation to the confusion likely to be caused by allowing Blue Badge holders to access the city centre bus priority areas but still be penalised for using bus lanes elsewhere in the city, or in other parts of the region or country. Similarly the risk of other road users following Blue Badge holders into bus priority areas is heightened, as cars carrying Blue Badge holders are not identifiable to other road users unlike taxis and busses.
- 3.38. If a change is to be made in this regard it should be at a national level to ensure consistence and reduce complexity for road users.

Additional Considerations - Car Park Access

- 3.39. To provide further context to perceived issues associated with accessing city centre car parks, traffic modelling has been analysed to understand changes in predicted car journey times to city centre car parks with Bridge Street open to northbound traffic and the right-turn from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct enabled (compared to a 2025 Reference Case scenario with all the ETRO measures in place). The results can be seen in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Changes in Car Journey Times to City Centre Car Parks

Route No.	From	at	To	Direction across City Centre	Average Journey Times (mm:ss)		
					2025 Ref Case	Bridge St & Union Terrace Open	Difference
1	Wellington Rd	Approach to QEII Bridge	Harriet St Car Park	Northbound	08:03	08:31	+ 00:28
2	Wellington Rd	Approach to QEII Bridge	Loch St Car Park	Northbound	07:55	07:47	- 00:08
3	A92	Approach to Bridge of Dee	Harriet St Car Park	Northbound	10:43	11:53	+ 01:11
4	A92	Approach to Bridge of Dee	Loch St Car Park	Northbound	18:46	18:43	- 00:03
5	A92 Elton Road	Esplanade	College St Car Park	Southbound	11:37	11:46	+ 00:08
6	A92 Elton Road	Esplanade	Union Square Car Park	Southbound	09:24	09:29	+ 00:05
7	A96 Auchmill Road	Bucksburn	College St Car Park	South/Eastbound	15:16	15:25	+ 00:08
8	A96 Auchmill Road	Bucksburn	Union Square Car Park	South/Eastbound	18:01	17:59	- 00:02
9	A944 Lang Stracht	Anderson Dr	College St Car Park	South/Eastbound	08:34	08:32	- 00:02
10	A944 Lang Stracht	Anderson Dr	Union Square Car Park	South/Eastbound	12:24	12:28	+ 00:04

3.40. In most cases, journey times see a negligible change in the model when Bridge Street and Union Terrace restrictions are removed, as most corridors that provide access to car parks (particularly Denburn Road and Virginia Street) are unaffected by restrictions, and drivers are observed to favour these routes within the model as they are generally more efficient. Aside from movements to the northern car parks from the south, most journeys did not use Bridge Street to access car parks within the model.

3.41. Differences are observed, however, for traffic coming from the south looking to access a car park to the north of the city centre, with Harriet Street and Loch Street used as examples in the model. In the test model, vehicles are generally observed to route via Bridge Street to access these car parks but journey times are shown to *increase*, primarily as a result of the aforementioned capacity constraints at the Bridge Street / Union Street junction. This further highlights that there are alternative and more appropriate routes than Bridge Street that enable quicker journeys to key destinations in the city centre, particularly Denburn Road.

Recommendations and Justification

Policy Analysis

3.42. As noted above, to supplement the modelling work discussed in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.30, and in the context of the “Common Sense Compromise” proposals also outlined above, an additional assessment of various options for the future of the bus priority measures has been undertaken, looking at the contribution of each of the options (which range from keeping the current measures as they

are to removing them in their entirety) to a range of local, regional and national policies, strategies and aspirations pertaining to transport, climate change, the economy, etc.

3.43. This assessment is presented in Appendix 3 and supports the conclusions that officers have reached that amendments to the bus priority measures would fundamentally undermine the purpose of the measures and are, therefore, not recommended.

3.44. Options considered as part of the assessment were:

- Option 1 – Maintain current (i.e. present day) traffic management measures;
- Option 2 – Re-open Bridge Street to all vehicles in one direction (assumed to be northbound, based on the traffic modelling outputs) and remove the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct;
- Option 3 – Re-open Bridge Street to all vehicles in both directions and remove the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct;
- Option 4 – Remove all restrictions other than Guild Street bus gates (the ‘Common Sense Compromise’); and,
- Option 5 – Remove all of the above measures (reverting to a pre-autumn 2023 scenario).

3.45. A table summarising the outcome of the assessment is provided below (Table 2), with the full policy assessment report provided as Appendix 3.

Table 2: Policy Assessment Summary

NATIONAL		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
National Transport Strategy Priorities	Reducing Inequalities	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Taking Climate Action	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Helping to Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth	-	-	-	-	-
	Improving Health and Wellbeing	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	×	xxx
	Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchy	✓	✓	✓	-	xx
Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Update Categories	20% Car km Reduction	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	×	xxx
	Reducing the Need to Travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Living Well Locally	-	-	-	-	-
	Switching Modes	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	xx	xxx
	Combining or Sharing Car Trips	✓	✓	✓	xxx	xxx
Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 / National Planning Framework 4 (Aberdeen Rapid Transit)		✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	xxx	xxx
REGIONAL		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
Regional Transport Strategy Priorities	Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity	-	-	×	×	×
	Zero fatalities on the road network	-	-	-	-	-
	Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport	✓	✓	×	×	xxx
	Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Accessibility for all	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	xx	xxx
Regional Economic Strategy		-	-	-	-	-
Regional Active Travel Network		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	×	xx

North East Bus Alliance Objectives	Arrest the decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	xxx
	Achieve year on year growth in bus patronage to 2025	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	xxx
LOCAL						
		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Place Stretch Outcomes	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	xx	xxx
	26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.	-	-	-	-	-
Central Locality Plan Priorities	Maximise the spaces in communities to create opportunities for people and nature to connect and increase physical activity.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xx
City Centre Masterplan Objectives	Maximise Pedestrian Space	-	-	-	×	×
	Ensure Access for All	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	Encourage Active Travel	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xx
	Improve Air Quality	✓	✓	×	×	×
	Incorporate Public Transport	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	xxx
	Accommodate Events, Parades, Marches etc.	-	-	-	-	-
	Include Appropriate Urban Greenery	-	-	-	-	-
	Maximise the Potential of Commercial Units	-	-	-	-	-
	Create Permanent Space for on Street Activities	-	-	-	-	-
	Include Space that Facilitates Appropriately Controlled Servicing	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Allow emergency service access to all areas	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	

Local Transport Strategy Aims	A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods.	-	-	×	×	×
	A safe and more secure transport system.	-	-	-	-	-
	A cleaner, greener transport system.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	xxx
North East Roads Hierarchy		✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xxx	xxx
Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan Objectives	Support delivery of the roads hierarchy strategy by implementing measures to discourage, and reduce the number of, through-trips undertaken by private vehicles in the city centre.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xxx	xxx
	Support delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, contributing to the regeneration of the city centre and enhancing the sense of place by developing a network of streets that prioritise the movement of people over the movement of vehicles, whilst maintaining necessary and efficient access for business and industry.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	xx	xxx
	Minimise the adverse environmental impacts of transport in the city centre, incorporating green infrastructure into new transport schemes wherever practicable, and ensure the city centre is resilient to the effects of climate change.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Ensure that the city centre is accessible to, and safe for, all, especially the most vulnerable members of society	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	Encourage and enable more walking and cycling in the city centre, particularly through the provision of better and safer infrastructure.	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx
	Develop a network of safe and attractive cycle routes across the city centre, through the provision of low speed, low flow streets and segregated infrastructure,	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx

	so that an unaccompanied 12-year-old child can safely cycle through the city centre					
	Improve the public transport experience to, from and within the city centre, particularly in terms of achieving shorter and more reliable journey times.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Improve connectivity between key destinations in and around the city centre by sustainable modes of transport.	✓	✓	✓	-	xxx
	Improve opportunities for multimodal journeys to, from and within the city centre.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	xxx
	For vehicles undertaking essential journeys within the city centre, enable as many of these as possible to be undertaken by low emission vehicles.	-	-	-	-	-
Aberdeen Net Zero Mobility Strategy Strategic Objectives	Reduce the demand for travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Improved travel planning and better integration of transport networks, to enable modal shift	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	xxx
	Low carbon transport decisions to support 20% car traffic reduction, mode shift and emission reductions	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	×	xxx
	Increase public transport options to encourage low carbon travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Extend and improve active travel networks for healthy, safer, and sustainable choices	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xx
	Decarbonise transport and increase uptake of low and zero carbon technology	-	-	-	-	-

- 3.46. As can be seen from Table 2, above, and the detail in Appendix 3, the options which retain all or most of the measures (Options 1 - 3) align best to the current policy environment, particularly with transport, climate change and place-based policies and strategies and aspirations to deliver Aberdeen Rapid Transit (discussed further below), albeit to a greater or lesser extent depending on the scale of interventions retained. Those options which remove all or most of the measures are seen to conflict with the majority of relevant national, regional and local policies and strategies.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART)

- 3.47. The [Vision for Aberdeen Rapid Transit](#) (ART) was first identified in the 2021 approved Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) as an ambition to develop a high quality, high frequency mass transit network across the city on key corridors and linking key destinations, supported by Park & Ride facilities. ART has the potential to support long-term sustainable growth for the city and wider city region and support local priorities including city centre regeneration, reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, improving accessibility and connectivity, increasing active travel and supporting healthy lifestyles. ART also has national recognition in Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and in the revised National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), demonstrating it is a key national priority for the Scottish Government.
- 3.48. The Vision for ART is for a high quality bus rapid transit system delivering a cross-city network connecting key regionally important destinations across the city and connected to park and ride sites. A tram-like solution, it aims to deliver fast, frequent and reliable public transport services through high segregation from general traffic, high frequency and high capacity vehicles, off-board fare collection and efficient boarding and alighting. The aim is to deliver significantly faster and more reliable public transport journey times, enhanced connectivity, accessibility and quality.
- 3.49. The City Centre bus priority measures are an important enabler of Aberdeen Rapid Transit, an aspiration shared by regional partners to deliver a step-change in public transport provision, helping us achieve the Council's net zero and air quality targets. Cities like Belfast and Bristol with similar rapid transit programmes have seen substantial economic and environmental benefits. For example, Belfast's "Glider" system increased public transport use by 25% within six months, significantly reducing car usage and contributing to decarbonisation efforts.
- 3.50. Two cross-city ART routes were agreed by the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on [11th June 2024](#) and connect Blackdog to Westhill via Bridge Street, Guild Street and Market Street and Craibstone to Portlethen via Union Street (a map of the agreed network can be found [here](#)). The agreed ART network will provide cross-city connections and therefore enhanced accessibility from across the region to key destinations including Foresterhill Health Campus, Aberdeen Airport, Aberdeen University, North East Scotland College, Union Square and the bus and rail stations.

- 3.51. Key to the success of ART will be the delivery of bus priority that can enable the delivery of fast, frequent, reliable and attractive public transport services along the length of these routes. As the city centre is the key interchange point between the two ART routes, bus journey reliability through the city centre is critical to ensuring that effective connections between the two ART routes (as well as with the wider bus network) can be made.
- 3.52. The bus priority that has been implemented on Bridge Street, Guild Street and Market Street, therefore plays an essential role in securing fast and reliable journey times through the city centre and therefore enhancing connectivity and accessibility to key employment, residential, health and leisure destinations across the city and wider city region. Amending bus priority measures in these areas would risk the ability for ART to deliver these opportunities.
- 3.53. Work is currently progressing on the development of the Business Case for ART, which is being funded through the Aberdeen City Region Deal. Beyond this, the expectation is that ART could be in place by 2030.

Wider Analysis

- 3.54. If Aberdeen is to tackle an unsustainable growth in traffic and not store up greater problems for the future, decisions must be taken which work towards a sustainable future now. Reducing traffic while ensuring our city centre is still accessible, through better public transport, is at the heart of the City Centre Masterplan ambition to make Aberdeen's city centre a more attractive place in which to live, work and spend leisure time.
- 3.55. The following paragraphs provide further commentary on the wide-ranging benefits that City Centre bus priority measures bring.

Environment and Climate Change

- 3.56. In February 2023, Aberdeen City Council added its voice to the growing number of local authorities around the world to have responded to the global climate change and nature loss crises by declaring a climate and nature emergency.
- 3.57. This followed the Council, in October 2021, becoming a formal signatory to both the [United Nations Race To Zero Campaign](#), pledging to recognise the global climate emergency and commit to inclusive climate action, and the [Paris Agreement](#), symbolising support to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- 3.58. In February 2022, the [Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap](#) was approved following development by a range of public, private and community organisations. This sets the strategic approach to reduce city greenhouse gas emissions and a pathway towards Aberdeen becoming net zero by 2045, aligning with the [legislative target year](#) for net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland. The Routemap is supported by 6 enabling strategies, including a [Net Zero Mobility Strategy](#) which includes objectives for a transition to sustainable, low and zero carbon transport.

- 3.59. Bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre have improved as a result of the ETRO measures, likely resulting in modal shift from the car to the bus for some trips. Restricting general traffic on key city centre streets makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage. If modal shift is sustained with fewer people driving through the city centre, there would be a consequent reduction in climate changing emissions and air pollution. These benefits would be greatest under Option 1 considered in the Policy Assessment (Appendix 3), and would decrease as the scale of measures, and their consequent impacts, are reduced.
- 3.60. At the September 2024 meeting of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, Members were presented with the [2024 Air Quality Progress Report](#), which recognised in its conclusions (page 29) that: *“The recently established vehicle access restrictions have resulted in a significant improvement in air quality at city centre locations (...).”*

Access to the City Centre

- 3.61. It is recognised that shoppers can be deterred from going into city centres by traffic congestion and parking stress. Making it easier to access the city by bus and reducing overall traffic will make it a better experience for everyone, including car users. The bus priority measures have resulted in more efficient journey times for bus passengers to and through the city centre. If the measures were to be amended or removed then it is likely that car and bus journey times would increase further in the future, as largely unrestricted traffic in the city centre results in further congestion.
- 3.62. As illustrated by Tables 3, below, access to key off-street car parking locations within the city centre has also not significantly changed since the bus priority measures were introduced. Table 3 shows a comparison of journey distances between three origins (one in the west of the city, one in the south, and one in the north) and four main city centre car parks, in the north, south and west of the city centre. Current (post-ETRO) routes have been extracted from Google Maps, which provide the optimum route (in terms of distance) based on current conditions. Pre-ETRO routes have been estimated using a judgement on the most ‘logical’ routes for vehicles to take with no bus gate restrictions in place (other than on Union Street Central).
- 3.63. As Table 3 demonstrates, the distances to be travelled have not changed (as in many cases the ETRO measures do not impact on routeing) or have a negligible difference (less than half a mile increase in journey distance).

Table 3: Access to City Centre Car Parks

Origin	Destination	Distance Pre-ETRO	Distance Post-ETRO
Woodhill House, AB16 5GJ	Bon Accord (Harriet Street)	2.2 miles (via Westburn Road, South Mount Street, Rosemount Viaduct, Schoolhill)	No change
	Chapel Street	1.9 miles (via Westburn Road, Watson Street, Esslemont Avenue, Rose Street)	No change
	Trinity Mall	2.3 miles (Via Westburn Road, Skene Square, Denburn Road)	No change
	Union Square	3.0 miles (via Westburn Road, Craigie Loanings, Union Street, Bridge Street, Market Street)	3.2 miles (via Westburn Road, Skene Square, Denburn Road, South College Street, Palmerston Road)
Wellington Road, AB12 3FU	Bon Accord (Harriet Street)	3.6 miles (via Wellington Road, South College Street, Bridge Street, Rosemount Viaduct, Schoolhill)	3.9 miles (via Wellington Road, South College Street, Denburn Road, Woolmanhill, Schoolhill)
	Chapel Street	3.5 miles (via Wellington Road, South College Street, Bridge Street, Union Street, Huntly Street)	3.5 miles (via Wellington Road, South College Street, Crown Street, Huntly Street)

Origin	Destination	Distance Pre-ETRO	Distance Post-ETRO
	Trinity Mall	3.2 miles (via Wellington Road, South College Street, Wapping Street)	No change
	Union Square	3.2 miles (via Wellington Road, North Esplanade West, Market Street)	No change
Bridge of Don, AB23 8DX	Bon Accord (Harriet Street)	2.9 miles (via Mounthooly Way, Spring Garden, Maberly Street, Skene Square, Schoolhill)	No change
	Chapel Street	2.9 miles (via Mounthooly Way, Spring Garden, Woolmanhill, Summer Street)	No change
	Trinity Mall	2.7 miles (via King Street, Union Street, Market Street, Guild Street)	2.8 miles (via King Street, Mounthooly Way, Spring Garden, Skene Square, Denburn Road)
	Union Square	2.7 miles (via King Street, Castle Street, Union Street, Bridge Street, Market Street)	2.7 miles (via King Street, Marischal Street, Regent Quay, Market Street)

3.64. It should also be noted that evidence from the traffic model suggests drivers tend to favour more strategic routes (such as Denburn Road and Virginia Street) to access city centre car parks in any case, and such journeys are largely unaffected by any of the ETRO restrictions.

Wider Economic Considerations

- 3.65. A recent report [by KPMG for the Confederation of Passenger Transport](#) highlights that bus passengers across Scotland contribute significantly to local economies through their spending, which is estimated at £2,960 million per year. The report also identifies that every £1 of government spend on better bus services and bus priority schemes can secure economic benefits between £4.55¹ and £7².
- 3.66. A 10% improvement in local bus service connectivity has also been associated with a 3.6% reduction in deprivation³. A paper recently published by the Place and Wellbeing Collaborative, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service on Transport Poverty notes that not everyone has access to the same transport options, and defines transport poverty as: *“the lack of transport options that are available, reliable, affordable, accessible or safe that allow people to meet their daily needs and achieve a reasonable quality of life.”* Improving accessibility and safety of active travel and public transport options can be one means of eradicating transport poverty, opening up opportunities for people who do not have access to a private car, and preventing ‘forced’ car ownership (and associated financial hardship) arising from a lack of alternative transport options⁴. According to Scotland’s 2022 Census Data, 30.7% of households in Aberdeen do not have a car or van in their household.
- 3.67. Questions have been raised publicly about whether the introduction of the bus priority measures in August 2023 has resulted in people choosing not to visit the city centre, and whether footfall figures have declined as a direct result of the measures. Although analysis of Springboard footfall data does indicate a 3.7% decline in city centre footfall between the periods of January 2023 - August 2023 and January 2024 - August 2024, this is indicative of a longer-term trend that extends across the whole country, not just in Aberdeen. For instance, over the same period across Scotland there was a 5.3% decline.
- 3.68. Much of this longer-term trend can be attributed to an increase in online consumption and home working. Between January 2019 and September 2023 online payment spend rose by 4% in Scotland⁵. In the North East in June 2022, around two-thirds of employees were working in their designated workplaces, with one in seven using a hybrid model, and one in seven working from home. This represents an increase in home working compared with pre-pandemic levels, when levels of home-working were at only 6%⁶.
- 3.69. Face-to-face retail spend in the North East has also remained stable between 2019 and 2023 rather than increasing⁷. At a UK level, there is evidence that the

¹ [Economic Impacts of Bus | CPT \(cpt-uk.org\)](#)

² [Greener Journeys: The Value of the Bus to Society - Community Transport Association](#) [Community Transport Association \(ctauk.org\)](#)

³ [Greener Journeys: The Value of the Bus to Society - Community Transport Association](#) [Community Transport Association \(ctauk.org\)](#)

⁴ [Place and Wellbeing: Movement Theme – Place and Wellbeing Collaborative, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service](#)

⁵ ONS: [Link](#) Consumer Card Spending Flow March 2024

⁶ Felstead, A and Reuschke, D (2020) ‘Homeworking in the UK: before and during the 2020 lockdown’

⁷ Source: (UK VISA Card Payments 2023)

volume of face-to-face sales has been falling, but their value has been rising. This is consistent with anecdotal evidence from the Economic Policy Panel, which suggests that people are making fewer visits to city centres but spending more when they do⁸.

- 3.70. Average dwell time has risen by at least 5% in the city centre over the weekends since the introduction of the bus priority measures. Dwell time is also currently higher at the weekend than 2019 pre-pandemic levels⁹.

Changing Nature of City Centres

- 3.71. Generally across the country strong trends already in place over a significant period of time have changed the character and composition of city, town and other centres. These factors underpin the changes to retail in the long term and include an ageing population; lifestyle changes including internet shopping, technological advances in online retail and economic growth post Brexit.
- 3.72. Office for National Statistics data for internet sales identifies that 26.7% of all retail expenditure is undertaken online (as at July 2024). During the pandemic this figure reached a peak of 37.8% (January 2021). Whilst the data suggests that the high levels of online retail experienced during periods of lockdown have not been sustained, it is not yet clear whether the cumulative forced changes during the Covid-19 public health emergency will have longer term impacts on consumer behaviour and in particular on online retailing.
- 3.73. Over the last few years traditional high streets and off prime pitches in major centres across the country have also been experiencing a higher turnover of occupiers, higher vacancies and a shift from retail goods to a mix of retail and leisure services. Shopping centres, who have been hardest hit by changes in retailing with continuing increase in vacancies and departure of multiple occupiers, are also likely to adopt more flexible approaches, i.e. hosting a broader mixture of tenants, in the near future. The Council's Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan identifies interventions that will support a changing high street, and has implemented measures that have enabled reoccupation and new uses for vacant units on the street
- 3.74. Local shopping provision has also been revitalised as a result of home-working and continued local customer base – although a positive for local businesses in these areas, this shift is likely to have resulted in a loss of trade in town and city centres due to higher levels of home-working.
- 3.75. Aligned with these trends, it is predicted that demand for commercial leisure space will grow significantly across Aberdeen City in the years to come and that this growth has the potential to offset decline in comparison goods retailing. There is also significant potential for additional leisure space to serve tourism.
- 3.76. On that basis, there is an opportunity to better support leisure, entertainment, tourism and cultural activities to complement the retail offer in the city centre.

⁸ Monthly Business Survey, Retail Sales Inquiry, ONS.

⁹ Huq Industries Limited

This could be by encouraging new uses throughout the city centre which support its vitality and viability, including the “heart” of the city centre along Union Street, or by actively supporting existing facilities that are already located in the area. Key to this will be ensuring a city centre which is enjoyable to spend time in and, in this context, it is useful to note that the annual number of visitors and audience members attending Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA) facilities has *increased* over the last 12 months. This is highlighted within the Annual ALEO Report elsewhere on the Agenda for this Council meeting.

- 3.77. This change to a more diverse offering is also reflected in changes to planning policies in the Local Development Plans over the last decade. Both the 2012 and 2023 Local Development Plans designated a Retail Core within the city centre – recognising the area containing most of the city centre’s shopping floorspace and where new retail development should be directed. In the 2012 Local Development Plan, the Retail Core of the city centre stretched the entire length of Union Street and down Holburn Street to the Great Western Road junction, whereas within the 2023 Local Development Plan, the Retail Core has contracted to the section of Union Street from just east of Broad Street towards Bon Accord Street.
- 3.78. This reduction in the Retail Core designation over time, informed by technical evidence and studies, has resulted in more flexibility in the types of uses supported on Union Street, allowing more entertainment, office and leisure uses to enter into the area. The growth in restaurants, particular on the east and west ends of Union Street, and developments such as the Silver Fin and the Capital, are a testament to that change in patterns.
- 3.79. This echoes the change in shopping patterns as highlighted above, with online shopping only accounting for 9.4% of sales in 2012, to more than 26% over the space of two Local Development Plans periods.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- 3.80. The determinants of health are the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that indirectly influence the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Some determinants of health may be difficult to change (age, family history of illness etc), whereas others can be influenced by the social, economic and physical environments in which we live, and therefore can be changed, positively or negatively, by policy interventions or decisions made by Council.
- 3.81. Public transport accessibility allows car free access to services, amenities and employment which increase health benefits and reduces the impact of financial poverty. Evidence has been provided by both First Bus and Stagecoach around the bus priority measures in the city centre improving reliability and improving journey times for public transport. This greater reliability offers greater security to those who travel by public transport, proportionally more women than men, that they will be able to access their destination and personal commitments on time.

- 3.82. Less traffic in the city centre also results in safer conditions for people walking, wheeling and cycling, as well as less noise and fewer emissions, contributing to a healthier and less stressful city centre environment in which to live, work and visit.
- 3.83. During the five-year period between 2015 - 2019, prior to the Covid-19 public health emergency, there was an average of 4.2 pedestrian casualties per year recorded in the core city centre area (Union Street / Market Street / Bridge Street / Guild Street), while during the four-year period from 2020 - 2023 the average was 0.5 pedestrian casualties per year. This fall in pedestrian casualties is likely to be linked to the volume of road users in the latter period being significantly lessened. Nonetheless, it would be usual to expect the interventions, to date, by reducing general traffic volume, and prioritising vulnerable road users, will continue to have a positive long-term effect on road safety.
- 3.84. Increasing the attractiveness of walking, wheeling and cycling in the city centre will also encourage and enable more active travel, bringing physical and mental health benefits for those switching from sedentary forms of transport. More people out and about in the city centre could also have a positive impact on personal safety and security due to increased natural surveillance, while also enabling good social connections which strengthens mental health.

SUMMARY

- 3.85. Officers have set out in this section a number of matters relevant for Members to consider in making a final decision on the future of the current city centre bus priority measures. As noted in the Recommendations in Section 2, it is officers' professional view that the measures put in place should be retained, and that approval is given to make the Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) Experimental Order 2023 a permanent Order.
- 3.86. By way of summary, officers have come to this view for the following reasons:
- The principles of city centre bus priority measures are long-established, stretching back to the original City Centre Masterplan approved unanimously by Council in 2015.
 - The traffic modelling undertaken does not give sufficient confidence that removal of any of the ETRO measures will not simply lead to further congestion and problems in the future. Indeed, the removal of southbound restrictions on Bridge Street is seen to lead to significant problems once Union Street Central streetscape works are completed in 2025.
 - The measures provide a degree of resilience and future-proofing for additional planned City Centre Masterplan measures – it is difficult to imagine, for example, how the approved streetscape improvements on Union Street West could be delivered if significant traffic is re-introduced into that space.

- Retention of the measures is fully in accordance with current national, regional and local policy and strategy, particularly in terms of climate change, health and wellbeing, and sustainable transport.
- The measures have already benefitted bus passengers through improved bus journey times and journey time reliability, and users of active modes of transport by reducing traffic levels and contributing to a safer and more welcoming city centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Almost one-third of households in Aberdeen do not a car or van and therefore benefit from interventions to make other modes of transport safer, quicker and easier to use.
- For those continuing to use a car to access the city centre, accessibility has remained at similar levels. While distances to access city centre car parks may have increased marginally in some instances, information extracted from the traffic model suggests that drivers tend to favour strategic routes such as Denburn Road and Virginia Street anyway, which are unaffected by the restrictions.

3.87. In addition to the points above, it is also important to highlight the financial risk that the Council would be subject to should the Scottish Ministers consider that any change or departure from the purposes for which the Bus Partnership Fund Grant was awarded warrants an alteration in the amount of the Grant, or that the future of the project is in jeopardy. This is discussed further in Section 4, below

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Grant Funding

4.1. As noted in Report Recommendation 2.2 (above), at the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee on 03 February 2021, Committee instructed Officers to submit a bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund. As part of the approval of the bid, Committee moved two additional instructions - those being:-

- ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, that in the context of the corridor options within the bid terminating in the City Centre, and in light of the recommendations from the Economic Policy Panel and ongoing transport projects, to seek to accelerate the City Centre elements of the bid. This should include any necessary enabling works for approved schemes, for example South College Street and Berryden, to help drive recovery, improve the transport system and ensure integration of current transport projects; and*
- iii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, to explore options to improve access and integration of the Aberdeen bus station as part of the bid, to help improve the customer experience.*

- 4.2. £10,000,000 from the Bus Partnership Fund was awarded to the Council for the South College Street Junction Improvement Project Phase 1. South College Street had previously been identified as an enabler of the City Centre Masterplan, with the improvements providing alternative capacity for general traffic displaced by the public realm improvements on Union Street Central and surrounding streets. Within the award letter (Appendix 2), Transport Scotland made it clear that this award was contingent on the South College Street improvements facilitating and preceding the delivery of bus priority measures on nearby streets:

“On South College Street, you will be required to evidence clearly that this project enables bus priority measures on other roads in the city centre, given that the plans do not currently include bus priority measures on the street itself.”

- 4.3. The outcome of the funding application, including the award letter with the above condition, was reported to the City Growth and Resources Committee in August 2021, where the Committee noted the award and instructed officers to continue to work with partners to deliver the projects in accordance with the grant conditions.

- 4.4. The award letter included provision for Transport Scotland to recover funding from the Council:

“9.1 The Scottish Ministers may re-assess, vary, make a deduction from, withhold, or require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it in the event that:

9.1.1 ...

9.1.2 the Scottish Ministers consider that any change or departure from the purposes for which the Grant was awarded warrants an alteration in the amount of the Grant;

9.1.3 ...”

- 4.5. Prior to the requisitioned meeting of Council held on 16 July 2024, officers sought legal opinion which noted the risk of the Council being required to repay some or all of the grant funding if the agreed bus priority measures were to be removed or significantly amended, and/or Transport Scotland considered the future of the project to be in jeopardy
- 4.6. The Chief Officer – Finance is of the view that the increasing financial constraint across the Scottish public sector, the reductions that have been applied to funding streams in 2024/25, such as the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and Free School Meals, as well as delays to funding announcements this year e.g. Employability Services, means there will be a heightened level of scrutiny and consideration given to any changes made, and therefore increased risk over the recovery of funding that no longer achieves the intended objectives, either in part or whole.
- 4.7. The Chief Officer – Finance expects the Council to seek to secure certainty from Transport Scotland on what they would intend to do if the decisions taken made changes to the bus prioritisation measures. In the meantime the Council

Financial Performance Reports would reflect the decisions taken by including a Contingent Liability, however if the matter remained outstanding at 31 March 2025 then a Provision would have to be included in the Council's draft 2024/25 Annual Accounts to recognise the potential for financial loss.

- 4.8. Following the Council meeting of 16 July 2024, officers sought the view of our external auditors, Audit Scotland, on the retention of grant funding for the purpose of facilitating bus prioritisation, should the measures be changed.
- 4.9. The response from the external auditor acknowledges that there is a risk that Scottish Government could seek recovery of some funding if the bus priority measures were removed.
- 4.10. That risk is not absolute however, and in the absence of certainty, both from the extent of any potential changes and the determination on the matter by Transport Scotland, the expectation of Audit Scotland would be for a contingent liability to be recorded in the Council performance reports for Quarters 2 and 3, while the actual implications are worked through with Transport Scotland and they make a decision.
- 4.11. Audit Scotland would however expect to see a provision in the Quarter 4 financial performance report and the draft 2024/25 Annual Accounts if the priority measures are removed and there has been no final determination by Transport Scotland or if no suitable discussions have taken place and the situation remains uncertain. The change in recommended accounting treatment between Q3 and Q4 is due to 31 March 2025 being the date by which the Council is required to have made a decision about the permanency of its Experimental Order (ETRO).

Cost of Works

- 4.12. The Council Budget meeting on 10 March 2021 outlined a funding commitment totalling £150m from the General Fund Capital Programme over financial years 2021/22 to 2025/26 to ensure the Council transforms the City Centre and the Beach area. With the addition of £20m grant funding from the Levelling Up Fund, projects amounting to approximately £170m are now individual project budgets in the approved Capital Programme.
- 4.13. To date, £7,944,077 has been spent and claimed from the Bus Partnership Fund for the cost of the South College Street Improvements, with a final claim still to be submitted. The cost of the supporting bus prioritisation measures on other roads was approximately £285,000, fully funded by the Bus Partnership Fund and Nestrans
- 4.14. Therefore the bus priority measures reported here have already been installed on site and the major outgoings have been made. There is currently no remaining external funding available for amendment or removal of the measures and the Council does not have a capital or revenue budget to fund changes. So if changes to the measures are agreed, any costs of

implementing those changes would require to have a source of funding identified.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

- 5.1. Aberdeen City Council made the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police Scotland in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to said Act and having complied with the statutory requirements of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 1999, as amended.
- 5.2. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was brought into effect on 1 August 2023 and, in terms of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, should not continue in force for longer than 18 months. The Council must, therefore, reach a conclusion ahead of 1 March 2025 on whether the Order will be made permanent in its entirety, made in part or abandoned.

Recent Judgements of Note

- 5.3. The *Cains Trustees (Jersey) Limited and Cains Fiduciaries (Jersey) Limited as Trustees for the Eastgate Unit Trust v Highland Council* [2024] CSOH 80 case ("the Highland Council case") differs significantly from the current Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order (ETRO) 2023 situation.
- 5.4. The ETRO subject of this report to Council involved a period of consultation and monitoring, allowing the public and decision-makers to observe the impacts before deciding on its permanence. The ETRO underwent statutory consultation, with comments and objections from individuals and businesses considered by officers and presented to Members as part of the decision-making process.
- 5.5. Conversely, the Highland Council case involved a non-statutory consultation to generate a single option for a formal TRO consultation, which was deemed procedurally unfair. If Council decides not to approve the making of the ETRO as a permanent Order and decides to proceed with another option instead (e.g. add a new element which would require a completely new Traffic Regulation Order) then the points raised in the Highland Council case regarding consultation on options and ensuring that any consultation is procedurally fair will be considered when conducting future consultation exercises.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The City Centre and Beach Masterplan has been screened through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process and the consultation

authorities have confirmed that no Environmental Report specific to this overarching Masterplan is required.

- 6.2. Additional Environmental considerations related to this report are discussed further in Section 3, above. In summary, the City Centre bus priority improvements promote improved walking, cycling and public transport priority within the city centre and reduce vehicles within the main pedestrian spaces. This reduces people’s exposure to poor air quality whilst enjoying the city centre environment. The reduction in “through traffic” is a desired outcome that also contributes to the Council Net Zero commitments and the Scottish Government target of reducing vehicle km by 20% by 2030.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council’s Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Removal of any of the bus priority measures risks undermining efforts to support and enable more public transport use and active travel in the city centre, contrary to current local and national transport policy. This may also put at risk the Council’s ability to deliver future City Centre Masterplan projects and longer-term aspirations such as Aberdeen Rapid Transit.	The report recommends that the measures are retained.	L	Yes

Compliance	Removal of the bus priority measures could constitute a breach of Bus Partnership Fund grant conditions.	The report recommends that the measures are retained.	M	Yes
Operational	The bus priority measures are in place and operational. Should any be removed, resources would have to be identified to undertake this work.	The report recommends that the measures are retained.	L	Yes
Financial	<p>Removal of the bus priority measures may have implications for Scottish Government Bus Partnership Funding provided for the bus priority measures and the South College Street works. Some or all of this money may have to be returned, with the implications of this addressed within the report.</p> <p>Removal of the measures could put at risk the Council's ability to attract national funding for future transport projects, especially projects that rely on these measures for their success, such as Aberdeen Rapid Transit.</p> <p>There is currently no external funding available for amendment or removal of the measures and the</p>	The report recommends that the measures are retained.	M	Yes

	<p>Council does not have a capital or revenue budget to fund changes. If changes to the measures are agreed, any costs of implementing those changes would require to have a source of funding identified.</p>			
Reputational	<p>Retaining the measures in their entirety could see the Council being accused of not listening to the views of businesses and members of the public.</p> <p>Conversely, changes to the measures could result in confusion amongst drivers, with the Council accused of deliberately causing confusion. The Council could also be accused of a lack of resolve under pressure and therefore not fully committed to sustainable transport improvements and measures to address the climate emergency.</p> <p>Should the measures be amended or removed, there is a risk that the Council is seen as inconsistent in the eyes of funding partners who have</p>	<p>The report recommends that the measures are retained.</p> <p>The Council will continue to communicate the benefits of the bus priority measures and how they support the wider transport and City Centre Masterplan vision.</p> <p>The Council will continue to raise awareness of the changes and address concerns about legibility of the restrictions.</p> <p>The Council will work with local businesses to identify future city centre transport projects that assist businesses, where this is possible.</p>	M	Yes

	invested significantly in this project, which may put at risk the Council's ability to attract further external funding in the future.			
Environment / Climate	The city centre traffic management measures seek to improve conditions for people using active travel and public transport and encourage a greater uptake of these modes of transport. Mode shift from private car to sustainable transport will bring air quality improvements and carbon reduction benefits.	The report recommends that the measures are retained.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The recommendations within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Scottish Government and NESTRANS to improve the city's bus network, including considering options for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network, with the support of the Scottish Bus Fund, and consider options for council-run services in the city. • Improving cycle and active transport infrastructure, including by seeking to integrate safe, physically segregated cycle lanes in new road building projects and taking steps to ensure any proposal for resurfacing or other long-term investments consider options to improve cycle and active transport infrastructure.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The recommendations support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 13 - Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate; and • Outcome 14 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Regional and City Strategies</i></p> <p><i>Regional Strategies: (i.e. Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Transport Strategy; Regional Skills Strategy)</i></p> <p><i>City Strategies and Strategic Plans (i.e. Local Development Plan; Local Housing Strategy; Children's Services Plan; Net Zero Routemap for the City)</i></p> <p><i>Council Strategies (i.e. Medium Term Financial Strategy; Estates and Assets Strategy)</i></p>	<p>The report supports the priorities in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) around investment in infrastructure, regenerating our city centre, unlocking development potential, improving the deployment of low carbon transport, and enabling Aberdeen to realise development opportunities in the City Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The report supports the National, Regional and Local Transport Strategies, particularly the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which prioritises the needs of those walking, wheeling, and cycling and using public transport above other road users, and the 4 pillars identified in the recent Regional Transport Strategy, Nestrans 2040: Equality, Climate, Prosperity, and Wellbeing.</p> <p>It also supports the Aberdeen Active Travel Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, both of which seek to improve conditions for people walking and cycling and travelling by bus in Aberdeen, particularly to, from and within the City Centre, through the provision of more and safer infrastructure.</p> <p>Measures to reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic in the City Centre will support the Air Quality Action Plan, Climate Change Plan, Net Zero Action Plan and Low Emission Zone by contributing to emissions reduction.</p> <p>The recommendations support the City Centre Masterplan by contributing to the development of a safer and more welcoming city centre environment for people, and improving accessibility of the area for non-car modes of transport.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the City Centre Bus Priority Measures (ETRO) has been reviewed and changes made.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Report CR&E/24/169 to Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee: The Aberdeen City Council (City Centre, Aberdeen) (Traffic Management) (Experimental) Order (ETRO) 2023 – Statutory Public Consultation https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s158378/ETRO2_BusPriorityMeasures_Report_CRE_21_1_69_Final.pdf

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Traffic Model Testing Report

Appendix 2 – Transport Scotland Grant Letter – Bus Partnership Fund

Appendix 3 – Policy Assessment

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TRAFFIC MODEL TESTING SUMMARY REPORT



ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN

ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE BUS GATE APPRAISAL

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Aberdeen City Council
Project	Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan
Title of Document	Aberdeen City Centre Bus Gate Appraisal
Type of Document	Traffic Model Testing Summary Report
Date	19/09/2024
Reference number	GB01T24E14/190924
Number of pages	12

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Aberdeen City Council (ACC) commissioned SYSTRA Ltd (SYSTRA) to undertake a traffic modelling assessment of proposed amendments to the current traffic management operation within Aberdeen City Centre, namely to:

- Re-open Bridge Street to all vehicles in one or both directions
- Remove the right turn ban from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct

1.1.2 ACC instructed SYSTRA to consider the impact of these changes under the following network scenario:

- **2025 Scenario** - Union Street Central works are complete with buses, taxis and service vehicles permitted through the re-aligned corridor between Bridge Street and Market Street. The measures also include a segregated cycle lane provided throughout the length of the corridor with controlled connection to the wider network at the Bridge Street and Market Street junctions.

1.1.3 This report details SYSTRA's model testing programme and outcomes from the model testing assessment.

2. TRAFFIC MODEL TESTING

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The key impacts of the changes to the traffic management operation within the city centre are the changes to general traffic flows and the subsequent impact to public transport journey times.
- 2.1.2 The model outputs collated for this study are:
 - Model traffic flow changes around the core area of the city centre
 - Model bus journey times for services that are impacted by the Bridge Street and Union Terrace traffic management changes – both directly and in-directly

2.2 Model Test Programme

- 2.2.1 Through discussions with ACC officers, the model test scenarios were required to assess the impact of the following:
 - Bridge Street open to general traffic – in either and in both directions
 - Union Terrace right turn to Rosemount Viaduct re-opened - assessed individually and in parallel with the various Bridge Street scenarios
 - All test scenarios undertaken on a 2025 scenario reflecting completion of the Central Union Street streetscape works with bus, taxi and service vehicles permitted along this corridor.
- 2.2.2 A table summarising the model test scenarios is provided below:

Table 1. Model Test Scenarios

Test	City Centre Restriction			Scenario Description
	Bridge Street		Union Terrace	
	Bus Gate NB	Bus Gate SB	R/T Banned	
1	✓		✓	All Traffic Permitted SB on Bridge St
2		✓	✓	All Traffic Permitted NB on Bridge St
3		✓		All Traffic Permitted NB on Bridge St + R/T allowed for all traffic on Union Terr
4			✓	All Traffic Permitted NB & SB on Bridge St
5				All Traffic Permitted NB & SB on Bridge St + R/T allowed for all traffic on Union Terr
6	✓	✓		R/T allowed for all traffic on Union Terr



2.3 Traffic Flow Assessment

2.3.1 Table 2 and Table 3 provide the modelled traffic flow changes between the 2025 Reference Case and the various test scenarios in the AM and PM peaks respectively.

2.3.2 The tables provide the model flows for the Reference Case and provide the difference to the 2025 Reference Case for the test scenarios.

Table 2. AM Peak Hour Traffic Flow Changes – 2025 Scenario

AM Peak Hour (08:00-09:00)	Direction	Difference to Reference Case						
		2025 Ref Case	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6
Bridge Street	Northbound	51	-7	76	81	73	101	6
	Southbound	61	90	0	4	81	86	6
Union Street West	Eastbound	117	50	-4	25	47	67	41
	Westbound	153	-5	37	35	35	49	3
Union Terrace	Northbound	53	-14	24	63	14	47	37
	Southbound	95	22	-12	-8	7	15	3
Rosemount Viaduct	Eastbound	207	-5	-6	-5	-7	-8	4
	Westbound	110	9	-2	-5	4	0	-3
Blackfriars Street	Northbound	30	-9	0	6	-4	-3	14
	Southbound	86	1	5	-6	-2	-1	4
College Street	Northbound	530	-22	63	43	33	33	-6
	Southbound	460	19	-17	-13	12	20	9

Table 3. PM Peak Hour Traffic Flow Changes – 2025 Scenario

PM Peak Hour (17:00-18:00)	Direction	Difference to Reference Case						
		2025 Ref Case	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6
Bridge Street	Northbound	42	1	66	106	69	118	4
	Southbound	51	123	-1	-3	128	125	3
Union Street West	Eastbound	139	52	3	35	56	72	46
	Westbound	146	-2	35	49	42	36	-3
Union Terrace	Northbound	89	-37	24	93	-21	54	48
	Southbound	98	29	-8	-3	26	22	-3
Rosemount Viaduct	Eastbound	212	14	-1	21	0	21	19
	Westbound	240	5	-7	-9	-10	7	10
Blackfriars Street	Northbound	27	11	2	24	3	17	17
	Southbound	199	-7	-13	-10	-11	-1	0
College Street	Northbound	667	-1	44	30	27	11	-28
	Southbound	465	17	0	-27	0	-6	-6

2.3.3 The model results suggest the following:

- Opening Bridge Street to general traffic in either or both directions results in traffic flow increases through this corridor.

- Northbound, up to 120 vehicles per hour increase and up to 1200 vehicle increase over the model 12 hour period (when Bridge Street is open northbound to all traffic)
- Southbound, up to 130 vehicles per hour increase and up to 1600 vehicle increase over the model 12 hour period (when Bridge Street is open southbound to all traffic)
- Traffic flows on Union Street West are generally observed to increase in both directions under nearly all the test scenarios
- Allowing northbound traffic to turn right from Union Terrace on its own (Test 6), results in a small increase in traffic flows through the city centre (<50 vehicle increase per hour)
 - If Union Terrace right turn is allowed with Bridge Street open to all traffic northbound (Test 3 and 5), the Union Terrace northbound traffic flows increase by approximately 60 to 90 vehicles per hour
 - In this scenario, there is not an obvious increase in traffic continuing through Blackfriars Street and on through the George Street area (<25 vehicles per hour)
- AM Peak and PM Peak results show similar patterns, with higher traffic flows through Bridge Street southbound in the PM Peak hour.

2.3.4 The traffic flow tables do not tell the full story of the general traffic behaviour in the model test scenarios. Model observations show high traffic queuing on Union Street West on approach to Bridge Street in the scenarios that include Bridge Street open southbound.

2.3.5 Figure 1 provides a model snapshot from the Test 5 scenario (Bridge Street fully open in both direction with no restrictions on Union Terrace)

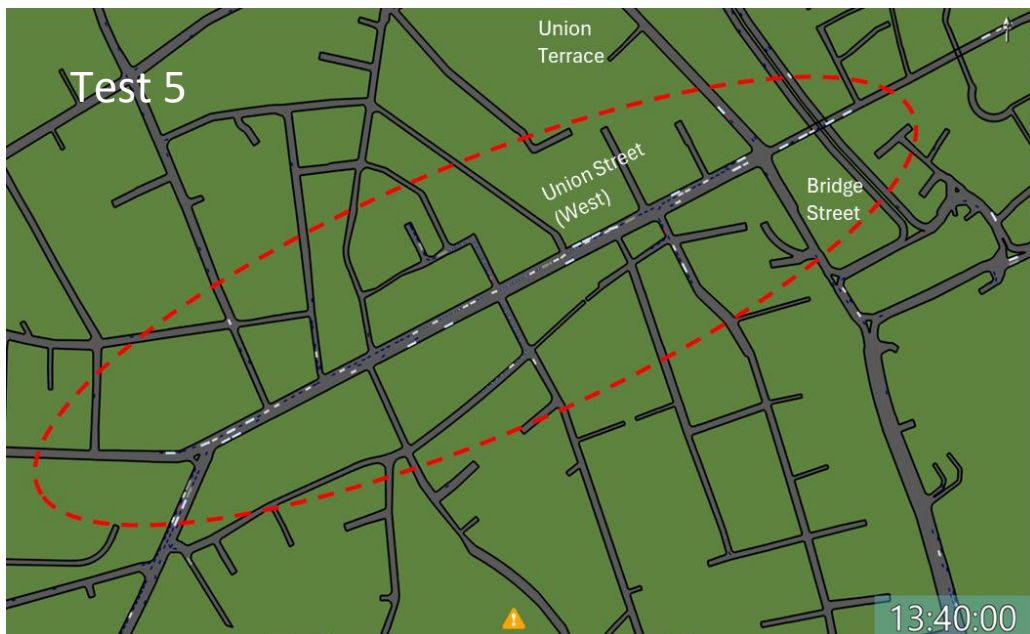


Figure 1. 2025 Scenario, Bridge St open to general traffic in both directions (Test 5)



- 2.3.6 The above figure shows that, when traffic is permitted to route southbound on Bridge Street, there is significant queuing on Union Street (West) on approach to the Bridge Street junction.
- 2.3.7 The traffic queuing on Union Street is a direct result of the volume of traffic seeking to turn right from Union Street (west) to Bridge Street. The limited time available in the traffic signals at Bridge Street / Union Street cannot cater for the volume of traffic seeking to turn right, hence large queues develop through the model period.
- 2.3.8 Separately, when allowing general traffic to route northbound on Bridge Street there does not appear to be any significant queue issues on Union Street West or Bridge Street in the 2025 scenario.

2.4 Bus Journey Time Assessment

- 2.4.1 Public transport journey times were extracted from the model through the routes detailed in Figure 2.

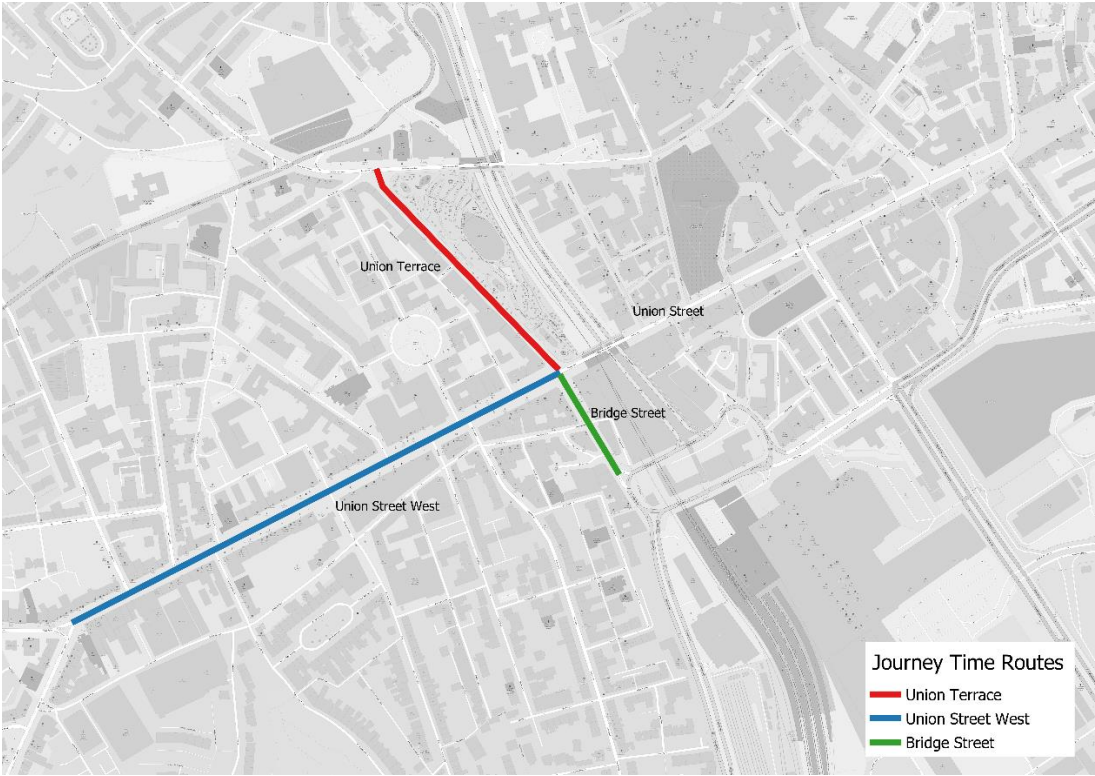


Figure 2. Bus Journey Times Routes

- 2.4.2 **Appendix A** provides the average bus journey times for buses to traverse the above corridors in each peak period for the various traffic restriction scenarios.
- 2.4.3 Table 4 specifically provides the average bus journey times through Union Street (west), eastbound. The 2025 Reference Case journey times are shown in the table with the flow difference to the Reference Case provided for each of the test scenarios.



Table 4. Average Bus Journey Times through Union Street West, 2025 - Eastbound

Union Street West Average PT Journey Times Eastbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:05:26	00:05:05	00:05:21	00:05:17
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:31	00:12:57	00:01:49	00:05:06
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:00	00:00:00	-00:00:04	-00:00:01
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:00	-00:00:01	-00:00:03	-00:00:01
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:12	00:14:10	00:02:46	00:05:43
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:21	00:08:06	00:01:05	00:03:11
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:06	00:00:00	-00:00:01	00:00:02

2.4.4 Average journey times through Bridge Street and Union Terrace remain relatively consistent through all test scenarios. However, the bus journey times through Union Street West heading towards Bridge Street show some significant delays in the scenarios where Bridge Street is open to general traffic southbound (Tests 1, 4, and 5).

2.4.5 From the model observations, and the journey time test results, it is clear that the Bridge Street / Union Street traffic signals do not have the capacity to accommodate the heavy right turn demand from Union Street (west). Given the traffic signal constraints for phasing requirements for pedestrians, cyclists, and general traffic separately, there is no capacity to provide Union Street west with more signal green time to facilitate this manoeuvre.

Bus Journey Times through Wider Model Network Area

2.4.6 A second bus journey time statistic was extracted from the traffic model scenarios. This considered the average journey time for buses to traverse their full route through the traffic model area. This would theoretically pick up any wider impacts of the various traffic restriction changes within the city centre area.

2.4.7 The bus services selected for analysis were all services that routed through the Bridge Street /Union Street junction in any direction.

2.4.8 Table 5 summarises the average journey time for all services to route through the model network. The table provides the AM, interpeak and PM peak results along with the full 12 hour model period. Each of the test model scenarios are presented as a difference to the 2025 Reference Case model.

Table 5. Average Bus Journey Time through Model Area (2025)

Bus Routes - Average Journey Times (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:28:20	00:28:27	00:29:57	00:28:55
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:09	00:04:53	00:01:10	00:01:58
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:21	-00:00:02	-00:00:09	-00:00:11
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:05	00:00:13	-00:00:03	00:00:02
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:12	00:04:40	00:01:13	00:01:54
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:04	00:02:37	00:00:46	00:01:07
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:04	00:00:17	00:00:46	00:00:19



2.4.9 The bus journey time table provides further suggested evidence that the removal of restrictions on Bridge St southbound result in significant impacts to the journey time of buses routing through the city centre area.

2.5 Bus Reliability Assessment

2.5.1 The third bus journey time statistic analysed relates to bus reliability. Bus operators require journey times to be relatively consistent throughout the day in order to retain consistent timetables and retain passenger confidence.

2.5.2 Within this traffic modelling exercise, the bus reliability was considered as the difference between the maximum and minimum journey time for buses routing throughout the modelled 12 hr period. An increase in the difference between the maximum and minimum journey time represents reduced reliability, and vice versa.

2.5.3 The analysis focused on bus services that traverse the three key corridors as previously detailed (Union Street West, Bridge Street, and Union Terrace).

2.5.4 **Appendix B** provides bus reliability graphs (maximum, minimum, and average journey time comparison) for all the test scenarios under the 2025 network scenario.

2.5.5 With the exception of the Union Street West arm, the model results are all fairly similar. Figure 3 provides the reliability (journey time spread) for buses routing eastbound along Union Street (west) over the modelled 12 hour period.

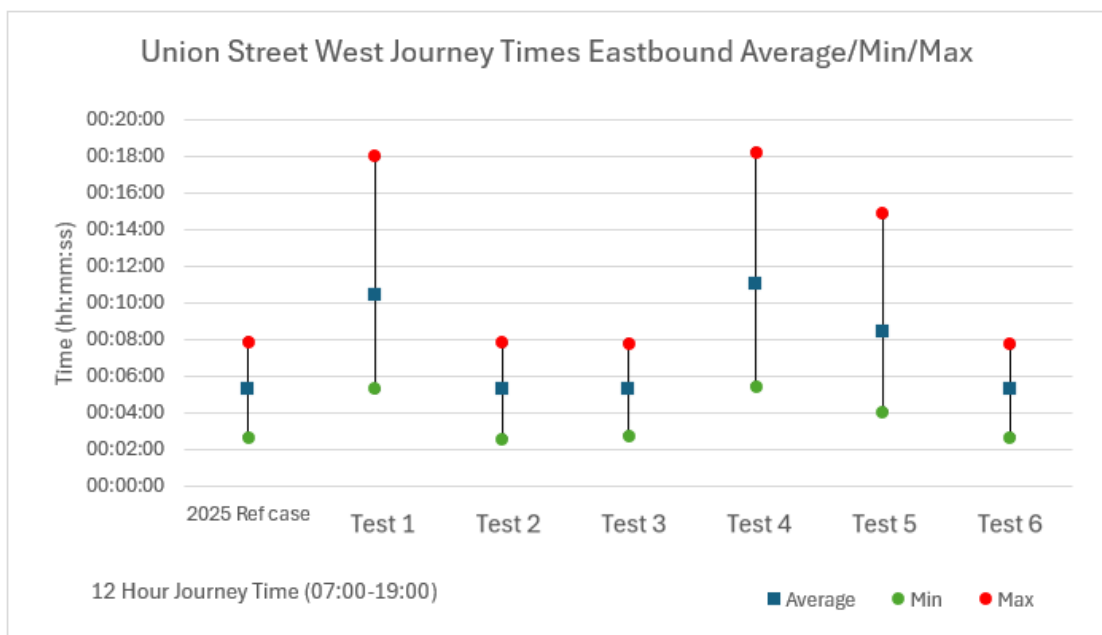


Figure 3. PT Journey Time Reliability – Union Street West (eastbound)

2.5.6 The graph shows that when Bridge Street is open to general traffic southbound (Tests 1, 4, and 5), then the average and maximum bus journey times are detrimentally impacted as well as the reliability spread (difference between maximum and minimum journey time). This is in line with the large queueing observed in these model scenarios along Union Street West.



3. TRAFFIC MODELLING CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1.1 The traffic modelling assessment suggests that the removal of the bus gates on Bridge Street would naturally result in an immediate increase in general traffic through the Bridge Street and Union Terrace corridors. The opening of Bridge Street southbound results in traffic queuing and congestion on Union Street (West). This further impacts on the bus network reliability.
- 3.1.2 The limited traffic capacity at the Bridge St / Union Street junction means that, if there was even a marginally higher traffic demand in reality compared to the model flows, there would very likely be higher traffic queuing and delays to the PT network through this corridor.
- 3.1.3 It is also worth noting that the impact of removal of these restrictions has not been assessed for a Saturday Peak (only a weekday period model exists). Traffic demand through Bridge Street and Union Terrace may be higher at the weekend due to a higher volume of city centre car parking traffic.
- 3.1.4 Beyond 2025, there is no certainty that traffic volumes within Aberdeen city centre will not increase. What is known, is that there will be a gradual reduction in the impact of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ), which only has a limited time dependant impact. As the proportion of compliant vehicles increases over time, then traffic volumes may gradually increase within the LEZ area.
- 3.1.5 The current traffic restrictions implemented within the city centre have allowed a high degree of futureproofing and resilience against future traffic growth as well as enabling future plans for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network by providing the bus priority on which it will depend. If any of these restrictions are removed in the short term, there is an increased risk that any future traffic growth may impact on the envisioned operation of the city centre in terms of air quality, active and sustainable transport operation, and placemaking.



