Aberdeen - A place where all people can prosper

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-2026

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Contents

SECTION 1: CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

This Council Delivery Plan ('the Plan') forms part of our strategic planning approach. The Plan sets out our contribution to Aberdeen City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Council's Partnership Agreement, Strategy Framework and Legislative Duties and, in doing so, details the Council's key priorities for the year ahead through Commissioning Intentions. These intentions are presented within a broader context of investment and collaboration across the wider Aberdeen City Council "group" of arm's length external organisations (ALEOs). Service Standards, which reflect current performance; the resource available to each Cluster; and planned transformational activity, outline the levels of planned service delivery for each Cluster. These Standards form part of the suite of measures that are reported to Council Committees to enable Elected Members to maintain effective oversight.

Operating Environment

Across local government there is a growing mismatch between the levels of demand being experienced and the capacity of councils to effectively respond. This was recognized in The Accounts Commission "Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24", published in January 2025:

> "Scotland's councils face a challenging future, with significant financial risks and uncertainties. This has been compounded by pressures out with their control, including ever-increasing demand on services and inflation. An expected increase in funding for the year ahead doesn't cancel out the urgent need for transformation, at a pace and depth we've not yet seen."

Jo Armstrong, chair of the Accounts Commission, January 2025

For Aberdeen City Council, this makes it imperative that we extend many aspects of our change journey, including:

- focusing holistically on the wellbeing of the place and people of the city
- further embedding effective early intervention and prevention into all council and multi-agency services, preventing demand, where possible, and taking targeted action to avoid the escalation of both harm and costs
- implementation of changes aligned to our Medium Term Financial Strategy and our Transformation Programme
- accelerating our joint working with partners, both locally and nationally, ensuring services are designed and delivered in the most cohesive and effective way
- setting priorities and service standards more keenly aligned to current performance, reducing capacity and overarching prevention strategies.

SECTION 2: OUR PURPOSE

i.   Our Vision

Our vision, as set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan for the city, remains:

"Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper."

This means all people being able to access the opportunities available in our City, regardless of their background or circumstances. This reflects our desire to help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect. To achieve this vision we are committed to tackling the issues that exist in our society which prevent equal opportunity for all to lead a happy and fulfilling life.

Despite the relative prosperity that Aberdeen has enjoyed compared to other areas of Scotland, there are problems faced by our City which have endured for decades and have been stubbornly resistant to improvement. Our evidence confirms what we already know; that inequalities in health, education and employment opportunities continue to exist in some communities and that this is most acute for those families living under the grip of poverty.

Through early intervention and prevention, we aim to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself.

ii.   Strategic Commissioning Cycle

The Council's approved strategic commissioning approach continues to underpin the development of the Council's annual planning and budgeting. The approach is designed to align the use of resources with assessed needs, requirements and commitments. Specifically, strategic commissioning includes:

- assessing and forecasting needs;
- linking investment to agreed outcomes;
- considering options;
- planning the nature, range and quality of future services;
- putting these services in place; and
- evaluating the impact of those services.

For Aberdeen City Council, this is reflected in the key elements of a commissioning led approach to planning and budgeting, shown in the figure below.
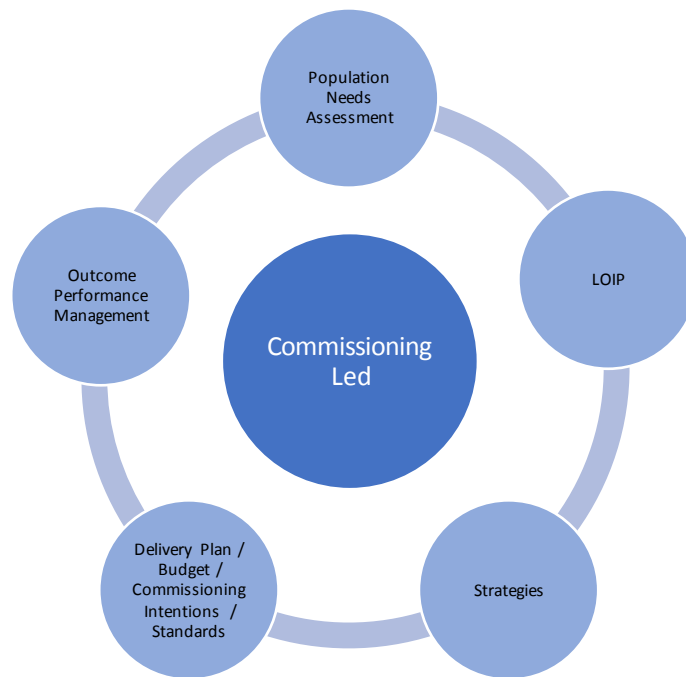
Adopting this commissioning led cycle ensures that:

- agreed outcomes, and the strategies for delivering those outcomes, are addressing the needs of the city; (PNA, LOIP, Strategies)
- annual planning and commissioning intentions focus on implementing our strategic priorities; (Council Delivery Plan, Commissioning Intentions)
- the agreed levels of service to be delivered are affordable and reflect the demand for those services; (Service Standards)
- a balanced budget is set which aligns to those commissioning intentions and service standards (Budget)
- the impact of the services we commission on outcomes is monitored, understood and drives future improvement and planning (Outcome Performance Management)

iii. Population Needs in Aberdeen and the Social Determinants of Health

This Delivery Plan, for the first time, is structured around 5 themes which reflect the Social Determinants of Health. Those are all the non-clinical factors that influence peoples health and well-being.
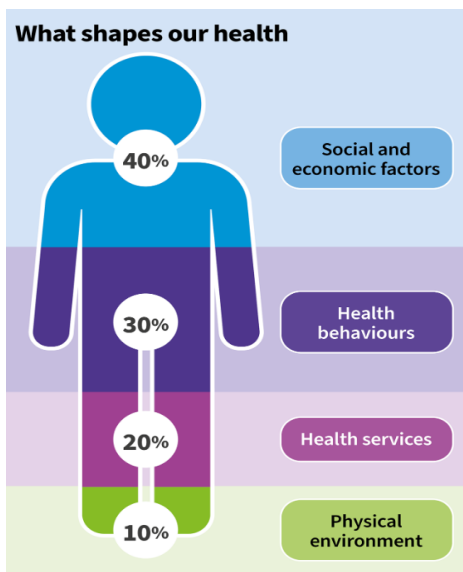
We know that multiple factors can shape our health, but the most significant of these are social and economic factors such as poverty, employment and education. It is estimated that these relate to 40% of what shapes our health outcomes. This is more than any individual lifestyle choices such as alcohol consumption, diet, smoking or any other factor that people can control. In addition, these individual health behaviours themselves are also shaped by the places and environments in which we live.

Local authorities have a major role to play in supporting people and creating the conditions for improving health and well-being. This role is seen in the range of services for children and young people; through housing; in the work done to maintain and improve the physical environment of the city; in our support for the local economy; and in many other ways. These social determinants of health are summarised under the 5 themes below.

Throughout this Plan, the 5 themes of the social determinants of health are used to inform priorities, activity and the use of resources in 2025/26.

A deliberate data and evidence led approach has been taken to understand the current strengths and risks within each theme. Our evidence base includes a [Population Needs Assessment](#) (PNA) which brings together a very broad range of data covering the people, place and economy of Aberdeen and explores how these can be related to the services and interventions that are being provided by the Council and its partners.

At a headline level the PNA tells us that life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in the City has either stalled or is in decline. It also tells us that whilst the long-term trends in some factors relating to the determinants of health and wellbeing have been positive (e.g. some clinical causes of ill-health; crime levels), there are others which are clearly areas for concern, including mental health and poverty. The data should be viewed in the context of 2 important issues:

i.   that increasing poverty in the city is clearly shown in the data, and the impact of this on many related indicators is likely to become evident over time; and

ii.   where there are general positive trends, in many cases these mask very significant differences and inequalities across the city's geographical communities and communities of interest.

A summary of the current position with each social determinant of health theme is set out below.

Theme 1: Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

Ensuring that a child's life starts well, and is supported as they develop into young people, is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Early support to the child – and to their families or principal care givers – will have a direct impact on the future and lifelong physical and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. Early action can help to reduce health inequality.

What is getting better?

There has been an increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22.

There has been improvement across all Curriculum for Excellence measures and the city is now in line with national averages.

There has been a rise in the % of children meeting developmental milestones from 87.4% in 21/22 to 89.8% in 22/23. Better than the national average, but with variation across communities.

The number of crimes committed by juveniles reduced to 1,084 in 2022/23, compared to 1,311 in 2021/22. Although the number of offenders remained similar to the previous year.

What has stayed the same?

The number of children claiming free school meals is slightly higher than the national average (77.15% locally compared to 76.4% nationally) but with considerable variation at community level.

The % of babies born of healthy weight has remained consistent at 85.3% in 2023, compared to 85.1% in 2022. This is broadly tracking national averages, be of concern given the potential impacts of this.

The physical wellbeing survey told us there are times when children and young people do not have the right access to food to meet their nutritional needs. 3%, 238 (compared to 3.7%, 256 in 2022).

The proportion of school leavers, aged 16 to 19, in positive and sustained destinations has remained consistent in 2023/24.

What has declined?

Levels of maternal obesity continue to rise, from 22.5% in 2022 to 23.9% in 2023. Whilst this is below the national average of 27%, levels are increasing more quickly locally.

The number of children in the city who became "Looked After" increased to 500 in 2023, but this follows several years of reductions.

The average total tarrif score for those living in SIMD 1 has reduced from 591 to 481. This is some way from the national average of 658. The Nat 5 pass rate for SIMD 1 also fell in 2024 by 1.3%

There has been a 1.3% increase in the number of children living in poverty (after housing costs) from 2022 to 2023. Over 1 in 5 children now live in poverty. The city remains 2.2% below the national average.

The PNA includes a wide range of indicators covering the physical health and mental wellbeing of children and young people. It is important to understand both patterns in the overall population and, crucially, the variations that are seen across the City or in different settings. Reducing variation must be a priority as these reflect health inequalities that will lead to poorer health and outcomes in the longer term.

Amongst the evident inequalities are the outcomes for care experienced children. Whilst the number of looked after children in 2023/24 showed a reduction, in line with the longer term trend, care experienced children overall leave school with fewer qualifications than the whole school population and are significantly less likely to be in a positive destination.

Inequalities in educational attainment and positive destinations are also clear across geographical areas of deprivation. 85% of school leavers in the most deprived quintile have a positive destination compared to 95.3% of those in the least deprived quintile.

The council is regularly surveying all pupils in primaries 6 and 7 as well as all secondary pupils in relation to their health and wellbeing. The data indicates that whilst there are high levels of happiness, wellbeing and self-confidence amongst a majority of pupils, this should not mask the proportion of children who report a less positive experience. For each factor, the effects of gender and family affluence are evident. Notably, affluence within the family is clearly a factor as the more affluent the family, the more likely the child reported being healthy.

Indicators suggest that there is a real potential for family / household financial insecurity, with this being put under further pressure by the fuel and food poverty experienced by local people. Around 931 more children in the city are estimated to have been living in poverty in 2022/23 compared to 2019/20, bringing the total to 8,476 children (0-15 years), which is above 1 in 5. In 2023-24, there were 1,780 homelessness presentations to the council, similar to the previous year, but an increase of 25% from 2021/22. In January 2025, 403 households were in temporary accommodation. That these factors can and will feed into health and social inequalities is clear.

Theme 2: Economic Stability

A healthy economy is an inextricable link to a healthy population. It is clear that the ways in which economic circumstances affect people can both enhance or reduce their health and wellbeing. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. People who are economically secure, have better health and wellbeing.

What is getting better?

The no. of businesses paying the real living wage in Aberdeen rose from 75 in December 2022 to 110 in December 2024.

A higher proportion of businesses feel their turnover will improve in the next 12 months (62%) compared to the UK (53%).

The percentage of people (16-64) in employment increased to 77.4% in September 2024, compared to 71.9% in 2023.

Gross Value Added (GVA): In 2022 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire had a GVA per head of £32,590 showing a slight increase from the previous year (£31,823) and significantly higher than the Scotland figure of £27,126.

What has stayed the same?

During the pandemic the employment rate dropped from 80% to 74%. As of September 2024, it has recovered to 77.4%.

Most recent annual data shows there were 875 new businesses in the City in 2023, a slight increase from 2021 (860).

In November 2024 there were 21,001 people on Universal Credit in Aberdeen City – up from 18,382 in November 2023, but including people moving from older benefits.

In 2023-24 there were 389 Business Gateway Start-ups – similar to 2022-23. This is equivalent to a rate of 171 per 100,000 population – higher than the rate for Scotland of 143.3 per 10,000 population.

What has declined?

Median weekly wages in Aberdeen remained similar in 2024 compared to the previous year and were ahead of the Scotland figure. However, wages for females declined slightly.

The working-age population (16-64) has declined from 68.7% in 2020 to 67.7% in 2023.

In 2024 9.4% of people in the city reported that they were worried they did not have enough food in the last 12 months. Up from 8.4% in 2023.

The number of children living in poverty (after housing costs) rose from 7,994 in 2012/22 to 8,476 in 2022/23. Around 1 in 5 children (21.8%) now live in poverty. This is below the Scotland figure of 24%.

Aberdeen's economy reflects an area that is experiencing an economic transition toward a low-carbon economy and the city is well placed to manage that transition, focusing on developing greater diversity in our business sectors. Energy remains a key component in this along with the other key sectors identified in the Regional Economic Strategy, creative industries (including digital), food and drink, and life sciences. Whilst the wealth gap between the region and Scotland as a whole is narrowing, in 2024 people in the city were still earning more per head of population than across Scotland overall.

Employment in the city has continued to rise through 2023 and 2024 with 80.5% of the working age population economically active in June 2024, compared to 77.3% across Scotland. However, this still means that 1 in 5 are economically inactive. It is estimated that 1 in 7 Aberdeen households had no one within the household working, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. Indicators of relative poverty in Scotland suggest that about 3 out of 5 (57%) experiencing relative poverty will be within a working household.

Theme 3: Communities & Housing

The "place" of Aberdeen is both the buildings, streets and spaces that make up the physical environment around us, and our "communities", the people, social groups, and the support networks that make up our social environment. The council is one of the largest social landlords in Scotland and has a key role in directly supporting tens of thousands of Aberdonians with homes which are affordable, warm, and secure.

What is getting better?

The proportion of council dwellings which meet Scottish Housing Quality Standard rose from 77.2% in 2022/23 to 90.4% in 2023/24. Above the national average of 77.8%.

Whilst the rate of crime has been falling and is relatively low in most areas it varies across the City from a low of 4 per 1,000 population to a high of 247 per 1,000.

The number of hate crime reports in Aberdeen fell in 2022/23 to 291, compared to 361 in 2021/22. However, the rate per population remains above the Scottish average.

What has stayed the same?

There were 1,956 anti-social offences in Aberdeen in 2023/24. This is slightly down from 1,986 in 2022/23. The rate per population is the same as the national figure.

The proportion of council dwellings that are energy efficient remained similar in 2023/24 (92.7%) compared to the previous year.

1,780 homelessness applications were made in 2023/24, which was a slight increase from 1,770 in 2022/23.

What has declined?

The number of homeless households offered and refused temporary accommodation increased from 549 in 2022/23 to 729 in 2023/24.

The amount of council rent loss due to empty properties rose from 5.7% in 2022/23 to 7.9% in 2023/24.

The gross rent arrears relating to council houses, as a % of the rent due for the year rose from 17.4% in 2022/23 to 18.2% in 2023/24. Almost double the Scottish average.

According to the Scottish Household Survey, in 2023 16% of people in Aberdeen volunteered in the previous 12 months. This compares to 25% in 2021 and 22% in 2022.

There are consistently high numbers of homeless presentations, significantly more than pre-covid 19. This, together with ongoing challenges in repairing and filling empty properties and the need to accommodate peoples arriving in the city, puts significant pressure on the available housing stock.

Residents in all types of tenures are experiencing fuel poverty as energy costs continue to increase and it remains important that a focus remains on mitigating this through both infrastructure improvements and financial support, including ensuring that all residents are accessing the benefits to which they are entitled.

Feeling safe within your place and your community are important factors in wellbeing. The rate of crime varies across the City and is relatively low in most areas. As with many indicators, crime rates vary significantly across the city between a range of 4 (per 1,000 population) in Braeside, Mannofield, Broomhill & Seafield South to 247 in City Centre East.

The PNA highlights 3 consecutive surveys designed to ascertain how residents feel about various aspects of the communities in which they live. Questions relating to sense of "Identity and Belonging" and "Influence and Control" show improving scores for both areas in the most recent survey. This is extremely encouraging. Building on the existing strong social roots within our communities is key to meeting environmental and economic challenges.

Theme 4: Neighbourhood & Environment

Both the very local and the wider physical environment are important in creating health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, for families and for communities. Local issues which impact on health include, air quality; the location, quality and accessibility of green spaces; walkability and transport, particularly in support of active travel; and the physical appearance of localities, such as litter and poor or derelict buildings, which can impact on mental health. Climate change will continue to impact our communities through direct effects including increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold and loss associated with flooding and other extreme weather events.

What is getting better?

Greenhouse gas emissions estimates in Aberdeen fell from 5.35 tCO2e per capita in 2021 to 5.2 tCO2e in 2022.

More respondents stated they can regularly experience good quality natural space in 2024 (75.6%) compared to 2021 (68.3%)

109 people were injured in road traffic accidents in 2023. Whilst higher than for the years most affected by the pandemic, this remains below pre-Covid levels.

In 2024 74.5% of City Voice respondents reported that they were satisfied with their local greenspace – up from 65% in March 2020.

What has stayed the same?

Street cleanliness slightly improved in 2023/24 (89.7%) compared to 89.5% the previous year. However, this remains below the national average.

The % of household waste that was recycled remained 42% in 2023/24, but lower than 2021/22 (47%).

Annual mean concentration for the air quality objective and the daily mean concentration have not been exceeded at any of the six continuous monitoring sites since 2018.

The percentage of A class roads in the city that should be considered for maintenance stayed broadly similar at 19.0% in 2023/24 compared to 19.2% in 2022/23. This is better than the national average of 28.9%.

