2022/23 SPIs

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
	2020/21	254,040	2021/22	1,434,492	2022/23	1,734,276

Total number of attendances for indoor pool sports and leisure facilities; schools and community education establishments		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	60,894	2021/22	419,531	2022/23	575,873

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
	2020/21	193,146	2021/22	1,014,961	2022/23	1,158,403

Total number of attendances for outdoor sports and leisure facilities		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	190,595	2021/22	414,238	2022/23	372,507

This is the first year with no COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Scotland entered level 3 restrictions in April 2021, dropping to level 2 in May, level 1 in June, level 0 in July and finally removing all restrictions on 9th August 2021. Leisure Facilities were offering a reduced timetable of activities during this period, particularly affecting attendance at indoor facilities, while one facility - Get Active At Lochside - remained closed to the public completely until January 2022.

Attendances at indoor wet and dry facilities, as well as the total number of attendances, have increased significantly but they are still below pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels. The largest increase was in wet facilities. This is due to the removal of remaining restrictions, such as changing rooms and advanced booking systems, as well as people becoming more comfortable returning to facilities following the COVID-19 pandemic. Outdoor attendances were significantly higher than usual during 2021-22; even higher than pre-Covid levels. This is largely due to some group exercise classes and coaching sessions being held outdoors to allow ventilation and social distancing, and also due to increased interest in outdoor sports due to restrictions on indoor activities. Golf, for example, had a large increase in demand at the start of 2021-22 as it was one of the only sports available. Outdoor attendances have fallen, however this reflects a return to normality, with group classes and coaching returning indoors following the easing of

restrictions. There has been a large increase in attendances at Sport Aberdeen facilities offering Cricket. This is the result of the work which has been undertaken to support the cricket league, including the installation of an artificial cricket wicket at Queens Links and supporting the league to invest into more artificial wickets which has helped to facilitate the cricket hub at Inverdee.

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
	2020/21	979,056	2021/22	1,190,854	2022/23	1,339,942

The number of virtual visits has risen marginally due to the continued use of digital applications, the number of in-person visits has risen significantly surpassing those experienced prior to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Visitors feel confident visiting Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums venues in person and actively engaged with the exhibition and activity programme on offer throughout the year.

Plans are in place for access improvements across all venues following visitor feedback and consultation including a review of orientation signage, weight on opening of doors, light levels and impact on visual contrast and assisted-opening doors are being fitted.
 Bi-lingual interpretation (Scots Gaelic / English) has been introduced in the gallery in one changing display and as part of one temporary exhibition. Scots Gaelic choir performances and events have been hosted and well attended. Bloomberg Connects tour app is now available in Scots Gaelic translation. Doric has been incorporated in the new collection gallery "A View of Aberdeen".

02. Investment

Investment
Following a period of redirection of resource to supporting the administration and distribution of COVID-19 pandemic business grants and reduced inward investments activity due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions the Invest Aberdeen team has returned to a full complement and focus on its core business and priority of attracting inward investment. In 2022-23, this has covered core work of: maintaining and developing the Invest Aberdeen website and associated resources; proactive communication through social media; attending and promotion at relevant industry and investment events; pursuit of potential investments and supporting inward investment enquiries; and collaborating with regional, national, and international partners on relevant projects and events. Activities of note included:

- Supported 97 inward investment enquiries.
- Attendance and exhibition at leading industry events such as All Energy in Glasgow and the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum.
- Creation, sharing and promotion of marketing material for regional investment propositions and key sectors for events and the Council's presence at Scottish Cities Week in London.
- Continued engagement and collaboration with regional, national and international stakeholders, and development of proposals with Energy Transition Zone Ltd.
- Reconvening the Regional Inward Investment Forum to inform the work of Invest Aberdeen.
- Supporting inward visits such as the Aberdeen-Houston Gateway 2022 and Scottish Development International led visits from France and Germany.
- Continued online reach with the Invest Aberdeen website now having had 129,853 total views from 158 countries since launch in 2018; development of an updated regional promotional video for use at events, online and by partners; and provision of communications and marketing expertise and coordination for the North East Scotland Green Freeport bid.

03. Museums and Galleries, Events and Exhibitions

Events Exhibitions Museums and Galleries

We hosted 14 special exhibitions and displays at Aberdeen Art Gallery and presented two displays at Aberdeen Maritime Museum. The special and temporary exhibition programme featured major touring exhibitions and loans, partnership projects with local organisations, and work from the collections of Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums, which are recognised collections of national significance. This was our first full year of trading after the Covid-19 pandemic, in which we saw audience confidence rebuilt and an increasing number of visitors returning to our buildings.

The exhibitions' programme at Aberdeen Art Gallery was very well received. Aberdeen Art Gallery brought some of Scotland's rare and early treasures to the city for the first time in a double-bill of exhibitions in summer 2022, The Book of Deer and The Galloway Hoard which together attracted over 60,000 visitors. The Book of Deer features the earliest surviving text in Scots Gaelic. The Galloway Hoard was an exhibition featuring the richest collection of rare and unique Viking-age objects ever found in Britain or Ireland. The exhibitions and display programme 2022-23 was complemented by a varied engagement programme of events, activities and music for all ages including families, under 5's, young people, adults and our audiences with assisted needs.

We held the following significant events: Aberdeen City Highland Games, Armed Forces Day, Tour of Britain, Fireworks, Christmas Tree Switch On and Light Switch On Parade, Carol Concerts, Hogmanay and SPECTRA. There were additional events such as the Queens Jubilee Celebrations and Operation Unicorn.

04. City Deal

City Deal
The Aberdeen City Region Deal is the 10-year agreement between the UK Government and the Scottish Government with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Opportunity Nort- East (ONE) as one delivery mechanism for the Region's economic vision which focuses on transformational investment supporting the evolution of the region's key sectors, sustainable business growth and creating green jobs for the future. Seven years into the Deal Programme, we continue making excellent progress in delivering a £1bn programme in partnership with public and private sector partners. Between 2022 and 2023 the Deal has welcomed the launch of the National Subsea Centre established to provide advanced research to accelerate the transition to net zero and the launch of the Net Zero Technology Services and anticipate its continued growth beyond the Aberdeen City Region Deal. In addition, we have welcomed the news of the completion of the construction of the BioHub and the launch of this new-build industry innovation hub. The project SeedPod, a food and drink industry investment to create an innovation hub for manufacturing and production, have announced the construction contract award and is opening in Aberdeen next year. The benefits of safe and efficient port services and generous quayside space from operational Aberdeen South Harbour are already being realised while the final construction stage is underway. The next stage of the External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour project is underway to deliver the most appropriate road, public transport and active travel measures to improve wider linkages to the Aberdeen South Harbour Development and support the Energy Transition Zone. Our Digital programme has been delivered across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The most recently completed Full Fibre project has provided gigabit capacity infrastructure across the region. The outcome of the digital infrastructure gap analysis produced three new projects to deliver 5G networks within the region.

Commercial and Procurement

01. Council expenditure with local suppliers

Percentage of council expenditure with local suppliers		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	37.4%	2021/22	38.4%	2022/23	35.7%
Percentage of local suppliers		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	22.8%	2021/22	22.8%	2022/23	23.5%
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.   We also pay a number of suppliers as "Prime Contractors" with those suppliers sub-contracting within the local area, however within the 22/23 data it was not possible to capture the level of sub-contractor spend which was local.