APPENDIX A: PT JOURNEY TIME PATHS

Union Street West Average PT Journey Times Eastbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:05:26	00:05:05	00:05:21	00:05:17
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:31	00:12:57	00:01:49	00:05:06
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:00	00:00:00	-00:00:04	-00:00:01
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:00	-00:00:01	-00:00:03	-00:00:01
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:12	00:14:10	00:02:46	00:05:43
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:21	00:08:06	00:01:05	00:03:11
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:06	00:00:00	-00:00:01	00:00:02

Union Street West Average PT Journey Times Westbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:04:36	00:05:02	00:04:42	00:04:47
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	00:00:01	00:00:00	00:00:01
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:04	00:00:01	00:00:04	00:00:03
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	00:00:01	00:00:00	00:00:01
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:04	00:00:02	00:00:02	00:00:03
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:02	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:01
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:01	-00:00:01	00:00:00	-00:00:01

Bridge Street Average PT Journey Times Northbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:01:49	00:01:32	00:01:27	00:01:36
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:02	-00:00:02	00:00:00	-00:00:01
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:00	00:00:01	00:00:01	00:00:01
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:03	00:00:02	00:00:07	00:00:04
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:07	00:00:00	00:00:04	00:00:04
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:05	00:00:03	00:00:06	00:00:05
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:02	-00:00:01	00:00:02	00:00:01

Bridge Street Average PT Journey Times Southbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:02:45	00:02:14	00:02:16	00:02:25
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:15	00:00:03	00:00:01	00:00:06
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	-00:00:01	00:00:01	00:00:00
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	00:00:00	00:00:01	00:00:01
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:11	00:00:03	00:00:03	00:00:06
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:08	00:00:04	-00:00:01	00:00:04
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:04	-00:00:01	-00:00:01	00:00:01



Union Terrace Average PT Journey Times Northbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:02:52	00:02:34	00:02:51	00:02:46
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:03	-00:00:04	-00:00:03	-00:00:01
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:02	00:00:00	00:00:07	00:00:02
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:12	00:00:00	00:00:02	-00:00:03
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:06	-00:00:03	00:00:08	00:00:04
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	-00:00:12	-00:00:04	00:00:01	-00:00:05
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:16	00:00:05	00:00:18	00:00:13

Union Terrace Average PT Journey Times Southbound (hh:mm:ss)	AM 07:00-10:00	IP 10:00-16:00	PM 16:00-19:00	12 Hour 07:00-19:00
2025 Reference Case	00:01:41	00:01:49	00:01:51	00:01:47
Test 1 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:02	00:00:04	00:00:00	00:00:02
Test 2 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:02	-00:00:01	-00:00:02	-00:00:00
Test 3 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:03	-00:00:01	00:00:00	00:00:01
Test 4 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	00:00:03	-00:00:02	00:00:01
Test 5 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:01	00:00:01	-00:00:01	00:00:00
Test 6 - Difference from Reference Case	00:00:03	-00:00:02	-00:00:04	-00:00:01



APPENDIX B: PT RELIABILITY GRAPHS



APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Author	Callum Guild	Associate Director	17/09/2024	
	Checked by	David Murtagh	Associate	18/09/2024	
	Approved by	Malcolm Neil	Director	19/09/2024	
2	Author				
	Checked by				
	Approved by				





Angela Scott
Aberdeen City Council
anscott@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Our ref: BPF004 North East Scotland
18/06/2021

Dear Ms Angela Scott

OFFER OF GRANT FOR BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND (BPF)

The Scottish Ministers in exercise of their powers under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, section 70 hereby offer to give to Aberdeen City Council (“the Grantee”) a grant of up to £12,030,000.00 STERLING, payable over the financial year(s) 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 in connection with bus priority infrastructure development, which is more particularly described in Part 1 of **SCHEDULE 1** (“the Project”) and subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Definitions and Interpretation

- 1.1 In these Conditions, the words and expressions set out in **SCHEDULE 4** shall have the meanings ascribed to them in that Schedule.
- 1.2 In these Conditions unless the context otherwise requires, words denoting the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and words denoting any gender shall include all genders.
- 1.3 The headings in these Conditions are for convenience only and shall not be read as forming part of the Conditions or taken into account in their interpretation.
- 1.4 Except as otherwise provided in these Conditions, any reference to a clause, paragraph, subparagraph or schedule shall be a reference to a clause, paragraph, subparagraph or schedule of these Conditions. The schedules are intended to be contractual in nature. They form part of the Agreement and should be construed accordingly.
- 1.5 This Agreement shall not be varied except by an instrument in writing signed by both parties.

2. Purposes of the Grant

- 2.1 The Grant is made to enable the Grantee to carry out the Project.

2.2 The Grant shall only be used for the purposes of the Project and for no other purpose whatsoever.

2.3 No part of the Grant shall be used to fund any activity or material which is party political in intention, use, or presentation or appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.

2.4 The main outcomes of and criteria for the Grant are:

- To improve bus journey times and provide greater reliability, by prioritising bus over other types of traffic.
- To provide high-quality bus services which contribute to the four priorities of the NTS2 vision – to reduce inequality, take climate action, help deliver inclusive growth and improve health and well-being.
- To reduce congestion, through improved bus services.
- To fit with the partnership area's overall strategy for integrated transport, to encourage a modal shift from cars to more sustainable transport and reduce emissions.
- To demonstrate partnership strength and commitment, including through 'match in kind' action and investment to further improve bus services, and working towards a Bus Service Improvement Partnership model.
- For the lead local authority and its partners to deliver the proposed developments effectively, with local political buy-in.

2.5 The targets/milestones against which progress in achieving objective s/expected outcomes shall be monitored are:

- Delivery of a programme plan, with milestones and key dates, within two months of accepting this offer.
- Provision of timely and transparent monthly progress reports, in a format to be specified by Transport Scotland.
- Completion of deliverables to develop bus priority infrastructure, as detailed in [SCHEDULE 1](#).

2.6 The eligible costs for which the Grant can be claimed are:

- Capital costs of implementing bus priority infrastructure .
- Professional support for research, evaluation, planning and implementation of the bus priority infrastructure.

2.7 The eligible costs exclude:

- Any Value Added Tax (VAT) reclaimable by the Grantee

3. Payment of Grant

3.1 The Grant shall be paid by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee in accordance with the terms of [SCHEDULE 1](#) attached.

3.2 The Grantee shall within **3 months of receiving the final instalment of the Grant** submit to the Scottish Ministers a statement of compliance with the Conditions of the Grant using the form of words provided in [SCHEDULE 3](#). The statement shall be signed by the Grantee's Director of Finance or equivalent.

- 3.3 In the event that the amount of the Grant paid by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee at any point in time is found to exceed the amount of the expenses reasonably and properly incurred or required by the Grantee in connection with the Project, the Grantee shall repay to the Scottish Ministers the amount of such excess within 14 days of receiving a written demand for it from or on behalf of the Scottish Ministers. In the event that the Grantee fails to pay such amount within the 14 day period, the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to interest on the sum at the rate of 2 per cent per annum above the Bank of England base lending rate prevailing at the time of the written demand from the date of the written demand until payment in full of both the sum and the interest.
- 3.4 The Scottish Ministers shall not be bound to pay to the Grantee, and the Grantee shall have no claim against the Scottish Ministers in respect of, any instalment of the Grant which has not been claimed by the Grantee by 31 March of the applicable financial year as set out in **SCHEDULE 1**, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Scottish Ministers.

4. Inspection and Information

- 4.1 The Grantee shall keep the Scottish Ministers fully informed of the progress of the Project in the form of **monthly project reports**. Details shall include actual expenditure to date compared with profiled expenditure and any change to estimated expenditure for the financial year and/or the Project as a whole, the reasons for any such changes and progress in achieving objectives/outcomes.
- 4.2 Revisions to targets/milestones against which progress in achieving objectives/outcomes are monitored shall be subject to the written agreement of the Scottish Ministers.
- 4.3 The Grantee shall, on completion of the Project, submit a report to the Scottish Ministers summarising the outcomes and performance of the Project. Such a report shall include such statistical and other information relating to the impact of the Project as shall be required by the Scottish Ministers.
- 4.4 The Grantee shall also provide any other information that the Scottish Ministers may reasonably require to satisfy themselves that the Project is consistent with the Agreement. The Grantee shall provide the Scottish Ministers with prompt access to any information they reasonably require to ensure compliance with these Conditions.
- 4.5 The Grantee shall keep and maintain for a period of **6 years** after the expenditure occurs, adequate and proper records and books of account recording all receipts and expenditure of monies paid to it by the Scottish Ministers by way of the Grant. The Grantee shall afford the Scottish Ministers, their representatives, the Auditor General for Scotland, his/her representatives and such other persons as the Scottish Ministers may reasonably specify from time to time, such access to those records and books of account as may be required by them at any reasonable time in response to a written request for such access from the person seeking it. The Grantee shall provide such reasonable assistance and explanation as the person carrying out the inspection may from time to time require.
- 4.6 In the event of the Grantee becoming aware of or suspecting any irregular or fraudulent activity that may have any impact on the Project or on the use of the Grant, or any part of it, the Grantee shall immediately notify the Scottish Ministers of such activity and provide such other information as the Scottish Ministers may reasonably require in relation to the impact on the Project and the use of the Grant.

- 4.7 The grantee shall immediately inform the Scottish Ministers of any change in its constitution for example, but not limited to, a change in status from one type of body corporate to another.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 5.1 The Grantee will respect the confidentiality of any commercially sensitive information that they have access to as a result of the Project.
- 5.2 Notwithstanding the above, the Grantee may disclose any information as required by law or judicial order. All information submitted to the Scottish Ministers may need to be disclosed and/or published by the Scottish Ministers. Without prejudice to the foregoing generality, the Scottish Ministers may disclose information in compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, any other law, or, as a consequence of judicial order, or order by any court or tribunal with the authority to order disclosure. Further, the Scottish Ministers may also disclose all information submitted to them to the Scottish or United Kingdom Parliament or any other department, office or agency of Her Majesty's Government in Scotland, in right of the Scottish Administration or the United Kingdom, and their servants or agents. When disclosing such information to either the Scottish Parliament or the United Kingdom Parliament it is recognised and agreed by both parties that the Scottish Ministers shall if they see fit disclose such information but are unable to impose any restriction upon the information that it provides to Members of the Scottish Parliament, or Members of the United Kingdom Parliament; such disclosure shall not be treated as a breach of this agreement.
- 5.3 The Grantee shall ensure that all requirements of the Data Protection Laws are fulfilled in relation to the Project.
- 5.4 To comply with section 31(3) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Ministers publish an annual statement of all payments over £25,000. In addition, in line with openness and transparency, the Scottish Government publishes a monthly report of all payments over £25,000. The Grantee should note that where a payment is made in excess of £25,000 there will be disclosure (in the form of the name of the payee, the date of the payment, the subject matter and the amount of grant) in both the monthly report and the annual Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 statement.
- 5.5 The Grantee should also note that in order to comply with Section 70(4) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 the Scottish Ministers must, within three months of the end of the Financial Year in which the Grant was made, lay before the Scottish Parliament a report on grants made under section 70(1) during the Financial Year. The Grantee should note that this report will detail the name of the Grantee, the amount of Grant and the purpose for which it has been paid.

6. Disposal of Assets

The Grantee shall not, without prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers, dispose of any asset funded, in part or in whole, with Grant funds during the lifetime of the asset. During that period the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to the proceeds of the disposal – or the relevant proportion of the proceeds based on the percentage of grant funding used in connection with the acquisition or improvement of the asset against the whole proceeds. The Scottish Ministers shall also be entitled to the relevant proportion of any proceeds resulting from any provision included as a condition of sale. Recovery by the Scottish Ministers shall not be required where the value of the asset is less than £5000.

7. Publicity

The Grantee shall where reasonably practicable acknowledge in all publicity material relating to the Project the contribution of the Scottish Ministers to its costs. The Scottish Ministers may require to approve the form of such acknowledgement prior to its first publication.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

- 8.1 All Intellectual Property Rights are hereby assigned to and shall vest in the Crown or its assignees.
- 8.2 The Grantee shall ensure that nothing contained in any materials produced or submitted to the Scottish Ministers by the Grantee or anyone acting on its behalf nor the reproduction of such materials, shall constitute an infringement of any third party copyright or intellectual property right and shall indemnify the Scottish Ministers against all actions, proceedings, claims and demands made by reason of any such infringement.

9. Default and Recovery etc. of Grant

- 9.1 The Scottish Ministers may re-assess, vary, make a deduction from, withhold, or require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it in the event that:
 - 9.1.1 The Grantee commits a Default;
 - 9.1.2 The Scottish Ministers consider that any change or departure from the purposes for which the Grant was awarded warrants an alteration in the amount of the Grant;
 - 9.1.3 The Grantee fails to carry out the Project;
 - 9.1.4 In the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the progress on the Project is not satisfactory; or
 - 9.1.5 In the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the future of the Project is in jeopardy.
- 9.2 If, in the Scottish Ministers' opinion, the Grant or any part of it is state aid and they consider that they are required to recover such sum in order to ensure compliance with their legal obligations Scottish Ministers may require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it together with interest at such rate and on such basis as may be determined from time to time in accordance with law.
- 9.3 The Scottish Ministers may withhold the payment of the Grant if at any time within the duration of the Agreement:
 - 9.3.1 The Grantee passes a resolution that it be wound up, or a court makes an order that the Grantee be wound up, in either case otherwise than for the purposes of reconstruction or amalgamation, or circumstances arise which would enable a court to make such an order or

the Grantee is unable to pay its debts within the meaning of section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986;

9.3.2 Where the Grantee is an individual, if a petition is presented for the Grantee's bankruptcy or the sequestration of his estate or a criminal bankruptcy order is made against the Grantee; or the Grantee makes any composition or arrangement with or for the benefit of creditors, or makes any conveyance or assignment for the benefit of creditors, or if an administrator or trustee is appointed to manage his affairs; or

9.3.3 A receiver, manager, administrator or administrative receiver is appointed to the Grantee, or over all or any part of the Grantee's property, or circumstances arise which would entitle a court or a creditor to appoint such a receiver, manager, administrator or administrative receiver.

9.4 In the event that the Grantee becomes bound to pay any sum to the Scottish Ministers in terms of clause 9.1, the Grantee shall pay the Scottish Ministers the appropriate sum within 14 days of a written demand for it being given by or on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee. In the event that the Grantee fails to pay the sum within the 14 day period, the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to interest on the sum at the rate of 2 per cent per annum above the Bank of England base lending rate prevailing at the time of the written demand, from the date of the written demand until payment in full of both the sum and interest.

9.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of this clause 9, in the event that the Grantee is in breach of any of the Conditions, the Scottish Ministers may, provided that the breach is capable of a remedy, postpone the exercise of their rights to recover any sum from the Grantee in terms of clause 9 for such period as they see fit, and may give written notice to the Grantee requiring it to remedy the breach within such period as may be specified in the notice. In the event of the Grantee failing to remedy the breach within the period specified, the Grantee shall be bound to pay the sum to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with the foregoing provisions.

9.6 Any failure, omission or delay by the Scottish Ministers in exercising any right or remedy to which they are entitled by virtue of clauses 9.1 to 9.3 shall not be construed as a waiver of such right or remedy.

10. Assignment

The Grantee shall not be entitled to assign, sub-contract or otherwise transfer its rights or obligations under the Agreement without the prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers.

11. Termination

The Agreement may be terminated by the Scottish Ministers giving not less than 3 months' notice in writing from the date of the notice being sent.

12. Corrupt Gifts and Payments of Commission

The Grantee shall ensure that its employees shall not breach the terms of the Bribery Act 2010 in relation to this or any other grant. The Grantee shall ensure that adequate controls are in place to prevent bribery.

13. Continuation of Conditions

- 13.1 These Conditions, except for Condition 6, shall continue to apply for a period of 5 years after the end of the financial year in which the final instalment of the Grant was paid.
- 13.2 Condition 6 shall continue to apply until the end of the period referred to in that Condition.

14. Compliance with the Law

The Grantee shall ensure that in relation to the Project, they and anyone acting on their behalf shall comply with the relevant law, for the time being in force in Scotland.

15. Governing Law

This contract is governed by the Law of Scotland and the parties hereby prorogate to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts.

If you wish to accept the offer of this Grant on the whole terms and conditions as set out in the letter and annexed Schedules, you should sign and date both copies of the Grant Acceptance below and return one copy of the offer of Grant and Schedules to me at buspartnershipfund@transport.gov.scot. You should retain the second copy of the offer of Grant and Schedules for your own records.

Yours sincerely



Laura Murdoch, Director; Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel
18/06/2021

GRANT ACCEPTANCE

On behalf of Aberdeen City Council I accept the foregoing offer of Grant by the Scottish Ministers dated 18/06/2021 on the whole terms and conditions as set out in the letter and annexed Schedules. I confirm that I hold the relevant signing authority.

[email signatures acceptable, with witness copied]

Signed:

[REDACTED]

«Director/Company Secretary/Authorised Signatory»

Print Name: Michele Pittendreigh

Position in Organisation of Person Signing: Commercial Legal Team Leader

Date: 2 August 2021

Place of Signing:

Signed:

Witness Name:

Address:

Date:

Place of Signing:

SCHEDULE 1**PART 1: THE PROJECT**

A project to deliver bus priority interventions, through a series of work streams and deliverables. Work streams and key deliverables will be as described in the application to the BPF, dated 18/06/2021 and summarised below:

Ref.	Work stream	Deliverable	Indicative budget
BPF004(1)	North Corridor (Ellon to Gathdee)	STAG appraisal	£100,000
BPF004(2)	North Corridor	OBC	£150,000*
BPF004(3)	North West corridor (Inverurie to Aberdeen)	STAG appraisal	£100,000
BPF004(4)	North West corridor	OBC	£150,000*
BPF004(5)	West corridor (Westhill to Aberdeen)	STAG appraisal	£100,000
BPF004(6)	West corridor	OBC	£100,000*
BPF004(7)	South corridor (Stonehaven to Aberdeen)	STAG appraisal	£100,000
BPF004(8)	South corridor	OBC	£150,000*
BPF004(9)	City Centre	STAG appraisal	£125,000
BPF004(10)	City Centre	OBC	£125,000*
BPF004(11)	ART	STAG appraisal	£100,000
BPF004(12)	ART	OBC	£100,000*
BPF004(13)	South College Street	Improvement works	£10,000,000
BPF004(14)		Communications	£300,000
BPF004(15)		Project management and contingency	£330,000
		Total	£12,030,000

*Subject to satisfactory gateway review of appraisal

PART 2: PAYMENT OF GRANT

1. The total Grant of up to £12,030,000.00 shall be payable by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee who is a public body, on receipt of a completed claim for Grant in the form set out in **SCHEDULE 2** together with the associated monitoring information set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Offer of Grant.
2. The total Grant shall be payable over the financial year/s 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. The Scottish Ministers shall not be bound to pay any instalment of the Grant which has not been claimed by the Grantee by 31 March of the applicable financial year, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Scottish Ministers.
3. The Grantee shall provide a profile of expenditure of the Grant before the start of the project. Any change to the profile or to the overall costs of the Project shall be notified to the Scottish Ministers at the earliest opportunity via the claims for Grant and monitoring reports. **Grant claims must be submitted each quarter**, starting from the end of October 2021.

4. Each claim shall be for an amount equal to the actual reasonable and proper costs and expenses incurred by the Grantee in connection with the Project since the submission by it of the last claim for an instalment of the Grant.
5. Each claim shall be submitted together with such explanatory or supplementary material as the Scottish Ministers may from time to time require whether before or after submission of the claim.
6. On receipt of each claim (and any required documentation and information), the Scottish Ministers shall determine the amount of expenditure which they consider the Grantee has reasonably and properly incurred in connection with the Project having regard to that claim. The determination shall be based on the information provided by the Grantee in accordance with this Schedule. The Scottish Ministers shall use their best endeavours (but shall be under no obligation or duty) to pay the amount determined to the Grantee within 4 weeks of receiving a claim and any required documentation and information relevant to the claim.
7. In order to facilitate the accrual of expenditure of the Grant for the financial year the Grantee shall, where appropriate, advise the Scottish Ministers in writing by 15 April the amount of the Grant actually expended up to and including 31 March.

SCHEDULE 2

GRANT CLAIM FORM

CLAIMS MUST BE SUBMITTED QUARTERLY

Organisation: «Name and Address»

Bank details: «Name and address, sort code, account number»

Programme: BPF – BUS PARTNERSHIP

Total agreed grant for: 2021/22 - £XXX

Total agreed grant for: 2022/23 - £XXX

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: 2021/22 - £XXX

Latest forecast of expenditure of grant for: 2022/23 - £XXX

Grant claimed to date: £XXX

Claim for grant for the period from [DATE] to [DATE]

We hereby claim grant of £XXX in respect of the above period in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer of Grant dated [DATE] and the Schedules attached thereto.

Completed by:

Position:

Contact Details:

Date:

Items of Expenditure

Please list in the table below all discrete items of expenditure relevant to the above period and the type of documentary evidence that has been submitted to substantiate each amount.

Project Ref (per Schedule 1)	A - item	B – amount (£)	C - paid invoice [Y/N]	D – other evidence (please specify)
	TOTAL*			

* Note the total should add up to the total expenditure claimed for the period.

SCHEDULE 3

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF GRANT

Bus Partnership Fund

This is to confirm that the grant claimed by Aberdeen City Council in relation to the above Project during the financial year ended 31 March 2022 was properly due and was used for its intended purpose(s) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant. This statement is supported by the records of Aberdeen City Council.

Signed:

Name in block capitals:

Position:

Date:

SCHEDULE 4

DEFINITIONS

“Agreement” means the agreement constituted by the Scottish Ministers’ invitation to apply for a grant, the Grantee’s Application, these Conditions and the Grantee’s acceptance of these Conditions;

“Conditions” means these grant conditions;

“Data Protection Laws” means any law, statute, subordinate legislation, regulation, order, mandatory guidance or code of practice, judgment of a relevant court of law, or directives or requirements of any regulatory body including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

“Default” means:

- a) Any breach of the obligations of either party under this Agreement (including, but not limited to, any breach of any undertaking or warranty given under or in terms of this Agreement);
- b) Any failure to perform or the negligent performance of any obligation under this Agreement;
- c) Any breach of any legislation; or
- d) Any negligence or negligent or fraudulent mis-statement or misappropriation of Grant, or any other default,

In all cases by either party, its employees, agents or representatives;

“Financial Year” means a period from 1 April in one year until 31 March in the next;

“Grant” means the grant offered by the Scottish Ministers to the Grantee as specified in the Award Letter, as varied from time to time in accordance with these Conditions;

“Grantee” means the person, organisation or body to which the Grant will be payable as specified in these Conditions. Where two or more persons, organisations or bodies are the Grantee, references to the “Grantee” are to those persons, organisations or bodies collectively and their obligations under the Agreement are undertaken jointly and severally;

“Intellectual Property Rights” means all copyright, patent, trademark, design right, database right and any other right in the nature of intellectual property whether or not registered, in any materials or works in whatever form (including but not limited to any materials stored in or made available by means of an information technology system and the computer software relating thereto) which are created, produced or generated as part of the Project by or on behalf of the Grantee.

“Project” means the purpose for which the Grant has been awarded as described in the Offer of Grant;

“Payment” means each of the payments specified in Schedule 1 hereto.

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Appendix 3:

City Centre Transport Measures – Policy Assessment

1 Background

In autumn 2023, Aberdeen City Council (ACC) introduced an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), which brought a number of traffic management changes to the city centre. These included:

- The introduction of a series of ‘bus and authorised vehicle only’ restrictions (commonly and hereafter referred to as ‘bus gates’) on Union Street, Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street; and
- Banning the right-turn (other than for buses and other authorised vehicles) from Union Terrace to Rosemount Viaduct.

These measures were introduced in support of the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and seek to limit opportunities for general traffic ‘through-routeing’ on these streets, thus awarding priority within the space to active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) and public transport, while maintaining legitimate vehicle access to all areas for those requiring it.

In July 2024, the Council agreed to the temporary easing of restrictions to support local businesses during construction works associated with the new Market development, with all vehicles now permitted to turn left into Market Street from Union Street and left from Market Street to Trinity Quay. This is not anticipated to result in significant volumes of traffic being attracted back onto Market Street.

In response to concerns raised by the city centre business community, the Council asked officers to investigate the feasibility and impacts of:

- Reopening Bridge Street to all vehicles in one or both directions; and
- Removing the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct.

The local business community is currently advocating for the removal of further restrictions (dubbed the ‘Common Sense’ compromise), which would essentially involve removing all of the above measures, other than the Guild Street restrictions.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assess the extent to which different options for city centre traffic management measures align with national, regional and local strategies and policy commitments.

It is appreciated that certain commitments, objectives and aspirations are replicated across a number of policies, plans and strategies, therefore the assessment and the summary table presented at the end of the report should not be read as a quantitative or cumulative assessment, hence why no final ‘score’ is presented for the options, recognising that this would involve a degree of ‘double-counting’. Rather, it aims to give a high-level qualitative assessment, allowing (in the summary table) an ‘at a glance’ indication of each option’s alignment with current policy and strategy.

3 Options

For the purposes of this assessment, the following options are considered:

- Option 1 - Maintain current (September 2024) traffic management measures;
- Option 2 – Re-open Bridge Street to all vehicles in one direction (based on a concurrent traffic modelling assessment, this is assumed to be northbound) and remove the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct;
- Option 3 - Re-open Bridge Street to all vehicles in both directions and remove the ban on right turns from Union Terrace onto Rosemount Viaduct;
- Option 4 – Remove all restrictions other than Guild Street bus gates (the ‘Common Sense’ compromise);
- Option 5 - Remove all of the above measures (essentially reverting to a pre-autumn 2023 scenario).

Options are awarded a score, based on their alignment with the policies and strategies forming part of the assessment, on a 7 point scale as shown in the table below, consistent with best practice Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG):

✓✓✓	Strong alignment with policy
✓✓	Moderate alignment with policy
✓	Minor alignment with policy
-	Neutral or no impact
×	Minor conflict with policy
×	Moderate conflict with policy
×	Major conflict with policy

4 Policy Assessment

4.1 National Policy

4.1.1 *National Transport Strategy*

Scotland's second National Transport Strategy (NTS2) (2020) provides the national transport policy framework, setting out a vision of a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system which helps deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. It sets out four key priorities to support this vision, with supporting outcomes and policies identified alongside these priorities.

The below tables assesses the extent to which the bus gate options align with NTS2 priorities.

Priority 1 - Reducing inequalities		
<u>Outcomes:</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide fair access to the services we need; • Will be easy to use for all; • Will be affordable to all. 		
<u>Policies:</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the connectivity and cost disadvantages faced by island communities and those in remote rural and rural areas, including safeguarding of lifeline services; • Ensure transport in Scotland is accessible for all by supporting the implementation and development of Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework; • Remove barriers to public transport connectivity and accessibility within Scotland; • Improve sustainable access to healthcare facilities for staff, patients and visitors; • Ensure sustainable, public and active travel access to employment, education and training locations. 		
1	✓✓✓	<p>The bus priority measures have resulted in quicker and more reliable journey times for bus passengers travelling to the city centre and the healthcare, employment, education and training opportunities available there.</p> <p>This has translated into cost savings for passengers, with operators offering free bus travel during weekends in January 2024, in response to reduced operating costs. While this cannot be guaranteed, there is scope for further cost benefits for passengers in the future.</p> <p>The number of vehicles on the affected streets has reduced, contributing to a safer and more welcoming environment for people</p>

		walking, wheeling and cycling, and improved accessibility to the city centre for these modes. While concerns have been raised about city centre accessibility, access to all key destinations (including public car parks and blue badge parking bays) has been maintained.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, although the benefits may be slightly less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Street, should restrictions be removed (based on traffic modelling).
3	×	Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, traffic modelling of this option suggests it could result in increased congestion and a significant detriment to bus journey times and reliability for services travelling from Union Street West.
4	×	Active travel and public transport is prioritised on Guild Street, although the limited geographical extent of this means the benefits are likely to be minimal. Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits experienced with Option 3 would also occur, and may even be worse, under this option.
5	×××	This option does not reduce inequality as it is unlikely to result in any sustainable transport accessibility or affordability improvements.

Priority 2 - Taking climate action

Outcomes:

- Will help deliver our net zero target;
- Will adapt to the effects of climate change;
- Will promote greener, cleaner choices.

Policies:

- Reduce emissions generated by the transport system to mitigate climate change;
- Reduce emissions generated by the transport system to improve air quality;
- Ensure the transport system adapts to the projected climate change impacts;
- Support management of demand to encourage more sustainable transport choices;
- Facilitate a shift to more sustainable and space-efficient modes of transport for people and goods;
- Improve the quality and availability of information to enable all to make more sustainable transport choices

1	✓✓✓	Prioritising active travel and public transport over the private car on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street could result in a greater uptake of these sustainable modes and reduced emissions as a result.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, albeit the benefits may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	×	<p>Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, this option re-introduces unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace, which may conflict with aspirations to encourage a shift to cleaner modes of transport and reduce emissions.</p> <p>Traffic modelling suggests this option could result in increased congestion and a significant detriment to bus journey times and reliability for services travelling from Union Street West, resulting in more emissions and further reducing incentives for people to travel by bus.</p>
4	×	<p>Active travel and public transport is prioritised on Guild Street, although the limited geographical extent of this means the impacts (in terms of encouraging a shift to sustainable transport, and emissions reduction) are likely to be limited. Maintaining general traffic on Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with emissions reduction or mode shift aspirations.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits experienced in terms of congestion and bus journey times with Option 3 would also occur, and may be worse, under this option.</p>
5	×××	Maintaining unrestricted vehicle movements through the area, with no incentives to use active travel or public transport, demonstrates a major conflict with NTS2 Priority 2.

Priority 3 - Helping to deliver inclusive economic growth

Outcomes:

- Will get people and goods where they need to get to;
- Will be reliable, efficient and high quality;
- Will use beneficial innovation.

Policies:

- Increase resilience of Scotland's transport system from disruption and promote a culture of shared responsibility;
- Increase the use of asset management across the transport system;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a transport system which enables businesses to be competitive domestically, within the UK and internationally; • Ensure gateways to and from international markets are resilient and integrated into the wider transport networks to encourage people to live, study, visit and invest in Scotland; • Support Scotland to become a market leader in the development and early adoption of beneficial transport innovations; • Meet the changing employment and skills demands of the transport industry and upskill workers; • Integrate transport and wider infrastructure policies and investments, including digital and energy, to unlock greater benefits. 		
All	-	Given the limited geographic scope of the area and the specific policies articulated under NTS2 Priority 3, all of the options are assessed as having a neutral alignment.

Priority 4 - Improving health and wellbeing		
<u>Outcomes:</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be safe and secure for all; • Will enable us to make healthy travel choices; • Will help make our communities great places to live. 		
<u>Policies:</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase safety of the transport system and meet casualty reduction targets; • Implement measures that will improve perceived and actual security of Scotland's transport system; • Ensure that transport assets and services adopt the Place Principle; • Reduce the negative impacts which transport has on the safety, health and wellbeing of people; • Provide a transport system that promotes and facilitates active travel choices which help to improve people's health and wellbeing across mainland Scotland and the Islands; • Embed the implications for transport in spatial planning and land use decision making. 		
1	✓✓✓	Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street will make these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling. Less traffic results in less noise and emissions, contributing to an improved city centre environment in which to live, work and visit.

		<p>Increasing the attractiveness of active modes of travel should encourage greater adoption, with physical and mental health benefits for those switching from sedentary forms of transport.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the limited geographic scope of the area under consideration, and the lack of onward active travel connections at present, this option strongly aligns with NTS2 Priority 4.</p>
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, albeit the benefits may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	✓	As per Options 1 and 2, as general traffic is restricted on Market Street and Guild Street, although the benefits will be less as a result of more traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace. Traffic modelling suggest there could be additional congestion and queuing on Union Street West, which could increase harmful emissions, albeit this area is in the Low Emission Zone (LEZ).
4	×	<p>Restricting general traffic on Guild Street should make this space safer and more welcoming for walking, wheeling and cycling. However, the limited geographic extent of this option is not likely to encourage active travel on a significant scale.</p> <p>Maintaining general traffic on Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with active travel and health aspirations.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits experienced in terms of congestion and emissions with Option 3 would also occur, and may be worse, under this option.</p>
5	×××	This option does not support modal shift to more active forms of transport, and has no safety benefits. Unrestricted traffic routing through the city centre will result in continued noise and emissions on city centre streets.

In addition to the above priorities, NTS2 supports the adoption of a Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options (in that order) in preference to single occupancy private car use. It also prioritises investment aimed at reducing the need to travel unsustainably, whilst focusing on maintaining and safely operating existing assets ahead of new infrastructure investment. In the below table each of the options is assessed in terms of their alignment with the Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchies.

Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchy		
1	✓	Space on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street is prioritised for active travel and public transport over the private car. However, cyclists are given no physical protection and are required

		to share roadspace with other vehicles. While this involves minimal expenditure and the maximisation of existing assets, it does not formally prioritise cyclists over other vehicles using the space.
2	✓	As per Option 1, albeit to a lesser extent as a result of additional traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	✓	As per options 1 and 2, albeit to a lesser extent, as this option still maintains general traffic routeing through Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
4	-	Traffic restrictions are limited to Guild Street, with no wider network improvements. While this involves minimal expenditure and the maximisation of existing assets, prioritisation of sustainable modes is minimal.
5	xx	Sustainable transport modes are not prioritised over the private car under this option, with all road users sharing the same space. This requires minimal expenditure and maximises the use of existing assets, however.

4.1.2 The Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Update

The Scottish Government publishes a strategic delivery plan for meeting emissions reduction targets at least every 5 years. In the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Update, a commitment to develop and implement a coordinated package of policy interventions to support a reduction of car kilometres by 20% by 2030 was established.

In January 2022, the Scottish Government published its route map outlining the steps needed to achieve this reduction. It sets out a range of sustainable travel behaviours grouped into four categories: travel less, stay local, switch mode and combine a journey.

The following tables assess the alignment of each of the options against the 20% car km reduction target, and the four categories identified in the route map for achieving this target.

20% Car km Reduction		
1	✓✓✓	This option prioritises active travel and public transport over the private car within the city centre core, potentially encouraging modal shift from the private car to active and shared modes of transport for journeys to and within the city centre.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.

3	✓	<p>This option prioritises active travel and public transport over the private car on some streets within the city centre core, potentially encouraging modal shift from the private car to active and shared modes of transport for journeys to and within the city centre. This is, however, on a lesser scale than Options 1 and 2, with unrestricted vehicle access on, and through-routeing available via, Bridge Street and Union Terrace.</p> <p>The potential impacts on bus services from Union Street West observed in the traffic model suggest that the attractiveness of some bus services could be reduced under this option, potentially discouraging modal shift to the bus for affected journeys.</p>
4	✗	<p>This option prioritises active travel and public transport on Guild Street only. The impact of this is such that it is unlikely to contribute to modal shift in isolation, with unrestricted through-routeing opportunities available via Bridge Street, Union Terrace and Guild Street.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits arising for bus passengers from congestion would also occur, and may be worse, under this option.</p>
5	✗✗✗	<p>This option maintains unrestricted vehicular vehicle access through the city centre, and offers no priority to, or incentives for, sustainable transport modes.</p>

Reducing the Need to Travel		
All	-	None of the options impact on this category.

Living Well Locally		
All	-	None of the options impact on this category.

Switching Modes		
1	✓✓✓	<p>Bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre have improved as a result of the measures, potentially resulting in sustained modal shift from the car to the bus for some trips.</p> <p>Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the</p>

		attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, although the active travel benefits may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	-	<p>Traffic modelling suggests there could be significant detriment to westbound bus services, with increased and more variable journey times, arising from this option, therefore it is unlikely to result in sustained modal shift to the bus.</p> <p>Restricting general traffic on Market Street and Guild Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage.</p>
4	xx	<p>Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted private vehicle routeing through the city centre, is unlikely to result in modal shift.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits arising for bus passengers from congestion would also occur, and may be worse, under this option, further disincentivising modal shift.</p>
5	xxx	Maintaining unrestricted private vehicle through-routeing strongly conflicts with modal shift aspirations.

Combining or Sharing Car Trips		
1	✓	City centre traffic restrictions may encourage some people to combine or share trips.
2	✓	As per option 1.
3	✓	As per option 1.
4	xxx	The impacts of this option are unlikely to be significant enough to encourage people to combine or share trips, given that unrestricted private vehicle through-routeing of the city centre is largely maintained.
5	xxx	Maintaining unrestricted through-routeing for private vehicles strongly conflicts with aspirations to encourage trip combining or sharing.

4.1.3 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

In 2019, Transport Scotland commenced the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), an evidence-based review of the performance of the strategic transport network across all modes and across all of Scotland, to set future transport priorities.

The final report was published in December 2022 and makes recommendations for national investment priorities in an updated 20-year (2022-2042) Infrastructure Investment Plan.

Recommendation 13 focuses on the development of a high-quality bus-based rapid transit system for the North East Region, which would prioritise buses on two key corridors, with interchange opportunities in the city centre. It recommends that Transport Scotland continues to work with Nestrans, ACC and Aberdeenshire Council in developing Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) plans.

The fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was approved by the Scottish Government in February 2023. It sets out a long-term spatial strategy for development and infrastructure in Scotland, including a need to *embrace and deliver radical change to tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, improve health and wellbeing, build a wellbeing economy and create great places*. In this context, NPF4 recognises that places need to be planned in a way that reduces the need to travel, and is hence aligned to the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and policies for cleaner air and climate change action. Under the ‘Sustainable Places’ policy, ART is identified as a national development.

Rather than assessing the bus gate options against all policies and projects within STPR2 and NPF4 (as the vast majority will not be relevant, will have a neutral impact and/or will be duplicated in other assessments against national policy in this section), the below assessment focusses solely on the alignment of the options with ART aspirations articulated in these plans.

STPR2 and NPF4 – ART		
1	✓✓✓	Fully supports ART and the route network agreed by regional partners, which proposes the use of Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street.
2	✓✓	Largely supports ART and the agreed route network, although maintaining one-way general traffic on Bridge Street may have implications that require further consideration.
3	✓	Partially supports ART and the agreed route network, although maintaining general traffic on Bridge Street will have implications that require further consideration.

4	xxx	Maintaining general traffic on Bridge Street and Market Street conflicts with ART aspirations for quick and reliable bus journeys through the city centre, and the agreed route network.
5	xxx	Maintaining general traffic on Bridge Street, Guild Street and Market Street conflicts with ART aspirations for quick and reliable bus journeys through the city centre, and the agreed route network.

4.2 Regional Policy

4.2.1 *Regional Transport Strategy*

The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) 2040 sets the long-term vision and direction for transport in the North East for the next 20 years. This vision is: *To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive, accessible and resilient transport system in the North East, which protects the natural and built environment and contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities.*

In support of the vision, the strategy was developed under four equal and overlapping pillars that align with and support NTS2:

- Equality – Promoting equality across the North East;
- Climate – Reducing our impact on climate change and protecting the environment;
- Prosperity – Help deliver inclusive economic growth across the North East; and
- Wellbeing – Improving health, safety and wellbeing across the North East.

Sitting within the framework of these pillars are six key priorities which set the tone and direction of the strategy:

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity;
- Zero fatalities on the road network;
- Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport;
- Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045;
- Accessibility for all; and
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes.

The tables below assess the alignment of the different bus gate options with the six RTS priorities.

Priority 1 - Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity		
1	-	This option results in more efficient journey times for bus passengers but potentially a lengthening of journey times for some private vehicles, depending on origins and destinations. Overall, this results in a neutral alignment.
2	-	As per option 1. Differences between the options will have minimal impacts.
3	×	Traffic modelling suggests that this option will result in congestion and increased journey times between Union Street West and Bridge Street, impacting on both private and public transport, although there may be improvements for each modes elsewhere on the network.
4	×	As per Option 3.
5	×	This option does not contribute to more efficient bus journeys, albeit private vehicle journeys will be unaffected.

Priority 2 - Zero fatalities on the road network		
All	-	<p>Each option has different impacts on the volume of vehicles in the city centre core, however any benefits resulting from the more interventionist options may be negated if vehicles move to alternative streets.</p> <p>Each option also has a different impact on the city centre pedestrian and cycling environment, although the limited geographic scale of this and the lack of wider active travel network connections at this stage are unlikely to have any significant impacts on road safety.</p>

Priority 3 - Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport		
1	✓	<p>City Centre air quality should improve as a result of less traffic in the central core.</p> <p>As the option most likely to result in sustained modal shift, this does positively align with air quality improvement aspirations, albeit the scale of this will be minimal in the absence of additional measures.</p>

2	✓	Similar to option 1, albeit the impacts may be slightly less as a result of traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	×	Similar to option 1, albeit the impacts may be slightly less as a result of the removal of traffic restrictions on Bridge Street and Union Terrace. Traffic modelling suggests this option could increase congestion (and hence emissions) on the Union Street West approach to Bridge Street, albeit this is within the LEZ.
4	×	The impacts of traffic restrictions on Guild Street in isolation are unlikely to result in any significant air quality improvements or transport modal shift. Continuing to allow largely unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, which is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), albeit a LEZ, brings no air quality benefits and hence conflicts with this priority. Although not explicitly modelled, the congestion noted in the traffic model for Option 3 would also likely arise with this option.
5	×××	Continuing to allow unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, which is an AQMA, brings no air quality benefits and hence conflicts with this priority.

Priority 4 - Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045		
1	✓✓✓	Prioritising active travel and public transport over the private car on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street could result in a greater uptake of these sustainable modes and reduced emissions as a result.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, albeit the benefits may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	×	Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, this option re-introduces unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace, which may conflict with aspirations to encourage a shift to cleaner modes of transport and reduce emissions.
4	×	Active travel and public transport is prioritised on Guild Street, although the limited geographical extent of this means the impacts (in terms of encouraging a shift to sustainable transport, and emissions reduction) are likely to be limited. Maintaining general traffic on Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with emissions reduction or mode shift aspirations.

5	xxx	Maintaining unrestricted vehicle movements through the area, with no incentives to use active travel or public transport, demonstrates a major conflict with RTS Priority 4.

Priority 5 - Accessibility for all		
1	✓✓✓	<p>This option makes key areas of the city centre safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling as a result of reduced traffic volumes, allowing people to move around this space with greater ease.</p> <p>The journey time and reliability impacts on public transport achieved under this option may enable more people to use the bus for journeys to and through the city centre, making this a more accessible transport option for some.</p> <p>All areas of the city centre remain fully accessible by vehicle for those requiring access, while all city centre car parks and blue badge parking bays likewise remain fully accessible.</p>
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per Options 1 and 2, although the benefits may be less as a result of unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
4	×	Given the limited change incurred under this option, it does not materially impact on active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains almost full vehicular accessibility through the area.
5	×	This option does not contribute to improving active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains full vehicular accessibility through the area.

Priority 6 - A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes		
1	✓✓✓	<p>Bus journey times and reliability to and through the city centre have improved as a result of the measures, potentially resulting in sustained modal shift from the car to the bus for some trips.</p> <p>Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the</p>

		<p>attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage.</p> <p>The measures may make driving to the city centre less attractive for some people (depending on their origins and destinations).</p>
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, although the active travel impacts may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	-	<p>Traffic modelling suggests there could be significant detriment to westbound bus services, with increased and more variable journey times, arising from this option, therefore it is unlikely to result in sustained modal shift to the bus.</p> <p>Restricting general traffic on Market Street and Guild Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage.</p>
4	xx	<p>Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted private vehicle routeing through the city centre, is unlikely to result in modal shift.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits arising for bus passengers under Option 3 would also occur, and may be worse, under this option, further disincentivising modal shift.</p>
6	xxx	Maintaining unrestricted private vehicle through-routeing strongly conflicts with modal shift aspirations.

4.2.2 Regional Economic Strategy (2023)

The Regional Economic Strategy sets out a long-term plan of investment for North East Scotland to transform its economy over the next decade and beyond.

It identifies a vision: *for a regional economy that enables us to thrive. It is leading a just energy transition, diversifying our economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for our people – a post fossil-fuel future.*

The vision is supported by the following objectives:

- To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head;

- Maintain regional Gross Value Added (GVA) as a share of Scotland’s overall GVA while increasing the share of regional GVA from the region’s growth sectors;
- Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates;
- Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher; and
- Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030.

While references to net zero, sustainability and transport are peppered throughout the document, none of the objectives, programme areas, actions or outcomes are particularly relevant to the current project. As a result, all the options are assessed as having a neutral alignment with the Regional Economic Strategy.

4.2.3 Regional Active Travel Network

Nestrans, ACC and Aberdeenshire Council are developing a Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) which identifies an aspirational network of high-quality, cohesive routes for walking, wheeling and cycling across the North East of Scotland, for further development and/or progression on a prioritised basis. This comprises a dense network in the urban area, supported by regional connectors linking to more rural areas and communities within Aberdeenshire.

Within the proposed network, Market Street, Guild Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace are identified as Priority Routes for active travel. This denotes that these are key links in the city’s active travel network and should be considered for physical infrastructure and / or traffic management improvements to makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

The below table assesses the alignment of the options with the RATN.

Regional Active Travel Network		
1	✓✓✓	Measures to restrict through traffic on Market Street, Guild Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace fully align with RATN proposals.
2	✓✓✓	Largely aligns with the RATN as a result of traffic restrictions on Market Street and Guild Street. Maintaining some traffic on Bridge Street and all movements on Union Terrace does not necessarily conflict with the RATN, assuming alternative active travel improvement measures are still feasible.
3	×	Partly aligns with the RATN as a result of traffic restrictions on Market Street and Guild Street. Maintaining unrestricted traffic on Union Terrace does not necessarily conflict with the RATN, assuming the environment can still be made safe for cycling.

		Maintaining unrestricted through-traffic on Bridge Street may conflict with the RATN as this could preclude the delivery of active travel improvements in the future, although this would require to be fully assessed.
4	×	Partly aligns with the RATN as a result of traffic restrictions on Guild Street. Maintaining unrestricted traffic on Union Terrace does not necessarily conflict with the RATN, assuming the environment can still be made safe for cycling. Maintaining unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Market Street may conflict with the RATN as this could preclude the delivery of active travel improvements in the future, although this would require to be fully assessed.
5	×	Maintaining unrestricted traffic through this area is likely to conflict with RATN aspirations to make the area safe for cycling.

4.2.4 North East Bus Alliance

The North East Bus Alliance was formed in 2018 as a voluntary partnership of Nestrans, ACC, Aberdeenshire Council, First Aberdeen, Stagecoach, and Bain's Coaches. The overarching objectives of the Alliance are to:

- Arrest the decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022; and
- Achieve year on year growth in bus patronage to 2025.

An assessment of the alignment of the bus gate options with these objectives is provided in the tables below:

Objective 1 - Arrest the decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022		
1	✓✓✓	Feedback from the bus operators suggests that the ETRO has had positive impacts on bus patronage as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability.
2	✓✓✓	Impacts are likely to be similar to option 1.
3	-	<p>Bus priority on Market Street and Guild Street may have some positive impacts on journey times and reliability for some services, resulting in increased bus patronage.</p> <p>Traffic modelling suggests there could be significant detriment to eastbound bus services travelling between Union Street West and Bridge Street, with increased and more variable journey times arising from this option, therefore it is unlikely to make bus an attractive option for journeys routeing via these streets.</p>

4	×	<p>Bus priority on Guild Street may have some positive impacts on bus patronage, as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability, although these benefits are likely to be minor in isolation and may be negated by maintaining unrestricted private vehicle through-routeing of Market Street, Union Terrace and Bridge Street.</p> <p>Although this option was not specifically modelled, delays to passengers are likely to be similar to, and may be worse than, Option 3.</p>
5	×××	<p>Maintaining unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, with no bus priority measures to protect buses from the impacts of traffic and congestion, does not align with this objective.</p>

Objective 2 - Achieve year on year growth in bus patronage to 2025		
1	✓✓✓	<p>Feedback from the bus operators suggests that the ETRO has had positive impacts on bus patronage as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability.</p>
2	✓✓✓	<p>Impacts are likely to be similar to option 1.</p>
3	-	<p>Bus priority on Market Street and Guild Street may have some positive impacts on journey times and reliability for some services, resulting in increased bus patronage.</p> <p>Traffic modelling suggests there could be significant detriment to eastbound bus services travelling between Union Street West and Bridge Street, with increased and more variable journey times arising from this option, therefore it is unlikely to make bus an attractive option for journeys routeing via these streets.</p>
4	×	<p>Bus priority on Guild Street may have some positive impacts on bus patronage, as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability, although these benefits are likely to be minor in isolation and may be negated by maintaining unrestricted private vehicle through-routeing of Market Street, Union Terrace and Bridge Street.</p> <p>Although this option was not specifically modelled, delays to passengers are likely to be similar to, and may be worse than, Option 3.</p>
5	×××	<p>Maintaining unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, with no bus priority measures to protect buses from the impacts of traffic and congestion, does not align with this objective.</p>

4.3 Local Policy

4.3.1 *Local Outcome Improvement Plan*

Community Planning Aberdeen is a partnership of 14 organisations, including ACC, who work with each other, other organisations and community groups to deliver The Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

The LOIP sets out how Community Planning Aberdeen will improve outcomes for local people and communities, to support attainment of the LOIP vision of *A place where all people can prosper*. This vision is broken down into 4 themes of People, Place, Economy and Community Empowerment, with 16 Stretch Outcomes (SOs) beneath these themes. The SOs pertaining to the Place theme are most relevant to this project, therefore the following tables assess the different bus gate options against the three relevant SOs.

SO13 - Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.		
1	✓✓✓	Prioritising active travel and public transport over the private car on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street is anticipated to result in a greater uptake of these sustainable modes and emissions reduction.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, albeit the benefits may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	×	Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, this option re-introduces unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace, which may conflict with aspirations to encourage a shift to cleaner modes of transport and reduce emissions.
4	×	Active travel and public transport is prioritised on Guild Street, although the limited geographical extent of this means the impacts (in terms of encouraging a shift to sustainable transport, and emissions reduction) are likely to be limited. Maintaining general traffic on Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with emissions reduction or mode shift aspirations.
5	×××	Maintaining unrestricted vehicle movements through the area, with no incentives to use active travel or public transport, demonstrates a major conflict with SO13.

SO14 - Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.		
1	✓✓✓	<p>This option prioritises active travel and public transport over the private car within the city centre core, potentially encouraging modal shift from the private car to active and shared modes of transport for journeys to and within the city centre.</p> <p>The measures may make driving to the city centre less attractive for some people (depending on their origins and destinations).</p>
2	✓✓	<p>As per Option 1, given there are only minor differences between the options, although the active travel impacts may be less as a result of more traffic being attracted back to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.</p>
3	-	<p>Traffic modelling suggests there could be significant detriment to eastbound bus services, with increased and more variable journey times, arising from this option, therefore it is unlikely to result in sustained modal shift to the bus.</p> <p>Restricting general traffic on Market Street and Guild Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater usage.</p>
4	xx	<p>Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted private vehicle routing through the city centre, is unlikely to result in modal shift.</p> <p>Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits arising for bus passengers from congestion noted for Option 3 would also occur, and may be worse, under this option, further disincentivising modal shift.</p>
6	xxx	<p>Maintaining unrestricted private vehicle through-routing strongly conflicts with modal shift aspirations.</p>

SO15 - 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.		
All	-	<p>As none of the options have implications for greenspaces or buildings, all are assessed as having neutral alignment with SO15.</p>

4.3.2 Central Locality Plan

The Central Locality Plan supports delivery of the LOIP and sets out the Central Locality priority outcomes that partners wish to achieve by 2026.

As with the LOIP, a series of priorities are identified to be achieved under the 4 key themes of Economy, People, Place and Community. Priority 5 is linked to the Place theme: *Maximise the spaces in communities to create opportunities for people and nature to connect and increase physical activity*, with *Encourage walking and cycling* identified as a means of achieving this. The table below therefore assesses the contribution of each option to Priority 5, specifically its ability to encourage walking and cycling.

Priority 5: Maximise the spaces in communities to create opportunities for people and nature to connect and increase physical activity		
1	✓✓✓	Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets inherently safer for walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater adoption.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per option 1, although the impact may be more limited as a result of Bridge Street and Union Terrace continuing to offer a through-route for general traffic, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
4	×	Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted through routeing of the city centre, is unlikely to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
5	×	Maintaining unrestricted car access to and through the city centre, is unlikely to contribute to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.

4.3.3 City Centre Masterplan

In 2022, ACC agreed a revised City Centre and Beach Masterplan (CCBMP), which outlines a 20-year development strategy for the city centre and the beach area. It identifies a series of ambitious but deliverable projects that will support future economic growth and will secure more benefits and opportunities for the communities of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

For the 2021 CCMP review 11 objectives guided the visioning and design proposals. The below tables assess the alignment of the various bus gate options with these objectives.

Objective 1: Maximise pedestrian space		
1	-	This option may enable the creation of more pedestrian space on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, albeit streetscape improvements do not form part of the current proposals.
2	-	As per option 1.
3	-	This option may enable the creation of more pedestrian space on Market Street and Guild Street, albeit streetscape improvements do not form part of the current proposals.
4	×	This option may enable the creation of more pedestrian space on Guild Street, albeit streetscape improvements do not form part of the current proposals. Retaining all traffic on Market Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace will limit opportunities to devote more space to pedestrians on these streets.
5	×	Retaining all traffic on Guild Street, Market Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace will limit opportunities to devote more space to pedestrians on these streets

Objective 2: Ensure access for all		
1	✓✓✓	<p>This option makes key areas of the city centre safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling as a result of reduced traffic volumes, allowing people to move around this space with greater ease.</p> <p>The journey time and reliability impacts on public transport achieved under this option may enable more people to use the bus for journeys to and through the city centre, making this a more accessible transport option for some.</p> <p>All areas of the city centre remain fully accessible for vehicles requiring legitimate access, while all car parks and blue badge parking bays likewise remain fully accessible.</p>
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per Options 1 and 2, although the benefits will be less as a result of unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace.

4	×	Given the limited change incurred under this option, it does not materially impact on active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains full vehicular accessibility through the area.
6	×	This option does not contribute to improving active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains full vehicular accessibility through the area.

Objective 3: Encourage active travel

1	✓✓✓	Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets inherently safer for walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater adoption.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per option 1, although the impact may be more limited as a result of Bridge Street and Union Terrace continuing to offer a through-route for general traffic, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
4	×	Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted through routing of the city centre, is unlikely to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
5	×	Maintaining unrestricted car access to and through the city centre, is unlikely to contribute to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.

Objective 4: Improve air quality

1	✓	<p>City Centre air quality should improve as a result of less traffic in the central core,.</p> <p>As the option most likely to result in sustained modal shift, this does positively align with air quality improvement aspirations, albeit the scale of this will be minimal in the absence of additional measures.</p>
2	✓	Similar to option 1, albeit the impacts may be slightly less as a result of traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.

3	×	Traffic modelling suggests this option could increase congestion (and hence emissions) on the Union Street West approach to Bridge Street, albeit this is within the LEZ.
4	×	The impacts of traffic restrictions on Guild Street in isolation are unlikely to result in significant air quality improvements or transport modal shift. Continuing to allow largely unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, which is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), albeit a LEZ, brings no air quality benefits. Although not explicitly modelled, the congestion noted in the traffic model for Option 3 would also likely arise with this option.
5	×	Continuing to allow unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, which is an AQMA, brings no air quality benefits and hence conflicts with this priority.

Objective 5: Incorporate public transport

1	✓✓✓	This option includes public transport priority measures on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street.
2	✓✓✓	As per option 1.
3	✓✓	This option includes public transport priority measures on Market Street and Guild Street.
4	✓	This option includes public transport priority measures on Guild Street.
5	×××	This option includes no public transport priority measures.

Objective 6: Accommodate events, parades, marches etc.

All	-	The main event space and parade route is likely to remain on Union Street and, while different options may facilitate and support this to a greater or lesser extent, none preclude this, therefore all have neutral alignment with this objective.
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Objective 7: Include appropriate urban greenery

All	-	As none of the options incorporate streetscape improvements at this stage, all are assessed as having a neutral alignment with this objective.
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Objective 8: Maximise the potential of commercial units		
All	-	As all options prioritise either vehicular or sustainable transport accessibility to the city centre by greater or lesser degrees, all options have been awarded a neutral score against this objective.

Objective 9: Create permanent space for on street activities such as occasional licenced premises, pop-up shops, markets, street trading		
All	-	None of the options look to reallocate space from transport purposes.

Objective 10: Include space that facilitates appropriately controlled servicing		
All	✓✓✓	All options would continue to enable appropriate servicing.

Objective 11: Allow emergency service access to all areas		
All	✓✓✓	All options would continue to enable unhindered emergency access.

4.3.4 Local Transport Strategy

The Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2016-2021 was developed to set out the policies and interventions adopted by ACC to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the five year period.

It sets a vision for: *A sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy, facilitates healthy living and minimises the impact on our environment.*

This is supported by five high-level aims:

- A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods;
- A safe and more secure transport system;
- A cleaner, greener transport system;
- An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system; and
- A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living.

The following tables therefore assess the alignment of the various bus gate options with the LTS aims.

Although a new LTS is currently in development, the 2016-2021 document remains the default strategy at this time, hence the use of the 2016-2021 aims for the purposes of this assessment.

A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods		
1	-	This option results in more efficient journey times for bus passengers but potentially a slight lengthening of journey times for private vehicles, depending on origins and destinations.
2	-	As per option 1. Differences between the options will have minimal impacts.
3	×	Traffic modelling suggests that this option will result in congestion and increased journey times between Union Street West and Bridge Street, impacting on both private and public transport, although there may be improvements to the different mode elsewhere at different parts of the network.
4	×	As per Option 3.
5	×	This option does not contribute to more efficient bus journeys, albeit private vehicle journeys will be unaffected.

A safe and more secure transport system		
All	-	Although each of the options have differing impacts on the volume of vehicles in the city centre core, the benefits of this may be negated if displaced vehicles move to alternative streets. Each option has a different impact on the city centre pedestrian and cycling environment, although the limited geographic scale of this and the lack of wider network connections at this stage are unlikely to have any significant or wider impacts on road safety.

A cleaner, greener transport system		
1	✓✓✓	This option prioritises active travel and public transport on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, which is anticipated to result in modal shift and emissions reduction.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, although the impacts will be slightly less as a result of general traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.

3	×	Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, this option re-introduces unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace, which may conflict with aspirations to encourage a shift to cleaner modes of transport and reduce emissions. Traffic modelling suggests this option may result in significant queueing on the approach to Bridge Street from Union Street West which will increase emissions, albeit all traffic should be LEZ-compliant.
4	×	By only prioritising active travel and public transport on Guild Street, impacts will be limited, therefore this option is unlikely to support mode shift or emissions reductions. Although not explicitly modelled, the congestion noted in the traffic model for Option 3 would also likely arise with this option.
5	×××	This option does not support modal shift or emissions reductions.

An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system		
1	✓✓✓	<p>This option makes key areas of the city centre safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling (which are relatively inexpensive forms of transport) as a result of reduced traffic volumes, allowing people to move around this space with greater ease.</p> <p>The journey time and reliability impacts on public transport achieved under this option may enable more people to use the bus for journeys to and through the city centre, making this a more accessible transport option for some.</p> <p>All areas of the city centre remain fully accessible by vehicle for those requiring legitimate access, while all city centre car parks and blue badge parking bays likewise remain fully accessible.</p>
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per Options 1 and 2, although the benefits will be less as a result of unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street.
4	×	Given the limited change incurred under this option, it does not materially impact on active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains full vehicular access to the area.