What has declined?

In 2023, 13% of people used active travel (walking or cycling) to get to work – down from 14% in 2022 and 24% in 2021 and lower than the rate for Scotland of 14.7%.

The cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 pop in Aberdeen rose from £15,221 in 2021/22 to £28,391 in 2022/23.

Time to complete Local (Non-Householder) Development applications rose from 8.1 weeks in 2022/23 to 9.1 weeks in 2023/24, slightly higher than the national average of 8.3

Poor air quality can lead to respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and other health problems. Efforts to reduce pollution locally, which now includes the Low Emissions Zone, continue through promotion of public transport and cycling.

Access to parks and natural areas encourages physical activity, reduces stress, and improves mental health. Green spaces also provide opportunities for social interaction and community building. The percentage of residents satisfied with parks and greenspaces fluctuates, but is usually above the Scottish average.

How a particular community area looks can have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of people. Whilst the condition of local roads in Aberdeen is consistently above the national average, street cleanliness measures are below national comparators. However, the most recent data shows this has improved.

The number of people using active travel to get to work and education appear to be dropping in Aberdeen. Whilst year on year comparisons are difficult due to a national change in how the date is collected, as well as the significant increase in the number of people working from home, the most recent figures show only 13% using active travel compared to 14.3% for Scotland as a whole.

Extreme weather conditions, such as heatwaves and cold spells, can have direct health impacts, especially on vulnerable populations like the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies are important for protecting health. Climate change has indirect effects to health and wellbeing through health inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel poverty and food poverty. As with other challenges discussed above, our focus as a council and a city has to be on preventing and mitigating future impacts by taking those actions that are within our gift, including delivering on our net zero commitments and supporting vulnerable communities and individuals to adapt to the changing climate.

Theme 5: Health & Social Care

What is getting better?

The rate of cancer registrations in the City has fallen for the 3 years to 2022. And is now below the Scotland figure for the first time since 2014.

The rate of patients with emergency hospitalisations in Aberdeen has fallen to a low of 6,433 per 100k pop. Significantly lower than the Scotland figure of 7,035.

The % of staff expressing confidence in applying the principles of supporting victims of domestic abuse in 2023/24 was 94% in comparison with 30% in 2021/22.

The % of carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role has risen from 32.4% in 2021/22 to 37.1% on 2023/24. Higher than the Scotland average of 31.2%.

What has stayed the same?

The % of adults in the city who are smokers rose from 14% in 2022 to 15% in 2023. This is the same as the rate for Scotland overall.

The % of adults in the city who met the guidelines for the level of physical activity in 2022 remained the same (71%) as 2021. 4% higher than Scotland.

The % of adults rating their general health as good remained 78% in 2023. 6% higher than Scotland. However, 7% said their health was bad / very bad. 1% higher than the previous year.

The 5 year average rate of deaths from probable suicides in Aberdeen was 12.3 per 100k in 2023 compared to 12.2 per 100k in 2020. Both are below the respective Scotland average.

What has declined?

Maternal obesity increased from 21% in the three years ending 2021 to 25% in the three years ending 2024. Those living in more deprived areas have higher than average levels.

More people are being prescribed drugs for anxiety and depression than ten years ago.

The gap in estimated life expectancy between most and least deprived has increased for females 8.4 years (previously 8.1). The gap has reduced for males, but due to a drop in the least deprived

For both women and men increased life expectancy has stalled and healthy life expectancy is declining. The variation across the city's communities for both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is stark. People from areas with higher deprivation are significantly more likely to have shorter lives and to live with poorer health for longer. There is a 14 year difference in life expectancy between the highest and lowest areas in the city.

The PNA focusses on a number of indicators of health behaviours including smoking, obesity, and being physically active. Given that over half of the deaths in Aberdeen City are associated with cancers and circulatory diseases, for which smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity are risks, it is clear that there is still work to be done in promoting healthier lifestyles.

The PNA highlights that whilst most people are not experiencing poor mental health or loss of mental wellbeing, around 1 in 6 adults self-report dissatisfaction with their mental health and around 1 in 7 could be at risk of suffering a mental illness. Against this background, health indicators for the City suggest that more people are being prescribed drugs for anxiety and depression than ten years ago, though the rate of people being in hospital for mental illness has fallen. Though lower than the Scotland figure and below the rate of the last decade, the rate of deaths from suicides has risen in each of the last 2 recording periods. The full effects of rising poverty and cost of living may further impact mental health and wellbeing in the near future.

There is unlikely to be a single cause of these health inequalities and we need to understand that such health inequalities happen as a result of wider inequalities experienced over time. As a result, these types of health inequality are challenges not only for treatment here and now, but reflect a need to place a greater emphasis on prevention.

iv.   Prevention and Early Intervention

The challenges summarised above, make it imperative that we act to prevent demand, where possible, and take targeted action to avoid the escalation of both harm and costs through early intervention.

In 2011, the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (the Christie Commission) identified the importance of a deliberate shift to preventative services and spending based on the rising demand on public services, and the scale of reactive spending, specifically the targeting of resources at short term and immediate responses rather than long term planning to reduce demand and spend. This supported the findings of the Marmot review in 2010 which proposed an evidence based strategy to address the social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and which can lead to health inequalities, highlighting the links between socio-economic inequalities and poorer life outcomes. During 2025/26 the Council will be working with University College London (Institute of Health Equity), Public Health Scotland and NHS Grampian through the "Collaboration for Health Equity" to further embed the principles of the Marmot review across the city.

Whilst it can be argued that the majority of services delivered by the Council are fundamentally preventative, the Population Needs Assessment shows us that in some ways, notably life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, poorer outcomes are now becoming measurable.

In the face of recent, current and future stresses, the fragility of existing public services is evident. It is vital that we continue to reinvent and redesign public services to better support good population health in our targeted communities. This will be done through the transformational work of specific programmes of work, such as the Scottish Government funded Fairer Futures Pathfinder, but crucially, early intervention and prevention can't be viewed as solely something that is over and above what we already do. Rather it must be a deliberate shift across the whole system to resourcing upstream activity that supports the communities that most need it to secure more equitable outcomes in the longer term. This inevitably means that some of the activity the Council has previously undertaken will have to stop in order to free up capacity to drive more impactful preventative and targeted activity.

To support this, the Council's Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy sets out a tiered model to understand demand and prevention (see figure below).
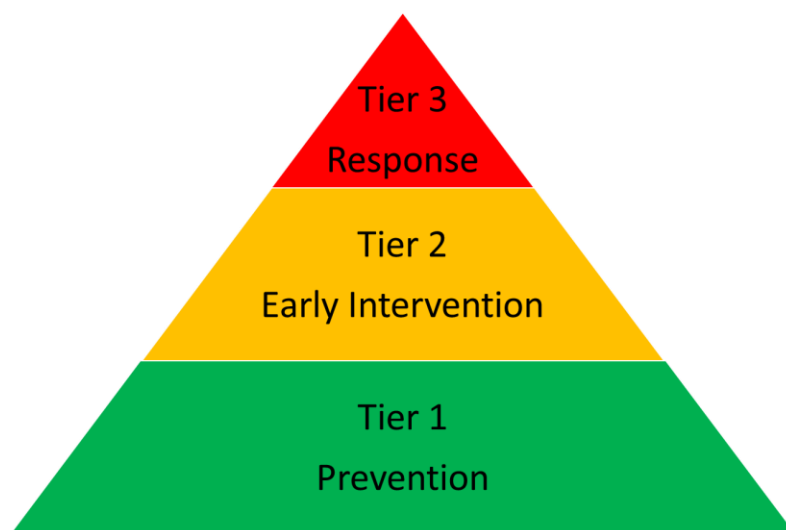
During 2024/25, this tiered model has been applied to a number of strategies and plans as well as

the allocation of resources. In developing this Delivery Plan, and in advance of the Council agreeing a 2025/26 budget, we have applied this 3 tier model to:

i. categorise demand and spend across all Council services. This provides a baseline and a method to capture measurable change towards prevention and early intervention

ii. categorise Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities

iii. categorise the priorities listed throughout this report

iv. complete an assessment of the impact of all budget savings options considered throughout the 25/26 budget process to understand potential impact

v. undertaken an assessment of tiered resource allocation across the Aberdeen City Council family group

In applying the model the following definitions have been used.

Category	Definition	Origin of demand
Tier 1 Prevention	Taking action to prevent the occurrence of harm through universal measures	Human and Resource
Tier 2 Early Intervention	Interventions that ward off the initial onset of harm and create empowered resilient communities and staff	Human demand
Tier 2 Early Intervention	Intervening before further harm takes place in a way that avoids the later costs in both human and financial terms of handling the consequences of that harm	Resource demand
Tier 3 Harm	A negative impact on humans, the institution or resources available	Human and Resource

The application of this model to both the 2025/26 commissioning intentions and the draft 2025/26 general revenue budget is shown below and confirms that the majority of activity and spend is preventative in nature, but that the costs of avoidable demand remain significant.
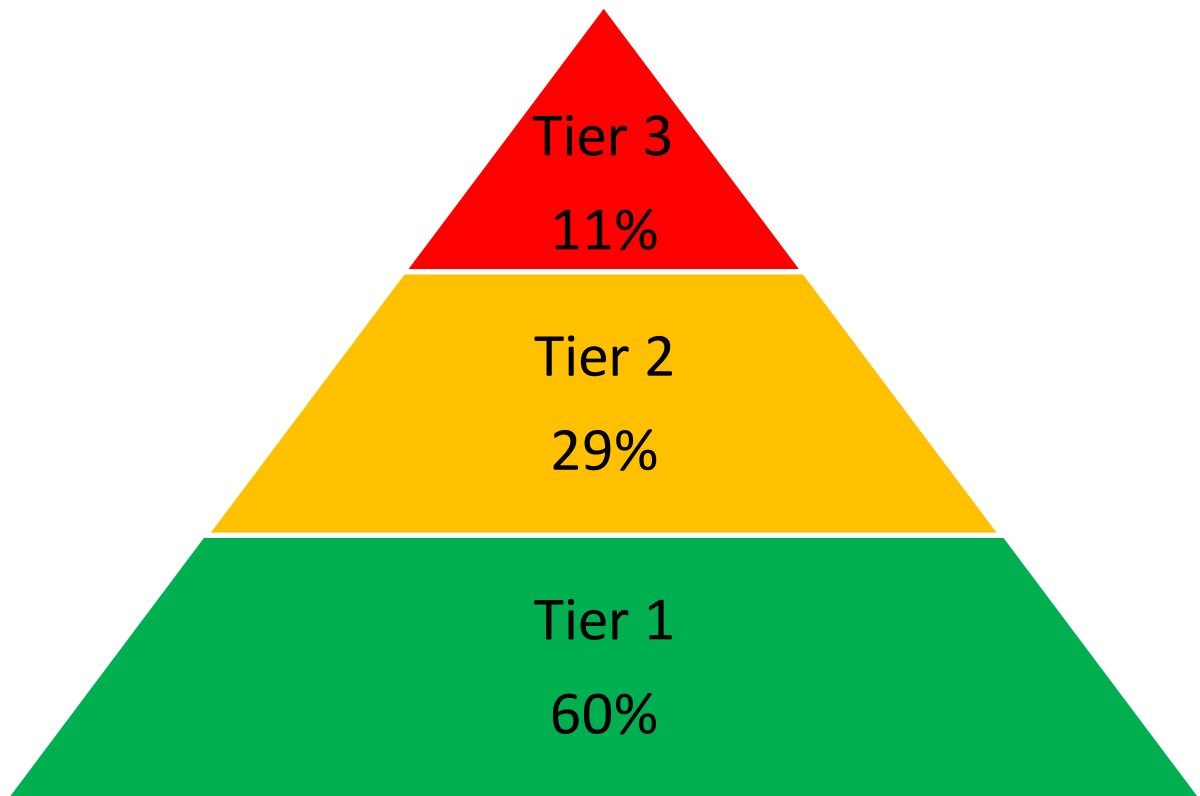
%age of 2025/26 Commissioning Intentions Identified by Prevention and Early Intervention Tier
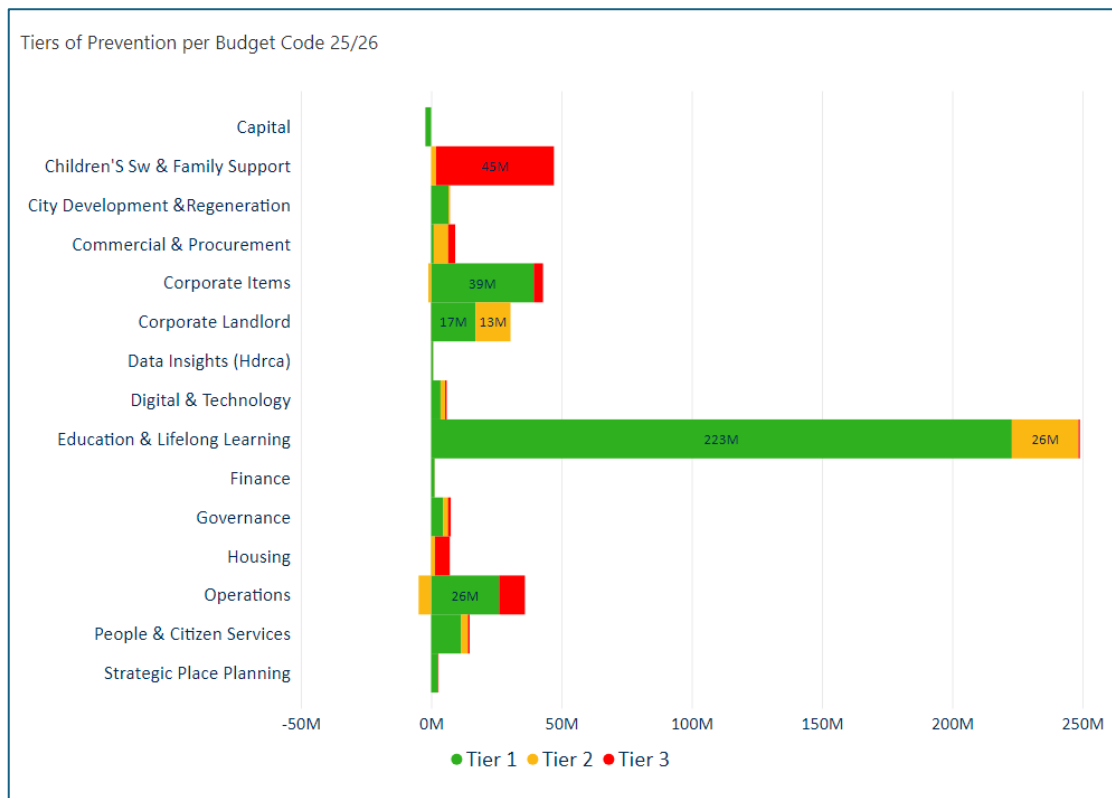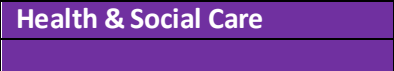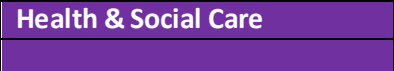
Value of 2025/26 General Revenue Budget by Cluster by Prevention and Early Intervention Tier

iii. Strategic Alignment

Alignment of High Level Priorities with the Social Determinants of Health

Theme	Strategic Priorities
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy
	A Healthy and Skilled Population
	A Strong Community and cultural identity
	An outstanding Natural Environment
	Reduce child poverty
	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits
	Support mitigation of fuel poverty
	Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake and improve debt management
Education, Children & Lifelong Learning	Maximise the impact of Early Learning and Childcare
	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people
	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as Corporate Parents
	Raise attainment and achievement
	Support transition to positive destinations
	Prevent children & young people from entering the criminal justice system and support those who do
	Protect Children from harm
Communities & Housing	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour
	Protect citizens through enforcement and protective services
	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims
	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour
	Protect citizens through enforcement and protective services
	Support Council tenants
	Housing needs analysis and delivery
	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless
	Improve the quality, efficiency and suitability of Council property
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions by increasing public transport
	Minimise the levels of waste created

Theme	Strategic Priorities
	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel
	Reduce carbon emissions from transport infrastructure
	Reduce carbon emissions through travel to and within the city
	Increase the amount of land managed for nature and increase access to and quality of green spaces
	An outstanding Natural Environment
	Maintain the City's green space environment, local road and pavement network
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people
	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims

vi. Aberdeen City Council Commissioning Intentions 2025/26

The following table sets out the 2025/26 commissioning intentions, which describes the Council's response to the assessment of needs, statutory obligations and operating environment.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Lead Cluster
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Design and implement targeted workforce development programmes aimed at engaging economically inactive individuals (long term physical and mental health issues, parents and disabled), equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to enter the job market.	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Facilitate collaborative Partnerships with the education authority and further and higher education to create clear pathways that support students in need of additional support (Health issues, disabled, care experienced and disengaged) to transition into the workforce.	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Foster collaboration with local businesses to create tailored training and development programmes for those furthest from the job market into the region's identified growth and volume sectors that meet workforce needs and build employment skills. Establish a Supported Employment Service through No One Left Behind Grants.	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	In partnership with the Science Museum Group and targeted Aberdeen city schools, develop a "science capital" approach to teaching and interpretation in archives, gallery & museums.	City Development & Regeneration

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with partners to implement the post school funding solution to continue to improve outcomes for young people.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Continue to work with employers to support placements for young people with additional needs.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Reduce child poverty	Continue to prepare for implementation of the Scottish Government commitment to expand free childcare services for 1 and 2 year olds to support targeted families into employment when national plan is known.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Deliver the new Riverbank School in Spring 2025 with a planned decant to the new school soon after.	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue and progress design development at new Hazlehead Academy.	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue design development for the Bucksburn Academy extension.	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue and progress design development at refurbished St Peters Primary.	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Evaluate the impact of approaches to Local Authority and school quality improvement including pupil tracking to determine their effectiveness in addressing variation.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Maximise the impact of Early Learning and Childcare	Maximise the uptake of 1140 hours of ELC for all eligible children, with a particular focus on eligible 2s (190 in 2023/24) and those currently in families living in SIMD 1.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Deliver a broader curriculum offer through digital and partnership delivery of Phase 3 of ABZ Campus to secure improvement in senior phase attainment.	Education & Lifelong Learning