02. SME Expenditure

Percentage of council expenditure with small and medium enterprises		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	51.8%	2021/22	53.3%	2022/23	61.9%
Percentage of council expenditure with local small and medium enterprises		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	25.4%	2021/22	24.3%	2022/23	24%

The Positive Procurement Programme (PPP) facilitates engagement with the local business community. The purpose of PPP is to support local businesses across all business sectors (including 3rd sector) to develop their capacity and capability to bid successfully for public contracts. The overarching aim is to demonstrate positive steps we are taking to ensure the inclusive participation of local Small and Medium Enterprises/local 3rd sector in our procurement activity. PPP is joint initiative between Procurement and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council Economic Development units together. In partnership with the Supplier Development Programme, we will increase focus on future, actual contract opportunities across the main commodity categories, particularly where the local business community can help to shape/scope requirements to ensure competitiveness, a diverse marketplace and inclusive participation.

03. Supplier Development Programme

Supplier Development Programme (Positive Procurement Programme)
We held 2 Tender Training Events, one virtual 'Meet the Buyer' event and one in-person 'Meet the Buyer North' event. There were 345 attendees at the 'Meet the Buyer North event'. Of these, 238 attendees were from 192 unique Scottish SME businesses. Of those, 19 were based in Aberdeen City Council and 29 were based in Aberdeenshire Council and 35 were based in the Highland Council area. The Supplier Development Programme established the Highlands and Islands Networking Together (HINT) Group which is currently chaired by a member of the Commercial & Procurement Shared Service. The Group was set up to continue the networking of public sector bodies in the Highlands and Islands and we are a member along with a significant number of other public sector bodies in the North-East of Scotland. Its purpose is to discuss and facilitate the drive for best practice of procurement activity, share key documents and to improved visibility of contracts, key projects and opportunities for supplier engagement to aid economic

recovery. Attendees share best practice, discuss new and existing Scottish Government policies and their impact upon local businesses in the North of Scotland, give practical advice on creating procurement reports, and participate in discussion on procurement barriers and how to overcome them, as well as participate in general networking with the various public sector bodies in the region.

Data and Insights

02. Data Led Organisation

Data Led Organisation
We have well established approaches to ensuring the organisation is data led. For example, our annual commissioning cycle which culminates in a whole organisation Delivery Plan and budget, is informed by an analysis of funding, demand, statutory obligations, service standards and performance. Our Local Outcome Improvement Plan is developed on the basis of a "Population Needs Assessment".
We are the first local authority in Scotland to be funded by the National Institute for Health & Care Research to establish a Health Determinants Research Collaboration with NHS and local universities.
We have invested in a Central Data Platform to improve the ability and speed to gain insight from data. All of these developments are additional to strong fundamentals in data systems, processes and skills.

Stategic Place Planning

01. Sustainable Energy

Corporate Carbon Emissions (tonnes) tCO2e		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	25,929	2021/22	26,159	2022/23	
In 2021/22, Council carbon emissions showed a slight increase of 230 tCO2e when compared to 2020/21, a 1% increase. However, 2020/21 is not considered a representative reporting year due to COVID-19 and the rise was attributed to increased use of assets and operations following the gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. This rebound in emissions was reflective of the wider picture of public sector emissions in Scotland, as indicated in the **key findings and analysis** from public sector bodies'						

annual reports for the reporting period, 2021/22.   Council emissions have reduced by 43.6% against reporting baseline of 2015/16. This was the second year of implementation of the Council Climate Change Plan, approved March 2021.

Key actions progressed during 2022/23 will contribute to the 2022/23 carbon emissions data which will be reported to the Net Zero Environment and Transport Committee in Autumn 2023 included:
• A fresh launch of the Green Workplace section of the staff intranet with sections added to signpost staff to information and resources, including a dedicated page for the Council Climate Change Plan.
 • Carbon Literacy Training sessions for Senior Managers and Elected Members and the launch of a 'Meeting Our Climate Change Duties' e-learn training module for staff in September 2022.
 • Council carbon budget has been developed further and is being rolled out on a phased basis.
• Scottish Government grant awarded for second phase of the **Torry Heat Network** which will significantly reduce the demand for heat generated from fossil fuel sources.
 • Completion and opening of a **replacement primary school at Miltimber** with an Energy Performance Rating of A.
 • 2 new 'Gold Standard'Council homes completed in the **Auchmill development**, which are connected to an existing district heating network and built to a high energy efficiency standard to reduce carbon emissions.
 • A further 8 electric vehicle charging points dedicated for Council Fleet, bringing the total to 16, helping to decarbonise the Council fleet.
 • The **Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan** was approved. The Plan aims to identify sites for woodland creation in the city.
 • Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan won the **'Best Practice Award'** at Scottish Renewables Net-Zero Energy Transition Awards in August 2022.

02. Sustainable Development

Work done to encourage and support sustainable development
This is the second year of the implementation stage of the **Council Climate Change Plan 2021-25** which is taking forward over 100 projects across Aberdeen. City-wide climate action progressed with a **Net Zero Aberdeen** website which hosts public versions of the Net Zero Aberdeen strategy documents and Aberdeen Adapts. **The Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge** was developed and launched in November 2022, allowing organisations and members of the public to pledge their commitment to the city-wide climate and nature goals. A **Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration** was made in March 2023. We formally approved a **City Centre Low Emission Zone (LEZ)** in May 2022. The Big Issue E-Bike **on-street bicycle rental scheme** launched in December 2022 and seven people were trained to develop and deliver cycling sessions (Bikeability) based on the National Standard for cycling. Hazlehead household waste and recycling centre opened a **reuse shop** in July 2022 for all Aberdeen City residents to donate or buy unwanted items.   The partnership **Granite City Good Food** secured a **Silver Sustainable Food Place award** for Aberdeen involving considerable outreach and engagement. The second community

garden festival was held and the **Aberdeen food-growing map has surpassed 100,000 views**. The **Queens Green Canopy** planting saw more than 20,000 trees planted across the city in 2022/23.The refurbished **Union Terrace Gardens** opened in December 2022 which included extensive planting and additional low carbon buildings to the city centre.   **Fairtrade** continued to be promoted both internally and city-wide. Four editions of the **Green Times** were published and twelve Green Flags were awarded to Aberdeen schools under the **EcoSchools** Scheme. We contributed to **Climate Week North East** event; relaunched the Green Workplace on its internal intranet with more content; introduced a new e-learn module for staff on how to meet our climate duties and expanded a city Green Champion network to six partners recruiting 75 champions in total.

The **ACC School Estates Plan (2022)** which was approved in September 2022 emphasising a focus on improving existing schools before considering building new and design which demonstrates contribution to net zero targets; the **City Centre and Beach Masterplan** which was approved by Council in August 2022 with net zero emissions specifically highlighted as one of the 4 key objectives for its programme of works; and the **Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan** which was approved in June 2022.

03. Planning Applications Processing Time

Average Determination Times of Major Development Planning Applications (weeks)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	31.4	2021/22	27.6	2022/23	87.3
Average Determination Times of Non Householder Local Planning Applications (weeks)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	10.6	2021/22	14.9	2022/23	10
Average Determination Times of Householder Planning Applications (weeks)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	8.3	2021/22	8.8	2022/23	8.1

The reason for the large increase in time taken to determine major developments is due to a small number of applications taking a very long time to determine, of which the actions and timescale were outwith our control. The approval of National Planning Framework 4, that gives significant weight to the global climate and nature crises has focussed the emphasis of planning decision making even more strongly towards addressing the climate emergency. It should also be noted that there was a 56% increase in enforcement cases under investigation.

