

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Customer
<u>Date:</u>	10 March 2022
<u>Title of Update:</u>	2020/21 Statutory Performance Indicators
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UPDATE

BACKGROUND

In order to comply with legislative requirements linked to the demonstration of Best Value, the Council is required to publish its Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) outcomes in the public domain each year through the release of annual Statutory Performance Indicator reporting against a range of output and outcome measures, covering key areas of operational service and financial performance, including those delivered in partnership with stakeholders.

Although the majority of the SPIs have already been reported to various committee throughout the year, the Statutory Performance Indicator report attached provides the 2020/21 SPIs in a combined document. This approach, supported by publication of information through the Council website, aids transparency in the public domain and enables cross-references between outcomes that may be influenced by the delivery of more than one Service, or group of services, within the Council.

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT

Over the previous two years, increasing focus has been placed on the development of Indicators that better align with the full requirements of the Accounts Commission Guidance and enable consistency of benchmarking with national datasets, including those encompassed by the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework (SLGBF) and Scotland Performs metrics.

Consideration has also been given, where practical, to the recommendations arising from the Best Value Audit of Aberdeen City Council conducted by the Accounts Commission in 2021 in terms of the range, extent and scope of areas of scrutiny, with discussions around how these are to be developed further for 2022/23, and directly align with the Council Delivery Plan, agreed at the Council meeting of the 7th March 2022.

2020-21 STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR OVERVIEW

It should be noted that performance between the financial year 2020/21 and previous years is, in many instances, not directly comparable, due to the extensive service impact linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With material changes to the delivery models of a large range of Council services throughout 2020-21, flexing of these services to accommodate the various stages of COVID-19 pandemic

related legislation and to ensure effective service delivery, the overall position shows that Council services have adapted well in terms of maintaining performance in challenging circumstances.

Learning from this period around the longer term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and future-proofing of the authority's Statutory Performance Indicator reporting will be critical to ensure that the Council continues to provide a robust response to both the on-going and changed priorities of its stakeholders and is able to evidence this through an increasingly open and flexible approach to the sharing of information about the performance of its services, and their impacts in the community.

APPENDIX

2020-21 Aberdeen City Council Statutory Performance Indicator Report

2020/21 Statutory Performance Indicators excluding Education - APPENDIX

1. Commissioning

ALEOs

01. LGBF – ALEO Sport and Leisure Management

Total number of attendances for indoor pool and dry sports facilities; schools and community education establishments	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	2,229,239	2019/20	2,270,736	2020/21	254,040
<p>Attendances at all Aberdeen Sports Village and Sport Aberdeen facilities have dropped heavily as a result of leisure centres being instructed to close on 21st March 2020 as part of the Scottish Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The impact of the pandemic and resultant closures and limited reactivation within the latter part of 2020, adversely effected performance when compared to the previous year. However, there are a number of performances which, although much reduced compared to last year, were still better than had been expected and demonstrated our customers desire to return to activities and their confidence with the safety measures that had been put in place.</p> <p>Partial re-opening of some facilities and services took place throughout the year as detailed below. It should be noted that where services were reactivated, they were done so in a COVID-19 compliant manner, which generally included operating at reduced capacity and with appropriate social distancing measures in place, along with a requirement for all activities to be pre-booked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gyms, fitness classes and indoor tennis – 31 August 2020 • Pools – 5 October 2020 • Ice skating – November 2020 <p>The above re-openings were on a reduced services and capacity basis and did not apply to all venues.</p> <p>The following Sport Aberdeen venues did not re-open during the year either because access was unavailable due to being a shared facility with a school or due to capacity limitations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Active at Lochside • Get Active at Torry 						

- Get Active at Cults
- Bridge of Don Pool

As Scotland moved to tier 4 restrictions on 18th December all indoor venues closed on 23rd December 2020 and remained closed for the rest of the reporting year 2020-21.

Total number of attendances for indoor pool sports and leisure facilities; schools and community education establishments	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	662,351	2019/20	720,012	2020/21	60,894

Respectively, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen Sports Village attendances within pool facilities were reduced by 92.8% and 86.5%, recording 31,206 and 29,668 visits in turn, There were no public admissions to education based facilities, resulting in a further loss of 68,224 admissions connected to programmes delivered through external lettings.

Total number of attendances for indoor dry sports and leisure facilities (excluding pools in a combined complex)- sports facilities; schools and community education establishments	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	1,566,888	2019/20	1,550,724	2020/21	193,146

The total number of attendances at Aberdeen Sports Village dry facilities was 65,691. The total of number of attendances at Sport Aberdeen dry facilities was 127,455.

Combined, the total number of attendances at indoor dry facilities was 193,146, a reduction of 87.5% with the cancellation of the external lettings programmes in education venues contributing around 14.8% of the decline.

Total number of attendances for outdoor sports and leisure facilities	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	266,481	2019/20	363,201	2020/21	190,595

Arm's Length External Organisation Managed Centres

Sport Aberdeen managed sites saw varied attendance outcomes although attendances at Aberdeen Sports Village reduced with ticketed activities ('pay and play' use of facilities) comprising the majority of the loss.

Education and Community Centre Dry Sports Facilities

There was a greater decrease in visits to these facilities. It is not presently clear if this represents a substantive change trend in the types of use made of these facilities or if there is transference to non-Council venues which is influencing this outcome.

Commercial and Procurement

01. Council expenditure with local suppliers

Percentage of council expenditure with local suppliers	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	21.5%	2019/20	32.2%	2020/21	37.4%

Over the last three years, payments for the The Event Complex Aberdeen project significantly increased our total procurement spend, which caused the percentage of local spend to drop drastically despite the value of spend with local suppliers remaining relatively constant.

In 2020/21 payments for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route continued to inflate total procurement spend, but less than in previous years. If payments for this capital project were excluded from the calculation, the percentage of spend with local suppliers would increase to 41.4%.

It is also important to note that the local spend is calculated using suppliers' invoice payment addresses; this is generally the address of their credit control department. In some cases the supplier may have a local base, is an employer, pays business rates or contributes in various ways to the local economy. Using the invoice payment address allows consistent benchmarking between public bodies but assumes that a single postcode receives the entire economic development benefit from the spend. We also pay a number of suppliers as "Prime Contractors" with those suppliers sub-contracting within the local area, however within the 20/21 data it was not possible to capture the level of sub-contractor spend which was local.

Percentage of local suppliers	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	22.1%	2019/20	22.1%	2020/21	22.8%

The percentage for use of local suppliers will be impacted by activities / projects undertaken, for example use of non local suppliers re capital projects (AECC)

The information is produced from a report extracted from "Spend By Local Authority Area" on Spikes Cavell Observatory. This SPI has historically been reported on the basis of "core trade" spend; where core trade is defined as trade suppliers and social care providers with whom £1,000 or more has been spent in aggregate.

02. SME Expenditure

Percentage of council expenditure with small and medium enterprises	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	40.3%	2019/20	47.7%	2020/21	51.8%
<p>Over the last three years, payments for the TECA project significantly increased the total procurement spend, which caused the percentage of spend with SMEs to drop drastically despite the value of spend with local suppliers remaining relatively constant.</p> <p>In 2020/21 payments for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route continued to inflate the total procurement spend, albeit to a lesser extent than in previous years. If payments for this capital project were excluded from the calculation, the percentage of spend with SMEs would increase to 59%.</p>						

Percentage of council expenditure with local small and medium enterprises	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	18.1%	2019/20	23.6%	2020/21	25.4%
<p>The local spend is calculated using suppliers' invoice payment addresses, which is generally the address of their credit control department. In some cases, the supplier may have a local base, is an employer, pays business rates or contributes in various ways to the local economy. Using the invoice payment address allows consistent benchmarking between public bodies but assumes that a single postcode receives the entire economic development benefit from the spend.</p>						

03. Supplier Development Programme

Supplier Development Programme (Positive Procurement Programme)
Regular Supplier Development Programme (SDP) events were held throughout the year:

Meet the Buyer – Twitter Takeover (2nd June 2020)

162 tweets were sent from the SDP Scotland Twitter during the Meet the Buyer 2020: Live Virtual Event by five public sector organisations. The tweets collectively earned 55,228 impressions (the number of times users saw a Tweet on Twitter) and 1,591 engagements (total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet). Overall, including the hour of the Twitter Takeover that SDP Scotland participated in, SDP Scotland supported the Meet the Buyer 2020: Live Virtual Event with 70 total tweets. The tweets earned 29,729 impressions (the number of times users saw a Tweet on Twitter) and 636 engagements (total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet). Collectively, SDP Scotland's 70 tweets earned 46 retweets, 124 likes and 15 replies

Meet the Buyer North 2020 (2nd September 2020)

Due to the COID-19 pandemic, a virtual version of the usual Meet the Buyer, was held with 825 attendees over the course of the day. Aberdeen City Council Head of Commercial & Procurement Services was a guest speaker at this event.