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Further improve transition planning and support for children with ASN transition to adult services. Build on the learning from the GIRFE Pathfinder to ensure a more integrated approach to early and effective transition planning. This will include their connection with NHSG services.	Children's Social Work & Family Support
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Work with Skills Development Scotland, NHS Grampian and other key partners to try to secure an increased allocation of foundation apprenticeships.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refurbishment /replacement of a number of amenity and HRA city play areas in 2025/26.	Operations
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Prevent children & young people entering the criminal justice system & support those who do	We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act. In doing so we will: - Work to ensure no child under 18 years enters an adult prison. - Ensure our systems and processes recognise the over representation of care experienced young people in the justice system. - Provide intensive support as an alternative to custody/secure care, dependent on Scottish Government funding. - Co-design preventative whole family support approaches to supporting young people at risk of offending.	Children's Social Work & Family Support
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as corporate parents	We will work to improve the attainment of looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential.	Education & Lifelong Learning / Children's Social Work Family Support
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Oversee infrastructure developments linked to the new harbour that support job creation.	City Development & Regeneration

Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Develop proposals to unlock £160M over ten years through the Investment Zone.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the advancement of the offshore wind sector, through partnerships across academia, industry, and government, advocating for favourable regulatory frameworks, investing in workforce training, R&D and engaging local communities.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with Regional Economic Partners develop and deliver pipeline projects within key sectors to attract investment and support job creation.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the work of the Aberdeen Convention Bureau and P&J Live to secure more UK and International business events for Aberdeen and maximise the financial, academic and investment opportunities arising from hosting.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the work of VisitScotland and Visit Aberdeenshire to raise industry standards and market the region to increase visitor spend and improve the visitor experience as set out in the Destination Strategy.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	An outstanding natural environment (RES)	Continued investment in hydrogen to stimulate demand, address Net Zero and increase green energy employment opportunities through: • Continued delivery of H2 Buses Project • Development of a 5 year programme to maximise hydrogen export opportunities (subject to approvals for H2 valley) • Support BP/ACC Joint Venture to move to Phase 2 to realise local job creation	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Promote the establishment of community wealth building as a soon to be legislative framework, aimed at enhancing local economics, empowering communities and ensuring equitable distribution of resource.	City Development & Regeneration

Economic Stability	A strong community and cultural identity (RES)	Establish a framework for the successful implementation of the visitor levy in Aberdeen city; aimed at generating revenue for events, attractions and infrastructure.	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Further actions to secure and support delivery of community benefits through major developments. Including: • ETZ Jobs Plan • Hydrogen Hub JVP • City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan community benefits programme • Projects captured for progression within Capital Plan	Commercial & Procurement
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement Policy • Refresh existing Policy and report to Committee • Agree implementation with Shared Service partners	Commercial & Procurement
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Design and deliver Aberdeen Events 365 Strategy through the Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023-2026 (including Tall Ships 2025), and support through targeted sponsorship and fundraising income.	City Development & Regeneration
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Develop venues to provide best value cultural services and increase opportunities for cultural tourism: a. Tolbooth – reopen (Summer 2025) b. Maritime museum – (draft 5 year redevelopment plan 2025) c. Art gallery – top floor (June 2025) d. Archives – new home (OBC and 5yr development plan 2025/26) e. Glover House – investment plan (develop management and delivery plan 2025/26)	City Development & Regeneration

Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Free travel for schools to visit Aberdeen Art Gallery supported by the William Syson Foundation (3 year programme ending in 2027). Includes a tailored package for every ASN provision for Orchard Brae School and mainstream schools across the city.	City Development & Regeneration
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Through the funded Fairer Future Pathfinder co-design and deliver: - co-ordinated and targeted whole family preventative services to reduce involvement with statutory services; and - the transition to a future libraries model	Education & Lifelong Learning
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Delivery of 'In the City Programmes' to those most likely to be impacted by poverty for easter, summer and autumn, subject to Council budget decision.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Work with Public Health Scotland, University College London (Institute of Health Equity) and local partners to implement the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland, focusing on the Northfield and Torry areas of the city.	Data Insights (HDRCA)
Communities & Housing	Maximise the impact of Early Learning and Childcare	Roll out the second Request for Assistance process to help meet emerging demand across communities.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	In collaboration with Corporate Landlord, Finance, Capital and Strategic Place Planning analyse housing needs to inform the early development of a city wide Housing Strategy to align with an HRA Asset Management Model, 30 year business plan and consideration of those with complex and life-long needs.	Housing
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will further develop our person-centred approach to support individuals and families, affected by RAAC, who have been rehomed.	Housing

Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement, in collaboration with Housing, tests of change to realise a reduction in void Council houses.	Corporate Landlord
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Undertake a review of Council house repairs and housing improvements to secure improved performance.	Corporate Landlord
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare an implementation plan for the implications of the anticipated Net Zero Standard for Social Housing.	Corporate Landlord
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare an implementation plan for the implications of the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and Grenfell recommendations.	Corporate Landlord
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Implement, as part of Homewards Aberdeen, the year one commitments outlined within the delivery plan with a preventative focus to reduce homelessness in Aberdeen.	Housing
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Prepare for the implications of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, specifically in relation to Ask and Act (as part of Homewards Aberdeen), Domestic Abuse and Rent Controls, subject to further detail as the bill passes through parliament.	Housing
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will review the Strategic Housing Investment Plan once the resource planning assumptions have been issued by Scottish Government.	Housing
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote and secure development opportunities associated with the City Centre Masterplan including: a. Queen Street b. A new Aberdeen Market c. Beach Masterplan (Beach Park, Events Park and Broadhill – Phase A projects started and completed during 2024/25)	Strategic Place Planning

		d. City Centre Streetscape e. George Street	
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Continue construction of Union Street Central for delivery in 2025/26.	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with Strategic Place Planning, implement the Union Empty Shops Plan and support the work of Our Union Street.	City Development & Regeneration
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Commission a review of the commercial estate to better reflect current market conditions and determine investment / disinvestment opportunities, subject to availability of specialist resource.	Corporate Landlord
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions by increasing public transport	Subject to on-going external funding from Transport Scotland, respond to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 – provisions on buses which allows for direct service provision, partnership working and local franchising, including through the Bus Partnership Fund and Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Aim for 2025 is to continue to progress the corridor studies and agree a Strategic Business Case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete a Mobility Strategy for the city.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete an Active Travel Network Plan for the City.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Work with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for active travel as part of the beach and city centre masterplans and determine how to bring this forward in the context of Union Street East and Beach Boulevard.	Strategic Place Planning

Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Install distance markers across popular walking and running routes.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete an update of the Car Park Review.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Progress options appraisal to build a new foot and cycle bridge over the River Dee subject to funding from NESTRANS.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Work with Scottish Government and the joint procurement pilot for the North of Scotland to increase installation of electric charging capacity and use renewable energy for these. In 2025/26 the aim is to appoint a development partner, subject to the outcome of the procurement process, and agree infrastructure locations and a programme for their roll out.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Subject to on-going funding from Transport Scotland, work with the North East Bus Partnership and the Scottish Government to deliver the Bus priority measures as part of the Bus Partnership Fund and explore opportunities for alternative fuel vehicles. Aim for 2025/26 is to continue to progress the corridor studies and agree a Strategic Business Case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit and work with partners to explore options for alternative fuel vehicles.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Reduce energy consumption across the full council estate by 0.5%.	Corporate Landlord
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Commence construction on the B999 Shielhill Road Junction Improvement.	Capital

Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In 2025/26 the aim is to work with external partners such as the James Hutton Institute to develop a natural environment strategy implementation plan.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In collaboration with Operations update the Natural Environment strategy to identify and quantify public land to be managed for nature / increase areas of naturalised grassland and wildflower meadow.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In collaboration with Operations update the Natural Environment strategy to identify suitable land to expand tree planting on council owned land.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Deliver the Bridge of Don Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in spring 2025.	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Commission new Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bridge of Don as replacement for existing site at Scotstown Road.	Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Complete construction of Torry Heat Network Phase 1 and commence Phase 2.	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	In collaboration with Commercial and Procurement, improve waste reduction and product lifespan through ACC procurements.	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Work with Operations to update the Waste Strategy for 2025/26 with the aim of ensuring alignment with the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill and identifying opportunities /requirements to deliver on the Producer Responsibility Fund, and to support Operations in relation to ongoing programmes to reduce waste (including exploring opportunities for repair hubs).	Strategic Place Planning

Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Work with the Scottish Government to co-design a Household Recycling Code of Practice and increase reuse and recycling.	Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Complete the rebuild of Altens Materials Recovery Facility and transfer station.	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	Maintain the City's green space environment, local road and pavement network	Improve road safety through implementation of the Road Safety Plan, Route Action works, and traffic management/ road safety measures.	Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	Work towards transferring mortuary provision responsibilities to NHS to commence in the new North East Combined mortuary.	Governance
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	The Environmental Health Service will launch as a Food Safety Training Centre. This will be creating the opportunity for new and existing food businesses to ensure they have the appropriately trained staff to comply with their legal obligations.	Governance
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	Aberdeen Scientific Services Labs, by creating new posts and the use and development of new and emerging techniques, help support the protection of public health and generate additional income, through the provision of a locally based UKAS accredited laboratory service which can be accessed by local businesses, both new and established.	Governance
Health & Social Care	Reduce child poverty	Maintain readiness to increase uptake of free school meals, responding, as appropriate, to any requirement to deliver free school breakfasts and lunches for all primary school pupils in keeping with Scottish Government policy.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Support the evaluation of the neurodevelopmental pathway project as led by NHSG and collaborate with partners to determine how best to pivot our system to take account of the learning.	Education & Lifelong Learning

Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Work with stakeholders, including a Head Teacher working group, to determine a local response to the Scottish Government 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools and work in partnership to support the actions of the locally agreed action plan.	Education & Lifelong Learning
Health & Social Care	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as corporate parents	Work with Partners to deliver on the second Promise Plan (24 - 30). We will identify our priorities taking account of the progress made via Plan 21- 24 and the findings of the Bright Spots survey. We will, in collaboration with young people, reimagine the structure and style of Champions Board. We will actively plan for the development of the anticipated Promise Bill and the associated legislative change this will require. The above will be contingent on adequate resource being made a available from the Scottish Government via sustainable revenue funding and utilisation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.	Children's Social Work & Family Support
Health & Social Care	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims	We will further develop an integrated and multi-agency approach to supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse. In doing so we will: - Implement Equally Safe through a gendered lens across all public protection policy/practice areas. - Ensure our readiness for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 including Domestic Abuse Protection Orders. - Ensure a strong emphasis on 'prevention' and the role of schools in tackling misogyny. (Aligned to the Scottish Government's 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools.) - Explore the pathways between domestic abuse and	Children's Social Work & Family Support

		homelessness, mitigating the need for women and children to present as homeless. - Ensure consistent application of the Domestic Abuse Council Housing Policy. - Ensure our readiness for the legislative requirement to undertake Domestic Homicide & Suicide Reviews	
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Deliver the refurbished Bucksburn Pool.	Capital
Health & Social Care	Protect Children	Open our Bairns Hoose in summer 2025 to support children and young people who have been abused and harmed as well as those under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused harm to others. Develop pathways for recovery support to ensure children and young people receive whole family support post IRD. Ensure enhanced support to children and young people who have to give evidence in court Ensure the medical and recovery elements of the Bairns Hoose are connected to wider health & wellbeing supports to address identified needs.	Children's Social Work & Family Support

SECTION 3: How We Do Business

The Council's environment continues to be extremely complex and multi-dimensional, with significant demand and a high ambition for improvement. This places pressure on how we resource all elements of Council activity to the desired level and where funds are deployed for best value.

The key strategic linkages to create a future environment for the way in which we will operate can be summarised in the following themes:

- **The nature of our work (why we work) -** we work to prevent our citizens from experiencing negative and harmful outcomes and increasingly will be providing less direct service delivery and focusing more on helping our citizens, families, and communities to be empowered to help themselves and each other.

- **Building our 'Workforce' of the future (how we work and how we behave) -** enabled by technology, the public sector and partner organisations have, and will increasingly make use of, more varied work arrangements, accessing more diverse pools of skills and capabilities, both inside, outside and across organisational boundaries. As a result of the next phase of our digital maturity journey, our staff will undertake less and less transactional work, thereby creating more capacity for our workforce to focus on building relationships with citizens and supporting community capacity building. We will work with a singular focus on outcomes, working as groups of staff to make our contribution to those outcomes. And as teams, we will enjoy increased empowerment and flexibility.

- **Re-imagining our 'Workplace' of the future (where we work) -** technology, and new models for employing talent, are starting to redefine the workplace and its organisational supports. These changes have and will continue to impact physical workspaces (including remote and hybrid work) along with policies that promote employee well-being. We will no longer define our workplace by a defined building and instead will view our workplace as wherever we can best serve our citizens.

The tables below set out our strategic priorities and further 2025/26 commissioning intentions that are designed to support the implementation of the above themes.

THEME		
The nature of our work (why we work)	**Building our 'Workforce' of the future (how we work and how we behave)**	**Re-imagining our 'Workplace' of the future (where we work)**
Strategic Priorities		
Corporate Governance & Democracy		
Management of Risk		
Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits		
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience		
A Modern and Effective School Digital Estate		
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation		
Reduction in avoidable contact to increase focus on those with most need		
Undertake proactive citizen and community engagement		
Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake		
Management of Council Finances		
Data management for insights and improvement		

Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Lead Cluster
Corporate Governance & Democracy	Continue to strengthen the network of Community Councils through meaningful engagement with relevant points of contact across the organisation.	Governance
Management of Risk	Oversee the development of plans for emergency response, incorporating recommendations arising from response reviews locally and nationally, including Grenfell, COVID and any other major incidents.	Governance
Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Support the development of an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building Action Plan to encompass key partners and look to maximise the local impact of procurement activity through leading on the Spend Pillar theme	Commercial & Procurement

Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Modernisation of citizen contact services building on AI capabilities and enhanced life events service structure.	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Development of HR self service capabilities to better support all employees and provide improved access to frontline workers.	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Rationalisation of housing systems to improve support for tenants and support for housing strategy.	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Complete the analogue to digital transition for council provided services including the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC).	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Upgrade the network infrastructure across all council sites to include wide area (WAN) and local area network (LAN) assets.	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Drive adoption of generative AI to support staff in focusing on high value human interactions.	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Retain PSN and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations.	Digital & Technology
A Modern and Effective School Digital Estate	Finish delivery of Northern Lights project to ensure all schools have an established baseline for modernisation and innovation in learning and teaching.	Digital & Technology
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will implement a new HR / Payroll and Case Management System which will improve our efficiency by automating a number of our processes, improving our reporting functionality and our employee experience.	People & Citizen Services
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	With the Health Determinants Research Collaboration, we take deliberate actions which promote a research and evidence led culture throughout the Council and implement a programme to support the development of the necessary skills and knowledge.	People & Citizen Services

Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will implement a new flexible working policy which, alongside the statutory right to request flexible working, will provide greater flexibility for employees and bring benefits including improved work-life balance, increased morale and aid recruitment and retention.	People & Citizen Services
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	Refresh the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan to align with our new employer equality outcomes for 2025-2029 to meet our public sector equality duty.	People & Citizen Services
Reduction in avoidable contact to increase focus on those with most need	We will modernise the Contact Centre and redesign the supporting operating model, to maximise efficiency and support for those most vulnerable, including: • Complete the implementation of new digital telecare alarm receiving technology, enabling over 13,000 North East telecare users to transition from analogue to digital landlines. • Transform our traditional contact centre into an interactive "omni-channel" • Further deploy the 'Assisted Digital' citizen delivery model to educate and drive up digital uptake • Expand the integrated access model and life events approach providing a single entry point for citizens to access Council and partner agency services.	People & Citizen Services
Undertake proactive citizen and community engagement	We will create and implement a Citizen Engagement policy to guide positive consultation, engagement, and support for employees managing challenging behaviours.	People & Citizen Services
Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake	Work with colleagues through the Fairer Futures Pathfinder, to support whole family early intervention and prevention services to increase benefits uptake and improve debt management.	People & Citizen Services
Management of Council Finances	Further embed the 3 tier model of prevention as an enabler of rebalancing spend from reactive to early intervention and prevention.	Finance
Management of Council Finances	Update the agreed budget protocol, to take into account feedback and timelines for 2025/26 and oversee implementation.	Finance
Data management for insights and improvement	Expand the use of the Council's Central Data Platform to improve speed and quality of insights to support policy making.	Data Insights (HDRCA)

Data management for insights and improvement	Operationalise Master Data Management to enable greater understanding of individual needs and inform targeted and preventative services.	Data Insights (HDRCA)
Data management for insights and improvement	Work with local and national partners to promote and enable the effective sharing of data across organisational boundaries.	Data Insights (HDRCA)
Data management for insights and improvement	Leverage the resources of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration (Aberdeen) to support understanding of the drivers of demand, the effectiveness of interventions and the evaluation of public services.	Data Insights (HDRCA)

Transformation Programme

In addition to these, there are actions and programmes of work which support "How we do business".

The Transformation Programme has been developed to align with the timeline set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The delivery of transformational change will always be flexible depending on the changing demand and delivery of the desired benefits. The foundation for the Council's transformation remains our collective vision for the future of Aberdeen and our understanding of the strategic outcomes we need to address, as articulated in our strategies, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Council Delivery Plan.