5	×	This option does not contribute to improving active travel or public transport access, albeit it maintains full vehicular accessibility to the area.
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A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living		
1	✓✓✓	This option prioritises active travel and public transport on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, which is anticipated to result in a shift to active and healthy modes of transport, and emissions reduction.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	-	Prioritising active travel and public transport on Market Street and Guild Street could result in modal shift to active and healthy forms of transport, and emissions reduction, although the benefits may be reduced by enabling through-routeing via Bridge Street and Union Terrace. An increase in traffic queues as modelled in the network could increase harmful emissions, albeit all traffic in the area should be LEZ-compliant.
4	×	Limited measures on Guild Street are not anticipated to result in a significant uptake of active travel or emissions reduction. Maintaining through-routeing via Market Street, Bridge Street and Union Terrace is not in line with this objective.
5	xxx	This option does not support modal shift or emissions reductions.

4.3.5 North East Roads Hierarchy

A new Roads Hierarchy for the North East was agreed in 2020. One of the purposes of the Roads Hierarchy review was to: *Facilitate delivery of the transport elements of the CCMP by providing a means of reducing through-traffic in the city centre, reflecting the role of the city centre as a destination rather than a through-route for traffic.* A key principle was that: *The city centre should be considered as a destination rather than a through-route for vehicular traffic and crossing the city centre by car should be discouraged. While the city centre will remain fully accessible to vehicles, accessing and exiting the city centre should, as far as possible, be by the same route, with car parking signage reflecting this.*

To reflect the CCMP's emphasis on reducing city centre traffic and delivering an enhanced place for people, and the fact that these streets were no longer considered appropriate for carrying large volumes of through-traffic, the following city centre streets were declassified from A- and B-class roads to unclassified

streets in 2020: Union Street, Guild Street (Carmelite Street to Market Street) and Bridge Street (Union Terrace to Wapping Street).

The table below assesses the alignment of the various bus gate options with the current Roads Hierarchy.

Roads Hierarchy		
1	✓✓✓	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street, Market Street and Bridge Street fully aligns with the Roads Hierarchy.
2	✓✓	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street, Market Street and Bridge Street (one-way) largely aligns with the Roads Hierarchy.
3	×	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street and Market Street aligns with the Roads Hierarchy, however allowing through-routeing via Bridge Street does not.
4	×××	Allowing opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with the Roads Hierarchy.
5	×××	Allowing opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street does not align with the Roads Hierarchy.

4.3.6 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

The Aberdeen Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) was adopted in 2019.

Developed within the context of the CCMP, the Roads Hierarchy review, and the LEZ, the SUMP is a long-term transport strategy for the city centre which identifies projects that will be progressed by ACC and partners to make it easier and more attractive for people to travel around the area on foot, bike, public transport and other low-emission forms of transport in preference to less clean alternatives.

It has a vision of: *A city centre that is accessible to all, which enables healthy and sustainable lifestyles by prioritising the needs of those walking, cycling, wheeling and using public transport and which contributes to wider aspirations to deliver a safe, sustainable and economically buoyant city centre with an enhanced sense of place.*

The vision is supported by the following objectives:

1. Support delivery of the roads hierarchy strategy by implementing measures to discourage, and reduce the number of, through-trips undertaken by private vehicles in the city centre.

2. Support delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, contributing to the regeneration of the city centre and enhancing the sense of place by developing a network of streets that prioritise the movement of people over the movement of vehicles, whilst maintaining necessary and efficient access for business and industry.
3. Minimise the adverse environmental impacts of transport in the city centre, incorporating green infrastructure into new transport schemes wherever practicable, and ensure the city centre is resilient to the effects of climate change.
4. Ensure that the city centre is accessible to, and safe for, all, especially the most vulnerable members of society.
5. Encourage and enable more walking and cycling in the city centre, particularly through the provision of better and safer infrastructure.
6. Develop a network of safe and attractive cycle routes across the city centre, through the provision of low speed, low flow streets and segregated infrastructure, so that an unaccompanied 12-year-old child can safely cycle through the city centre.
7. Improve the public transport experience to, from and within the city centre, particularly in terms of achieving shorter and more reliable journey times.
8. Improve connectivity between key destinations in and around the city centre by sustainable modes of transport.
9. Improve opportunities for multimodal journeys to, from and within the city centre
10. For vehicles undertaking essential journeys within the city centre, enable as many of these as possible to be undertaken by low emission vehicles.

An assessment of the alignment of the bus gate options with the objectives of the SUMP therefore follows.

Support delivery of the roads hierarchy strategy by implementing measures to discourage, and reduce the number of, through-trips undertaken by private vehicles in the city centre.		
1	✓✓✓	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street, Market Street and Bridge Street fully aligns with the Roads Hierarchy.
2	✓✓	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street, Market Street and Bridge Street (one-way) largely aligns with the Roads Hierarchy.
3	×	Limiting opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Guild Street and Market Street aligns with the Roads Hierarchy, however allowing through-routeing via Bridge Street does not.
4	×××	Allowing opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Market Street and Bridge Street does not align with the Roads Hierarchy.

5	xxx	Allowing opportunities for city centre through-routeing via Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street does not align with the Roads Hierarchy.
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Support delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, contributing to the regeneration of the city centre and enhancing the sense of place by developing a network of streets that prioritise the movement of people over the movement of vehicles, whilst maintaining necessary and efficient access for business and industry.

1	✓✓✓	This option prioritises active travel and public transport on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street, whilst maintaining full accessibility of the area for vehicles requiring access.
2	✓✓	As per option 1, although the impacts will be more limited, as a result of some traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	✓	As per options 1 and 2, albeit the impacts will be more limited, given the lack of sustainable transport priority on Bridge Street and Union Terrace and the return of general traffic to these spaces.
4	xx	Improvements to Guild Street in isolation do not contribute to the development of a coherent network of active travel priority streets.
5	xxx	This option does not prioritise people on the streets under consideration.

Minimise the adverse environmental impacts of transport in the city centre, incorporating green infrastructure into new transport schemes wherever practicable, and ensure the city centre is resilient to the effects of climate change.

1	✓✓✓	Prioritising active travel and public transport over the private car on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street is anticipated to result in a greater uptake of these sustainable modes and emissions reduction.
2	✓✓	As per Option 1, although the impacts will be slightly less as a result of general traffic returning to Bridge Street and Union Terrace.
3	x	Although active travel and bus priority measures remain on Market Street and Guild Street, this option re-introduces unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace, which may conflict with aspirations to encourage a shift to cleaner modes of transport and reduce emissions. Traffic modelling suggests this option may

		result in significant queueing on the approach to Bridge Street from Union Street West which will increase emissions, albeit all traffic should be LEZ-compliant.
4	×	By only prioritising active travel and public transport on Guild Street, any impacts will be limited, therefore this option is unlikely to support mode shift or emissions reductions. Although not explicitly modelled, the congestion noted in the traffic model for Option 3 would also likely arise with this option.
5	×××	Maintaining unrestricted vehicle movements through the area, with no incentives to use active travel or public transport, demonstrates a major conflict with this objective.

Ensure that the city centre is accessible to, and safe for, all, especially the most vulnerable members of society		
1	✓✓✓	<p>This option makes key areas of the city centre safer and more welcoming for people walking, wheeling and cycling (which are relatively inexpensive forms of transport) as a result of reduced traffic volumes, allowing people to move around this space with greater ease and safety.</p> <p>The journey time and reliability impacts on public transport achieved under this option may enable more people to use the bus for journeys to and through the city centre, making this a more accessible transport option for some, particularly those without access to a car.</p> <p>All areas of the city centre remain fully accessible by vehicle for those requiring legitimate access, while all city centre car parks and blue badge parking bays likewise remain fully accessible.</p>
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per Options 1 and 2, although the benefits will be less as a result of unrestricted traffic on Bridge Street and Union Terrace. Maintaining active travel and bus priority on Market Street and Guild Street still demonstrates good policy alignment.
4	×	Given the limited change incurred under this option, it does not materially impact on active travel or public transport accessibility, albeit it maintains full vehicular access to the area.
5	×	This option does not contribute to improving active travel or public transport access, albeit it maintains full vehicular accessibility to the area.

Encourage and enable more walking and cycling in the city centre, particularly through the provision of better and safer infrastructure		
1	✓	Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets safer and more welcoming for walking, wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater adoption. The measures include no formal cycle infrastructure at this stage however.
2	✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓	As per option 1, although the impact may be more limited as a result of Bridge Street maintaining unrestricted vehicle access, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
4	xx	Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted through routeing of the city centre, is unlikely to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
5	xx	Maintaining unrestricted car access to and through the city centre, is unlikely to contribute to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.

Develop a network of safe and attractive cycle routes across the city centre, through the provision of low speed, low flow streets and segregated infrastructure, so that an unaccompanied 12-year-old child can safely cycle through the city centre.		
1	✓	This option contributes to the development of a network of low-flow low-speed streets but currently offers no segregated cycle infrastructure.
2	✓	As per option 1.
3	✓	As per options 1 and 2, although to a more limited geographic extent.
4	xx	Maintaining largely unrestricted car access to and through the city centre does not align with the development of safe and attractive cycle routes, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.

5	xx	Maintaining unrestricted car access to and through the city centre does not align with the development of safe and attractive cycle routes, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
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Improve the public transport experience to, from and within the city centre, particularly in terms of achieving shorter and more reliable journey times.		
1	✓✓✓	Feedback from the bus operators suggests that the ETRO has had positive impacts on bus journey times and improved reliability.
2	✓✓✓	Impacts are likely to be similar to option 1.
3	x	Bus priority on Market Street and Guild Street may have some positive impacts as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability. However, traffic modelling of this option suggests eastbound bus services on Union Street West could experience lengthy delays, with negative impacts on journey times and reliability.
4	x	Bus priority on Guild Street may have some positive impacts on bus patronage, as a result of reduced journey times and improved reliability, although these benefits may be negated by unrestricted vehicular access on Market Street and Bridge Street. Although not explicitly modelled, congestion impacts noted for Option 3 are likely to also occur, and potentially worsen, under this option.
5	xxx	Maintaining unrestricted vehicular access through the city centre, with no bus priority measures to protect buses from the impacts of traffic and congestion, does not align with this objective.

Improve connectivity between key destinations in and around the city centre by sustainable modes of transport.		
1	✓	<p>Although public transport journey time improvements have resulted from this option, delivery of bus priority in itself does not improve connectivity.</p> <p>The improved pedestrian and cycle environment on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street may enhance connectivity for sustainable modes, but the impacts will be limited in the absence of wider network improvements.</p>
2	✓	As per option 1.

3	✓	As per option 1.
4	-	This option does little to improve connectivity by sustainable modes, given the impacts are restricted to Guild Street.
5	xxx	This option does nothing to improve connectivity by sustainable modes.

Improve opportunities for multimodal journeys to, from and within the city centre.		
1	✓✓✓	Active travel access to the bus and rail station improves under this option.
2	✓✓✓	As per option 1.
3	✓✓✓	As per option 1.
4	✓	This option has more minor benefits, given the impacts are restricted to Guild Street.
5	xxx	This option does nothing to improve opportunities for multimodal journeys.

For vehicles undertaking essential journeys within the city centre, enable as many of these as possible to be undertaken by low emission vehicles.		
ALL	-	All of the options are considered to have a neutral alignment with this objective, given that the type of vehicle is not a variable within any of the options.

4.3.7 Net Zero Route Map and Mobility Strategy

In 2022, ACC adopted its Net Zero Routemap, setting out its approach for the journey to be a net zero city by 2045. There are six enabling strategies sitting alongside the routemap, one of which is a Mobility Strategy. This identifies a Strategic Aim: *We will reduce travel demand, play a key role in enabling a transition to low / zero emission vehicles and facilitate more walking, wheeling and use of public transport to reduce emissions while increasing the safety of road users.* Underneath, fit six key outcomes and six strategic objectives.

Key outcomes:

- Reduction in traffic across the city;
- Reduction in proportion of journeys by car to less than 50% by 2030;

- Reduce the need for car travel, facilitating local services and 20-minute neighbourhoods;
- Increased number of people taking public transport;
- Increased number of people walking and wheeling; and
- Reduced emissions from transport

Strategic Objectives:

- Reduce the demand for travel;
- Improved travel planning and better integration of transport networks, to enable modal shift;
- Low carbon transport decisions to support 20% car traffic reduction, mode shift and emission reductions;
- Increase public transport options to encourage low carbon travel;
- Extend and improve active travel networks for healthy, safer, and sustainable choices; and
- Decarbonise transport and increase uptake of low and zero carbon technology.

The following tables assess the alignment of each of the options against the 6 strategic objectives.

Reduce the demand for travel		
All	-	None of the options impact on this category to any great extent.

Improved travel planning and better integration of transport networks, to enable modal shift		
1	✓✓✓	Active travel access to the bus and rail stations improves under this option.
2	✓✓✓	As per option 1.
3	✓✓✓	As per option 1.
4	✓	This option has more minor benefits, given the impacts are restricted to Guild Street.
5	xxx	This option provides no integration benefits.

Low carbon transport decisions to support 20% car traffic reduction, mode shift and emission reductions		
1	✓✓✓	This option prioritises active travel and public transport over the private car within the city centre core, potentially encouraging

		modal shift from the private car to active and shared modes of transport for journeys to and within the city centre, with consequent emissions reductions.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓	<p>This option prioritises active travel and public transport over the private car on some streets within the city centre, potentially encouraging modal shift from private car to active and shared modes of transport for journeys to and within the city centre. This is, however, on a lesser scale than Options 1 and 2, with unrestricted vehicle access on, and through-routeing available via, Bridge Street and Union Terrace.</p> <p>The potential impacts on bus services from Union Street West observed in the traffic model suggest that the attractiveness of some bus services could be reduced under this option, potentially discouraging modal shift to the bus for the journeys in question.</p>
4	×	This option prioritises active travel and public transport on Guild Street only. The impact of this is such that it is unlikely to contribute to modal shift or emissions reduction in isolation, with unrestricted through-routeing opportunities available via Bridge Street, Union Terrace and Guild Street not in alignment with emissions reduction or mode shift aspirations. Although not explicitly tested in the traffic model, the disbenefits arising for bus passengers from congestion noted for Option 3 would also occur, and may be worse, under this option.
5	×××	This option maintains unrestricted vehicular vehicle access through the city centre, which is not in alignment with emissions reduction or mode shift aspirations.

Increase public transport options to encourage low carbon travel		
ALL	-	Although the options have differing impacts on the attractiveness of public transport, none of them impact on public transport options at this stage.

Extend and improve active travel networks for healthy, safer, and sustainable choices		
1	✓✓✓	Restricting general traffic on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street makes these streets inherently safer for walking,

		wheeling and cycling, increasing the attractiveness of these modes of travel and encouraging greater adoption.
2	✓✓✓	As per Option 1, given there is only minor differences between the options.
3	✓✓	As per option 1, although the impact may be more limited as a result of Bridge Street and Union Terrace continuing to offer a through-route for general traffic, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
4	×	Restricting general traffic on Guild Street alone, and maintaining opportunities for unrestricted through routeing of the city centre, is unlikely to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.
6	×	Maintaining unrestricted car access to and through the city centre, is unlikely to contribute to encourage walking and cycling, unless any additional active travel measures are put in place.

Decarbonise transport and increase uptake of low and zero carbon technology		
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ALL	-	Although the options have differing impacts in terms of potential for modal shift, their impact on transport decarbonisation and the uptake of clean technologies is limited.
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5 Policy Alignment Summary

NATIONAL						
		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
National Transport Strategy Priorities	Reducing Inequalities	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Taking Climate Action	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Helping to Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth	-	-	-	-	-
	Improving Health and Wellbeing	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	×	xxx
	Sustainable Travel and Investment Hierarchy	✓	✓	✓	-	xx
Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Update Categories	20% Car km Reduction	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	×	xxx
	Reducing the Need to Travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Living Well Locally	-	-	-	-	-
	Switching Modes	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	xx	xxx
	Combining or Sharing Car Trips	✓	✓	✓	xxx	xxx
Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 / National Planning Framework 4 (Aberdeen Rapid Transit)		✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	xxx	xxx
REGIONAL						
		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
Regional Transport Strategy Priorities	Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity	-	-	×	×	×
	Zero fatalities on the road network	-	-	-	-	-
	Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport	✓	✓	×	×	xxx
	Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Accessibility for all	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	xx	xxx

Regional Economic Strategy		-	-	-	-	-
Regional Active Travel Network		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	×	×	××
North East Bus Alliance Objectives	Arrest the decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	×××
	Achieve year on year growth in bus patronage to 2025	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	×××
LOCAL						
		Opt. 1	Opt. 2	Opt. 3	Opt. 4	Opt. 5
Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Place Stretch Outcomes	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	×××
	Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.	✓✓✓	✓✓	-	××	×××
	26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.	-	-	-	-	-
Central Locality Plan Priorities	Maximise the spaces in communities to create opportunities for people and nature to connect and increase physical activity.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	××
City Centre Masterplan Objectives	Maximise Pedestrian Space	-	-	-	×	×
	Ensure Access for All	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	Encourage Active Travel	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	××
	Improve Air Quality	✓	✓	×	×	×
	Incorporate Public Transport	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	×××
	Accommodate Events, Parades, Marches etc.	-	-	-	-	-
	Include Appropriate Urban Greenery	-	-	-	-	-
	Maximise the Potential of Commercial Units	-	-	-	-	-
Create Permanent Space for on Street Activities	-	-	-	-	-	

	Include Space that Facilitates Appropriately Controlled Servicing	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
	Allow emergency service access to all areas	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Local Transport Strategy Aims	A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods.	-	-	×	×	×
	A safe and more secure transport system.	-	-	-	-	-
	A cleaner, greener transport system.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	-	×	xxx
North East Roads Hierarchy		✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xxx	xxx
Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan Objectives	Support delivery of the roads hierarchy strategy by implementing measures to discourage, and reduce the number of, through-trips undertaken by private vehicles in the city centre.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	xxx	xxx
	Support delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, contributing to the regeneration of the city centre and enhancing the sense of place by developing a network of streets that prioritise the movement of people over the movement of vehicles, whilst maintaining necessary and efficient access for business and industry.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	xx	xxx
	Minimise the adverse environmental impacts of transport in the city centre, incorporating green infrastructure into new transport schemes wherever practicable, and ensure the city centre is resilient to the effects of climate change.	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×	xxx
	Ensure that the city centre is accessible to, and safe for, all, especially the most vulnerable members of society	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	×	×
	Encourage and enable more walking and cycling in the city centre, particularly through the provision of better and safer infrastructure.	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx

	Develop a network of safe and attractive cycle routes across the city centre, through the provision of low speed, low flow streets and segregated infrastructure, so that an unaccompanied 12-year-old child can safely cycle through the city centre	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx
	Improve the public transport experience to, from and within the city centre, particularly in terms of achieving shorter and more reliable journey times.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	x	x	xxx
	Improve connectivity between key destinations in and around the city centre by sustainable modes of transport.	✓	✓	✓	-	xxx
	Improve opportunities for multimodal journeys to, from and within the city centre.	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	xxx
	For vehicles undertaking essential journeys within the city centre, enable as many of these as possible to be undertaken by low emission vehicles.	-	-	-	-	-
Aberdeen Net Zero Mobility Strategy Strategic Objectives	Reduce the demand for travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Improved travel planning and better integration of transport networks, to enable modal shift	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	xxx
	Low carbon transport decisions to support 20% car traffic reduction, mode shift and emission reductions	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	x	xxx
	Increase public transport options to encourage low carbon travel	-	-	-	-	-
	Extend and improve active travel networks for healthy, safer, and sustainable choices	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	x	xx
	Decarbonise transport and increase uptake of low and zero carbon technology	-	-	-	-	-

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Proposal for the Torry Battery
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/24/284
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Shepherd
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Cate Armstrong
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Intro. 6.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the proposal received from Greyhope Bay Ltd for the expansion of their existing facility at the Torry Battery, and request that a 20-year lease be granted to allow them to secure funding to undertake required remedial works to the existing monument and the proposed development works.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:-

- 2.1 acting in its capacity as trustee of the Lands of Torry (charity number SC021299),
- (i) approves the granting of a 20-year lease of The Torry Battery to Greyhope Bay Ltd at a proposed peppercorn rent of £1.00 per annum, subject to planning and Listed Building consent for the proposed works being granted;
 - (ii) instructs the Chief Officer – Governance following consultation with the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to conclude the appropriate legal agreements incorporating various qualifications as necessary to protect the Council's and Trust's interests.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Following the approval by Council on 2 March 2020 for a 5 year lease and consent to install a temporary modular unit with associated decking / seating etc, Greyhope Bay Ltd obtained building warrant and listed building consent for these works, which started on site in July 2021 and were completed in April 2022.

- 3.2 The Centre has proved very popular receiving over 100,000 visitors since it opened. Plans have now been developed to expand and enhance both the community café facility and the Torry Battery itself. The design statement (shown at Appendix 1) provides an overview of the proposed development of the site. Appendix 3 shows an updated site plan, produced following the proposed closures for Greyhope Road.
- 3.3 The proposed development of the site comprises:
- the addition of a modular unit to provide a separate educational / workshop space, to be located adjacent to the existing unit;
 - an outdoor amphitheatre to provide a performance space for Living History and storytelling events;
 - the development of the Old Guard house, to provide an exhibition space;
 - recreation of the former storerooms/houses along the south wall, to create an outdoor market space for one off events.
- 3.4 Greyhope Bay Ltd have submitted funding requests with Historic Environment Scotland and also the National Lottery Heritage Fund. While this funding has not been committed, it cannot be secured without the Council's commitment to the grant of a 20-year lease.
- 3.5 As part of the development Greyhope Bay Ltd will also undertake the remedial works to repair and restore the walls of the Torry Battery. The completed project has an estimated cost in excess of £1.1 million, with the remedial works costing circa £450,000.
- 3.6 By approving the recommendation to grant Greyhope Bay Ltd a 20-year lease, the Council would transfer all maintenance and repair responsibilities for the Torry Battery to Greyhope Bay Ltd, and thereby relinquish its current liability for the Scheduled Monument.
- 3.7 This proposal will also ensure that the Scheduled Monument is maintained and enhanced to enable a viable future for the site, without detracting from its status.
- 3.8 The proposal has been considered by the Council's Senior Historic Environment Officer who has provided a letter in support of the proposals (see Appendix 2), with the caveat that appropriate steps should be taken to prevent private vehicle access through the gateway into the Monument.
- 3.9 The route along Greyhope Road to reach the Torry Battery and the Greyhope Centre was closed to general traffic in June 2024. Access is available via the south side of Greyhope Road connecting from St Fitticks Road / Coast Road past the Lighthouse. Only drivers with a disability and delivery vehicles are to be permitted vehicular access to the west car park. Plans have been drawn up to improve the footpaths and parking areas along the south stretch of Greyhope Road with works anticipated to begin before the end of 2024.
- 3.9 Greyhope Bay Ltd have requested that the Council give consideration to the granting of a 20-year lease at the nominal sum of £1.00 per annum. Officers

are of the opinion that this is not unreasonable, given the estimated cost of the works to repair, develop and maintain the Torry Battery, and Greyhope Bay Ltd's commitment to ensuring there is no further deterioration to the Torry Battery during the period of the lease.

- 3.10 As the University of Aberdeen Bursary Fund is a recipient of 49% of the income received by the Lands of Torry Trust, officers have contacted the University's Estate Team to inform them of the proposal and make comments. They have responded thanking us for the information; but given that they are recipients of only a portion of the fund's annual revenue acknowledged that the University have no place to comment on the proposals.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If the recommendations in this report are approved, the Council will no longer have liability for the maintenance and repair of the Torry Battery for the duration of the lease. While there are currently no apparent costs associated with the monument, it has been noted that the walls are in need of repairs, which, as noted above would involve a significant cost in the future.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Torry Battery is a trust asset that is managed by the Council on behalf of the Land of Torry Trust, benefitting the University of Aberdeen Bursary (49%) and the Common Good Fund (51%). Any disposal (including lease) must serve the Trust's best interests. The Trusts (Scotland) Act 1921 permits trustees to grant leases that align with the trust's objectives of promoting and advancing education and heritage. It is considered that the existing provision of hospitality and welfare facilities along with the proposed development for the larger Torry Battery to integrate the history and heritage of the site will provide benefit to both the local community and visitors from further afield.
- 5.2 Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, the Council can dispose of land and buildings at below market value if the Council is satisfied that the price offered is reasonable, and the disposal is likely to contribute to the promotion of a) economic development or regeneration, b) health, c) social well-being, or d) environmental well-being. Given the commitment Greyhope Bay Ltd will be making to repair, maintain and enhance the scheduled monument, and the information presented in their offer proposal which addresses the anticipated heritage and environmental benefits, the recommendations in this report are considered to be consistent with the 2010 regulations.
- 5.3 Legal Services, in consultation with Corporate Landlord, will undertake the necessary diligence checks to ensure that any lease arrangement is compliant with the relevant industry norms and legislative requirements, while ensuring that the trust's interests are appropriately protected.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The environmental implications of proceeding with the proposed development of the Torry Battery are on the whole expected to be positive as any negative impact deemed to be created by the development of a historic Scheduled Monument will be offset by Greyhope Bay Ltd's commitment to restoring and sustaining the historic structure. The organisation is also committed to providing more sustainable environmental, education and economic benefits to the City through this development and to green energy, relying on a solar energy and associated storage battery system to operate the facility.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	n/a			
Compliance	n/a			
Operational	n/a			
Financial	By granting a lease at less than market rent the council could be criticised under best value guidance	The proposed lease requires the charity to repair and maintain the scheduled monument which will provide facilities for the use of both the local community and visitors to the area.	L	Yes
Reputational	The Ancient Monument may be damaged during the developments works or occupation.	Protective measures can be included within the legal agreement, to ensure the lessee takes the appropriate measures to minimise the risk.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	n/a			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposed development of this scheduled monument will encourage more visitors to Torry, which can only have a positive impact and help our city to thrive.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Stretch Outcome 1 Approval of the recommendation will help ensure that the existing popular centre which provides welfare, educational and hospitality services, is expanded to accommodate more visitors. This will encourage more people into the area, and will contribute to the economy of the Torry locality.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The availability of an environmentally friendly and educational centre within the city will have a positive impact visitors of all ages
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Stretch Outcome 13 The facility will be sustainable through the use of green energy with the use of solar panels and a storage batteries. Stretch Outcome 15. A facility such as the one proposed is likely to encourage people from across the city to come to the site to see the Dolphins and birdlife; encouraging healthy, and family friendly activities for all ages

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Council 2 March 2020 RES/20/058 Temporary Lease at Torry Battery

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Design Statement

11.2 Appendix 2 – Letter from Archaeology Service

11.3 Appendix 3 – Updated Site Plan of Development

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Cate Armstrong
Title	Team Leader Estates
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Tel	01224 045519

Design Statement

GREYHOPE BAY AT TORRY BATTERY - PHASE 2



Above: Greyhope Bay Phase 2 Site Visualisation

The Greyhope Bay Centre opened in April 2022 after a decade of grassroots fundraising and community building. The current facilities (Phase 1) were established as an opportunity to test ideas and demonstrate the viability of a community centre and cafe within and atop Torry Battery taking advantage of the stunning views of Aberdeen's coast, harbour, and visiting dolphins.

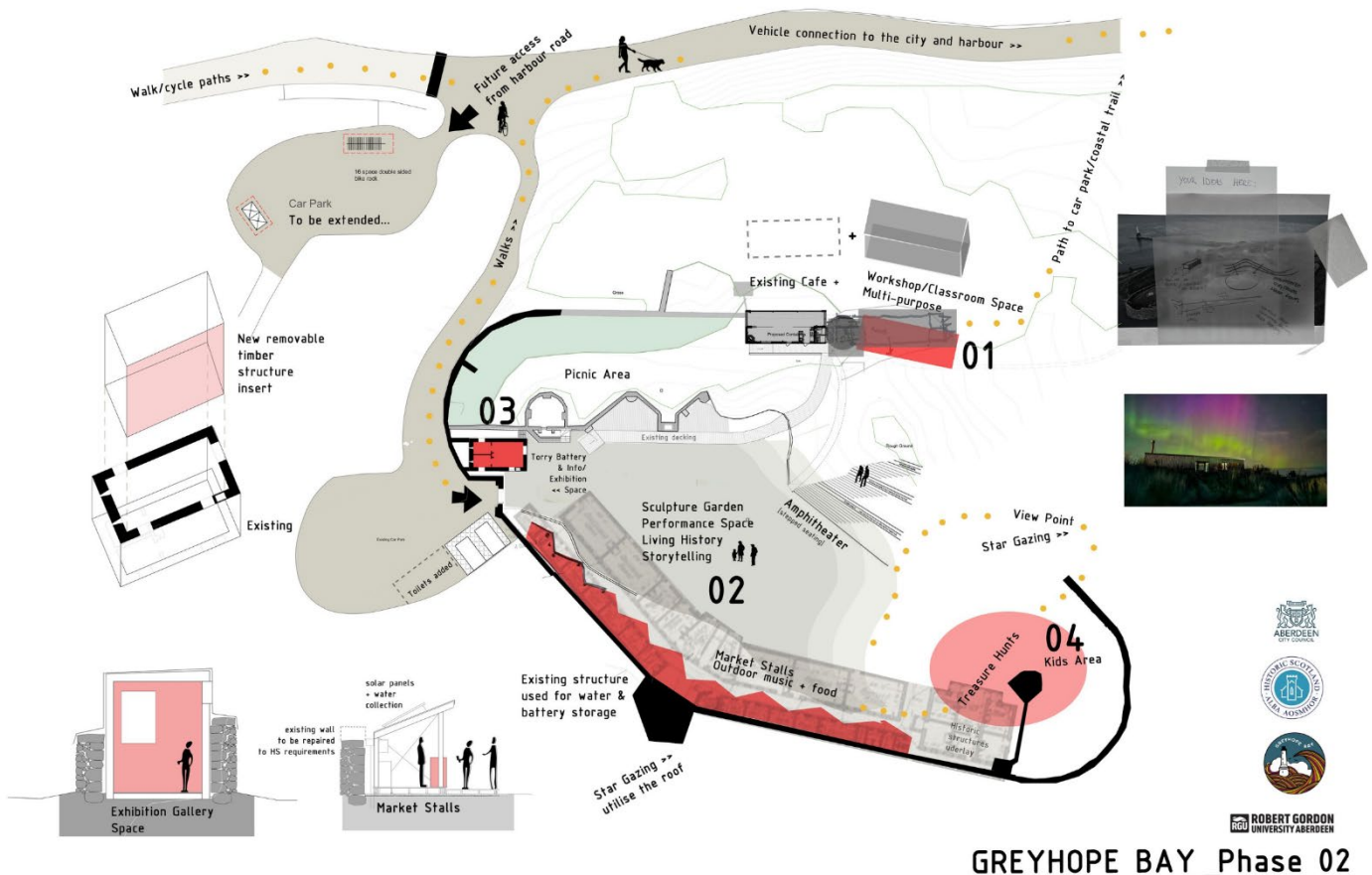
Since opening, the Greyhope Bay Centre has welcomed over 100,000 visitors to the cafe and centre, including enjoying the diverse programming of community events, workshops, and educational visits.

The project's success has exposed the limitations of current facilities (Phase 1) and missed opportunities to engage more with the site's heritage. The centre is too small for the high demand and competing interests of the café, community workshops and events within the same small space. There is an opportunity to rebalance activity into the outdoor environment, allowing visitors to directly engage with the heritage and define a place that incorporates the entire monument,

Phase 1 established a coastal connection and has set the stage for Torry Battery's phased development to cater to community needs whilst honouring its heritage and building on our green practices (the centre operates on a bespoke green power system and the collection and treatment of rainwater).

Over the past two years, the centre has observed how the community and visitors connect with the coastal views, dolphins, environmental and social value of the area and the monument's history. This convergence of coastal environment and built heritage has highlighted two key needs:

1. A demand for accessible heritage-focused interpretation and programming.
2. An urgent need for expanded facilities to meet the increasing demand for the Greyhope Bay Centre, its café and Torry Battery itself.



GREYHOPE BAY_Phase 02

Above: Phase 2 concepts developed from co-creation sessions

A co-designed Phase 2 concept, developed through seven months of monthly community co-creation workshops, addresses these needs. It is an innovative design and responds creatively to the demands of this exposed site. The design proposals are based on a 'lightweight' touch and thoroughly consider the context, including landscaping enhancements. All construction systems and materials are selected on a rationale that is recyclable and removable from the monument with minimal impact.

The co-created concept design developed by our community includes:

1. Expanding the centre to the east, taking in further views of Girdleness Lighthouse and windows/views that look back towards Torry Battery.

This expansion doubles the space and provides a central entrance, which allows for a multi-purpose space that can function as a larger café, or activity space for workshops, community events and educational visits. The proposed extension contains a sub-level due to sloping site levels. The sub-level will accommodate a store space and will be externally clad with reclaimed stone / gabion baskets reflecting the ruinous character. See drawing no: 03

2. Repair, consolidation and enhancement of the monument

The community wishes to protect Torry Battery and ensure no further deterioration, to its fabric which includes repeating the entrance archway, the guard house, and the immediate boundary wall. A prioritised schedule of works is currently being assessed through an updated condition survey.

3. Developing the old guard house into an exhibition space allowing for interpretation of the history and heritage of Torry Battery

This will be achieved by building a truss roof construction resting on existing stone walls. Roof members will sit on a lightweight concrete base plate which will also help protect walls from further water ingress. Insulated timber-farmed walls are to be hung from truss rafters, These are to be offset from existing stone walls, creating a suspended floor and eliminating the requirement for additional foundations and structural underpinning of existing walls. See drawing 04.

4. Recreating the storerooms/houses along the south wall to create an outdoor market space.

The layout will be built to reflect the previous historic plan of the site c.1865. The existing boundary wall is to be incorporated into the design forming the backdrop of the activities promoted within. A timber post and beam construction is to lightly rest on the restored

boundary wall to accommodate a sheltered roof canopy. The roof members will be used to hang information regarding the historic use of the site, including the previous names of storehouses and the families that lived there. The sheltered space is to promote external activities, including exhibitions, markets and creative performances. See drawing 05.

5. **Outdoor exploration that encompasses the entire site**

To improve site accessibility and safety, the proposal includes walkways and integrated seating places along the natural gradients of the site. This is to focus attention on the central parade activities as well as beyond the site towards the coastline. The landscaping proposal will help to retain the wildness of the site, encouraging the natural biodiversity of the wildflowers, birds, and natural grasses.

6. **Continued commitment to Green Energy**

Without access to the national grid, the centre operates using a hybrid green power system that relies on solar, battery (and a small generator during the winter months). For Phase 2, the proposal is to commit fully to green energy by accommodating additional PV panels along with an upgraded battery system which will eliminate current generator use.

The Greyhope Bay Phase 2 proposal will develop, preserve, and elevate a historic monument while providing wider accessibility and interpretation for locals and international visitors to the city. Beyond this, Phase 2 will further enhance a more sustainable environmental, educational and economic benefit to Aberdeen city, the North-East of Scotland and beyond.



Above: Greyhope Bay Phase 2 Site Visualisation

Cate Armstrong
Team Leader - Estates
Aberdeen City Council
Estates
Marischal College
Broad Street, Aberdeen
AB10 1AB

Aberdeenshire Council
Archaeology Service
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

30 August 2024

Dear Cate,

Proposed Phase 2 Development by Greyhope Bay Ltd at Torry Battery

The Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS), via a Shared Service Agreement, provides an archaeological service to Aberdeen City Council. As part of this role, the Service oversees all planning applications submitted to the Council, assessing potential impacts on the historic environment and advising when archaeological mitigation is required. The Service also provides advice and guidance to Aberdeen City Council on historic assets owned by the Council when required. It is within both these particular capacities of our service provision that this letter is written with specific regard to the next phase of proposed works at Torry Battery by Greyhope Bay Ltd.

Having attended various discussions with Greyhope Bay Ltd and Historic Environment Scotland, I am of the opinion that the current application for a variation of the time limit on the existing building and decking (Planning Application 240208/S42) is acceptable, and that any proposed Phase 2 works, as discussed prior to a formal planning application to date, will not adversely impact upon the fabric or structure of the historic Battery itself. Indeed, some of the remedial repair works being proposed would in fact be of benefit to the structure.

Torry Battery has gone through a variety of different uses since it was first constructed, and this latest development can be viewed as a positive step in the long-term management and safeguarding of the site against further decay or anti-social behaviour.

One issue which has been discussed is the ongoing activity of private cars driving through the gateway into the Battery in order to access the viewing platform and café. Steps should be taken to prevent this, including the erection of appropriate signage (with Scheduled Monument Consent from HES if applicable) and the consideration of physical barriers within the gateway such as bollards (that are in keeping with the heritage value of the Battery itself).

Taking all of this into consideration, I can recommend that the Council support the proposals from an archaeological perspective.

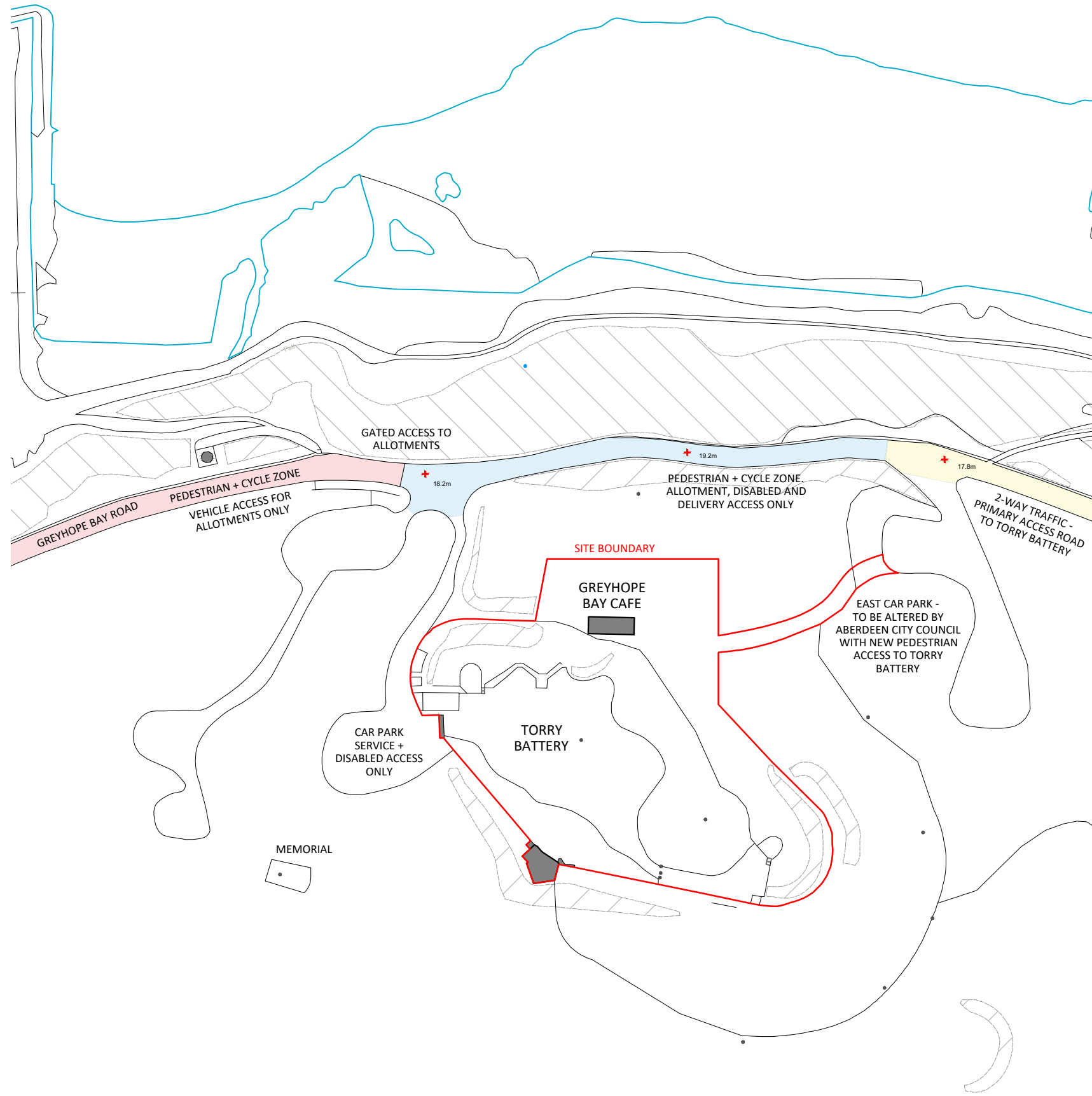
Should there be any queries regarding the above, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



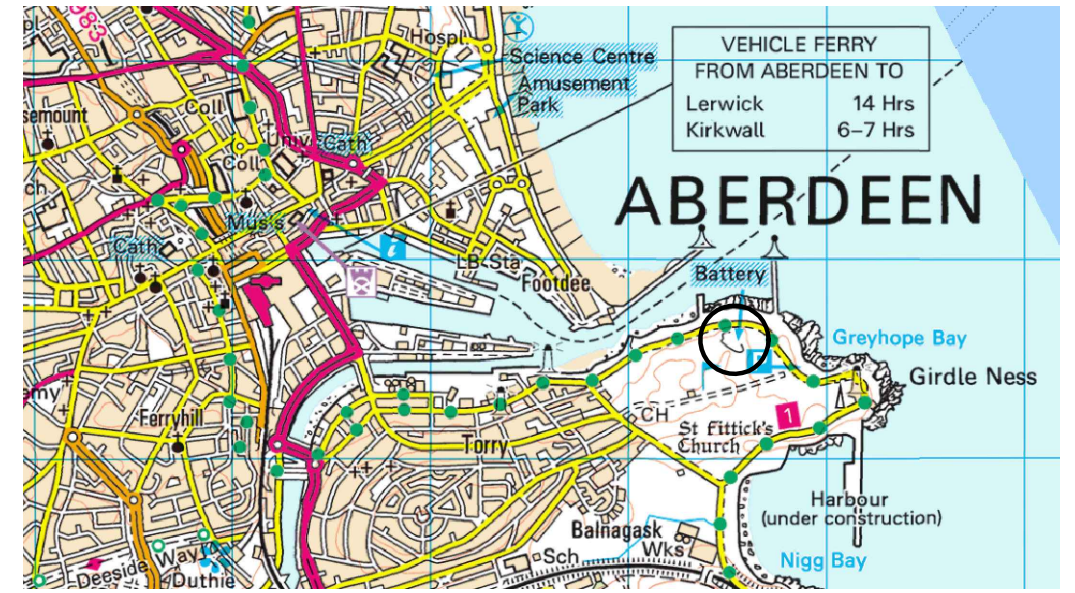
Bruce Mann MA MCIfA FSA Scot FRSA
Senior Historic Environment Officer
Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service

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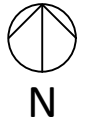


SITE LOCATION PLAN

1:1250



VEHICLE FERRY FROM ABERDEEN TO	
Lerwick	14 Hrs
Kirkwall	6-7 Hrs



SITE LOCATION PLAN

NTS

GOKAY DEVECİ ARCHITECT
 RIBA FIRAS CHARTERED ARCHITECT

Project
 PHASE 2 AT:

GREYHOPE BAY
 TORRY BATTERY
 GREYHOPE ROAD
 ABERDEEN
 AB11 8QX

Drawing
 SITE LOCATION PLAN

Scale 1:1250 @ A3	Date JUNE 2024
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COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 nd October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Council Delivery Plan, Annual Review Report 2023-24
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/281
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Martin Murchie
REPORT AUTHOR	Charlene Flynn
TERMS OF REFERENCE	13

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the Council with an Annual Review Report which highlights progress with respect to the 2023-24 Council Delivery Plan, that was approved by the Council on 1st March 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Council note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the Annual Review Report at Appendix A.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 As the Council, and our communities, have tackled cost of living pressures, provided sustained support for those adults and children displaced from Ukraine, addressed newly presenting issues around trends in relative poverty in the city, and embraced the need for climate change adaptation within its provision, the Council as an organisation, has required to maintain a responsive and flexible approach to service delivery to our citizens.

3.2 This is reflected in the inputs, outputs and outcomes captured within the Annual Review Report, and highlights where services have been enabled to deliver against Council Delivery Plan priorities whilst pivoting resource and effort to meet the additional legislative, demand related, and financial challenges that had arisen over the course of 2023/24.

- 3.3 It is important to note that the detail and outcomes captured in this report reflect the policies and actions aligned with the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan, which was subsequently updated for 2024/25 at the meeting of Council on 6th March 2024.
- 3.4 As such, it offers a retrospective overview of the work of the Council linking with those delivery priorities and objectives set out within the Plan, overlaid with the aims from the current Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement, ‘Working in Partnership for Aberdeen.’
- 3.5 Council Delivery Plan development is part of a strategic planning thread that flows from, and brings together:
- Aberdeen City’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan
 - The Council’s Policy Statements
 - National, Regional and City Strategies
 - Legislative and statutory delivery duties
- 3.6 Each of these strands establishes a range of commitments and requirements placed on the Authority, and the Council Delivery Plan identifies how the Council would meet these in the forthcoming twelve months.
- 3.7 The Annual Review Report summarises a snapshot of the deliverables for 2023-24 under these headings, along with outlining outcomes derived from the Council’s Commissioning Intentions, against which the Plan was a key element, and represents a statement on how the Council had delivered on its contribution to each.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising out of this report.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is consistent with the Council’s Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *Taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
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Strategic	No significant strategic risks	Annual reporting against the Council Delivery Plan serves to mitigate against Strategic Risk through enhanced scrutiny and accountability for outcomes	L	Yes
Compliance	No significant legal risks.	Publication of Council delivery performance information in the public domain ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations in the context of Best Value reporting.	L	Yes
Operational	None	N/A	N/A	NA
Financial	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputational	No significant reputational risks.	Reporting of Council delivery to Members, and into the public domain serves to enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None	NA	NA	NA

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024-25</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement	The detail reflected within this report overlaps with various commitments contained within the Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Plan April 2024 Refresh</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The detail reflected within this report supports scrutiny of Council delivery against each of the Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The detail reflected within this report supports scrutiny of Council delivery against each of the Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes

Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The detail reflected within this report supports scrutiny of Council delivery against each of the Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes
Regional and City Strategies	The report reflects outcomes closely aligned each of the regional and City strategies including National Improvement Framework for Education; Regional Economic Strategy, Local and Regional Transport Strategies and the Regional Skills Strategy, along with Local and Strategic Development Plans.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It was confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, on 2 nd September 2024 that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required for this report
Data Protection Impact Assessment	A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required for this report.
Other	No additional impact assessments have been completed for this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Delivery Plan 2023/2024 – COM/23/074, Council, 1st March 2023
Performance Management Framework – CORS/24/232, Council, 21st August 2024

11. APPENDICES

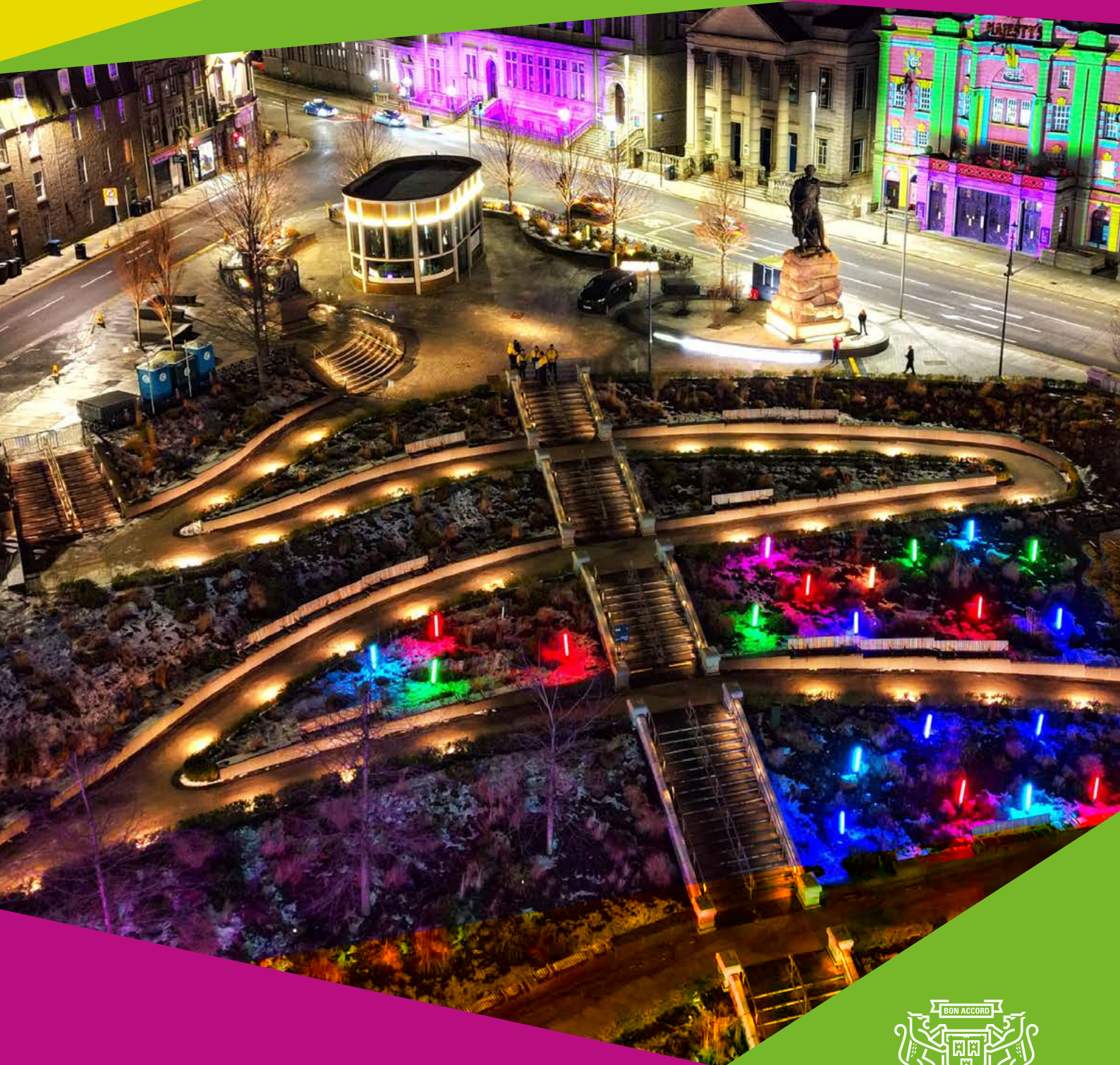
Appendix 1 – Council Delivery Plan, Annual Review Report 2023/24

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Council Delivery Plan

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023/24



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FOREWORD

This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made in implementing the Council Delivery Plan for 2023/24.

The report reflects the situation of Aberdeen as a city in on-going social and economic transition. A city which is well placed to manage the migration towards a low-carbon economy and is focused on diversifying its business sectors, but also one that is not isolated from national and international socio-economic impacts.

The legacy effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, through increased national and local analysis, are now better understood, and it is clear that these have increased poverty across the UK, (and by some measures, that experienced in the city), whilst the “cost of living”, although arguably rising at a slower pace, generates sustained pressures on many of our citizens, both those in employment and those not economically active. The city also faces the prospect of a declining and ageing population.

Local authorities, and the public sector in general, is also in a period of significant budgetary pressure and, in this environment, the Council Delivery Plan is one of the ways in which decision are made both in terms of which services and projects are prioritised and to whom and at what standard they can be delivered. Often this represents difficult choices.

However, this report shows that the Council, together with the city’s communities and our partners, are working hard to mitigate the impacts of these influences, with early evidence of gains in some areas of strategic intervention, including those around the city’s quality of environment; and commitments to tackling health inequalities among our citizens.

The achievements highlighted in this report stand as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the staff of both the Council and our partner organisations, as well as to the people of Aberdeen themselves.

The Council Delivery Plan is a key element of our commissioning approach and brings together, at the beginning of each financial year:

- Details of the Council’s strategy framework
- Relevant new statutory duties being placed on the Council;
- Outstanding commitments arising from the Council’s approved Policy Statement and Partnership Agreement
- Council commissioning intentions, through which we express the services we will provide

Importantly, each of these elements of our Council Delivery Plan are aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and represent a statement of how the Council will deliver on its contribution to the implementation of the LOIP.



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT COMMITMENT UPDATES

A Partnership Agreement setting out commitments over the next 5 years was presented to Council on 18th May 2022. Its delivery will maximise opportunities from other policy drivers and programmes, as well as collaborating with external local and national partners. Progress made in 2023/24 is summarised below:

A City of Opportunity

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Ensure local education services identify young people with mental health problems and help them get early support and help, where appropriate, to transfer to adult services.	The transfer from child to adult services will be a priority for the Children's Services Plan 2023-26.	A working group of stakeholders has been established to look at strategies and approaches to enhance current arrangements.
Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems.	Improving the outcomes for care experienced young people will continue to be a priority focus in the refreshed Children's Services Plan 2023-26. This will align to The Promise and the priorities identified in the existing Plan. Our Corporate Parenting improvement priorities will continue to be driven by our care experienced young people.	The Promise continues to be at the centre of the work undertaken to improve outcomes for all children and those who are care experienced specifically. All central education staff have participated in the keeping the promise award training and this is being rolled out to schools this academic session. Progress against Plan 2021-2024 and our Corporate Parenting Plan will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in November 2024. Community Learning and Development's (CLD) Family Learning & Youth Work teams are working with Education Scotland/The Promise to shape & deliver the Promise Award nationally for CLD practitioners.

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Continue to seek to support young people to receive care in Aberdeen, through fostering, adoption and other services and seek to reduce "out of authority" placements.	A reduction in the number of looked after children has been seen in all categories of care including out of authority placements. However, we recognise that further action is required to increase the proportion of looked after children placed in foster care. The support offer to kinship carers, developing an integrated Family Support Model, and utilisation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to enhance preventative and Early Intervention Approaches will continue to be moved forward at pace.	We will continue to further reduce the proportion of looked after children placed in foster care with a particular focus on the number placed with independent fostering agencies. Working with the media team we are seeing an increase in the number of people interested in fostering with ACC. Assessing their capacity to undertake this role is actively being progressed as a priority. The support offer to kinship carers has been enhanced utilising the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to strengthen preventative and early intervention approaches to support kinship placements. This has positively contributed to an increase in placement sustainability in kinship placements. This includes support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and a much-enhanced offer from the 3rd Sector.
Look to establish a school leavers fortnight – utilising the time between final exams and the end of the school year to offer pupils new experiences and help to build-up their life skills.	We will engage with young people to discuss potential approaches and understand what they would find most helpful.	Following consultation with young people there was no appetite to take this forward. Schools and the Employability team are currently progressing plans to better align work experience opportunities with growth sectors.
Build on the success of the Summer of Play, extending these learning experiences at least into school holidays, including the Spring and October holidays.	Committee report being presented to Education and Children's Services Committee in June 2023.	The 'In the City' programmes continue to be successful. A committee report was presented to Education and Children's Services in July 2024 to demonstrate the impact of the most recent programme.
We will actively work with partners to increase citywide delivery of music education, promoting excellence and enabling group performance.	Following a successful event at the end of 2022 planning is underway to extend the use of ensembles, etc.	The number of ensembles has been increased as has the number of opportunities for young people to perform as part of the music service and in partnership with others. The service continues to report progress through the annual Music report to the Education and Children's Services Committee every September.

A Vibrant City

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Establish a task force to identify disused and derelict land and buildings and help bring them back into use, including investigating the purchase and conversion of upper floors along Union Street.	Empty Shops Plan approved, and its implementation will be aligned to the work by Aberdeen Inspired on its Summit – both workstreams highlight conversion of upper floors on Union Street.	Work on delivering the Empty Shops Plan is continuing. The empty shops grant scheme was launched in July 2023, partners and stakeholders meet regularly to plan complementing activities. The vacancy rate fell from 25% to 19.5%. The Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) will end this year, after delivering significant levels of grant-based investment in the conservation-led regeneration of Union Street. Further investment will be targeted through a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Heritage Environment Scotland through the new Heritage & Place Programme.

Building a Greener & Sustainable City

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Support Aberdeen's continued pioneering of Hydrogen technologies and make the case to bring alternatively powered rail services to the City.	Ongoing delivery of H2 Plan, and this will include h2 power on other transport modes where appropriate, in consultation with NESTRANS. Support the delivery of bp Aberdeen H2 Power Ltd, the joint venture company owned by the Council and BP. Undertake further work on case for H2 powered rail.	ACC in partnership with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council commissioned Arup to produce a Refuelling Report highlighting the opportunities for the Region in the Energy Transition Zone and the prospect of trimodal refuelling. ACC continued to work closely with our JV partner BP. The Final Investment Decision (FID) was approved by the BP Aberdeen H2Power Ltd board on the 15th of July, 2024. ACC have liaised with Transport Scotland regarding opportunities for H2 powered rail with ACC commissioning SNC Lavalin to produce the 'Hydrogen in Rail' Action Plan.

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Protect and enhance Aberdeen's Green Belt, green spaces and open spaces so they can be enjoyed for purposes of leisure, sport and environmental wellbeing, and investigate the creation of new pocket parks.	The adoption of the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan includes policies protecting the Green Belt and designating space as Green Space Network all of which carry different forms of protection against development. In relation to Aberdeen's existing green spaces, they will continue to be maintained to a high standard within available resources.	The Aberdeen Open Space Audit: 2024 was approved at Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 11th June 2024. This Audit assesses green spaces, including parks, on their quality, accessibility and biodiversity value. The assessment also compares open space provision across wards within the city. This data will inform delivery of place-based outcomes in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and future revisions of the Natural Environment Strategy and Aberdeen Adapts. A review is currently ongoing of our Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), this includes looking at potential new sites. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP) 2023 was adopted on 19 June 2023. It includes policies protecting the Green Belt and designates space as Green Space Network and Urban Green Space; all of which carry differing levels of protection relating to development. The adopted Aberdeen Planning Guidance documents on 'Open Space and Green Infrastructure' and 'Food Growing' support the LDP in this area.

Keeping Our City Moving

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Creating a Road Safety Fund with an annual capital budget of at least £1 million to be used to make roads and pavements safer for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and other road users and implement traffic management projects which improve road safety.	Scottish Government funding for “Cycling Walking Safer Streets” is expected to be £900k+ for 23/24. Roads Safety Infrastructure Fund also available for bids. Allowance still to be confirmed.	Total CWSR funding for 23/24 was £1,453,000 which was fully utilised to deliver a vast range of projects including, new and upgraded path network, dropped kerbs and footway protection. The Road Safety Improvement Fund was £255, 839 which was fully utilised to provide a junction improvement in Torry, implementation of route action plans, pedestrian safety interventions on George Street and upgrades to roundabout provisions on Wellington Road.
Cycle Hire Scheme.	Scheme now launched with over 3,000 trips taken to date which given the time of year is very encouraging.	In February 2024, the scheme operator ShareBike announced their intention to withdraw from the UK market, meaning that the cycle hire scheme in Aberdeen has ceased operations for now. Officers are currently looking at options for re-introducing the scheme.
Delivering an improved and safer junction at Shielhill.	Design work to progress facilitating land assembly, which when complete, will allow tender and construction to follow.	Council at their August 2024 meeting agreed to make a Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the construction of the project.