Talking Tenders with Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Highland Councils (27th January 2021)

A specific event hosted by SDP to engage with suppliers both locally and across the country. There were approx. 140 attendees on the day from companies across a range of Business Sectors.

2. Customer

Customer Experience

01. Freedom of Information

% of Environmental Info Requests replied to within 20 working days – Corporate	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	90.35%	2019/20	83.52%	2020/21	71.75%

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% of Freedom of Information requests replied to within 20 working days – Corporate	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	90.43%	2019/20	83.76%	2020/21	69.15%

Percentage of Corporate Requests dealt with within 20 working days (FOIs and EIRs combined)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	90.4%	2019/20	83.68%	2020/21	69.75%
<p>Performance has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as resource was redirected to respond accordingly. In addition, there was a significant increase in requests. An action plan to increase performance is in place. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Access to Information Team will continue to provide targeted training and guidance to officers to ensure that requests are responded to fully and within the statutory timescales. • A more robust management reporting with a live performance dashboard that improves visibility and escalation of outstanding requests is also being introduced. This will further support service managers to identify and address any performance issues. 						

02. Benefit Administration Costs

Weighted private rented sector caseload	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	3,480.42	2019/20	2,685.93	2020/21	2,200.29

Weighted registered social landlord caseload	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	4,346	2019/20	3,740	2020/21	3,384

Weighted Council Tax Benefit caseload	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	20,884.8	2019/20	20,273.76	2020/21	22,324.24

Gross administration cost per benefit case	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£33.83	2019/20	£37.97	2020/21	£37.94

The staff costs, non-staff costs and internal service recharges have reduced from £1,589,352 in 2019/20 to £1,493,176. However, a reduced income, such as funding from the Department of Works and Pension from £89,928 in 2019/20 to £4,437 in 2020/21 has meant that the target set has not been met.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the Benefit Caseload in 2020/21. It is anticipated that the Council Tax Reduction caseload will continue to increase. The Council Tax Reduction Caseload has increased to 14,687 in March 2021 compared to 13,338 in March 2020. The Housing Benefit Caseload is anticipated to reduce due to Universal Credit and overall weighted caseload is predicted to remain static for 2021/22.

Further improvements to the eCitizen portal to allow for more self-service is planned to streamline processing and a performance target of £37.00 has been set for 2021/22.

Weighted rent rebate caseload	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	15,220.8	2019/20	12,898.42	2020/21	11,445.8

03. Benefits Claims and Changes

Average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and change events in Housing Benefit (monthly)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	9.65	2019/20	6.63	2020/21	7.79

Average Number of Days to Process New Benefit Claims	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	19.5	2019/20	16.38	2020/21	25.32

Average Number of Days to Process Change of Circumstances	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	8.22	2019/20	5.95	2020/21	6.5

The Housing Benefit Caseload has now reached its normal level with the introduction of Universal Credit. Housing Benefit Caseload is now transpiring. However the Council Tax Reduction caseload continues to increase in 2021/22 due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic impacts e.g. ending of furlough. In addition the Benefits Team have additional demand due to the introduction of Low Income Pandemic Payments.

With the increase demand on the benefits team the targets of 9 days for change of circumstances, 25 days for new claims and 12 days for Right Time Indicator are considered appropriate. Performance will continue to be monitored through 2020/21 and should there be an opportunity staff flexibility will be employed to support other areas within Revenues and Benefits.

04. LGBF – Council Tax Collection

Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£7.20	2019/20	£7.28	2020/21	£7.19
<p>Costs of the service have decreased from £875,337 in 2019/20 to £872,991. Along with an increased number of properties from 120,221 in 2019/20 to 121,381 there is a slight decrease in Council Tax cost per dwelling.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to implement Robotic Processing Automation for Council Tax Administration. Further improvements to the eCitizen portal to allow for more self-service is planned. The creation of a new Corporate Debt Team for all Council Debts to improve and streamline the debt recovery process is ongoing. The service is also currently in the process of looking at ways to improve the Council Tax collection rate.</p>						

05. LGBF – Council Tax Income

Percentage of income due from council tax for the year that was received by the end of the year	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	94.59%	2019/20	93.58%	2020/21	91.86%
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the Council Tax collection rate in 20/21. The debt recovery processes were delayed and there was no recovery of outstanding debts within the first third of the financial year. In addition, there are deferrals of Council Tax and payment arrangements made to help customers deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of which have delayed payment to 2021/22.</p> <p>Quality Assurance work has been carried out to ensure all procedures and legislation for Council Tax Administration and Council Tax Debt Recovery have been followed correctly. Going forward into 2021/22, work is ongoing to complete Robotic Processing Automation for Council Tax Administration and further improvements to the eCitizen portal to allow for more self-service is planned. The creation of a new Corporate Debt Team for all Council Debts to improve and streamline the debt recovery process is due to commence within 2021/22. It is anticipated that these improvements will improve the Council Tax collection rate.</p>						

Income due from council tax for the year net reliefs and rebates	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	117,139,771	2019/20	125,062,736	2020/21	129,975,737

06. LGBF – Payment of Invoices

Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	80.49%	2019/20	76.09%	2020/21	87.15%
<p>A significant improvement in performance in 2020/21 over the previous year with suppliers being paid more rapidly. Lower numbers of invoices had to be processed due to the temporary closure or change to some services during 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This did help to manage the invoice payment process where day to day changes were made to enable increase working from home alongside office based processing of what can be a paper exercise. Opportunities were taken to continue to improve the procedures and process of invoice payments, which included consolidating tasks in Marischal College, taking advantage of increasing document scanning in remote location and use of workflow capabilities. The positive change this year continues to be monitored with the objective of maintaining the progress made and pushing the overall performance towards the target of 90%.</p>						

07. Complaints

The number of complaints closed at Stage 1 within 5 working days as % of total no of Stage 1 complaints	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	58.27%	2019/20	64.36%	2020/21	71.58%

The number of complaints closed at Stage 2 within 20 working days as % of total no of Stage 2 complaints	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	39.39%	2019/20	35.03%	2020/21	54.63%

% complaints resolved within time (Corporate)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	52.99%	2019/20	60.4%	2020/21	69.61%

The number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as % of total no of escalated complaints	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	33.91%	2019/20	55.37%	2020/21	68.6%
<p>There has been improvement in all areas of complaints handling due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training and online complaints guidance has been refreshed to better support officers responding to complaints. • The Customer Feedback Team have adopted a new approach to the management of Stage 2 complaints and a dedicated member of the team now provides support throughout the investigation. • There is improved monitoring including the complaint escalation and performance dashboard, which is available to a wider group of managers to enable more visibility of outstanding complaints. • Social Work have adopted a more proactive approach to dealing with non-complex complaints at Stage 1 of the complaints handling procedure. This has resulted in faster responses and a reduction in stage 2 complaints which are more time consuming and take longer to respond to. • There has been an increased focus in resolving issues early in the process to avoid unnecessary escalations. 						

Data and Insights

01. Citizen Panel

Citizens Panel
The City Voice is an important tool for Aberdeen City Council, and the Community Planning Partners. It allows the different services to get a feel for and an understanding of what the public thinks about different policies, services and issues. It can show services the level of satisfaction with different services; but also where there might be room

for improvement. In 2020, the topics covered in the City Voice questionnaire were: Community; Food Security; Anti-social Behaviour and Young People; Alcohol Consumption; Unintentional Injuries; Travel and Transport; Parking; Digital Skills; Living Wage: Your Neighbourhood; Climate Change; Green Space and Winter Maintenance Policy.

The City Voice is well received by panellists and question providers alike. Additional feedback about a particular question/ questionnaire or about City Voice is generally very positive. We take any suggestions and comments seriously and try to address suggestions for improvement where possible, and actively encourage our panellists to provide feedback. The City Voice is a useful tool for public engagement. We ask every service to provide a service response once they have received the results from the questionnaire. In their response, services explain how they will use the information gained through this process.