04. Affordable Homes

Number of affordable houses developed (year to date)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	461	**2021/22**	692	**2022/23**	481

Affordable houses are registered complete when they are ready to be occupied. Working with external partners delivery has remained consistent for the last few years This is set to continue as major council projects progress and properties are delivered through Section 75 legal agreements. The National Planning Framework 4, adopted February 2023, is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It emphasises the need for access to affordable, quality homes in better places as identified by the Local Development Plan which in turn is informed by the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

2. Customer

Customer Experience

01. Freedom of Information

Percentage of Environmental Info Requests replied to within 20 working days – Corporate		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	71.75%	**2021/22**	90.22%	**2022/23**	83.33%
Percentage of Freedom of Information requests replied to within 20 working days – Corporate		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	69.15%	**2021/22**	88.52%	**2022/23**	84.5%
Percentage of Corporate Requests dealt with within 20 working days (FOIs and EIRs combined)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	69.75%	**2021/22**	89%	**2022/23**	84.31%

There was a 23% increase in the number of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests, which brings them up to pre- COVID-19 pandemic levels. There is no clear indicator as to why there has been such a notable increase as the subject matter varies and there was no clear peak during any period, with volumes remaining consistent throughout the year.   Topics of interest included the measures taken during the pandemic, e.g. working from home, hybrid working, Spaces for People, and bus lanes, as well as the cost-of-living crisis was also an area of interest, such as requests relating to council budgets, council tax arrears, and council debt.

02. Benefit Administration Costs

		Value		Value		Value
Weighted private rented sector caseload	2020/21	2,200.29	2021/22	1,958.54	2022/23	1,737.91
Weighted registered social landlord caseload	2020/21	3,384	2021/22	3,141.34	2022/23	2,932.84
Weighted Council Tax Benefit caseload	2020/21	22,324.24	2021/22	22,053.3	2022/23	20,550.02
Gross administration cost per benefit case	2020/21	£37.94	2021/22	£37.71	2022/23	£36.46
Weighted rent rebate caseload	2020/21	11,445.8	2021/22	10,207.6	2022/23	9,183.7

The impact of COVID-19 now has minimal, if any, impact on the service. The current cost of living challenges have more impact on the service, e.g., administration of Energy Support Schemes and fluctuating caseloads. This SPI has no impact on addressing climate emergency. During 2022/23 a review was undertaken to streamline operational processes, structure of the Benefits Team, priorities, utilise further use of automation and staff training was completed.

03. Benefits Claims and Changes

		Value		Value		Value
Average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and change events in Housing Benefit (monthly)	2020/21	7.79	2021/22	8.03	2022/23	12.06
Average Number of Days to Process New Benefit Claims	2020/21	25.32	2021/22	17.41	2022/23	33.05
Average Number of Days to Process Change of Circumstances		Value		Value		Value

	2020/21	6.5	2021/22	7.2	2022/23	9.59

Recruitment has been undertaken and staff training has commenced. This has made a significant improvement. By the end of 2022/23 there is evidence that performance is returning to the standards set. During 2022/23 a review was undertaken and the following actions were completed: We requested input from the Department of Works and Pension Performance Team to look for any improvements in processes and procedures and this will continue in 23/24.
• operational processes streamlined
• Benefits Team structure redesigned
• priorities reviewed
• automation further utilised
• staff training undertaken

04. LGBF – Council Tax Collection

Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	£7.19	2021/22	£7.25	2022/23	£6.78

The reduced costs together with an increase in the number of Council Tax properties in Aberdeen City from 122,963 in 2021/22 to 124,025 has realised a decrease in the cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling. The impact of COVID-19 now has minimal, if any, impact on the service. The current cost of living issues has more impact on the service, e.g. people have less money to pay bills. During 2022/23 a review of the staffing structure took place and temporary staff were made permanent to help improve the collection rate. This resulted in an increase in staffing costs from £1,050,584 to £1,115,328, but was offset by an increase in collection. To further improve the speed of processing of council tax administration, a benchmarking project will be undertaken to make further process improvements.

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
	2020/21	91.86%	2021/22	92.79%	2022/23	94.23%
Income due from council tax for the year net reliefs and rebates		Value		Value		Value

	2020/21	129,975,737	2021/22	131,942,512	2022/23	136,591,129

The improvement has been achieved through a service redesign resulting in streamlined operational arrangements. The Cost-of-Living Award that was introduced by Scottish Government during 2022/23 has also helped with an improved collection rate. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic now has minimal, if any, impact on the service. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the recovery on unpaid monies for Council Tax was reduced but all Council Tax recovery and administration processes have now returned to pre-pandemic levels. The current cost of living challenges has had an impact on the service, e.g., people have less money to pay bills. Going forward into 2023/24, a further review of the operational model will take place. It is also hoped that a benchmarking exercise will take place with other local authorities to learn from others and potentially improve the speed of administration.

06. LGBF - Payment of Invoices

Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	87.15%	2021/22	84.83%	2022/23	87.5%

Invoice volumes remain quite consistent with only a 0.5% decline in levels and this is in spite of continuing to transfer suppliers with high volumes to more efficient and streamlined ways of working to reduce the number of invoices receivable.
The staff compliment has steadied which has helped the overall performance of the team with us achieving the performance target in 6 months out of 12. Staff turnover has continued and it is positive to see staff leave for promoted and higher grade posts within the Council.
Work continues in system improvements where suppliers will be directed to our cloud and direct invoicing options for invoice submission to free up time in that area. One bill options have been addressed more in 2022/23 and will be rolled out further in collaboration with contract renewals with the procurement team with the aim of addressing demand and processing efficiency.

07. Complaints

Percentage of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	71.58%	2021/22	64.69%	2022/23	66.06%
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	54.63%	2021/22	44.92%	2022/23	37.14%

Percentage of complaints resolved within time (Corporate)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	69.61%	2021/22	61.47%	2022/23	60.67%
Percentage of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	68.6%	2021/22	48%	2022/23	38.03%

Following the easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, there was an increased demand which has been challenging for services to manage. However, there has been an improvement within specific departments, such as Building Services, whose overall response performance has increased. Staff turnover within the Customer Feedback Team and elsewhere within the organisation has impacted response times. This is because it has taken time to train and upskill the new post holders in complaint handling. The reasons for delays will continue to be explored and addressed with services directly to encourage compliance with the performance targets.

Digital and Technology

Digital and Technology
A key component of our digital transformation focuses on making it quicker, easier and more consistent for customers to access our services digitally, enabling them to become more self-sufficient. The provision of online services gives customers a choice of when and how they access our services and facilitates a reduced transaction cost compared to traditional channels of face-to-face and telephone. It also removes the need to complete paper forms and associated costs such as postage. In addition, continued improvements are being made to existing online services to ensure they are efficient as they can be. A total of 32 new online services were implemented, such as: • Apply for a premises licence variation • Apply for early learning eligible 2s nursery places • Apply for a taxi driver licence • Apply for a short term lets licence • Apply for Council Tax discount and exemption • Apply for annual garden waste permit renewal • Submit an adoption and fostering enquiry • Book a birthday party at ACC park venues   The digital solutions enable: • A consistent experience for our customers when accessing our service • 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, meaning a reduction in follow up calls required
- Work towards addressing the climate emergency.