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Reviewing our cycle and active transport network, and work with Aberdeen Cycle Forum to deliver our shared vision of making Aberdeen a cyclist friendly city and provide covered secure cycle storage in suitable locations across Aberdeen.	Work about to commence on an Active Travel Network plan for the City as part of a wider plan for the region and Shire in conjunction with NESTRANS.	<p>In partnership with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council, work has commenced on identifying an aspirational regional active travel network, with public and stakeholder consultation taking place in summer 2024. It is hoped that the network will be finalised in late 2024, with the projects identified developed into a prioritised list for the Council and partners to progress to feasibility, design and delivery stages, as resources allow.</p> <p>In the meantime, various active travel projects continue to progress through the design and delivery process, with two noticeable examples being the delivery of segregated cycle infrastructure on South College Street (autumn 2023) and Craigshaw Drive (summer 2024).</p> <p>Phase 1 of the implementation of safe and secure cycle parking facilities in dense residential areas was completed in 2023, with cycle shelters installed in the Seaton and Tillydrone areas. External funding has been secured from Cycling Scotland to deliver a second phase during 2024.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings with the Aberdeen Cycle Forum and the Convenor and Vice Convenor of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee have continued this year.</p>
Delivering a revised Local Transport Strategy.	Work is ongoing completion expected in 23/24.	Draft Local Transport Strategy and associated documents reported to Net Zero, Environment and Transport (NZET) Committee in August 2023 and permission gained to take the documents out for public and stakeholder consultation. The Consultation ran from November 2023 to January 2024 and almost 550 responses were received. A report on the consultation and proposed next steps will be taken to the September 2024 NZET Committee.

Homes for the Future

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Repeal the guidance that exempts student accommodation developers from affordable housing contributions.	Complete as part of the new Local Development Plan.	Aberdeen Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing and Student Accommodation was agreed at Full Council in December 2023. Repealing the exemption was explored through the public consultation on these documents. However, following the consultation, it was concluded that a repeal was not appropriate, and the Council agreed to maintain the affordable housing exemption for student accommodation in its Guidance.
Review and clarify guidance for the council's buy-back scheme and look to expand the scope of what can be bought	Instruction to review policy was given at committee in January and will be considered in Spring 2023.	On 30th May, Corporate Landlord was instructed to pause any new applications under the Council House buy-back scheme (with the exclusion of any properties in Torry that may meet the requirements of RAAC affected tenants) and bring a report on the Acquisition and Disposal policy and buy-backs progress by November 2024.

Empowering Communities

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Double the budget for leased community centres and work with the management committees of these community centres to enhance the important services and activities they provide.	Ensure that development programmes being established by Management Committees are aligned with Locality and Community Plan outcomes and targeted to achieve maximum benefit.	The grant funding provided to leased Community Centre Associations has increased from the 2022/23 baseline of £11,065 by 65% to £18,309.56.

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Work with communities to establish trusts, community enterprises, charities or other entities that support community empowerment and community wealth building.	Work with City Growth on the implementation of the approved community wealth building action plan.	Through the ABZWorks Development Fund, charities and social enterprises in the city have been supported to take forward activities that support community empowerment and community wealth building. The funding has helped build capacity in these organisations to take forward future employability activity, supporting those furthest away from employment. For example, Cairncry Community Centre has been funded to provide Confidence to Cook classes for local members of the community to gain knowledge and skills to help them better cope with the cost of living, through meal planning and learning how to cook healthily on a budget. The course has also led to participants gaining qualifications that will help with their future employability in the hospitality industry.
Support Inchgarth Community Centre with their extension plans.	£1.9m of Scottish Government Grant secured. During 2023 a design team will be appointed, detailed design work concluded with community and planning application will be submitted	At the end of concept design stage, the indicative costs provided to date indicated additional monies would be required to fully deliver the project. This budget uplift was approved at the September 2024 meeting of Finance and Resources. The expectation is construction works would commence in Spring 2025 and Practical Completion would be achieved in Spring 2026.

An Active City

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Install distance markers along popular walking and running routes across the city.	This is being taken forward as part of the review of the open space strategy and core paths plan.	Funding to progress this project is currently being sought.

A Prosperous City

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Seek to buy goods and services locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements.	Progression of engagement events with local supply chains and providers through a dedicated supplier development programme.	The percentage of procurement spend on local enterprises is anticipated to be in excess of 35%. This is in line with the 2022/23 outcome which represented a fourth consecutive year of % spend above the national figure.

A Caring City

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Support the roll-out of further changing places toilets across the city.	Changing place facilities are considered in all new projects and condition and suitability projects.	This commitment was reflected within the content of the Capital Programme Delivery and Condition and Suitability reports to the September 2024 meeting of Finance and Resources Committee.
Support greater personalisation of care and consider whether it would be possible to implement policies to maintain quality of life of disabled citizens in our community and support the health and well-being of carers by providing support and respite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing implementation of revised Carers Strategy, including priorities in relation to enhancing the provision of advice and support for carers including the use of creative respite breaks through the Quarriers Respite Bureau. Ongoing provision of Stay Well Stay Connected Programme focusing on inequality. Ongoing expansion of usage of Technology Enabled Care (TEC). Implementation Plan of the strategic review of Rehabilitation Services to be developed by April 2023. Analogue to Digital Technology Switchover to be progressed. Core Skills and Training Matrix to be developed for those working with people with complex needs by June 2023. Recommission provision of Pre-Paid Care for Self Directed Support Option 1 (Direct Payments) by July 2023. Health Checks to be offered to all Learning Disability Clients (+16) by October 2023. Transition Plan for Children with Disabilities moving into Adult Services to be implemented by November 2023. Review of provision of Advocacy Services by March 2024. Investment in specialist housing for people with complex care needs by March 2024. 	<p>The Annual Report on the implementation of the Carers Strategy went to IJB on 6th February. There has been a 21% increase in the total number of carers receiving support and during 2023 the Respite Bureau were handling an average of 30 referrals per month.</p> <p>The Stay Well Stay Connected programme continues to deliver initiatives to combat social isolation including Men's Wellbeing Groups, Boogies in the Bar and Soup and Sannies in Seaton, Kincorth and Torry.</p> <p>Adult Social Work Care Management has adopted a 'TEC First' approach to assessing care and 2023/24 saw a 46% increase in the number of TEC packages from the previous year.</p> <p>The initial focus of the review of Rehabilitation Services was redesigning the Neuro Rehab pathway. This was concluded and implementation is progressing. Review of the other areas continues into 2024/25.</p> <p>A provider of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) has been identified. Switchover of alarm units is almost complete well ahead of the January 2026 deadline. A solution is still being pursued for group living establishments.</p> <p>A Core Skills and Training Matrix was developed and will be included in the Complex Care Framework and elements of the Supported Living Framework both due to be re-commissioned in 2024.</p> <p>The Pre-Payment Cards were successfully recommissioned. The contract was for 3 years with options to extend.</p>

Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
		<p>Nurse led pilots for Health Checks have been set up in the Vaccination and Wellbeing Hub and the Len Ironside Centre. A Project Board monitors the delivery of these overseen by the Scottish Governments Implementation Group.</p> <p>Lived Experience engagement was undertaken between May and July and draft guides: 'Parents and Carers Guide to Post-School Enhanced Transition Planning' and 'Professionals Guide to Post School Enhanced Transition Planning', were created to support parents/carers and schools with transitions planning. The full Transitions Plan was not completed in 2023/24 due to the lead officer moving on, however the work has now been picked back up again and should be completed within 2024/25.</p> <p>Advocacy services were reviewed and recommissioned and the new service commenced 1st October 2023.</p> <p>Investment for a new 8 unit development on the site of the former Stoneywood school was secured in January 2024. The specially designed, single occupancy units will be ready for occupation by Spring 2025.</p>
A City that Listens & Works		
Partnership Agreement Commitment	Key Milestones for 2023/24	Update on Milestone
Recognise that citizens and communities – rather than the City Council - are best placed to say what services they require and how these are provided and seek to give greater control over appropriate services and facilities to local communities.	Work to introduce Citizen Assemblies.	On 12 June the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee agreed to commission the Scottish Women's Budget Group to deliver a citizens' assembly approach on poverty and gender inequality. SWBG will use mixed method tools to explore the impact of poverty and gender inequality on women and families in Aberdeen and identify with participants solutions that could address these issues for individuals, families and the wider community. The findings will be reported in February/ March 2025.



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COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

As part of our commissioning cycle, the Council Delivery Plan sets out a series of commissioning intentions which define the contributions which the Council will make to the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and which frame the ask of our commissioned services.

These commissioning intentions define the Council's contribution, from a single agency perspective. It should be noted that partners will also have single agency intentions to meet their obligations derived from the LOIP.

The Council Delivery Plan also shows measures for each of the commissioning intentions. This annual report highlights progress against many of these measures and up to date progress is shown against all of the LOIP and Council Delivery Plan measures in the Aberdeen Outcomes Framework which can be accessed at: <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/resources>

ECONOMY

KEY DRIVERS

- Supporting labour market to recover from impact of COVID-19 on employment
- Increasing the number of people in Aberdeen in sustained, fair work
- Promoting inclusive economic growth for our most disadvantaged communities
- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Poverty affecting those with the protected characteristics and in specific communities
- Ensuring access for all employers to skilled labour
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups

ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



224,663 visits to Aberdeen Art Gallery, a **5% increase** on 2022/23



Number of vacant units on Union Street has **reduced by 21%** since September 2022



57 more Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships in Training compared to 2022/23



Hosted the **European Pipe Band Championships** which attracted around **10K of visitors** to the city



PROGRESS MADE DURING 2023/24

SUPPORT THE ATTRACTION OF VISITORS TO THE CITY AND INCREASE FOOTFALL

Aberdeen Arts Gallery & Museums (AAGM)

The AAGM Audience Development Plan delivered with VisitAberdeenshire (VA) and VisitScotland has seen AAGM included in the new South Harbour VA guide for cruise passengers, this also included AAGM presentations to Cruise Welcome Volunteers as part of their induction. Staff from AAGM also attended VisitScotland Connect travel trade expo at P&J Live in April 2023.

Staff worked with VA on their “Make a Day of It” campaigns in 2023/24, funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), encouraging local people to discover something new or rediscover a long-forgotten gem, including the city’s award-winning cultural attractions.

Promotional focus for tourism has been major exhibitions in the art gallery, and permanent displays in all venues. This included AAGM developing a bookable offer for travel trade groups.

Major exhibitions included “Where Ideas are Born” from Magnum Photos; “A Quentin Blake Summer” illustrations for books and verse; “Constructed Narratives” celebrating 3 international but local artists’ careers; and the opening month of “Artist Rooms: Louise Bourgeois” from TATE. These shows, along with concerts, lecture series, family events and changes to smaller spaces attracted 224,663 visits to the gallery (5% increase on 2022/23).



Highlights of the activity programme include dementia friendly activities: Musical Memories and Our Aberdeen collection handling sessions supported by volunteers, visual description tours for visitors who have low vision led by curators, Baby Boogie disco sessions and a lunch-break concert programme where “pay as you feel” donations covered all performers’ fees. Evening concerts and special lectures were trialled and proved self-supporting with a small income; these will be developed further.

There has been a focus on social media and printed press. There is now a weekly page in the Evening Express with stories the city’s collection can tell, as well as the [events programme](#). The AAGM also had an undergraduate intern working with the team for the full academic year, which has allowed enhancement of the social media platforms including a TikTok account being launched, resulting in a rise in engagement.

TikTok followers rose from 23 in August shortly after the account was launched to 1182 in March 2024, with video “likes” in August below 100 to over 8000 by March. Monthly views average now between 4k - 19k per post. Followers and interactions are predominantly from the UK, with next highest South Korea and the United States.

Retail sales at AAGM increased 14% on prior year against a difficult trading backdrop for the sector. Success at the gallery was boosted by the popularity of the ‘A Quentin Blake Summer’ exhibition. The Maritime Museum shop opened toward the end of the period with an amended fit-out and new branding. Café business at AAGM increased by 20% on prior year under third-party operator Elixir. They continue to develop their local, seasonal offer and participate in initiatives such as Aberdeen Restaurant.

Venue hire business at AAGM venues grew by 58% year on year to £67k (£221k inc. catering). The value of evening hires was double that of daytime use. ACC used free hires to the value of £16k for high-level meetings and seminars.

An application to the UKSPF was successful in 2023/24, this funding will be used to review how methods of comms and marketing reach audiences, assess how audiences interact with what’s on offer and determine targets for audience acquisition. This will be delivered throughout 2024/25.

School visits have been slower post-covid, and secondary schools are particularly hard to attract, however collaboration with Education developed a lively and engaging programme with Northfield Academy supporting the transition of Primary 7 pupils to Northfield Academy, 173 pupils attended over 14 sessions at the Treasure Hub.

The Maritime Museum was closed for essential repairs over the winter period (October 2023 and February 2024) impacting on visitors and the ability to support curriculum-led visits, the Tolbooth Museum is currently closed until further notice whilst a comprehensive survey of the historic building is carried out, which will inform a programme of care and maintenance.

The Beach Ballroom and Civic Catering increased business by over 12% on prior year. External business growth was 21% while internal trade from ACC fell by 32%. Final turnover was £1.27m of which over £1.15m was from the private sector – a record high. Business initiatives included running the bars at the Highland Games to utilise internal resource and keep profit from the event within ACC. The Beach Ballroom was nominated for 4 events awards in 2023, including NE Wedding Venue of the Year at the Top Tier Awards and Best Unique Venue and Best Wedding Package at the Confetti Awards Scotland.

P&J Live

P&J Live hosted the 50th year of Offshore Europe, activating the entire venue, including the Sub-T level. Around 30k delegates attended, including c.4k from overseas. The event will return in 2025.

Entertainment highlights included Elton John, Pet Shop Boys, Lewis Capaldi, Deacon Blue, Madness, Busted, Andre Rieu, Arenacross, Harlem Globetrotters, Bill Bailey, Jack Whitehall, Jurassic Live, Bluey, Peter Pan and cult-favourite Bongo’s Bingo.

Exhibitions included Taste of Grampian, Your Wedding Exhibition, ComicConScotland, Floating Offshore Wind, and The Craft Spirit Show.

The teams at P&J Live and the Convention Bureau worked through the Ambassador Programme, a network of academics and professionals who volunteer their time to assist conference bids in specialist research areas. This secured and delivered major conferences linked to education and life sciences to the venue. Future bids won in this period include 10 between 2024 and 2027 with an economic impact of over £12m.

Support of Aberdeen Inspired 2021-2026 Business Plan

The council supported the cost of the city centre manager whose role is to act as the link between the council and other bodies and the businesses operating in the city centre. Through this support Aberdeen Inspired was able to achieve reaccreditation of the purple flag status.

A collaborative approach to events planning, delivery and communications is taken with any joint projects, with City Events and ACC Comms teams supporting as required e.g. Christmas Village. City Events provides operational support for projects such as NuArt and ABERDEEN letters. Aberdeen Inspired sit on the Event365 Group and the Local Organising Committee of Tall Ships Races Aberdeen 2025 to ensure that business opportunities are identified and maximised.



The 365 Event Working Group continued to work in collaboration on new events including the increased Christmas programme in Union Terrace Gardens and working toward Festival of the Sea in 2024 and the Tall Ships Races Aberdeen in 2025.



ACC awarded UKSPF funding to Aberdeen Inspired to commission a feasibility study on Union Street upper floors, which will look to benchmark the vacant space at upper levels, suggest alternative uses for this space, and identify the challenges and opportunities in activating these.

City Centre Masterplan

[An annual progress report](#) was reported to Council in August 2023, and another update was provided to Council [in August 2024](#). Projects such as Queen Street, the Aberdeen Market and elements of City Centre Streetscape are now reported regularly to Finance & Resources Committee as part of the Capital Programme.

Empty Shops Plan

Progress on the Empty Shops Action Plan was reported to Finance and Resources Committee in March 2024. Interventions under programme areas 'Distinctive Aberdeen', 'Culture and Heritage', 'Net Zero Union Street', 'Enterprising Union Street' and 'Enabling Delivery' are ongoing. City centre partners and stakeholders including Aberdeen Inspired, Our Union Street and Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce convene regularly to plan complementing activity which supports objectives and maximises impact without duplicating resource.

The Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme, launched in July 2023, supports internal renovation and reconfiguration works of vacant ground floor units to enable reoccupation. Ten applications have been approved to date with two more being considered at the September review panel. Through implementation of the Action Plan, partners' activity and the grant scheme, the number of vacant ground floor units on Union Street has decreased from 47 in September 2022 to 37 in May 2024. A further 9 of these 37 units are pending either planning consent, start of works or grant award.

Delivery of New Events to the City

New events in this period included the European Pipe Band Championships in Duthie Park which attracted around 10k visitors. Work commenced on Festival of the Sea, a precursor to the Tall Ships Races, to be delivered in July 2024. The Cruise in Company event in July 2023 saw 3 Tall Ships berth in Port of Aberdeen, including two of the largest in the fleet, enroute to Lerwick for the Shetland leg of the Tall Ships Races. A programme of events for the crew included a Civic Dinner, ceilidh at the Beach Ballroom and trips to local venues. Over 1000 members of the public visited the vessels on the quayside. The footprint of Aberdeen's Christmas Village was expanded to include Union Terrace Gardens which featured Christmas lighting and window displays as well as a weekend programme of choirs, brass bands and pipers. External funding was secured for the provision of the lights, alongside a 7m trailer stage and equipment to enable pop-up activity at events sites in future. The organisers of Mela were assisted by City Events and additional funding to move the festival to a larger site near to the beach.



Invest Aberdeen

ACC continues to support work by stakeholders to attract new inward investment to the city through various Strategies and Forums across the region:

Ongoing support of the delivery and rollout of the Regional Investment Tracker, led by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC), which highlights a £16billion investment pipeline to 2033.

We are continuing to support the creation and Implementation of the refreshed Regional Economic Strategy, and we are working with regional partners on the proposed North East Scotland Investment Zone.

ACC also Lead the Regional Inward Investment Forum, which brings together stakeholders from across the region and nationally to deliver on our inward investment objectives, creating a 'Team Aberdeen' approach to enquiries and visits. We work closely with the Scottish Cities Alliance to promote inward investment opportunities in the region, including through representation at Cities Week, the UK's Real Estate and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) and by hosting Joining the Dots event in Aberdeen.

We are also working with Scottish Development International (SDI) to showcase inward investment opportunities in the region and continued ongoing partnership working with Aberdeenshire Council to boost inward investment across the region. The Invest Aberdeen website, materials and social media channels are under continued development to increase engagement.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

Delivery of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) Employability Action Plan continues. This multi-year delivery plan sets out the priorities of the LEP including the key groups of people the partnership aims to target support towards as well as the membership and governance arrangements for the partnership. Activities and interventions delivered this year were aligned with the delivery plan and reporting took place quarterly into Aberdeen Prospers, the Outcome Improvement Group responsible for economy related stretch outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Specific work around developing employment pathways in 2023/24 included an increased level of employer engagement activities, including the delivery of a series of events targeted at employers, with the content focusing each time on the benefits and support available when recruiting people with barriers for example young people, parents, disabled people and people with convictions. An employer recruitment incentive were also awarded to 11 employers this year who employed an individual facing barriers to employment. Working closely with colleagues in Aberdeen City Council's Education Service, the ABZCampus and ABZPipeline is also in development which explores pathways into key sectors for young people still at school.

Focus support towards groups (women, young people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds) that have been disproportionately disadvantaged by the pandemic and cost of living

In 2023/24 48% of participants registered with ABZWorks identified as female, representing almost half of all those supported. Within this group, further specialist interventions have been developed to offer targeted support for women who face additional barriers including parents within the priority families and parents experiencing in-work poverty as a means to tackle child poverty [note that provision for parents is available to parents of any gender, but the majority who engage tend to be women]. Activities have included specific commissioned service, paid work experience in early learning and childcare settings and funding to support lone parents to help with the costs of the transition into work.

Young people also represented a significant proportion of overall participants supported with 33% of those registered with the service aged 16-24. Specific activities aimed at young people included Fit Next, developed for school leavers in mind enabling them to attend 'taster' activities with a variety of training

providers and employers so they could make informed choices about their next steps, a commissioned test and learn project for young people and paid work experience for care experienced young people. A specific test and learn project was also commissioned for people from ethnic minorities and of all those registered this year, 17% identified as having a minority ethnic background.

Learning from the evaluation of the North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF) has been considered when developing interventions to be delivered as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. One example of this is around promoting entrepreneurship, building on the success of a Start-up Accelerator delivered by the Robert Gordon University (RGU), two projects will be starting in year 2024/25 one being delivered by RGU and the second by the University of Aberdeen. Green skills is a further theme that featured in NEERSF and will be built upon through UKSPF projects with green skills activities being commissioned in sustainable energy management, sustainable waste managements, introduction to hydrogen and an introduction to green skills. Digital courses including sector specific IT skills and basic IT skills were also commissioned in 2023/24 and a paid work experience programme within health and social care was delivered to attract people into roles in this sector.

Aberdeen City Council continues to Chair the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) which was developed in alignment with the Scottish Government's framework for LEPs. The LEP membership is made up of key partner organisations that work in the employability and health space and meets monthly to share intelligence and to coordinate plans and resources with the aim of maximising the impact of members' combined efforts. A number of shared events were delivered this year with LEP members working in partnership, including employer engagement sessions, jobs fairs and the annual ABZWorks employability conference. There is a sub-group of the LEP that meets specifically around procurement which jointly scores and agrees on the winning bids for commissioned activities.

Work with the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub (AHH) JV to develop and deliver a skills action

Work continued into 2023/24 mapping the employability and skills ecosystem and this activity concluded with the publication in August of [Council/BP report Hydrogen in Scotland – Skills and Qualifications Gap Analysis](#). The report identified five themes to help meet demand:

- Ensure interventions are truly data-led and respond to real demand for skills
- Continue to invest in community and STEM engagement to inspire people into the sector
- Invest in new pathways that will upskill and reskill people for the hydrogen sector
- Underscore inclusivity in the design of programmes and their outreach efforts
- Harness the existing delivery landscape to create truly integrated responses

The latter part of the year has been focused on moving these aspects forward this has included, for example, STEM engagement with pupils and teachers at Lochside Academy.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS, INCLUDING EMPLOYABILITY BENEFITS

The Community Wealth Building (CWB) Working Group has taken forward key actions from the Aberdeen CWB Action Plan, focused on the short and medium term with the three pillars of: Spending, Workforce and Land and Property. A small employability grants scheme has been delivered, 'ABZWorks Development Fund' which was launched in December 2023, supporting small grass-roots organisations to develop, build on, and deliver employability projects in priority areas, up to the value of £10,000. Since then, there have been two rounds of funding, with nineteen grass-roots organisations funded to take forward creative and innovative projects to support those furthest removed from the labour market who face additional barriers.

The Commercial and Shared Procurement Service are awaiting final review and publication of formal data by Spikes Cavell (which informs reported local spend figure) - but from calculations, the percentage of procurement spend spent on local enterprises is anticipated to be in excess of 35%. The local spend figures

are subject to final review through the Scottish Procurement Information Hub and that the final figure will be reported via the Annual Procurement Report which will be published later this year.

The provisional number of community benefits delivered (captured in Annual Procurement Report yet to be finalised and published) for 2023/24 is 783 benefits - ranging from work experience placements, apprenticeships, community timebank hours and environmental measures. The final figure will be reported via the Annual Procurement Report.

Ongoing support of the delivery of community benefits through major developments such as the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub JVP and City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan. Regular six weekly meetings with contractors ensures monitoring of delivery and promotes participation in activities such as employability projects such as 'Fit Next', through ABZWorks. Working closely with Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO), BP have utilised their WeVolunteer portal to link volunteers within the organisation to volunteering opportunities for third sector and charity groups in Aberdeen. BP and those contractors working on the City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan have engaged with schools, further and higher education providers and provided insights into careers in the energy sector and construction industry.

Since publishing the first Jobs & Skills Plan in April ETZ have supported initiative in regional primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, as well as community-focus activities. A progress report was published in May 2024 and is available on the [ETZ website](#).

The Cloverhill Housing Development in the Bridge of Don is an example of a project within the Capital Programme, which has led to opportunities for community benefit delivery and specifically employability benefits. Bancon Construction have committed to delivering benefits which are aligned to the principles of sustainability, working with Aberdeen City Council and partner organisations such as ACVO and Developing the Young Workforce to ensure these benefits are maximised. Examples of community benefits delivered are; ongoing training and development for all staff (developing the workforce), providing them with opportunities to upskill and gain qualifications, work placements and school engagements. Bancon Construction have also participated in Employability Engagement Events hosted by ABZWorks, on topics such as: 'Employing Displaced People, Refugees and Asylum Seekers' and 'Employing Disabled People.'

Aberdeen City Region Deal projects

- Seedpod remains on track to be fully constructed by end of 2024, with the roof now on and the building watertight.
- Digital 5G – There are currently 3 approved 5G projects, 2 of which are in the City. These were formally approved in early 2024 and are progressing through their procurement phases by both Port of Aberdeen, and Opportunity North East.
- Transport Links to Aberdeen South Harbour – An outline business case has been approved by Joint Committee and procurement underway.

Prepare for and implement, as appropriate, provisions of the Procurement Bill

The UK Government describes the purpose of the Bill as being to reform the United Kingdom's public procurement regime following its exit from the European Union, to create a simpler and more transparent system not based on transposed EU Directives. The Bill will for the most part only apply in Scotland to the procurement activities of reserved bodies.

Any changes proposed to legislation in Scotland will be communicated to the wider public sector through Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPN's), publication of SPPN's is monitored by Commercial & Procurement and changes as required made to internal policy and procedures/communicated out to delegated procurers.

SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE CITY

The Business Gateway continued to deliver support to people seeking to start up and/or grow their businesses. Good links have been developed between the Business Gateway advisers and other council projects, for example the Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme where all enquiries are supported by an adviser in relation to their business idea and plan. Similarly, individuals who contact the employability service considering self-employment are allocated an adviser to assist them in developing their business idea. The Business Gateway Service appointed an adviser to support businesses to build their capacity and capability to tender for public sector opportunities.



The council continues to work with partners across the region as well as national agencies to ensure that the business support activities in the city are fit for purpose and easily accessible.

Aberdeenshire Council made the decision not to extend the contract for the Business Gateway service and bring the service delivery in-house, from 1 April 2024. This will ensure that the Business Gateway resources are delivered fully in line with the aims and objectives of the council.

Business Gateway has a dedicated Community Business Adviser providing targeted support and sessions for clients in priority areas of the city.

With funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and working alongside Aberdeenshire Council we launched a digital business support programme for SMEs (Small and medium sized enterprises) in the city.

Again, with funding from UKSPF, ACC will launch a Business Start-Up Grant Scheme in July 2024, supporting new city-registered businesses from 1 January 2024 with a one-off grant award to meet start-up costs. To ensure new business owners in priority areas are engaged and made aware of the Scheme, officers will engage with Business Gateway's dedicated community officer, ABZ Works Colleagues and Locality Managers.

Build and Strengthen Relationships with the Local Supply Base

Key to delivering progressive procurement to strengthen existing and build new relationships within the local supply chain is a targeted approach to Supplier Development activity for the Council, building upon and maintaining networks, sharing information, seeking input from suppliers to shape requirements for the benefit of the local economy and to understand their views on how we could employ more progressive procurement to build supply chains.

A Supplier Development Action Plan will be prepared annually based on the opportunities identified for Community Wealth Building, the plan will be developed in conjunction with both internal partners i.e., Economic Development and external partners i.e., Scotland Excel/Supplier Development programme. This will include participation and engagement of the Commercial & Procurement team in national events to support supplier awareness of how to do business with the Council (Meet the Buyer Scotland/Meet the Buyer North) and also aligned tender training/bidder days.

Energy Transition Zone

A Masterplan of the Energy Transition Zone site was adopted by the Council's Planning Development Management Committee as Aberdeen Planning Guidance in January 2024. Applications for planning permission are currently being progressed.

Delivery of BP Aberdeen H2 Power Ltd

The Final Investment Decision (FID) was approved by the BP Aberdeen H2Power Ltd board on the 15th July, 2024. Annual Work Programmes and Budget are agreed at JV Board and Shareholder level to deliver agreed community benefit, supply chain development and training and skills outcomes.

Hydrogen Infrastructure

Hydrogen Infrastructure Feasibility study commissioned with funding from the Hytrec2 project and NESTRANS and delivered by Arup. The purpose of the study was to inform ACC, Aberdeenshire Council and NESTRANS of a standardised hydrogen refuelling station concept design which can be replicated across Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, and other areas.

The results of the Study will allow NESTRANS, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to make informed bids for future energy transition and net zero funding opportunities to further develop and establish a network of hydrogen refuelling points across the North East of Scotland in line with the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy and both Council's net zero and energy transition ambitions for the decarbonisation of transport.

To encourage further investment in the city in hydrogen, we supported the delivery of Department of Business & Trade (DBT) Hydrogen High Potential Opportunity document and continued the development of energy transition investment opportunities materials. We are currently, working with SDI on a refreshed Regional Inward Investment Proposition. In addition, we are creating opportunities within Energy Transition through North East Scotland Investment Zone.

The Green Freeport Bid is being transitioned into deliverables as part of the Investment Zone proposal and Investment Plan and the new [Regional Economic Strategy](#) was approved by partners in 2023.

SUPPORT THE CITY TO BECOME A "SMART CITY"

The Full Fibre Infrastructure project is complete. The Duct network extension phase 2 is now complete with Phase 3 underway with completion scheduled in 2025. City Fibre/Vodafone investment continues.

Port of Aberdeen were awarded funding through Aberdeen City Region Deal and are procuring a private 5g network.

Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) awarded funding through Aberdeen City Region Deal and are in procurement phases for a solution to facilitate delivery of agri-tech applications within rural areas.

ONE awarded funding through Aberdeen City Region Deal for 5g pop up network to enable testing of applications in real life environments by companies.

Proposals are in development which consider opportunities for further investment within areas identified in the region as having very low/no coverage. These could come before Joint Committee as early as September 2024.



PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

KEY DRIVERS

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Ensure those experiencing in-work poverty have access to all appropriate benefits
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities
- Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need
- Improving health and reducing inequalities
- Improving education outcomes for care experienced children and young people
- Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including disability, ASN, term time leavers and those from priority neighbourhoods)
- Keeping Young Children Safe
- Improving timely access to support
- Increasing children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach
- Ensuring that children and young people receive accessible information and opportunities to engage and participate in decision making
- Supporting attainment of balance of care where children are able to remain more often at home and or with kin
- Young people receive the right help at the right time to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System
- More people appropriately diverted from Justice System to effective interventions aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending, where appropriate

PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE) HIGHLIGHTS



88.2% of Looked After Young People leaving school and go on to **positive destinations**



455 families being supported by the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Hubs



24% decrease in children identified as having communication difficulties in SEEMIS



94% of ELC settings registered to **provide 1140 hours**



PROGRESS MADE DURING 2023/24

REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

We continue to promote support from money advisors across our schools and in term 4 reissued electronic and hard copies of the financial booklet provided for parents signposting sources of support. Money advisers offer support to parents, carers and families by offering free, confidential and impartial advice on various aspects of their financial situation, such as income & expenditure, debts, benefits, tax credits, grants and other sources of support. They can also help parents to deal with creditors, negotiate payment plans, apply for insolvency options, and access emergency funds or food banks if needed.

We continue to increase uptake of free school meals and are prepared for around 1000 more eligible children across P6 and 7 to benefit from a free school meal. The increase to a universal offer of free school meals for all P6 and P7 pupils has been paused as part of the 24/25 Programme for Government.



All core curriculum charges continue to be removed with the Scottish Government grant passed to schools to support the removal of charges. Schools continue to remove the cost of the school day, offering uniform swap stations and providing foodbanks where there is a need.

Pupil Equity network meetings have been established and well attended by school leaders. These meetings have been seen as key in sharing best practice across the city and improving outcomes for learners impacted by poverty. The equity tracker provides an authority overview of how Pupil Equity funds are being spent and an evaluation of the impact of interventions. This enables an increased level of scrutiny and ensures the greatest impact.

Guidance and professional learning has been offered to all staff to ensure more accurate analysis of data and identification of poverty-related gaps at all levels from class to faculty to whole school. This will continue to be offered next session.

The Children's Services Annual Report was presented to Committee in February 2024 (CFS/24/046). The Report outlined the need to consider how best to deliver family centric approaches to support families facing complex challenges living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1.

There is considerable variation in outcomes at ward level signalling a need to ensure that our approaches reflect the unique context of each community and the complexity of individual families, rather than presume that centrally designed supports will meet needs. This work is being progressed through our developing Family Support Model which has secured funding from Scottish Government as a place based Fairer Futures Partnership.

Development of Family Learning offer in school Associated School Groups

Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding has meant family learning has been made available through each of the 11 Associated School Groups (ASGs), with 1:1 family support being available alongside a wide variety of city-wide, universal courses and activities which are available to all parent/caregivers across Aberdeen. Opportunities are designed to improve knowledge around specific themes, encourage peer connections, reduce isolation, develop skills and confidence as well as provide direct support to families.

Almost all (96% 2023/24 data) of all registered learners share that their confidence levels increase due to their engagement with the service and almost all (96% 2023/24 data) report gaining new knowledge and skills. There is clear evidence that the targeted and inclusive programmes delivered by Family Learning improve life chances and effectively enable parents to develop their parenting skills, helping to enable families to give their child the best start in life.

This resource continues to have a clear remit for early intervention and to target those children, young people and families most at risk of disengaging from education. Data and feedback from schools, children, young people and families indicates that the resource is proving successful in achieving the planned outcomes and is sufficiently agile to be able to respond to emerging needs in a timely manner.

The work of this resource is strongly aligned to the Family Support Model being developed across the local authority.

With partners, deliver support which maximises opportunities and minimise the stigma for children and families living in Aberdeen who have No Recourse to Public Funds

Children's and Adult Protection services, along with other services across the Council, and partner agencies, actively collaborate, and cross-reference knowledge around both the extent and impacts of poverty associated with children in families who have No Recourse to Public Funds.

This work is designed to (a) improve the evidence base around this theme to better understand the social and economic impacts on these families and (b) to refine the effectiveness of responses available to the local authority and its partner organisations.



The focus of this collaboration is directed by, amongst other separate referral pathways schools who will refer to Child Protection Social Work to assess the immediate and interim needs of a family who present as destitute and have NRPF. Similarly Adult Protection Social Work's engagement focus on the assessments of adults who present to the service as experiencing destitution as a result of their NRPF status and is first and foremost driven by the theme of protection.

In the above circumstances, both Child and Adult Social Work services can call upon their respective protective teams to support families to mitigate potential harms arising directly from poverty related to their NRPF status, and secondary to these statutory roles, ensuring children are accessing the services they are entitled to receive (health and education). In addition, teams signpost these families to additional sources of available community support which are most appropriate, and accessible to them.

Children's Social Work are mandated to receive unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people from other parts of the UK. Upon arrival these young people are considered 'looked after' and given they have NRPF, the Council is responsible for ensuring the needs are accounted for while their immigration status is resolved.

Through this approach, Aberdeen City Council seeks to act as a gateway providing immediate and direct support to alleviate harm and ensure vulnerable adults and children are protected. Additionally, these services act as enablers, signposting these families and children to those supports and advisory services delivered by and through the wider range of partners in the city, in order to facilitate young people with access to opportunities that their financial circumstances and status may materially limit.

EARLY YEARS

The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to deliver 1140 hours of funded ELC for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year old children has been fully implemented in the city. One of the overarching aims of this policy is to support more families into employment.

There are currently 53 Local Authority ELC settings and 41 Funded Provider ELC settings. There are also 63 Funded Provider childminders working in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to deliver the funded ELC entitlement, with a range of flexible options, for 3-5 year old and Eligible 2 year old children across the city. A map has been produced which shows a visual of the location of our ELC provision across the city and Associated School Groups (ASGs).

This is a slight decrease on the 1418 places offered last year, this could be the first indication of the predicted drop in demand due to a lowering birthrate. In response the service will pilot a system to allow families to pay to top up their allocation of 1140 in a settings where capacity allows to help determine next steps.

79.5% of all ELC applications over 2023/24 were offered their 1st choice of ELC placement. There remain challenges in recruiting quality ELC staff at all levels and the service is working closely with the employability team to support placements from those coming back into work as well as continuing to deliver successful Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes.

The Early Years Team continue to monitor demand across the city and in individual ASGs. This is in order to meet the needs of families and to achieve best value. We know from parent and carer feedback that a large majority of respondents (79.4%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of ELC providers and models within their local area/Associated Schools Group (ASG); and (75.8%) were able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ ASG.

The full ELC offer across each ASG ensures a good mix of 8am-6pm all year round ELC provision and 9am-3pm term time provision. Our ELC Funded Providers also offer fully flexible funded ELC across the city and can meet the needs of families who require wrap around care and additional hours.

Eligible 2's

The application process for Eligible 2 places has been refined, streamlined and is now online, bringing it into line with the application process for ELC places for 3-5 year olds at Local Authority ELC settings. This has enabled us to better monitor the volume of applications and demand for places.

The Scottish Government has introduced the Data Pipeline project which gives Local Authorities access to data identifying possible eligible families. Aberdeen City Council signed up to this project in 2023 and families in the city have been sent information, via flyer and incorporating a QR code, about the Eligible 2's service and how to apply. We continue to monitor application numbers to gauge the impact this has had. The number of children allocated an Eligible 2's place has increased by 12% from 183 in 2022/23 to 205 in 2023/24. Population projections suggest that we have increased the percentage of eligible population from 31.66% to 38% in the same period.

We also work in partnership with multi-agency partners, for example Health Visitors, to identify Eligible 2 children and we continue to receive a number of applications for discretionary placements which are considered on a case-by-case basis.



Quality Improvement

Overall, there has been an upward trend of improvement in inspection evaluations, with almost all ELC settings improving in at least one Quality Indicator following reinspection.

The Education Service presented an updated ELC Quality Improvement Framework to the Education and Children's Services Committee in June 2023. The service's own self-evaluation had determined that early gains were evident but that some variation remains as the framework is being implemented.

There has been significant collaboration with officers and Head Teachers to work on improvement through a Collaborative Improvement model. Following a three-day visit in November 2023 which involved visits to ELC settings and focus groups, the Collaborative Improvement Team (CIT) recognised the commitment of Local Authority senior leaders to realise high quality ELC provision and endorsed the ambitious aims of the ELC expansion programme believing that the Plan is likely to improve outcomes in the longer term. The establishment of a wider range of roles and development of a clear workforce progression pathway as part of the expansion programme was thought to be particularly impactful. The CIT saw clear evidence of both Support Workers and Modern Apprentices seizing opportunities to further their skills and qualifications in order to secure positions with more responsibility. The team identified that the public health restrictions in place at the time 1140 hours of funded ELC was fully implemented, will have contributed to the variation currently being experienced.

The collaborative improvement process has been exceptionally beneficial to the Education Service. In general terms the team has validated our own self-evaluation and endorsed our long-term ambition. They have helpfully shared national best practice that can now be used to enhance our approaches and these areas will be taken forward with support from the team where beneficial. The team has also provided a helpful reminder to pause and take stock of how far many have come and guided us to start to consider arrangements to support good or very good settings to drive their own on-going journey to excellence. It has also provided a central monitoring role to allow wider team support for individual schools to provide quality teaching and learning.

Provide access to PEEP across all ACC early learning and childcare settings

The Peep offer has been aligned to Quality Framework. Meetings have taken place with the Peep Co-ordinator to look at ways of increasing the Peep offer across the city. The plan includes videoing a current Peep session in a LA setting to share in the fortnightly communications. Links to How good is our Early Learning and Childcare and Quality Framework for Daycare of Children are also being created. 18 Local Authority ELC settings are currently delivering Peep to families. This has nearly doubled since 2022/23.

Work is underway to deliver joint Peep sessions within the Tillydrone Campus. There will be input from two Funded Provider ELC settings, Aberdeen City Library Service and Riverbank School staff.

Bookbug

Bookbug is managed nationally by Scottish Book Trust (SBT) and delivered in Aberdeen by Aberdeen City Libraries (ACL) in every library. The Bookbug programme is measured against the LOIP, Library and Information Service Action Plan, Forward National Strategy and reports regularly to SBT. ACL has worked with partners including the NHS, PEEP, local care homes, early years settings and schools. National initiatives such as Maths Week Scotland and British Science Week were supported in collaboration with CityMoves and TechFest. In 2023/24 the frequency of sessions increased and drop-in sessions were reintroduced to remove barriers to access.



Regular Bookbug session evaluations assess impact, with most respondents strongly agreeing that attending Bookbug sessions benefits their child's development and encourages them to share rhymes and stories at home.

- In 2023/2024, 217 Bookbug sessions were held across community libraries, with 1987 children in attendance
- 29 outreach sessions were held with partner agencies with 329 children in attendance.
- 98 Bookbug sessions/events were held in libraries within the 1 and 2 deciles of SIMD, with 9 outreach sessions held in these areas.
- 1875 Bookbug Baby bags and 1790 Bookbug Toddler bags were gifted by colleagues in the NHS .
- 2256 Bookbug Explorer Bags were delivered to early years settings
- 2214 Primary 1 Bookbug Family Bags were delivered to schools.
- 1051 children aged 0-5 became library members in 2023/24.

In addition, 124 tactile books to support children with ASN were gifted.

RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

A Quality Improvement Framework has been put in place to help drive improvement across our schools. The Framework guided a far more proportionate approach to quality improvement over 2023/24; however, capacity issues impacted on the consistency of application across localities in the primary sector as members of the central team covered vacant head teacher posts. This knowledge triggered a review of the working arrangements and an updated Framework for use over the 2024/25 academic year.

The new framework seeks to broaden the evidence base gathered during school quality assurance visits to help monitor the impact of our work against an agreed Behaviour Plan, and more intensive arrangements for schools yet to evaluate as good or better.

A centrally organised interactive workshop on effective learning and teaching has been used to support Head Teacher engagement events throughout the session. The session exemplified national expectations and clarified the role of the Head Teacher in leading the development of learning, teaching and assessment in our schools.

Our focus on improving learning and teaching is also now a feature of collaborative work across partner Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance. A senior officer (primary Head Teacher) has been appointed to work with leads from other local authorities to develop a learning and teaching toolkit to support staff development in schools. This resource is on track to be published in September 2024.

Staff have delivered the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative's (CYPIC) approach to supporting improvement in writing to 16 schools across ACC, primarily at the P4 stage with 11 of these schools then receiving additional training for their P3 – P7 teachers ensuring the spread and scale of the approach is consistent and of high quality. All staff who have attended the training were more confident in their understanding of the key aspects of the Quality Improvement Journey, using data to inform practice and involving their children in the assessment, feedback and interpreting data process.

The Northern Lights pilot is now complete allowing for the planning of full roll out to all schools providing every child from P6 – S6 with a new device. In addition, wifi networks are being upgraded and there has been a refresh of smart boards to ensure schools have access to the latest technology.

Improving the tracking and monitoring of all learners

The Broad General Education tracker is in place and updated three times per session providing schools with access to all data in a customised report. An agreed tracking system for secondary has been agreed and will be implemented over the current school session.

Programme of professional learning for leaders at all levels

There continues to be a strong interest in professional learning engagement by Aspiring and Early Phase Middle Leaders. Each course teaches a different aspect of leadership. This is followed up by considering how attendees effectively implement to ensure impact on pupil outcomes.

Our most experienced Middle Leaders involved in 'Readiness for Into Headship' programme are demonstrating improving understanding and engage in quality dialogue around leadership themes. A few attendees are giving consideration to building on this by undertaking Into Headship Programme next session.

Two Head Teachers who have recently completed 'Into Headship' shared their top tips and further information about this qualification. At this stage it looks like there will be a strong uptake entering this process for next session.

Over the course of the academic session, 111 live universal sessions were offered to staff across the service, as well as a range of safeguarding training and opportunities to commission bespoke support from our specialist services. The Grassroots (GPLP) programme continued this session delivered by classroom teachers, with programmes focussing on Numeracy, Sensory Stories and Circuits, Understanding ADHD and An Anti-Racist Ethos. Feedback for these sessions remained positive with evaluations highlighting the benefits of practical examples to take back into the classroom and opportunities to work with colleagues across the city.

The book groups run by our Orchard Brae Outreach Teacher were very well received, with requests to continue this next session. Some of the attendees have plans to develop book groups within their own settings following on from this learning opportunity.

There is emerging evidence of the positive impact of involving members of secondary school leadership teams in quality improvement activities beyond their own secondary schools. Widening the quality improvement team members to include a cross section of senior leaders is benefitting the school being visited and the individual team members home school by building a shared understanding of what high quality looks like and building capacity across our schools.

Increasing opportunities for music ensembles within localities and across the city

The Music Service has continued to [evaluate](#) how well they are expanding the provision of music tuition, increasing more equitable access and providing greater opportunities for students to perform individually and in partnership with other groups in the city.

The success of the Big Sing 2023 was built upon further with all P4s again coming together to sing at the Duthie Park. The event was well received by parents and families and plans are already in place to have a bigger and more international event next session. Termly concerts have provided regular opportunities for learners to share with parents. Groups have also performed at each of the face to face head teacher meetings and committees where a music report is being presented. Strong links have been made with the Music School and shared events are helping to promote both services.

Promoting Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic medium has been fully staffed this session with probationers choosing to stay on for session 2024/25. Learners participated in the Mod (the national festival for celebrating Gaelic linguistic and cultural heritage) this session and a link has been made with schools in Ireland to support further developments in the service.

Programme of learning experiences offered to families in partnership with 3rd sector during school holidays

In the city programmes continue to run Easter, Summer and October. Successful and popular sessions are offered by city staff and 3rd sector partners. There is a high level of satisfaction from both learners and their families.

Since summer 2021, the programmes have provided more than 53,000 bookable opportunities, including multiday camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums, galleries and local communities and bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs. More than 17,000 bookable opportunities have been made available since Easter 2023.

The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for one of the most recent programmes (Easter in the City, 2024) was 9.6 out of 10.

Both Countesswells and Greyhope are fully operational with learners and staff enjoying being in the new buildings. Construction has resumed on the new school in Tillydrone with completion planned next session. Feasibility studies are ongoing to inform investment and delivery of the planned future school estate.



CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP

The new equity tracking format was adopted in 2023 and is monitored as part of the Quality Improvement Framework. Evidence can be seen that most schools are becoming confident in ensuring plans demonstrate a clear understanding of context through increased use of data. Increasingly, interventions are time specific and being tracked more regularly with signs of greater confidence to adopt, adapt or abandon if desired progress is not being made.

Youth Workers and Family Learning Workers have a clear remit for early intervention and continue to target children, young people, and families most at risk of disengaging from education. Data is routinely gathered to support rigorous evaluation of the impact of interventions and help inform next steps. We are now looking to align this data set more carefully with our work to develop a Family Support model and will carefully consider how learning can be used to avoid duplication of support. Financial advisors continue to support families ensuring they have access to all benefits they are entitled too.

The tracking of those children and young people who are Looked After and educated in another authority continues to be developed alongside the other local authorities with 3 points in the year when information on exclusions / attendance / Curriculum for Excellence data is requested. The data is used to target resource and review support offered.

Development and implementation of a literacy and numeracy

A Writing Skills Progression focus group has been formed from colleagues across sectors and localities, to work collaboratively on a digital framework to support planning, teaching and assessment of writing skills. The group have looked outwardly to other local authorities and inwards, ensuring consultation with schools across the city on the text types taught in preparation for the forthcoming work planned.

A numeracy focus group is being established to review the current numeracy framework and develop planning, teaching and assessment materials as well as professional learning for staff.

Provision of intelligence led ASN services to better meet demand

ASN and outreach is an agile service which uses data to identify how best to align resource. The Educational Psychology service is undertaking a review of the level of support available in schools to identify best practice approaches to support future plans. The outcome of this review will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in November 2024.

The CIRCLE framework and Angela Morgan's "Support for Learning" Review

All schools have a designated CIRCLE lead who attends network meeting to update on progress within each establishment. The network meets twice termly and head teachers are updated annually on authority progress.

Work continues on the implementation of the 'Support for Learning' review. Training is offered regularly to teaching and support staff and central officers offer drop in session for parents twice termly facilitated by a local parental support group.

Multi agency support provided in partnership with the virtual school to improve outcomes for those on the edge of care

The multi-agency teams (Virtual School, Family Learning, social work and youth work) are embedded in both Northfield and Lochside Academy. A [full evaluation](#) has been undertaken and was presented to the July 2024 Education and Children's Services Committee Edge of Care Pilots to give consideration to a further roll out to the St Machar ASG. Both quantitative and qualitative data provides strong evidence of a positive impact on improving outcomes for both young people and families.

Monitoring of attendance and exclusion levels weekly to secure improvement

Updated guidance was issued to schools and families in April 2024. A new, improved, flow chart is helping ensure a consistent approach is adopted across ACC settings. Quality Improvement visits are used to monitor compliance and to ensure consistency in approach. An updated PowerBI Broad General Education Tracking & Monitoring system provides a platform to monitor attendance easily.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our schools offer a range of pupil voice groups to provide our children and young people an active voice in shaping both their school experience and to inform and support school improvement. These routinely include school councils, eco groups, health and wellbeing groups, digital (champions), etc.

The mental health of our children and young people is improving. All settings continue to participate in the Schools Health and wellbeing Improvement Network ([SHINE](#)) mental wellbeing survey and the ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing survey to support our understanding of the needs of P6/7 and Secondary learners across our settings. This year's surveys had higher completion rates by learners: over 500 for SHINE and almost an additional 2000 for the Physical Health Surveys. The interventions provided and work undertaken

across our settings has led to an improved data picture. Positive improvements were seen in a number of areas compared to the previous two survey returns (March 2022 & November 2022). Of particular interest were the following:

- reduction of pupils reporting low mood and at risk of depression
- improvements in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures mental health difficulties
- increases in reported self-confidence levels and optimism
- improvements in physical health
- improvements in feelings of safety, inclusion, good health, aspects of sleep, and being listened to.

Generally, Aberdeen City outcomes now sit above national comparator data. Two previous areas of concern for Aberdeen, reports of self-harming, and happiness with appearance have both improved this year. The 'Did Not Disclose' gender, and 'Girls' gender groups both showed improvements on previous surveys in these areas.

There are other areas the data directs us to consider further:

- the gap between the Family Affluence Scale Groups (low, medium and high) even though each group is showing an improved position
- how to increase positivity towards school (especially at the transition between primary and secondary stages), although improvements against feelings of pressure in relation to schoolwork, and higher reporting of liking school were reported
- the expected poorer mental health and wellbeing of girls with a focus on our cohort of S4 girls (our S3 group last year) who are continuing to show poorer self-reporting in mental health measures relative to their peers in other stages, and their male counterparts
- increased use of technology and devices including its impact on sleep, and going to bed later
- how to support and encourage secondary pupils to eat breakfast
- continuing work with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to address slight increases in the number of pupils trying of e-cigarettes/vapes and other substances

Youth Work is embedded in primary and secondary schools. A refined learning offer and improved referral process has been developed. The learning offer includes one to one support, support for transition from P7 to S1, SQA-approved youth awards such as Hi5 and Dynamic Youth, break-time drop-ins and Confidence to Cook classes. C2C participants learn how to prepare nutritious meals with a limited budget.

CLD Family Learning's approach and provision supports families with their mental health needs through intensive 1-1 support, group work provision and mental health counselling as well as offering guidance and support to access other services.

We continue to offer counselling services in all our secondary schools and this has been extended to P6 and P7 learners across the city. Our counselling services are now part of the request for assistance process allowing us to better evidence impact alongside other interventions.

Sport Aberdeen

Sport Aberdeen continue to provide activities which are being offered across the city and the work has been extended to include six ELC settings across the city to encourage increased physical activity habits. They also provide a school swimming programme which all P4 learners participated in.

'Fitlike Aberdeen'

The Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team, have continued to offer targeted whole family support to children, young people and families in Aberdeen City since 2019.

Fit Like? have seen a change in the level of need experienced by families over the past year, with parental mental health, poverty needs and child and adolescent emotional and mental health being saturated themes in the requests for assistance. The service continues to evolve to respond to the increasing demand for support and the noted complexity prevalent in families lives. The Fit Like? Family Wellbeing Team offers a variety of different supports to help families with a range of needs, help can extend from advice and guidance, consultation, group work to individualised support delivered to the whole family network. Those accessing the service tell us that it feels like a "bespoke service" and that it is the first-time support has 'felt right'. There is clear evidence that engagement with services helps families to achieve outcomes including:

- parents feeling supported to manage their anxieties and worries,
- feeling listened to and heard,
- strengthened family relationships
- improved child mental health and wellbeing.

'Getting support from the FitLikeHubs was so scary at the start, luckily for me I was given someone who has been absolutely amazing. She's supported me with so much, that I don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for her support. She's literally saved my life, which sounds extreme but when someone is so low and life's so difficult and someone comes in and makes such a big impact on how they support you, it can be life changing. To have someone come in and show you so much respect, not judge you and listen to you has not been something I am used to but [worker] has done all this and showed me that I can trust her. She's not given up on me when I thought I wasn't worthy of any support, she's allowed me the time to feel comfortable to be open and honest to her. I feel I still have lots to work on with [worker] but I am so thankful for how much she taken me on with her advice and support and continues to allow me to move forward.' [Parent]

The Fit Like? team have developed a range of group work programmes for parents/carers/children and families with the areas that they tell us they need help with: Parent Led CBT – helping parents support their anxious children, Distress to Success – helping parents understand and respond to their child's distress behaviour, Stay and Play – giving families the opportunity to come together in a relaxed family friendly environment which offers support and guidance when needed, Girls Group – a rights led group. We are also delighted to be piloting a new group in October 2024 'Helping your Autistic Child'.

Throughout the 2023/2024 period 178 Parents/Carers have been offered our groups and provided invaluable feedback:

'I felt the group covered a lot of what we go through as a family. And how to handle certain situations whether its meltdowns, sleeping, mood swings, hitting. I feel I have learned so much coming to the group and will try what I have learned and hope that it works for my son and family. Thank you so much' [Parent: Distress for Success Group]

'All the information provided was great, great topics, presentation was great as it was so relaxed but professional. The environment felt safe, the ladies made everyone feel welcome. There was also a good few new videos for me that have really stuck with me.' [Parent: Distress to Success]

'Speaking to other people who are in the same position. Knowing I am not alone.' [Parent: Distress to Success]

We have offered LIAM (Lets Introduce Anxiety Management) Groups in schools, successfully engaging with 9 schools reaching up to 90 children throughout 2023/2024. Young people told us:
'I feel I was listened to and able to speak. I feel I have improved a lot.' [Young person attending the LIAM Group]

The Fit Like Hubs in partnership with Children Social Work and Education colleagues have developed a local child protection pathway, to support families where there is escalating need to get the right support from the right service at the right time. This pathway has been further developed with the integration of other Tier 2 commissioned services, allowing services to respond to family's needs in a timely way, preventing overlap and duplication and providing opportunities for effective collaboration. This has allowed for a more co-ordinated, integrated approach to supporting families and minimises the need for families to keep repeating their stories to various professionals.

Our data and evaluation of the Fit Like Hubs has consistently demonstrated that support delivered in a non-stigmatising and trauma informed manner often enables families to feel heard emotionally and their needs deescalated to universal/community-based supports mitigating an escalation into Children's Social Work or CAMHS. In 2023, of a sample of 113 families who moved on from Fit Like help saw 87 (76%) families went on to engage in universal support, 14 families went on to require social work support and 12 families went on to CAMHS.

TRANSITION TO POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

ABZ Campus phase 1 is complete offering 38 additional courses across the schools and partners and phase 2 which includes anytime courses and increases the offer to 54 courses ready to start delivery in August 2024.

Common transition week and plans in place for curricular and pastoral transitions from P7 to S1 Aberdeen City Council Transition Standard has been reviewed by the Learning and Teaching Group and shared with school staff. Revised Transition Guidance for Learners with Additional Support Needs will be shared with school leaders in August 2024.

A numeracy group will be established next session to build on the good work of individual ASGs and ensure consistency across the city. There is a pilot underway to provide employability experience for learners with more complex needs and a working group looking at improving transitions from children's to adults services.

Foundation apprenticeships increased by 50% and there are plans to increase these further next session. There is also planning in place to support ongoing work experience to support learners in achieving a positive destination.

SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

** Care Experienced is the collective term for anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life*

*** Looked After refers to children/young people who are currently 'legally' looked after*

We have continued focus on implementing 'The Promise' with all central staff having participated in the keeping the promise award training. A multi-agency evaluation of progress to deliver on Plan 21 – 24 was submitted to the [Education & Children's Services Committee in November 2023](#) and thereafter to Community Planning Aberdeen. Our assessment demonstrated continuing progress to deliver on the aspirations of The Promise. At the end of Year 2 of the three-year plan 88% of required improvement activity was "well underway" (up from Y1 68%) and that 12% of the required improvement activity was "underway but does not yet appear sufficient" (down from Y1 24%). There were no areas where improvement activity had yet to commence.

Expand digital connection opportunities for care experienced young people in line with peers through local approach and access scheme

Digital Inclusion needs are assessed as part of Pathway planning with care leavers. Pathway planning is undertaken with 100% of those who engage in/with Aftercare support. These include the needs of those who have entered the UK as unaccompanied minors and become looked after.

Actions delivered against this theme include:

WiFi MiFi connection; mobile phone and laptop and iPad devices continue to be purchased with around 33 young people, supported on an Aftercare basis, benefitting. 22 Wi-Fi/MiFi/33 iPad and laptops; 30 mobile phones.

Continuing use of Aberdeen Care Experienced (ACE) Facebook as a communication device; there are 581 followers on ACE Facebook page and 555 followers on Youth Team Facebook page.

146 care experience young people have Mind of My Own (MOMO) accounts; 200 CSW professionals have accounts.

Sign posting young people to free to access and use resources e.g. the data bank, this is being promoted on a case-by-case basis.

The Youth Team as a care leaving team have all completed Circuit Digital Inclusion Training which offers Digital Inclusion Rights Training for professionals. Aligning professional knowledge with the commitments identified in the Promise to care experienced community.

The above has also facilitated access to the National Digital Inclusion network. Hub which we will explore re use re how best to deliver free digital inclusion support to the group eg access to free devices and free data.

The delivery of participatory opportunities for care experienced young people

Continuous participation events

Children's Rights monthly walks are attended by on average 8 young people per walk and with monthly connection group attended by around 12 young people. Thematic group work sessions e.g. Warm Space, are attended by around 5 young people: Supper Club events as above connected group activity, regularly engage around a dozen young people.

Event based participation

Young people attended the summer Picnic in the Park Day, with care leavers, and their children, participating in festive period events; Christmas crafts and baking, Advent and a Christmas Party which was attended by 30 participants.

Personal developmental and advocacy participation

The development of interview skills with and for young people. along with participation in the recruitment process for the candidate into the new post of Participation Lead Officer has directly supported young people to gain insight around pathways/transitions into the world of work.

Brights Spots Research was jointly designed, and delivered with CELCIS and Children's Social Work, connecting with all young people presently looked after and those who qualify for statutory Aftercare. Substantive engagement by our young people with this research was noted with 345 of those looked after completing a Bright Spots survey with an additional 227 responses from those beyond care.