02. Data Led Organisation

Analytics and Insight

The management and use of data has been critical throughout 2020/21 in identifying risks, monitoring service delivery and supporting the redesign of services during the pandemic. Amongst this work is:

- Continuous monitoring, across the Council and with partners, of the impacts of the pandemic, looking at the “4 harms” defined by the Scottish Government
- Completion of an updated Population Needs Assessment for Community Planning Aberdeen and the subsequent refresh of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans
- Establishing daily monitoring and reporting on the status of all city pupils
- Completion of online interactive School Profiles, giving Head Teachers unprecedented access to critical data to manage school activities
- Development of a digital tool to support moderation of SQA awards to City pupils
- A bespoke, beginning to end risk management system
- A comprehensive ACC Demand Application which gives access to data for all of the Council’s significant service demand and is used to drive the Council’s commissioning and budget process

Digital and Technology

Digital and Technology

The successful delivery of digital solutions continues, supporting the achievement of our digital transformation aims. In 2020/21, further progress has been made with the implementation of additional digital technologies to support digitisation of service delivery and processes. A total of 33 new online services were implemented including the launch of a number of online services to support COVID-19 pandemic grants as well as the development of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to enable the crisis support line with managing requests for assistance. A few examples of these online services are:

- Apply for crisis support (enabled for crisis support line for call handlers through CRM system)
- Apply for a small business support grant
- Apply for a self-isolation support grant
- Apply for pre-school food vouchers
- Apply for a nursery place
- Report a COVID-19 business restriction problem
- Book an appointment for a waste and recycling centre
- Book an appointment for libraries during COVID-19 restrictions
- Apply for annual garden waste permit renewal

The delivery of online services through digital solutions is enabling:

- A consistent experience for our customers when accessing our services
- A consistent experience for our staff receiving and processing these applications, requests and reports.
- Convenience of 24/7/365 access to services e.g. don't need to wait until office hours to obtain a paper form.
- Reduced costs of printing paper forms.
- Faster service delivery e.g. applications, requests and reports are received quicker leading to quicker turnaround.
- Intelligent forms that remove potential for error in manual handling and deliver mandatory information at the first point of contact e.g. reduction in follow up calls required

Early Intervention and Community Empowerment

01. LGBF – Library Visits

Total number of library visits – person; virtual	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	1,429,729	2019/20	1,736,063	2020/21	1,116,296
<p>Virtual visits in 2020/21 have increased by 22% compared with 2019/20. This is a significant increase that includes an increase of 152% in use of digital resources. The 94% decrease in physical visitors to the Library & Information Service (L&IS) in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 was due to the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The L&IS responded quickly to changes in guidance and was able to provide a limited physical service in Click and Collect from 22 July 2020. Additional in person services have been offered when permissible. Click and Collect has been available throughout to ensure that library members had some access to physical material.</p>						

02. Community Use of Libraries

Number of community participations generated by Library and Information Service Engagement and Extensions activity	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	38,730	2019/20	44,972	2020/21	38,337
<p>The decrease in performance is lower than expected given the traditional model of delivery, face-to-face, was not permissible in 2020/21. Library & Information Service staff achieved this by adapting and developing new skills to create digital content to enable the delivery of activities via online platforms. This was essential to ensure the service continued to support local communities unable to access traditional services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>						

03. Learning Centres / Access Points

Number of PC terminal and Wi-Fi access uses within Libraries and Library Learning Centres	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	187,673	2019/20	160,909	2020/21	19,464
<p>The Library & Information Service (L&IS) is committed to supporting digital inclusion in local communities. The capacity to deliver this support through provision of free Wi-Fi and Public PCs was limited in 2020/21 due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>						

In 2020/21 there were 79% fewer public PCs available to support social distancing. The number of hours PCs were available was also limited, with libraries open 73% fewer hours in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. In 2020/21 it was not permissible to offer study or dwell time to customers and this had a significant impact on Wi-Fi usage.

04. LGBF – ASBIT Noise

For domestic noise complaints received during the year dealt with under part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site	Value	Value	Value
	2018/19 0.56	2019/20 0.38	2020/21 0
<p>The Anti-Social Behaviour Team fielded 4902 calls regarding noise complaints in 2020/21 which has shown an increase by 755 calls on 4147 in 2019/20. Of the 4902 domestic noise complaints dealt with under part V of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, 0 had attendance on site due to the pandemic but all 4902 were answered and dealt with via telephone or other electronic methods.</p> <p>The ASBIT team continued to provide a telephone and digital service throughout offering advice, support and interventions to resolve complaints of antisocial behaviour for our customers.</p> <p>The ASBIT team have had to adapt and explore digital solutions to assist in how we investigate complaints of antisocial behaviour. We have been working with our colleagues in customer experience to improve our digital solutions, these are not live yet but will include improvements to our web page, a self service portal for customers making it easier for them to report anti-social behaviour as well as some short animations promoting self help and guidance in dealing with domestic noise.</p>			

05. Housing Rental

Gross rent Arrears as a percentage of Rent due	Value	Value	Value
	2018/19 6.86%	2019/20 8.16%	2020/21 11.3%
<p>The increase in rent arrears is mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Universal Credit, along with our increased focus in tenancy sustainment has also impacted the figures. We have continued to refine operating procedures and prioritise resources through the early stages of Universal Credit roll out in the city.</p>			

We have established a temporary specialist team to focus on rent management. The focus of the specialist team is managing high balance cases and aims to support tenants meet rental obligations and therefore avoid legal action. No eviction actions have been taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also continue with our supportive policy for tenants with rent arrears aiming to address the underlying factors which have resulted in the rent arrears and as a consequence of this approach tenancy sustainment is strong and we will continue to action fewer evictions than previously. We are working towards creating a new team to focus on rent collection and collection of other charges made by the Council. This specialised approach is anticipated to maximise rent income, however the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and Universal Credit will persist.

Rent loss due to voids – Citywide – YTD average	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	1.47%	2019/20	1.86%	2020/21	2.53%

Void property performance continues to be challenge, with a decrease in performance through the year. The longstanding problem of attracting and securing sufficient trades resources remains a key factor. Relatively high levels of terminations, with the private sector continuing to be more affordable than it has been historically is also impacting on performance.

Addressing voids performance continues to be a priority for services. Our Improvement Plan is now led at Chief Officer level and has an extensive range of actions intended to transform performance. Actions include assigning additional resources for voids repairs, use of digital technologies to support more efficient processes, review of scheme of allocations and enhanced tenants incentives scheme.

06. Equalities and Diversity

Work done to encourage and support equalities and diversity within the city

Aberdeen City Council continues to demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity within the city.

This can be demonstrated through our priorities and actions through 2019/20: Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming under continual review to help shape future priorities.

- Updated Equality Impact Assessments with a view to including impacts on children and young people as part of the commitment to the Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme
- Revised Service Level Agreements with commissioned services to support performance monitoring.
- Support of the Equalities Ambassadors Network for employees.

- Continued support to community based groups.
- Additional support commissioned to support the Syrian Refugee Service.
- Ongoing training to staff, including inter-sectionality.

3. Operations

Integrated Children's and Family Services

01. Looked After Accommodated Children

LAC with 3 or more placements in the past year (%)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	3.45%	2019/20	4.22%	2020/21	3.37%

The service is committed to reducing the number of placement moves children and young people experience. The number of moves in quick succession can be as a result of emergency unplanned admission, which is the case in a small number over this reported period. In addition, the Covid -19 pandemic led to some moves as a result of health related issues or increased need.

However, of the 17 children who did have 3 placements, some moves were onto a permanent fostering or adoptive destination, which is positive.

Research clearly shows that the number of placement moves a child has, increases the likelihood of poorer outcomes. The instability of care experiences does not allow for children to develop a sense of belonging and forge relationships of significance with their primary care givers which can support them into adulthood. Moves of care placement often necessitate changes of schools providing a disrupted pattern of education commonly resulting in poorer outcomes in attainment or securing employment. The appropriateness and careful matching of children to placements remains a priority. In addition the commitment from the service and partners to ensuring that carers are supported in regard to training and development is essential to reduce the likelihood of placement disruption.