The programme is structured around 4 strategic themes, and associated projects, which are a combination of specific business area redesigns and commercial opportunities.

```
                              ┌──────────────────────┐
                              │   Transformation     │
                              │     Programme        │
                              └──────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┬──────────────┴──────────────┬──────────────┐
  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐              ┌──────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐
  │ Internal  │  │  Digital  │              │ Whole Group  │  │ Shared Collaboration│
  │ Redesign  │  │           │              │  Structure   │  │                    │
  └───────────┘  └───────────┘              └──────────────┘  └────────────────────┘
```

| Internal Redesign		Digital		Whole Group Structure		Shared Collaboration	
Property Management and Maintenance Redesign	Roads and Transport Redesign	Education Digital Transformation	Citizen Services	Redefine SLAs	Future Delivery Models	Legal Services	People and Organisational Development Services
Utilisation of Fleet and Fleet Services Redesign	Reconfiguration of Assets	HR/Payroll	Data Platform			Customer Services	Digital and Technology Services
EV Charging Infrastructure	Heat Network Infrastructure					Financial Services	

SECTION 4: How We Behave

Delivery of our strategic purpose and programme of modernisation and transformation is underpinned and enabled by how we behave as an organisation – our culture.
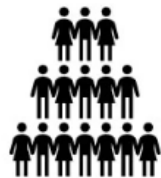
The Workforce Strategy, and its supporting Workforce Delivery Plan (2023) provides a clear vision and route map for the necessary evolution of our culture and support for our employees during rapid change. Our Guiding Principles remain the backbone of organisational culture – and inspire the strategic outcomes in our Workforce Strategy for what success looks like.

In order to deliver the workforce strategic outcomes, the Workforce Delivery Plan is structured into five key areas of work, along with specific objectives and projected timeline for delivery:
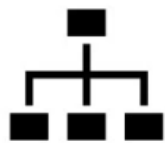
Right Structures	Right People	Right Skills	Right Place	Right Support
Setting up our council in a way that supports our cultural aspirations	Building our capacity through attracting, recruiting, moving talent	Building capability through awareness, desire, knowledge and ability	Working where and when is best for the work and the customer	Supporting employees to thrive, personally and professionally

Significant progress has been made towards the objectives in these five key areas of work in the past two years. There remains work to be done to embed and fully deliver some of these objectives, this will be reflected in upcoming refreshed Workforce Delivery Plan for 2025-2028+.

New and Emerging Drivers for Change
With the rapid pace of change locally and nationally, our Workforce Delivery Plan will also need to reflect and respond to new and emerging challenges since 2023 that inform how we need to behave.
- Budget pressures
- Reduced workforce capacity

- Nationally hard to fill roles
- Commissioning Intentions and Service Standards
- The need to be research and evidence based
- A focus on the social determinants of health
- AI and opportunities arising from digital technology
- Legislative changes
- Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report (2021-2025)

With these drivers for continued change and adaptation, what is the state of readiness within our workforce to adapt to this?

Employee engagement is fundamental for successful organisations – in facilitating a thriving workforce supporting productivity at the best of times; and maintaining motivation and goodwill during times of change. Workforce innovation is critical to success as we progress – and without engagement there will be no commitment to innovation. So as we move through the financial and resource challenges ahead – it is important that we pay attention to and respond to the prevailing mood of the workforce, and strive to put in place mechanisms to ensure they understand the drivers for change, are committed to our overarching purpose and play their part in the innovation and adaptiveness that is required to support the changes, are equipped with the knowledge, skills and ability to work in required new ways, and are supported and coached by their peers and managers throughout.

Since 2016, the MacLeod & Clarke four enablers of employee engagement have provided us with a structure for monitoring and measuring engagement levels through employee opinion surveys - and for identifying priority areas for improvement. These four enablers of engaged employees are:

- **Strategic Narrative:** Visible, empowering leadership providing a **strong strategic narrative** about the organisation, where it's come from and where it's going.
- **Engaging Managers: Engaging managers** who focus their people and give them scope, treat their people as individuals and coach and stretch their people.
- **Employee Voice: Employee voice** throughout the organisation, for reinforcing and challenging views, between functions and externally. Employees are seen not as the problem, rather as central to the solution, to be involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas.
- **Integrity:** the values on the wall are reflected in day to day behaviours. There is no 'say –do' gap. Promises made and promises kept, or an explanation given as to why not.

In 2020 we undertook an organisation-wide analysis of the employee experience through our Future of Work Survey. Alongside specific questions to

understand how the world of work had changed as a result of the pandemic, and how employees were adapting to the new enforced ways of working, the survey also sought to understand employee engagement through the four pillars of engagement outlined above. The results of this survey helped shape the Workforce Delivery Plan in 2023 by identifying priority areas for development.

In preparation for a refreshed Workforce Delivery Plan in 2025, in winter 2024/25 we repeated the organisation-wide survey and through the analysis of this we will identify new priority areas for focus as we progress on our journey of change. The key themes structured around the Macleod Report, which will influence the activity through the workforce delivery plan refresh. These improvement priorities, alongside outstanding strategic objectives from the Workforce Delivery Plan for 2025/26 will be reflected in upcoming refreshed Workforce Delivery Plan for 2025-2028+.

SECTION 5: Delivery through our Organisational Structure

CITY REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT FUNCTION

This function leads our work to improve the economic and environmental performance of the city and ensure that decisions taken around neighbourhoods and our built environment take account of the conditions required to improve population health, including driving our work towards net zero. The function will oversee all place-based capital investment from inception through to delivery, as well as delivering our planning and building standards services, economic development, cultural services and operational services. The City Regeneration and Environment Function works closely with the Families and Communities Function in order to ensure that our collective activity is sufficiently and appropriately targeted to support an improvement in outcomes for targeted communities. The Function is enabled and supported by the Corporate Services Function who help ensure the sound governance of the Function.

City Development and Regeneration

Role of the Cluster

The City Development and Regeneration cluster represents the Council and the city of Aberdeen on local, regional, national, and international stages. It operates a council budget of £12M, with built assets totalling c£70m+, collection assets c£200m+ and an income of £6M. The cluster employees c200 staff and works with an extensive list of partners and stakeholders.

Key responsibilities of the cluster include:

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums (AAGM) and the legal, statutory and ethical duties associated with this heritage services including the Unesco-designated Archives, Art Gallery, Provost Skene's House, Tolbooth and Maritime Museums, (with over 320,000 visitors in 23/24) the shops and merchandise, ensuring safe and accessible venues (venues are recognised as both "Warm and Safe Space"). It will also oversee the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives' re-location, the management of the Beach Ballroom, which includes civic catering, the Beach Ballroom was nominated for 4 venue awards in 2024.

Economic Development including supporting delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy, Aberdeen City Region Deal (ACRD), North East Scotland Investment Zone proposal and North East Performs. It supports Culture Policy and External Funding and sponsorship (managing

£9.4m grants), employability and skills activities, including ABZWorks (managing £3.3million of funding) and the Hydrogen programme, including hydrogen hybrid retrofit activity, hydrogen solutions in passenger rail, and upgrade of ACC refuelling stations. The team also oversees the Business Gateway delivery with Aberdeenshire Council and works with local and national partners and networks including Aberdeen Inspired, Our Union Street, and the Scottish Cities Alliance to support city centre regeneration.

City Promotion including the Council's Events 365 programme, which in 2025 will include TallShips Aberdeen and key delivery partnerships such as Visit Aberdeenshire, convention bureau and P&J Live which will see OffShore Europe in Aberdeen this year. International Trade continues to support inward and outward delegations including support for the World Energy Cities Partnership and works closely with Invest Aberdeen, a shared service with Aberdeenshire to collaborate with partners to create investor proposals.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The Cluster seeks to reduce reliance on revenue funding through partnership working and increasing income via commercial activity in managed venues, ticketed events, shared income models, venue hire, public donations, bequests, sponsorship, grants and other fundraising activity.

The overall staff resource of the Cluster expands and contracts in response to external funding, inward investment and the delivery of key capital and other programmes of work such as, Tall Ships Aberdeen, Hydrogen Programme and governmental initiatives. Whilst there is an

overall trend of reduction of permanent contracted staff, there will always be a need to consider best value delivery of short-term projects through fixed term posts, secondments or third party/partner delivery mechanisms.

Performance in 2024/25

Unemployment in the City fell from 5.1% in October 2022 to 4.1% in October 2023, which is above the Scottish average of 3.4%.

The cost of a museum visit has reduced from £3.65 in 2018/19 to £3.53 in 2023/24. This is 3 pence more than the national average.

Satisfaction with museums and galleries has increased from 66.6% in 2016/19 to 76.7% in 2021/24. Whilst this is slightly down on the previous year (79%), it remains better than the national average of 69%.

The claimant count as a % of the working age population reduced from 3.2% in 2022/23 to 3.1% in 2023/24. This is the same as the Scottish average.

The claimant count as a % of the population aged 16-24 increased from 3.3% in 2022/23 to 3.7% in 2023/24. This is slightly more the Scottish average of 3.5%.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Increase the number of people being supported into the workplace	Whilst unemployment in the city fell, the % of people supported into employment from Council funded programmes reduced in 2023/24 reflecting case complexity. Improvement activity will be linked to the evaluation of employability services detailed below.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Evaluate the impact of the employability programmes on longer term outcomes	The Council has a key role in supporting people into employment. This evaluation will review the operation and effectiveness of a number of programmes and governance arrangements.	This evaluation will be conducted with support from the Improvement Service.

The latest published risk register is linked here

Priorities

2025/2026 will see the cluster seek additional funding to continue Business as Usual activities listed above. These support the current economic activity in the region and the Cluster will continue to work with partners and communities to rationalise activity to deliver best value or seek alternative models where funding and resource is not sustained.

The 2025/26 Commissioning Intentions demonstrate City Development and Regeneration's ambition and commitment to contribute to the economic transformation and recovery of the region.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Oversee infrastructure developments linked to the new harbour that support job creation.	T1	Subject to investment & commitment from partners.

Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Develop proposals to unlock £160M over ten years through the Investment Zone.	T1	Subject to funding.
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the advancement of the offshore wind sector, through partnerships across academia, industry, and government, advocating for favourable regulatory frameworks, investing in workforce training, R&D and engaging local communities.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with Strategic Place Planning, implement the Union Empty Shops Plan and support the work of Our Union Street.	T2	Subject to on-going funding.
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with Regional Economic Partners develop and deliver pipeline projects within key sectors to attract investment and support job creation.	T1	Subject to funding.
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the work of the Aberdeen Convention Bureau and P&J Live to secure more UK and International business events for Aberdeen and maximise the financial, academic and investment opportunities arising from hosting.	T1	Subject to funding.
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support the work of VisitScotland and Visit Aberdeenshire to raise industry standards and market the region to increase visitor spend and improve the visitor experience as set out in the Destination Strategy.	T1	Subject to funding.
Economic Stability	An outstanding natural environment (RES)	Continued investment in hydrogen to stimulate demand, address Net Zero and increase green energy employment opportunities through: • Continued delivery of H2 Buses Project • Development of a 5 year programme to maximise hydrogen export opportunities (subject to approvals for H2 valley) • Support BP/ACC Joint Venture to move to Phase 2 to realise local job creation	T1	Subject to future investment & commitment from partners.

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Design and implement targeted workforce development programmes aimed at engaging economically inactive individuals (long term physical and mental health issues, parents and disabled), equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to enter the job market.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Facilitate collaborative Partnerships with the education authority and further and higher education to create clear pathways that support students in need of additional support (Health issues, disabled, care experienced and disengaged) to transition into the workforce.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Foster collaboration with local businesses to create tailored training and development programmes for those furthest from the job market into the region's identified growth and volume sectors that meet workforce needs and build employment skills. Establish a Supported Employment Service through No One Left Behind Grants.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	In partnership with the Science Museum Group and targeted Aberdeen city schools, develop a "science capital" approach to teaching and interpretation in archives, gallery & museums.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Economic Stability	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Promote the establishment of community wealth building as a soon to be legislative framework, aimed at enhancing local economics, empowering communities and ensuring equitable distribution of resource.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Design and deliver Aberdeen Events 365 Strategy through the Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023-2026 (including Tall Ships 2025), and support through targeted sponsorship and fundraising income.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Develop venues to provide best value cultural services and increase opportunities for cultural tourism: a. Tolbooth – reopen (Summer 2025) b. Maritime museum – (draft 5 year redevelopment plan 2025) c. Art gallery – top floor (June 2025) d. Archives – new home (OBC and 5 year development plan 2025/26) e. Glover House – investment plan (develop management and delivery plan 2025/26)		T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Free travel for schools to visit Aberdeen Art Gallery supported by the William Syson Foundation (3 year programme ending in 2027). Includes a tailored package for every ASN provision for Orchard Brae School and mainstream schools across the city.		T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Economic Stability	A strong community and cultural identity (RES)	Establish a framework for the successful implementation of the visitor levy in Aberdeen city; aimed at generating revenue for events, attractions and infrastructure.		T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will, with partners, support established businesses through the Business Gateway service within 5 working days of approach.		✓	✓	✓	N	100%	Tier 1	🟩
2. We will maintain Accreditation standards for the Art Gallery. UK Museum Accreditation Scheme	✓	✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will maintain Accreditation standards for Museums. UK Museum Accreditation Scheme	✓	✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	🟩
4. We will provide person centred employability support to those eligible with a particular focus on more vulnerable groups, and signpost those who are not eligible to alternative support within 5 working days.		✓	✓	✓	N	N/A	Tier 2	🟩
5. We will maintain or increase the number of external outdoor public events.	✓				N	N/A	Tier 1	🟧

Capital

Role of the Cluster

The Capital cluster creates the physical architecture which enables the provision of services as well as contributing to improvements in the neighbourhood and built environment to support good population health. The cluster provides professional technical design, construction and contractual expertise to deliver the Council's Capital Plan. It primarily consists of individuals with professional disciplines that deal with the design, planning, construction and management of capital funded construction projects. These projects include delivery of the city centre masterplan, the city region investments, the school estate strategy, roads infrastructure, housing and all aspects of our current general fund capital programme.
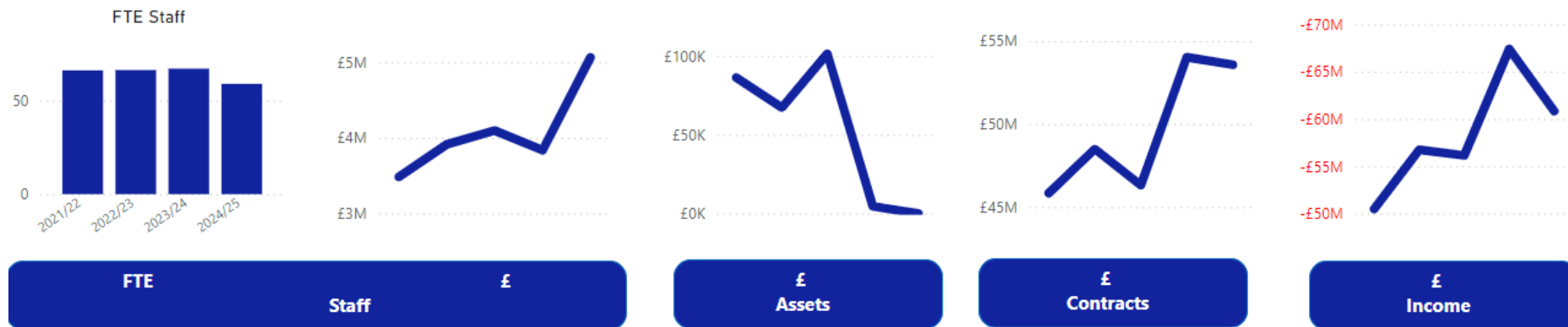
Resources 5 Year Trends

The staffing levels reflect the necessary resources required to deliver the full programme of projects within the approved Capital Plan, in accordance with each project's timeline and spend profile. With regard to the 'Assets' and 'Contracts', the values intimated are primarily driven by two distinct projects; the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the recently delivered 'Energy from Waste' (EfW) facility at Torry. Both projects involve periods of operation (30 years and 20 years respectively) post opening. It should be noted that, though managed by the Capital Cluster, this is revenue spend. Consideration of the income trend demonstrates that the cluster continues to perform well and achieve its income goals. Projects are inevitably planned and programmed to be delivered over a number of years, and the cluster remains future focussed to help manage all four depicted trends.

Performance in 2024/25

'Financial Close' has been achieved and works are underway for a small number of significant large projects; Union Street Central; Beach Phase A.

The cluster is targeting to deliver a spend rate of 70% against the approved General Fund Capital Programme budget. There is always some slippage due to external factors which impact on the delivery of capital funded programmes and projects.

24/25 has been a challenging year for the delivery of projects with a mixed success rate. Where there has been a need to vire any additional funds, it has been contained within Contingencies limits. Where target dates have not been achieved, the cluster continues to progress the project delivery in line with the commissioning intentions.

The delivery timeline for a small number of projects has not gone as well as planned. This is not always directly due to a failure within the cluster, for example where external organisations have not performed. Lessons learned will be captured to improve future project delivery forecasts.

The Cluster is forecasting a spend of 70% against the approved General Fund Capital Programme budget. As highlighted above work is now underway on a number of significant large projects and their delivery is expected over the next couple of years. Other projects, whose timeline has slipped are due to be delivered in early 25/26, such as the New Mortuary and the new Riverbank Primary School at Tillydrone. There is significant levels of design work underway for a number of key projects; which are related to our roads infrastructure, school and housing estate.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Future focus on the prioritisation of capital funded projects.	Balancing the overall Council budget is becoming more challenging and this is leading to funding pressures across all areas of the Council. It is clear that there will be challenging demands for what may be a limited, possibly reducing capital budget.
Better budget forecasting.	There have been pressures throughout the year to deliver projects within their allocated budget. External factors, and inflation across the construction sector.
Communication across clusters and teams.	24/25 has highlighted a small number of projects where cross-cluster working arrangements and collaboration could be improved to achieve a better outcome.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Cluster Redesign	With impending budget pressures there is a need to review the level and balance of professional skills and resources within the current cluster.	Align the 'new redesign' in discussion with developing structures in other clusters to improve communication and project delivery.

The latest published risk register is available here.