Early Intervention and Community Empowerment

01. LGBF – Library Visits

Total number of library visits – in person and virtual		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	1,116,296	2021/22	1,347,180	2022/23	1,648,447

In April 2022, Northfield Library was the final library to open post COVID-19 pandemic in April 2022 and in July 2022, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were relaxed which resulted in the number of physical visitors to libraries increasing by 128% on the previous year, when restrictions were still in place.   There has been an increase in the public visiting libraries in person to attend a varied programme of in person and hybrid events. During Autumn/Winter months libraries promoted themselves as Warm Spaces, providing the opportunity for people to come together and to share and use resources, which has also had a positive impact on access to the service. In contrast the Click and Collect service introduced during COVID-19 pandemic, whilst continuing to allow alternative access to the service, has reduced as some library users return to physical libraries to select their own reading material.

In March 2023, physical visitor numbers increased by 108% on April 2022 which was a result of public support following the decision to close 6 library buildings. Library events such as a 'Read in' at Ferryhill Library encouraged library members old and new to visit. There was a reignition of love of and for libraries which resulted in higher physical visitor numbers in the lead up to the closures. The continued provision of high-quality online resources has ensured virtual visitors increased by 7%, evidencing the continued upward trend in virtual access to the service. This is reflective in the use of Press Reader and access to free online magazines and newspapers.

02. Community Use of Libraries

Number of community participations generated by Library and Information Service Engagement and Extensions activity		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	38,337	2021/22	36,464	2022/23	33,861

The number of attendants at library events fell by 7% from the previous year. The high figure from the previous year was as a result of the popularity and number of online Bookbug sessions. These could be watched live and available to view multiple times after posting. As COVID-19 restrictions lifted and care givers were able to attend in person, the viewing figures for online Bookbug sessions has reduced. It is important to highlight though that monthly online Bookbug sessions continue to allow those unable to attend in person sessions to participate and enjoy songs and rhymes maximising accessibility.

The number of events increased by 428% on 2021/22 figures, with all library venues providing a wide range of activities and displays to encourage reading and participation. In comparison with 2019/20, 49% fewer activities have taken place in 2022/23 however across the year there has been a steady increase in the number of events, activities and participation demonstrating a post COVID-19 pandemic confidence in attending in person events. Aberdeen City Libraries won the Grampian Infant Feeding Advocacy Award for "going above and beyond, including providing breastfeeding related books, venues to support classes and providing Bookbug sessions during Scottish Breastfeeding Week." The library service took part in Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) 'Keep the heid and read' event in May where library members were encouraged to read for 6 minutes to improve their mental health. A total of 456,522 minutes was pledged across Scotland.

03. Learning Centres / Access Points

Number of PC terminal and Wi-Fi access uses within Libraries and Library Learning Centres		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	19,464	2021/22	36,866	2022/23	63,014

The use of library Public PCs and Wi-Fi increased by 48% from last year with PC usage increasing by 34% and Wi-Fi usage by 79%. On 11th May 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on PCs were removed at all libraries. Reservations on PCs returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic allowances of 2 hours with no mandatory cleaning period which resulted in a steady increase in PC usage. Other factors which had a positive effect on our PC usage was the increase in opening hours with all sites being open from April 2022 and therefore the increase in numbers of PCs available.

In March 2023, the team won an Edge Award for their work with Ukrainian refugees during Spring and Summer 2022. The purpose of the awards is to recognise positive achievements and promote outstanding library-based initiatives which celebrate the value of libraries. Aberdeen City Libraries won the 'Social' category for making a difference. The support for Ukrainian families began as "on the spot" help but quickly became an organised programme of support and activities. This was a vital service for

those traumatised by war in their own country.   A new service called Princh started in 2022, which provides wireless printing and has been welcomed by staff and public alike. In the first full month of the service in March 2022, 405 people used the service, whilst in March 2023, 1339 people printed from their own device. Library users, whether library members or not, can use their own device to print documents without logging on to a library computer whilst using our Library WiFi.

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
	2020/21	0	2021/22		2022/23	0.44

We received 2156 requests for assistance. Out of those, 252 calls required attendance on site in order to undertake observation, enforcement or de-escalation. The average time taken to attend these 252 complaints was 26.5 minutes between receipt of phone call and the officers' arrival. On a daily basis, partners who include Police Scotland, Housing and Scottish Fire and Rescue review incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour that have occurred over the previous 24 hours. We can promote our service and encourage people who are experiencing noise or neighbour disputes to contact the Community Safety team direct rather than the police.

05. Housing Rental

Gross rent Arrears as a percentage of Rent due		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	11.3%	2021/22	14.02%	2022/23	17.41%

Cost-of-living crisis and increase in fuel costs have both had a negative impact on tenants' incomes. We have increased our focus on avoiding legal action including evictions, and this is also a significant factor in rent collection performance. Universal Credit continues to have an impact on rent recovered and the number of tenants claiming this benefit continues to increase. A new Corporate Debt team has now been established to help maximise the collection of rent. The focus of this new team is to work in close collaboration with our tenants and relevant Housing & Support Officers to manage and reduce arrears at the earliest opportunity and ensuring that appropriate intervention action is taken to avoid cases proceeding to legal action stage. The Secure Escalation policies for debt recovery have been reviewed and new processes and introduced to help and support with earlier intervention, increased tenancy sustainment and maximisation of tenant's income. Tenancy sustainment through prevention and early intervention will therefore be key objectives in our enhanced approach.

An online benefit calculator which is accessed via our website and easy to use has been introduced to support tenants maximise their income. It's a tool that can be used by staff and members of the public to enable them to check what benefits they may be entitled to apply for. Going forward into 2023/24, work is ongoing to continue to review and introduce new initiatives surrounding all rent escalation policies with the aim of reducing Rent Arrears. However, it is anticipated that there will still be negative impacts on tenants' income through high inflation and rising costs.

Rent loss due to voids		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	2.53%	2021/22	3.66%	2022/23	5.7%

Void property performance continues to be a priority, given a decrease in performance through the year. The longstanding problem of attracting and securing sufficient trades resources remains a key factor. We've successfully commissioned external contractors to focus on the reletting of our properties held for the Ukrainian displaced people. Our Improvement Plan is now led at Director level with governance and oversight through our Performance Board 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, increasing inspection regimes and the establishment of an Officer/Member Working Group. Further actions include the implementation of Choice Based Letting with a focus on reducing refusal rates and creating effective allocation matches which will meet applicant desires and aspirations.

06. Equalities and Diversity

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

There have been continuous efforts and progress made to reduce inequalities and promote equality of opportunity.

• As required under the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, we reported on the progress of our Equality Outcomes on 8th March 2023. The full report can be accessed via this link

• A new Anti-Poverty and Inequality committee in 2022 with the purpose to monitor and determine the Council's contribution to alleviating and mitigating all forms of poverty and inequality in the city.

• The Disability Equity Partnership plays a key part in ensuring that our projects consider the needs of people with disabilities.

• We provided funding to 3rd party organisations such as Deafblind Scotland to provide support for people with dual sensory loss and Shopmobility to provide services to increase mobility and confidence while being out and about.

• We commissioned GREC (Grampian Regional Equality Council) to consult on issues affecting our citizens and feedback to us. They also provided services on our behalf such as counselling, English classes and support around Hate Crime.

• We increased our offer of BSL interpreters present at public events to make them more accessible to the BSL community.

• Our **Gaelic Language Plan** for 2021-25 was prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions.