02. Families at Risk

Percentage of looked after children and young people supported to remain within their families (at home and within kinship care)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	41.56%	2019/20	44.98%	2020/21	46.93%
<p>There is no doubt that during this reporting period the COVID –19 Pandemic has required the Service to adapt and ensure that services continue to fulfil their statutory duties. The figures indicate that over the past two years there is an increase in children being supported to live within their families. There is clear evidence that over the past year agencies have worked collaboratively with families to intervene and mitigate against any potential increase in risk to children. There has been clear evidence and reporting from families of feeling supported.</p> <p>The Alternative to Care Services, support children and young people to remain within their families/care placement. Emerging evidence suggests that the Alternative to Care service is supporting children to re-engage in learning and reintegrate into their mainstream school.</p> <p>The operational priority and emphasis over the coming year continues to be shifting the balance of care to support children being looked after within their families and communities.</p>						

03. Child Protection Register No's

Number of children on Child Protection Register	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	208	2019/20	267	2020/21	276
<p>The primary categories of registration have over the past year remained fairly static with Aberdeen City mirroring the most common causes recorded nationally, – emotional abuse, neglect, drugs, parental mental health and domestic abuse, the latter of which has increased over the 5 months to March 2021. 9% of registrations note a category of non-engaging family, a statistic that sits considerably lower than the national average of 23%, and lower than our neighbouring local authorities.</p>						

04. Child Protection Re-registrations

01.14a47: The number of children re-registering on the Children Protection Register within two years of being taken off the register	2018/19	Value 13	2019/20	Value 21	2020/21	Value 14
<p>Re-registration rates allow us to consider whether our intervention post registration as well as at the time of registration is sufficiently robust to minimise risk of harm to a child. The circumstances which have led to it being appropriate to remove the child's name from the register have altered with risk of significant harm to the child again indicating that a further period of registration is required.</p> <p>The COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions put in place in March 2020, many of which have remained throughout this reporting year, resulted in several unprecedented challenges in relation to keeping children safe from significant harm. Despite professionals across the partnership continuing to undertake direct contact with children and families where there are child protection concerns, the COVID-19 restrictions required an immediate increase in use of digital means to communicate. Our training in use of the 'Mind of My Own' app was recognised nationally and it remains a focus to maximise our usage in gaining timely feedback from children and young people.</p>						

Operations and Protective Services

01. Street Light Repairs

Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days	2018/19	Value 58.95%	2019/20	Value 61.94%	2020/21	Value 83.04%
<p>Service in early months of 2020 was severely hampered by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. It was confirmed at Operational Delivery Committee that no Street Lighting figures would be reported between March 2020 - August 2020. Between September 2020 - March 2021 we have seen a reduction in faults by 904 on previous year selected months. Average performance during the selected months has increased from 63.33% to 83.04%. This can be attributed to the benefits from the ongoing LED lantern conversion programme</p>						

02. Street Lighting Lamps

Percentage of LED Lamps installed	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
<p>The seven year rollout program of replacing the old inefficient and expensive street lighting with more efficient and cost-effective LED lighting continues. The rollout has been delayed during 2020/21 due to COVID-19 pandemic with both our employees and our sub contractors being on furlough / shielding or redirected to other priority work.</p> <p>Lighting which has been replaced by LED has increased from 16,145 in 2019/2020 to 21,047 in 2020/21. 4,902 LED lanterns were installed during 2020/21 an increase of 30.36%. By the end of March 2022 the LED rollout figure will increase to 75% with remaining being completed over financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.</p>						

03. Road Network Restrictions

Percentage of council and private bridges assessed that failed to meet the EU standard of 40 tonnes	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	2.55%	2019/20	2.3%	2020/21	2.3%
<p>Strengthening of the Union Terrace Widening is underway under the scope of the Union Terrace Gardens Redevelopment Project.</p> <p>There are several projects which are proposed for the future capital programme. These include work on Victoria Bridge, King George VI Bridge, Parkhill Bridge, Cults Square, Milton of Drum, Maryculter Bridge and Union Bridge.</p> <p>The Bridge of Dee requires upgraded scour protection and design work is underway.</p>						

04. Pothole Repairs

Potholes Category 1 and 2 - % defects repaired within timescale	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	97.74%	2019/20	94.3%	2020/21	83%
<p>In 2020/21, there was an increase of pothole repairs despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.</p> <p>The number and severity of pothole repairs vary dramatically with the weather and time of year. The highest volume of repairs occurs during the winter period, where variation in temperature along with road surfaces being wet can lead to road surface deterioration. or following extended periods of rainfall.</p>						

- Regular work teams are normally added to from internal resources in order that account is taken of seasonal variations in the workload.
- External contractors are not available at all times due to workload – budget constraints may also preclude their use.
- Priority pothole repairs increased to 6,802 in 2020/21, an increase of 26.31% on the previous year. For priority 1 defects, the most serious failures, 1363 were repaired in the period.

The higher number of repairs can be attributed to a number of factors, for example; weather variation and the improved functionality of the Aberdeen City Council web portal for reporting pothole repairs, the improved user friendly interface can make it easier for customers to report a fault. We are working to roll out mobile working using handhelds for operatives for the 2021/2022 financial year which should aid with the efficiency of our defect response.

05. LGBF – Refuse Collection

Number of premises for refuse collection (combined domestic, commercial, and domestic bulky uplift)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	118,741	2019/20	121,619	2020/21	122,769
Most of the growth is the result of new developments. As number of properties has increased the Waste and Recycling has changed the collections of around 20,000 properties to balance the workload of new properties and future developments.						

06. Abandoned Vehicles

The number of abandoned vehicles that require to be removed by the council – removed within 14 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	60.09%	2019/20	49.38%	2020/21	18.7%
The decrease in performance can be mainly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown that left several cars on the street longer than normal. Discussion is ongoing with respect to transferring the abandoned vehicle duties to the enforcement team which will improve the process as they have a higher resource and can review abandoned vehicles more timeously while carrying out other enforcement duties.						

07. LGBF – Noise Complaints

Barking Dogs and domestic Environmental Protection Act complaints received during the year requiring attendance on site, the average time (hours) between the time of the complaint and attendance on site.	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	30.4	2019/20	24.7	2020/21	54.8

In 2020/21 the Environmental Protection Service received 308 dog barking complaints and 2 domestic EPA noise complaints. Of those complaints 4 dog barking complaints and no domestic EPA complaints were attended. The average time to attend these complaints was 54.8 hours. The number of visits made is significantly less than previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To minimise the risk of virus transmission, Officers only carried out visits that were necessary and where resolving matters could not be achieved through telephone calls. Two visits could not be made within 48 hours. Due to the low number of visits this has caused the average time to respond to exceed the target time.

08. Food Hygiene

Food Safety Hygiene Inspections % premises inspected 6 monthly	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	100%	2019/20	100%	2020/21	

Under Ministerial direction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Hygiene recording was suspended until 2021.

Food Safety Hygiene Inspections % premises inspected 12 monthly	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	98.85%	2019/20	100%	2020/21	

Under Ministerial direction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Hygiene recording was suspended until 2021.

Food Safety Hygiene Inspections % premises inspected more than 12 monthly	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	63.9%	2019/20	64.52%	2020/21	
Under Ministerial direction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Hygiene recording was suspended until 2021.						

09. High Priority Pest Control

High Priority Pest Control % responded to within 2 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	95.8%	2019/20	98.2%	2020/21	97.7%
100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the number of complaints received each month. The COVID-19 pandemic could have had a significant impact on the ability to respond to service requests , as staff worked from home. However, there was no impact on the ability to respond to complaints, as staff had access to the relevant systems to obtain complaint information and contact complaints. In 2020/21 100% of the complaints were responded to within the target time in 9 of the 12 months. Eight of the 19 service requests not responded to within the 2 days were received during the Christmas period , when there is no pest control service.						

10. High Priority Public Health Complaints

High Priority Public Health % responded to within 2 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	97.2%	2019/20	96%	2020/21	97.6%
100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the number of complaints received each month. The COVID-19 pandemic could have had a significant impact on the ability to respond to service requests , as staff worked from home. However, there was no impact on the ability to respond to complaints, as staff had access to the relevant systems to obtain complaint information and contact complaints.						

11. Air Quality

Air Quality

The national and EU annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide is exceeded in Aberdeen and we have a statutory duty both to assess air quality and implement actions to reduce pollution levels in areas where objectives are exceeded. There are 6 continuous air quality monitoring stations in Aberdeen which continuously record nitrogen dioxide and particulate concentrations. There are also over 60 diffusion tubes attached to lamp post and downpipes across the City used to identify hotspots, monitor trends and changes in pollution levels, for example following changes in traffic flows as a result of local infrastructure measures. The data from all the monitoring is reviewed and assessed and helps inform council policies and initiatives, for example on planning, transportation, infrastructure and carbon reduction.