Our care experienced young people are also provided with now extended opportunities for dialogue/ engagement within and across corporate parenting support teams (and between each other) though Focus group and Champions Board meetings, In the digital realm, sign-posting and daily posts of wider events

within the Aberdeen City community through dedicated Facebook channels, and the establishment of the Children's Rights webpage on the Aberdeen Protects site, ensures that our young people are offered critical information, and the opportunity to engage with extended activities within the city.

Mind of My Own App

The Mind of My Own app continues to be utilised with and for care experienced young people in the settings where they are cared for. The uptake, as part of specific child protection investigatory processes, is relatively low but with expansion of the engagement offers noted above this may change in time.

In 2023/24, 46 children have shared their feelings whilst participating as part of Child Protection processes; 22 times for initial child protection meetings.

Contextually, in the past six years, Child Protection stakeholders have noted that there is a significantly lower uptake in use of the app when accessed by young people preparing to attend or after they have attended a meeting in general.

In addressing this trend, there is ongoing workforce development to promote better uptake across Child Protection processes and, with cognisance of the increased utilisation of the app language feature, driven by the growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People (UASYP) in our care, this has been identified as an area for development and focus in 2024/25.

Celebration of Care Day and Care experienced week

Care Day was celebrated in February 2024, incorporating a series of events and digital engagement/information opportunities, including a celebratory event at Westburn Resource Centre. This had the theme of 'participation.' and highlighted the launch of the Bright Spots research programme, (see above) with over 30 young people and their supporters in attendance.

Both Care Day itself, and the Week. were extensively supported and enabled by both Aberdeen City Council, and partner team professionals, with sharing of the lived experiences of our Care Experienced Young people, in the context of policies and interventions applied to support these young people.

Support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People (UASYP) access supports which enables and offers them physical and emotional wellbeing benefits

Presently 52 UASYP are supported as looked after young people or care leavers by Children's Social Work teams.

The extended support framework currently in place, both that delivered directly by Aberdeen City Council, and that provided in partnership with a range of formal/third sector organisations include educational, emotional and practical daily living assistance.

With the establishment of a fixed term, specialist Children's Social Work resource of four professional practitioners/workers, Aberdeen City Council has acted as both a lead service, and enabler to support, and continue to develop, educational provision for those who are in secondary education, and through NESCOL have provided/offered access to language support for these young people through 2nd language short courses attended by 22 participants.

All 52 young people have a combination of care and/or pathway plans in place, reflecting their status as Looked After Young People which places material responsibilities on Aberdeen City Council, and others, as corporate parents. Outreach support is presently provided to more than 20 of these young people. As with all our Care Experienced young people, UASYP have access to the support tools, Forums and Groups which are identified in the section above around participatory opportunities.

Housing needs cultural event promotion and support, along with access to recreational activities (in partnership with Sport Aberdeen) are each supported by an allocated worker resource within Aberdeen City Council.

Additionally, the young people are provided with access to a specific point of contact within Child and Adult Mental Health Services and have participated in/attended Health Assessment clinics arranged by our partner organisations where immunisation updating, and the offer of additional health advice was made available. 30 young people attended this clinic setting at the first event in 2023/24. In terms of sustaining healthy living through accessibility to food stuffs, each of these young people is also provided with access to products from the Westburn foodbank, that includes culturally based preferences.

PREVENT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Preventative whole family support approaches to supporting young people at risk of offending

In the period the Barnardo's led RAFT consortium received 33 referrals from Youth Justice Management Unit (YJMU). Many of these young people were referred on more than one occasion, this was seen as positive in terms of future capacity building with them. 87 under 18s were diverted from prosecution by COPFS in this period. Around 50% of these were referred to RAFT .

LOIP charter activity in 2022 sought to increase the number of children, with particular focus on 16/17-year-olds, who were jointly reported being referred to the reporter.

In 2020/21 61% of the 16/17-year-olds jointly reported were referred to reporter, an increase from only 33% referred in 2016/17. Available data shows that children have continued to be held within the age-appropriate children's hearing system, i.e. for the period May 2023 to April 2024 of the 39 16/17-year-olds jointly reported on 2 were retained by the Procurator Fiscal, a significant improvement.

Workforce development sessions took place with over 60 members of the multi-agency workforce attending awareness raising sessions. High participation indicates that the continued workforce development initiated as part of the charter activity continues to have the desired impact.

There is an agreed communication and information exchange system with JSW partners in place that ensures support is in place for children who are to appear in court. A briefing note for Children Services has been in place for some time and sets out expectations for allocated workers of a child appearing in court. We have adopted and applied the Whole Systems Approach review system for 16- to 21-year-olds who have been remanded or sentenced to custody in YOI. Through discussion, preparations have been put in place for the ending of under 18s in YOI arising from the implementation of this element of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 in Summer 2024.

ENSURE THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN ARE CONSIDERED AND PROTECTED

Initial training has been delivered on the UNCRC and there is considerable evidence of consideration of children's rights in all schools. Schools are providing child friendly policies and plans.

Work continues across all schools to increase learner voice and to embed children's rights across school policy and practice. Consideration is given, and opportunities routinely provided, to ensure that children and young people are provided with appropriate mechanisms to influence decision-making regarding (Education) service design and delivery.

All school improvement plans have evidence of learner voice and all schools produce a child /family friendly version of their plan.

PEOPLE (ADULTS)

KEY DRIVERS

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Ensure those experiencing in-work poverty have access to all appropriate benefits
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation
- Encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach
- Reduce levels of harmful alcohol consumption across the whole population through “making every opportunity count” approaches
- Enhance early intervention and preventative treatment for those at greatest risk of harm from drugs and alcohol
- Increase visibility and support of recovery in our communities
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to make informed decisions about health and lifestyle
- Tackling antisocial behaviour in problem areas with appropriate and effective interventions
- Changing attitudes about domestic abuse in all its forms and ensuring victims receive access to the right support
- Those who are convicted are supported to engage with relevant services and reduce re-offending

PEOPLE (ADULTS) HIGHLIGHTS



90.4% of ACC properties meeting **SHQS**



806 affordable homes delivered in 2023/24



Over **90%** of Adult Learnings supported through our CLD Team reported an **increase in confidence and skills**



75% increase in the number of staff trained to administer Naloxone



Image © Felix Mooneram

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2022/23

HOUSING

Increasing the supply of affordable housing

The Council's new build programme is ongoing. Developments at Wellheads, Auchmill Road, Summerhill, Tillydrone and Kaimhill have been completed and handed over. Craighill has been re-rendered and is due for completion in Summer 2026. Kincorth is due to be re-rendered in summer 2024. Completion dates will be supplied in due course. Development of specialist provision homes at Stoneywood is onsite and Cloverhill development is being handed over in phases.

A review of housing for varying needs is ongoing with Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership, Housing and Bon Accord Care. Work is ongoing to allow Provost Hogg Court to transition to a hybrid model of sheltered housing and very sheltered housing.

A 25% allocation of affordable housing is required as part of the planning process for new developments. These developments will then form part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. Reduction in affordable housing supply grant means there are more developments than funding. In 2023/24, 806 affordable homes were delivered across the city, 8 of which have full wheelchair accessibility. This is the highest number of affordable homes delivered through the affordable housing supply programme.

There continues to be a post that supports Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) to consider their housing options and access suitable housing support. CEYP are given a high priority on the urgent list to ensure they can move in to suitable settled accommodation as quickly as possible. The Housing Support for Care Leavers procedure is in place.

Reduce Homelessness

A new stretch outcome dedicated to reducing homelessness in the city was introduced as part of the LOIP refresh towards the end of 2024. Planning for this started in 23/24 with the creation of the Ending Homelessness in Aberdeen Partnership. This has evolved into the Homelessness Outcome Improvement Group in partnership with Homewards (The Royal Foundation). The stretch outcome has a focus on the prevention of homelessness, with an aim to reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief, non-recurring with a longer-term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.

Housing First continues to operate in the city and has continued to feature in our recent commissioning of an updated Outreach Housing Support Service in the city. Ongoing monitoring of the current contract and plans to support the implementation of a new contract are underway.

The Private Landlord Support Officer has been in post since April 2023, the post continues to support the progression of the following key areas

- Establishing relationships with key stakeholders
- Tenant Support & Advice -raising awareness of tenants' rights in the Private Rented Sector
- Landlord Support and Advice - Providing advice and guidance on tenancy management
- Improving the standard of private rented accommodation
- Assisting with the prevention of homelessness from the Private Rented Sector



There continues to be an officer who works from Grampian Prison, with a focus on sustaining tenancies wherever it is possible to do so for people who are in prison, this group also benefits from a high priority on the urgent list, if they have to terminate their ACC tenancy as it is not possible to sustain, which aims to plan for a secure tenancy being available on their release.

The Housing & Support Officer role continues to focus on supporting the prevention of homelessness as an outcome by ensuring existing tenants are supported to sustain their tenancy either through direct support from their housing & support officer or through support to access the most appropriate commissioned service in the city.

Tenancy sustainment rates have stayed the same between 22/23 and 23/24, whilst post COVID-19 there has been an increase in evictions from council housing due to rent arrears, from 6 to 24 in the same period. The repeat rate of homelessness remains relatively low and has reduced from 22/23 when it was at 44 cases, to 40 cases in 23/24. The sustainment rate for people experiencing homelessness has risen slightly with only 68 households not sustaining for more than 1 year in 23/24 compared with 85 in 22/23. There has however been an increase in people who go from a prevent 1 classification to homeless, which was at 51.5% (1623) in 22/23 increasing to 52.9% (1722) in 23/24.

Youth Homelessness

Nightstop (Community Hosting) is currently operational in the city. This is a different concept, and it has been a challenge to find young people who are accepting of the notion of living with a non-relative for a period of time whilst being supported with the Foyer to consider their housing options. The project is currently due to continue until September 2024.

Supporting people who have settled in temporary accommodation to flip their accommodation to their permanent address

This option continues to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Due to the increased need for temporary accommodation this has had to be a balanced approach to ensure availability of temporary stock. In 23/24 15 tenancies were flipped from temporary accommodation to mainstream, with the tenant remaining in the property to support them to sustain their tenancy.

Supporting people in financial difficulty who have no recourse to public funds

Child and Adult Protection Social Work Service are responsible for assessing families and individual adults who have a NRPF condition attached to their immigration status.

Families/Individuals with NRPF often approach Social Work during crisis situations, marked by destitution and urgent, essential needs which they cannot meet themselves. These individuals may need a safe place to live or have no financial means to meet basic needs

We work collaboratively across the Council (Social Work, Housing, Financial Inclusion Team) and with partners (CFine, Abernecessities and faith groups) to ensure families and adults are supported by those services best placed to do so to mitigate risk and alleviate destitution. Where necessary, we also work with external services, such as the Home Office, Police and/or third sector providers.

Priority Families

The Priority Families Service was recommissioned in 2024 and aims to: *Improve whole family outcomes through the delivery of family intervention support to families affected by complex and multiple issues which impact on their life outcomes.*

Families, resident in Aberdeen City Council tenancies and affected by a range of issues such as anti-social behaviour and low school attendance with adverse life experiences impacting on their ability to achieve successful life outcomes are offered intensive support for up to 12 months. There are 3 key features to the model - intensive and consistent support by a dedicated Practitioner, appropriate to the level of assessed need, small caseloads to ensure Practitioners have the necessary capacity and time to dedicate to families and avoid drift and a persistent, assertive and practical, hands-on approach to sustaining engagement, support and continued progress. Outcomes across a range of domains are measured to ensure progress.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD)

The CLD adult Learning team has supported 505 learners in 2023/24 which equates to 10727 learner hours and 170 learning opportunities to access literacy, IT and ESOL. Over 90% reported an increase in confidence and skills, we also worked with 20 Gypsy Traveller families and Criminal Justice Learners.

The Healthy Minds Team (Part of Community Learning and Development) supports adults in recovery of an enduring mental illness access learning opportunities in the community and the Forensic Unit (Blair) at Cornhill Hospital. Over 23/24 we supported 54 learners in the community (21 males/33 females) and 10 learners from the Blair unit (8 males/2 females). This equates to 844 learner hours. Almost all learners reported an increase in confidence and skills.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Preparations for and a response to the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 including Domestic Abuse Protection Orders

The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act has received Royal assent, but the individual provisions have not yet been brought into force. No timescales have been given for implementation of the legislation at this point in time. Key points of the legislation involve Social Landlords having additional reasons for ending a Scottish secure tenancy when a tenant has been abusive to their partner or ex-partner. The landlord can only seek to end the tenancy if they plan to let the person who has been abused continue to live in the house. The person who has been abused must also wish to continue to live in the house. This will prevent further abuse to families and prevent families from becoming homeless or having to access refuge accommodation.

Services for those experiencing or fleeing domestic abuse

We have recently implemented two additional posts within ACC's Domestic Abuse Team. This allowed for the increase in referrals created through the end of the service currently commissioned by Housing Access and Support to deliver Refuge and Outreach Services for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse from Grampian Women's Aid. Additionally, we have recently recruited a post to liaise between the Domestic Abuse Team, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment and partners, to enable effective communication and allow for the Domestic Abuse Team to be accessed as a specialist service should this be required in addition to the support offered through the Housing Support Services and Financial Inclusion Services. The Liaison Officer will also be required to link with Housing Allocations to enable the appropriate allocation of properties from Council housing stock as a replacement for the refuge properties. The next 12 months will be key for improving collaborative work between Housing and Support Services and the Domestic Abuse Team.

"Safe & Together" project

Funding was received to support the local implementation of the Safe & Together model. This is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help key public sector and third sector professionals to become domestic abuse-informed and promote multi-agency, collaborative responses to working with families experiencing violence and abuse.

Supporting the implementation of Safe & Together locally will directly contribute to priority 3 of Equally Safe; by helping service providers and other professionals to competently identify domestic abuse and respond effectively to women, children and young people experiencing abuse. Specifically, this project will promote local workforce wellbeing, capacity building and development. Ensuring key staff have the training, tools and other resources they need to identify and respond to domestic abuse within families in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of the mother and child, holding the perpetrator to account for their behaviours. 250 staff members (mostly from Children's Social work and Justice Social Work, with some representation from Education and Health) have attended one day Overview training. The Overview sessions gave staff an introduction to the model, suite of tools and interventions designed to help child and family serving systems become domestic abuse informed. 80 staff members from across children and families social work and justice social work have been undertaking the 4 day, more intensive Core training. We have 4 certified in-house trainers who can deliver this training.

The Domestic Abuse policy is fully in place, and has recently been reviewed, with training offered to all Housing and Support staff on the Dynamics of Domestic Abuse.

REDUCING DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE

Multi-agency improvement has made significant strides in increasing engagement with drug services through innovative developments focusing on individual needs, and their family in a focus to reduce harm and save lives. This has included the introduction of:

- Treatment for those at risk: assertive outreach approach with daily crisis intervention/home visits to individuals identified at risk to provide support in their homes and encourage engagement
- Harm reduction: raising awareness of safer drug use practices, sterile injecting equipment to reduce the risk of blood borne infections and sexual health advice
- Communities: raising awareness in the community of risks of drug use; how to respond to an overdose and where support is available;
- Referral pathways: a direct referral pathway between ADA and the custody suite, Police Scotland introduced.
- Whole family/city approach to increasing access to naloxone –reach beyond alcohol and drug services
- Alcohol Brief Intervention training being rolled out in non-clinical settings.

Many children face the traumatic experience of a parent dying from substance use and multi-agency work in the last year has contributed to children's services having amended child protection processes to ensure, that where there was a risk of a child being adversely affected by the potential death of a parent, professionals are required to ensure naloxone is held in the house.

The preventative approach has also been community focused, as we strive to ensure that naloxone is always available when needed, and we have seen a number of community centres in priority neighbourhoods undertake the training and have a publicly available stock of naloxone.

This infrastructure will continue to ensure naloxone is easily available and the number of kits being distributed can be targeted to making every opportunity count to save lives. Example of other new naloxone distributors in the city also include Shelter Scotland and Grampian Housing Association.

We continue to run media campaign to raise awareness of naloxone, how to use it, and how to access it has also been successful. The campaign used radio, bus, and social media platforms to reach a wide audience. The campaign increased the number of people who visited the website, ordered naloxone online, or attended the training sessions. The campaign also addressed the stigma and fear associated with carrying or using naloxone.

Access to support

Multi-agency project work aimed to increase uptake of drug treatment and specifically within Locality Areas by 10% each year and to increase naloxone supply by 10%. The project achieved both aims with a 24% increase in uptake of drug treatment (active clients at Integrated Drug Service (IDS) from 1083 (2019/20) as an average across the year for the number of active clients at IDS to 1340 in 2023/24.

The improvements tested have allowed for barriers such as access/support to get to appointments and engagement to be reduced. Having a clear pathway for people who have had a near fatal overdose has allowed discussion with partners and an assertive approach to encourage engagement with services in our priority neighbourhoods. The indication is that this support is helping people re engage with services.

Between July 2022 and December 2023, 490 individuals overall have been supported, with 65 unique individuals receiving a service through the sharp response service and 425 unique visits being undertaken by the Crisis Response service. In addition, there were 72 referrals from Kittybrewster Custody Suite. From the targeted approach, data has shown increased engagement with ADA Drugs Services by key priority neighbourhoods.

The 10% increase in engagement has been achieved in each postcode, with a 26%, 23%, 42% and 27% increase in 22/23 in AB11, AB16, AB24 and other respectively compared to 20/20-21/23 3-year average. In 2023/24 the project showed sustained improvement with a further 74 new individuals engaged with ADA drug service support from the three priority neighbourhoods: AB11 [12], AB16 [27] and AB24 [35].

There has also been a 34% increase in referrals to Assertive Outreach (AO) in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, which has led, to referrals to the Sharp Response and Crisis Response services.

Through the Crisis Response service, a team is available daily to check in with partners in Housing (ACC), ARI (NHS), Assertive Outreach (AO) team and others to identify those at risk and who are requiring support/ access to treatment. Daily crisis intervention/home visits are then undertaken, enabling rapid assessment and referral to the appropriate service.

Naloxone Access and Training

We have increased the supply of naloxone through non-Drug and Alcohol services, resulting in a 31% increase in naloxone distribution between 2022 and 2023. Aberdeen City Council has developed a self-sustaining training and resource naloxone model which can be used as a template for other organisations/ groups. The training takes a “trauma” lens to substance use which is an important factor in reducing the stigma many substance users experience in services and communities and sets many of their challenges in the context of potential adverse childhood and adult experiences. This approach also recognises that many of our staff are also community members and may also have friends or family members experiencing harms from substance use.

To date 350 staff within ACC have been trained and 9 service points stocking naloxone (community centres, library, community justice settings, children’s services settings). As well as training individual staff an approach has been taken to train up whole departments. This has included housing and homelessness services, justice staff and library staff. Local Elected members have undertaken the naloxone training and participated in efforts to raise public awareness.

Plans are in place to continue to spread the use of naloxone with all our libraries (apart from 2) soon to be stocking to distribute naloxone and to train volunteers in all our Warm Spaces. Upcoming naloxone distributors in the city also include Langstane Housing Association and Instant Neighbour.



Image © Felix Mooneram

PLACE

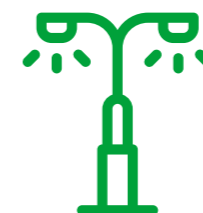
KEY DRIVERS

- Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision & Route-map
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to make informed decisions about health and lifestyle
- Encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach
- Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, wellbeing and confidence
- Increasing the diversity, quality and use of the Aberdeen's green spaces by facilitating community participation in them to restore nature and increase people's satisfaction, health, and wellbeing
- Increasing the area of public, private and community land managed for nature, in recognition of the nature crisis and in alignment with global and national ambitions to protect 30% of land and 30% of water by 2030 (30-30-30)
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation
- Contributing to the delivery of Aberdeen Adapts by developing a bottom-up approach to community resilience to encourage greater ownership and independent action towards understanding communities' risks from climate change and adapting to them
- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty



Image © Felix Mooneram

PLACE HIGHLIGHTS



60% reduction in electricity and carbon emissions due to the installation of ultra efficient LED lanterns across the city



8.6% reduction in NO2 concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) across the city



An estimated **20% reduction** in annual electricity consumption at Marischal College due to the **LED lighting project**

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Reducing emissions

A city-wide Mobility Strategy was published in November 2022, as part of a suite of enabling strategies launched alongside the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap. The Mobility Strategy was developed by NESTRANS with support from Aberdeen City Council and sets key outcomes, strategic objectives and measures to enable a transition towards a more sustainable transport network. Ongoing work on a new Local Transport Strategy supports the Mobility Strategy and will allow for it to be refreshed in due course.

In partnership with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council, work has commenced on identifying an aspirational regional active travel network, with public and stakeholder consultation taking place in summer 2024. It is hoped that the network will be finalised in late 2024, with the projects identified developed into a prioritised list for the Council and partners to progress to feasibility, design and delivery stages, as resources allow.

Bikeability Training continues to be delivered in Aberdeen City Schools by Adventure Aberdeen and by Sustrans I Bike Officers with external funding. In addition to Bikeability Level 2 taking place, a need was identified by the ACC TSAP team to offer Bikeability Level 1 to some children who did not yet have the necessary cycling skills to be able to undertake Level 2. External Funding for this was sought in 2023/24 which was supplied by Adventure Aberdeen and funding has been sought for 2024/25.

Engagement on the key projects has continued as progress on the city centre and beach masterplan moves into delivery.

The Fleet Replacement Programme continues to consider carbon friendly alternatives where possible. This is currently negatively impacted by insufficient EV infrastructure and supply of hydrogen.

The installation of ultra efficient led lanterns now being used throughout the city have seen a 60% reduction in electricity consumption and carbon emissions (4348 down to 2091) tCO2e. All lighting now on central management system (CMS) which enables monitoring of onsite equipment reducing the number of site visits required by engineers and adaptively control the city's lighting.

The Joint Procurement Service, covering Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Highland Councils have been leading on a project which will see all three Councils, plus Moray Council, work together to improve their public electric vehicle charging offering in the north of Scotland. A business case was developed; to look at how the Councils could jointly procure a partner to work with them, both to manage and to grow the EV charging infrastructure on Council land for both fleet and public to use. Part of this looked at the opportunities for growth and the likely investment that would be required from all parties. Off the back of this, a funding application was made to Transport Scotland for £6.9M to cover all Council areas and was successfully received in January 2024. This has enabled the joint procurement service to launch the procurement exercise to market in 2024/25. It is anticipated that a 15-20 year contract will be offered, depending on the responses received and a partner is expected to be in place by April 2025. The Council also continues to encourage other parties to install publicly-available EV charge points on their own land and has been pleased to see an uptake from supermarkets, leisure destinations, shopping centres and petrol filling stations in doing this.

Meantime, the Council continues to use its own funds, from the Non-Housing Capital Plan, to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure. New units have been installed and powered up at Virginia Street and Summer Street car parks (public) and Mastrick Road and Duthie Park (Fleet) in 2023/24. More units are being installed during the 2024/25 financial year and will be reported on in the next update.

Phase 1 of the South College Street improvements, and associated city centre bus priority measures (both funded via the Bus Partnership Fund), were delivered in autumn 2023. Work is ongoing to identify, design and deliver further improvements on key corridors to and from the city centre via the individual corridor studies and through the development of Aberdeen Rapid Transit. This work is now being funded through the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Bus priority measures on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street were implemented in autumn 2023, via Experimental Traffic Order. This also included traffic management measures on Union Terrace and Schoolhill. Construction of Union Street Central is now underway.



NATURAL ECONOMY

Open Spaces

79% of respondents in the Aberdeen Open Space Audit: 2024 Public Survey were satisfied, fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of Aberdeen's greenspace and open space areas. Note this question formed part of a stand-alone survey as part of the Aberdeen Open Space Audit: 2024. Respondents in the Aberdeen City Voice: 46th Survey reported being satisfied or fairly satisfied with the quality of green/open spaces (66.9% and 68% respectively)

Blue/Green Infrastructure

City Scale Trial Project delivered through the SEPA and Scottish Water's agreement. ACC hosted the agreement trial to strategically review improvements to Aberdeen's drainage systems. A report is close to completion and may be submitted to Council to seek support to continue to work towards:

- Managing rainwater and wastewater drainage more sustainably.
- Investing wisely to protect the water environment to minimise energy and resource use and maximise social and economic benefits.

Increasing Nature Areas

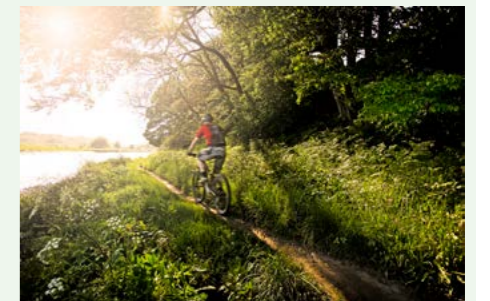
The Den Burn Restoration project has completed concept design and is now looking for funding to complete detailed design and construction.

Aberdeen B-Lines is working to restore 20 hectares of council owned land for pollinating insects by restoring wildflower meadows and grassland habitats. The project is focused along the River Don and River Dee corridors and along the coast.

Community Involvement

A Citywide Nature Awareness Campaign will be launched in 2024 to address LOIP Project Improvement Aim 15.3 that 25% of people report that they understand the importance of nature on both their neighbourhood and individual wellbeing by 2026. The campaign was approved at the Natural Environment & Transport (NZET) Committee on 11th June 2024.

The Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge (launched November 2022) continued to be promoted to organisations and citizens across the city. There are over 100 signatories to date, 75 of which are individuals or households.



The Aberdeen Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) pilot was recently launched with NESCAN (North East Scotland Climate Action Network). The purpose of this fund is to empower communities to take positive action in the places and on things that matter to them, with a focus on communities making environmental improvements, improving biodiversity and tackling climate change. Options to further expand the fund in 2024/25 are being explored.

Protect the City's natural environment

A [property level flood protection grant](#) remains in place. The Council runs a 50% funded grant scheme to assist protecting property from flooding. The grant is for private residences and commercial properties.

Where there is surface water flood risk, the status of priority hakes and gullies continue to be checked so these can be cleared if necessary.

Enabling prompt response to flood alerts, the Council continues to operate a Duty Flood Officer rota, checking SEPA water Levels for the Rivers Dee and Don, ACC water levels for Den Burn and Culter Burn and monitoring coastal tide levels. Monthly visual inspections take place for any defect or issues with the rock armour, seawall structures, including ramps and steps and condition of timber groynes. Beach levels are also monitored on a bi-weekly basis, these can vary naturally along the Aberdeen coastal front, low sand levels present a risk to the stability of the seawall and a risk to the public access and safety.

Flood studies are ongoing in high priority flood risk areas.

Water level gauges have been installed in critical locations all over Aberdeen which give a warning for potential flood risk, allow us to monitor potential debris built up at the trash screens and use data for flood studies.

A CCTV camera has been fitted to monitor water levels at Maryculter Bridge on the River Dee and more are planned for other critical locations where remote visualisation with assist prioritisation of resources during a flood event.

Enhancement of Green infrastructure is ongoing through the application of relevant Aberdeen Local Development Plan and NPF4 policies. Also, through the City Centre and Beach Masterplan projects.

WASTE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Minimise the levels of waste

Following three online stakeholder workshops carried out in March 2023 in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland, an output report was published in May 2023 summarising the output of this series. The report is available on the Net Zero Aberdeen website and includes output from facilitated discussions on the city-wide approach to a circular economy, and further opportunities, as part of the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Circular Economy Strategy.

Reduce carbon emissions from waste

Construction of the Ness Energy from Waste Facility (EFW) was completed in December 2023 and a formal opening event was held in April 2024. The facility is now treating residual waste from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils. Electricity is generated by the facility and being exported to the national grid. Work is ongoing to connect the EFW to the Torry Heat Network and this is expected imminently.

Actions through the Green Champion Network to promote and increase reuse and recycling of the Council's internal waste included a Repair What You Wear series to support learning and development of core mending skills. In addition, a learning workshop for Champions took place on reusable period products, covering the impacts of plastic products on the planet and the work by colleagues to distribute products across the city. Further actions carried out by the Champions included workplace growing, food waste champions and litter picks. Work by Archives, Galleries and Museums included reducing coffee waste and continued recycling of wood waste from crates for local growing initiatives such as the community garden in Seaton. A Libraries Service Green Week was held in October 2023 with activities focused on repair and growing. Tasks relating to the environment and waste management were added to the Council's Premises Responsible Person procedure.

ENERGY SUPPLY

Support growth and development of decarbonised energy supplies

A hydrogen infrastructure feasibility study was completed, and the outputs of the study were used as the basis for a proposal to the Clean H2 Partnership, Horizon Europe fund, to establish an H2 Valley in the North East of Scotland focused on stimulating demand for H2 in relation to mobility (vehicles, maritime and trains), agriculture and decarbonising whisky distilleries. The decision on the success of us securing funds will be made in late 2024.

Aberdeen City Council currently works with Scottish Enterprise, ETZ Ltd and AREG to support potential supply chain companies based in Aberdeen to recognise and develop their capabilities to benefit from the major investment that is happening in respect of ScotWind.

There is ongoing discussion with Aberdeen Heat & Power and Scottish Government for the preparation of the Licensing and Consenting under Heat Networks (Scotland) Act.

Due to Scottish Government financial constraints the Green Growth Accelerator programme has been suspended. When it comes back into operation the Council will re-engage with the Scottish Government.

Reduce fuel poverty

Phase 1 of Torry Heat Network is complete, and Phase 2 is under construction, it is anticipated that the low carbon heat from Energy from Waste will contribute towards decarbonisation of heat throughout the city heat network. As part of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act, the heat consumption will be metered, and heat charges will be monitored.

The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) priority areas includes fuel poverty data and identifying energy efficiency improvements which can potentially mitigate fuel poverty.

Continuous engagement with NHS, SCARF and other partners around providing support wherever its needed and assisting in mitigating fuel poverty.

Marischal College LED lighting project now complete with an estimated 20% reduction in annual electricity consumption for the building.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING

The preceding sections of this report provide a both narrative and quantitative review of the commitments set out within the Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan 2023/24. Supplemental to this review, this section provides an overview of certain key performance indicators and directs readers to detailed benchmarked performance information comparing the performance of council services over time and in relation to Scotland’s other local authorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARK FRAMEWORK (LGBF)

The LGBF is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support understanding of why variations in cost and performance are occurring between similar councils, and through this understanding act as a catalyst for improving services, targeting resources to areas of greatest impact and enhancing public accountability.

The LGBF helps compare key council services against a suite of efficiency, output and outcome indicators that cover all areas of local government activity.

All of Aberdeen City Council’s data outputs for these LGBF measures can be accessed through the link: [Council Delivery Plan Key Measures](#) The LGBF applies the standards for statistical rigour set out in the three pillars of the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice – trustworthiness, quality, and value. One impact of this is that data can take some time to be analysed and released for all 32 local authorities. The data that follows is, therefore, for the year 2022/23.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL BENCHMARKED PERFORMANCE

The tables below relate to the ranking for Aberdeen City Council’s performance relative to all of Scotland’s local authorities i.e. position out of 32. Table 1 below showing that the Council had almost the same number of measures ranked in the top half as in the bottom half. It also shows that this reflects an improvement on the previous year. There are many reasons why the relative performance of councils might differ including different demographics and legitimately different priorities and choices on the use of resources.

Table 1

	Indicator Outcomes by Quartile Position			
	2022-23	% of total	2021-22	% of total
Indicator Outcomes in Quartile 1 (1st to 8th)	18	19.7%	17	18.7%
Indicator Outcomes in Quartile 2 (9th to 16th)	27	29.7%	22	24.2%
Indicator Outcomes in Quartile 3 (17th to 24th)	29	31.8%	31	34.1%
Indicator Outcomes in Quartile 4 (25th to 32nd)	17	18.7%	21	23.1%

Table 2 below shows that the Council’s relative ranking improved for almost twice as many indicators as it declined.

Table 2

	Improvement by Quartile Standing			
	2022-23	% of total	2021-22	% of total
No. of Indicators Improving by Quartile Standing	20	21.9%	11	12.1%
No. of Indicators Unchanged by Quartile Standing	60	65.9%	63	69.2%
No. of Indicators Deteriorating by Quartile Standing	11	12.1%	17	18.7%
Total Number of Indicators	91	100.0%	91	100.0%

Finally, Table 3 compares performance against each LGBF indicator to the target agreed by the Council and expressed in a Red, Amber, Green “traffic light” system, where green represents that the target was met, amber that the target was nearly met and within an agreed threshold, and red that the target was missed. Overall performance in 2022/23 was almost identical as in the previous year with just over two thirds of LGBF indicators holding green status against the agreed target.

Table 3

	Performance Data Traffic Light – Value based			
	2022-23	% of total	2021-22	% of total
Green	61	67.1%	61	67.1%
Amber	18	19.7%	20	21.9%
Red	12	13.1%	10	10.9%

The graphic below provides a visual representation of improvement against the full Local Government Benchmarking suite of Performance Indicators on the base year for each of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

This suggests that Aberdeen City’s general improvement performance is in line with the national median over time and that, where performance deterioration is evident, these trends largely track those same measures where, at a national level, a decline in performance can also be observed.



Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework Benchmarking Overview Report 2024

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COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 nd October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	North East Population Health Alliance: End of Year One Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/280
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Martin Murchie
REPORT AUTHOR	Martin Murchie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present a progress report after the first year of operation of the North East Population Health Alliance (NEPHA).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Council:-

- i. note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report; and
- ii. agree to instruct a progress report on the second year of the operation of the strategic partnership agreement.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Public sector leaders in the North East made a collective commitment to focus on population health in a bid to reverse current trends (stalling life expectancy and widening levels of inequality). The North East Population Health Alliance and within was formed to facilitate public health learning across existing partnership arrangements to explore shared challenges, test evidence based solutions and implement what works at scale and pace through respective structures and systems.

3.2 A strategic partnership agreement was prepared in 2023 to formalise this collaboration, setting out the parameters of engagement between the nine North East partners alongside Public Health Scotland.

3.3 At its meeting of 23 August 2023, the Council agreed that Aberdeen City Council be a signatory to the strategic partnership agreement and requested the Chief Executive to provide Council with an annual progress report on the strategic partnership agreement.

3.4 The following high level themes were agreed for focus in this first year:

- i. Develop a learning system that explores the challenges faced by the North East of Scotland, tests solutions, and implements what works at scale and pace.
- ii. Form collective knowledge, data, and evidence to shape more powerful collective conversations and action to achieve the vision of thriving communities living fulfilled lives.
- iii. Developing common data governance and system models to enable findable, accessible, interoperability and re-useable data to support research, policy development and operational delivery such as Persons At Risk Database (PARD) and local, use of common identifiers, including CHI.
- iv. Collaboration on the commissioning and conduct of research on the wider determinants of health across the north east and the application of knowledge to practice locally and nationally.
- v. Development of a baseline of prevention activity within the region with a view to establishing some targets for growth in activity.
- vi. Child poverty, the drugs mission and the eradication of homelessness to appear in a detailed workplan given the commitment is established at a national and local level and therefore the Alliance can maximise the tripartite collaboration on the achievement of these commitments.

3.5 Assessment

3.5.1 Activity in this first year has focussed on developing a learning system to facilitate collective knowledge through shared data and evidence. Appendix 1 summarises the key areas of work progressed and how they align to the strategic partnership agreement high level themes (SPA HLTs).

3.5.2 At their June 2024 meeting, NEPHA members reflected on the Strategic Partnership Agreement, Public Health Scotland's involvement in the Alliance to date and, more widely, NEPHA's progress in relation to joint learning and action for population health improvement. It was generally felt that the first 12 months had been a developmental year, the potential to deliver real value through the Alliance was acknowledged with it still to be fully realised. There was a sense that greater progress on the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) priorities / themes was required, with prioritisation needed to deliver outcomes. It was agreed to support further reflection through a series of interviews within individual members.

3.5.3 A series of individual conversations have been scheduled with NEPHA members to understand the expectations of working together and steps required to collectively deliver improvements. Further discussions are planned within the NEPHA on the insights gathered from these conversations.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising out of this report.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *Taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic	No significant strategic risks	N/A	L	Yes
Compliance	No significant legal risks.	N/A	L	Yes
Operational	None	N/A	N/A	NA
Financial	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputational	No significant reputational risks.	N/A	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None	NA	NA	NA

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024-25</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement	The aims of the NEPHA overlap with various commitments contained within the Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Plan April 2024 Refresh</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The aims of the NEPHA support delivery against each of the Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The aims of the NEPHA support delivery against each of the Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes

Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The aims of the NEPHA support delivery against each of the Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes
Regional and City Strategies	The aims of the NEPHA closely align to regional and City strategies including National Improvement Framework for Education; Regional Economic Strategy, Local and Regional Transport Strategies and the Regional Skills Strategy, along with Local and Strategic Development Plans.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It was confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, on 2 nd September 2024, that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required for this report
Data Protection Impact Assessment	A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required for this report.
Other	No additional impact assessments have been completed for this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress Made in Relation to the Strategic Partnership Agreement

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1 Progress Made in Relation to the Strategic Partnership Agreement

Developing a Learning System and Test Solutions (aligned to SPA HLT 1)

NEPHA has been exploring the Human Learning Systems approach and how this may be used to improve outcomes for people. It challenges thinking about public service and is based on the belief that the role of public services is to support human flourishing rather than to improve performance for organisations. It embraces complexity and suggests ways to work effectively within it. Over the past year the NEPHA have combined theory-based presentations with practical experiments – a ‘learning while doing’ approach. Exploratory learning events have involved NEPHA members including colleagues from wider public and voluntary sector, facilitated by Public Health Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. With the focus on learning within organisations and partnerships, the NEPHA is also learning together with national agencies to sustain improvement at all levels of the system.

The main practical experiment underway is in substance use where reducing harm is complex and enduring, and has been a long-standing area of concern for the NEPHA. A workshop in Torry held in June 24 was attended by a range of stakeholders from across the system - all keen to share their experiences and learning about naloxone kit distribution and how uptake can be increased where it is low and harms are high. Facilitated by PHS and HIS, this was the first ‘learning cycles’ where many insights were shared. Planning is underway for the next cycles which will extend to people with lived and living experience of substance use harm. Updates and insights will be provided as this progresses.

Conversations are underway with a range of partners who are keen to utilise the learning from the human learning system approach for example in the areas of child poverty, family support services and schools. NEPHA will seek to support sharing the learning of adopting this approach with the support of national colleagues.

Community appointment days is a new approach to providing care that has been tested in other parts of the UK. With a focus on the individual, this human centred approach will experiment with different ways to improve health, care and wellbeing. The NEPHA aim to ‘experiment’ with this, beginning with musculoskeletal care, working with Moray Health and Social Care Partnership in September 24.

Partners are beginning to look at human centred approaches for people who are delayed in hospital. The learning cycles are just evolving and it is very early days, but this is a good example of addressing a complex situation in partnership.

In summary, there is a lot happening in this space. Experiments, learning and improvement will all take time but the lessons and evidence from elsewhere is that impact can be significant.

North-East Health Inequalities Atlas (aligned to SPA HLT3)

Building knowledge and evidence to inform collective action is central to NEPHA’s aims. This requires an in-depth understanding of our communities and the needs of disadvantaged groups including how inequalities have emerged and anticipation

of future trends. Whilst there is a range of ongoing work to improve data sharing, this could be better coordinated and resourced. Getting 'smarter' around data is fundamental to achieving improvements across the North East. A detailed 'atlas of health inequalities' drawing on the collective data assets of partners is being developed. A North East Portal is underway and a prototype regional geographical reporting system using PowerBi was built using datazone and Intermediate datazone data for all 3 LA areas.

Prototype regional reporting of data and mapping at various geographic levels was demonstrated at the NEPHA in March 2024. Since then the reporting format has been expanded to capture and visualize the data released from the 2022 Census, again across the Region. Census data is being released in phases. The reporting currently includes Population; Age; Sex; Households; Ethnicity; Religion; Sexual Orientation; Trans History; and BSL use. NRS have scheduled further releases as follows:

- Housing, 22 August 2024
- Education, labour market and travel to work, September 2024
- Health, disability and unpaid care, September 2024

The data will allow us to create a solid foundation for a health inequality atlas.

Officers from each of the NE local authorities and NHS Grampian have met to establish a permanent local data analytics community and Terms of Reference for this group have been agreed. The development of a Health Inequalities Atlas is part of their planned work programme and further work will be undertaken to set out timelines for delivery.

Exploring Substance Use in the North East (aligned to SPA HLT 2,4,6)

One of first areas of work NEPHA commissioned was focussed on stigma associated with substance use. Two multi-agency regional workshops were hosted. The first was a stakeholder's workshop exploring substance use using the Kings Fund 'four pillar' approach. Addressing stigma was identified as the focus for future activity. A second workshop in June 2023 concentrated on capturing the lessons and truths of the lived experiences of those affected by substance use – in particular their experiences of specialist services as well as the health and social care environment as a whole and including wider determinants of health and wellbeing.

A 'Charter of Rights' setting out the rights people can expect when accessing services in the North East of Scotland was the main recommendation for action. A regional short life working group led by Pam Miliken, involving the three ADPs has been progressing this.

In 23 March 2024 a 'Grampian Charter of Rights' Workshop was held with key representatives from each ADP, with people with lived experience, members of the NEPHA and the National Collaborative. Approximately 47 people attended the workshop, valuable time was spent in the morning discussing the importance of a Grampian Charter of Rights and listening to people with lived experience on their views on what was important to be included within the local charter. Two key questions were considered:

- 'What rights do you believe individuals struggling with substance use should have within our community?'
- 'Measures implemented to prevent discrimination against individuals with substance use in employment, house, healthcare etc?'

People articulated the need to be seen and heard, to see stigma disappear and to be treated as humans. Services should be located near to where people live and able to address multiple needs, across all aspects of life e.g. finding a safe place to live, to access food, gain employment, manage chronic conditions, kinship, address mental health and wellbeing or just taking the time to listen. Looking past the symptoms of substance use and better understand the cause(s) is important, as is trauma informed staff, not having to repeat the same story, knowing how and where to get help and recognising the struggle with both professional and self-stigma.

Jacqui Stevenson from the National Collaborative also presented the proposed National Charter of Rights, welcoming feedback from workshop attendees as part of the national engagement on the proposed National Charter.

On 11 June 2024 a further meeting was hosted to progress next steps for the Grampian Charter of Rights. A survey was developed to engage those who attended the workshop in March to drill down further into what must be included within a Grampian Charter of Rights. Responses to the survey have now been received from those with lived experience and service providers.

During the Grampian Charter of Rights development phase, the National Benchmarking Report on the Implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards was published (18 July 2024). MAT refers to the use of medication alongside psychological and social support in the treatment of people who are experiencing issues with their drug use. These new MAT Standards came into force in April 2022.

It is envisaged that the National Charter of Rights will be embedded within the MAT Standards and form part of the annual performance reporting. This proposal will add some authority to the National Charter of Rights. Therefore, a decision is required as to how a Grampian Charter of Rights aligns with the National Charter of Rights and provides additional qualitative evidence from a local perspective.

In September 24, the proposed Grampian Charter of Rights will be presented for discussion and shared with those with lived experience to agree and sign-off. Once there is agreement on the Grampian Charter of Rights these will be presented to the NEPHA (North East Population Health Alliance) in December 2024 for further endorsement.

Place and Wellbeing (aligned to SPA HLT 2,4,6)

A strong sense of 'place' is a foundation for health and wellbeing, in particular supporting deprived communities. This has been recognised in each of the 3 Grampian Community Planning Local Outcome Improvement Plans. To build further on this sense of 'place to improve health' NEPHA sponsored activity in the form of two symposiums to build strategic understanding across the North East, to

share ideas and best practice. The second event held in November 23, with 100 participants from third sector organisations, local authorities, NHS, academia and Public Health Scotland, focussed on nature-based activities to improve health and the environment. Participants valued having the visible presence of local and national leaders not just as demonstration of support, but also to hear the challenges and possibilities for change from a grassroots perspective.

The symposiums have increased networking, helped build relationships and inspire action. One of the developments from the symposiums has been the North East Place and Wellbeing Network. It is an informal network that meets every quarter with approximately 70 members registered from across the North East. The Network has focussed on two key priorities - Social Prescribing and connection to nature/greenspace, particularly focusing on children and young people.

Social prescribing has the potential to change the way the health service interacts with our communities, de-medicalising issues which are social, economic, environmental and cultural. To shift power out of the clinic and into the community. There are currently different models of Social Prescribing across Grampian. The Place and Wellbeing Network has been investigating the possibility of a consistent approach to Social Prescribing which could apply across the whole of the North East. This seeks to take Social Prescribing beyond primary care to incorporate secondary care and other areas of the health system. There is a wealth of activity and experience to learn from and build upon, identifying aspects which could be applied universally.

A paper compiled by a Network working group to fully understand the current national and local landscape around social prescribing was shared widely across colleagues and partners in the North East as well as national stakeholders. The feedback acknowledged and confirmed that there were many variations of both formal and informal social prescribing taking place. The Network is now proposing to focus on four universal themes:

- Support with Information Governance Solutions
- Campaign for changes at national level for a Single Directory of Services
- Development of a North East Social Prescribing Awareness Campaign
- Evaluation and Research on different approaches of Social Prescribing

The Network is also looking at ways for young people to engage and connect with nature and greenspace. A literature review was carried out to pull together evidence around the benefits for children and younger people accessing nature and green space. There is a large and growing body of evidence that suggests that more time spent in nature and a richer connection with nature as a child have significant benefits for health and wellbeing of both people and planet. The evidence highlights there is a “Teenage Dip” in nature connection. Younger children demonstrate high connection with nature, but this drops in the teenage years.

The Network action group agreed to gain an understanding and map current service provision / activities in the North East for young people to connect with nature. The Place and Wellbeing Network is planning to support and raise the profile of existing projects as opposed to developing something new.

There are currently no future plans to deliver another symposium due to financial constraints. However, the North East Place and Wellbeing Network is currently exploring becoming a constituted body and the development of a digital platform for partners to network and share information about 'Place' pieces of work.

Working Together for Health Improvement - Cost of Living
(aligned to SPA HLT 2,4,5,6)

In 2023 the Alliance agreed to utilise the Director of Public Health Annual Report as a framework to engage with partners to identify the areas where we can work together to improve population health, reduce health inequalities and further develop and strengthen our population health system. A joint planning steering group was established with cross-system representation to ensure this engagement work met the requirements of all partners and built on what was already in place. It was agreed to focus specifically on the rising cost of living threat to identify what is working well (to enable us to share learning), identify any gaps in our response and the opportunities to work together for greater action.

A policy and practice briefing was developed by the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaborative providing the evidence base. This was used to guide a series of workshops in summer 2023 with approximately 100 representatives from a wide range of organisations including health, education, third sector, academic, sport & leisure and social care. The outputs were then considered by North East community planning partners at a workshop in October 23. Five areas for improvement emerged, and a public health system leadership deep dive was held in June 24 to explore these areas with a specific focus on data and sharing good practice, next steps are outlined below:

Focus Required	Activity Being Taken
Develop opportunities to share good practice	Child Poverty Community of Practice – currently exploring further opportunities to share practice in conjunction with outputs from recent child poverty deep dive at Public Health System Leadership Group.
Maximise Anchor Institution collaborations to address issues such as physical space, volunteering	Aberdeen City Council has led the establishment of the NE Anchors Group which has met 3 times. Representatives from partner organisations have been working on respective community wealth building and anchor plans and the NE Anchor group will use these plans and the output of the cost of living work to identify areas for collaboration. The use of physical space is also included as an action within NHS Grampian's anchor strategic plan and will be progressed through the land and assets pillar.
Data sharing	A PHSLG workshop is scheduled in Sept focussing on developing a pan Grampian approach to Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, this will include data sharing with input on the NE Health Inequalities Atlas
Support population health needs assessments to enable targeted local activities	As above

<p>Support evaluation of local programmes</p>	<p>An evaluation strategy is in early stages of development, this will direct how public health resources/ expertise support evaluation for population health across the local system. Having a shared evaluation framework will support consistency and build evaluation into practice through L&D</p>
<p>A purpose of this focussed engagement over the past 18 months was to understand how as partners we can work together to improve population health and strengthen our population health system. This has provided good insight. Working in partnership now to improve these identified areas will continue to support and reinforce cross system working.</p>	
<p><u>Wider Public Health Workforce Development</u> (aligned to SPA HLT 1,2)</p> <p>Organisations within the public, private and voluntary sector have a long-standing commitment to public health. Ensuring that Senior Managers within these organisations are supported and have the right tools to recognise the wider scope for, and delivery of, public health should support improved population health outcomes. NEPHA has sponsored the development and testing of a training module for senior managers to provide a broad understanding of population / public health within the context of local authority and wider functions.</p> <p>The overall scope of the proposed module was agreed with senior officers from Aberdeen City Council – the agreed pilot local authority. An initial workshop was organised and delivered with 20 council senior managers and executive directors in May 2024. An immediate, informal evaluation of this first session indicated that it was welcomed by those attending and a keenness for moving to the next sessions noted. A formal timetable for these and a formal evaluation of the module are currently being developed. Support for the overall approach has been agreed with the Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen, who are being approached to undertake the formal evaluation. It is anticipated that learning from this will feed into both the ongoing work of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen and will facilitate adoption of the module by other LAs in Grampian.</p>	
<p><u>Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight and Active Living</u> (aligned to SPA HLT 2,4)</p> <p>Local authorities, Health & Social Care Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships are in a uniquely influential position to work with their communities and local partners to tackle obesity. In October 2023 the North East Population Health Alliance endorsed a Grampian wide whole systems approach to promoting healthy weight and active living, building on the approach being taken in Aberdeenshire. Public health capacity is supporting this shared approach.</p> <p>Following NEPHA endorsement, a series of discussions were undertaken with senior executives in Aberdeen City Council and Moray Council to discuss and agree a way forward. A gap analysis using the University of Edinburgh Local Levers for diet and Healthy Weight as a framework was completed for all 3 Community Planning Partnership areas to support these conversations.</p>	

In July 2024 Aberdeen City Council Education and Children's Committee agreed that the 6 stage whole systems model will be adopted to guide the approach in Aberdeen City to tackle the rise of children and expectant mothers who are not of a healthy weight (highlighted in the Children's Service Annual report). The Children's Service Board will champion this, with the City Council acting as organisation lead for child obesity and weight management. An initial stakeholder event is scheduled in Sept to complete stage 2 of the WSA. ACHSP will drive work from an adult perspective.

In Moray, full engagement with the Council's senior executives has not been possible with the very recent appointment of the new Chief Executive and HSCP Chief Officer. The Public Health Consultant aligned to Moray is leading on this engagement. In February 24, Moray Community Planning Partnership endorsed a proposal led by the Leisure Services to progress a WSA for physical activity, with PHS support. A series of 3 PHS led workshops have been facilitated to date with stakeholders to implement the [PHS framework](#). The ambition is to broaden this to include focus on obesity as agreed at the Community Planning Partnership Board.

Aberdeenshire CPP adopted the whole system model in 2021. In April 2024 the CPP Board requested a review using recent data and emerging evidence. The purpose was to prioritise actions that will have the greatest impact, recognising the challenges of partners' capacity. The 'Local Levers' gap analysis is informing this review. An initial stakeholder workshop was hosted in June 24, with a second workshop scheduled for August 24 focussed on integrating HEAL action and Local Place Plans.

As part of the WSA to healthy weight, a strong argument can be made for increased provision of weight management services in Grampian, in particular with enhanced specialist services that can be delivered digitally. Following a recently submitted expression of interest to NHS Grampian Charity Public Health have been invited to prepare a funding application in two parts; the first to enhance existing weight management support services and reduce inequalities through the provision of new digital evidence based interventions designed and targeted at the most socio-economically deprived communities. The second part of the submission, based on the experience of Aberdeenshire's health improvement team, proposes that Public Health support is provided to CPPs to develop, project manage and implement their Healthy Eating, Active Living delivery plans using the Whole Systems Approach.

It is planned that a Grampian 'healthy eating active living' symposium will be hosted by March 25 bringing stakeholders together across the region with representation from the three CPPs to facilitate shared learning and promote good practice.

Data Driven Community Action – Winter Falls and Ice Crew Gritting (aligned to SPA HLT 3)

An analysis of Emergency Department presentations at ARI and DGH was undertaken for the winter period in 2023. Maps were prepared by Public Health to show the geographical postcode of residence of those who had presented due to a fall.

A test of change was taken forward in Aberdeen City engaging the communities of Hilton, Stockethill, Cults and Bielside, as these areas had the highest incidences.

Through engagement with community councils, and in collaboration with the Aberdeen City roads department, volunteer 'Winter resilience rapid response task forces', which later became known as 'Ice Crews' were deployed. The hospital data informed where street gritting was targeted by these volunteer 'ice crews'. Delivery of the equipment needed was coordinated through Public Health and the Roads Department. The Community Councils did their own advertising across their communities and sourced high-visibility vests for the crews and one liaised with their local primary school to help name their group and the gritters.

The crews used hand gritters and salt bags provided by the council to grit the pavements where the highest number of falls were seen the previous winter (according to where people lived, not necessarily where the fall occurred). These areas include a lot of sheltered housing as well as community venues used by vulnerable members of the community. Gritting took place on many occasions during the winter and anecdotal evidence shows the affected communities were appreciative and it helped to build a level of community resilience and spirit.

An evaluation to assess the impact on A&E attendances and more widely on community resilience is currently being undertaken. The evaluation findings will be concluded by early September 24, to inform volunteer ice crew activity in Aberdeen City for Winter 24. Some of the community councils are planning activity for the winter and identifying where to access funding to ensure this project continues. This has led to a CPP objective to roll the project out to other communities in the City.

The findings will be shared with all three Community Planning Partnerships/ local authorities to consider extension of this approach across Grampian to build on local elected member interest.

NE Co-ordinated Approach

Throughout the year NEPHA has discussed opportunities to take a co-ordinated approach across the North –East to achieve added value and shared learning in relation to specific population health plans and approaches. Examples of this include:

Joint Health Protection Plan:

The Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan 2024-26 was considered by NEPHA in May 24. Whilst acknowledging that partners have individual responsibilities for the delivery and governance of specific actions / services to protect the health of the population, NEPHA concluded that there is further scope and added value for North East organisations to collectively contribute. One specific area identified was public communications and messaging.

Putting People First

Following a presentation on NHSG's developing approach 'Putting People First' - shaping a new relationship with the public in June 24, NEPHA acknowledged the value in North-East partners developing a whole-system approach to listening to and involving people. Partners were keen to optimise connectivity with existing networks and approaches e.g. place based approaches and there is interest in provision of holistic community appointment days. There was agreement that capturing the shared learning was important to future activity.

National Population Health Framework and Marmot Places

Public Health Scotland has provided NEPHA with a series of updates across the year on the developing national population health framework and the partnership with the Institute of Health Equity to progress Marmot Places in Scotland, both key national drivers to tackle health inequalities. The partners agreed that mapping relevant local policies to assess if local responses are sufficient will be considered once the draft national framework is published. NEPHA committed to developing a strong response to the draft national framework to ensure the north east perspective is fully considered.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	2 October 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Annual Performance Reports - 2023/2024 for all Tier 1 ALEOs: Aberdeen Performing Arts; Aberdeen Sports Village; Bon Accord Care; Sport Aberdeen
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/285
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Craig Innes
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig Innes
TERMS OF REFERENCE	24.13

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the annual performance reporting of the Council's four Tier one Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) covering financial year 2023/2024: Aberdeen Performance Arts (APA); Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV); Bon Accord Care and Sport Aberdeen (SA). An ALEO is a term used to describe an organisation that is formally separate from the council but is subject to its control or influence. That level of control or influence can vary.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council notes the Annual Performance Reports for each of the Tier one ALEOs.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The undernoted paragraphs, 4 to 7, provide a brief overview of each of the four ALEOs. Individual Annual Performance Reports for each organisation are appended to this report.

4. Aberdeen Performing Arts

- 4.1 APA is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status established as an ALEO of the Council in 2004. APA operates the Music Hall, His Majesty's Theatre and The Lemon Tree, as well as managing the Box Office for 20+ venues in the region.
- 4.2 APA is an active member of 'Culture Aberdeen', the city's cultural network and a leading partner in the development of the ten-year cultural strategy and action plan for the city which was endorsed by the Council in 2018. APA also deliver various festivals.

- 4.3 The revised performance template provides an overview of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and what has been achieved against these targets for the financial year 2023/2024. The report provides evidence of APA's delivery against their business plan objectives but also contributions to the City's cultural strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan .
- 4.4 In addition to the core programme of more than 700 performances attended by over 360,000 people, Aberdeen Performing Arts delivered a number of projects which demonstrated significant development or enhancement to the city. In a first collaboration of its kind with the National Theatre of Scotland, APA co-produced a brand new stage adaptation of Bram Stoker's Dracula, which had its world premiere in Aberdeen at His Majesty's Theatre in September 2023 before an extensive tour of Scotland and England. The show was extremely well received including a five star review in the national press. 2023's Light the Blue Festival represented a notable step change in the quantity and quality of engagement and presentation as the city's festival for and by young people.
- 4.5 A significant highlight of the festival was the 'Snappy Operas' project through which pupils from Hanover Street, Gilcomstoun, Riverbank and West Park schools performed specially written operas in the Music Hall – a truly special event and the first time many of the participants and their families had set foot in the venue.
- 4.6 The organisation continued to work in partnership and develop work with marginalised and under-represented communities – including the Rise Up Festival showcasing black and people of colour artists, the Eat the Rich cabaret programme with the LGBT+ community, and new opportunities for older people to participate such as our script reading group.

5. Aberdeen Sports Village

- 5.1 Aberdeen Sports Village Limited is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Opened in 2009, ASV is a joint venture between Aberdeen City Council and the University of Aberdeen.
- 5.2 Although a joint venture, ASV is considered a Tier 1 ALEO of the Council.
- 5.3 ASV was the first joint venture of its kind in the United Kingdom and remains an example of best practice in the sport and physical activity sector. Aberdeen Sports Village is Scotland's premier sports, fitness and lifestyle venue managing both performance level activities and all-inclusive programmes. It hosts international sports event and offers multiple sports facilities, including an International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) accredited 400m athletics track and UK Athletics indoor athletics facility, an Olympic standard aquatics centre, a state of the art gym, exercise and lifestyle classes.
- 5.4 An annual review report on ASV's business plan is appended to this report. It includes a qualitative summary of outcomes, outputs and activities undertaken by ASV, how these align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and progress made to-date. The annual report also details

how ASV's activities have delivered against Council strategies and action plan priorities and provides details of user numbers, other income received and any challenges faced.