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been written to reflect the reprofiling of the capital programme as a result of construction inflation and project slippage. The cluster will continue to maintain focus on the green credentials of new buildings as the Council and partners continue to work towards net zero. Priorities reflect a continued focus on prevention through delivery of the school and housing estate to help address the poverty agenda. Importantly, our young people have heavily influenced many of the projects delivered by the Cluster.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Continue construction of Union Street Central for delivery in 2025/26.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Deliver the New Riverbank School in Spring 2025 with a planned decant to the new school soon after.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue and progress design development at new Hazlehead Academy.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue design development for the Bucksburn Academy extension.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Continue and progress design development at refurbished St Peters Primary.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Commence construction on the B999 Shielhill Road Junction Improvement.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Deliver the Bridge of Don Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in spring 2025.	T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Complete construction of Torry Heat Network Phase 1 and commence Phase 2.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity

Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Complete the rebuild of Altens Materials Recovery Facility and transfer station.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Deliver the refurbished Bucksburn Pool	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will ensure the specification on new construction projects meet the required environmental and building quality standards.			✓		N	100%	Tier 1	1.
2. We will ensure all capital projects have gate stage reviews completed in accordance with our project management governance protocols.			✓		N	100%	Tier 1	2.

Strategic Place Planning

Role of the Cluster

The Strategic Place Planning cluster works to support the cities net zero routemap and its 6 enabling strategies along with partner agencies. The cluster supports improvements in the neighbourhood and built environment in order to realise the conditions required to support improvement across all of the determinants of good health. As a result, the cluster works to ensure that the physical, social and economic activities are used to maintain, regenerate and strengthen the place of Aberdeen - seeking to strike the balance across economic, social and environmental outcomes as stated in the LOIP. The focus is to enable, facilitate and deliver Strategic Place Planning. This includes all transport, environment, net zero, climate change and planning strategies, development management and building standards in order to help deliver major infrastructure projects; meeting the outcomes in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and advancing sustainable city growth.

Resources 5 Year Trends
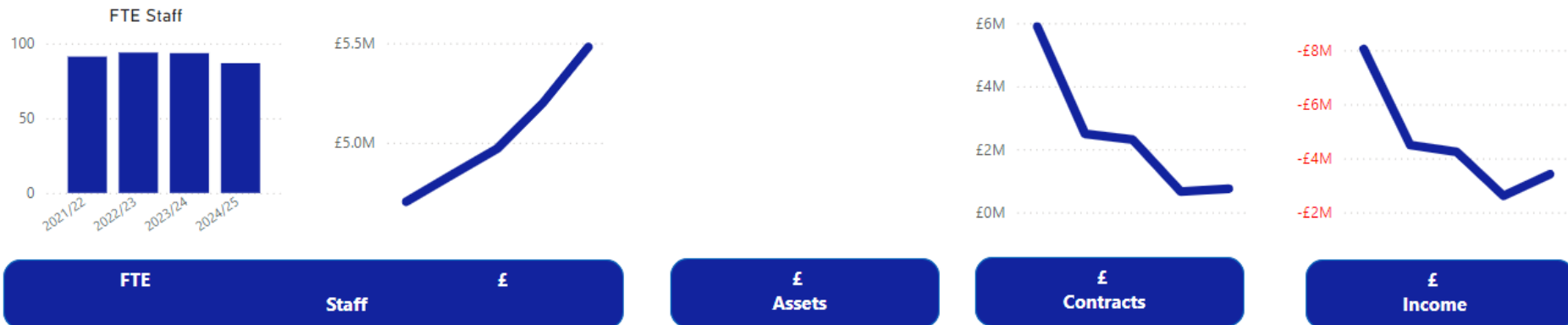
Performance in 2024/25

> The average time to complete business & industry planning applications has fallen from 27.1 weeks in 2020/21 to 6.7 weeks in 2023/24. This is better than the national average of 10.7 weeks.

> In the last 12 months the % of building warrant applications issued within 10 working days rose from 84% in quarter 1 to 93% in quarter 4. This compares to an agreed target of 80%.

> The cost of planning, and building standards per planning application, decreased from £9,807 in 2022/23 to £8,629 in 2023/24. This is higher than the national average of £6,675.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Planning Performance and service delivery.	Planning Performance Framework (PPF) has recently changed to the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) with a stronger focus on improving performance and standards. This provides us with an opportunity to further explore opportunities for improvement working with a partner local authority as part of the NPIF.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Cost of undertaking planning applications	The relative cost of undertaking planning applications, whilst, reducing, is above the average for other Scottish local authorities.	This evaluation will review the differences between Aberdeen City and other selected Councils. It will use benchmark data on the volume and nature of applications, respective processes and cost data from the local financial return.

The latest published risk register is available here.

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect an increased focus on net zero, transport and the natural environment. In particular projects focusing on reducing emissions in the most challenging categories and to alleviate some of the challenges for the council in terms of

adaptation and mitigation. This will require closer cross service working with a strong focus on outcomes particularly in the areas of *Just Transition* to help alleviate fuel and transport poverty which impact on the most vulnerable in our society.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote and secure development opportunities associated with the City Centre Masterplan including: a. Queen Street b. A new Aberdeen Market c. Beach Masterplan (Beach Park, Events Park and Broadhill – Phase A projects started and completed during 2024/25) d. City Centre Streetscape e. George Street	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions by increasing public transport	Subject to on-going external funding from Transport Scotland, respond to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 – provisions on buses which allows for direct service provision, partnership working and local franchising, including through the Bus Partnership Fund and Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Aim for 2025 is to continue to progress the corridor studies and agree a Strategic Business Case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete a Mobility Strategy for the city.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete an Active Travel Network Plan for the City.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Work with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for active travel as part of the beach and city centre masterplans and determine how to bring this forward in the context of Union Street East and Beach Boulevard.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Install distance markers across popular walking and running routes.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Complete an update of the Car Park Review.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Progress options appraisal to build a new foot and cycle bridge over the River Dee subject to funding from NESTRANS.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Work with Scottish Government and the joint procurement pilot for the North of Scotland to increase installation of electric charging capacity and use renewable energy for these. In 2025/26 the aim is to appoint a development partner, subject to the outcome of the procurement process, and agree infrastructure locations and a programme for their roll out.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Subject to on-going funding from Transport Scotland, work with the North East Bus Partnership and the Scottish Government to deliver the Bus priority measures as part of the Bus Partnership Fund and explore opportunities for alternative fuel vehicles. Aim for 2025/26 is to continue to progress the corridor studies and agree a Strategic Business Case for Aberdeen	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

		Rapid Transit and work with partners to explore options for alternative fuel vehicles.		
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In 2025/26 the aim is to work with external partners such as the James Hutton Institute to develop a natural environment strategy implementation plan.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In collaboration with Operations update the Natural Environment strategy to identify and quantify public land to be managed for nature / increase areas of naturalised grassland and wildflower meadow.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	In collaboration with Operations update the Natural Environment Strategy to identify suitable land to expand tree planting on council owned land.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	In collaboration with Commercial and Procurement, improve waste reduction and product lifespan through ACC procurements.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Work with Operations to update the Waste Strategy for 2025/26 with the aim of ensuring alignment with the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill and identifying opportunities /requirements to deliver on the Producer Responsibility Fund, and to support Operations in relation to ongoing programmes to reduce waste (including exploring opportunities for repair hubs).	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Neighbourhood & Environment	Maintain the City's green space environment, local road and pavement network	Improve road safety through implementation of the Road Safety Plan, Route Action works, and traffic management/ road safety measures.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will, on average, determine householder planning applications within 10 weeks.		✓			L	82%	Tier 1	🟧
2. We will, on average, determine local non-householder planning applications within 11 weeks.		✓			L	80% N/A	Tier 1	🟧
3. We will, on average, determine major planning applications within 30 weeks.		✓			L	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
4. We will respond to building warrant applications within 20 working days.		✓			L	90%	Tier 1	🟧
5. We will respond to building warrant approvals within 10 working days.		✓			L	85%	Tier 1	🟧
6. We will ensure that each existing Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is reviewed as fit for purpose at least once every 10 years.		✓		✓	L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
7. We will, on average, determine applications for works to protected trees (under TPO and Conservation areas) within six weeks.		✓			L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
8. We will maintain independent Customer Service Excellence accreditation.			✓		N	100%	Tier 1	🟧

Operations

Role of the Cluster

The Operations cluster makes a significant contribution to the neighbourhood and built environment. The cluster is responsible for the delivery of frontline services related to green space environment, local road and pavement network, domestic waste collection and recycling including the NESS Energy from waste facility. The work of the cluster is increasingly aligned with the city's Net Zero Routemap and Enabling Strategies as well as being a major contributor to Aberdeen Adapts, the Framework for responding to the harm created through climate change. The cluster manages the Council's fleet of vehicles and has a key role in ensuring operational health and safety and fleet compliance requirements are met in accordance with legislation.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The overall resource of the Cluster has changed significantly through service transformation and redesign. Whilst there is an overall trend of staff reduction, there is a focus on maintaining assets and service delivery whilst trying to reduce costs overall. Costs of goods, materials, and contracts continue to increase and the services try to mitigate these, where possible, through redesigning service delivery. Climate change is increasing the demand on the Cluster, through the need to respond to the impacts of adverse weather and other environmental impacts. The Cluster seeks to increase income through increasing partnership working and seeking opportunities for increasing external income.

Performance in 2024/25

The net cost per waste disposal per premises fell from £137.84 per premises in 2021/22, to £101.39 in 2023/24. This is lower than the national average of £104.41.

The % of adults satisfied with street cleaning have remained almost unchanged in 2023/24 at 58.3%. This is slightly above the national average of 58.0%.

The net cost of street cleaning has fallen from £11,048 per 1,000 population in 2021/22 to £10,678 in 2023/24. This is significantly lower than the national average of £16,181.

The proportion of household waste that has been recycled remained unchanged in 2023/24 at 41.8%. Slightly below the national average of 43.5%.

The street cleaning score for the city was 89.7% in 2023/24. A slight increase from 89.5% the previous year. However, this is lower than the national average of 92.1%.

The net cost per waste collection per premises has increased from £56.41 per premises in 2021/22, to £61.67 in 2023/24. However, this is lower than the national average of £78.48.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Waste management	Against the backdrop of a national route-map to accelerate the pace, and the impact of the pandemic and then a fire which destroyed Altens East recycling facility and transfer station, there is a need to increase the volumes of waste which is recycled. Officers are researching good practice from across the country and will instigate improvement actions locally.
Staff attendance	Sickness absence in some parts of the cluster are higher than the average across Council services. To address this, interventions have been developed to better support operational services to manage and reduce levels of absences.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
The impact of road maintenance on insurance claims	With pressure on budgets there is a need to understand the relationship between reducing road repairs and the potential liability risk and insurance impact.	An exercise will take place to review claims defended based on any performance reduction of maintenance to draw any link between the data sets.
Evaluate the impact of gulley maintenance on flooding, risk and mitigation	To review any impact of known flood reports/risk whereby gulley cleaning has been targeted.	Use flood risks data and flooding incidents to examine the impact of gulley cleaning and identify the most effective preventative approach within available resources.

The latest published risk register is available here

Priorities

2025/26 commissioning intentions have been updated to reflect an increased focus on net zero and the natural environment. Priority will be given to rebuilding the Altens facility in addition to further measures to restore previously high levels of performance in recycling. Projects focusing on reducing fleet emissions and maximising the positive impact of our greenspace, and associated biodiversity, will help support delivery of high level Council priorities.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refurbishment /replacement of a number of amenity and HRA city play areas in 2025/26.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Commission new Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bridge of Don as replacement for existing site at Scotstown Road.	T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Work with the Scottish Government to co-design a Household Recycling Code of Practice and increase reuse and recycling.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Maintain the City's green space environment, local road and pavement network	Improve road safety through implementation of the Road Safety Plan, Route Action works, and traffic management/ road safety measures.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Commission Altens Materials Recovery Facility and transfer station and, following completion of rebuild, recommence operations in autumn 2025.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
Environmental Services								
1. We will remove litter from adopted roads and pavements to a minimum of Grade B of the Keep Scotland Beautiful "Local Environmental Audit Management System" (LEAMS) standard.		✓	✓		P	80%	Tier 1	🟩
2. We will maintain all parks and amenity open spaces to a minimum of Grade B of the Keep Scotland Beautiful "Land Audit Management System" (LAMS) standard.		✓	✓		P	80%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will complete all priority 1 amenity / street tree maintenance work (emergency work on dangerous trees) within 4 weeks.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
4. We will inspect all amenities / street trees a minimum of once every 6 years.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
5. We will visit, inspect and maintain outdoor amenity play areas (excludes education and community centre settings) on a fortnightly basis to national safety standards (BSEN 1177 for safety surfacing, BSEN 1176 for play equipment and BSEN 14974 for wheeled sports).		✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	🟩
6. We will inspect lifebelts at the beach on a daily basis and twice weekly at other locations in keeping with the National Water Safety Strategy or ROSPA water safety guidance.		✓	✓		P	97%	Tier 1	🟩
7. We will deliver Cremation Services to a standard that achieves a positive evaluation by the Inspector of Cremation.			✓		P	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
8. We will support the active participation of 150 partnership / community environmental groups.			✓		N	184	Tier 1	🟩
9. We will remove non offensive graffiti from public buildings and structures within 20 weeks.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
10. We will remove offensive graffiti from public buildings and structures within 15 days.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 3	🟧

							%	Tier	Status
Fleet Services									
1.	We will achieve first time MOT pass for HGV's subject to a pre-check and then presented for annual test.			✓		N	95%	Tier 1	🟩
2.	We will achieve first time MOT pass for Light vehicles when presented for annual test following a pre-test.			✓		N	94%	Tier 1	🟧
3.	We will only provide vehicles which comply with engine Euro emission ratings iv, v or vi.			✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
4.	We will complete all Scheduled Safety inspections within 2 days.		✓	✓		N	100%	Prevention	🟧
Waste Services									
1.	We will collect refuse, recycling, food and chargeable garden waste bins fortnightly for all individual household bins.			✓	✓	L	95%	Tier 1	🟧
2.	We will respond to reported overflowing communal bins within two working days.		✓			N	95%	Tier 3	🟧
3.	We will respond to fly-tipping enquiries relating to public places within 5 working days.		✓			N	100%	Tier 2	🟧
4.	We will complete paid bulky uplift service requests within 10 working days.		✓		✓	L	100%	Tier 1	🟧
5.	We will divert household waste from landfill to help limit the use of landfill.			✓		P	85%	Tier 1	🟩
6.	We will recycle and compost household waste to help limit the use of landfill.			✓		P	50%	Tier 1	🟧
7.	We will provide services to non-domestic customers by mutual agreement.			✓	✓	L	100%	Tier 1	🟧
Roads and Infrastructure									
1.	We will repair (High/Medium priority) carriageway / footway defects within 7 days.		✓			P	98%	Tier 2	🟧
2.	We will complete road safety inspections within the set timeframe as set out in the Roads Inspection Manual.		✓			P	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
3.	We will respond to general street lighting faults within 7 days.		✓			P	97%	Tier 2	🟧

4.	Will complete General Inspections of all bridges/structures every two years.		✓			P	N/A	Tier 1	
5.	We will take preventative measures to reduce flooding by watercourse inspections and clearance of debris prior to storm events		✓	✓		L	80%	Tier 1	
6.	We will take preventative measures to reduce flooding by biannual cyclical gulley maintenance		✓	✓		L	80%	Tier 1	

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES FUNCTION

This Function leads our work to use social and community capital and education to improve outcomes for citizens over the longer term. The function leads on the development of a partnership Family Support Model that takes full account of the various influences on population health, including housing, education and community based support systems. As a result, the Function plays a key role in delivering on the child poverty agenda. The function oversees the provision of supports for children, young people and families at community level, by working with communities to understand what matters to them, and reshaping council services to better address the complex situations many face. The Families and Communities Function works closely with the City Regeneration and Environment Function to ensure that our collective activity is sufficiently and appropriately targeted to support an improvement in outcomes for targeted communities. The Function is enabled and supported by the Corporate Services Function who help ensure the sound governance of the Function.

Education and Lifelong Learning

Role of the Cluster

The Education & Lifelong Learning cluster works in partnership with others to reduce inequalities in educational outcomes and raise attainment given the key role education plays in long term outcomes. The cluster supports lifelong learning to enable and empower the people of Aberdeen to fulfil their potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic prosperity of our city. The cluster oversees all funded Early Learning and Childcare settings (including funded childminders), out of school care provision, schools (primary, secondary and special), library and community learning provision as well as a range of support services.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The increases in staff numbers reflect the delivery of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and recent increase in school roll. Pay uplifts continue to be mitigated where possible through the redesign of services. The service continues to engage with other Clusters and partners to co-locate services to reduce costs and improve access to services.   Variation in assets is directly linked to the ELC expansion and wider school estate programme, with all assets currently incurring increased utility costs. The peak in contract costs is directly linked to the ELC expansion, it is anticipated that these will now reduce. The income listed is largely from national grants.
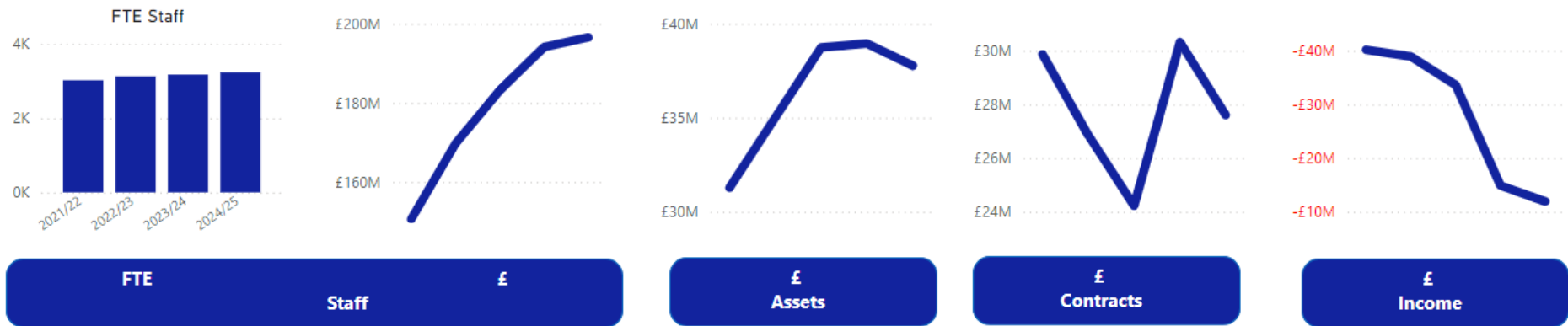
Performance Highlights in 2024/25

The cost of a pre-school, primary and secondary school pupil has reduced steadily over recent years. The city is now consistently in the top (i.e. least costly) quintile across all Scottish Councils.