Promotional and awareness raising activities and actions to promote sustainable transport and active travel are also key to improving air quality. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, no 'hands-on' promotional events took place during 2020. National Clean Air Day was a virtual event held in September 2020. We issued a press release to complement national activities, support sustainable transport and increase awareness of the benefits of lockdown in improving air quality and public health. Lockdown resulted in a 20-40% reduction in the annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration at the majority of roadside monitoring locations across the City.

A range of other initiatives to support sustainable transport and active travel and reduce carbon emission also contribute to improved area quality. Initiatives include:

1 Active Travel: Smarter Cities initiatives were introduced across the City Centre and adjoining areas as a result of Covid to promote walking and cycling. These included the removal of all traffic on Union St between Market St and Union Terrace, the introduction of Union St bus gates and traffic restrictions on George St, Rosemount and Torry areas. Other improvements to the strategic and local walking and cycling network continue to grow each year, supported by wider activities to promote active travel such as Travel Tracker to promote active and sustainable journeys for children going to and from school.

2 Support of the ECO Star fleet recognition scheme: Using Scottish Government funding, the Council contracted a third party to continue to deliver the Eco Stars scheme in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Membership of the scheme is free and encourages and supports operators of HGVs, vans, buses and coaches to run their fleets more efficiently.

3 Cleaner Vehicles: Aberdeen City Council has 27 alternatively fuelled (electric or hydrogen) vehicles available for both staff and the public via the Council Car Club scheme. The electric vehicle charging network also expanded in 2020.

4 Transportation Infrastructure: Various infrastructure initiatives were progressed in 2020 to support traffic movement and reduce congestion on key routes and consequently support improved air quality. These included the commencements of works to improve the Haudagain roundabout and progression of the Berryden Corridor and South College Street initiatives.

We also progressed actions to support the introduction of a City Centre Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in compliance with the Scottish Government commitment to have a LEZ in place in the 4 main Cities. The compliance date was revised from the end of 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A third party was appointed to undertake a City

Centre LEZ feasibility study, including detailed traffic and air quality modelling and the development of LEZ options to take forward for public consultation. A public on-line consultation on 8 LEZ options ran for 6 weeks during September and October 2020. There were also 5 stakeholder workshops with representatives from the bus, freight and taxi industries, Aberdeen Harbour, Community Councils and environmental/interest groups. Following analysis of the consultation responses and further traffic modelling, a preferred option was identified which will be taken forward for further detailed analysis and a report to Committee in spring/early summer 2021. Officers sit on various working groups to support the introduction of LEZs in the 4 Cities, including a LEZ Consistency Group, LEZ Enforcement Group, LEZ Modelling Group and the LEZ Communications Group. They also attend workshops on air quality matters and contributed to the review of the Scottish Government's Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy and the development of LEZ legislation and guidance.

12. Fleet Vehicles under 5 years old

Percentage of Fleet Vehicles under 5 years old	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19		2019/20	72.13%	2020/21	76.31%

The percentage of vans under 5 years has increased over the last year currently at 78.3%, the number of HGV vehicles has decreased slightly at 69.5%, this is due to some older vehicles not having been replaced as of yet, this is delayed slightly for an assessment to be made going forward for the implementation of alternative fuelled vehicles operating on electric or hydrogen fuels. The low emission fleet consisting of alternative fuelled vehicles and euro 6 engines currently at 85.53%, this figure again is due to delayed replacement of vehicles as we await the development of infrastructure.

Vehicle "life" depends on a number of criteria and operating life may range from 5 to 7 years depending upon usage and the vehicle type - small LGV vehicles or HGV vehicles over 3.5 tonnes. There is an optimum time for vehicle replacement and it is likely that the older the vehicle the greater the cost of repairs and maintenance and the likely increase of vehicle downtime. Vehicle life can be extended where appropriate according to current mileage and condition and whilst this may increase the percentage of vehicles over 5 years old, it provides best value. Our aim is to continue to work towards de-carbonising its in-house fleet and introduce new vehicles with the latest reduced and/or zero emissions technology.

13. Traffic Light Repairs

Percentage of all traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	97.03%	2019/20	94.63%	2020/21	96.89%
<p>Traffic signal faults were recorded between October 2020 and March 2021 only, as routine fault reporting was suspended between April and July 2020 due to the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions. Analysis has shown that of the 16 faults that were not repaired within the 48-hour timescale, 14 were related to Road Traffic Collisions. These are accepted as being unavoidable in most cases as they are outwith the control of the maintenance contractor.</p>						

4. Place

City Growth

01. LGBF – Museum Services

Number of visits to/usages of council funded or part funded museums – person; enquiries; outreach; virtual	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	972,955	2019/20	1,204,065	2020/21	979,056
<p>There was a decrease in visits of the Museums and Galleries venues due to the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Art Gallery was able to partially re-open between 27th August and 24th December 2020, travel restrictions between different COVID-19 pandemic geographic Levels were in place, which also had an influence.</p> <p>The number of virtual visits increased by 5.5% on the previous year, reflecting an increased use of digital applications during the periods of lockdown. Digital engagement opportunities continued alongside the safe re-opening of venues. We improved the number and quality of images on the website to enhance the textual information available.</p> <p>A prestigious series of exhibitions is programmed for the Art Gallery during 2021-22 including the launch of British Art Show 9 and a tribute to celebrated fashion designer Zandra Rhodes.</p>						

02. Investment

Investment

Invest Aberdeen is an operational partnership between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in Partnership with; UK and Scottish Government agencies, Opportunity North East, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Elevator UK, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Cities Alliance and other regional stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement has served to promote and familiarise regional and national contacts with the Invest Aberdeen offer and ensure collaboration on any local or international investment. The Invest Aberdeen website provides a resource hub for potential investors and for local stakeholder organisations and hosts a number of key investment projects, good news stories and case studies as well as being a central information point for COVID-19 pandemic business support updates;

From March 2020 the Invest Aberdeen Team were repurposed to assist in managing the set up of a Business Hub response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Invest Aberdeen Officers were deployed to support the distribution of business grants and managing the COVID-19 pandemic Business Response hotline. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to restrict activity, in particular travel to support investment.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions the following outputs have been achieved in the third year of operation:

- 79 enquiries, with 19 of these remaining live at the time of writing this report. These investments cover all of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) priority sectors. It is worth noting that the lead in times for investment can be 12+ months and, this reporting period has been distorted by the COVID-19 pandemic with investors putting plans on hold.
- In addition, 41 leads have been generated by the team to introduce potential investors to opportunities in the city region by actively targeting investors through networks.
- Online Event Attendance – Several online speaking opportunities and investor pitches were undertaken, including at The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships Conference, Infra Academy Webinar Series, Hydrogen – UK Developments in Hydrogen and the Scottish Cities Alliance Green Investment webinar.
- We continued the programme of one-to-one and team-to-team engagements to identify areas of common ground and scope out collaboration with stakeholders and industry groups.
- Invest Aberdeen hosted eight virtual tours of regional opportunities to potential national and international investors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Invest Aberdeen film is being updated and is widely used by third party agencies to promote the area.
- A new, more user friendly, online Customer Relationship Management system to track business has been adopted to ease the sharing of information across other Council activities and services.
- We held a full programme of online events with Scottish Development International, Scottish Cities Alliance in place of attending Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier 2021.
- We supported delivery of the revised Regional Economic Strategy action plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as ongoing support of the Aberdeen City Region Deal communications activity and promotion of the infrastructure projects that make up the Deal.

03. Employability

SECON 1 SLGBF % Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	5.50	2019/20	10.47	2020/21	2.53
<p>A significant amount of employability work has been carried out or supported/funded by the council to support people into employment. This includes work in schools and with school leavers and other young people, to support them into positive destinations, and ranges right across to supporting long-term unemployed people and those with multiple barriers to employment to access training, mentoring, support, and job seeking skills to help them into work and to sustain that employment. We are working closely with partner agencies DWP, SDS, North East Scotland College (NESCol) as well as with the third sector to ensure that as much support can be provided as possible to those in need of it. There were issues that came with the additional funding from Scottish Government such as the lateness of grant letters and issues with funding carryover to the next financial year. The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the delivery of employability services as all contact had to move online and many training or learning opportunities were cancelled or postponed until later in the year.</p> <p>There has been a change of funding streams within the authority, and we have seen the continuation of No One Left Behind, which provides participants of all working ages with a bespoke training and action plan with access to a range of support and training provision. This funding is all-age, all-stage employability provision taking a holistic, person-centred approach and with a focus on those furthest removed from the labour market.</p> <p>To combat the impact the pandemic has had on young people, we have also seen the introduction of the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) which aims to support every young person in Scotland, ages 16-24, into employment, education or training. We have also seen additional funding through the Parental Employability Support Fund, aimed at supporting unemployed parents or parents experiencing in-work poverty to support the actions of the child poverty agenda through employability. Partnership Action through Continuous Employment (PACE) has also been expanded to support those who have been made redundant or are at risk of redundancy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>						

04. Museums and Galleries, Events and Exhibitions

Events Exhibitions Museums and Galleries
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During 2020–21, the programmes of exhibitions and city events were severely impacted by COVID–19 pandemic restrictions,, leading to the cancellation of all City events except two – the Christmas Tree Switch–On and Nativity Blessing. These were not open to the public but were filmed and available online. The Art Gallery also hosted the HAAN Christmas Market over the weekend of 4–6 December 2020.