We provided more accessible information for the diverse groups that we engage with – for example updates in community languages and **BSL Videos** , information in **Easy Read** , **Gaelic** and other community languages where requested. Our recent adoption of the ReciteMe accessibility tool on our webpage empowers customers to self-help where they can and access the information they need at any time. Internally, we have an **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** which aims to address our two employment-related Equality Outcomes, namely to ensure diversity and access to opportunity within the organisation, as well as to create an inclusive workplace for all employees. Combined with our **Workforce Delivery Plan** and refreshed **Capability Framework**, we are taking steps to mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation and upskill our workforce, which in turn will impact positively on equalities and diversity in the city

07. Abandoned Vehicles

Percentage of reported vehicles meeting legal definition of abandoned vehicles	2020/21	Value	2021/22	Value	2022/23	Value 12.14%
Percentage of Legally Abandoned Vehicles uplifted within 28 days	2020/21	Value	2021/22	Value	2022/23	Value 57.62%

Inspections are carried out by the City Warden Service with approximately 95% of vehicles inspected within 48 hours of being reported. The service inspected 1244 vehicles during the reporting period with only 151 meeting the legal definition of being abandoned. The service is currently reviewing opportunity to increase capacity of 3rd party vehicle removal services as only 87 of 151 vehicle were removed within 28 days.

08. Citizen Panel

Citizens Panel
The **City Voice** is an important tool for Aberdeen City Council and 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. It may also be used to provide data for Local Outcome Improvement Plan Improvement Projects. For example, the percentage of respondents who reported that they were worried they would not have enough food to eat or that they would not be able to heat their homes are used as indicators for Stretch Outcome 1 – No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.

The City Voice is generally well received by panellists and question providers alike. Following a review of the City Voice conducted at the beginning of 2022 (a full copy of the review report can be found **here** and a summary of key recommendations can be found **here**), the resultant recommendations are currently being incorporated into the delivery of the City Voice. This included a 'refresh' of the City Voice panel which was carried out during the summer of 2022, with the first questionnaire to the refreshed panel going out at the end of 2022.

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. These responses are included in the City Voice Reports and are important as they provide feedback to panellists on how their input contributes to policies and services. In 2022 the topics covered in the City Voice questionnaire were: Access to Food, Your Heating, Energy Use and Climate Change, Digital Skills, Alcohol Awareness, Travel and Transport, Your Neighbourhood and Green Space.

People and Organisation

01. LGBF - Sickness Absence

The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for teachers		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	4.16	2021/22	5.56	2022/23	6.85
The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for other local government employees		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	10.32	2021/22	13.85	2022/23	13.63

Work continues to take place under the Absence Improvement Project, including greater visibility of the data for Senior Management Teams, regular meetings between People and Organisational Development Advisors and Senior Management Teams to review absence data and the publishing of an online management toolkit to facilitate attendance management. We have improved the reporting of sickness absence through Power BI reporting, and continue to roll out the reports to managers across the organisation to allow for greater in depth analysis of absence data at Service level.

02. LGBF - Equal Opportunities Policy

Percentage of council employees in top 5% of earners that are women		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	58.11%	2021/22	57.99%	2022/23	54.24%

We are providing equality of opportunity to both female and male employees. The equalities agenda is concerned with meeting the public sector general equality duty and the specific duties. Over the last year we have continued to work towards meeting our specific duties in relation to employment equality. The specific duty of equality impact assessing and reviewing policies and practices against the needs of the general equality duty has continued to be undertaken, with impact assessments of employment policies and practices for the protected characteristics, including gender. We are also working in relation to occupational segregation in teaching and early years.

03. Human Resources Costs

Cost of overall human resources function per £1,000 of net expenditure		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	£3.18	2021/22	£3.64	2022/23	£3.57

04. Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement
Our key engagements within the Action Change Management approach include: • Dynamics 365 for Social Work programme. The project has been shortlisted in the Local Government Chronical awards within the Technology category.   • Smarter Working. We assessed the hybrid working test and trial results and created a draft guidance document.   • Face-to-face engagement to reach areas of the workforce who do not regularly use digital devices to engage on: Job Families and the Capability Framework, digital skills, health and wellbeing and employee benefits.   • Working with frontline services to understand different ways of engaging with them. Job families and Capability Framework will allow us to tailor both training and engagement/communications to specific groups within the organisation.   • Regular communication through managers and frontline supervisors' channels to highlight support available to employees. For example, Mental Health First Aid Network, Able Futures, The Bounds and Aberdeen University Counselling Service.   • Face-to-face discovery sessions with the leadership forum to create a forum to discuss common issues that could be solved through joined up working.   • Webinars for more in-depth engagement as well as for questions and answers on the subjects of climate change, City Centre Masterplan, housing and planning.

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of disabled employees	2020/21	3.7%	2021/22	3.6%	2022/23	3.6%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of full-time female employees	2020/21	31.8%	2021/22	32.9%	2022/23	35.6%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of part-time male employees	2020/21	5.1%	2021/22	5.6%	2022/23	5.3%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of full-time male employees	2020/21	24.9%	2021/22	24.4%	2022/23	24.6%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees under 20 years	2020/21	0.4%	2021/22	0.7%	2022/23	0.5%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees aged 20 – 29	2020/21	12.7%	2021/22	13.1%	2022/23	12.5%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees aged 30 – 39	2020/21	23.7%	2021/22	24.6%	2022/23	24.9%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees aged 40 – 49	2020/21	23.4%	2021/22	23.2%	2022/23	23.3%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees aged 50 – 59	2020/21	27.9%	2021/22	27%	2022/23	26.4%		

	Value			Value			Value	
Percentage of employees aged 60 – 64	2020/21	8.4%	2021/22	8.1%	2022/23	8.7%		

Percentage of employees aged over 65		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	3.7%	2021/22	3.5%	2022/23	3.7%

Percentage of part-time female employees		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	38.3%	2021/22	37%	2022/23	34.5%

The Equality Action Plan sets out the ways in which we plan to address areas of under representation in the workforce, and to support those existing employees who have a protected characteristic. We continue to work towards promoting equality and encouraging diversity across the workforce.

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

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.

06. LGBF - Gender Pay Gap

Average Hourly rate of Pay (Male)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	£16.33	2021/22	£16.67	2022/23	£18.15

Average Hourly rate of Pay (Female)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	£16.96	2021/22	£17.29	2022/23	£19.27

The gender pay gap		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	−3.83%	2021/22	−3.72%	2022/23	−6.17%

A key element of the gender pay gap is reflective of the teaching workforce, which is mainly female. Prior to the 2018-2020 multi-year pay award for teachers, we had 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 and will continue to monitor to understanding the gender pay gap.