Attainment in literacy at P1,4 and 7 has increased over the past two years from 63% in 2020/21 to 73% in 2023/24. Numeracy levels have risen by 2% in the same period.

The proportion of eligible 2 year-olds attending an early learning and childcare provision rose in 2023/24 to 38% compared to 31.6% in 2022/23.

The proportion of adults satisfied with local schools increased from 71.3% to 72.3% in 2023, higher than most recent years, and on a rising trend compared with the national figure of 73.7%.

Satisfaction with local libraries in 2023/24 sits at 70% which is unchanged from the previous year and 3% above the national average.

The % of Primary School pupils (P-7) eligible for Free School Meals who were registered for this entitlement was similar in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 at around 77%, although with an increase in meals uptake.

The % of publicly funded Early Learning and Childcare graded good or better currently was 80.2% in 2023/24. It fell from a high of 86% in 2022/23 and compares to a national average of 90%

In 2023/24, the % of pupil school leavers in a positive destination was 90.1%, virtually unchanged from the previous year. This is below the Scottish average of 92.7%.

The average total tariff Score of S4 pupils from the most deprived areas of the city fell to 481 in 2023/24, compared to a Scottish average of 658. This remains a priority for Aberdeen.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Improve attainment in the senior phase for those living in SIMD 1 & 2	Data shows that in Aberdeen, attainment of school leavers living in quintiles 1 and 2 is lower than both the National average and the Council's family group.
Improvement in school inspection outcomes	School inspection outcomes continue to be variable resulting in follow up visits from HMIe. Systems in place to support improvement require to be further embedded to realise improvement.
Positive and sustained destinations	The percentage of school leavers in a positive destination remains below the Scottish average and unchanged for the last 2 years. There is a need to work with partners to address gaps and improve tracking of young people.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Fairer Family Pathfinder	Focussing on prevention, early intervention and long term sustainability, the Fairer Family Pathfinder will implement interconnected workstreams and empower multi-disciplinary locality based teams to help find more person centred ways of addressing the challenges facing our citizens, families and communities. This aims to be innovative and transformational change and evaluation is a key requirement.	The Pathfinder is funded by the Scottish Government and, as part of the initiative, national evaluation of the implementation and impact will be conducted. Additional, local evaluation will be scoped and delivered with support of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration.
Longitudinal evaluation of the impact of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare	The expansion of early learning and childcare is a significant policy change and investment. The impact of this requires strong evaluation.	The expansion of early learning and childcare by the Scottish Government is the subject of ongoing national evaluation, however, longitudinal evaluation will be undertaken locally with support of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration.
Test of change at Riverbank School	This project takes an Early Intervention approach, which mirrors arrangements in our Language Units and supports the positive return to mainstream school, for our youngest learners in primary school following a period of intensive support.	The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project against its plan and the impact of the intervention for children and staff.

The last published risk register is published here

Priorities

Current data guides us to increase focus on those communities with high numbers of families living in SIMD 1 as we work to address child poverty, this targeting has been reflected in the priorities. The need to focus on addressing variation across Early Learning and Childcare and

school settings has been embedded alongside the need to consider how all services supporting families can work together to promote literacy. Priorities also reflect our final preparations for duties under the newly incorporated UNCRC.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with partners to implement the post school funding solution to continue to improve outcomes for young people.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Continue to work with employers to support placements for young people with additional needs.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Reduce child poverty	Continue to prepare for implementation of the Scottish Government commitment to expand free childcare services for 1 and 2 year olds to support targeted families into employment when national plan is known.	T1 & T2	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Through the funded Fairer Future Pathfinder co-design and deliver: - co-ordinated and targeted whole family preventative services to reduce involvement with statutory services; and - the transition to a future libraries model	T1 & T2	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Delivery of 'In the City Programmes' to those most likely to be impacted by poverty for easter, summer and autumn, subject to Council budget decision.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Health & Social Care	Reduce child poverty	Maintain readiness to increase uptake of free school meals, responding, as appropriate, to any requirement to deliver free school breakfasts and lunches for all primary school pupils in keeping with Scottish Government policy.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Evaluate the impact of approaches to Local Authority and school quality improvement including pupil tracking to determine their effectiveness in addressing variation.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Maximise the impact of Early Learning and Childcare	Maximise the uptake of 1140 hours of ELC for all eligible children, with a particular focus on eligible 2s (190 in 2023/24) and those currently in families living in SIMD 1.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Maximise the impact of Early Learning and Childcare	Roll out the second Request for Assistance process to help meet emerging demand across communities.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Support the evaluation of the neurodevelopmental pathway project as led by NHSG and collaborate with partners to determine how best to pivot our system to take account of the learning.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Work with stakeholders, including a Head Teacher working group, to determine a local response to the Scottish Government 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools and work in partnership to support the actions of the locally agreed action plan.	T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Deliver a broader curriculum offer through digital and partnership delivery of Phase 3 of ABZ Campus to secure improvement in senior phase attainment.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Work with Skills Development Scotland, NHS Grampian and other key partners to try to secure an increased allocation of foundation apprenticeships.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as corporate parents	We will work to improve the attainment of looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will meet all eligible requests for early learning and childcare placements within one month.		✓		✓	L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
2. We will meet all mainstream requests for a primary and secondary school placement within one month.		✓		✓	L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will work to ensure early learning and childcare settings meet the national standard.			✓		L	100%	Tier 1	🟧
4. We will ensure primary, secondary, and special schools achieve an average evaluation of 'good' or better in core Quality Indicators.			✓		N	80%	Tier 1	🟧
5. Provide CLD services to a level that achieves a rating of good or better through external inspection.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
6. We will process requests for additional support to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people within 40 days.		✓			N	100%	Tier 2	🟩
7. We will work to ensure that Broad General Education Attainment at P1, P4, P7 and S3 is in line (within 1%) of the National Average.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
8. We will work to ensure that Senior Phase Attainment at Levels 4, 5 and 6 is in line with (within 1%) the National Average.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
9. We will flexibly respond to ensure that schools, ELC, CLD and library provisions remain open irrespective of staffing absence.	✓				N	98%	Tier 1	🟩
10. We will work to ensure that school attendance is as good or better than the national average.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
11. We will work to ensure that all young people in the senior phase have access to city wide courses through ABZ Campus.	✓		✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
12. We will meet those wishing to access CLD services from priority areas within 3 weeks (inclusive of Youth Work and Family Learning) to begin person centred planning.	✓	✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
13. We will ensure library item requests are satisfied within 21 days.	✓	✓			N	73%	Tier 1	🟩

Children's Social Work and Family Support

Role of the Cluster

The Children's Social Work & Family Support Cluster works with children, young people and families, other Clusters and multi-agency partners to support children, young people and families identified as being at risk of harm. Additionally it seeks to prevent children entering the care and justice systems by offering preventative intervention and support in line with the statutory framework in which social work operates. Working with partners we will continue to ensure children remain within their family network where it is safe for them to do so. Where children cannot remain in their family network alternative care arrangements will be designed to meet their needs. The Chief Officer will continue to oversee the redesign of children's social work as we transform delivery models to better reflect the intentions of The Promise. The Cluster takes a lead role in ensuring that the Council complies with its Corporate Parenting and child protection responsibilities and leads the coordination of the multi-agency model of Family Support.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The overall resource of the Cluster has seen changes across all domains. In relation to staff, the reduction reflects the challenges recruiting social workers. In line with the commissioning intention to explore colocation opportunities, the number of physical assets has reduced although the cost of running these have increased. The increase in contract spend reflects inflationary increases particularly in relation to the placement of young people in out of authority placements. Income fluctuations reflect ring fenced grant funding from Scottish Government to fund national priorities.

Performance Highlights in 2024/25

The cost of children looked after in residential care reduced from £4,539 in 2021/22 to £3,684 in 2022/23, below the national average of £5,071. The cost of those looked after in a community setting also decreased from £697 in 2021/22 to £642 in 2022/23, above the national average of £446.

There has been a positive reduction in the overall number of Looked After Children – (No. looked after children at the end of Q2 – 2020/21 563; 2021/22 517; 2022/23 485; 2023/24 515).

The % of Looked After and Accommodated children who have had 3 or more placements in a 12 month period has improved from 4.35% (23 children) in 2022/23 financial period to 2.78% (15 children) in 2023/24.

The no. of children re-registering on the Children Protection Register within 2 years of being taken off the register in 2023/24 was 15 (6%) in comparison with 31 (13%) in 2022/23. This number is lower than most previous years.

The percentage of children and young people and families at risk supported to stay together in their own community in 2023/24 was 43.1%, slightly lower than than 44.8% in 2022/23.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Improve the balance of care to ensure more children remain in their communities	ACC's % of looked after children in aligns to the national position. However, the breakdown of placement type has variability. We have a lower % of looked after children living within their family network and higher % of looked after children in care settings out of the city. As a consequence, they are more likely to experience dislocation from family, their community and makes their transition to adulthood more challenging. These placements also come at a significantly higher financial cost to the LA. Change is complex and multi-faceted and requires a sustained commitment from multi-agency partners. Without this there are limits what CSW can achieve on its own. Identified change includes:

	• Enhanced community based support to keep looked after children in their family network • A continuing focus on developing the capacity of our fostering service • Exploring opportunities to develop the capacity of local residential care. • Enhanced health and care provision to meeting the needs of looked after children in local care settings.
Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM) within 21days	The National Child Protection Guidance requires CPPM's to be held within 21 days from the IRD decision. Performance over the past year has been below what we would want. As a Child Protection partnership we are undertaking a deeper dive to better understand the reasons for delays in cases coming to a Child Protection Planning meeting. Findings of the deeper dive will feed into the Child Protection Committee's performance and quality assurance activity.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Evaluate the impact of the IRD process	• Locally there is evidence of a variable understanding of "risk of significant harm". This can result in children being unnecessarily referred into the IRD process. • Changes to the IRD process was flagged in the SCIM implementation review (2024). • Aligned to delivering our Bairns Hoose we want to ensure a stronger connection to the commencement of recovery support with the IRD process, resulting in fewer children needing to be considered at a CPPM.	There is alignment across the North East of the IRD process. A test of change has begun, to explore improvement in relation to reconvening the IRD after the JII has been concluded to affirm the need for a CPPM. We will continue to support the understanding of the concept of significant harm across the multi-agency workforce.
Fairer Futures Partnership	The Fairer Futures Pathfinder is a change programme funded by the Scottish Government and runs over 2025/26 and 2026/27. It will focus on integration of services and support around communities and families. National and local evaluation of the programme will be undertaken.	Evaluation of implementation and impact will be co-ordinated between Council services, local partners, the Scottish Government and Celsis.
Bairns Hoose in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh	Aberdeen City's Child Protection Partnership is a Scottish Government pathfinder for the Bairns Hoose policy. The Pathfinder phase will run from 1/4/2024 to 31/3/2027. We have partnered with the University of Edinburgh to support our evaluation of establishing a Bairns Hoose and the impact of this on children, young people and families.	Our partnership with the University of Edinburgh currently runs until 30/9/25. Consideration is being given to extending this in line with the extension to the pathfinder phase. This will be dependent upon SG funding.

		In partnership with Children First we will continue to ensure we capture and utilise the voice of children and young people actively inform the design and delivery of our Bairns Hoose. The University of Edinburgh will provide 6 monthly reports to support our iterative development of our Bairns Hoose.

The last published risk register is linked here

Priorities

202/26 priorities have been updated to better reflect the work of the cluster and the Cluster's changing focus as we work to deliver The Promise. These changes in national policy have seen the addition of work to keep siblings together and increased support for kinship carers to further improve support available across our communities. On-going development of a local model of Family Support will help mitigate risks to children and will continue to be prioritised.

The considerable demand to deliver age assessments for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) is now reflected in the priorities, as are changes in legislation anticipated through implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024. On-going work to transform how services are delivered are reflected more fully for session 2024/25.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Further improve transition planning and support for children with ASN transition to adult services. Build on the learning from the GIRFE Pathfinder to ensure a more integrated approach to early and effective transition planning. This will include their connection with NHSG services.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Health & Social Care	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as corporate parents	• Work with Partners to deliver on the second Promise Plan (24 - 30). • We will identify our priorities taking account of the progress made via Plan 21- 24 and the findings of the Bright Spots survey. • We will, in collaboration with young people, reimagine the structure and style of Champions Board. • We will actively plan for the development of the anticipated Promise Bill and the associated legislative change this will require. • The above will be contingent on adequate resource being made a available from the Scottish Government via sustainable revenue funding and utilisation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.	T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims	We will further develop an integrated multi-agency approach to supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

| Health & Social Care | Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims | We will further develop an integrated and multi-agency approach to supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse. In doing so we will:

• Implement Equally Safe through a gendered lens across all public protection policy/practice areas.
• Ensure our readiness for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 including Domestic Abuse Protection Orders.
• Ensure a strong emphasis on 'prevention' and the role of schools in tackling misogyny. (Aligned to the Scottish Government's 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools.)
• Explore the pathways between domestic abuse and homelessness, mitigating the need for women and children to present as homeless.
• Ensure consistent application of the Domestic Abuse Council Housing Policy.
• Ensure our readiness for the legislative requirement to undertake Domestic Homicide & Suicide Reviews | T1, T2 & T3 | Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners. |

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Prevent children & young people entering the criminal justice system & support those who do	We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act. In doing so we will: • Work to ensure no child under 18 years enters an adult prison. • Ensure our systems and processes recognise the over representation of care experienced young people in the justice system. • Provide intensive support as an alternative to custody/secure care, dependent on Scottish Government funding. • Co-design preventative whole family support approaches to supporting young people at risk of offending.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Health & Social Care	Protect Children	• Open our Bairns Hoose in summer 2025 to support children & young people who have been abused and harmed as well as those children & young people under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused harm to others. • Develop pathways for recovery support to ensure children & young people receive whole family support post inter-agency referral discussion. • Ensure enhanced support to children & young people who have to give evidence in court. • Ensure the medical and recovery elements of the Bairns Hoose are connected to wider health & wellbeing supports to address identified needs.	T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. All initial screenings will be undertaken and action decided on new referrals within 7 days.		✓			N	97%	Tiers 2 and 3	
2. We will hold initial Child Protection Planning Meetings within 21days.		✓			L	71%	Tier 3	
3. We will ensure care provided within Council children's homes achieve a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.			✓		P	100%	Tier 3	
4. We will ensure care provided by the Council's fostering service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.			✓		P	100%	Tier 3	
5. We will ensure care provided by the Council's adoption service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.			✓		P	100%	Tier 3	
6. We will work to maintain or increase the current number of foster carers.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 3	
7. We will undertake an initial age assessments within 2 weeks of unaccompanied asylum seeking individuals who identify as being under 18 years where there is a dispute to their age.		✓			L	N/A	Tiers 2 and 3	
8. We will ensure that fewer than 5% of care experienced children and young people will have 3 or more placements in 12 months.			✓		P	1%	Tier 3	
9. We will ensure care experienced children and young people have a pathway plan by the age of 15 years.			✓		L	68%	Tier 3	
10. We will support, where safe to do so, more than 80% of the children and young people open to Children's Social Work live within their family network.	✓		✓		P	75%	Tier 3	

Housing

Role of the Cluster

The Housing cluster plays a key role in supporting one of the key determinants of population health – having shelter and hopefully a home. The cluster delivers housing strategy and services for individuals and families and aims to reduce inequalities by providing affordable housing which meets the Scottish Housing Regulator housing standards. The cluster has a key role in understanding community need, increasing community capacity and resilience, and working with partners to tackle the cause rather than the consequences of failure demand. Key areas of responsibility include: Housing Strategy & Operational Improvement, Housing Services, Housing Options, Homelessness & Resettlement. The cluster makes a significant contribution to our dispersal and asylum support, helping to coordinate the work of other Clusters to ensure a coordinated response.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The overall fluctuations in staffing across the cluster reflects the changes through service transformation and design (e.g. implementation of the Housing & Support model which resulted in a realignment of resource to the Housing Revenue Account) in addition to fluctuations in demand and fixed term arrangements. The increase in contract expenditure reflects the fundamental shift in the homeless landscape in 2022/23 and 2023/24, following a significant increase in homeless applications, which continues to be recorded. As a direct result of this upturn, there is an increased use of hotels to meet temporary accommodation needs.

Performance in Highlights 2024/25

83.3% of our Council housing met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in 2020/21. This increased to 90.4% in 2023/24. This is significantly above the Scottish average of 77.8%.

86.9% of these properties were rated as energy efficient in 2018/19, this rose to 92.7% in 2022/23. This compares to a Scottish average of 87.6%.

The significant increase in homeless applications has impacted on the performance with respect to the time taken to assess applications and the overall homeless "journey" for applicants assessed as unintentionally homeless.

The level of gross rent arrears as a % of rent due was 6.9% in 2018/19, but has increased to 17.4% in 2022/23. This compares to a Scottish average of 9.6%.

In 2019/20 1.9% of rent due was lost due to Voids (empty properties). In 2023/24 this had risen to 7.9% compared to a Scottish average of 1.8%.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
In collaboration with Corporate Landlord, we will decrease the number of voids (empty Council properties)	The percentage of void properties is significantly above the Scottish average. This both reduces the opportunities to rehouse people who have housing needs and limits the potential rental income, with which the Council can invest in tenants' homes. There are numerous drivers for voids including the demand for the properties which become available, the condition of some properties returned to the Council and the effectiveness of repairs and letting processes. Improvement actions are a collaborative effort and already underway.

In collaboration with Corporate Landlord, we will decrease the average time to let a property	The length of time taken to relet properties relates to the improvement action to reduce void properties detailed above. Following evaluations in 2024 of policies relating to minimum letting standards and choice based letting, additional actions are being taken to more quickly allow tenants to be matched and move into council homes.
Reduce the homeless journey	The increase in the number of homeless applications received by the Council and the limitations on available properties into which people can be rehoused has resulted in the length of time taken to permanently resolve homelessness. Through a range of initiatives, including working in partnership on the Homewards project with the Princes Trust, improvement actions are underway to reduce the time people spend "homeless".