No exhibitions were held at Aberdeen Maritime Museum which remained closed due to the pandemic or at Provost Skene’s House where the redevelopment programme was also delayed by the pandemic. Aberdeen Art Gallery opened between 27 August and 24 December 2020 and hosted 3 exhibitions BP Portrait Award 2020 (10 October 2020 – 24 December 2020, closing early due to lockdown), The Bill Gibb Line (22 February 2020 – 24 December 2020 and 27 April – 23 May 2021 and Express Yourself which was on show throughout public opening. Our complementary public engagement plan of events and activities was also suspended but we were able to offer some of the activity successfully on online via a Museum at Home page on our website www.aagm.co.uk

A series of online exhibitions was also available throughout the year on the aagm.co.uk website: The Many Faces of James Giles, Haroon Mirza:Waves and Forms, Aberdeen Artists Society Annual Open Exhibition, Drawn North in association with Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and the intention is to continue offering a hybrid approach of online exhibitions and exhibitions within venues.

05 City Deal

City Deal

The #ABZDeal was formally signed in 2016, and is now a £936 million partnership between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Opportunity North East, Scottish Government and UK Government. The Aberdeen City Region Deal is playing a key role in supporting economic recovery and the creation of green jobs for the future across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

More than £504 million has been invested to date by the public and private sectors in transformational industry innovation and growth projects and digital and physical infrastructure.

The [Annual Report for the Aberdeen City Region Deal](#) highlights significant progress across its transformational projects as the region develops its leadership in the low–carbon economy across key industry sectors including energy, digital, transport, food and drink, and life sciences.

The 2021 there was success in a number of areas:

- Speed and progress being made towards £2m of digital improvements in the City Network Extension project, connecting 57 corporate sites with a commercial investment of £40million by CityFibre to make Aberdeen a Gigabit City.

- In Aberdeenshire, the Full Fibre project investment of £10.5m to connect 191 public sites in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire including GP surgeries, schools, hospitals.
- Progress on construction of the £40 million BioHub, which will be home to 400 scientific entrepreneurs and drive life sciences innovation, collaboration and commercialisation when it opens in 2022.
- Key milestones in the development of the £21 million SeedPod innovation hub, including planning approval, which will support food and drink manufacturers to adopt new technology, drive advanced manufacturing efficiencies, use global insights for premium product development, and lead in low-carbon, sustainable food production.
- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's leadership in energy transition and the low-carbon economy, including the £390m Net Zero Technology Centre's work to develop and deploy technology to accelerate the transition to an affordable net zero North Sea.

06 COVID-19 Business Response Hub

COVID-19 Business Response Hub

In March 2020, businesses in Aberdeen were faced with an immediate challenge in response to COVID-19 pandemic; alongside a collapse in oil barrel prices to less than \$18 per barrel. An immediate action was the formation of a Business Resilience Group, to understand the immediate issues facing businesses and a source of intelligence that fed into the wider city and regional resilience responses. As the financial impact hit, the UK and Scottish Governments began to distribute several different funding streams to support businesses, via local government. To distribute the funding as quickly as possible, a bespoke resource was required, bringing together the business support responses, to include communications with Governments, CoSLA and SLAED, politicians and community groups to provide information, advice and guidance to businesses and self-employed.

In April 2020, City Growth created a 'short life' intervention, the "Business Response Hub" to support businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff from across City Growth, other Council Services and arms-length organisations came together, some as volunteers going above and beyond the day job and others through the temporary movement of staff.

The team set up a:

- Telephone hotline
- On-line grant application
- Webpage
- Application data
- Frequently Asked Questions,
- Signposting to partner organisations

- A business support inbox

City Growth was helped by People and Organisational Development, Digital, Finance, Data & Insights, Communications team, Customer Services, and Invest Aberdeen to create these frontline services. Close working with the Rates, Licensing and Fraud teams was essential, as was a senior management appeals team. During peak periods, the COVID-19 Business Response Hub and wider teams worked to incredibly tight deadlines, rapidly turning round on-line applications and communications to open grant schemes within hours of funding announcements. When Aberdeen had further restrictions due the direct restrictions place by the Scottish Government, the cumulation of grants and new schemes meant that, despite some officers working over Christmas, we returned to more than 800 applications and four new schemes to administer. Through hard work, all were processed within the government’s target turnaround times.

To date, more than £80 million of grants has been distributed, following the correct processes, due diligence, and appeals process. The foresight and skills of those who set up the systems means we can process data, based on business types and amounts etc., ensuring future funds can be targeted based on real data. From this work, the Urgent Business Committee approved a short-term Socio-Economic Rescue Plan to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic effects. This framework enabled the co-ordination of support responses across ‘Business’, ‘People’ and ‘Place’ themes. The COVID-19 Business Response Hub not only proved the importance of being adaptable and what internal and external partnerships can achieve, but also brought together a range of expertise to ensure that organisations and individuals seeking help get a full and tailored package of advice, as well as the standard grant application support.

Strategic Place Planning

01. Sustainable Energy

Corporate Carbon Emissions (tonnes) tCO2e	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	31,090	2019/20	30,563	2020/21	25,929

The year-on-year outcome shows a reduced level of corporate CO2 emissions, in part as a result of the Council’s Climate Change programme, although this experienced some slowing as a result of the pandemic, which was accompanied by significant consequential impacts arising from the changes in service models linked to the various stages of COVID-19 legislation and guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

Whilst the extent of these direct COVID-19 impacts is not consistent across the range of emissions sources, those related to asset management were the largest contributor to the overall emissions reduction of 4,634 tCO₂, as many services moved from primarily property based, to remote or digital, provision. Overall, corporate emissions have reduced year-on-year by 15.2% and by 44.1% in comparison with the 2015/16 baseline, substantially ahead of linear projections linked to the Climate Change Plan 2021-25. Aberdeen City Council is committed to carrying forwards any legacy lessons from this exceptional period that will support its Net Zero 2045 commitment, with an expectation that emission levels, in the short term, will return to levels consistent with the target projections outlined in its Climate Change Plan 2021-25, as accessibility restrictions lessen.

02. Sustainable Development

Work done to encourage and support sustainable development

Sustainable Development is reflected in our vision and strategic priorities through the many new strategic documents which were approved during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Of particular note was progress managing our contribution to climate change, including a [Council Energy and Climate Routemap](#) and [the Council Climate Change Plan 2021-25](#) covering net zero and climate resilience for ACC's estate and operations; approval for and progress on the governance for the city-wide net zero vision described in [Strategic Infrastructure Plan \(Energy Transition\)](#) through the establishment of a Leadership Board and Delivery Transition Unit. Additionally, there has been approval for the [Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan \(2022\)](#) and Delivery Programme which was mapped against the Sustainable Development Goals and stated its aim 'to support the Council's vision of creating a sustainable and socially equitable future for the city...'. Furthermore sustainable transport has been progressed with a new [EV Framework](#) to guide future electric vehicle strategy and locations of charge points; a new [Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026](#) which identifies the actions and interventions that ACC will pursue to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive choices; and progress towards a new [cycle hire scheme](#) for the city.

Sustainable development was promoted through both ongoing and new partnership work. Of particular note during the reporting period has been agreement of the [Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan](#) and a new [Regional Land Use Partnership](#) which was set up in the reporting period with Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders to help develop Scotland's approach to land use in support of a green recovery and transition to net zero.