3. Children's and Family Services

Education

01. Attainment

Percentage of Senior Phase pupil candidates achieving Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 5 at the end of S6 (based on S4)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	59%	2021/22	62%	2022/23	69%
Percentage of Senior Phase pupil candidates attaining Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4 at the end of S6 (based on S4)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	88%	2021/22	85%	2022/23	89%
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at Advanced Higher Grade		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	86%	2021/22	91%	2022/23	90%
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at Higher Grade		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	81%	2021/22	87%	2022/23	81%
Percentage difference in the attainment of Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF Level 4 between the most and least deprived of Senior Phase pupil candidates		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	18.0%	2021/22	21.0%	2022/23	19.0%
Percentage difference in the attainment of Literacy and		Value		Value		Value

Indicator		2020/21	Value	2021/22	Value	2022/23	Value
Numeracy at SCQF Level 5 between the most and least deprived of Senior Phase pupil candidates		2020/21	44.0%	2021/22	43.0%	2022/23	39.0%
Percentage of S4 year group from areas defined as falling within the highest 20% of deprivation (SIMD Quintile 1) attaining 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 at the end of S6		2020/21	37.0%	2021/22	43.0%	2022/23	48.0%
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at National Four		2020/21	88%	2021/22	86%	2022/23	89%
Percentage of S4 year cohort attaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 5 or better by end of S6		2020/21	60%	2021/22	63%	2022/23	70%
Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy		2020/21		2021/22	63%	2022/23	69%
Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy		2020/21	N/A	2021/22	72%	2022/23	77%
Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) – Percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils		2020/21	N/A	2021/22	31%	2022/23	21%
Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) – Percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils		2020/21	N/A	2021/22	28%	2022/23	21%
Percentage of S4 year group from areas defined as falling within the highest 20% of deprivation (SIMD Quintile 1) attaining 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 at the end of S6		2020/21	10%	2021/22	14%	2022/23	17%
Percentage pass rate for all subjects at National Five			Value		Value		Value

	2020/21	80%	2021/22	86%	2022/23	86%

		Value		Value		Value
Percentage of S4 year cohort attaining 5+ awards at SCQF level 6 or better by end of S6	2020/21	36.0%	2021/22	37.0%	2022/23	39.0%

02. Positive Destinations

		Value		Value		Value
Percentage of school leavers from publicly funded schools in positive initial destinations by academic year	2020/21	90.3%	2021/22	95.4%	2022/23	93.8%

03. Education Inspections

		Value		Value		Value
Percentage of positive evaluations of Quality Reference Indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded Early Learning Centres, primary, secondary and special schools per financial year	2020/21		2021/22	91.3%	2022/23	94.2%

04. 4 Pre-School Inspections

		Value		Value		Value
Percentage of positive evaluations of Quality Reference Indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports of publicly funded Early Learning and Childcare per financial year	2020/21		2021/22	91%	2022/23	90%

05. Pre-School Provision

Percentage of eligible population allocated ACC funded Ante Pre-school and Pre-school nursery places in local authority and partner provider Early Learning and Childcare settings		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	95.91%	2021/22	91.28%	2022/23	94.74%
Percentage of eligible ante pre-school child population allocated ACC funded part time nursery provision within local authority and partner provider settings		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	90.7%	2021/22	DIV/0	2022/23	92.8%
Percentage of eligible pre-school child population allocated ACC funded part time nursery provision within local authority and partner provider settings		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	101.0%	2021/22	93.8%	2022/23	96.6%

Integrated Children's and Family Services

01. Looked After Accommodated Children

Percentage of Looked After Children with 3 or more placements in the past year		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	3.37%	2021/22	3.5%	2022/23	4.35%

We are committed to reducing the number of placement moves children and young people experience. There was a small increase in the number of children who had 3 or more placements and there were emergency placements which necessitated quick succession of moves before appropriate match identified. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic led to some moves as a result of health-related issues, carers resigning as a result of change in personal circumstances and increased need.
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 in order to reduce the likelihood of placement disruption. The investment as noted in our Kinship care service is significant and ultimately should contribute to positive outcomes for kinship families.

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
	2020/21	46.93%	2021/22	45.7%	2022/23	44.82%

Raising the proportion of children looked after in kinship care is our priority to be more in line with the national average. The Kinship Team was expanded in 2022/2023 and we have three strands of improvement activity underway across the partnership based on feedback from carers, children and young people. It is anticipated that these improvements will become embedded into service delivery throughout 2023/2024 and impact on our balance of care. 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. For those in such placements, there has been clear evidence and reporting from families of feeling supported. The Alternative to Care Services support children and young people to remain within their families/care placement.

03. Child Protection Register Number

Number of children on Child Protection Register		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	276	2021/22	240	2022/23	244

A significant proportion of registrations relate to children under the age of 4yrs – approximately 50% of all registrations. Whilst this represents the national picture, work is taking place across the partnership to enhance our collective supports to vulnerable pregnancies in the city. The reasons for registration show that the primary categories of registration have over the past year remained fairly static and we mirror the most common causes recorded nationally: neglect, parental mental health, domestic abuse and emotional abuse, the latter often being a factor alongside other concerns. These reflect the priorities from our Child Protection Programme for 2021–2024, including working collaboratively with the Aberdeen Violence Against women Partnership in the roll out of the Safe & Together programme across the Partnership.

Children's Social Work, and its partners, has continued to practice in a trauma informed and strength-based manner, with emphasis on working systemically with families. A primary driver for this model is to enable staff to articulate the difference between risk and actual harm, and to understand that risk is not static but can be reduced by the skilled intervention of knowledgeable and confident practitioners. Feedback from families and professionals has shown that this approach has encouraged a more ethical and empowering collaboration between service users and professionals which cultivates identified strength within families, something which in turn helps to keep children safe. This is shown in our Annual Child Protection Register Report which notes 'services finding it hard to engage' as a category of concern in only 16% of registrations, – lower than our nearest neighbouring authority (36%) and lower than the national average (26%) for this same period.

04. Child Protection Re-registrations

The number of children re-registering on the Children Protection Register within two years of being taken off the register		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	14	2021/22	26	2022/23	31

Agencies across Aberdeen city work together to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect. Children's names are placed on the child protection register and a multi-agency plan is developed, if they are deemed to be at risk of significant harm. We learn from our data, audits and reviews to determine if support and intervention is helping to reduce harm. This includes monitoring of our numbers of children on the child protection register, which in Aberdeen have remained fairly static and only slightly higher than the national average rate. We also scrutinise our re-registration statistics, that is, when children who have previously had their name taken off the register, require to be registered again.

Re-registration may indicate that children have been removed from the child protection register too soon, or that support after de-registration was not effective. Whilst Aberdeen's re-registration numbers were routinely high, they have seen significant improvement, with Aberdeen's data now in line with the national average. During this reporting period, 20% (50 children) of the 244 children whose names were placed on the child protection register, had had any previous registration. When looking at the children whose previous registration was within a 2 year timescale from current registration, the numbers albeit an increase on previous years, are even less, at only 13% (31 children). This data shows that despite Aberdeen's increase, our interventions remain effective in reducing the risk of re-registration, which is one of our key indicators of child protection quality and impact.

4. Resources

Corporate Landlord

01. Public Access

Percentage of council buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	81.95%	2021/22	81.82%	2022/23	81.6%

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**
	2020/21	**96.38%**	**2021/22**	**96.71%**	**2022/23**	**91.99%**
The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use.		**Value**		**Value**		**Value**
	2020/21	**75.09%**	**2021/22**	**75.9%**	**2022/23**	**77.41%**
The removal of three C rated libraries, coupled with the addition of five other satisfactory assets this year improved the overall suitability figure. The asset portfolio will continue to change, making predictions difficult. However, the Property & Estates Strategy identifies a likely decline.						

03. Operational Assets Required Maintenance Costs

The required maintenance cost of operational assets per square metre		**Value**		**Value**		**Value**
	2020/21	**£90.74**	**2021/22**	**£93.77**	**2022/23**	**£132.67**
The overall required maintenance has increased by £20,628,048 and the overall floor area decreased significantly by 5,504sqm, primarily due to the closure of leisure facilities. The continued decline in condition of many properties has been identified during the condition survey programme. This was notable at Hazlehead Academy, Kittybrewster depot and a number of multi-storey car parks, where significant increases in required maintenance have been recorded. Construction costs continue to rise with impact of that inflation not full accounted for in the figures. In addition, there are not comprehensive surveys available of key electrical and mechanical plant within the portfolio, so it is therefore very likely that the required maintenance figure does not fully capture the extent of investment required. The Condition & Suitability Programme will continue to allow for targeted capital spend. This will result in improvements to specific buildings but buildings not included in the programme will decline. Projects within the capital programme such as Greyhope Primary School will positively contribute over the next 12 months.						