- 5.5 The revised performance template provides an overview of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and what has been achieved against these targets for the financial year 2023/2024. It should be noted that ASV aligns to the Further Education academic year for financial reporting which is between 1st August through to 31st July each year.
- 5.6 Within the appended report, Section 2 – Users, Participants and Investments provides an overview of ASV user numbers within 6 regeneration areas of the city.
- 5.7 The ASV Annual Report for 2023-24 highlights a successful year despite economic challenges. ASV, a joint venture between Aberdeen City Council and the University of Aberdeen, exceeded targets in several key performance areas, including memberships, sports camps, and partner club memberships. ASV hosted 179 events, including national and international competitions, and engaged over a million participants across various programs.
- 5.8 The organisation focused on promoting physical and mental health through initiatives like the Evergreens Programme for seniors and various community partnerships that provide free access to sports and activities for children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, ASV made significant strides in sustainability, implementing a carbon reduction plan and promoting energy-efficient practices.
- 5.9 Key initiatives included programs addressing child obesity, adult loneliness, and support for individuals with disabilities. ASV's community outreach involved partnerships with local schools, providing free meals and activities for children, and targeted programs like the Cardiac Referral Programme and the "Finding Your Feet" initiative for amputees.
- 5.10 The organisation has also prioritised inclusivity and diversity, offering opportunities for vocational learning and work experience. Through its efforts, ASV has made a positive economic impact on Aberdeen by hosting numerous events that attract visitors and promote the city as a sporting destination. The report showcases ASV's commitment to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, emphasising the importance of physical activity, community engagement, and sustainable practices.

6. Bon Accord Care

- 6.1 Bon Accord Support Services (BASS) and Bon Accord Care (BAC) are ALEOs owned by Aberdeen City Council (ACC). For operational purposes Bon Accord Care is used as a collective term to refer to both companies.
- 6.2 The Integration Joint Board directed the Council to put in place arrangements for BAC to provide a range of services which are currently being delivered by them.

- 6.3 Bon Accord Care is led by a board of non-executive and executive directors. The directors are accountable to the shareholder (Aberdeen City Council) for the operations of the company and are responsible for setting the strategic direction and taking the policy decisions that meet the company objectives.
- 6.4 A summary of the annual performance report which is appended to this report shows performance metrics in relation to efficiency and quality of service delivery. The Bon Accord Care Annual Performance Report 2023/24 also appended provides a comprehensive breakdown of core business, efficiency and quality, innovation and early intervention.
- 6.5 During 2023/24, Bon Accord Care has embraced change, responded to system pressures, and played their part in the early intervention and prevention agenda across Aberdeen City. The launch of their new strategy in 2023 has offered clarity around their provision in the city and their intentions for development in the coming years; being key providers who make a difference to health and social care in the local area.
- 6.6 Bon Accord Care continue to be responsive and proactive in planning for a changing and challenging Health and Social Care landscape. In doing so, a key area of strength lies in their commitment to partnering with other local communities, providers, commissioners, and stakeholders to shape a Bon Accord Care that meet the needs of the population now and in the future; integrating across health and social care, the Aberdeen Community and voluntary sector to support individuals who live there.

7. Sport Aberdeen

- 7.1 The current arrangement for the management and development of the city's indoor and outdoor sports facilities and for the provision of sport, physical activity and wellbeing services targeted at those most in need are delivered by the Council's ALEO, Sport Aberdeen. It commenced trading in 2010 under a Funding and Service Provision Agreement.
- 7.2 An annual review report on Sport Aberdeen's business plan is appended to this report. It includes a qualitative summary of outcomes, outputs and activities undertaken by Sport Aberdeen, how these align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and progress made to-date. The annual report also details how Sport Aberdeen's activities have delivered against ACC strategies and action plan priorities and provides details of user numbers, other income received and any challenges faced.
- 7.3 The revised performance template provides an overview of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and what has been achieved against these targets for the financial year 2023/2024.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report for APA. For 2023/2024 the Council provided core funding of £936k to APA.

- 8.2 APA is a regular funded organisation of Creative Scotland. They continue to be in receipt of £333,333 per annum through the scheme until March 2025. The scheme is being replaced by a new 'Multi-Year Funding' application process which will provide annual support from April 2025 until March 2028. The scheme is currently open to application at this time.
- 8.3 APA has a turnover of over £10m per year, and as one of Scotland's biggest performing arts companies, manages some of the city's most iconic buildings.
- 8.4 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report for ASV. The Council provided £824,000 of annual revenue funding to ASV toward the operation of the Sports Centre and Aquatics Centre during 2023/24.
- 8.5 As per the terms of the Joint Venture Agreement, the University of Aberdeen provides the same level of revenue funding to ASV toward the operation of the Sports Centre and Aquatics Centre.
- 8.6 It should be noted that ASV's financial year is different to the Council. It runs from 1st August to 31st July and is referred to as the "contract" year.
- 8.7 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report for Bon Accord Care. Core funding to Bon Accord Care for 2023/2024, paid under direction from the Integration Joint Board, was £31,958,336 with a separate £3,667,488 for Kingswells Nursing Home.
- 8.8 Other services may be directly commissioned from Bon Accord Care, either under direction from the Integration Joint Board or other Council Services and would be met from within the appropriate existing budgets. Such purchases would remain outside the Service Level Agreement (SLA) that governs use of the Core funding.
- 8.9 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report for Sport Aberdeen. The Council's budget for Core funding for Sport Aberdeen for 2023/24 was £4,515,000.
- 8.10 Separately, the ALEO Assurance Hub continues to seek assurance from all of the ALEOs on their financial stewardship, governance, and risk arrangements. This includes oversight that medium term financial plans are in place and aligned to business planning. This is reported on twice a year to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee along with the Hub's risk ratings, which reflect the level of risk presented to the Council by each ALEO.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

11. RISK

11.1 The risks reflect the 23/24 reporting period covered and there is ongoing monitoring of the current position through the ALEO Assurance Hub.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level		*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk					
Compliance					
Operational	ALEO staff not being supported.	The annual report and ALEO hub monitoring process ensures and demonstrates good practice.		L	Yes
	ALEO's providing poor services to customers.	The annual report demonstrates to the Council the ALEO's commitment to customer service.		L	Yes
Financial	None				
Reputational	None				
Environment / Climate	None				

12. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The ALEOs align to the transformation programme and each forms part of the next steps for delivery of the outcomes and commitments.

<u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The annual reports evidence the contributions by each ALEO towards the LOIP theme of prosperous economy. SLAs are outcomes-focused and contain robust contract management measures to ensure that they link directly to the LOIP outcomes for a prosperous economy.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The annual reports evidence contributions by each ALEO towards the LOIP theme of prosperous people.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The annual reports evidence contributions by each ALEO towards the LOIP theme of a prosperous place. As above with the refresh of the SLAs

13. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

15. APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1** – Aberdeen Performing Arts Annual Performance Report 2023/24
- **Appendix 2** – Aberdeen Sports Village Annual Performance Report 2023/24
- **Appendix 3** – Bon Accord Care Annual Performance Report 2023/24
- **Appendices 4, 4A & 4B** – Sport Aberdeen Annual Performance Report 2023/24

16. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name Craig Innes
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ALEO ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Deadline for submission 15th July 2024

Organisation: Aberdeen Performing Arts	
Year Covered:	2023-24
Report completed by:	Sharon Burgess
Position:	Chief Executive

About the organisation

Aberdeen Performing Arts is the cultural cornerstone of North-east Scotland, driving change through creativity and community engagement. Our vision includes city centre regeneration, social change initiatives, community cohesion, and placemaking, enriching the region's creative, social, and economic fabric.

We measure success by financial and operational targets, city centre revitalisation, community engagement metrics, and the growth of our artistic programmes. Focusing on collaboration, inclusion, and personnel investment, we aim to lead the cultural sector, nurture talent, and foster sustainable development.

As a cultural hub, we contribute to the arts, community, and civic life through national and international performances, producing and curating work, hosting festivals, and engaging diverse communities. Our activities significantly impact the local cultural sector and the region's prosperity.

Serving a region transitioning to renewable energy and sustainability, we ensure arts and culture influence and reflect these dynamics. We engage with local communities, transcending socio-economic boundaries to provide access to arts and culture for all, enhancing experiences and adding regional value.

We champion collaboration and creative engagement, forging partnerships to support new work and sector growth. Investment in people, governance, leadership, and digital technologies drives our transformation. Our leadership promotes a positive company culture, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Aberdeen Performing Arts offers clear pathways for workforce and talent development, providing opportunities for emerging artists to contribute meaningfully to the artistic landscape.

In conclusion, Aberdeen Performing Arts' strategic direction focuses on becoming the leading cultural institution in North-east Scotland, driving change through creativity, community engagement, and sustainable development.

Organisation Information	
Organisation legal structure	Company limited by guarantee with charitable status
Number of years operating	19
Name of Director/ Chief Executive	Jane Spiers (from April 2023 to May 2023) Sharon Burgess (from June 2023 to March 2024)
Number of venues operated	3
Number of Board Members	14
Number of Full time staff	42 (average headcount across the year)
Number of part time/casual staff	211 (average headcount across the year)

SECTION 1 - Outcomes and outputs

Please provide a qualitative executive summary of outcomes, outputs, activities undertaken and progress made to date:

PROGRAMME 2023/24

Our programme featured:

- **700+ diverse performances** across theatre, music, dance, comedy, literature, spoken word, and work for young people.
- **Granite Noir** – an international crime writing festival.
- **Light the Blue** – a youth festival created by and for young people in Aberdeen.
- **Rise Up** – a festival celebrating black and people of colour creatives, in partnership with We Are Here Scotland.
- **Delve** – a weekend of artist-curated exploration of themes and ideas.
- **Creative responses** to key themes and events, including Climate Week North East.
- **Digital art** – 5 new commissions for our Stepping In screen.
- **Art exhibition** – including 2 new commissions in our Music Hall gallery spaces.

TALENT – Investing in Today's and Tomorrow's Creatives

In 2023/24, we:

- Co-produced a major new work with the National Theatre of Scotland, offering opportunities for local creatives.
- Supported development, production, and touring for North-east theatre companies, including AyeTunes and Ten Feet Tall.
- Delivered a digital arts programme with 5 new commissions and an art exhibition programme with 2 new commissions.
- Offered 2 Intern positions for Granite Noir and 2 Festival Assistant positions for Light the Blue.
- Held emerging artist events across all festivals and our programme.
- Launched a call-out for multi-year, multi-venue festive productions for early years, co-commissioned with Eden Court and Capital Theatres.

ARTS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES – Inclusive Creative Engagement

In 2023/24, we:

- Ran 5 youth theatre classes for ages 5-19 for three 10-week terms.
- Delivered 2 early years music classes for ages 1-8 for three 10-week terms.
- Conducted a hip hop programme for ages 12-18 for three 10-week terms.
- Supported a community choir and vocal ensemble.
- Held HOURS, a hip hop event series by local producers.
- Expanded Light the Blue as a co-designed youth arts festival.
- Established a young advisors' network for Light the Blue and broader organisational input.
- Developed community engagement projects on climate action and inclusion.
- Expanded engagement efforts to reach and include new audiences.

PLACEMAKING – Shaping and Celebrating the North-east

In 2023/24, we:

- Played a leading role in Culture Aberdeen, including key initiatives and advocacy.
- Actively participated in local, regional, and national networks, including Board-level representation.
- Delivered Granite Noir, Light the Blue, Rise Up, and Delve with increased partnerships and local artist involvement.
- Co-produced Dracula with National Theatre of Scotland and led supporting campaigns.

PEOPLE AND FAIR WORK

In 2023/24, we:

- Developed our Board with new recruitment and training, enhancing diversity and transitioning to a new chair.
- Reviewed our leadership structure to support people development and financial sustainability.
- Continued implementing Open House, our Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion plan.
- Provided leadership development and training opportunities to our team.

AUDIENCE

DEVELOPMENT AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

In 2023/24, we:

- Utilised Audience Spectrum for segmentation to support programme priorities.
- Launched key marketing campaigns for Rise Up and Light the Blue.
- Engaged new and existing audiences with campaigns for Rise Up, Light the Blue, and Granite Noir.
- Conducted stakeholder mapping to support creative engagement.
- Evaluated audiences using various metrics including behaviour, geography, and socio-economic factors.
- Enhanced Spektrix data with Audience Agency partnership.
- Improved digital customer journeys with increased web sales and mobile ticketing.
- Developed digital strategies for programme priorities and social media reach.
- Planned marketing and communications for Board and Leadership changes and recruitment.

CLIMATE ACTION

In 2023/24, we:

- Implemented our Environmental Sustainability Policy and Carbon Management Plan.
- Aligned our Carbon Management Strategy with Science Based Targets Net Zero pathway.
- Worked with The Theatre Green Book to audit venues for carbon reduction opportunities.
- Developed climate-themed events and activities, including for Climate Week North East.
- Partnered with Creative Carbon Scotland, Beyond Green, and other organisations.
- Explored carbon offsetting schemes for audience participation.
- Embedded climate action in our branding and communications.
- Ensured sustainability in future redevelopment projects.
- Partnered with Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

In 2023/24, we:

- Diversified income sources and increased fundraised income.
- Set and reviewed clear revenue and profit targets.
- Improved efficiencies through effective structures and venue operations.
- Developed digital and data strategies for decision-making.
- Enhanced digital marketing resources for greater reach.
- Improved system effectiveness and invested in performance analysis software.
- Created detailed audience profiles to inform offerings and marketing.
- Expanded corporate hospitality, conference, and event offerings.

Activity Outputs (complete only the ones that apply to your funded activities)			
Total number of participants	9,393	Total audience numbers	363,709
Total number of volunteers	11	Total number of volunteer hours	498
Total number of project artists employed	79	Total number of artist hours	360
Total number of performances	777	Total number of training courses	-
Total number of exhibitions	12	Total number of festivals	4
Total number of workshops	393	Total number of publications	-
Other (please specify)	-	Total number of Conference and Events	48

If you have not met the targets set, please give any reasons or explanation for this:

The targets set against our key strategic performance indicators (KPI) have in the most part been achieved or exceeded. The expanded KPIs for Creative Engagement and Audience in relation to age demographics have been provided for 2023/24 reflective of the enhanced data capture which was not possible in previous years.

Please provide a summary of particular successes or case studies:

This is where you can collate and share your good news stories highlighting best practice where investing in culture has had positive impact in changing lives or changing perceptions (i.e. personal testimonies or examples of projects which are game changers in how you approach your activity).

Case studies are also encouraged, these can be big projects like a building development or festival but they can also be something more small scale and discreet such as a programme of outreach workshops or the mentoring and development of volunteer or artists. Its helpful to consider any case study in the context of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Culture Aberdeen strategy/actions to demonstrate real progress against the city's wider priorities as well as examples of best practice which your organisation and others within the cultural sector can learn from.

Dracula: Mina's Reckoning

In 2023, Aberdeen Performing Arts collaborated with the National Theatre of Scotland in partnership with Belgrade Theatre Coventry, to co-produce the epic new adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The new version, written by Elgin-born playwright Morna Pearson, was located in Aberdeen and Cruden Bay (as well as Transylvania) and used Stoker's frequent trips to the North-east of Scotland as an authentic interpretation of the story's setting. Award-winning director Sally Pearson led the production which had an all-female or non-binary cast many of whom were from this region. The production featured the Doric language throughout and provided a platform for our local dialect to be seen in a serious context, although with frequent humour. The production included a mesmerising soundscape, innovative use of lighting and projection mapping, and an imposing Gothic set created by Highland designer Kenneth MacLeod. As co-producers, APA not only invested financially in the creation of the piece, but heavily influenced the creative decisions and direction it took. Our involvement gave confidence to the team to embrace the full opportunities providing by the North-east setting, giving the production an authenticity from the very start. Following rehearsals at NTS' base in Glasgow, the show did production and tech week in Aberdeen, opening at His Majesty's Theatre in September 2023. It subsequently toured to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Dundee, Stirling and Coventry, before finishing its run at the Liverpool Playhouse. The show was performed 41 times and seen by 19,294 audiences and received excellent public and critical acclaim including a five-star review in the Scotsman. A motion was submitted to the Scottish Parliament commending the success and ambition of the project. The collaboration with NTS was extremely positive and we have received very warm feedback from them about our team and our constructive approach to the partnership. This project demonstrated Aberdeen Performing Arts' vision and ambition for producing and creating work of scale and impact, our ability to contribute as creative as well as financial partners, and contributed hugely to delivering Aberdeen's cultural objectives around creation, working with artists, experimentation and impact.

Encore! Script reading Group and participation research for older people

We introduced a new participatory group which was specifically aimed at engaging creatively with older people. This project, delivered at the Music Hall and in partnership with Ten Feet Tall Theatre company, provides an opportunity for people over the age of 60 to meet in a relaxed environment and to explore a well-known play. The group is very informal and is accessible to people with no experience of acting or performing. The focus of the group is as much on socialising and interacting as with exploring and discussing the text. It is a really effective model for allowing people to participate without any pressure to perform and with the ability to contribute as much or as little as they are comfortable with. The programme proved hugely popular and completely sold out and we plan to integrate this as a core element of our creative engagement programme.

Related to this, we have recognised that there is an opportunity for us to provide participatory activities for older people, particularly those who may suffer from isolation or loneliness, or have financial barriers to taking part in activities. As such, we engaged a placement student from the University of Aberdeen to undertake a research project investigating what types of activities older people may wish to participate in. The research explores types of activity, possible themes, ideal locations and setup, and possible barriers to attendance. We will use the outcome of this research to inform future plans with older participants.

Please provide a summary of any problems or issues that have required attention or action:

Again, this provides context of the environment you have been operating under to better reflect your organisations challenges and achievements. Its also an opportunity to highlight examples of good practice leadership, governance, collaboration and financial management within your organisation.

The launch of a new call-out for multi-year, multi-venue festive productions for early years, co-commissioned with Eden Court and Capital Theatres, was delayed by a year due to funding uncertainty caused by the delayed CS RFO application process

Aberdeen Performing Arts is set to commence a refurbishment of The Lemon Tree to ensure it remains fit for purpose for the foreseeable future, given that a full redevelopment is not financially viable at this time. All capital expenditure will focus on essential work that would also be part of a full redevelopment if it occurs in the longer term.

Delivering on Key Strategic Priorities Please provide a summary of how your activities have delivered against key local (and national) strategic priorities relevant to your organisation			
Culture Aberdeen 2018-2028 Action Plan Ambitions	Regional Economic Strategy Strong Communities and Cultural Identity	LOIP 2024 refresh (2016-26)	Your Organisations Delivered Actions
Releasing our Creativity - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city opening doors, where everyone can be transformed and inspired through engagement in the arts and culture.</i>	Fostering a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging in the region	4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We deliver a diverse programme with wide appeal including touring production, signature events, and exclusive curated shows. • Our festivals attract audiences from a range of backgrounds and boost pride in the city. • Our ticket pricing has accessible entry points and discount schemes. • We curate unique events which are rooted in the city. • Developed Light the Blue as a festival for and by young people with young advisors and an approach of co-design. • An extensive access programme for people with disabilities including BSL, captioning, audio description, and relaxed adaptations. • Partnerships with organisations such as Sanctuary Queer Arts, We Are Here Scotland, North East Sensory Services, Barnardos and more. • Innovative change-maker posts with a focus on inclusion. • Creative Engagement activity with participants from under-represented communities and free/subsidised spaces.
Becoming Scotland's Creative Lab - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city to experiment in, a home, a place, a destination and testing ground for artists, creative enterprises and new ideas</i>	Increasing the number of jobs in the creative industries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produced a major touring theatre production with National Theatre of Scotland, <i>Dracula: Mina's Reckoning</i>, which was set and opened in Aberdeen before touring across the UK. • Supporting the creation and touring of <i>My Doric Diary</i> by Fraserburgh based Aye Tunes. • A joint festive commission with counterparts in Edinburgh and Inverness. • 2 new visual art commissions • 6 new digital art commissions • Delivered the third Rise Up festival celebrating and showcasing

		<p>2. Working towards a 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026.</p> <p>10. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p>	<p>Black and POC creatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered the second Delve weekend inviting an artist to curate a series of performance and workshops on a chosen theme or art form. Curated a programme for Climate Week North East. Developed our inclusive cabaret programme for LGBT+ artists and audiences. Maintained employment and freelance engagement of more than 350 creative professionals.
<p>Making All the City a Stage - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city which inspires, where exciting cultural experiences are around each and every corner and where there are no creative boundaries.</i></p>	<p>Increasing the number of assets held by communities across the region</p> <p>Creating a clearer/ stronger identity and cultural narrative</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded all our festivals to have presence across the city particularly Light the Blue, our festival for and by young people, which featured outdoor performances in the city centre, and projects with a range of partners and locations throughout. Staged large scale West-End productions at His Majesty's Theatre, attracting strong audiences from across the region and beyond. Produced signature festivals featuring events, workshops and exhibitions in various locations and venues across the city
<p>Connecting Us to the World- <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city like no other, where we celebrate and promote our culture and heritage, the things we make and create.</i></p>	<p>Creating a clearer/ stronger identity and cultural narrative</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granite Noir invites international writers and welcomes international audiences to the city and online. Developed a plan for a new international season alongside the Edinburgh Fringe to promote sustainable touring, encouraging artists traveling from overseas to extend their season to Aberdeen, to deliver in summer 2024. Rise Up Retained all the programming of national and international significance at our venues – home of Scotland's national companies in the North, key touring stop for prestigious national organisations.
<p>Shaping our Future- <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city whose cultural sector is growing in ambition and confidence with a</i></p>	<p>Increasing the number of jobs in the creative industries</p>		<p>Active participation in city-wide initiatives; development of the cultural strategy for the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant contribution to the delivery of the cultural strategy

<p><i>strong collective of cultural leaders collaborating to realise the city's potential.</i></p>		<p>13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.</p> <p>15. 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected for nature and 60% of citizens report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.</p> <p>16. 50% of citizens report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.</p>	<p>for the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership programming with local cultural organisations including Citymoves, Sound, Peacock, GHAT, Look Again, shmu, Arts Centre, Creative Learning, Multicultural Centre, Ten Feet Tall, and more. • Providing opportunities for the next generation of creative talent through our youth participation programmes, Granite Noir interns, Light the Blue Assistants and Young Advisors, placements and volunteering. • Membership of city-wide groups including Culture Aberdeen, Events 365, AGCC Policy Council, Visit Aberdeenshire Tourism group, North-East Music Partnership. • Staff learning and development programmes; cross-departmental working groups: <p>Future proofing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive work on environmental sustainability, cross-dept green team, award-nominated. • Continual development and repairs/maintenance of our building and equipment infrastructure. • Continually review and update business readiness including business continuity, infrastructure, information and data security, GDPR adherence, cyber security audit, environmental impacts, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion • Creation of new audience development plans and customer engagement strategies to better inform decision making.
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Local Priorities:

Please highlight where your outcomes, outputs or activities align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and or Council Delivery plan. <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/aberdeen-city-local-outcome-improvement-plan-2016-26/>

Aberdeen Performing Arts is not currently a statutory community planning partner but contributes and aligns to the LOIP stretch outcomes as follows (pre-revised LOIP Priorities 2018-9)

Aberdeen Performing Arts is also a member of Culture Aberdeen, who currently sit on the Outcome Improvement Group 'Aberdeen Prospers'.

LOIP Stretch Outcome	Key Driver	Aberdeen Performing Art Actions
Aberdeen Prospers		
<p>Investment in Infrastructure</p> <p>Aberdeen City is a robust and resilient economy providing a vibrant built environment and attractive place for residents, students, business and tourists</p>	<p>We will regenerate our city centre to become a vibrant and attractive place to live, work and invest in</p>	<p>Deliver diverse and distinctive cultural programme to create attractive city to live, work and visit.</p> <p>Custodian of iconic city centre venues and undertaken major investment in upgrading facilities.</p> <p>Regular programme of upgrades and repairs to buildings and infrastructure.</p>
<p>Innovation</p> <p>Aberdeen City has a reputation for enterprise, innovation and world class solutions</p>	<p>We will accelerate the transition to a more balanced economy</p>	<p>Collaboration and partnership to create brand new work of scale such as Dracula: Mina's Reckoning.</p> <p>Ambitious programming, measured risk-taking, and curatorial approach to create unique offer.</p> <p>Produce several innovative festivals with local relevance and national impact.</p>
<p>Inclusive economic growth</p> <p>A skilled workforce for the future that provides opportunities for all our people</p>	<p>We will develop the people and skills necessary to deliver economic development and, as a result, support diversification of businesses and economy</p>	<p>Hundreds of opportunities for artist employment.</p> <p>Developing new talent through internships, placements and new roles. Partner on Developing Young Workforce.</p> <p>Creating sustainable employment through revised contracts and new posts.</p> <p>Accredited Real Living Wage Employer,</p>

		Disability Confident Committed.
<p>Internationalisation</p> <p>Aberdeen City is a location of choice for investment, high value business activity and skills</p>	<p>We will attract the best possible range of incoming exhibitions and events and showcase the city's internationally recognised sports, arts and culture offer</p>	<p>We continue to grow international presence in our festivals such as Granite Noir.</p> <p>We have a new international season for launch in 2024.</p> <p>Support for locally based ethnically diverse communities via Multicultural Centre, Mela etc.</p>
<p>Prosperous People – Children are our future</p>		
<p>Children are our future and people are resilient, included and supported when in need</p>	<p>Children have the best start in life – children in Aberdeen City are healthy, happy and safe, and enjoy the best possible childhood</p>	<p>Extensive programme of weekly participation opportunities.</p> <p>Expanded free spaces programme across our activity.</p> <p>Dedicated festival Light the Blue for and by young people.</p> <p>Programming for children and young people, ticket offers, and schools engagement.</p> <p>Projects specifically with care experienced young people, children with disabilities, and from lower socio-economic backgrounds.</p>
	<p>Children are safe and responsible – from all forms of harm</p>	<p>Comprehensive safeguarding training and child protection approach.</p> <p>Partnerships with key support organisations.</p>
	<p>Children are respected, included and achieving – children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision-making process</p>	<p>Young advisors group co-design Light the Blue and wider activity.</p>
<p>Prosperous People – People Are Resilient, Included and supported when in need</p>		
<p>People and communities are protected from harm – Individuals and communities are made aware of the risk of harm and supported appropriately to reduce this risk.</p>	<p>We will develop systems and approaches that raise awareness of harm</p>	<p>Projects specifically targeted to improve opportunities for marginalised groups e.g. Beats and Rhymes, over 60s, LGBT+, BPOC.</p> <p>Our Equalities, diversity and Inclusion policy and action plan continues to raise the bar in our support of our communities, under-represented and vulnerable groups</p>

		<p>Research project to combat loneliness in older people.</p> <p>We provided training in conflict management, as well as first aid.</p>
<p>People are supported to live as independently as possible – able to sustain an independent quality of life for as long as possible, take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing</p>	<p>We will empower citizens to feel they have real and meaningful choice and control over their own lives.</p>	<p>Culture of development and progression for our team.</p> <p>We are an accredited Real Living Wage employer.</p> <p>Increased access provision and membership scheme.</p> <p>Disability Confident Committed accredited employer.</p> <p>Inclusive recruitment practices including video application, interview questions shared etc.</p> <p>Providing regular performances which as BSL signed, audio described, captioned and relaxed performances.</p> <p>Embed Everyone is Welcome Here ethos.</p>
<p>Prosperous People - EMPOWERED, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES</p>		
<p>People friendly city – a city where people to choose to invest, live and visit</p>	<p>Build a child friendly city to ensure that the best interests of the child is a primary consideration</p>	<p>We provide a child and family friendly programme in all our venues.</p> <p>Dedicated festival for children and young people.</p> <p>Increased free spaces in our participation programme.</p> <p>Signed up to breastfeeding friendly Scotland scheme.</p> <p>Children Eat Free in school holidays in our cafes.</p>
	<p>We will be a city whose built environment is fit for keeping an ageing population safe and healthy and puts the child at the centre of design</p>	<p>Award-nominated for environmental initiatives.</p> <p>Embedded post of Creative Change-Maker (Climate Action)</p> <p>Cross-dept Green Team.</p> <p>Improved practices and data gather.</p>

Equalities:

Please provide further information in respect to any relevant activities

Open House, our EDI policy and action plan was updated in June 2023, and within the year 2023/24, a number of initiatives were expanded, consolidated and implemented in order to work towards and meet our ambitions around Equality at Aberdeen Performing Arts, across all areas. These include:

- We augmented our board through a wide search and inclusive recruitment process, resulting in five new board members including our new Chair. This has resulted in our board now being more representative of under-represented backgrounds, and closer to being balanced in terms of gender.
- We saw our workforce continue to develop in its diversity and representation of our community, through inclusive recruitment campaigns, and continued achievement of the Disability Confident Committed accreditation
- The introduction and development of our Access Champion working group comprising of 10 employees. Our training focused on using our own service providers to provide meaningful relevant content. Our BSL Interpreter ran a deaf awareness workshop, in addition to the session our Audio Describer did earlier in the year on the services we offer for Visually Impaired customers. Both sessions focused on best practice for the team and offered insight into how we can continue to better the customer experience.
- In partnership with We Are Here Scotland, we delivered our third Rise Up festival, celebrating the work of Black and People of Colour creatives. Eat the Rich, our LGBT+ cabaret event took place for the third year running and saw increased ticket demand, leading to a sold-out performance and demonstrating the need for events within a safe space which are relevant to the LGBT+ community. Our hip hop workshops, Beats and Rhymes, are focused on delivering music making opportunities to those young people who may not otherwise have chances to take part in creative activity and continues to engage successfully with this group, building skills and self-confidence. We have undertaken research into provision of creative activity for the over 60s age group to better inform how we can meet their needs with future creative engagement provision with an intention to look at ways to tackle isolation and improve health and wellbeing outcomes.
- The development of our unique Creative Change Maker: Inclusion and Relevance role, ensuring that our commissions, productions and curated work involve collaboration around creative diversity and representation and our organisation embraces the ethos of Everyone Is Welcome Here.
- There have been notable increases in our accessible performance offerings. BSL performances increased from 26 to 39, captioned performances from 17 to 20, and audio described performances from 28 to 30. Touch tours saw a significant rise from 10 to 29. Relaxed performances increased from 2 to 5. Sales of wheelchair spaces grew from 619 to 704, and our complimentary essential companion tickets more than doubled from 570 to 1160.
- Our commitment to dismantling barriers to participation continues with increased offers of free spaces within our Creative Engagement strand. We continue to work with partners to help us reach those with whom we are not currently engaged. We have introduced more pay what you can ticket initiatives for our produced shows to support marginalised and under-represented groups in attending events which they may otherwise face barriers to accessing.
- Audiences for events and festivals with values around equality and diversity have been increasing year-on-year. Rise Up, a festival showcasing Black and People of Colour artists, increased in attendance by 95% with almost 700 people attending. Eat the Rich, our subversive and provocative cabaret aimed at the LGBT+ community sold 83 tickets in 2022, 109 in 2023 and sold out in 2024 with 149 attendees.

Net Zero/Climate Change:

Please provide further information in respect to any relevant activities to support realising Aberdeen City's Net Zero Ambitions

Within the year, our team of Green Champions, concluded the first phase of our Carbon Management project which allowed us to define our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, establish a baseline metric, plan out a series of initiatives for the medium term that allow us to focus on reducing our carbon footprint and strengthening our Environmental Sustainability Policy and framework. Inputs from the legislative ESOS Phase 3 environmental audits, as well as support from Business Energy Scotland and our environmental partner Beyond Green, have provided a solid foundation for us to shape the direction of our practical sustainability activity particularly in Scope 3 categories, which include our Audience Travel impact.

We have undertaken a number of initiatives across the year aimed at reducing the carbon impact of the infrastructure we

operate within, as well as our operation itself. These include:

- Finalising the upgrading to LED lighting within His Majesty's Theatre and Music Hall in public areas, complete with motion sensor detection.
- Signing up to electricity contracts for all three venues which are provided from 100% renewable sources.
- Reducing the amount of single use and disposable cleaning products used within our housekeeping function
- The introduction of a pedestrian scrubbing machine at The Lemon Tree, which significantly reduces the water consumed and wasted throughout the cleaning process.
- Initial improvements to our Building Management System at His Majesty's Theatre, and scoping of a wider suite of works intended at significantly improving efficiency.

We realise the unique position that the arts leverage within the wider climate and sustainability conversation, and through our creative engagement team

- Successful delivery of an environmental focused art exhibition, Oor Future Oor Monsters, which is now on permanent display within our Lemon Tree venue.
- Successful delivery of a series of programmed activity to coincide with Climate Week North East 2024
- Taking the lead, alongside partners The Barn, in hosting a series of workshop events as part of Creative Carbon Scotland's Springboard Assemblies series.

Education:

Please provide further information in respect to any education programmes delivered.

Self-explanatory but helpful to highlight any links with specific schools, further education institutions, geographic areas. To avoid repeating what has been said previously you can highlight in depth some example of particularly successful projects/programmes, feedback from participants or schools or provide context for longer term vision and partnerships.

Light The Blue Festival – Snappy Operas Project

Our festival for and by young people, Light The Blue, delivered the Snappy Operas project to four primary schools, Hanover Street, Gilcomstoun, Riverbank and West Park. Working in school with professional musicians, producers, repititeurs and directors, pupils created their own mini opera which they then performed on the stage at the Music Hall for an audience of friends, families and guests.

The project invited pupils to engage with opera through an accessible, fun approach, introducing them to an art form which is often perceived as elitist. For most of the children and their families, it was the first time they had ever set foot in the Music Hall, affording us an opportunity to make everyone feel welcome, breaking down perceived barriers to accessing our buildings. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the experience, with each school creating their own unique, 10-minute snappy opera, performed brilliantly on stage. Taking part helped develop self-confidence, teamwork, creative thinking, music making, performance, reading and writing skills and inspired pupils and teachers to continue a journey exploring further opportunities for creative and music making.

Feedback from teachers:

- 'Can you pass on my massive thanks to Jess, Eleanor, Lavie and Rosie for all their hard work with my class. It was such a massive undertaking, and they were just amazing. My class definitely have their challenges and they took it all in their stride. My 5s loved every session and they were gutted when it was a week where they didn't come in!'
- 'Fantastic! A chance to make real music in a real setting (that none of my class had ever been to) supported by professionals. What a way to encourage children into the arts.'
- 'Huge confidence boost, being on stage, performing for a large audience. Improved resilience, workshopping and developing a performance. Self and peer feedback improved throughout the term. Renewed interest in music-making (and increased uptake of instrumental lessons).'
- 'Many children in our setting never aspire to get on stage and perform for others and this will be one of these things that many will remember for the rest of their lives.'
- 'Throughout the experience, the children were engaged. In allowed the pupils to grow in confidence and perform to a live audience. The opportunity to perform, for free, was great as it allowed all to participate'.

Feedback from young people:

- 'Amazing! I loved being on stage in front of so many people and singing for them.'
- 'I felt really confident getting on stage and doing our opera for my family. We worked really hard but it was totally worth it.'
- 'The concert hall was really big and scary and I was worried about standing on it in front of everyone, but we did lots of practise and when we had to perform for the audience we just did it and it was amazing!'

Please also see link to Light the Blue Snappy Operas video in Support Material.

Employment

Please give us a bit more information about your volunteers, if you have any:

- What roles do your volunteers undertake within the organisation?
- Training and Policy in action?
- Example of volunteer success stories such as transition to employment?

Our main volunteers undertake the roles of Tour Guide and Archivist. Our Board members are also volunteers. This year we added two new volunteers to our tour guide pool, and further updated our tour guide script, training and supporting our volunteer tour guides on updates within the organisation, so that our public tours can incorporate current information about our venues and organisation as well as the history of the venues.

Volunteer success stories:

We had visitors from far and wide, including America, as part of a health and wellness trip to Scotland. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and there are dates in the diary for a return trip. We also welcomed a group of students from France who are studying English Literature. Our volunteer tour guides tailored the tour to include insights into the performances that have been on our stage.

We hosted a dementia-friendly guided tour at The Music Hall, designed to be inclusive and accessible, allowing participants to experience the venue in a comfortable and supportive environment. Following the tour, our archivist Alan hosted a tea and chat session, providing an opportunity for attendees to share their memories and stories. Participants expressed their gratitude for the compassionate and respectful way the tour was conducted. This success has encouraged us to expand our work with Alzheimer's Scotland,

Most of our tour guides have traditionally led tours exclusively at His Majesty's Theatre. However, the success of our recent Music Hall tour has demonstrated the potential for our volunteers to diversify their expertise. We are currently in the process of reviewing and fine-tuning the tour script to train more of our volunteers to lead tours at The Music Hall.

Training and policy in action: In 2023/24 we have placed a particular focus on creating development opportunities internally for our team. This has involved creating secondment and development roles across various departments for internal staff only, allowing and encouraging more cross-departmental working, which has resulted in the upskilling of key members of our team, providing more part time and full time opportunities, developing career paths, and improving understanding cross-departmentally.

Artists/ Creative practitioners Opportunities:

Please provide further detail on examples of projects or programmes which have created employment opportunities for local residents, artists and or creative practitioners.

Our co-production of *Dracula: Mina's Reckoning*, our support of Aye Tunes' *My Doric Diary* and a presentation of a work in progress by local playwright Laura Miller, all provided employment opportunities for artists and creatives hailing from the North-east, and importantly provided a platform for North-east stories to be shared on stage and on tour.

We delivered two cabarets, *Eat the Rich*, and *Everyone is Welcome Here*, for the LGBT+ community. Both cabarets commissioned new work and provided a platform for early career artists to perform, developing production, performance and stage skills with the support of a professional team. Early career producers and stage managers from the LGBT+ community were employed to help sustain and bolster their career opportunities in the region.

Across our Youth Theatre, *Beats & Rhymes* and *Early Years* music provision, we employ young or early career Creative Assistants who will gain knowledge and skills supporting our experienced directors and tutors in delivery of workshops to children and young people. All our Creative Engagement workshop provision is delivered by local creative practitioners.

Light The Blue engaged two early career Assistant Producers employed to support our Festival Producer in the programming, production, logistics and delivery of the festival from March until festival end. The festival also engaged local creatives to support the delivery of the *Snappy Operas* project across 4 primary schools in the city. The wider festival programme included collaborative projects with a range of local arts partners with many artists and creative practitioners employed to deliver performances, workshops or projects.

Granite Noir employs two festival interns who providing critical support to the festival programming and marketing teams, delivering key author liaison tasks, and gaining invaluable skills and experiences working alongside our experienced team. The festival supported local writers through the *Locals in the Limelight* strand and the new *Short Story Competition*. We commissioned local theatre company *Ten Feet Tall Theatre* who produced "*Scared to Death*" in the *Anatomy Rooms*, telling the true story of a brutal crime from the history of the city.

Rise Up! Festival is delivered in partnership with *We Are Here Scotland* and this support ensures opportunities for Black and People of Colour creatives, artists and practitioners in producing, programming and delivering the festival alongside opportunities for local BPOC artists to perform on our stages and deliver panels and workshops. The festival offers networking opportunities and a springboard for further opportunities, strengthening the cultural ecology for the BPOC community in the north-east of Scotland.

We work in partnership with *HOURS*, two early career local producers, djs and hip-hop artists. With our support, *HOURS* produce events at the *Lemon Tree* which give a platform to and showcase the work of local up and coming musicians in the genre of hip-hop, rap and drill.

Our series of zine making workshops were delivered by two local artists.

As part of *Book Week Scotland*, we engaged three local writers to perform and showcase their work.

We delivered a *Loud Poets Masterclass* and showcase which was facilitated and hosted by two local poets.

We commissioned local musicians to create new work as part of our *Jam for Climate Justice* event during *Climate Week North East*.

Our monthly *True North Sessions* offered an opportunity for local musicians to perform and showcase their work in *Big Sky Studio* at the *Music Hall*, supported by our professional technical team and with marketing across all our platforms to raise their profile with our audiences.

We commission artists to create new work for exhibition in our gallery space at the *Music Hall*. In 2023/24 we commissioned work from 3 local artists. Additionally, our digital exhibition space, the *stepping in screen* in the *Music Hall* foyer offers opportunities for North-East based artists to exhibit their work.

SECTION 2 – Audiences, Participants and Investment

Please complete this section to report on the number of participants from each of the identified areas who have participated during the year.

Audiences	Target (22/23)	Total (23/24)
Total visitor Number	1,200,000	1,360,000
Total Audience Number	356,408	363,709
Audience number from Aberdeen City	153,037	160,932
Audience number from the wider region or further	200,952	198,441
% of audience survey rating experience as 'excellent' or 'good'	96%	94%
<i>The above may not be relevant to your organisation or known – however if you use ticket/box office analysis, visitor books, audience surveys, event impacts studies etc. it should be fairly straight forward to complete.</i>	-	-

Audience broken down to Age groups	Target (22/23)	Total (23/24)
Aged 0-5	-	-
Aged 6-15	-	-
Aged 16-24	-	1%
Aged 25-44	-	14%
Aged 45-64	-	51%
Aged 65-74	-	26%
Aged 75+	-	8%
Unknown/ Not Age Specific	-	-

Participants	Target (22/23)	Total (23/24)
Total number of participatory opportunities created throughout programme	-	9,393
Number of participatory opportunities by Age group		
Aged 0-5	-	1,800
Aged 6-15	-	3,308
Aged 16-24	-	1,000
Aged 25-44	-	-
Aged 45-64	-	150
Aged 65-74	-	150
Aged 75+	-	150
Unknown/ Not Age Specific	-	2,835
Number of participatory opportunities for target groups		
Age	-	6,250
Disability	-	308
Gender Reassignment	-	27
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-
Race	-	260
Religion or Belief	-	-
Sex	-	-
Sexual Orientation	-	27
Low income / income poverty – those who cannot afford regular bills, food, clothing payments.	-	1,500
Material deprivation – those who cannot access basic goods and services, unable to repair/replace broken electrical goods, heat their homes or access to leisure or hobbies	-	1,500
Area deprivation – consider where people live and where they work (accessibility and cost of transport)	-	1500
Socio-economic background – social class, parents' education, employment, income.	-	1500
<i>Please note these are specifically 'targeted' opportunities aimed at reaching the above groups</i>		

Income 2023/24	Total £
Value of Grant(s) from Aberdeen City Council	£ 1,011,000
External Grant funding	
External Grant funding	£ 337,453
Sponsorship	£ -
Trading income	£ 1,930,365
Other (please specify)	
Earned Income (Ticket Sales)	£ 8,574,907
Theatre Tax Relief & Gift Aid	£ 31,645
Donations	£ 59,541
Total add income	£ 10,933,911

Section 3 – Support Material

We recommend you provide up to five items of support material to help demonstrate the quality and impact of your activity. This may include; case studies, photographs, videos, web links, publications, marketing material, reports, participant testimonials and feedback. If emailing please keep all support material to under 5mb. Please supply details on your support material below

Please note that any material submitted may be included within an annual Cultural Investment report and/or material promoting the Creative Funding programme. By submitting this you are providing permission for each item to be used for publication. You should ensure you have the creators consent and accreditation is provided where necessary.

Support Material 1:	Summer 2023 Season Brochure
Support Material 2:	Dracula: Mina's Reckoning
Support Material 3:	Light The Blue 2023 Snappy Operas Project
Support Material 4:	Beats&Rhymes Sharing 2023.pptx
Support Material 5:	Rise Up 2023

Section 4- Declaration on use of information

Aberdeen City Council collects and maintains the data on this form about your organisation for the purpose of contacting you in relation to the funding, monitoring purposes and to collate information for statistical and audit purposes. We will retain Personal Data for six years in accordance with the organisation's Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and for the purpose of administering, processing and assessing your report.

For the purposes of processing this information Aberdeen City Council is the Data Controller. The Information Commissioner Office is the UK's regulator of data protection law (www.ico.org.uk). More information about all of the rights you have is available on our website at: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/your-data>.

Whenever the Council processes personal data we need to make sure we have a basis for doing so. We understand our basis in GDPR to be Article 6(1)(e) as we consider that it is in our public task to collect this information under our powers set down in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act, 1982 section 14, as amended by section 128 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994. The act provides for us doing or contributing towards the expenses of providing or doing, anything necessary or expedient for the purpose of ensuring that there are facilities available for recreational, sporting, cultural or social activities as we consider appropriate.

To confirm that all information included in this report is accurate and that you have read and followed the terms and conditions, please sign and date below. If submitting by email an electronic signature or the typed name of the appropriate contact should be inserted.

Name:

Date:

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

ALEO – ANNUAL REPORT

ORGANISATION:	Aberdeen Sports Village <i>Important note – ASV’s financial year (referred to as the <u>contract year</u> in the Joint Venture Agreement) starts on the 1st August and ends on the 31st July. The information provided in this report is for contract year 2023 - 2024</i>
REPORT COMPLETED BY:	Ludwik Metelski
DATE:	30 th August 2024

SECTION 1 - Outcomes and outputs



Please provide a qualitative summary of outcomes, outputs, activities undertaken and progress made to date:
<p>Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) is a Joint Venture between Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and the University of Aberdeen (UoA) with each partner owning a 50% shareholding in ASV Ltd. Both ACC and UoA provide equal funding to ASV which has provided stability to its service delivery in very uncertain times.</p> <p>In Contract year 2023/24 (August 23 – July 24) ASV had a very strong performance, against a backdrop of a turbulent economy, increased energy costs and a cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Despite this turbulence, ASV remained focussed on supporting the local community, in terms of physical activity participation levels, providing affordable services to all and ensuring good access to schools, sporting clubs, students and our evergreen customers. The majority of ASV targets, outcomes and outputs have been reviewed and will continue to evolve around its strategic commitments but pleased to report that in most of its performance indicators, ASV continues to deliver on behalf of the city.</p> <p>This report will share the successes and progress made in this year and highlight ASV’s contribution to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).</p> <p>Encouraging the citizens of Aberdeen to be engaged in a sport, at any level and being physically active remains a city priority. ASV plays an important role in facilitating and improving the physical and mental health of communities but perhaps not widely recognised, it makes a positive economic impact on the city by the number of sporting events it brings and hosts in our city.</p> <p>ASV shares the city objectives of encouraging healthy and active lifestyle choices for all; continually identifying and developing relationships with those from varied backgrounds and groups of individuals with health concerns; and supporting wider social issues such as child obesity, underprivileged families, and adult loneliness. These key areas were identified through close partnership working with Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership.</p>




Performance indicators:

This is the quantitative progress you have made in meeting targets over the year. These were agreed in your business plan / development plan and should be confirmed in your first quarterly meeting with your Lead Officer
PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE BASELINE OR TARGET FIGURES.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

23-24

	Target	Measure
1. For Everyone in the Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet income target for all of ASV Sport Meet targets for ASV aquatics memberships Meet targets for sports camps registrations 	£762,300 1,900 members 630 camp registrations	£811,272 Partially achieved (1,783 @ highest) Achieved 735
2. For Club Sport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet targets for all sport and partner club memberships Meet target for income from Community Sport, Events & Training Camps and Education 	350 club members £665,700	Achieved (358 @ highest) Achieved (£770,557)
3. For Performance Sport: Meet membership targets across all performance programmes, and support athletes to National programmes	150 performance development athletes	Achieved (174)
4. For Student Sport: Home of Sport for the University of Aberdeen sports clubs – club training and University events	Host 35 student clubs & 5 student events	Achieved 39 clubs & 5 events)
5. Events & Training Camps: Host a balanced programme of events at ASV	140 events (10 National events, 10 National camps & 1 International event)	Achieved 179 events; 27 National events, 6 National camps & 1 International event)
6. Telling our Story: Implement a system of showcasing good news stories and sharing achievements and new community initiatives	Telling our Story – on-going updates	On-going regular updates on our website
		
1. Staff will be trained as ‘mental health champions’	10% of staff	Achieved
2. Annual staff engagement survey. Create and deliver on the action plan	November 23	Ongoing
3. Real Living Wage operator	May 2024	Achieved
4. Invest in our staff training academy and invest in the training and development of our people	3% of staff costs to invest in training	Achieved
5. Know the make-up of our diverse team (gender, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability or health	August 23	Achieved

condition, working patterns. Report the findings to our team and take action accordingly		
PROMOTING GROWTH AND INNOVATION 		
1. Implement a new Financial Management System	September 2023	Achieved
2. Total Members (inclusive of sport)	9,000	10,209
3. Average membership yield	£25.00	£25.93
4. Membership Income	£2.1 million	£2.2million
5. Average length of membership	20.5	21.72
WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE 		
1 Achieve a clean external Health and safety audit	Clean Audit	Achieved
2. Meet all HASAW targets detailed in the quarterly report	100%	Achieved
3. Achieve pool water management best practice	100%	Achieved
4. Achieve a clean financial audit report	Clean Audit	Audit due Oct '24
5. Achieve a balanced budget	Balanced budget	Achieved (£22,000+)
SAVING THE PLANET – PLAYING OUR PART 		
1. Implement a carbon reduction plan to reduce our carbon footprint of 785.3 tonnes of CO2e	July 2024	Achieved
2. Implement a programme to replace lights with energy saving LED light	July 2024	Ongoing – replacement program underway
3. Reduce overall waste by 50% and increase recycling levels.	July 2024	Ongoing
4. Investigate options for alternative renewable energy sources	July 2024	Complete
5.Reduce utility consumption (water, heat, electricity)	By 5% per year	Ongoing 10% electricity

If you have not met the targets set please give any reasons or explanation for this:

ASV's performance in 2023-24 exceeded expectations in terms of growth in the majority of products and services on offer.

Please provide a summary of particular successes or case studies:

Since launching, ASV has excelled at addressing many of the social issues and challenges that impact health and wellbeing. ASV has identified a range of community needs in relation to sport and physical activity, recognising not only the important role it plays in improving physical health, but also the social, mental health, and wellbeing benefits, and the economic impact on the city.

Our strategic objectives include encouraging healthy and active lifestyle choices for all; continually identifying and developing relationships with those from varied backgrounds and groups of individuals with health concerns;

and supporting wider social issues such as child obesity, underprivileged families, and adult loneliness. These key areas were identified through close partnership working with Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership.

ASV aims to break down barriers with our programmes, believing in diversity, inclusivity, and being an accessible place for the whole community. ASV is committed to reducing barriers to participation and ensuring that programmes are accessible for all, regardless of their situation. ASV developed several initiatives focused on reducing barriers to participation, such as:

1. HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

- **ASV Children's Programme:** introduces children, including those with disabilities, to sport in a fun and safe environment.
- **ASV Children's Sports Camps:** 10 weeks of multi-sport, full week camps; every week of the school holidays.
- **ASV Sports Specific Camps:** a number of focussed camps for all pathway levels in swimming, diving, football and athletics.
- **Partnership Camps:** collaborative delivery with other partner organisations and professional sports bodies, including free football and activities in partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust and the Russell Anderson Foundation, whereby children from the SIMD areas in ASV's locale were offered free sport's coaching, with food provided by ASV; plus ASV co-ordinated the Denis Law Legacy Trust Community Festival, providing free opportunities for over 1,600 people to participate.
- **Summer/Easter of Play:** The Scottish Government provided local authorities with significant funding to deliver Summer/Easter of Play, to help improve the wellbeing of children and young people over the summer holiday period. As a participating partner, and through accessing the government funding via ACC, ASV provided the activities with a key focus on food and activity for young people to further promote healthy and fun activity, whilst also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of families during the summer holiday period, and providing over 180 free meals.
- During the 2024 summer holidays, ASV delivered activity to 1,851 children which totalled over **20,000 hours of physical activity**.
- ASV (either directly or in partnership) provided **1,900 meals** to children from our local community during the summer school holidays



2. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

ASV enhanced its relationships with the primary schools within their local cluster area, supporting the following school usage during 2023/2024 (table indicates the number of pupil participants):

P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	TOTAL
136	664	1210	835	1934	4297	1281	10,357

This is an increase from 9,288 in 2022-23.

2. SENIORS PROGRAMME

- The community programmes at ASV also help to provide stability and routine in many people’s lives; loneliness and isolation is becoming a concerning issue for older adults, with over half of all people aged over 75 now living alone.
- ASV’s **Evergreens Programme** introduces older adults to group exercise and sporting activities, giving them to chance to socialise and make friends; it has been hugely successful in offering accessible, friendly, fitness options to adults aged over 60.
- Our low-cost Evergreens membership, launched in 2016, now has 1,236 members.
- While many local and national leisure facilities focus on the 65+ age group, the ASV Evergreen program is designed for those aged 60 and above. Engaging individuals in wellness programs earlier, starting at 60, can help prevent or manage age-related health issues more effectively. This proactive approach supports healthier aging by encouraging regular physical activity, social engagement, and mental stimulation before significant age-related declines begin. The current generation entering their 60s often have different expectations for their retirement years compared to previous generations. Many are more active and interested in maintaining a high quality of life, so offering programs at 60 can cater to these evolving expectations.
- Our Evergreens program offers 23 dedicated group exercise classes and 8 sports sessions each week, tailored to those aged 60 and over. These include weightlifting, metCon, studio cycling, Pilates, Zumba, yoga, pickleball, table tennis, netball, and badminton. Each activity is designed to enhance muscle strength, balance, and overall fitness, while also fostering social interaction and a sense of community among participants.
- ASV are excited to report that in 2023-24, ASV saw a remarkable 122,527 bookings for our Evergreen programs and activities, marking a substantial increase from the previous year. This significant rise highlights the growing popularity and value of our offerings, reflecting our members' enthusiasm and commitment to staying active and engaged. The increase not only demonstrates the success of our diverse range of activities but also underscores the positive impact we're having on the lives of older adults in our community.
- In addition to our group exercise and sports sessions for Evergreens, we offer specialised fall prevention classes, including "Stable & Able" and "Chair-Based exercise". These classes are specifically designed to target the key areas that contribute to fall risk, such as balance, coordination, and core strength. These classes offer more than just physical benefits—our "Stable and Able" group also enjoys a coffee morning before each session, providing valuable social interaction. This social time fosters a sense of community and connection, making the experience both physically and emotionally enriching.
- Along with our group classes, we also offer one-on-one personal training for our Evergreen members. We currently have 22 Evergreen members taking advantage of this service. Our trainers are specially qualified in exercise for older adults and have additional training in working with conditions like Parkinson's. This means they can create personalised workouts that really make a difference for older adults, helping them stay strong, active, and healthy.

- Christmas 2023 marked the return of our popular Evergreens Christmas lunch, where we hosted 70 Evergreens in our café and guests enjoyed a full Christmas dinner. Festive games followed creating a joyful and memorable celebration and experience.
- In 2024, ASV introduced our first Evergreen Wellbeing Week, adding a variety of new activities to our regular schedule. This week featured breathing workshops, walking groups, first aid sessions, a seminar on healthy habits at 60, and nutrition seminars. These additions were fantastic because they provided our Evergreen members with a holistic approach to their well-being, covering everything from physical fitness to essential life skills and healthy living tips.

3. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: ASV ENERGISERS



- In collaboration with the business sector and local sports clubs, ASV continued to develop the ASV Energisers programme for local primary schools this year
- The initiative provided free afterschool sport, food, heat, shower facilities and sports equipment (swimming costumes and goggles) to children from the local area
- The primary school reach included Sunnybank, Woodside, Seaton, Kittybrewster, St Peters, Riverbank, Cornhill, Greenbrae, Walker Road, Ashley Road, Middleton Park and Mile End
- Autumn Term 2023: 28 children took part in athletics, with 140 free meals provided
- Winter Term 2024: 130 children took part in learn to swim, athletics and football, with 1,002 free meals and fresh fruit provided
- Spring Term 2024: 120 children took part 1098 meals and fruit provided
- Summer Term 2024: 76 children took part, 403 meals and fruit provided
- Total of 354 children and 2,643 free meals
- 27 students from NESCOL delivered the coaching, providing the students with valuable work experience
- Supported financially by Global E&C

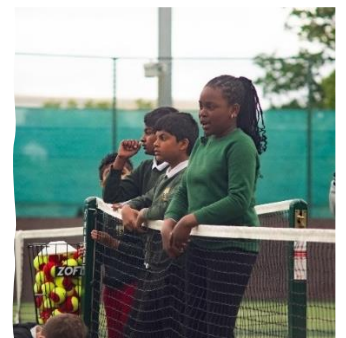
4. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: THE LINKS NURSERY

- Working in partnership with Excellence and Equity Practitioners to break down barriers for pre-school participation in sport
- Now in its second year, this programme continues to provide pre-school children attending the Links Nursery with access to free activities each week at ASV
- Activities include blocks of learn to swim for 15 x 3-5 year olds each term.
- During 2023 / 2024, the project provided at least 1 block of 5 weeks of swimming lessons for 72 x 3 – 5 year old children
- To help sustain this project, ASV secured further sponsorship from TEXO which will not only provide financial support, but will provide swimwear for children and assistants.



5. NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: THE HOME OF COMMUNITY SPORT

- Following a successful initial pilot programme, the Home of Community Sport initiative built great momentum this year, with continued liaison with the local primary schools within the St Machar cluster; to provide free sporting activity during the school day (including facilities, transport and coaching)
- Schools participating included Kittybrewster, Sunnybank, Riverbank, St Peters, Seaton and Cornhill primaries
- Autumn Term 2023: a group of children with Additional Support Needs (S2-S5) participated in table tennis sessions, in partnership with the Aberdeen District Table Tennis Association
- Winter Term 2023: 757 children, 3,250 participations, variety of sports
- Spring Term 2024: 250 children, 1,166 participations, including learn to swim
- Summer Term 2024: 297 children, 1440 participations, including learn to swim and tennis
- Partnerships included local clubs, University clubs, and NESCOL (with 80 students gaining coaching experience)
- The project also included an ASV football festival
- The project has attracted some great feedback, “Students have come on leaps and bounds since the programme first started. They started off needing a lot of direction but have gradually progressed to now coming to sessions with their own plans and drills. Keep up the good work guys!” (David Duncan, Hermes FC & We Make Footballers)
- The project was officially launched in February 2024



6. DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP: NESCOL

- To support the delivery of sport for everyone in the community, ASV and the North East Scotland College (NESCOL) have developed a partnership whereby NESCOL students receive vital practical experience of coaching through the ASV community schools projects, whilst working towards vocational qualifications.

- The partnership has already led to several students being offered paid opportunities, with future plans to develop this further as ASV becomes the main preferred placement provider for the college students.
- As part of this partnership, students receive mentorship during the coaching, which is provided by either ASV, or a partner club or organisation. This year staff, and volunteers from ASV, Aberdeen Amateur Athletics Club, Hermes Bridge of Don and We Make Footballers have all provided key mentorship to local students.



- Through this partnership ASV provided 27 students with work placement experience in the ASV Energiser Programme, and a further 60 students received experience providing coaching to 7 local primary schools at ASV (Seaton, St Peters, Sunnybank, Riverbank, Woodside, Kittybrewster, Cornhil).

7. ASV AQUATICS PROGRAMMES

- ASV delivers the Scottish Swimming Framework for Learn to Swim and Learn to Dive, for all ages and abilities.
- An average of 1,382 Learn to Swim members, a growth of 11% in comparison to the previous year.
- A series of intensive learn to swim blocks throughout the school holidays and recruitment of additional assistant swimming teacher should ensure additional capacity for the programme to continue to grow.
- With a partnership now in place with Dyce ASV swimming club, ASV can offer the whole pathway for swimming from adult and child, through learn to swim, progression into the Dyce squads, who are partner members of the performance swimming programme; the Dyce Head Coach has remarked on the excellent standard of the swimmers coming through the pathway from ASV.
- An average of 284 Learn to Dive and Diving Club members, an increase of 10% in comparison to the previous year.
- A series of intensive learn to dive blocks, squad training camps and private lessons ensure that the diving programme continues to operate a strong pathway for progression from Dive Skills 1 to the World stage.