The adoption of the Gold Standard for our House Building Programme was approved in February 2020, the district heating network was extended to St Machar Academy and management plans for all four Local Nature Reserves and local nature conservation sites were reviewed and updated during 2020. Additionally the bi-yearly statutory [Biodiversity Duty Report 2018-2020](#) was published during this period and the annual [Climate Change Report](#) indicated progress with meeting Public Bodies Duties.

03. Planning Applications Processing Time

Average Determination Times of Major Development Planning Applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	19.9	2019/20	28.1	2020/21	31.4
<p>Performance has been affected adversely this year by the Planning Team's ability to progress applications timeously due to a number of factors including:</p> <p>1 the COVID-19 pandemic, which has meant that many agents were furloughed or, otherwise, had limited capacity to make the amendments required to progress applications – especially in the first part of the reporting period. Some applicants required to review whether they wished to progress with particular development proposals already in the planning system.</p> <p>2 a number of significant applications were not fully in line with the Development Plan Strategy and required careful consideration prior to Officers reaching a recommendation.</p> <p>3 Officers were reallocated to deal with COVID-19 related priorities such as the Spaces for People Project and manning the emergency business support grant helpline.</p>						

Average Determination Times of Non Householder Local Planning Applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	8.1	2019/20	8.6	2020/21	10.6

Average Determination Times of Householder Planning Applications (weeks)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	6.8	2019/20	6.9	2020/21	

04. Affordable Homes

No. of affordable houses developed (year to date)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	356	2019/20	401	2020/21	461

The Strategic Development Plan (SDP) sets the Housing Supply Target using information from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. This is the Strategic Development Planning Authority's view of the type and level of housing to be delivered over the period of the SDP. Although taking aspiration into account it aims to identify a target which is deliverable.

Affordable houses are registered complete when they are ready to be occupied. Completion is affected by a variety of factors, not least the weather which can have a major impact. Delivery has risen dramatically in the last four years and this is set to continue for the next few years as properties are delivered through Section 75 legal agreements.

5. Resources

Capital

01. Major Project Delivery

Major Project Delivery
<p>Aberdeen is undergoing and leading the most significant transformation in the city's history. Across its full breadth there are several major projects under construction or in development, with unprecedented levels of investment, which is improving transportation connectivity, enhancing historic venues and delivering new world-class facilities.</p> <p>During the 2020/21 financial year, the delivery of projects continued reasonably well within the challenging environment brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Major Projects construction periods generally span more than a single year such that none have reached practical completion stage, although there are elements delivered within specific programmes.</p> <p>As part of the contribution towards the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, 3 new build housing developments have started: 369 units (of social housing) at Summerhill, on the site of the former Summerhill Academy, 278 units (of social housing) at Wellheads, Dyce and 90 units (of social housing) at Auchmill, Bucksburn.</p> <p><u>Construction complete:</u></p>

None due as per the construction schedule.

Under construction: Provost Skene's House

Union Terrace Gardens

Energy from Waste

Wellheads New Build Housing

Summerhill New Build Housing

Auchmill New Build Housing

New Milltimber Primary School

Under design development:

New Countesswells Primary School

New Torry and Hub Primary School

New Tillydrone Primary School

South College Street corridor improvement

Berryden Dual Carriageway

Under design development and construction:

City-wide programme of Early Learning Centres

02. City Centre Masterplan

City Centre Masterplan

Aberdeen is undergoing and leading the most significant transformation in the city centre's history. Across its full breadth there are several major capital projects under construction or in development, with unprecedented levels of investment, which is improving transportation connectivity, enhancing historic venues and delivering new world-class facilities. During the 2020/21 financial year, the delivery of projects continued reasonably well within the challenging environment brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The city centre construction project periods generally span more than a single year such that none have reached practical completion stage.

Construction complete:

None due as per the construction schedule.

Under construction:

Provost Skene's House
Union Terrace Gardens

Under design development:

South College Street corridor improvement

Corporate Landlord

01. LGBF – Public Access

Percentage of council buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	81.02%	2019/20	81.62%	2020/21	81.95%
The remaining buildings that are not accessible are generally inherently difficult to improve and the only option for these buildings is to close them or to replace them.						

02. LGBF – Asset Management

Percentage of internal floor area of operational accommodation that is in a satisfactory condition.	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	96.02%	2019/20	96.75%	2020/21	96.38%
This year's satisfactory condition figure of 96% is the same as last year's figure, but is below the target set of 97%. The overall floor area has remained relatively static, but the overall number of properties has reduced by 3.						

Improvement came from the new Stoneywood Primary, where the C rated School has been replaced with a new A rated school. Some B rated assets have been removed from this year's SPI and replaced with A or B rated assets. The exception is Unit 5, Woodlands Road, which is rated D. The primary reason the target of 97% was not met was because the Art Gallery did not open as anticipated. The floor area of the Gallery in addition to the Cowdray Hall accounts for around 1% of the overall floor area.

Improvements will continue to be made through the C&S programme. Further decline in assets identified during the current survey programme is difficult to predict. However, this is unlikely to result in any significant change in grades. The redevelopment of the Art Gallery, Cowdray Hall and the new Tillydrone Community Hub, this will have a positive impact on next years figure. This will be offset as operational service ceases in A or B assets, such as Tillydrone Library and Frederick Street. Taking all of this into account a target for next year of 96% has been set for condition.

The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use.	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	75.35%	2019/20	75.27%	2020/21	75.09%

The three assets added this year are either A or B for suitability. Whilst these have a positive impact, the improvement is offset by the removal of four suitable buildings. Only one removed asset, Clinterty Caravan Park was rated C for suitability. Planned works on various assets include the reopening of provost Skene's House, which will result in an A suitability rating. Ongoing suitability works to schools will continue throughout the summer break, and the new nursery programme including Duthie Park Lodge will result in the creation of A rated assets.

The suitability survey programme has been delayed by competing demands on resources for both Corporate Landlord and the Services occupying the assets. The survey programme will be restarted next year. This may see some assets being downgraded, but It is not possible to predict this impact at this time.

03. Operational Assets Required Maintenance Costs

The required maintenance cost of operational assets per square metre	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£90.72	2019/20	£89.30	2020/21	£90.74

The overall floor area has decreased slightly due to the closure or transfer to Housing Revenue Account of a number of smaller properties. Many projects have been delayed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and due to this, a reduction in required maintenance against certain assets has not been achieved. Updated condition surveys have seen some required maintenance requirements increase. These combined factors have led to an increase in the overall figure.

The Condition and Suitability Programme will continue to allow for targeted priority capital spend. This will result in improvements to specific buildings, but buildings not included in the programme may decline. Capital projects, such as Provost Skene's House will positively impact next year's figure.

04. Carbon Reduction Commitment

Building and Streetlighting Carbon Emissions	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	27,631 tonnes	2019/20	26,961 tonnes	2020/21	21,714 tonnes

The Energy Management Team has an annual 2.5% energy reduction target and have worked actively to reduce the energy consumption and carbon emissions from all public buildings and streetlighting. Energy efficiency measures and actions include energy awareness campaigns in schools, boiler controls, improved heating settings to match occupancy patterns, heating pipe insulation, lighting replacement to LED, district heating connections, improved building management systems, organising repairs to heating systems to improve efficiency and more installations of LED streetlighting including smart lighting level controls. The active management of heating has helped reduce overall gas consumption in buildings by 4%. There is an increase in electricity consumption by 2,196,660kWh in 2018/19, or 7% compared to the previous year and this is attributed to new buildings opening in the year and also increases in EV charging points. Streetlighting electricity consumption has shown a further reduction of 10% as part of the ongoing LED streetlighting programme. So overall there is a reduction of 4,198 tonnes of carbon emissions. The Energy Team are continuously monitoring energy consumption patterns to identify more energy savings. There are also ongoing energy spend-to-save projects being planned and implemented.

Finance

01. Efficiencies Achieved

Council-wide efficiencies as a percentage of revenue budget	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	5.28%	2019/20	9.38%	2020/21	6.34%
Savings of £37.9m for 2020/21 budget were achieved by a combination of staff/vacancy management savings and service delivery changes, along with increased income targets. We are working towards delivery of its approved Target Operating Model, which is reflected in the savings approved for 2020–21, alongside the 5–year business plan, and we will strive to meet funding constraints and efficiency targets in the future.						

02. Accountancy Costs

Cost of overall accountancy function per £1,000 of net expenditure	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£4.81	2019/20	£4.16	2020/21	£3.70
Finance expenditure has decreased from £1.884 million to £1.710 million, due to a further reduction in staff numbers in the accountancy function, and the cost of overall Council Operations have increased by £9.454m to £461.956 million.						