04. Carbon Reduction Commitment

Building and Streetlighting Carbon Emissions		**Value**		**Value**		**Value**
	2020/21	**21,714 tonnes**	**2021/22**	**21,968 tonnes**	**2022/23**	**21,793 tonnes**

There has been a 1% increase in electricity consumption compared to last year. This is due to the addition of union terrace, ex Police Head Quarter, new Early Learning Centres and Schools and increases in the use of Electric Vehicle charge points. There has been a decrease of 4% in gas usage compared to lst year. This is in line with a 4% reduction in degree days compared to last year meaning the gas usage has adjusted to match the temperature. Water consumption is back to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels and any further increase is probably greater hygiene use following the COVID-19 pandemic. Carbon emissions from District Heating have been added for the first time.

Finance

01. Efficiencies Achieved

Council-wide efficiencies as a percentage of revenue budget	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	6.34%	2021/22	6.36%	2022/23	6%
finance expenditure has increased from £1.583 million to £1.732 million, mainly due the Scottish Government Pay award for 2022/23 leading to an increase in salary costs and the cost of overall Council Operations have increased by £38.664m to £524.603million						

02. Accountancy Costs

Cost of overall accountancy function per £1,000 of net expenditure	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	£3.70	2021/22	£3.26	2022/23	£3.30
Finance expenditure has increased from £1.583 million to £1.732 million, mainly due the Scottish Government Pay award for 2022/23 leading to an increase in salary costs and the cost of overall Council Operations have increased by £38.664m to £524.603million						

Operations and Protective Services

01. Street Light Repairs

Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	83.04%	2021/22	79.47%	2022/23	93.19%
The LED refurbishment project is now nearing completion and this combined with the introduction of the CMS (central management system) has greatly assisted the efforts to improve our street light repairs. Further to this, the lighting department has made the move towards mobile working with the introduction of tablets for the electricians. These enable the CMS to raise and issue fault tickets directly to the team ensuring that issues are addressed before the public has had the opportunity to report them.						

02. Street Lighting Lamps

Percentage of LED Lamps installed	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	63%	2021/22	89.38%	2022/23	93.42%
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 progressed during 2021/22, we are currently on phase 9, south of the city. This should be the last phase. 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. 8186 LED lanterns were installed during 2021/22						

03. Road Network Restrictions

Percentage of council and private bridges assessed that failed to meet the EU standard of 40 tonnes	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	2.3%	2021/22	1.84%	2022/23	3.33%
Of the bridges failing the EU standard of 40 tonnes: • Strengthening of the Milton of Drum Bridge is desirable when funds become available. • Footway protection to be installed on rail bridges with weak footpaths when funds become available.						

In relation to the bridge stock as a whole, the key issues are as follows:

• The backlog of maintenance and repairs remains high.

• Several major projects proposed for the future capital programme include work on Victoria Bridge, Parkhill Bridge, Cults Square, Milton of Drum, Maryculter Bridge and Union Bridge. These are required in order to maintain security of the network.

• The Bridge of Dee requires upgraded scour protection and design work is underway. Works are due to start financial year 2024/25 using a sum of money transferred to Aberdeen City Council for this particular purpose.

04. Pothole Repairs

Potholes Category 1 and 2 – % defects repaired within timescale		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	83%	2021/22	84%	2022/23	93%

The improvement is due to an improvement in working practices, even though our priority potholes increased this year. The number and severity of pothole repairs vary dramatically with the weather and time of year and the highest volume of repairs occurs during the winter period or following extended periods of rainfall. A significant part of the reason for the increase in priority 1 and 2 potholes was a harsher winter than last year.

Regular work teams are normally added to from internal resources in order that account is taken of seasonal variations in the workload, although external contractors are not available at all times due to workload and budget constraints may also preclude their use. Capital schemes are being used to help target areas where pothole demand is high, although it should be noted that potholing is only one of many factors considered by the roads service with regard to roads maintenance.

05. LGBF – Refuse Collection

Number of premises for refuse collection (combined domestic, commercial, and domestic bulky uplift)		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	122,769	2021/22	124,369	2022/23	125,372

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
	2020/21	54.8	2021/22	57.2	2022/23	44.8

In 2022/23 the Environmental Protection Service received 361 dog barking complaints and 56 domestic EPA noise complaints. Of those complaints 111 dog barking complaints and 0 domestic EPA complaint were attended.   There are two Dog Wardens in the team who deal with dog barking complaints. Management expectation is for both domestic EPA complaints and barking dog complaints to be visited within 48 hours, excluding weekends and public holidays. However where an appointment has been made then the visit may be greater than 48 hours. The dog wardens made a greater number of visits in conjunction with Housing Officers to improve the customer experience and assist resolving complaints. Time taken to respond has improved compared to last year and is within the required performance time and therefore within management expectation.

08. Food Hygiene

Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1A 18 months –		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	DIV/0
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1B 12 months –		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1C 6 months –		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	100%
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1D 3 months –		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	DIV/0
Food Law Inspections on time – Group 1E 1 month –		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	DIV/0

Food Law Inspections on time – Group 2D 3 months –	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	93.02%

Food Law Inspections on time – Group 2E 1 month –	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	100%

The food law landscape has changed significantly over the last three years. In 2019 a new risk rating scheme was introduced which combined the inspection activities of food hygiene and food standards into one food law intervention. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the beginning of April 2020, Food Standards Scotland secured Ministerial agreement to allow relaxation of routine food intervention programmes and all inspections were suspended allowing resources to be diverted to COVID-19 pandemic related work. The exemption concluded at the end of August 2021 and the Recovery/ Restart process commenced. This was led by Food Standards Scotland who acknowledged that Local Authority intervention programmes would be adversely affected following the suspension of the inspection programme as numerous interventions would not be undertaken when due.

We have inspected 100 % of our trading premises in these Groups on time apart from Group 2D, due to increased service demand at the time the visits were due. All have now been inspected. Our officers also undertake inspections of new and other lower risk businesses where resources allow. They are multifunctional and deal with several other areas of work in addition to undertaking food law inspections. Available staffing resource is allocated to matters that present the greatest public health risk which has an impact on the capacity to undertake food law inspections. The Service is still in recovery and is also catching up with the backlog of inspections that were postponed during the pandemic.

09. High Priority Pest Control

High Priority Pest Control – percentage responded to within 2 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21	97.7%	2021/22	98.4%	2022/23	98.9%

100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the number of complaints received each month. Lower staffing levels through annual leave, training and staff vacancies can also make compliance more challenging. In 2022/23 100% of the complaints were responded to within the target time in 6 of the 12 months. Four of the 10 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 – percentage responded to within 2 days		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	97.6%	2021/22	99.2%	2022/23	96.3%

100% response time may not always be possible to achieve due to variations in the number of complaints received each month. There is now only 1 Officer specifically dealing with public health service requests, with support provided by other Environmental Protection officers during busy periods or absences. A reduction in staff numbers, loss of an experienced officer and increase in the number of requests contributed to the reduction in number of requests responded to within 2 day compared to 2021/22.