8. EVENTS

ASV prides itself in the delivery of events. Working with key stakeholders across the UK, ASV has become one of the go-to places when looking to host events. We are proud of our ability to attract and then retain events year on year due to the experience we provide.

- 179 events hosted at ASV during 2023–2024, including 1 International, 27 national events and training camps, 82 regional and 5 University events
- Key Events included:

- Scottish Athletics National Age Group Championships: 700 athletes
- Katoni Cup: 6th year at ASV, 8 Scottish Premier League boys teams from across Scotland
- Scottish Schools Biathlon Championships: 50 children, qualifier for British championships
- Scottish Swimming Summer Meet: 4 days, 750 attendees daily
- University of Aberdeen Underwater Hockey Club: the annual Gowlands Cup, 13 UK teams

In partnership with the PEPAS group (physical education, physical activity and sport), ASV hosted and supported the delivery of the [Aberdeen Daily Mile Event](#). The event attracted over 2,000 young people from 48 Aberdeen city primary schools, for 15 minutes of activity at their own pace, on the ASV outdoor track, with the Daily Mile demonstrating its ability to enhance the physical, social and mental wellbeing of the children.

ASV then provided a follow-up session in collaboration with the Russell Anderson Foundation, for any pupil who had missed the original 'Daily Mile Event', with pupils from 5 additional schools attending.

The inspirational [Parasport Festival](#) returned to ASV in September 2023; 60 young people took part in this festival, organised by Scottish Disability Sport, providing opportunities for young people with disabilities to try a variety of sports, including swimming, kayaking, athletics, wheelchair basketball, table tennis, judo and boccia.



ASV hosted the opening round of the [Netball Scotland Scottish Super Cup Tournament](#), with 4 teams, comprising all national and development players, competing in the tournament.

In February 2024, ASV hosted the **British Para-Swimming Winter National and Great Britain Para-Swimming World Series**. The first leg of the 2024 World Para Series started with 5 days of competition in Aberdeen, prior to heading to Australia:

- 150 swimmers from 17 nations attended the event (along with 3 local athletes competing), that saw Team GB win 22 medals.
- The event had a major impact on the city during the week of competition, with 840 bed-nights across 3 hotels for the teams and a further 750 bed-nights for event staff and families, with around 300 spectators attending the Aquatics Centre each day.
- In collaboration with GB Aquatics and Premier Coaches (as part of the Home of Community Sport), ASV organised for 90 children from local schools to attend the opening heats of the World Series, providing a fantastic opportunity to see athletes perform on the world stage, as well as 15 members of the Finding your Fee amputee group attending.
- GB Aquatics commented: *“I couldn’t praise Aberdeen more for how much support and hard work that was put in by you and the team to make the event a success.”*

ASV hosted the **Scottish National Age Group Swimming Championships** in April 2024 – 5 days of competition, with 1,003 swimmers from across 93 Scottish clubs, plus around 330 spectators attending each of the 3 daily sessions. Once again, the city impact of the event was demonstrated throughout the week of competition, with 178 of the participants coming from a non AB postcode and living locally for the 5 day competition



The **Scottish National Age Group Diving Championships** were also held at the Aquatics Centre in April 2024 - 3 days of competition, 126 divers from 5 clubs, with the overall Thistle Trophy being won by the Aberdeen Diving Club.



ASV is a unique venue that has the facilities to attract a variety of **training camps** to Aberdeen. In addition to the world-class facilities, in partnering with Visit Aberdeenshire, UoA and local accommodation providers, ASV can provide the complete camp package. The Swimming Performance Analysis System that has been installed at ASV will generate international interest in hosting camps in Aberdeen.

Training camps this year have included the Swimming Senior and Youth squads, the Scottish Water Polo Girls and Mens.

9. DENIS LAW LEGACY TRUST COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

- This community festival was hosted by ASV in July 2024, in partnership with generous support from a number of local and national agencies, including Aberdeen City Council as part of the Festival of the Sea
- The festival provides free sport and activity opportunities, enabling more than 1,050 people to participate in a variety of sports
- Festival activities included tournaments for all ages and abilities including disability, girls, corporate 7s
- Family sports sessions included fun family sessions in badminton, table tennis, squash, pickleball and swimming
- 120 free meals were provided as part of the ASV Energisers within the festival
- In partnership with the Festival of the sea and funding from ACC, 23 children achieved their water smart award, 317 free family swims and 40 shallow water swims were provided during the festival



10. PARTNERSHIP: AFC / THE ASV MATCHDAY CLUB

The ASV Matchday offers individuals and groups the opportunity to experience Aberdeen FC home matches and Aberdeen Sports Village on matchdays. The programme is targeted towards families and groups as a reward, incentive or to support access to physical activity and football matches for those who otherwise would not be able to attend these venues. Target groups included families in the local community who are suffering from socio-economic issues due to a number of reasons, such as social exclusion, financial hardship or other disadvantages.

ASV hosted 16 ASV Matchday experiences, providing 156 people with a match ticket, and the opportunity to experience the facilities at ASV, including groups from Community Integrated Care, Family Learning, National Childbirth Trust, the Russell Anderson Foundation and AberNecessities.

11. PARTNERSHIP: ABERDEEN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Following a trial pilot programme in the previous year, ASV successful secured Public Equity Funding (PEF) to continue with these sessions for the 2023–2024 school year.

ASV provided free learn to swim lessons for all pupils who attend the Aberdeen School for the Deaf. Throughout the year we provided the school with 31 x 30 minute swimming lessons

The programme included ASV staff receiving training from the school and also through the institute for swimming to ensure teachers were supported to communicate as best as possible with those attending and to ensure that the children received the best experience.

12. TARGETED GROUPS

ASV is passionate about ensuring that sport and physical activity is available to all. We are actively part of the ACHSCP'S Stay Well, Stay Connected programme and the Physical Activity Huddle, to develop and deliver programmes to support early intervention for those in need, including:

- Older Adults
- Community Groups
- Finding Your Feet
- Poverty and Low income families
- Those with Additional Support Needs
- St Machar Academy ASG Pupils
- Low Income Families

13. CARDIAC REFERRAL PROGRAMME

ASV has partnered with the Aberdeen Community Health and Care Village to deliver the NHS Cardiac Referral Programme, a crucial initiative aimed at supporting individuals who have recently experienced heart-related health issues. This referral program was specifically designed to create a clear and supportive pathway for patients recovering from a heart attack (myocardial infarction), newly diagnosed angina, heart bypass surgery, or stent procedures. We've seen a 30% increase in participation in the NHS Cardiac Referral Programme, not due to a rise in the number of individuals with heart conditions, but because of improved communication and outreach efforts by the instructors Donal Pirie and Jackie Schum who deliver the program. Enhanced coordination and clearer information have made it easier for patients to engage with our program and access the support they need. This growth reflects our commitment to effectively connecting with and serving our community, ensuring that more individuals benefit from our tailored health and fitness resources

Regular attendees benefit from weekly sessions that are integral to their ongoing recovery and long-term well-being. By providing a structured environment and expert guidance, ASV supports these individuals in adopting and maintaining an active lifestyle, ultimately aiding their recovery and promoting better heart health. This collaborative effort underscores our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for those with cardiac conditions and fostering a community where health and wellness are prioritised.

14. PARTNERSHIP: FINDING YOUR FEET

Last year ASV started supporting a group of local amputees with free weekly Personal Training sessions. The 'Finding Your Feet' charity support families affected by amputation or limb absence through a range of sporting initiatives and social inclusion projects designed to positively affect both physical and mental wellbeing. Isolation is a huge problem for many amputees. It has been proven that quality of life and even life expectancy is greatly reduced without social inclusion, with as many as 30% of vascular amputees not surviving to one-year post amputation.

The ASV "Finding Your Feet" program has continued to thrive, evolving from a small group of amputees attending a weekly group PT session to a vibrant community of 14 participants. Not only are they now enjoying their regular gym sessions, but they've also embraced swimming and table tennis as part of their routine. In an inspiring demonstration of their commitment, the group raised £2,431 for amputee support across Scotland by swimming the distance of the English Channel.



In October 2023, Tracy Stainer, our dedicated personal trainer, received national recognition for her exceptional work with amputees. She was honoured with the "Unsung Hero" award at the Variety Club Sports Disability Awards for her efforts to make sport more inclusive and diverse. Tracy was thrilled to celebrate this achievement with the class, showcasing the profound impact her work has had on the lives of those she trains.

15. ABERDEEN CITY HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

ASV are supporting 'The Stay Well Stay Connected' program which is aimed at preventing ill health by adopting early intervention.

ASV provide a tailored opportunity for adults aged 45 and over, including those with long-term health conditions or disabilities, to become more active through our comprehensive support program. This initiative, open to individuals nominated by their Link Practitioner, includes a FREE 3-month fitness membership and a personalised approach to fostering lifestyle changes.

The program features:

- A one-on-one lifestyle consultation with one of our experienced trainers, which can be accompanied by a Primary Care Link Practitioner if needed for the initial session.
- Complimentary access to our gym facilities, swimming pool, fitness classes, and sports sessions, allowing participants to choose activities that best suit their interests and fitness goals.
- Our ongoing support ensures that participants receive the guidance and encouragement they need to achieve and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

Wellbeing

ASV recently launched a Mental Health Awareness Week during the month of May; National Mental Health Awareness Month. We offered a diverse range of free classes and workshops to the entire city. The event featured Qi Gong, yoga, breathing workshops, stability fit sessions, and nutrition seminars, all aimed at promoting mental well-being and resilience. This comprehensive approach provided valuable tools and techniques for managing stress, enhancing stability, and improving overall health. With over 300 participants

across the week, the high levels of participation highlighted the community's strong demand for such resources and highlighted our commitment to fostering mental and physical wellness. For ASV, this successful initiative reinforced our role as a leading advocate for wellbeing and demonstrated our dedication to supporting and enriching the lives of the citizens of Aberdeen.

16. PERFORMANCE SPORT

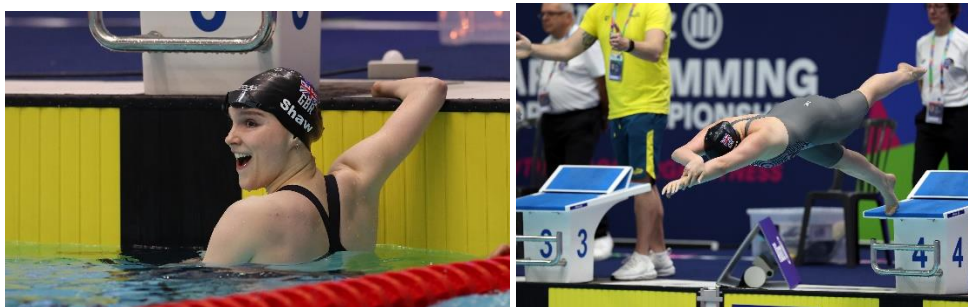
Athletes across all performance programmes enjoyed a terrific year of development and outstanding performances, representing Aberdeen on the national and world stage.

- **ASV Table Tennis Academy** had a very successful season, with a flurry of outstanding achievements, including:
- A clean-sweep at the Scottish Primary Schools' (age group) Championships, winning all 4 available titles, leaving as boys and girls singles and doubles champions, with a further 2 silvers
- 2 Academy players captaining their respective Scottish teams to silver medals in the UK Primary Schools' Championships
- 5 Scottish National age group titles at the National Championships, plus further doubles gold medals
- 6 players represented Scotland at the UK Senior Schools Championships
- 3 players selected to represent Scotland at the 2024 European Youth Championships in Sweden in July



- The **University of Aberdeen Performance Swimming** programme is a national performance pathway programme that provides a world-class training environment to athletes, from development to elite, based at ASV. The 2023-2024 season was extremely challenging, with the programme facing a funding reduction of £94k. This necessitated the implementation of completely new partnership and operational models, with the 2023-2024 season serving as a 'transition season' to fully implement and embed the new working arrangements. By working in close partnership with the University of Aberdeen, ASV and Scottish Swimming, the programme continues to thrive as a sustainable and effective programme.
- In addition to providing 25 hours of training for 90 members each week, the club provides development camps for younger swimmers, technical sessions and coaches forums.
- In August 2023, the club enjoyed outstanding performances at the World Para Swimming Championships, with Toni Shaw (S9) winning a bronze medal and Faye Rogers (S10) winning a gold and 2 bronze medals.

- 13 athletes reaching finals and achieving podium finishes at the Scottish National Short Course Championships
- An outstanding performance at this years' British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Short Course Championships, where Aberdeen finished 8th swimming team overall, and 3rd para swimming team overall, with Toni Shaw being awarded the title of top female para swimmer.



- Faye Rogers's stunning season included 2 British, 2 European and 1 World Record, across 100m fly, 200m fly and 400m freestyle.
- Tom Beeley won a silver medal at the British Championships and Toni and Faye's tremendous podium performances securing their selection for Team GB at the Paris Paralympics.



- **Aberdeen Diving Club** produced some excellent individual and team performances this season:
- 61 divers from Aberdeen Diving Club attended the Scottish Diving Levels competitions, with athletes winning 10 gold, 13 silver and 9 bronze medals.
- Noah Penman was selected to compete in the Junior European Championships in Croatia in August 2023, winning his first (silver) medal at an international meet. He then competed for Team GB at the Dresden Youth International, where he secured a further silver medal with a huge personal best performance.



- The club had divers taking part in the Swim England and Scottish Swimming Talent Games, representing Scotland in Eindhoven and a large group competing at the Irish Open Diving Championships, where they won 10 gold, 8 silver and 6 bronze medals



- In **Athletics**, 5 senior women from partner club Aberdeen Amateur Athletic Club (AAAC) represented Scotland at a Loughborough International meet, with a further 2 from other local clubs. Of those athletes, 4 are University alumni, and 2 are ASV Sports Camp Leaders.

17. INSPIRATIONAL INDIVIDUALS

This is **Tracy**; a Personal Trainer at ASV. Tracy was shortlisted by Scottish Disability Sport for her Service to Sport.

In addition, ASV was shortlisted for the Variety Club Disability Sport Awards in 2 categories: Accessible Sporting Venue (UK) and Tracy for Unsung Hero. These nominations acknowledge the support and commitment from Tracy and from ASV to deliver accessible and effective programmes, and in particular the contribution to the Finding your Feet amputee programme.



This is **Paris**; who spends many hours each week at ASV, having joined at just 3 years old. From Wee Swimmers through all the learn to swim levels, Paris has progressed through the pathway and is now a member of Dyce ASV swimming club. She is also a member of Aberdeen Diving Club, in the Mini Rippers squad.



This is **Graham**; Head of Sport and Events at ASV. Graham Morrison won the Mentor of the Year Award by RGU's School of Creative and Cultural Business, one of the industry awards presented to local organisations and individuals who have proved vital to supporting their students over the past year. Graham was also selected for the **sportscotland** Scottish Sporting Leaders Programme this year.



This is **Fiona**; one of ASV's poster-girl walking netball players. Fiona won the Outstanding Achievement Award at the Aberdeenshire Clubsport Awards, and was presented by Audrey Nicoll MSP with a commendation award from the Scottish Parliament, for her advocacy work raising awareness of autism and disability across the North East and Scotland.

"Fiona's real strength is supporting coaches and players in understanding autism" (Caroline Walker)



At the **Scottish Swimming Awards 2023**, Anna Sless (ASV's Diving Coach) won the Performance Development Coach of the Year, whilst Noah Penman (Aberdeen Diving Club) was awarded the John and Margaret Bell Award for the diver who done most to enhance and uphold the prestige of Scottish Diving throughout the year.



At the **Aberdeen Sports Awards 2024**, ASV received 18 nominations across almost all categories for staff, athletes, programmes or partnerships.

Winners included:

- Max Singer, ASV Table Tennis Co-ordinator & Coach – Lifetime Achievement
- Noah Penman, ASV athlete & Diving Coach – Young Sports Achiever

- Anna Sless, ASV Diving Coach – Performance Coach
- Faye Rogers, ASV athlete – Student Sports Achiever
- Jane Davidson, ASV Coach / AAAC athlete – Judges Choice



Please provide a summary of any problems or issues that have required attention or action:

ACC Strategies and Action Plan Priorities:

Please provide a summary of how your activities have delivered against ACC strategies and action plan priorities.

See LOIP information included in next section of annual report.

Local Priorities:

Please highlight where your outcomes, outputs or activities align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/aberdeen-city-local-outcome-improvement-plan-2016-26/>

LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLAN THEMES

1. People (Children and Young People)

Directly linked to targets relating to increasing physical, mental, emotional health and wellbeing, ASV delivers a suite of activities, specifically tailored for children and young people, including:

- Activities for **pre-school children**: to allow very young children to play and learn; with 70 aquatics lessons each week specifically for early learners, plus a unique partnership with the Links Nursery
- Activities and sports for **school-age children**: introducing children and young people to healthy and fun regular activity; working with key partner clubs to offer a seamless pathway to a club environment; with over 160 swimming and diving lessons and sporting activity club sessions each week, specifically for children

- Sports and supervised gym sessions for **teenagers**: providing an opportunity to socialise with peers whilst enjoying being active; with 8 sessions each week specifically for young people, 13 during the school holidays, seeing approximately 3,804 participations during the year.
- Children's **aquatics programme**: the well-established and respected aquatics programme is now celebrating 10 years of operation - over 1,500 children and adults enrolled in the whole aquatics programme, with over 1,350 children in the learn to swim programme
- A **holiday sports camp programme** for all ages and abilities: multi-activity camps, sports-specific camps, and in partnership with clubs and governing bodies, accessible and free camps for local families.

In relation to improving **post-school learning and employment opportunities**, ASV is committed to offering opportunities for vocational learning and work experience, with a view to supporting a well trained and prepared future workforce in the city.

- With a high proportion of the ASV workforce under the age of 25, with many still in further or higher education, ASV provides mentoring support, and on-going training to its young people
- ASV provides part-time and flexible employment opportunities for University and College students, and invaluable first steps and experience in the industry to senior school pupils
- The partnership with DYW North East (Developing the Young Workforce) has been positive for our youngest employees, and we fully aim to work with the group in the future year to facilitate modern apprenticeships and professional development
- ASV has supported a number of staff to become qualified in their field to deliver high quality, governing body recognised training courses; the short-term aim is to expand its delivery in relation to such courses, with a view to building a nationally recognised Training Academy, which will continually provide education and training
- ASV identified an early trend in the challenges now faced by the industry to recruit and retain staff; one solution was to deliver a number of Swim Teacher and Dive Coach training courses this year, inviting young people, swimmers and divers to take part, fully funded by ASV, which they then paid back to the ASV programmes by volunteering their time; in time, this has resulted in a significant number of young people who are now industry-trained and qualified, who are now paid teachers or coaches as part of the ASV aquatics team.

2. People (Adults)

The key areas where ASV will continue to evidence support in this area include building resilience within communities and supporting families, and increasing healthy life expectancies.

- Through enhanced customer engagement, ASV provides flexible and affordable opportunities for adults to participate in a variety of activities, via the Lifestyle Membership, or Lifestyle Day Pass.
 - 1,106,304 visits to ASV which was a 24% increase YOY (Aug23 – Jul24) (891,556 last year)
 - On average there were 10,209 individuals with membership at ASV which is a 7% growth YOY
 - There were 86,367 class attendances with an average occupancy of 70% throughout the year
- For senior members (over 60s) the Evergreens Lifestyle Membership lies at the core of the programme; a heavily discounted membership giving access to over 30 specialised sessions of sport and physical activity each week
 - Evergreens membership increased again this year by almost 13% with 1,236 Evergreens members
 - 31+ specialised sessions of sport and physical activity each week for Evergreens, with class utilisation sitting at over 85 and in some cases 90% (Aqua / Exercise to Music)
 - 122,527 Evergreens participations (Aug23-Jul24)
- ASV will continue to support the integration and health and wellbeing of our local population, working to deliver in partnership with the relevant bodies
 - 1,071 health referral participations (Aug23-Jul24), which is an increase of 13% year on year.
 - 2 Cardiac Rehabilitation and 1 Stable & Able class each week in conjunction with the NHS and the local health village.
- ASV is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion
- ASV staff are made up of the following:

- 55% of staff are aged between 16 to 24 years old. These staff roles are predominantly coaching, teaching and lifeguard/operation assistant, with a vast majority being students. ASV employes an above average amount of young adults
- 56% of staff identify as female and 43% of staff identify as male. The industry average if 56% male.
- 74% of staff identify as white Scottish/British
- 88% of staff consider themselves not to have a disability. The industry average is 87%
- 74% of staff identify as heterosexual, 1% gay, 2% bisexual, 1% lesbian 7% prefer not to say
- 60% of staff have no religion or belief, 16% identify as Christian
- 41% of staff are casual workers, 35% are part time and 24% are full time
- Due to the nature of the service provided by ASV, the workforce has a large majority of casual staff who carry out roles such as coaching and teaching.

3. Place

Contributing to the city, and enhancing the positive environment in which people can live, work, study and visit, is very important to ASV.

- As a community sports facility, ASV aims to continue to evolve our ASV ‘family’ and make the facility as welcoming as possible for all people.
- ASV will continue to support our very local communities, by utilising funding opportunities and volunteers to deliver activities, food and education, through community projects (as per information in previous sections).
- ASV are committed to reducing our carbon emissions – our aim is to be carbon neutral by 2030
Our Carbon footprint is 785 tonnes of CO₂e which includes:
Scope 1 emissions that ASV own or control directly is 0.8 tonnes of CO₂e
Scope 2 emissions from energy providers is 750 tonnes of CO₂e
Scope 3 emissions indirectly caused by ASV are 34.2 tonnes of CO₂e
- ASV aim to invest in renewable energy and innovation that will assist in reducing our carbon emissions.
- An LED lighting replacement plan is underway with additional lighting controls to reduce consumption. We have upgraded the Sports Hall, Indoor Pitch, Indoor Athletics Track and 50m Swimming Pool, with the other sporting areas to follow.
- Staff cycle to work scheme.
- ASV aim to improve cycle and sustainable travel schemes for our staff and customers and achieved the Cycling Friendly Employer award. In partnership with Cycling Scotland an action plan was created. ASV survey staff annually on their travel behaviours to and from work.
 - 65% of staff travel between 1-10 miles to work
 - The majority of travel time takes between 15-30 minutes
 - 58% use their own car to travel to work as it’s fast, convenient or there are no other alternatives, followed by 18% that walk and 5% bike to work
 - Staff raised concerns that they would not cycle to work due to safety concerns on the road or distance
- ASV aims to invest in biodiversity throughout the estate, transforming areas to be more attractive to insects and wildlife by planting wildflowers and encouraging tree cover. Approximately 80 tree saplings were planted by staff within our green spaces during the year.



- ASV are committed to reducing landfill waste by increasing recycling through educating users and staff. Total waste was 35, 466kgs which was a reduction of 18% from the previous year.
- ASV remains in partnership with Aberdeen Heat and Power to provide low cost, low emission heat and power.
- ASV is committed to replacing its fleet to electric vehicles to reduce emissions.
- ASV green spaces are regularly utilised by the local community for dog walking, exercise, picnics, relaxing and the occasional sledding in winter.
- Supporting the UN Sustainable development goals specifically *climate action, good health and wellbeing and zero hunger*.
- ASV supports team members with their own voluntary community-based projects, such as collecting presents or raising money for local charities, or collecting food for local distribution; ASV will encourage and champion such individual and team efforts in light of current and on-going challenges.
- Community clubs continue to enjoy utilising the facilities at ASV, and provide not only physical benefits, but also enhance social and emotional wellbeing and contribute to more positive mental health.
- ASV remains in close engagement with the University of Aberdeen to ensure continued support for the health and wellbeing of their community, and providing a 'home of sport' for over 40 of their student sports clubs.
- We will remain available as an emergency refuse centre for the people of Aberdeen.
- ASV hold UK Athletics track quality assurance scheme 'TrackMark' which allows ASV to host national level competitions.
- ASV's 3G pitch is World Rugby and Scottish Football Association compliant.

4. Economy

The past 2 years have been exceptionally challenging to the sport and leisure industry, but ASV continued to operate efficiently and effectively, where permitted within the guidelines, and contributed to the city's economy in a variety of ways, including:

- **Development of the skilled workforce:** With the majority of ASV's workforce being young people under the age of 25, ASV invests in significant in-house training each year. Through on-going Continued Professional Development and investment in professional members of the team, ASV offers a comprehensive suite of vocational training courses.
- With almost half of ASV's workforce being young people under the age of 25, ASV invests in significant in-house training each year. Through on-going Continued Professional Development and investment in professional members of the team, ASV offers a comprehensive suite of vocational training courses.
 - ASV employ 200 individuals, with over half the workforce being young people under 25 years of age
 - Up to 3% of staff costs were invested into training and development; with numerous in-house training opportunities for the ASV team
 - ASV Training Academy: 130 people gained qualifications, from 27 accredited courses
 - ASV supported 2 modern apprenticeships.

- 15 ASV staff are NHS Scotland accredited 'Mental Health First aid' qualified
 - Managers are developed to hold the IOSH Managing safely qualification with some holding the NEBOSH qualification
 - 51 staff are members of CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) the professional body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector
 - The leadership team and the Board attended Equality, diversity and inclusion training
 - Frontline staff all attend the 'Worldhost' customer service course
 - Managers attended the SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) complaint investigation skills course.
 - Our front-line teachers and coaches hold a child wellbeing and protection in sport qualification
 - Entry level Managers have achieved the level 3 ILM Leadership & Management qualification with some attaining the level 5 ILM Leadership & Management qualification.
 - Carbon Literacy for sport and IEMA Environmental sustainability skills
 - 2 Lifeguards have achieved the RLSS royal lifesaving society Trainer/Assessor qualification so they can develop lifesaving skills within the community
 - Human resource training for line managers on various topics like recruitment, performance management, dealing with absence & equality, diversity & inclusion.
 - Health and fitness qualifications and CPD
 - A comprehensive Lifeguard training programme
 - All catering staff hold the elementary food hygiene award or higher.
 - Food allergies awareness training
 - Les mills training in body balance and sh'bam
 - Diploma in Digital Application support
 - Swimming pool plantroom operator
 - Supporting pre & postnatal clients with exercise and nutrition
 - 4 staff are Belbin accredited trainers.
 - 2 staff are completing the Level 5 Coaching course so they can develop and coach staff in their performance.
 - 8 staff completed the ACT – Action Counters Terrorism course.
 - UK Athletics certificate in Track & Field facility Management completed by 5 staff.
 - Master's in finance
 - National Autistic Society Employer Awareness Session
 - Scottish Sporting Leaders Programme
 - Fire warden training for front line staff
 - Sport Scotland Assessor
 - 5 level 1 dive coaches were trained at ASV and have all been employed
 - 11 'Village volunteers' aged 16-19 years old volunteered 60 hours each of their time and in return gained a swimming teaching qualification and a child protection qualification. They then went on to gain employment at ASV.
- **Investment in infrastructure:** ASV has a substantial life-cycle reserve of £2.6 million which will be reinvested in ASV facilities over the 10 year investment programme. In the financial year 2022-2023, ASV invested in the following:
 - £202,000 invested in operational facility maintenance
 - £240,000 investment in energy saving LED lights
 - £120,000 investment in refurbishing the sports hall
- **Contributing to the city's tourism:** Please refer to previous section for summary of events held.

Education:

Please provide further information in respect to any education programmes delivered.

Please refer to previous section above

Employment

Please provide information about your volunteers, if you have any:

- What roles do your volunteers undertake within the organisation?
- Training and Policy in action?
- Example of volunteer success stories such as transition to employment?

ASV volunteers help greatly in the delivery of children's activities, Evergreens sports sessions and performance programmes.

- ASV had 32 regular volunteers in 2023-2024, with many more temporary and casual volunteers
- Each week on average there were over 30 hours of volunteer coaching
- The volunteers who support the performance programmes and events at ASV are invaluable; coaches, officials, committees, etc.
- ASV supports a volunteer package, whereby regular volunteers are offered training courses to further enhance their skills
- The partnership with NESCOL, sees 80 students provide weekly volunteer hours to ASV between October to April in the delivery of the ASV Energiser programme and Home of Community Sport.

A recently created training room was created which provides opportunities for the community to retrain or upskill in subjects like Lifeguarding, First aid, Sports coaching and sport officiating. Many learners go on to find employment locally or with ASV.

ASV is a real living wage employer.

There are 4 staff 'Chambers' who meet once a quarter for the following:

- The Green group champions ways of saving waste and reducing ASV's carbon footprint.
- The Health & Safety group reviews accident, policy, and procedure
- The Social group encourage a healthy working lifestyle with the emphasis on fun and engagement.
- The Consultation group meets to discuss company procedures, new ideas and initiatives.

ASV encourages flexible working including a hybrid mix of home working and working from the office.

A staff menopause group was set up to raise awareness for staff going through menopause, they reviewed the ASV menopause policy and champion training in this area.

ASV reviewed its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy in December 2022 to ensure ASV provided inclusive choices for staff and potential new hires.

SECTION 2 – Users, Participants and Investment

Please complete this section to report on the number of participants from each of the identified areas who have participated during the year.

Participants	Target	Total 23-24
Number of participatory opportunities targeted for priority groups		
Older People (65+) <i>*Note: Recorded 60+ customer participations in the Evergreens programme</i>	100,000	122,527
Disability (mental health physical, sensory (e.g. BSL users) and carers of disabled people) <i>* Note: Number of known individuals with a registered disability</i>	200	277
Ethnic minority communities including Gypsy/ Travellers	20,000	49,153
Sexual orientation (LGBTQ)	This data is not collected nor recorded	

Residents of regeneration areas within Aberdeen City	See below table:
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SIMD Area	Visits	% Total
1 Torry	3,728	1%
2 Middlefield, Mastrick, Northfield, Sheddocksley	17,211	3%
3 Seaton	62,626	11%
4 Tillydrone	13,756	2%
5 Woodside	19,648	3%
6 George Street	21,139	4%

Please complete this section to report on visitor numbers in relation to your programming.

Customer participation/user	Target	Total 23-24
Total participations *		1,106,304
User number from Aberdeen City		82%
User number from the wider region or further		18%
% of customers rating experience as 'excellent' or 'good'		80%

We are keen to evidence the added economic value and social return of investment, as such we request that you please complete the table below.

Income 2023-24	Total £
Value of Grant(s) from Aberdeen City Council:	
ASV – Sports Centre and Aquatics Centre	824,550
ASV – Performance Swimming	10,000
Grant funding - University of Aberdeen	864,550
Strategic Funding	77,000
Charitable Activities	4,093,173
Trading income	460,371
Other (please specify) Bank Interest	206,907
Total add income	6,536,551

Section 3 – Support Material

We recommend you provide up to five items of support material to help demonstrate the quality and impact of your activity. This may include; case studies, photographs, videos, web links, publications, marketing material, reports, participant testimonials and feedback. If emailing please keep all support material to under 5mb. Please supply details on your support material below

By submitting this you are providing permission for each item to be used for publication. You should ensure you have the creators consent and accreditation is provided where necessary.

Support Material 1:	ASV Annual Report 2022-2023: (2023-24 report in progress) https://www.aberdeensportsvillage.com/about/annual-report-2022-2023
Support Material 2:	News story on ASV's initiative with Links Nursery & Hub, off Regent Walk, to deliver free swimming lessons to 100 children throughout the year: https://youtu.be/D_KXUS5N2ps?si=hS4z442IEZ9EYhIR

Support Material 3:	Home of community sport video: https://youtu.be/eT8dYK8TNxA?si=0ww5x6uimCR3J4jz
Support Material 4:	STV News clip - Tracy Stainer recognised for the life-changing training she gives to amputees: https://youtu.be/Uf6Ngmq0gB4?si=3-VE76nPNaKf79IV
Support Material 5:	Corporate Games 2023: https://youtu.be/CIS5 IBtrXs?si=CvloJYbrAXIIAvtg

Section 4- Declaration on use of information

Aberdeen City Council collects and maintains the data on this form about your organisation for the purpose of contacting you in relation to the funding, monitoring purposes and to collate information for statistical and audit purposes. We will retain Personal Data for six years in accordance with the organisation’s Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and for the purpose of administering, processing and assessing your report.

For the purposes of processing this information Aberdeen City Council is the Data Controller. The Information Commissioner Office is the UK’s regulator of data protection law (www.ico.org.uk). More information about all of the rights you have is available on our website at: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/your-data>.

Whenever the Council processes personal data we need to make sure we have a basis for doing so. We understand our basis in GDPR to be Article 6(1)(e) as we consider that it is in our public task to collect this information under our powers set down in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act, 1982 section 14, as amended by section 128 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994. The act provides for us doing or contributing towards the expenses of providing or doing, anything necessary or expedient for the purpose of ensuring that there are facilities available for recreational, sporting, cultural or social activities as we consider appropriate.

To confirm that all information included in this report is accurate and that you have read and followed the terms and conditions, please sign and date below. If submitting by email an electronic signature or the typed name of the appropriate contact should be inserted.

Name:



Date: 30th August 2024

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

ALEO – ANNUAL REPORT

ORGANISATION:	Bon Accord Care
REPORT COMPLETED BY:	Dr Lou Henderson, Managing Director, and Executive Leadership Team.
DATE:	September 2024

SECTION 1 - Outcomes and outputs

Please provide a qualitative summary of outcomes, outputs, activities undertaken and progress made to date:

In my new appointment as Managing Director for Bon Accord Care (BAC), I am delighted to present the Annual ALEO Report on behalf of all staff at Bon Accord Care. Staff have continued to deliver excellent standards of care, supporting early intervention and promoting health and wellbeing for the citizens of Aberdeen. They do so at a time where the landscape of Health and Social Care faces significant challenges, with increasing need for services and financial scrutiny. However, through an integrated approach to our service provision our staff are **‘making a difference’** to the citizens of Aberdeen (see Supporting Material no. 5).



BAC staff help citizens to maintain their health and wellbeing, by demonstrating Respect and Integrity, through a Teamwork approach that promotes shared Accountability (See our Q1 campaign information around ‘Always Respectful’ Supporting Material 1). This report highlights some of the tremendous efforts of Bon Accord Care staff;

both those who provide direct care and support, and those who support them to be able to do that. It outlines the diverse range of services we provide, the support services that help them to make a difference to the lives of citizens in Aberdeen, and the impact that Bon Accord care has had for individuals, communities, staff and partners.

Strategic Delivery & Development

A year on from the launch of our three-year strategic plan, we found it important to look back and reflect on the performance of all our workstreams in relation to it. Through doing this, we are able to adapt and tweak our strategy going forward, where necessary, in order to fulfil our goal as effectively as possible - making a difference to the lives of the people we support and work with.

Our Delivery and Development workstream has seen some exciting changes during 2023 - 2024. Staff across all services have made a concerted effort to develop new service specifications, in preparation for our contract renewal in April 2024. We have worked closely with our colleagues at Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership and with our Clinical Governance teams to develop these. They offer clarity on integrated working practices and focus on how, together, we can support citizens of Aberdeen to meet the health and wellbeing outcomes.

Finance & commercial

The Finance Team has worked extensively with services and budget holders to ensure the delivery of a balanced budget result can be achieved. We have worked closely with our finance colleagues at the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure financial efficiencies have been achieved in the interests of the wider system. Our Information Systems team has commenced the rollout of our KPI Performance Dashboard together with a strategic review of our core operating systems. Work is ongoing to develop our Information Systems Strategy to complement our Corporate Strategy.

People & Performance

After the launch of our organisational Vision and Values last year, we created a plan to embed these within our everyday work, with every member of staff at Bon Accord Care. A key part of this plan was to develop a performance framework for employees that helps staff visualise and live our values. We are now close to completing this project and look to roll it out in the new financial year. Another area of the organisation we have focussed on is recruitment. The recruitment process for the organisation has been reviewed and streamlined to support how we consistently bring in quality people into Bon Accord Care.

Building on the post-launch efforts from the previous year, we have continued to embed our new vision and values across the organisation. Promotional materials for internal and external use were produced, including posters for display in our services and pop-up banners for external events. These will help ensure the message is clear around the way we want to work and act as well as a key tool when introducing our values to potential new staff and partners.

Clinical and Governance

The Clinical and Governance Team have embedded workstreams in five key priority areas to share learning across the services from best practice. Working collaboratively with our Delivery & Development colleagues, we have a shared vision and excitement for new innovations. Ensuring service users are at the heart of everything we do remains our key priority while delivering safe high-quality care.

The Clinical and Governance team have continued to support development of our governance and assurance structures within BAC; through working groups, there has been shared learning and promotion of best practice, positive conversations and consideration to the factors that influence or affect the delivery of care. We have seen further enhancement of the data on performance, through refinement of our governance dashboards.

Awards & accreditations

Bon Accord Care continue to strive to deliver the best of care through working towards and achieving key accreditations. We continue to support those who have served in the armed forces through our Armed Forces Covenant Award (Silver Level) as well as maintaining our Mindful Employer Award and Healthy Working Lives (Gold Level) award.

We have also achieved:

- Quality Standards Framework accreditation for our telecare service for the second year running whilst our Joint Equipment Stores achieved it for the first time.
- The Young Persons Guarantee award
- Disability Confident employer
- A2DT Telecare – Bronze Award but could update, on course to achieve Gold Award

Performance indicators:

This is the quantitative progress you have made in meeting targets over the year. These were agreed in your business plan / development plan and should be confirmed in your first quarterly meeting with your Lead Officer
PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE BASELINE OR TARGET FIGURES.

Please complete all boxes

INDICATOR		TARGET 23/24	ACHIEVED 23/24
Financial Savings		£1.2m	£1.2m
Compliments versus Complaints			111 Compliments 19 complaints
Mandatory training for all staff		85%	85%
Delayed discharge – tenants will be home within 24 hours of being classed as fit for discharge	-	-	-
Telecare and community alarm – response to high priority referrals within two working days		85%	88%
Telecare and community alarm – response to medium term referrals within five working days		85%	99%
Joint Community Equipment Store Deliveries have been made within 1 day of order, ensuring people are receiving their equipment more quickly		90%	93.5%

If you have not met the targets set please give any reasons or explanation for this:

Delayed discharges: Bon Accord Care have always had capacity to welcome tenants home and have therefore not been responsible for any delayed discharges.

Please provide a summary of particular successes or case studies:**Case Study: Reablement Strengthening community connections**

There has been a focus on establishing connections within the community through the following initiatives;

- Regular residents' attendance at Boogie in the Bar at the local pub Greentrees.
- Boogie in the Hoose, bringing dancing, fun and laughter, along with enablement and reablement, to sheltered housing (see Supporting Material 2).
- Visits from Puddleducks Nursery – arranging days out with them, picnics, tea parties and walks.
- Residents really enjoyed a visit from Joyful Ponies which was organised after residents requested an activity with animals.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcomes (SO): Child Development (SO3); Community Empowerment (SO16).

Case Study: Children's community occupational therapy support

The Occupational Therapist received a referral for a child with severe cerebral palsy who now required safer M&H techniques and a review of all transfers involving seating, bed and bathing. Intervention: The OT liaised with NHS and education colleagues as well as specialist equipment representatives as part of the assessment process. The Service User received a hoist, specialist sling, a Moving and Handling plan and Risk Assessment, a specialist profiling bed and a larger bath seat. Outcome: This enabled the Service User to have safer moving and handling between home and school, a safe sleeping space and a safe changing place for parents to assist with personal care. Bathing is now a safer and much more enjoyable activity for the Service User.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Child Development (SO3); Supporting children with disabilities (SO8); Health & Wellbeing (SO10).

Case Study: Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) support

The OTA in the Van received a referral for a Service User who had been housebound for several months as can no longer managed steps at the front door due to experiencing a stroke, resulting in a right side weakness. Intervention: The OTA carried out a full assessment, recognising the Service User was experiencing difficulties with many activities within the home. Outcome: Service User received a toilet frame, shower stool, lever to assist her in and out of bed and external rails which would support her to leave the house safely, meaning that she could return to some activities she previously enjoyed in the community.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Supporting children with disabilities (SO8); Health & Wellbeing (SO10); Community Empowerment (SO16).

Case Study: Clashieknowe

Clashieknowe received a referral for someone who needed support to reduce their risk of harm, morbidity and mortality following a stroke. After a long period of time in hospital, they were transferred to Clashieknowe for ongoing reablement and rehabilitation and to await re-housing (alternative accommodation). In partnership with our housing colleagues, NHS Allied Health Professional colleagues, Community Psychiatric Nurse from the Drug and Alcohol Service, Care Manager, staff within Clashieknowe supported reablement and independence. In collaboration with voluntary sector colleagues at Turning Point access to community events was increased, also offering support with medication collections. Multi-disciplinary Team meetings were highly valuable, where the supported person and those who supported them were able to discuss progress. The individual embraced a reablement ethos and was able to move to an amenity cottage to live independently. Turning point and family continued to support and an Occupational Therapy Assistant from Clashieknowe ensured that any small pieces of equipment were ordered and in place for a safe move.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Healthy life expectancy (SO10); Alcohol and Drugs (SO11); Community Empowerment (SO16).

Case Study: Developing the Young Workforce

The Bon Accord Care Young Workforce Team hosted a recruitment day at the Learning Hub as we opened the doors for young people interested in social care. Taster sessions took place with M&H, First Aid and SVQ. Feedback from the day was really positive with applications being completed and interviews planned. Later in the month we welcomed six new apprentices in Care.

Our Young People Empowerment and Participation went live in August 2023. Young people met at the Learning Hub and began by looking at 'what makes a good mentor' where there was a lively and informative discussion

about the qualities that young people find supportive and inspiring. We took a deep dive into building a mentoring/mentee relationship and how this works most effectively in practice. The findings from this first group session were used to form our 'Mentoring Matters' Workshops that took place at the end of August.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Employment (SO2); Children and young people feel listened to (SO4); Positive Destinations (SO6); Empowering communities (SO16).

Case Study:

In response to feedback from service users, their families, staff and key partners, Bon accord care have recently re-introduced their news letter and rebranded under the title: Bon Accord Cares. This newsletter shares news about communities within Bon Accord Care, activities, workforce updates, good news, and celebrates the success of our services and the valued contribution that Bon Accord Care makes to our local communities within Aberdeen City. This has been well received by all, with some fabulous feedback from service users, staff and partners to-date. We continue to explore alternative ways of engaging across our communities and the new MD v-Log has been warmly welcomed and feedback has been positive (see examples Supporting Material 3 & 4)

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Employment (SO2); Positive Destinations (SO6); Community Empowerment (SO16)

Case Study: Enablement

Mary returned home from a period of time in an acute Hospital and rehabilitation service and experienced a high level of anxiety, along with a period of low mood related to her increased level of dependence compared to pre-hospital admission. She was discharged with a stand aid to support her transfers when unable to use her zimmer frame. Mary was referred to the Enablement team, and following assessment by a Reablement Facilitator, identified her goals as below: regain confidence in her mobility within her flat; manage her continence needs independently; and, to regain confidence to complete small kitchen tasks independently. A six week plan was put in place, with weekly visits from the Reablement Facilitator and the support staff to implement and achieve her goals. This required collaborative working both internally with Bon Accord Care staff, as well as with external partners such as the NHS Community Therapy Team. Mary demonstrated a reduced level of dependence by the end of her reablement support and continues to be supported by the team with a dedicated enablement approach to maintain her regained independence in her activities of daily living.

Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Health and Wellbeing (SO10); Empowering communities (SO16).

Please provide a summary of any problems or issues that have required attention or action:

This year has presented multiple challenges, posing significant leadership, operational, capacity and wellbeing issues for the organisation.

Our most significant and ongoing challenge to BAC, and the wider Health and Social Care sector, is the recruitment and retention of qualified and competent staff. This has been further compounded by the impact of changes to the model of delivery at Rosewell House (which was jointly delivered between BAC and NHSG). Challenges in securing medical cover have led to rehabilitation and reablement provisions being redirected to community settings. However, BAC are developing a comprehensive recruitment strategy. We continue to work closely with ACHSCP, educational institutions and other provider organisations to recruit staff. We continue to place an importance on developing our own workforce through our young people's workforce and our learning and development function.

Our Wellbeing Team have been instrumental in supporting wellbeing and resilience for our staff. Overall levels of sickness have been high throughout the period in review and our Wellbeing Team have assisted both our staff and services in supporting staff to return to work. Our staff continue to work under extreme pressures in response to the above, but we are seeing strong resilience amongst our dedicated staff. We are happy to report that the Wellbeing Team has also set up a Menopause Café for staff as well as a policy and risk assessment for staff with menopausal symptoms which is currently under progress.

Challenges around workforce and Information, Technology and Connectivity within the buildings from which BAC operate have presented issues for staff, whereby, lack of connectivity impacts upon their ability to maintain accurate record keeping and move towards digital and technology enabled care. However, BAC are connected with ACC and both organisations are committed to seeing co-designed solutions to resolve these issues explored.

Financial year 2023/24 has presented multiple challenges which have posed significant operational, capacity and wellbeing issues for the organisation. The organisation has had to operate whilst contending with extremely challenging budget pressures, significant inflationary pressures and a rise in demand for our services. These challenges have not only affected our organisation but have also had a considerable impact upon both our staff and the people we support. In addition to these pressures, we have experienced significant financial impacts arising from the cost-of-living crises. The biggest impact in FY23/24 arose from the COSLA agreed pay award which was significantly higher than our budget assumption of 3% for FY23/24. The impact of £1.2m resulted in significant savings having to be made across the organisation and also working in collaboration with ACHSCP.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis has seen our significant budgetary pressures on our utility, food, and fuel costs. The impact of these costs pressures for Financial Year 2023/24 was as follows:

Category	Impact	% Impact
Utilities	£48,548	24%
Food	£40,414	9%
Diesel/Petrol	£11,696	35%

These increases were funded by delivering financial efficiencies elsewhere across the organisation.

At its meeting of 6th July 2023, the Finance and Resources Committee for ACC instructed the Chief Executive to undertake an Options Appraisal on all potential working arrangements with our ALEOs (Arms-Length External Organisations) and develop an Outline Business Case with the output from that Options Appraisal, and for that Outline Business Case, accompanied by a draft Project Plan underpinning the preferred option(s) to be submitted to full Council at its meeting of 11th October 2023. The preferred option at the time, was that BAC would transfer back into ACC. BAC contributed to this review, which presented significant challenges and delays for BAC, with relation to progression with 2024-28 contract with ACHSCP. Levels of uncertainty around future models of delivery and development led to a temporary pause in strategic planning, while key reports were co-produced as part of this process. However, on completion of a high-level business case, the proposal was dismissed on the grounds of financial impact and on the understanding that operating an ALEO offered opportunities for greater flexibility in response to a rapidly changing health and social care landscape (including The National Care Service). ACC retained the right to review this again in future, in response to legislative changes pertaining to the National Care Service.

BAC have faced challenges around Analogue to Digital Technology (A2DT). This has predominantly related to testing of new digital lines and ensuring that there is a continued level of adequate service maintained during this testing to minimise the impact for people who use digital telecare services. Despite this, we have been successful in obtaining a Bronze award and are on track to achieve the Silver and Gold awards. As at 31st August 2024, the BAC Telecare Team had successfully changed over 99.8% of our alarms to new digital units. BAC attendance at the

Digital Programming Board has been revised, with our Information Systems Manager and one of our Operational Leads supporting this work, whilst escalation continues to be fed into Our Finance and Commercial Director.

As part of our ongoing commitment to working with NHS Grampian partners at our Joint Equipment store, discussion are ongoing to review the joint working agreement and to explore alternative premises for the service. There has been a significant increase in the number of people being cared for at home, this has led to an increase in demand and pressure on JES. Service users from 2019 using the service was 19,938 and now in 2024, that has increased by 23% to 24,445 service users. The workload/amount of requests actioned in 2019 was on average 761 per month, that has increased by 47% to 1430 requests per month. There has been no increase in resource from either an NHS or BAC perspective. The current Joint-Working Agreement and premises are not longer fit-for-purpose, with further clarity required around provision and funding of key services. BAC remain committed to engaging our NHS partners to progress this key piece of work. BAC continue to work in close partnership with ACHSCP to co-produce the Service Specification for the Joint Equipment Store, progress the Joint -Working Agreement, and gain the necessary clarity around funding.

ACC Strategies and Action Plan Priorities:

Please provide a summary of how your activities have delivered against ACC strategies and action plan priorities.

At the end of year one delivery for BAC's strategic plan outlines the aims and target areas for Bon Accord Care over the next three years. At the heart of this strategy is engagement with the people we support and wider communities. They have helped us to develop this strategy along with engagement from staff across our organisation, and our external health and social care partner organisations. We focus on a central theme of 'making a difference' in the lives of people we support and work with, encompassing our values and behaviours in order to achieve our four strategic aims:

- Caring
- Enabling independence
- Workforce
- Healthy lives

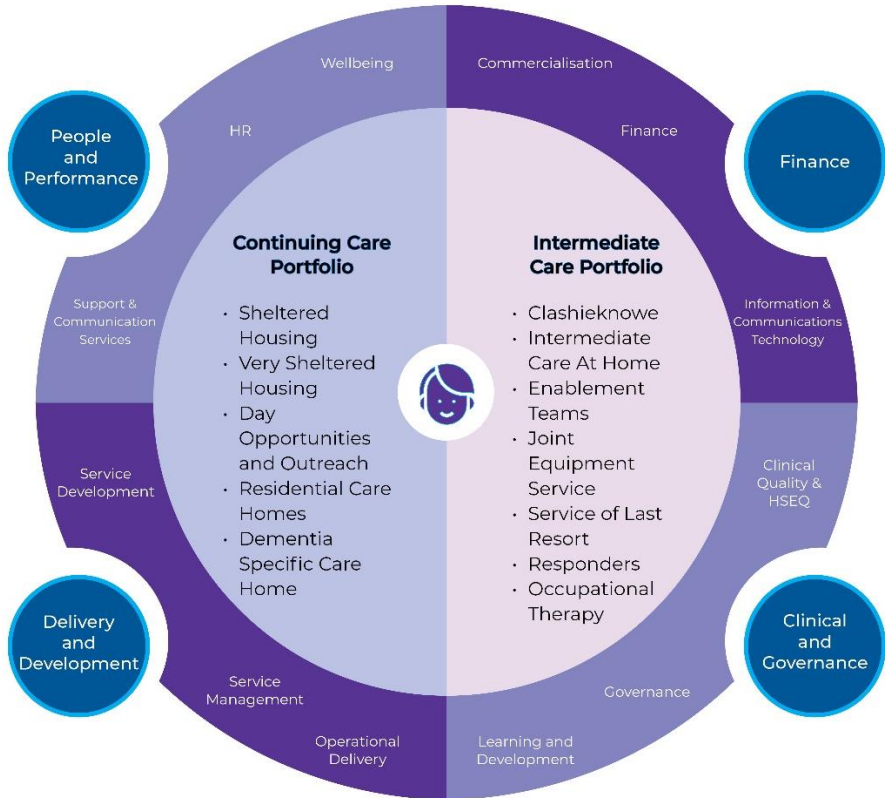
These strategic aims and the target areas are aligned to the ACHSCP Strategic Plan and build on the positive work and learning from the last five years. They ensure that we remain focus on the task in hand, to 'make a difference' for the people we support, their families and unpaid carers, and for the people we work with when delivering person-centred health and social care services. This report and above case studies highlights BAC's contribution to the delivery of the Stretch Outcomes (SO) of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26 (LOIP) across the below areas:

- Employment (SO2)
- Child Development (SO3)
- Children and young people feel listened to (SO4).
- Care experienced (SO5)
- Positive Destinations (SO6)
- Supporting Children with Disabilities (SO8)
- Healthy life expectancy (SO10)
- Alcohol & Drugs (SO11)
- Nature & Wellbeing (SO15)
- Community Empowerment (SO16)

Local Priorities:

Please highlight where your outcomes, outputs or activities align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/aberdeen-city-local-outcome-improvement-plan-2016-26/>

The range of services from BAC offers not only continuing care support in citizens' own homes (be those sheltered housing, very sheltered housing or care home), we also have a range of intermediate services that directly contribute to the national and local early intervention and prevention agenda. We strive to promote early intervention and prevention across all of our services, in line with local strategic priorities. In addition to our contributions to the LOIP, BAC remain committed to supporting Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to progress and achieve the aims of their Strategic Plan 2022-25: Caring together; keeping people safe at home; preventing ill health, and supporting people to achieve fulfilling and healthy lives.



Education:

Please provide further information in respect to any education programmes delivered.

Learning and Development

[Contribution to ACC LOIP Stretch Outcome(s): Employment (SO2); Children and young people feel listened to (SO4); Care Experienced (SO5); Positive destinations (SO6)].

Bon Accord Care Learning Hub

During 2023/24, the Learning and Development Team have delivered courses covering 85 subjects, with 9736 staff taking part. The new Corporate Induction program launched in January 2023, aims to embed culture and values with a strong focus on customer service, communication skills, staff behaviours, development and putting the people we support at the heart of everything we do. The restructure meant that staff are expected to undertake role-specific induction alongside accessing specific training identified in services and that the need to attend training was reduced, which is reflected in the numbers of people attending courses. During this period, Learning and Development staff have responded to needs in services by delivering support sessions onsite. This has been received positively by staff teams and managers alike.

L&D - Scottish Vocational Qualifications

The team have supported staff working on SVQs at various levels in 2023/24, 186 were completed and a further 113 are in progress. The SVQs are delivered by the team to a variety of staff from Bon Accord Care and Aberdeen City Council

Building our future workforce

Work continues to develop staff through theory and practice learning. Development packs for job profiles have been introduced across roles to further embed development of staff, with opportunities to obtain the skills required to progress through their career.

Supporting a change of career

Bon Accord Care have been supporting Five Occupational Therapists (OT) back into the profession through a Return to Practice scheme. They are employed as OTA's whilst they gain experience, confidence and required skills to register as an OT with the HCPC. The service has successfully supported 4 staff members to gain OT appointments with the company via this route in the past two years

Developing the Young Workforce

Foundation Apprenticeships

Young people have completed the NPA element of the award and will now continue to complete SVQ2 (SCQF Level 6) units on communication, health and safety, safeguarding and developing practice. These will be completed by work based learning and production of reflective statements.

100% of Young people enjoy the classroom experience.

100% of young people surveyed feel supported by their mentor.

100% of young people surveyed feel supported by the young workforce team.

100% of young people surveyed were comfortable to ask questions at their workplace.

100% of young people surveyed feel the SVQ matches the tasks they are being asked to complete on placement.

Modern Apprenticeships

Young people are progressing well with their qualifications in Social Services and Healthcare SVQ2 & SVQ3 in Business Administration and are being supported by their work place mentors SVQ assessors.

100% of young people surveyed feel supported by their mentor.

100% of young people surveyed feel supported by the Young Workforce Team.

100% of young people surveyed feel meta skills workshops supported their wider learning and build confidence.

100% of young people surveyed feel the SVQ matches the tasks they are being asked to complete on placement.

98% of young people surveyed feel valued in their role.

100% of young people surveyed were comfortable to ask questions at their work place.

Graduate Apprentices

Five Business Management Graduate Apprentices continue to work hard with one now entering fourth and final year of academic studies.

School Engagement

Schools Across Aberdeen access the FA hubs and support students to complete their Foundation apprenticeship. Of these, 19 come from an Aberdeen Priority Area School. During 2022/2024 four schools operated as HUBS, which continues. The Hub Schools are; Aberdeen Grammar School (16 pupils), Bucksburn Academy (12 pupils), Old Machar Academy (8 pupils). St Machar Academy (16 Pupils). Home School; Aberdeen Grammar School (9), Bridge of Don Academy (2), Bucksburn Academy (7), Dyce Academy (3), Hazlehead Academy (1), Old Machar Academy (1), St Machar Academy (19).

Career Ready

Bon Accord Care has taken part in Career Ready for 7 years, with 4 placements 23/24.

Student placements

There have been two placements offered to the Princes Trust, with young people working in Balnagask and Kingswood Day Centre to complete the work based hours required for employability awards.

Employment

Please provide information about your volunteers, if you have any:

- What roles do your volunteers undertake within the organisation?
- Training and Policy in action?
- Example of volunteer success stories such as transition to employment?

Currently we have several partnerships with Companies in the Aberdeen Area who support us. One example of this is at Fergus House where employees from Stork help the residents with the garden. We are currently looking to review our volunteering policy as post-Covid we are now beginning to see a small increase in the number of requests to volunteer in our services.

We continue to work with the Employability team within Aberdeen City Council and have undertaken a few paid placements through the ABZ Works team to give an overview and experience of care services. Through this scheme we have been able to offer a route back into employment.

SECTION 2 – Users, Audiences, Participants and Investment

Please complete this section to report on the number of participants from each of the identified areas who have participated during the year.

Participants	Target	Total 2023-24
Total number of participatory opportunities created throughout programme		
Number of participatory opportunities targeted for priority groups		
Young People under 16		
Young People 16-25		
Older People (65+)		
Disability (mental health physical, sensory (e.g., BSL users) and carers of disabled people)		
Ethnic minority communities including Gypsy/ Travellers		
Sexual orientation (LGBTQ)		
Residents of regeneration areas within Aberdeen City		
Other (please specify)		

Please complete this section to report on audience/visitor numbers in relation to your programming.

Users/Audiences	Target	Total 2023-24
Total user/Audience/visitor Number		
User/Audience number from Aberdeen City		
User/Audience number from the wider region or further		
% of user/audience survey rating experience as 'excellent' or 'good'		






We are keen to evidence the added economic value and social return of investment, as such we request that you, please complete the table below.

Income 2023-24	Total £
Value of Grant(s) from Aberdeen City Council	GBP
External Grant funding	
Sponsorship	
Trading income	
Other (please specify)	
Total add income	

Section 3 – Support Material

We recommend you provide up to five items of support material to help demonstrate the quality and impact of your activity. This may include case studies, photographs, videos, web links, publications, marketing material, reports, participant testimonials and feedback. If emailing, please keep all support material to under 5mb. Please supply details on your support material below

By submitting this you are providing permission for each item to be used for publication. You should ensure you have the creators consent and accreditation is provided where necessary.

<p>Support Material 1:</p>	  <div> <p>Respectful Integrity Teamwork Accountability</p> <p>ALWAYS RESPECTFUL</p> </div> <div> <p>Bon Accord Care is committed to providing a safe environment for all. By living our values icon RITA, we are Always Respectful in order to promote a culture that rejects violence, aggression, bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Our staff, as well as any person in a Bon Accord Care setting, are not expected to receive any intentional form of verbal, physical, racial or emotional abuse.</p> <p>Action should be taken to stop or prevent unacceptable behaviour by speaking to a manager and direct escalation via electronic and incident reporting in Salesforce/Skedulo. If Salesforce/Skedulo is unavailable please complete a paper copy (DC/FM/0007).</p> </div>
<p>Support Material 2:</p>	<p>Boogie in the Hoosie June 2024</p> <p>Boogie in the House 21.06.24 (youtube.com)</p>
<p>Support Material 3:</p>	<p>Bon Accord Cares Newsletter June 24</p>  <p>Adobe Acrobat Document</p>
<p>Support Material 4:</p>	<p>Bon Accord Cares Newsletter July 24</p>  <p>Adobe Acrobat Document</p>
<p>Support Material 5:</p>	<p>Strategic Impact Report 2023/24</p>  <p>Final_2023-24_Strategic Impact Report.p</p>

Section 4- Declaration on use of information

Aberdeen City Council collects and maintains the data on this form about your organisation for the purpose of contacting you in relation to the funding, monitoring purposes and to collate information for statistical and audit purposes. We will retain Personal Data for six years in accordance with the organisation's Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and for the purpose of administering, processing and assessing your report.