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Housing Policy	The Housing Board have a rolling programme of evaluations. For example, an evaluation of Choice Based Letting policy was completed in 2024. Learning from that evaluation resulted in amendments to the implementation of the policy and the impact of these changes will be evaluated in 2025.	The approach used follows an agreed "ACC Approach to Evaluation", developed with the Health Determinants Research Collaborative.
Rent Assistance Fund (with Customer Experience)	The Council introduced the Rent Assistance Fund in 2024. Evaluation of its implementation and impact will be important in planning future options.	

The last published risk register is linked here

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect the collaboration with Corporate Landlord to ensure the availability of suitable housing stock that best meet the needs of our citizens. The more focussed priorities guide the development of a long term housing strategy to support our longer term ambitions. Work to support targeted communities, such as those with care experience and those at risk of becoming homeless are prioritised.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	In collaboration with Corporate Landlord, Finance, Capital, Strategic Place Planning analyse housing needs to inform the early development of a city wide Housing Strategy to align with an HRA Asset Management Model, 30 year business plan and consideration of those with complex and life-long needs.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will further develop our person-centred approach to support individuals and families, affected by RAAC, who have been rehomed.	T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Implement, as part of Homewards Aberdeen, the year one commitments outlined within the delivery plan with a preventative focus to reduce homelessness in Aberdeen.	T1, T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Prepare for the implications of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, specifically in relation to Ask and Act (as part of Homewards Aberdeen), Domestic Abuse and Rent Controls, subject to further detail as the bill passes through parliament.	T1, T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will review the Strategic Housing Investment Plan once the resource planning assumptions have been issued by Scottish Government	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will assess all homeless applications within 28 days.		✓		✓	L	58%	Tier 2	
2. We will ensure all homeless people secure a permanent tenancy within 100 days average.		✓		✓	L	140 days	Tier 2	
3. We will review and process housing applications within 28 days.		✓		✓	N	96%	Tier 1	
4. We will ensure a decision is made on all Tenancy Management actions (specifically Abandonment, Assignation, Joint Tenancy, Lodger, Single Abandonment, Single Termination, Sublet, Succession) as per statutory timescales.		✓			L	88%	Tier 2	
5. We will ensure an average time to let a property of 210 days.	✓		✓		N	257 days	Tier 1	
6. We will ensure that our support for people being liberated from prison meets the SHORE standards. SHORE Standards (sps.gov.uk)	✓		✓	✓	L	Yes	Tier 1	
7. We will ensure that our support for New Scots displaced people is in accordance with the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2024.	✓	✓	✓		P	N/A	Tier 3	

Corporate Landlord

Role of the Cluster

The Corporate Landlord cluster makes a key contribution to neighbourhoods, the built environment and the social and community context in order to improve population health. The cluster consolidates all our property activities within one cluster, including health and safety activities, and is responsible for the management of commercial and non-commercial land and property assets, hard facilities management, asset and contract management across the council stock.

Resources 5 Year Trends

The overall increase in staff numbers is due to reorganisation of Council structures. Staffing costs include salary uplifts and reflects budget re-alignments and includes a significant number of post that have remained vacant due to particular challenges in recruiting technical and professional skills sets (Chartered Surveyors/ asbestos officers etc). Spend on assets (public buildings) repair and maintenance remains restricted to essential works although there are significant pressures on estate costs with utilities and construction cost inflation. Income also shows pressure due to the impact of utility costs on key assets and limited demand and growth in the commercial property market.

Performance in 2024/25

86.9% of these properties were rated as energy efficient in 2018/19, this rose to 92.7% in 2022/23. This compares to a Scottish average of 87.6%.

The % of operational buildings that were suitable for their use has improved from 75.4% in 2018/19 to 77.4% in 2022/23. This compares to a Scottish average of 86.1%.

91.2% of our properties are currently in a satisfactory condition and this has fallen from 92% in 2022/23. Whilst this is above the Scottish average, it is likely to come under pressure in coming years as available budgets restrict maintenance work.

In 2019/20 the average time taken to complete a non-emergency housing repair was 5.5 days. This rose to 8.5 days in 2023/24, however, this remains below the Scottish average of 10 days.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
In collaboration with Housing, we will decrease the number of voids (empty Council properties)	The percentage of void properties is significantly above the Scottish average. This both reduces the opportunities to rehouse people who have housing needs and limits the potential rental income, with which the Council can invest in tenants' homes. There are numerous drivers for voids including the demand for the properties which become available, the condition of some properties returned to the Council and the effectiveness of repairs and letting processes. Improvement actions are a collaborative effort and already underway.

In collaboration with Housing, we will decrease the average time to let a property	The length of time taken to relet properties relates to the improvement action to reduce void properties detailed above. Following evaluations in 2024 of policies relating to minimum letting standards and choice based letting, additional actions are being taken to more quickly allow tenants to be matched and move into council homes.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Fire Safety in multi-story properties	This evaluation is reflective of risk of multi-story building and will inform future service design and resource investment.	The evaluation will review process, procedures and gaps.

The latest published risk register is linked **here**

Priorities

2025/26 priorities are focused in 3 areas, the performance of our commercial estate, public buildings and Housing stock. This reflects the energy performance of the estate, repair and maintenance requirements.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Commission a review of the commercial estate to better reflect current market conditions and determine investment / disinvestment opportunities, subject to availability of specialist resource	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Reduce energy consumption across the full council estate by 0.5%.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement, in collaboration with Housing, tests of change to realise a reduction in void Council houses.	T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Undertake a review of Council house repairs and housing improvements to secure improved performance.	T2	Sufficient internal capacity

Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare an implementation plan for the implications of the anticipated Net Zero Standard for Social Housing.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare an implementation plan for the implications of the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and Grenfell recommendations.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards		Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1.	We will work to ensure that our public buildings, which have been awarded a dispensation, meet accessibility requirements under the Equality Act 2010.	✓		✓		L	82%	Tier 1	🟧
2.	We will carry out condition surveys across 100% of public buildings on a 5-yearly cycle.		✓			P	N/A	Tier 1	🟥
3.	We will work to ensure that our public buildings achieve a condition rating of C (poor) or better.			✓		P	92% (B)	Tier 1	🟧
4.	We will work to ensure that our buildings achieve a suitability rating of C or better.			✓		P	77% (B)	Tier 1	🟧
5.	We will work to ensure minimal disruption to schools and ELC provisions due to building defects/extreme weather (baseline from 2023/24 is 46 days lost).	✓		✓		N	46 lost days	Tier 1	🟩
6.	We will complete statutory maintenance works on public buildings in accordance with the legal duties.		✓	✓		L	100%	Tier 2	🟩
7.	We will complete statutory maintenance works on council houses in accordance with the legal duties.		✓	✓		L	99.6%	Tier 2	🟩
8.	We will undertake Asset Valuations to meet Financial Regulations every year (investment assets) and every five years for all other asset types.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩

#	Statement						%	Tier	
9.	We will work towards school occupancy at 80%-95% for primary schools and secondary schools.	✓				N	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
10.	We will ensure that all surplus assets are taken to market within 4 months of being declared surplus.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	🟥
11.	We will work towards all public buildings having an EPC rating of C or higher.			✓		P	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
Building Services Published handbook									
1.	We will make good or make safe emergency daytime housing repairs within 4 hrs.		✓	✓		N	97.5%	Tier 3	🟩
2.	We will make good or make safe emergency out of hours housing repairs within 4 hrs.		✓	✓		N	95%	Tier 3	🟩
3.	We will complete urgent housing repairs within 24 hours.		✓	✓		N	90%	Tier 3	🟩
4.	We will complete high category housing repairs within 3 days.		✓	✓		N	90%	Tier 2	🟩
5.	We will complete non-emergency housing repairs within 5 working days.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟩
6.	We will complete routine housing repairs within 10 working days.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
8.	We will complete repairs right first time.		✓	✓		N	91%	Tier 2	🟩
9.	We will complete housing repairs pre-inspections within 20 days.		✓			N	80%	Tier 1	🟧
10.	We will complete housing voids maintenance for each property to ensure the property meets the new letting standard.		✓	✓		**N**	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
Facilities Management									
1.	(Catering) All meals served to children and young people in our schools will meet The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020			✓		L	100%	Tier 1	🟩

#	Commitment						%	Tier	
2.	(Cleaning) We will complete Void Housing and Response cleaning alerts within the following timescales: • Emergency cleans within 4 working hours • Urgent cleans within 24 hours (not including Saturday or Sunday) • High priority cleans within 3 working days • Non-Emergency cleans within 5 working days • Routine priority cleans within 10 working days • Planned cleans within either 24 days or 90 working days dependent on timescale given by requestor		✓			L	98%	Tier 2 & 3	🟩
3.	(Cleaning) We will respond to fly tipping alerts at multi-storey blocks within 60 working hours		✓			L	88% (48 hours)	Tier 3	🟧
4.	(Cleaning) We will deliver 39 weeks contracted school cleaning to the standards set in our generic specification	✓				L	100%	Tier 1	🟧
5.	(Cleaning) We will deliver cleaning services within all (non-school) operational properties to the standards set in our generic specification			✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
6.	(Janitorial) We will provide janitorial support to every (non 3Rs) primary school for a minimum of 4 hours per day when the school is open to pupils.	✓				L	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
7.	(Janitorial) We will provide janitorial support to every (non 3Rs) secondary school between 07:00 and 18:00 on each day when the school is open to pupils.	✓				L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
8.	(PTU) We will assess mainstream school transport applications for children and young people who live more than 2 (primary) or 3 (secondary) miles from their local school within 1 calendar week, from date of receipt.		✓		✓	L	100%	Tier 2	🟩
9.	(PTU) We will assess ASN/Exceptional Circumstances school transport applications within 1 calendar week, from date of receipt.		✓		✓	N	100%	Tier 1	🟩
10.	(PTU) We will undertake spot checks on at least 50% of all school transport contracts over the course of the Academic year.			✓		N	46%	Tier 1	🟩
11.	(PTU) We will review and respond to local bus service registration changes within the prescribed 28-day period.		✓			L	100%	Tier 2	🟩

CORPORATE SERVICES FUNCTION

The Corporate Services function is essential for the council to reach its strategic objectives by giving the required support and infrastructure that allows data driven decisions to support the political direction set by elected members. The Function offers various support services to the council that help it to perform its duties in providing high quality services to citizens and staff while also managing the financial and regulatory risks involved, by ensuring that there is effective co-ordination of effort across the clusters by managing and coordinating corporate activities.

Delivery is focused on the effective governance of the Council. Clusters within the Function enable those across City Regeneration & Environment and Families & Communities, to comply with processes put in place to ensure compliance with a range of statutory duties. These include, but are not limited to, compliance with financial and procurement regulations, duties to secure best value and employment law.
The Function also has a key role in enabling both City Regeneration & Environment and Families and Communities through the provision of data insights to support the shaping of services and technology to enable the Council to deliver modern services. It brings together engagement activities, diversity & inclusion, ease of contact and assurance led transactional services for staff and citizens, with the focus on digital transformation, skills and platforms underpinning all of these.

Governance

Role of the Cluster

The Governance cluster supports the organisation to manage its corporate governance activities, including democratic decision-making structures, legal compliance and systems of assurance; all of which are supporting the achievement of the LOIP outcomes. Protective Services play a key role in the management of public health risks from a local authority perspective. Community Safety and Enforcement teams work in partnership with colleagues in Police Scotland to manage the safety of the city centre and its surrounding communities.

Resources 5 Year Trends
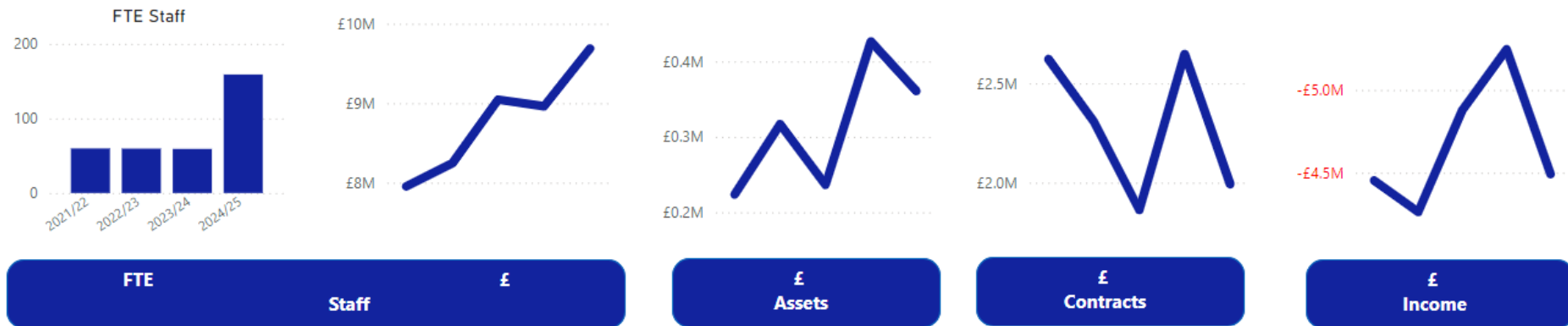
The cluster continues to provide vital governance support to all Council services whilst reducing staff numbers and increasing income. The services within Governance have low dependency on assets. Contracts are directly aligned to enforcement.

Performance in 2024/25

The cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 population has reduced from £30,542 in 2019/20 to £23,355 in 2022/23. This is slightly above the Scottish average of £22,302.

The % of high priority public health requests responded to within 2 days is reported quarterly and, over the last 12 months, has fluctuated, but in the last 3 quarters has been between 96% and 99%.

The cost of environmental health per 1,000 of population fell from £20,000 in 2022/23 to £18,310 in 2023/24. This remains above the national average of £15,518.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Performance & Risk Assurance	This project will further modernise the organisation's approach to the reporting and scrutiny of key areas of performance, risk and operational control, providing increased visibility and assurance throughout relevant governance arrangements.
ASBO applications process	The Digitisation of Parking project is a significant improvement initiative aimed at modernising Aberdeen's parking system. By introducing virtual parking permits, replacing outdated parking meters, implementing intelligent-led enforcement through the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vehicles to report parking contraventions, and offering cashless parking options, the project enhances the overall parking experience for residents, visitors, and staff. These advancements not only streamline the process but also protect the budgeted income from parking services, ensuring a more efficient and user-friendly system.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Evaluation of the income opportunities within Governance.	To enable a full understanding of the income to all services within the Cluster and opportunities for investment which could increase income.	Analysis of income targets and their alignment with fte within each service areas, compared with opportunities to reach further with additional fte.

The latest published risk register is available here

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been updated to ensure we continue to strengthen our CIPFA accredited governance framework whilst further automating health and safety and emergency response. In addition, we want to be transparent about the impact which our challenging risk environment has on service performance, and to allocate resources to plan for the impacts of legislative change.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Enabling Services	Corporate Governance & Democracy	Continue to strengthen the network of Community Councils through meaningful engagement with relevant points of contact across the organisation.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Enabling Services	Management of Risk	Oversee the development of plans for emergency response, incorporating recommendations arising from response reviews locally and nationally, including Grenfell, COVID and any other major incidents.	T1, T2 & T3	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	Work towards transferring mortuary provision responsibilities to NHS to commence in the new North East Combined mortuary.	T1, T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	The Environmental Health Service will launch as a Food Safety Training Centre, This will be creating the opportunity for new and existing food businesses to ensure they have the appropriately trained staff to comply with their legal obligations.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Neighbourhood & Environment	Protective Services	Aberdeen Scientific Services Labs, by creating new posts and the use and development of new and emerging techniques, help support the protection of public health and generate additional income, through the provision of a locally based UKAS accredited laboratory service which can be accessed by local businesses, both new and established.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will acknowledge requests for review within 14 days (Local Review Body).		✓			L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
2. We will hear School Placing and Exclusion hearings within 28 days of request.		✓			L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will determine Civic License applications within 9 months of a valid application.		✓			L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
4. We will hold all hearings to determine a Premises License application or Variation application within 119 days of the last date for representations.		✓			L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
5. We will issue decision letters for alcohol applications within 7 days of Board meeting.		✓			L	100%	Tier 1	🟩
6. We will acknowledge Civic licensing complaints within 24 hours.		✓			N	100%	Tier 2	🟩
7. We will investigate Civic licensing complaints within 10 days.		✓			N	96%	Tier 2	🟩
8. We will investigate and respond to reports of persistent Anti-Social Behaviour within 60 working days.	✓	✓	✓		N	100%	Tier 2	🟩
Protective Services								
1. We will visit 20% of all registered tobacco and nicotine vaping products retailers yearly to give business advice on compliance with legislation.	✓		✓		P	45%	Tier 1	🟩
2. We will undertake test purchasing of registered tobacco and nicotine vaping products in 10% of retailers yearly to test retailer compliance with age restrictions.			✓		P	16%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will respond initially to all business requests within 14 working days.		✓			L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
4. We will respond to initial non-domestic noise nuisance requests within 5 working days.		✓			L	82% (2 days)	Tier 2	🟩
5. We will respond to initial pest control requests within 2 working days for high priority infestations and 5 working days for low priority infestations.		✓			N	89%	Tier 2	🟧

6.	We will respond to initial public health requests within 2 working days for high priority cases.		✓			N	87%	Tier 3	
7.	We will respond to initial public health requests within 14 working days for low priority cases.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 2	
8.	We will respond to dog incident requests within 5 working days.		✓			N	68% (2 days)	Tier 2	
9.	All scheduled food service premises inspections (where access was possible) will be carried out on time, in line with Food Regulatory Service Plan.		✓			P	N/A	Tier 1	
10.	The Scientific Laboratories will examine /analyse and report food and environmental samples within specified turnaround times agreed with partners/customers.		✓			N	75%	Tier 2 and 3	

Commercial & Procurement

Role of the Cluster

The Commercial & Procurement cluster supports the Council's and partner Councils' commissioning and procurement to ensure that the best services / partners are identified to deliver the required outcomes within agreed budgets, as a result, the activity of the cluster impacts on all of the determinants of good health. Work extends to include the decommissioning and or/recommissioning of services, the development of commercial opportunities as well as activities focused on shaping the market.