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. 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. Concentrations in 2022/23 were marginally higher than 2021/22, when the country was coming out of lockdown, but still 20–40% lower that pre-lockdown levels at the majority of roadside monitoring stations. The improving air quality can be attributed to a progressively cleaner vehicle fleet, continued lower traffic volumes on most routes and reduced congestion. Promotional and awareness raising activities and actions to promote sustainable transport and active travel are also key to improving air quality. There were no 'hands-on' air quality promotional events, however we continued to support national initiatives such as Clean Air Day via social media. We also supported the GetAbout Aberdeen Cycling Festival in September 2022 on the eve of the AJ Bell tour of Britain Grand Depart. The City Centre became a cycling hub over the weekend and won the 'Sporting Event of the Year' at a Scottish Event Award Ceremony. The focus in 2022/23 was the progression of 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 the 4 main Cities. Following Committee approval of the preferred LEZ option in June 2021 and subsequent Minister approval, we introduced the LEZ on 30 May 2022 with a 2-year grace period to enable non-compliant vehicles to be upgraded or replaced. During 2022/23 attention has been on the development and procurement of the enforcement infrastructure, including the cameras, signage and backroom support. A dedicated web page has been established where interested parties can view proposals, supporting documentation and FAQs. A programme of local and national promotional activities will continue during 2023-2024 leading up to the May 2024 implementation date. Outwith the formal LEZ consultation processes, we regularly engaged with other key regional partners and groups on developing air quality and transportation matters via meetings and webinars. This ensures key organisations, including bus, freight and taxi operators are aware of changing local and national policies that may impact on their businesses. A range of other initiatives to support sustainable transport and active travel and reduce carbon emission also contribute to improved air

quality. Officers from various services and external organisations work together to achieve cross service benefits. Initiatives include:

• 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. ECO Stars experts assess each fleet, award a star rating based on current performance and produce a 'roadmap' of recommendations which help operators reduce emissions while also reducing operating costs.

• Active Travel: Smarter Cities initiatives were introduced across the City Centre and adjoining areas during the Covid pandemic to promote walking and cycling. While many of the initiatives were removed following a return to normality, bus gates on Union Street between Market St and Union Terrace were retained. The private vehicles access restrictions not only resulted in a 30% reduction in NO2 compared to pre-covid levels in the restricted area, but also contributed to reduced traffic flows and improved air quality across the wider area as there is no longer a direct route through the city centre. 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. An on-street E-bicycle rental scheme was launched in November 2022 with hundreds of bikes now available across the city on a pay-as-you go basis.

• Cleaner Vehicles: we have 21 alternatively fuelled (electric or hydrogen) vehicles available for both staff and the public via the Car Club scheme which continues to attract new members. The electric vehicle charging network also expanded in 2022.

• Transportation Infrastructure: Various infrastructure initiatives were progressed in 2022 to support traffic movement and reduce congestion on key routes and consequently support improved air quality. These included the completion of works to improve the Haudagain roundabout in Spring 2022 and progression of the Berryden Corridor and South College Street initiatives.

12. Trading Standards – Complaints and Advice

Percentage of trading standards consumer complaints that were dealt with in 14 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	74.37%

Percentage of trading standards business advice requests that were dealt with in 14 days	Value		Value		Value	
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	68.97%

The Trading Standards Service received 1369 consumer complaints and enquiries during 2022-23. These are received from various sources but predominantly from Advice Direct Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland, and the consumer personally. Advice Direct Scotland and Citizens Advice Scotland provide first line, basic, consumer advice and refer criminal and complex matters for Trading Standards to progress. Complaints are differentiated as 'notifications' and 'referrals', with Trading Standards obliged to deal with

the referrals.   All complaints are examined by the Trading Standards Duty Officer to ensure no criminal allegations have been missed by Advice Direct Scotland or Citizens Advice Scotland, and to extract any useful Intelligence. If allegations have been missed, the complaint is redesignated as 'officer initiative' and progressed as if it were a referral. All referrals and complaints made by the consumer personally are allocated to an officer and progressed.

The number of business advice requests in comparison to pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels is lower. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Trading Standard officers provided businesses with bespoke advice to address the challenges they faced to comply with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, if they were permitted to operate, including visits to business premises to advise on and monitor compliance. This work has established links with businesses which will be useful to them and Trading Standards going forward.

13. Trading Standards Inspections

Trading Standards Inspections – percentage visits to high risk premises achieved		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	98.96%

This is the first year we have reported this since the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions ended. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was obviously considerable disruption to business activity and inspection of businesses for 'business as usual' purposes. Certainly during 2020-21 very few high risk inspections were done although as we adapted to the restrictions, we returned to inspections carried out outdoors in 2021-22, such as petrol stations and weighbridges. Due to the ability of Trading Standards officers to interact with businesses and provide advice, we were a vital part of our advice and enforcement team, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Along with colleagues from Environmental Health, we contacted businesses by phone, or visited in person, to help owners and employees understand the steps they were required to take to prevent virus spread and comply with the temporary restrictions. We did this from the inception of the regulations in March 2020 to the date they were lifted in April 2022. We have now returned to delivering on our statutory duties under Trading Standards law. In terms of high risk inspections, we have been successful in meeting this target, with only one exception.

14. Fleet Vehicles

Vehicles under 3500Kg under 5 years of age		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	78.33%	2021/22	65.23%	2022/23	67.65%
Vehicles over 3500Kg under 7 years of age (HGV)		Value		Value		Value

	2020/21	69.57%	2021/22	72.44%	2022/23	77.39%
Low emission vehicles		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	85.54%	2021/22	95.97%	2022/23	88.91%

Vehicle "life" depends on a number of criteria and operating life may range from 5 to 7 years, or longer depending upon usage and the vehicle type – small Light Good Vehicles (LGV) or Heavy Good Vehicles (HGV) over 3.5 tonnes. There is an optimum time for vehicle replacement which is 5 years for LGV or 7 years (HGV) and it is likely that the older the vehicle the greater the cost of repairs and maintenance and the increased possibility of vehicle downtime. Vehicle life can be extended where appropriate according to current mileage, condition and speciality design whilst this may increase the percentage of vehicles over 5 years old for LGVs or 7 years for HGVs, it provides best value. Our aim is to continue to work towards de-carbonising the in-house fleet and introduce new vehicles with the latest reduced and/or zero emissions technology. A new fleet management system has been operating in a reduced format over asset management since February 2022. When it is fully functional, it will give a better understanding of fleet vehicle utilisation and whole life costs, which will impact on the age profile of the fleet going forward. The vehicle's life may be extended depending on mileage, condition and utilisation with consideration to any specialist features, which will impact the figure, but provide best value and optimum availability to all Services.

We are committed to reducing carbon emissions both within its operations and across the city as part of the Climate Change Energy Plan now in place. Reducing emissions from transport remains a challenge as it involves the need for increased funding together with behavioural change either in relation to previous funding attitudes, changing method of transport or the introduction and moving to the use of new vehicle technology such as electric or hydrogen vehicles.

15. Traffic Light Repairs

Percentage of all traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours		Value		Value		Value
	2020/21	96.89%	2021/22	96.56%	2022/23	93.23%

Faults increased from 639 to 871. The severe winter weather was directly responsible for 105 traffic signal faults. There has been an increase in faults attributable to damage caused following road traffic collisions from 45 in 2021/22 to 69 in 2022/23. There were 59 faults that were not repaired within the 48-hour timescale – 10 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. 33 faults were due to extreme winter weather in December causing push buttons to freeze. Of the remaining 16 faults not repaired within the 48-hour timescale, all were due to parts shortages due to the global semi-conductor parts supply shortage.