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Whenever the Council processes personal data we need to make sure we have a basis for doing so. We understand our basis in GDPR to be Article 6(1)(e) as we consider that it is in our public task to collect this information under our powers set down in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act, 1982 section 14, as amended by section 128 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994. The act provides for us doing or contributing towards the expenses of providing or doing, anything necessary or expedient for the purpose of ensuring that there are facilities available for recreational, sporting, cultural or social activities as we consider appropriate.

<p>To confirm that all information included in this report is accurate and that you have read and followed the terms and conditions, please sign and date below. If submitting by email an electronic signature or the typed name of the appropriate contact should be inserted.</p>	
<p>Name: Dr Louise Henderson Date: 02/09/2024</p>	

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

ALEO – ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

ORGANISATION:	Sport Aberdeen
REPORT COMPLETED BY:	Keith Heslop, Chief Executive
DATE:	August 2024

SECTION 1 - Outcomes and outputs

Please provide a qualitative summary of outcomes, outputs, activities undertaken and progress made to date:

Awards Success in 2023/24

Northern Star Business Awards

Former managing director, Winner of the Regional Contribution award 2024

Finalist in Business of the Year category 2023

Finalist in Student Placement category 2023

Scottish Swimming Awards 2023

Finalist in the Learn to Swim Provider of the Year category

ukactive Awards 2023

Shortlisted in Healthy Communities category

Scottish Veterans Awards 2023

Adventure Aberdeen, Winner of Bronze Award in Contribution to the Scottish Fitness Industry and Society category

The Herald and GenAnalytics Diversity 2023

Finalist in Diversity in Sport category

Celebrate Aberdeen 2023

Finalist in Large Organisation of the Year category

Programme Champion Awards

Winner, Young Programme Champion Award

Scottish Leisure Network Group Awards

Get active @ Northfield, Winner of Facility of the Year

Scottish Health and Fitness Awards

Finalist in Community Involvement category

Accreditations

Quest Tackling Inequalities in Leisure Standard achieved at Get active @ Northfield in November 2023 (achieved excellent ranking overall)

Business Plan Aims and Objectives

Sport Aberdeen's business plan for 2023/24 focused on achieving five key aims. These aims are summarised below with the key supporting projects, outputs and other activities undertaken to achieve them.

Key Aims

1) To provide programmes aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of key groups, including children and young people and older adults.

Under this aim, we:

- Helped children access a wide variety of sports over holiday periods by being a key delivery partner for Aberdeen City Council's (ACC) Summer in the City and Autumn in the City programmes. Spaces on these programmes were free for children and aimed at priority families.
- Processed over 1680 Get active for Less applications and renewals, ensuring opportunities to participate in our services and activities were available to everyone, regardless of circumstance through our discounted access scheme.
- Developed a programme for New Scots and refugees in Aberdeen to participate in weekly five-a-side football sessions.
- Were the first Scottish leisure provider to introduce GoodBoost AquaMove, an AI-based individually tailored programme designed to help maximise an individual's self-management of their physical health conditions.
- Delivered a 10-week block of Walking Football sessions for individuals living with Parkinson's, in Partnership with Parkinson's UK, AFC Community Trust and Grampian Young Onset Parkinson's Group
- Supported 15 Stand Up to Falls sessions, resulting in 262 meaningful conversations about falls prevention, in community locations such as Aberdeen City Vaccination Centre and Dobbies Garden Centre.
- Delivered three specialist exercise classes per week on behalf of MS Society Aberdeen Groups, supporting 82% of participants to maintain or improve their activity levels and overall wellbeing over 12 months.
- Continued to target a variety of community groups by offering activities such as weekly relaxed sessions for individuals with additional support needs, training for the Grampian Flyers Wheelchair basketball team and modest ladies swimming sessions for those in the Muslim community.
- Ran over 50 activities per week for older people per week including fitness, dance, swimming and gym sessions with over 24,000 recorded attendees.
- Created a new learn-to-ski primary school programme with partner sponsor, RAM Tubulars enabling more than 500 children from 15 primary schools to participate in free ski lessons at Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports.
- Worked alongside NHS Grampian to deliver the Active Lifestyles Referral Programme which included 21 programmes supporting those with breathing conditions, cancer, diabetes, weight management issues, musculoskeletal conditions, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's and receives 300 new referrals annually.

2) To focus on growing key income streams, becoming more cost efficient and investing in the future.

Under this aim, we:

- Had 19,000 individuals signed up to a membership or coached programme by March 2024, demonstrating an annual increase of 11% and representing 8.3 % of Aberdeen's population.

- Increased direct debit income to £403k at March 2024 (a 5.4% increase), reflecting more people becoming committed to getting active and participating in activities.
- Grew the learn-to-swim programme to a total of 5,500 participants at the end of March 2024 reaching 79% occupancy.
- Refocused efforts on attracting commercial advertising and sponsorship with the recruitment of a Commercial Services Manager, achieving £125,000 in the financial year.
- Directly invested over £900k in facility developments which included £600k for the padel courts and a £103k investment in our golf courses. A further £233k of facility improvements were delivered using external funding.
- Spent £2.34m on repairs, maintenance, improvements and grounds maintenance in 2023-24.
- Rolled out a new membership mix in June 2023 which simplified our offer for customers and also introduced a new premium 'Get active' offer for those looking to take part in more than one of our core activities.
- Completed our padel court project in May 2023 with a new padel membership product introduced in July 2023 to capitalise on the new facility.
- Initiated a feasibility study to explore the redevelopment of our Get active @ Westburn venue and the wider Westburn complex to improve the commercial viability of the venue.
- Launched our training academy, extending Sport Aberdeen's training offer to external parties generating new income.
- Ceased operating the Beach Leisure Centre and Bucksburn Swimming Pools following reduction in grant funding from Aberdeen City Council and thereby removing the significant operating deficits and maintenance burdens associated with these facilities.

3) To grow strategic partnerships and to build our corporate governance model.

Under this aim, we:

- Commenced development of outdoor courts at Ruthrieston and Northfield with Tennis Scotland to increase capacity for tennis in city and bring a wider offer to these communities and our membership.
- Worked with Tennis Scotland and the LTA to create proposals to develop Aberdeen Tennis Centre by covering the outdoor courts.
- Worked with Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to host their priority intervention hub at Get active @ Northfield enabling people to access a range of early intervention, prevention and rehabilitation services in the heart of the community. Regular classes, clinics and 1:1 appointments were hosted by Community Respiratory Team, Community Adult Assessment and Rehabilitation Service, Community Listening Service and Primary Care Link Practitioners.
- Welcomed three new trustee directors in January 2024 to strengthen board skillset and governance.

4) To focus on growing our team through professional and personal development.

Under this aim, we:

- Successfully trained 63 individuals through our NPLQ (lifeguarding qualification) programme. Of these, 25 were subsequently hired by our company, representing a 40% employment rate. Additionally, we expanded our training offerings by introducing new courses, such as mental health first aid and national lifesaving. These initiatives have not only strengthened our internal workforce but also generated revenue through external training partnerships.

- Committed to the Young Person's Guarantee with DYW (Developing Young Workforce) providing mentoring through the Career Ready programme, modern apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for school pupils and students aged 16-24.
- Appointed the Finance and Corporate Services Director to the new role of Chief Executive following retirement of the Managing Director at the end of December 2023.
- Promoted the Head of Sport and Active Communities to Director of Sport and Active Communities following an internal structure review.
- Offered colleagues access to a range of qualifications with two completing modern apprenticeships, two achieving TAQA fitness qualifications and one internal trainer assessor obtaining a Level 3 in Education and Training Awards, which allowed us to offer a wider range of first aid courses.
- Progressed 33 aquatics volunteers to paid aquatics helper roles as part of the teacher development pathway.
- Progressed 33 aquatics helpers to teaching roles following course delivery by an in-house tutor.
- Were one of the first organisations in the UK and Ireland to roll out the new Gen10 RLSS lifeguard qualification.

5) To deliver efficiencies, transformation and better decision-making using data and technology.

Under this aim, we:

- Appointed a performance and insights manager internally to develop our business intelligence capability, and use of new data analysis tools to ensure we are targeting the right areas for the highest impact.
- Brought direct debit collection back in house from April 2023 ensuring customers were able to deal directly with our teams and enabling us to provide a more streamlined and consistent level of service.
- Introduced the LTA's ClubSpark booking platform in July 2024 to provide customers with a bespoke online court booking and gate access system for the outdoor tennis and padel courts.
- Launched multilingual AI chatbot 'AllyBot' on website in December 2023 to improve customer services and communications.
- Invested in new technologies across our fitness venues, including TANITA digital scales which provide high quality body analysis and the introduction of Trakk app to improve fitness workouts at Get active @ Jesmond and Get active @ Northfield.
- Added new address finding functionality to our online booking platform ensuring postcodes are valid and addresses are entered correctly speeding up the sign-up process for customers and staff.
- Implemented a new payroll software solution ensuring employees have self-service access to payslips and secure, convenient access to their information.

Performance indicators:

This is the quantitative progress you have made in meeting targets over the year. These were agreed in your business plan / development plan and should be confirmed in your first quarterly meeting with your Lead Officer
PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE BASELINE OR TARGET FIGURES.

Please complete all boxes

INDICATOR	ACHIEVED 22-23	ACHIEVED 23-24	VARIANCE
VENUE PARTICIPATION			
Participation – total visits (Expectation is a 1% increase year on year. Please see Appendix A – KPIs 2022/23 to 2023/24 for further breakdown.)	1,399,017	1,414,960	+15,943
Active Lifestyles			
Walk Aberdeen			
Social walking groups per week	9	9	0
Social walking sessions	386	432	+46
Social walking participations	4,362	5,568	+1,206
Number of volunteers	24	27	+3
Number of volunteering hours	1,320	1,440	+120
Active Lifestyles Referral Programme			
Long-term health conditions with specific activity programmes	8	8	0
Number of referrals received	312	344	+32
Number of opportunities (per week)	21	25	+4
Number of sessions	746	847	+101
Number of participations	4,313	4,871	+558
Average number of people active in specialist referral classes per week	244	344	+100
Number of volunteering hours	144	220	+76
Active Lifestyles Participation			
Number of opportunities per week	52	57	+5
Number of sessions	2,444	2,850	+406
Number of participations	23,596	26,481	+2,885
Number of volunteering hours	2,520	1,081	-1,439
Total Healthy Communities Participation			
Number of opportunities	82	91	9
Number of sessions	3,576	4,129	+553
Number of participations	32,271	36,923	+4,652
Active Schools			
Number of visits	113,412	176,499	+63,087
Number of blocks	1,320	1,151	-169
Distinct participants in extracurricular programme	6,872	8,567	+1,695
% distinct participants in extracurricular programme by school roll	27%	33%	+6%
Distinct volunteers delivering extracurricular programme	685	816	+131
Distinct qualified / certified adult volunteers delivering extracurricular programme	203	317	+114

INDICATOR	ACHIEVED 22-23	ACHIEVED 23-24	VARIANCE
Distinct secondary pupils delivering extracurricular programme	129	154	+25
Distinct qualified / certified secondary pupils delivering extracurricular programme	20	40	+20
Distinct female participants	2,894	3,815	+921
Adventure Aberdeen			
Total number of sessions delivered	1,515	1,531	+16
Number of sessions secondary	0	58	+58
Number of sessions – primary	601	490	-111
Number of sessions – ASN	233	366	+133
Total number of participants	16,210	17,133	+923
Number of participants - secondary	0	791	+791
Number of participants – primary	7,264	6,221	-1,043
Number of participants – ASN	233	1,938	+1,705
Attendance at public events – sessions	148	45	-103
Total number of participants at public events	1,523	1,115	-408
School holiday programmes – total sessions	71	140	+69
Total number of sessions age 3-8	41	42	+1
Total number of participants age 3-8	254	304	+50
Total number of sessions age 9-16	30	98	+68
Total number of participants age 9-16	422	1,104	+682
Community projects – total sessions	99	12	-87
Community projects – total number of participants	581	144	-437
Bikeability scheme – training sessions	318	374	+56
Bikeability schemes – training participants	4,189	4,773	+584
Coached Programmes			
Coached programme members			
Aquatics	4,947	5,500	+553
Gymnastics	587	538	-49
Tennis	393	394	+1
Skating	556	701	+145
Snowsports	521	467	-54
Dance	0	87	+87
Total coached programme members	7,004	7,687	+683
ASN participants in targeted swimming lesson classes	59	88	+29
Number of pupils receiving school swimming lessons	2,095	2,200	+105
Coached programme classes			
Aquatics	749	762	+13
Gymnastics	51	46	-5
Tennis	35	44	+9
Skating	83	83	0
Snowsports	114	90	-24
Dance	0	9	+9
Total	1,032	1,034	+2
Community Sports Hubs			

INDICATOR	ACHIEVED 22-23	ACHIEVED 23-24	VARIANCE
Number of community sports hubs across the city	6	6	0

If you have not met the targets set, please give any reasons or explanation for this:

Participation at 1.41 million increased by 1.1% against the target of 1%.

In general terms, the company is pleased with the rate of growth and the contribution it has made to communities within a very challenging year and still managed to achieve target with two less facilities.

The positive work of the company is not fully reflected in the standard KPIs requested for this proforma, so this report helps to set out the contribution that the company has made on a wider basis.

Please provide a summary of particular successes or case studies:

Padel brought to the city

In May 2023 Sport Aberdeen opened the city's first outdoor padel courts next to Aberdeen Tennis Centre at Westburn Park. They were the 17th & 18th courts to be constructed in Scotland, officially opened by Chairman Tony Dawson and President of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Sandi Procter. Covered by an outdoor canopy so the courts can be enjoyed all year round, the LTA gave us a six-figure interest free loan to get the project on site. The sport has a diverse appeal, and we provide equipment making it accessible.

RAM Tubulars sponsorship

A new corporate sponsorship with RAM Tubulars in April 2023 allowed us to launch a new 'Learn to Ski School Programme' at Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports Centre. This three-year deal provides the opportunity for primary 5 children to take part in free skiing lessons on the beginner slopes, learning the basic techniques and working towards linked snowplough turns. Participants are being given new opportunities which they may not have had otherwise, so the programme presents a unique chance to try something new, enhance their social skills and have fun. To date, over 500 children from 15 primary schools across the city have received free tuition.

Launch of GoodBoost

Sport Aberdeen was the first leisure provider in Scotland to launch the pioneering GoodBoost programme, with sessions delivered at its Get active @ Northfield pool and Tullos Swimming Pool.

GoodBoost supports participants with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions such as arthritis, back pain, neurological conditions and people before and after hip and knee replacement surgery to participate in individually-tailored, water-based therapeutic exercises in friendly and supportive group classes.

Each person is given a waterproof tablet with AI technology, and this creates a personalised therapeutic aquatic exercise programme for each participant to support them with their mobility, balance and fitness.

The feedback since the programme launched in April 2023 has been immensely positive, having a significant impact on individual's lives.

Facility of the Year award win

Get active @ Northfield, Sport Aberdeen's health and fitness venue was crowned Facility of the Year at the Scottish Leisure Network Group (SLNG) Awards in November 2023. A significant achievement as the venue had only been open for 12 months.

Football for All project makes worthy impact

Sport Aberdeen's community sport team launched a unique, targeted programme for New Scots and refugees in Aberdeen to participate in weekly five-a-side football sessions. It is designed to fulfil aims and objectives as set out by the Scottish Government's 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: 2024'. The strategy has six outcomes and the main one the project focuses on is to ensure 'New Scots can pursue their ambitions through education, employment, culture and leisure activities in diverse communities.'

The two-hour football sessions take place on a weekly basis at Fives Football. Several participants have received some form of football clothing provision through Kit for All – a project Sport Aberdeen's Active Schools team initiated, helping individuals to access recycled and pre-loved sports kits. Sport Aberdeen has multiple drop-off and collection points for kit located at its venues. Through a partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT), football shirts from a previous season were donated too.

So far, the project has had:

- Over 100 distinct participants
- 65 pairs of football boots provided
- Over 80 attendees given full kit (jumper, t-shirt, shorts, socks)
- 80 hours of free football since October 2023
- Over 10 different nationalities attended.

Please provide a summary of any problems or issues that have required attention or action:

Service cessation at Get active @ Beach Leisure Centre

Get active @ Beach Leisure Centre ceased to operate in April due to the venue being at the end of its lifecycle. The swimming pool had been decommissioned previously on August 2022 due to an increase in energy costs. This was a difficult time with frequent enquiries from the media and customers/members alike.

Service cessation at Bucksburn Swimming Pool

The service cessation at Bucksburn Swimming Pool was announced in December 2023 and thereafter the facility ceased to operate in April 2024. This presented community challenges with locals expressing their disappointment and protesting to keep the venue open. We worked with the city council to open Dyce academy pool for lessons and club use to mitigate the impact. Plans are in place to reopen Bucksburn Pool.

Fatality at Get active @ Northfield Swimming Pool

An incident occurred in February 2024, where subsequently a young person died. A full investigation is still being conducted by Police Scotland and Sport Aberdeen is cooperating fully with the team on this.

Community Access to Schools

Community access to some schools, including swimming pools, has not returned to pre-pandemic arrangements creating challenges and capacity issues particularly in meeting the demand for delivery of the citywide swimming programme.

Pitch capacity

Demand for all weather pitches continues to be extremely high across the city with many operating to capacity at peak times. Significant investment in 3G pitches is required in order to meet this demand and reduce reliance on high cost, weather dependent grass pitches.

ACC Strategies and Action Plan Priorities:

Please provide a summary of how your activities have delivered against ACC strategies and action plan priorities.

Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2026

A mid-term review of the sports facilities strategy was completed in March 2023 which incorporated nine new strategic priorities. At least four of the new strategic project proposals were initiated within 2023/24 including Get active @ Westburn, Aberdeen Tennis Centre and phase 2 of Get active @ Northfield.

A further review is planned within the next year with all major providers of sport and leisure in the city being invited to participate in the exercise to agree and align on a 10-year sports and leisure strategy to deliver better outcomes for the city.

The Strategy for an Active Aberdeen

The strategy has the vision of making Aberdeen the most active city in Scotland, with a mission to Activate the City. The key strands of this strategy relate to increasing opportunities and participation in sport and physical activity, investing in the infrastructure of places (physical infrastructure) and people (communities of interest).

The final aim is to be inclusive, so that everyone has the opportunity to be and stay active. These are closely linked with the aims and objectives of the Sport Aberdeen business plan and the detailed evidence for what Sport Aberdeen has achieved by increasing participation is highlighted throughout this document and particularly in the preceding sections.

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

Sport Aberdeen has taken a lead role in coordinating and supporting the Active Aberdeen Partnership (AAP) with the focus during the year being on the Sport and Physical Activity Forum. The LOIP refresh did not specifically include a stretch outcome focused on sport and physical activity, making this less relevant to the other AAP partners. Notwithstanding this, Sport Aberdeen has remained fully committed to contributing to the LOIP stretch outcomes where practicably possible, with most relevance aligned to People (Children & Young People and Adults) and Place.

Active representation and resources allocated by Sport Aberdeen to CPA planning, ongoing development and delivery of LOIP Outcomes throughout the previous year is highlighted below. Sport Aberdeen has maintained representation on the CPA thematic groups, on behalf of the AAP, where there has been capacity to do so.

Local Priorities:

Please highlight where your outcomes, outputs or activities align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 4: 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026

- Care and Connect Programme for Young Carers
- Priority Families Project Activator
- SPACE – Supported Physical Activity for Care Experienced
- Active Schools Curricular Impact
- ProActive Minds Mental Health support
- Active Girls Committee

All use the power of sport and activity to provide a safe space for children to express themselves, whilst developing strong relationships to ensure voices are heard – verbally or through non-verbal cues.

Involvement in multi-agency meetings to support advocacy for children and families who experience greater inequalities.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 5: By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.

- SPACE programme for care experienced using activity to support health, wellbeing and attainment. Partnership approach providing wrap around support to whole family, including family-based activity.
- Free Get active memberships for all care experienced children, their families and support networks.
- Young people supported through adapted Active Schools leadership programme, with increased skills development and pathways into positive destinations.
- Lead Active Schools Coordinator (Virtual School) driving provision, training and developments to ensure we're Keeping the Promise and fully undertaking our corporate parenting responsibilities.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 6: 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 and 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.

- Active Schools leadership programme offer in Northfield Academy and ASG primary schools to develop skills, alongside provision within St Machar ASG.
- Academy pupils supported into paid employment where possible.
- Bespoke leadership offer for care experienced young people and/or young carers - supporting those living in priority neighbourhoods.
- Placements, Career Ready and work experience opportunities for young people across the city, with an emphasis on getting it right for those within priority neighbourhoods.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 7: 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.

- Prevention work through Active Schools Curricular Impact and programmes such as Active Schools Assistants, SPACE and Priority Families provision.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 8: 100% of our children with additional support needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination.

- Adventure Aberdeen has worked with a range of schools delivering outdoor educational programmes and activities to individuals and small groups that have been identified by schools as needing additional support. These have focused on learning new skills, increasing confidence and supporting young people to get to a place where they are better positioned to experience a positive destination.
- Active Schools curricular impact supporting those with additional support needs to gain confidence and develop skills. Strong partnership working with complex needs schools and enhanced provision to increase opportunities and identify pathways into paid employment – such as coached programmes.
- SPACE programme for care experienced young people supports the wellbeing, skills development and attainment of young people, inclusive of qualifications within UHI NPA Level 4 Horse Care – leading to positive destination opportunities including volunteering.
- Hospital-based activity for children within RACH, building relationships, skills and trust with those otherwise not accessed through school-based provision.
- An inclusive and adaptable Active Schools leadership programme, alongside strong levels of partnership working with local and national agencies, such as Scottish Disability Sport.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 10: Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026

- Community sports hub team has developed strong partnership with ACC family learning and community learning teams to deliver programmes of low intensity sport and physical activity in Northfield and Ferryhill to engage those who may not have accessed traditional sports and physical activity (including Boccia and Tai-Chi).
- Healthy communities team contributed to the review of the pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) pathway. This resulted in a 60% increase in referrals to Sport Aberdeen's PR maintenance programme in Q4 2023.24 compared to the same period in the previous year, enabling people to access a community-based class where appropriate, enabling self-management and easing pressure on NHS waiting lists.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 14: Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.

- Over £11,780 of investment through partnership with Scottish Cycling to deliver Rock Up and Ride Communities programme, providing bike library and funding for led rides to break down barriers to cycling in Seaton and Northfield.
- Delivered pilot of Scottish Cycling Mini Riders programme to 12 Ukrainian children as part of Summer in the City programme to support learning to ride and improve cycle confidence.
- Target of 100% of schools delivering Bikeability Level 2 cycling training to primary 6s achieved with support from Adventure Aberdeen for school year 2022-23. Funding awarded from Cycling Scotland to deliver this target, with funding awarded for school year 2023-24 to continue supporting deliver of 100% target. As of 31 March 2024, programme is on track to meet 100% target.
- Bikeability level 1 training delivered by Adventure Aberdeen in schools to approximately 1,050 pupils. 34 days of Bike Doctor bike maintenance sessions were delivered, involving 550 participants.
- Cycling Friendly School and Cycle Friendly Employer Awards programme delivered by Adventure Aberdeen following funding from Cycling Scotland. In total, 26 organisations/sites were newly registered, with 17 cycling friendly site assessments carried out. There were three newly accredited organisations and 15 organisations signposted to development funding.
- Cycling Without Age Aberdeen City, delivered the first full year of tri shaw rides enabling older adults and those with disabilities across Aberdeen City to enjoy the outdoors and experience the wind in their hair. 130 tri shaw rides with 260 passengers were made possible over summer 2023, thanks to the team of 12 volunteer pilots. Partnerships were developed with organisations including VSA, Cornerstone and Charlie House.
- Walk Aberdeen coordinated nine weekly social walking groups with over 5,500 participations during the year. Step Out September was hosted in conjunction with ACHSCP Stay Well Stay Connected initiative, to encourage more people to come and try their local walking group.

LOIP Stretch Outcome 16: 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026

- Renewed focus on developing community sports hubs across the city, with six hubs working towards being re-established or newly set up. The community sport hub approach is to support and empower local people to improve sport and physical activity in communities across Scotland. It starts with understanding the needs within a community and then collaborating to facilitate and deliver activities and interventions.
- Consultation events and ongoing community engagement undertaken in regard to potential redevelopments of facilities at Ruthrieston and Northfield Outdoor Sports Centres.

- Targeted and specialist Active Schools programmes support children and families to express their needs and to be actively involved in shaping decisions which affect them.
- Active Schools team working with pupil voice groups to shape extra-curricular and festival programme offer, alongside programmes such as Active Girls Committee and Young Ambassadors.
- Healthy communities team worked in conjunction with programme participants to seek feedback as part of a review of the programme and introduced a number of new activities in response to this collaboration.
- Parkinson's Walking Football sessions were piloted in collaboration with the Grampian Young Onset Parkinson's Group and MS exercise classes designed in conjunction with MS Society Aberdeen Groups, ensuring these opportunities met the interests and needs of the participants.

Education:

Please provide further information in respect to any education programmes delivered.

Sport Aberdeen delivered a number of programmes in the period to support education. These include:

SPACE (Supported Physical Activity for Care Experienced), Care and Connect Young Carers, Priority Families

Programmes: Run in partnership with Aberdeen City Council's virtual school, ACHSCP, Barnardo's Young Carers service, Action for Children's Priority Families Team, these programmes aim to remove barriers and support young individuals to improve their physical health, emotional wellbeing and enhance key life skills, using the power of change as a catalyst for positive change.

Active Schools Leadership Programme - Flexible to the needs of young people, the Active Schools leadership programme is designed to support young people to achieve positive destinations through completion of modules transferable for employability, completion of which provides alternative entry pathways into higher education courses. Inclusive by design, the programme is accessible for those at greater risk of reduced attainment, including care experienced young people. Alternative programmes also in place for primary school pupils, including playground captains and sports ambassadors.

ProActive Minds (Knowledge transfer partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University and The Wood Foundation) - A first-of-its-kind programme designed to promote mental and physical health in children and young people across the city. The project is now in its second year and has continue to develop and test new interventions and programmes to support young people's mental health. This resulted in 1-2-1 and small group psychological support from a skilled psychologist, stressbuster exam sessions and a Being Me programme designed to combat negative body image trends.

Early Years – early intervention support for six primary schools to increase motor skills, engage with parents via PEEP and upskill staff to deliver sport and physical activity in identified early years settings.

Confidance – dance-based programme designed to increase confidence in identified children across six primary schools, culminating in a dance showcase at Greyhope School.

University of Aberdeen – CPD and workshops for PGDE and MA primary teaching students to develop skills and confidence in delivering PE post qualification, whilst understanding the importance of inclusive practice.

Bikeability – delivery of the government's national cycle training programme to equip young people with the practical skills and confidence to cycle on today's roads. Delivery is targeted to ensure 100% of schools deliver a Bikeability level 2 course. Bikeability level 1 sessions are also delivered.

School swimming programme – delivery of 10 swimming lessons to all 2,200 P4 pupils in Aberdeen city. An additional £10,000 of funding from Scottish Swimming also supported:

- a pilot of Scottish Swimming’s new school swimming framework, focusing on water safety and confidence
- targeted P7 school swimming delivery
- Targeted swimming classes for priority groups

Community Sport Training Programme – 170 participants attended Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport, Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer and Emergency First Aid training to upskill volunteers and coaches who support Active Schools, club and community programmes.

Paths for All Walk Leader training and Cycling Without Age Pilot training - delivered to 24 new volunteers.

Career Ready Programme - Two mentees were supported over an 18-month period, completing internships in summer 2023. One has gone on to employment as a coach within our holiday camps programme, after his experience with Sport Aberdeen confirmed his interest in studying sports coaching and development at NESCOL.

Employment

Please provide information about your volunteers, if you have any:

- What roles do your volunteers undertake within the organisation?
- Training and Policy in action?
- Example of volunteer success stories such as transition to employment?

The Sport and Active Communities team works with 850 volunteers ranging from senior pupils in secondary schools, school staff, parents and carers to adults who are retired. Over 200 young people currently volunteer with Active Schools via a range of programmes which includes the Active Schools Leadership Programme highlighted in the previous section. There’s also programmes for Young Ambassadors, Active Girls Committee and primary school leadership opportunities. Active Schools volunteers contribute to over 15,000 hours of volunteer hours, equating to around £250,000 of coaching hours.

Sport Aberdeen’s volunteers contribute 16,600 volunteering hours per year enabling a wide range of activities including:

- extracurricular school sports clubs and festivals
- social walking groups
- trishaw rides for local care home residents and
- community sports hub events and activities

Coached Programmes Volunteer Pathway

A strong career development pathway exists through Sport Aberdeen’s coached programmes, this enables people to join the charity as a volunteer in the learn to swim programme, before progressing to paid employment as an aquatics helper and aquatics teacher through a robust pathway of training and mentoring. During 2023-24, there were 33 aquatics helpers recruited through this pathway. The majority were young people, so providing a positive destination. 102 current aquatics staff progressed from the volunteer pathway.

Success Story

A young person from Northfield Academy volunteered within the Active Schools team, gaining confidence and experience. This has resulted in paid employment with Sport Aberdeen and a new career path, recently commencing a sports related course at college. They attribute this to the positive experience and role models across the Active Schools programme.

An adult volunteer who gained confidence through volunteering within Active Schools after a career break, sought part-time employment opportunities across Sport Aberdeen programmes. Word of mouth has resulted in more parents return to work, whilst expressing increased physical activity levels through volunteering.

A care experienced young person who has gained a level 4 qualification in horse care through Sport Aberdeen's SPACE programme has started volunteering at a local riding centre, increasing their sense of worth, belief and confidence.

Success Story

A team of 12 volunteers were recruited to form the Cycling Without Age Aberdeen City Chapter, including a Chapter Captain, Chapter Administrator and volunteer tri shaw pilots. These volunteers worked alongside Sport Aberdeen's Walk Coordinator to establish the chapter with Cycling Without Age Scotland and form partnerships with a number of local organisations to offer tri shaw rides. A volunteer training coordinator was upskilled to train volunteer tri shaw pilots for the project and the team delivered over 130 rides to 260 passengers in summer 2023.

SECTION 2 – Users, Audiences, Participants and Investment

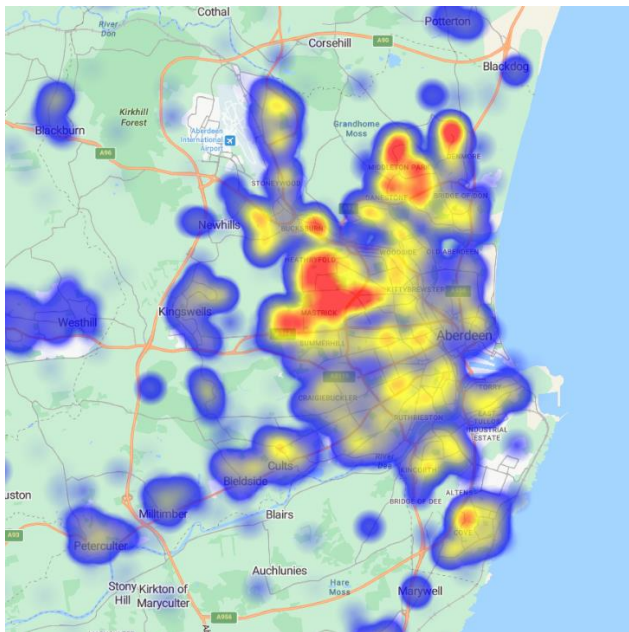
Please complete this section to report on the number of participants from each of the identified areas who have participated during the year.

Participants	Total 2022-23	Total 2023-24	Variance
Total number of participatory opportunities created throughout programme	1,399,017	1,414,960	+1.1%
Young People under 16 (Active Schools & Community Sport)	114,704	168,288	+46.7%
Young People 16-25 (Active Schools & Community Sport)	N/A	8,380	-
Older People (65+)	N/A	80	-
Disability (mental health physical, sensory (e.g. BSL users) and carers of disabled people)	N/A	244	-
Ethnic minority communities including Gypsy/ Travellers (Asylum seeker and refugee programmes during 2023-24)	N/A	795	-
Sexual orientation (LGBTQ)	Management system unable to collect data		

Residents of regeneration areas within Aberdeen City	Members			% Members	
	22-23	23-24	Variance	22-23	23-24
Torry	567	613	46	2.36%	2.43%
Middlefield, Mastrick, Northfield, Sheddocksley	3090	2927	-163	12.85%	11.59%
Seaton	208	163	-45	0.87%	0.65%
Tillydrone	304	330	26	1.26%	1.31%
Woodside	209	235	26	0.87%	0.93%
George Street	180	173	-7	0.75%	0.69%
Total	4,558	4441	-117	19.83%	17.59%

*Datahub enables interrogation of data and heat maps to identify participation of those within our database from SIMD.

	22-23	23-24	Variance	22-23	23-24
Other (please specify)					
Number of Active Schools participants within priority neighbourhoods	N/A	2,225	N/A	-	-



The heat map shows the areas of significant membership and coached programme uptake which correlates with greater usage of facilities and increased physical activity.

This is particularly dominant in the north of the city and the priority area of Heathryfold, Middlefield, Northfield, Cummings Park & Mastrick. This increase in membership and usage is directly aligned with investment in the facilities in these areas.

Sport Aberdeen is committed to improving facilities and where investments can be made with Aberdeen City Council, we have a proven track record of delivering increased usage and physical activity uptake, contributing to the overall health and wellbeing outcomes of these communities.

Please complete this section to report on audience/visitor numbers in relation to your programming.

Users/Audiences	Total 2022-23	Total 2023-24
Total user/audience/visitor number	1.4 million	1.41 million
User/audience number from Aberdeen city	86.3%	85.8%
User/audience number from the wider region or further	13.7%	14.2%

We are keen to evidence the added economic value and social return of investment, as such we request that you please complete the table below.

Income 2023-24	Total
Value of Grant(s) from Aberdeen City Council	£4,515,000
External grant funding	£596,282
Sponsorship	£125,260
Trading income	£9,009,244
Other – interest receivable	-
Total income	£14,462,488

Social Value Calculator

With a commissioning fee of **£4,515,000**. from Aberdeen City Council, the overall social value generated in 2023/24 is **£8,856,195**. This level of measurable social value delivered is a positive indicator of the performance of the company and of the value it delivers across key areas.

Physical and mental health: as a result of reductions in risk of coronary heart disease / stroke, diabetes, breast cancer, depression, dementia, colon cancer, back pain, hip fractures, depression, reduction and reduced GP visits;

Subjective wellbeing: as a result of improved subjective wellbeing, looking at improved life satisfaction, frequent positive feelings and positive relations with others

Individual development: as a result of improved educational attainment (participants aged 11-18) and enhanced human capital; and

Social and community development: from reduced criminal incidences about young males (aged 10-24) and social capital (improved social networks, trust and reciprocity).

Section 3 – Support Material

We recommend you provide up to five items of support material to help demonstrate the quality and impact of your activity. This may include: case studies, photographs, videos, web links, publications, marketing material, reports, participant testimonials and feedback. If emailing, please keep all support material to under 5mb. Please supply details on your support material below

By submitting this you are providing permission for each item to be used for publication. You should ensure you have the creator's consent and accreditation is provided where necessary.

Support Material 1:	Participation KPIs 2023/24
Support Material 2:	Community Sport presentation
Support Material 3:	Active News
Support Material 4:	Padel launch video STV News, 31 May 2024
Support Material 5:	Good Boost video case study - Susan's story

Section 4- Declaration on use of information

Aberdeen City Council collects and maintains the data on this form about your organisation for the purpose of contacting you in relation to the funding, monitoring purposes and to collate information for statistical and audit purposes. We will retain Personal Data for six years in accordance with the organisation's Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and for the purpose of administering, processing and assessing your report.

For the purposes of processing this information Aberdeen City Council is the Data Controller. The Information Commissioner Office is the UK's regulator of data protection law (www.ico.org.uk). More information about all of the rights you have is available on our website at: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/your-data>.

Whenever the Council processes personal data we need to make sure we have a basis for doing so. We understand our basis in GDPR to be Article 6(1)(e) as we consider that it is in our public task to collect this information under our powers set down in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act, 1982 section 14, as amended by section 128 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994. The act provides for us doing or contributing towards the expenses of providing or doing, anything necessary or expedient for the purpose of ensuring that there are facilities available for recreational, sporting, cultural or social activities as we consider appropriate.

To confirm that all information included in this report is accurate and that you have read and followed the terms and conditions, please sign and date below. If submitting by email an electronic signature or the typed name of the appropriate contact should be inserted.

Name:	Keith Heslop, CEO
Date:	20 September 2024

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Appendix 4A



Key Performance Indicators

Venue User Statistics

City Wide Swimming	Key Performance Indicators		Venue User Statistics	
	2022-23	2023-24	User Variance	Cumulative 2023-24 % Variance
Learn to swim	213013	237063	24050	11.29%
Swim adult	20188	15254	-4934	-24.44%
Swim Adult A2L	894	0	-894	-100.00%
Swim CD visit	0	0	0	0.00%
Swim family	32814	25588	-7226	-22.02%
Swim family A2L	464	0	-464	-100.00%
Swim junior	23871	19438	-4433	-18.57%
Swim junior A2L	172	0	-172	-100.00%
Swim member visit	38520	44428	5908	15.34%
Swim misc	37668	36758	-910	-2.42%
WET TOTAL	367604	378529	10925	2.97%

City Wide Other Activities	2022-23	2023-24	User Variance	% Variance
Athletics	0	0	0	0.00%
Badminton	47926	54692	6766	14.12%
Basketball	10050	11184	1134	11.28%
Bowling	1725	1688	-37	-2.14%
Club Skating	7326	6732	-594	-8.11%
Coaching	76341	84549	8208	10.75%
Creche	0	0	0	0.00%
Cricket indoor	1460	2290	830	56.85%
Event	0	14873	14873	0.00%
Fitness class	141080	138365	-2715	-1.92%
Fitness studio member visit	160189	147207	-12982	-8.10%
Fitness studio Pay & Play	6737	3969	-2768	-41.09%
Football	12745	13688	943	7.40%
Health suite	630	80	-550	-87.30%
Hockey	2488	2212	-276	-11.09%
Ice Coaching	0	0	0	0.00%
Ice Hockey	8660	8601	-59	-0.68%
Ice Hockey for All	589	691	102	17.32%
Netball	15482	20549	5067	32.73%
Party	79	0	-79	-100.00%
Room hire	3558	22503	18945	532.46%
Skate Uk	29761	34421	4660	15.66%
Skating	35377	39120	3743	10.58%
Sports hall misc	127059	85577	-41482	-32.65%
Squash	1977	2896	919	46.48%
Table tennis	4356	4204	-152	-3.49%
Tennis	25411	24330	-1081	-4.25%
Volleyball	6214	6796	582	9.37%
DRY TOTAL	727220	731217	3997	0.55%

City Wide Outdoor Activities	2022-23	2023-24	User Variance	% Variance
Artif pitch football	100150	110983	10833	10.82%
Cricket outdoor	2170	1535	-635	-29.26%
Football 11 aside	19217	15355	-3862	-20.10%
Football 7 aside	3682	6550	2868	77.89%
Golf mem visit	94695	98680	3985	4.21%
Golf P&P	17945	17359	-586	-3.27%
Outdoors misc	66334	54752	-11582	-17.46%
OUTDOORS TOTAL	304193	305214	1021	0.34%

CITY WIDE GRAND TOTAL	1399017	1414960	15943	1.14%
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Total Number of visits per venue				Cumulative 2023-24	
	2022-23	2023-24	User Variance	% Variance	
Alexander Collie Sports Centre	61774	66399	4625	7.49%	
Beach Leisure Centre	129778	2256	-127522	-98.26%	
Beacon Centre and Dyce 3G pitch	119939	123737	3798	3.17%	
Jesmond Centre	127426	124492	-2934	-2.30%	
Kincorth Sports Centre	29369	39916	10547	35.91%	
Linx Ice Arena	82418	92620	10202	12.38%	
Peterculter Sports Centre	25636	28454	2818	10.99%	
Sheddocksley Sports Centre	73076	85838	12762	17.46%	
Aberdeen Tennis Centre	76554	74803	-1751	-2.29%	
Bridge of Don Swimming Pool	50677	48870	-1807	-3.57%	
Bucksburn Swimming Pool	83877	6456	-77421	-92.30%	
Cults Sports Complex	96719	105447	8728	9.02%	
Adventure Aberdeen Kingswells	16036	17106	1070	6.67%	
Lochside Sports Centre	67917	82526	14609	21.51%	
Northfield Swimming Pool	98370	199218	100848	102.52%	
Tullos Swimming Pool	76706	98836	22130	28.85%	
Balnagask Golf	19777	21866	2089	10.56%	
Hazlehead Golf - 18 Hole	48068	47976	-92	-0.19%	
Hazlehead Golf - 9 Hole	21590	22011	421	1.95%	
Kings Links Golf	25635	27140	1505	5.87%	
Aulton Outdoor Pitches	440	0	-440	-100.00%	
Hazlehead Joe Paterson Pavilion	3322	286	-3036	-91.39%	
Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports	63913	59483	-4430	-6.93%	
Dyce Academy Pool	0	39224	39224	0.00%	
Total	1399017	1414960	15943	1.14%	



COMMUNITY SPORTS TEAM

CEO Update April 24



Community Sports Team Projects:

						
<p>Focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albury • Dyce • Garthdee • New Scots • Northfield • Ruthrieston • Torry (NEW) • Seaton (NEW) 	<p>Hub focused ED&I Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse & Ethnic Communities • Poverty & Low Income • Disability & ASN • Mental Health 	<p>Breaking down barriers to cycling in St Machar / Northfield</p> <p>Partnering with Scottish Cycling & SUStrans</p>	<p>Funded through Grampian Disability Sport</p> <p>Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen • Alford • Peterhead 	<p>Club Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Training • First Aid Training • Athlete Development Programme • General Club Support • Liason with SGBs 	<p>Facilities Development & Club Partnering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northfield OSC • Ruthrieston OSC • Dyce Pavilion • Hazlehead • Inverdee 	<p>Partnership with Club Sport SCIO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Discount (SA / ACC) • Access to Active Schools support • Event delivery • Advocacy

Examples of range of partners:

Internal	Sporting	Non-Sporting	Community Groups	Funders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Schools • Active Communities • Health & Fitness • Get Active Venues • Estates • Marketing • Memberships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Governing Bodies • sportscotland • Scottish Disability Sport • Grampian Disability Sport • Club Sport Aberdeen • AFCCT (Kit for All) • 5ives / ASV • Local Sports Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustrans • Family Learning (ACC) • Grampian Regional Equality Council • Asylum & Refugee Care (Charity) • Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships • Schools • Live Life Aberdeenshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashley Broomhill Community Council • Northfield Community Council • Cummings Park Community Centre • BeCycle • Friends of St Fitticks Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE: • sportscotland • Grampian Disability Sport • Programme for Government • ADDITIONAL: • Health Improvement Fund • National Lottery • NHS Grampian Charities • UK Shared Prosperity • Place Based Investment Programme (TBC) • Scottish Cycling • Aberdeen City & Shire Hotels

Aberdeen City Hubs:



The Hub network represents a wide range of community groups, sports clubs and invested individuals and each one presents their own challenges and opportunities specific to their region.

The Community Sport Hub approach is to support and empower local people to improve sport & physical activity in communities across Scotland. It starts with understanding the needs within a community and then collaborating to facilitate and deliver activities and interventions.

Our high priority areas for 2024 are;

- Northfield
- Ruthrieston
- New Scots Hub

We will also be focusing activity in the hubs areas of;

- Albury
- Garthdee



Working with Communities – For Communities:



Community Sport Team presenting at Language Café, organised by Grampian Regional Equality Council



Engaging directly with community groups;

- Hubs meetings
- Public consultations
- Attending partnership events



Bringing organisations together to work in partnership and achieve common goals;

- Sporting & non Sporting organisations



Identifying and recruiting volunteers to deliver and support projects;

- Working to ensure successful projects are sustainable long term by delegating delivery to community leaders

EDI Focus – Using Sport to create positive change in communities.

New Health and Wellbeing Walk
Wednesdays at 9:45am – 11:00am
Followed by tea and coffee at Ferryhill Community Centre

Walk begins at Community Sports Hub, Albany Road, AB11 6TN

The price is set by the group and everyone is welcome to come and join us.

Albury Community Sports Hub
!!! OPEN DAY !!!
A Day Of Free Activity

Tennis
18 hole Putting
Bowls
Petanque
Croquet

Saturday 27th May
2pm–5pm

Albury Road, Aberdeen AB11 6TN (Next to Ferryhill Primary)

THE ALBURY SOCIAL SESSIONS

PUTTING PLAY AT THE HEART OF WELLBEING
Come and join us on Friday afternoons at 1pm for a FREE social session of sport combined with a chat and a cuppa. These sessions are relaxed and enjoyable with an emphasis on meeting people, getting gentle exercise and feeling the positive effects of taking part in sport. All are welcome

Fridays 1pm - 3pm
30th June
7th July
14th July
21st July

Relax & Play
18 hole putting
Lawn Bowls
Tennis & Pickleball
Petanque & more

Долучайся до заняття спортом! sport aberdeen

Презентація Sport Aberdeen

30 червня о 11.00

Rosemount Ukraine Hub

Найбільший спортивний оператор у Абердині: більше 30 спортивних центрів: спортивні, босоніжні, тенісні корти, скотч, гольф, анімаційні, театр та театральні клуби та ін.

Завантажте код, щоб отримати Universal Credit

Завантажте код, щоб отримати отримання, щоб ми могли запропонувати програми саме для вас!

www.sportaberdeen.co.uk

THE ALBURY SOCIAL SESSIONS

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Come and join us on Friday afternoons at 1pm for a FREE social session of sport combined with a chat and a cuppa. These sessions are relaxed and enjoyable with an emphasis on meeting people, getting gentle exercise and feeling the positive effects of taking part in sport. All are welcome

Fridays 1pm - 3pm
8th September
15th September
22nd September

Relax & Play
18 hole putting
Lawn Bowls
Tennis & Pickleball
Petanque & more

ADVENTURE ABERDEEN SNOWSPORTS

The DROP
SAT 30th SEPT ALL WELCOME

Never tried it?
£5 Ski & Snowboard Beginner Taster Sessions
0930 - 1030

Are you a beginner?
£5 Improve your skills and connect with local clubs in a guided open session
1030 - 1130

CHALLENGE YOURSELF
£5 Win prizes and have fun in the DROP IN JAM
1100 - 1100

EMAIL: snosports@sportaberdeen.co.uk FOR QUERIES

SOCIAL BOCCIA SESSION

Completely Free!

A chance to try out this exciting activity in a relaxed social setting at a fully accessible facility

CUMMINGS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE
Cummings Park Crescent, AB16 7AS
Every Second Wednesday from 17th January 0930-1030

ALL AGES, ABILITIES AND EXPERIENCE WELCOME
For more information contact Kyle Murray at KMurray@sportaberdeen.co.uk

ADVENTURE ABERDEEN SNOWSPORTS

The DROP
SAT 30th SEPT ALL WELCOME

DROP IN JAM
1000 - 1100
RELAXED FORMAT

LOADS OF PRIZES UP FOR GRABS

EMAIL: snosports@sportaberdeen.co.uk FOR QUERIES

FOOTBALL FOR ALL 5 A-SIDE SESSIONS

When? 2pm–4pm
22 / 11 / 23

Where? Sives Football, Nelson Street, Aberdeen AB24 5ES

Sign Up For Free Here

INDOOR CRICKET
Free social cricket (tapeball) sessions

ALL ABILITIES WELCOME
I COME ALONG AND PLAY!

WHEN?
1200 - 1400
27 / 11 / 23
04 / 12 / 23
11 / 12 / 23
18 / 12 / 23

WHERE?
GETACTIVE @ Kincoath, Corthan Cree, Aberdeen, AB12 6BB

OFFICIAL INVITE!

FOOTBALL FOR ALL
7 A SIDE

ABERDEEN SPORTS VILLAGE

13th December
1315 kick off

BASKETBALL

Social pick-up basketball session.
Halfcourt / Fullcourt games

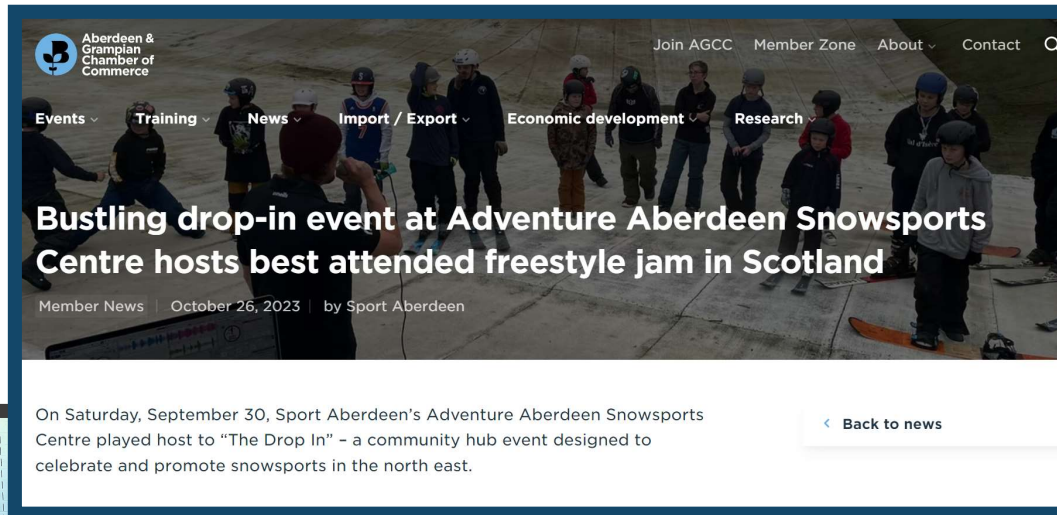
FERRYHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE
WEDNESDAY: 20/12/23 : 1300 - 1500

SCAN TO BOOK FOR FREE

Activation and coordination of various projects and events across the city in 2023 each aiming to address barriers to activity within our key demographics;

- Diverse and Ethnic Communities
- Poverty and low income
- Disability / ASN

Successes & Challenges



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Join AGCC Member Zone About Contact

Events Training News Import / Export Economic development Research

Bustling drop-in event at Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports Centre hosts best attended freestyle jam in Scotland

Member News | October 26, 2023 | by Sport Aberdeen

On Saturday, September 30, Sport Aberdeen's Adventure Aberdeen Snowsports Centre played host to "The Drop In" – a community hub event designed to celebrate and promote snowsports in the north east.

[Back to news](#)



SPORTFIRST stories behind a world class sporting system

Empowering communities to increase participation in sport

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sportaberdeen.co.uk/community-sport

Clubs & Communities

26.03.24

Boccia brings mums together

How boccia sessions are providing a space for mums to connect in Aberdeen

When the team at Northfield Community Sports Hub in Aberdeen were tasked with coming up with a session for a group of mums in the community, boccia might not have been the obvious choice. What started as a multisport session where the group would have the choice of what sport to play each week, however, quickly turned into a week-on-week boccia tournament for the women.

Positive collaboration

Northfield Community sport hub is part of the national **sports**scotland community sport hub network that is funded by The National Lottery and brings sports clubs and community organisations together to improve the contribution sport and physical activity has within communities across Scotland.



Urgent need to recruit and train volunteers to increase capacity to deliver projects and allow team to seek out new opportunities
– major focus for 2024 -



Project Activator (Cycling) - Laura Benson

2 year P/T role, funded by Scottish Cycling's Community Cycling Fund

Develop community cycling with a key focus on targeted activation within Aberdeen



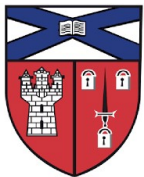
- Link underrepresented groups with cycling opportunities.
- Partnership working, linking & working with existing cycling organisations & community development workers.
- Focusing on SIMD areas - Northfield & St Machar.
- Link cycling with community sport hubs where possible.
- Working towards a Sport Aberdeen Cycling & Active Travel Hub in Seaton.

2023 Mini Riders

Summer Pilot Project – Ukrainian children, Dyce



- 12 children (aged 4-8 years)
- Partnership delivery – volunteers
- Improved cycle confidence and skills over 3 weeks
- 1 child taught to pedal
- Parent follow up - adult cycle confidence session
- Feedback to Scottish Cycling influencing draft syllabus



2024 - Rock Up & Ride Communities, Seaton

An accessible pathway to recreational cycling.

Targeting women, underrepresented groups, & people living in SIMD areas.



Short led cycle rides - Seaton/beach area

12 adult project bikes

Partnership working:

- Sustrans | Bike Communities
- ACC Community Learning & Development
- Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership

New Scots - Community Sport's Virtual Hub

Volunteer opportunities

More groups to be targeted into 2024

Community Cycling Impact /Aims



- 57 participants so far
- 6 children taught to ride
- Increases confidence on (& off) bikes
- Increases willingness to get active & cycle
- Good for mental wellbeing
- Providing New Scots with access to bikes, the ability to get active, see more of the city, & learn to cycle safely



- Create pathways to recreational or active travel cycling - working with adults & children to increase levels of cycling, facilitating individual & family cycling
- Link with existing cycling, bike maintenance, & community partner organisations - providing opportunities for bike ownership and cycle skill development

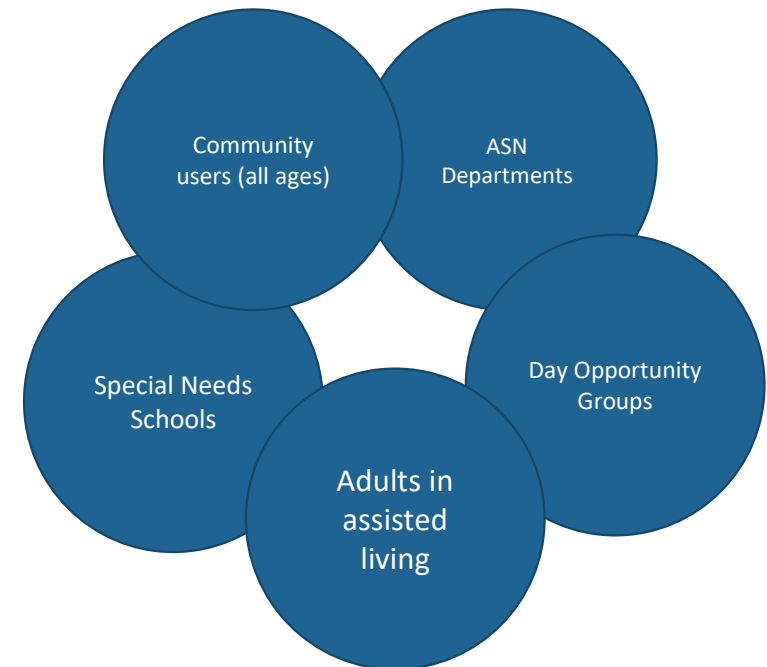


Project Activator (Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies)

Fiona Smith

Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies

- Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies Project – p/t post funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and hosted by Sport Aberdeen on behalf of Grampian Disability Sport
- Goal – to set up and support adapted cycling bothies across Grampian to improve access to adapted cycling. Each bothy will have a selection of bikes and trained volunteers to support users.
- Post commenced 23rd August 2022.



Bothy Development

Aberdeen Bothy (Opening May/June 2024)

Main hub in Grampian (Aulton pavilion)

Opportunity for riders to explore Beach as well as cycle in area at the pavilion

Adapted bikes ordered (12 week delivery), due mid/end May

One volunteer having PVG processed, further recruitment ongoing.

Peterhead & Alford Bothies

Regular sessions running in both Peterhead and Alford

Supported by 7 PVGd volunteers and a further 5 potential volunteers

Regular attendance from individuals in the community and a number of day support centres, all ages attending

Being approached by a number of groups to set up support sessions including Grampian Spinal Injury Support group session (Alford).

Grampian Adapted Race Day

Event being planned with Scottish Cycling and Scottish Disability Sport for Sunday 16th June at the GTM track in Alford

Support from British Cycling Limitless program to run the first adapted race day in Scotland

Off-road Bothy

Funding received from Aberdeenshire Club Sport to run 2 x led Offroad rides using bikes and services of Able-2-Adventure/Access Mhor Cairngorms based at Badaguish – 1st ride Monday 6th May in Ballater

Potential support to set up an off-road bothy to allow more adventurous participation.

Discussions ongoing with the organisers of Thrive (Ballater MTB festival) to form partnership to allow participation in off-road adapted cycling.



Cornerstone - North Aberdeen & Shire

14 September at 16:43 · 🌐

The people we support at #TeamCraigewan have been really enjoying a weekly cycle at the Peterhead race track in conjunction with Community Sports Aberdeen 🚲👏💙



page 482



Supporting LLA with their Summer of Play program (July/August 2023)



Live Life Outdoors Aberdeenshire

24 July 2023 · 🌐

Bothy Impact

- Over 180 individuals, so far, able to participate in an adapted cycling session
- Helping physical and mental well being
- Introducing many participants to cycling for the first time
- Social impact (regular sessions allow a meeting place)
- Allowing participants the opportunity to try a variety of adapted bikes (4 individuals have gone on to get funding to purchase their own bike)



Club Sport Aberdeen



Affiliation Year (1 st Jan)	Total Members	Sports Represented	Level 2	Level 1	Reach
2021	65	24	56	8	21,686
2022	87	33	71	14	18,740
2023	81	33	69	12	20,051
2024 (as of 23rd April)	78	29	69	9	19,977



www.clubsportaberdeen.org

Supported by Community Sport Team



Benefits - Sport Aberdeen	Benefits - Member Clubs
Quality control of clubs working directly with Active Schools / Schools (Level 2)	Discount on block bookings at ACC / SA facilities
Direct links to sports clubs	Discount on Community Sport training courses (First Aid / Child Protection)

Community Sport – Summary & Objectives 24:

Progress 2023/24:

- 6 Community Sports Hubs activated with potential for 2 more in 2024 (Torry & St Machar)
- 8 Projects delivered with specific ED&I remit
- Over 500 distinct participants engaged through programmes in 2023
- Positive local and national recognition of project development including New Scots, Boccia and Inclusive Cycling programmes
- Over £29k of additional project funding sourced from Health Improvement Fund, NHS Grampian & National Lottery
- £216k secured from UKSPF fund for redevelopment of Northfield OSC

Selected Objectives for 24/25:

- Fully establish Inclusive Cycle Bothy based at Aulton Pavilion
- Develop Community Sports Hubs to be more sustainable and focus on volunteer recruitment
- Deliver successful Tennis opening events at Ruthrieston & Northfield ahead of development programmes being established

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