People and Organisation

01. LGBF – Sickness Absence

The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for teachers	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	4.87	2019/20	5.37	2020/21	4.16
The 2020/2021 figures have to be considered in the wider context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the overall absence rate has fallen across both the measures, the data shows that a drop in the rates over the lockdown period in particular was followed by rates beginning to climb again. The Absence Improvement project, which is ongoing, will undertake a deep dive of the data to identify supports that can be put in place and those services which the data suggests are most in need of intervention.						

An emphasis over the past year has been on improving data reporting around absences to inform data led interventions, and this work continues to progress; recent improvements have included giving all line managers instant access to real time absence data for their teams through a report on the manager dashboard of the HR System.. During the pandemic, a range of supports were put in place for employees including:

- Support to shielding employees, with arrangements in place for their safe return to work.
- Anyone with symptoms was given occupational sick pay. It was also regarded as an infectious disease as per the national agreements and so not counted as sickness absence and so didn't affect entitlement to sick pay.
- The implementation of the Mental Health Action plan and the continuing roll out of Mental Health First Aiders.
- A large number of resources identified and shared with staff, including mental health and wellbeing support sessions, resilience support, and support for front line workers.
- High level of flexibility offered to staff throughout the pandemic, including home working and support to balance childcare arrangements.
- The roll out of F1 IT licences to front line staff allows all staff to be able to access the health and wellbeing support resources available on the Intranet.

The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for other local government employees	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	11.87	2019/20	11.3	2020/21	10.32

The overall absence rate has fallen, although there was a drop in the absence during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions over the lockdown period, absence began to climb again. Part of the Absence Improvement project, is analysing information to identify supports that can be put in place for services in need of the most intervention. Recent improvements have included giving all line managers instant access to real time absence data for their teams through a report on the manager dashboard of the Human Resources system.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of supports were put in place for employees including:

Crisis arrangements to support shielding employees, with arrangements in place for their safe return to work.

The implementation of the Mental Health Action plan and the continuing roll out of Mental Health First Aiders

Mental health and wellbeing support sessions, resilience support, and support for front line workers.

High level of flexibility offered to staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including home working and support to balance childcare arrangements

Percentage of council employees in top 5% of earners that are women	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	59.88%	2019/20	57.52%	2020/21	58.11%
<p>We are providing equality of opportunity to both female and male employees. Targets are not as they are not appropriate, with equality initiatives considered instead. The equalities agenda strives to meet the public sector general equality duty and the specific duties. Over the last year it has continued to work towards meeting its specific duties in relation to employment equality.</p> <p>The specific duty of equality impact assessing and reviewing policies and practices against the needs of the general equality duty has continued, with impact assessments of employment policies and practices for the protected characteristics, including gender.</p>						

03. Human Resources Costs

Cost of overall human resources function per £1,000 of net expenditure	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£4.22	2019/20	£4.40	2020/21	£3.18
<p>This reflects the change in the organisational structure of the function following the Service Redesign and also reflects an underspend in the training budget during the pandemic.</p>						

04. Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement
<p>The ongoing challenges of finding rapid, effective communication routes with frontline colleagues were highlighted as the COVID-19p pandemic developed, particularly in terms of urgent messages requiring to be conveyed e.g. regarding Shielding, required risk assessments etc. Focus group engagements were held to discover effective 2-way communications with these colleague groups. The outcomes emphasised that assigning frontline Microsoft licenses to colleagues would provide the channels needed and the engagement in terms of ongoing corporate information, key team messages and collaborating more effectively with others. The work covered 1600 staff, to provide this</p>

digital connection as well as covering off any literacy and digital literacy needs via a Leaflet for Frontline staff to detail all of the digital tools available to them as well as the support routes. This work continues with frontline colleagues to ensure the full benefit of these tools is realised.

We had already begun the journey of using Office 365 and Microsoft Teams in 2019 and this provided solid grounding when the Covid pandemic drove an enhanced level of adoption of these tools. We have been classed as one of the Scottish Government’s Digital Office’s exemplar Councils, particularly in relation to Digital leadership and skills and Microsoft 365 adoption, sharing best practice and collaborating with the Digital Office and other Councils. “Aberdeen are one of our key collaborative partners on important workstreams including our Modern Workplace programme in partnership with SPDS, COSLA and the Improvement Service, utilising their innovative and ambitious experience to drive forward our collective vision”. As part of this work, we were asked to conduct best practice demonstration videos on key aspects of this and which are shared across the community of local authorities in Scotland.

Partnership working and integration with Police Scotland was cemented via the co-location in Marischal College. Colleagues from both organisations worked together to ensure joined-up engagement approaches and resources, including dedicated pages on our Intranet space and a shared handbook.

Employee-led engagement groups were expanded in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. These included our Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) network, which grew to 72 fully-trained members. This figure looks set to double over the 21/22 period. The MHFA role is to act as a point of contact and reassurance for any member of staff who may be experiencing a mental health issue. Our networks of Digital Champions (points of contact) and Digital Superchamps (who support the learning of their peers) grew to 300 and 60 respectively, with the latter group being trained up directly on Microsoft tools, to pass their learning straight onto colleagues through live virtual training sessions.

05. Workforce Profile

Percentage of disabled employees	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	2.5%	2019/20	3.2%	2020/21	3.7%

Percentage of full-time female employees	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	35.6%	2019/20	34.5%	2020/21	31.8%

Percentage of part-time male employees	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		3.6%		4.6%		5.1%

Percentage of full-time male employees	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		26.6%		25.2%		24.9%

Percentage of employees under 20 years	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		0.4%		0.5%		0.4%

Percentage of employees aged 20 - 29	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		13.5%		13.1%		12.7%

Percentage of employees aged 30 - 39	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		23.2%		23.3%		23.7%

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Percentage of employees aged 40 – 49	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		23.6%		23.7%		23.4%

Percentage of employees aged 50 – 59	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		27.8%		27.5%		27.9%

Percentage of employees aged 60 – 64	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		8.5%		8.3%		8.4%

Percentage of employees aged over 65	2018/19	Value	2019/20	Value	2020/21	Value
		3%		3.5%		3.7%

Percentage of part-time female employees	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	34.3%	2019/20	35.8%	2020/21	38.3%
<p>The Equality Action Plan sets out the ways in which we plans to address areas of under representation in the workforce, and to support those existing employees who have a protected characteristic. We continues to work towards promoting equality and encouraging diversity across the workforce.</p> <p>We hold a number of accreditations which demonstrate the Council's commitment to an inclusive and diverse workforce. These include: Equally Safe at Work (Bronze Award) Investors in Young People (Good practice Award Gold Standard) Disability Confident Employer Carer Positive Engaged Employer</p> <p>There has been an increase in the percentage of employees with a disability; this is encouraging and reflects our ongoing commitment as a Disability Confident Employer. The redeployment scheme aims to retain employees with disabilities or medical conditions in employment by matching them to suitable posts within the organisation. There has been an increase in part time working over the past year. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have provided increased flexibility for colleagues to allow them to undertake caring responsibilities and embrace different ways of working. An area of particular interest has been the increase in the percentage of part time male employees. The age demographic shows 63% of the workforce falling into the 40 and over categories, with only 0.37% of the workforce being under 20, a slight reduction on last year's figures. A number of initiatives have been launched this year to encourage younger workers, including the setting up of the Young Person's Network; the launch of the Kickstart Internship Programme; a wide ranging Apprenticeship programme and the Young Person's Guarantee Scheme.</p>						

06. LGBF – Gender Pay Gap

Average Hourly rate of Pay (Male)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£16.04	2019/20	£16.56	2020/21	£16.71

Average Hourly rate of Pay (Female)	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	£16.13	2019/20	£17.49	2020/21	£17.64

The gender pay gap	Value		Value		Value	
	2018/19	0.56%	2019/20	-5.6%	2020/21	-5.56%

A key element of the gender pay gap is the teaching workforce, which is predominantly female. Prior to the 2018–2020 multi-year pay award for teachers, we showed a small gender pay gap in favour of men, however the awards of 3%, 7% and 3% for main grade teachers over the 3 years of the pay award led to a reversal of this position, and to the current position.

We are committed to supporting the city economy through the Scottish Government Fair Work Action Plan; as such, an understanding of the gender pay gap within the organisation is crucial and ongoing monitoring will therefore take place. The current gender pay gap will continue to be monitored and it is considered to be reasonable if any gender pay gap is less than 3%.