Resources 5 Year Trends

In the main the costs for the staff resources are split 40/40/20 between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Highland Councils. For the social care and commissioning function it is 50/50 split between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and the function supports the needs of both Integrated Joint Boards for each Council. Similarly, the Insurance function is split between the two Councils and there is a dedicated Aberdeen City Legal and Commercial Team and a dedicated Contracts Management Team for the PFI school contracts. The Team also acts as the strategic interface with all the Council's ALEO's.

Performance in 2024/25

The % of spend with local suppliers was 33% of total spend in 2023/24, higher than the national average, and the spend with local small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) increased to 24% in 2023/24 compared to 23% in the previous year.

18 of 19 regulated contracts (95%) in 2023/24 included requirements relating to Fair Work Practices (including Real Living Wage).

18 of 19 regulated contracts (95%) in 2023/24 included Community Benefit requirements.

The % of spend covered by contract was 85% in 2023/24, compared to 83% in 2022/23.

1,062 Community Benefit Outcomes were imposed/delivered in 2023/24, compared to 762 in the previous year.

The % of spend covered by collaborative contracts was 9.54% in 2023/24.

Performance is monitored through a Strategic Procurement Board between the three Councils on a quarterly basis where a number of key performance indicators are reported. An Annual Procurement Performance Report is presented to each Council's respective Committees after the end of each financial year. Further to this an independent Procurement Capability and Improvement Programme (PCIP) assessment is conducted on a bi-annual basis.

There are areas where preventative controls are difficult to implement due to the number of systems involved across training, approvals, carrying out procurement and ordering and this limits opportunity for automation via the systems themselves. It is planned that procurement will review capabilities of Office 365 tools to understand the potential for utilisation of these to automate areas of the procurement process in future.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Procurement compliance	An audit on Procurement Compliance was conducted in 2024/25, the audit highlighted areas for further improvement and development and recommendations were made, the report did also highlight areas of progress to support compliance from a previous audit and recognised that where there are processes in place these can take time to embed. Further work is underway on developing assurance reporting to ensure that the processes and procedures amended or implemented in response to the audit are being followed by delegated procurers, an update will be presented to audit committee in Quarter 1 2025-26.

The latest published risk register is linked here

Priorities

The Commercial and Procurement cluster works to deliver the 6 themes of their approved Joint Procurement Strategy: Governance; Policy; Food Procurement; Climate Change, Net Zero and Circular Economy; Commercialisation and Community Wealth Building. Delivery of each of these themes is detailed with measures within the Joint Procurement Strategy. The Cluster also ensure the Council adheres to the Mandatory Requirements Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. 2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect procurement activity to achieve key outcomes within the LOIP and this Delivery Plan.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Enabling Services	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Support the development of an Aberdeen Community Wealth Building Action Plan to encompass key partners and look to maximise the local impact of procurement activity through leading on the Spend Pillar theme	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Further actions to secure and support delivery of community benefits through major developments. Including: - ETZ Jobs Plan - Hydrogen Hub JVP	T1 & T2	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

|								
		• City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan community benefits programme • Projects captured for progression within Capital Plan						
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement Policy • Refresh existing Policy and report to Committee • Agree implementation with Shared Service partners				T1	Sufficient internal capacity	

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will quality assure Cluster commissioning to ensure demand management is embedded for all revenue contracts above £50K contracts at strategy stage and throughout life of contract to ensure that the quantity and specification of goods and services match, but do not exceed, the actual needs of the Council.			✓		P	100%	Tier 1	🟧
2. A two year contract pipeline will be published online as part of the annual procurement report.	✓				N	100%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will quality assure Cluster commissioning through sample testing to ensure that all contracts above £50K in value are tracked to show community, local economic and environmental benefits.			✓		P	95%	Tier 1	🟧
4. We will ensure that all contracts above £50K have standard clauses to require providers to demonstrate commitments towards carbon reduction and efficiency.				✓	P	75%	Tier 1	🟧
5. We will monitor compliance, every six months and escalate non-compliance as required, to ensure that all delegated procurers have undertaken the necessary procurement training.			✓		N	100%	Tier 2	🟩
6. We will provide procurement compliance reports to the Risk Board every six months, reporting any exceptions and corrective actions taken.			✓		N	90%	Tier 1	🟩

Digital and Technology

Role of the Cluster

The Digital & Technology cluster is an enabling service, providing Information Technology (IT) services that are secure, highly available, effective and efficient to enable the provision of customer focused services to the citizens, visitors and businesses of Aberdeen. The cluster provides core IT infrastructure, implements and supports line of business applications and delivers and supports End User Computing services. The cluster also provides business analysis and project management to support digital transformation for the Council and the wider city.

Resources 5 Year Trends
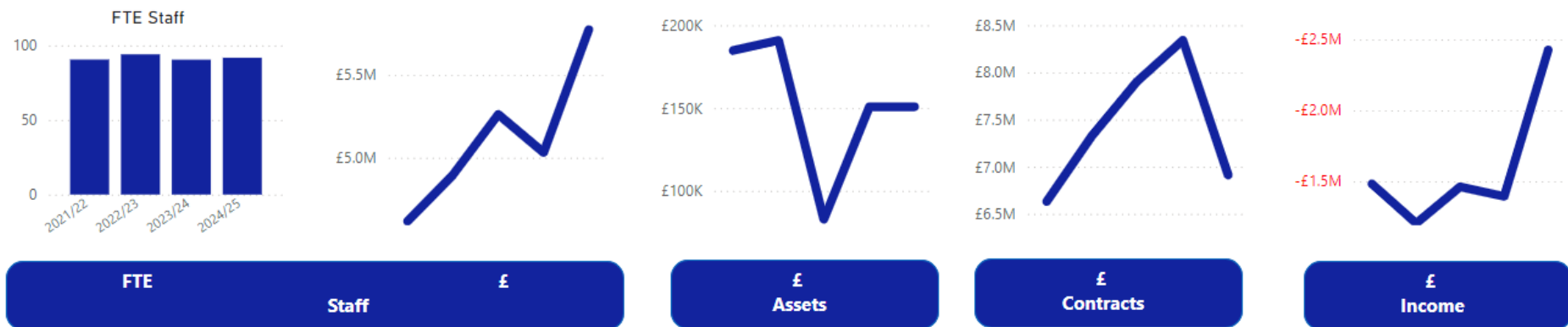
Digital and Technology concluded redesign of its structure in Q4 2023/24 and has been running under the new model since April 2024. Integration of system teams has been instrumental in creating capabilities around new, modern cloud platforms. The cluster continues to manage staff budgets to balance effective delivery with improved efficiency arising from automation and adoption of DevOps as part of normal business operation. The consolidation of system teams has allowed central co-ordination of contracts over the same period which shows an increase as additional contracts were transferred in and a reduction as contracts were aligned over the past financial year.

Performance in 2024/25

The cluster replaced 5,600 laptop devices which were end of life ensuring that the council's baseline cyber security standard is maintained.

The cluster led the continuous improvement programme around cyber security, achieving accreditation to the Public Services Network (PSN) and Cyber Essentials Plus.

The cluster facilitated a new AI chatbot for citizen contact that is helping to reduce failure demand

Successfully upgraded connections into all of our schools to deliver high speed connectivity, laying foundations for improvements funded as part of the £17.7m capital investment for schools digital services.

The service desk exceeded its 65% target of first-time fixes with figures trending around 80% for the year.

Incident performance dipped in Q3 of 2024/25.

Digital and Technology continues to focus on the delivery of the enabling strategy in support of the new target operating model and improved digital services for citizens and staff.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Improved demand management	Current service catalogue for Digital & Technology will be reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with service function and new technologies. This will be linked to the demand management pipeline to ensure resources are allocated in line with defined service standards and priorities.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Reviews of demand, priority and service roadmaps	Monitoring demand pipelines for service areas will allow better targeting of resource to ensure priority commitments are scheduled and met.	Demand and capacity via IT Self Service will be monitored with service-based teams to ensure focus is maintained in the right areas. Aligns with best practice for product management.

The latest published risk register is linked here

Priorities

The cluster will continue to oversee our cyber security and drive forward the development of a new citizen platform to enable front facing services to better respond to the needs of those we serve. The further rollout of Dynamics365 and exploration of new technologies will help teams work more efficiently and effectively. Our continued investment in our children and young people will help ensure that our youngest citizens are well placed to benefit from opportunities in digital and technology as a growth sector.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Modernisation of citizen contact services building on AI capabilities and enhanced life events service structure.	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work with commercial partners
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Development of HR self service capabilities to better support all employees and provide improved access to frontline workers.	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work with commercial partners
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support	Rationalisation of housing systems to improve support for tenants and support for housing strategy.	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work

	the best possible service experience			with commercial partners
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Complete the analogue to digital transition for council provided services including the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC).	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work with commercial partners
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Upgrade the network infrastructure across all council sites to include wide area (WAN) and local area network (LAN) assets.	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work with commercial partners
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Drive adoption of generative AI to support staff in focusing on high value human interactions.	T1 & T2	Sufficient Internal capacity
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Retain PSN and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations.	T1 & T2	Sufficient Internal capacity
Enabling Services	A Modern and Effective School Digital Estate	Finish delivery of Northern Lights project to ensure all schools have an established baseline for modernisation and innovation in learning and teaching.	T1 & T2	Internal capacity supported by capital investment to work with commercial partners

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will ensure calls to the IT Service Desk are dealt with right first time.		✓	✓		N	78%	Tier 2	🟩
2. We will ensure critical systems are continuously available.	✓	✓	✓		N	99.5%	Tier 1	🟩
3. We will resolve Priority 1 incident calls within 4 working hours.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
4. We will resolve Priority 2 incident calls within 8 working hours.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
5. We will resolve Priority 3 incident calls within 3 working days.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
6. We will resolve Priority 4 incident calls within 5 working days.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 2	🟧
7. We will resolve Priority 5 Incident calls within 30 working days.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	🟧
8. Digital & Technology Services will be available as follows: • Service Desk Phone Support Hours: Mon – Fri (08:30-16:00) • Self Service Portal (24/7) • Emergency Support (24/7)	✓				N	100%	Tier 1	🟧

People & Citizen Services

Role of the Cluster

The People & Citizen Services cluster is responsible for supporting the delivery of the Target Operating Model by enabling, empowering and engaging staff to deliver the best service and outcomes for our citizens, communities, businesses and visitors to our city. The cluster provides vital frontline, administration and support functions, fundamental to the effective delivery of services. The cluster actively improves outcomes for themes such as recovery of unpaid council debts, financial inclusion, people development, person centricity and engagement.

Resources 5 Year Trends

Income is increasing as a result of offering additional benefits (home tech) to staff, this may reduce slightly due to changes in National Insurance which may have an impact. Staff resourcing costs have risen due to the pay award and transfer in of HR service centre and payroll teams. The cluster has continued to grow, taking responsibility for the provision of first line and administrative support on behalf of other council services and partnership organisations, e.g. Housing, Vaccine Support and the Children's Panel. The staffing levels are reflective of this growth. Contract spend has been variable to meet essential service delivery and is therefore demand driven, with evidence of a decrease during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Performance in 2024/25

The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax fell from £7.16 in 2022/23 to £6.25 in 2023/24. This is better than the average for similar council areas of £10.33.

The average days taken to process new claims and changes to housing benefit reduced from 12.06 in 2022/23 to 8.58 in 2023/24.

The average days to process new Benefit Claims reduced from 33 in 2022/23 to the 16.5 in 2023/24.

There has been no change in the gender pay gap from in 2023/24 at -6%, meaning that on average female employees earn more than males. The Local Authority sits well above the Scottish average of 1.7%

The % of Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants processed within 1 day rose from 97% in 2022/23 to 99% in 2023/24. This is better than the national average of 97%.

Staff absence has risen (excluding teachers) to 14.6 days in 2023/24, slightly above the Scottish average of 13.9. Evidence, shows this figure is likely to fall for 2023/24.

The % of Scottish Welfare Community Care Grants processed within 15 days fell from 77.5% in 2022/23 to 66.3% in 2023/24. in 2023/24. This is below the national average of 93.9%.

The % of Council Tax received by the end of the year was 92.8% in 2023/24. Down from 94.2% the previous year and less that the Scottish average of 95.5%.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Council tax and rent arrears	Whilst the Council continues to receive Council Tax beyond the end of the year, the in year collection rate fell in 2023/24 and is below the national average and below the average of similar Councils.
Support targeted clusters to improve attendance	People & Citizen Services has a role in supporting all sections of the Council manage employee absence. During 2024/25 analysis and tests of change have been undertaken which has led to an improvement in absence management and absence rates, and this will be continued in 2025/26.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Flexible working policy	A revised flexible working policy will be implemented during 2025/26. The implementation and impact of this policy change will inform future planning.	We will follow the Council's approach to evaluation supported by the Health Determinants Research Collaboration.

The latest published risk register is linked here

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect the need to formalise smarter working arrangement through corporate wide policy. We continue to focus and invest in our key priorities of staff mental health and wellbeing, developing our young workforce, whilst at the same time recognising our workforce capacity risk. We continue to expand and develop our apprenticeships across the organisation, supporting Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships matched to our hard to fill roles and areas of increasing demand. In addition, we will continue to participate in a range of employability initiatives, in collaboration with our City Development and Regeneration colleagues, supporting a significant number of internships for care experienced young people, and young people at risk of unemployment. We have seen good results in both our apprentices and interns securing ongoing employment with the Council at the end of their programmes.

Priorities reflect the ongoing focus on the provision of critical and statutory services vital to the people and place of Aberdeen City and the implementation of workstreams within the Customer, Data and Digital strategy. Increased digitisation will be implemented to improve efficiency and we will continue to assist service users to help themselves through self-serve channels, to reduce demand on resources and enable our focus to be on the most vulnerable, who require one to one support. Integrated access will be developed further in association with partnership organisations, and a life events approach to service delivery embedded to enable us to signpost to the most appropriate support and to intervene when necessary. Further support activity for the council will be channelled through the cluster, which allows capacity to be maximised in other areas to focus on their priorities.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will implement a new HR / Payroll and Case Management System which will improve our efficiency by automating a number of our processes, improving our reporting functionality and our employee experience.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	With the Health Determinants Research Collaboration, we take deliberate actions which promote a research and evidence led culture throughout the Council and implement a programme to support the development of the necessary skills and knowledge.	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will implement a new flexible working policy which, alongside the statutory right to request flexible working, will provide greater flexibility for employees and bring benefits including improved work-life balance, increased morale and aid recruitment and retention.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	Refresh the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan to align with our new employer equality outcomes for 2025-2029 to meet our public sector equality duty.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Enabling Services	Reduction in avoidable contact to increase focus on those with most need	We will modernise the Contact Centre and redesign the supporting operating model, to maximise efficiency and support for those most vulnerable, including: • Complete the implementation of new digital telecare alarm receiving technology, enabling over 13,000 North East telecare users to transition from analogue to digital landlines. • Transform our traditional contact centre into an interactive "omni-channel" • Further deploy the 'Assisted Digital' citizen delivery model to educate and drive up digital uptake	T1	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.

Enabling Services	Undertake proactive citizen and community engagement	We will create and implement a Citizen Engagement policy to guide positive consultation, engagement, and support for employees managing challenging behaviours.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
		• Expand the integrated access model and life events approach providing a single entry point for citizens to access Council and partner agency services.		
Enabling Services	Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake	Work with colleagues through the Fairer Futures Pathfinder, to support whole family early intervention and prevention services to increase benefits uptake and improve debt management.	T1, T2 & T3	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards		Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1.	We will complete evaluation panels upon receipt of all completed and verified documentation within 15 working days for each individual job, in relation to Job Evaluation.		✓			N	96%	Tiers 1 &2	
2.	We will allocate a People and Organisation advisor to formal casework within 5 working days.		✓			N	100%	Tier 2	
3.	All People Development courses will receive 75% employee satisfaction in evaluations.	✓		✓		N	89%	Tier 1	
4.	We will make initial contact with redeployees within 5 working days of redeployment confirmation.	✓				N	100%	Tiers 1 &2	
5.	We will pay our people correctly and on time, in line with notifications of changes received within deadlines.			✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	

| #	Description		✓		Col	Val	Tier	
6.	We will refresh our Employer, Service Provider, Education, Licensing Equality Outcomes every 4 years, and comply with requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and its Scottish Specific Duties.		✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
7.	We will update our Gaelic Language Plan every 5 years, providing Monitoring Reports to the Gaelic Board on an annual basis. We will promote the GLP internally and externally in line with Scottish Government requirements: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-gaelic-language-plan-2022-		✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
8.	We will update our British Sign Language Plan every 6 years and deliver the actions required by the Scottish Government British Sign Language (BSL): national plan 2023 to 2029 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)		✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	🟩
Revenues and Benefits								
1.	We will process all new housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims within 35 calendar days on average.	✓			N	32	Tier 1	🟩
2.	We will process change of circumstances in relation to housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction within 5 calendar days on average.	✓			N	4.45	Tier 1	🟩
3.	We will process Crisis Grant applications within 2 working days.	✓			L	98.4%	Tier 3	🟧
4.	We will pay the correct amount of housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction to customers.		✓		N	96%	Tier 1	🟩
5.	We will process Community Care Grant applications within 15 working days.	✓			L	73%	Tier 1	🟧
Registrars – Births, Deaths and Marriages								
6.	We will ensure accurate Registration of all Births, Deaths and Marriages.		✓		P	99%	Tier 1	🟩
7.	We will issue copy birth, death, marriage and civil partnership certificates within 7 days of the request being received.		✓		N	99%	Tier 1	🟩
Customer Service								
8.	We will answer Customer Contact Centre calls within an average of 5 minutes.	✓			N	75% (180 sec)	P / EI / H	🟩

Finance

Role of the Cluster

The Finance cluster is central to our governance arrangements and is responsible for financial planning, including the Medium Term Financial Strategy, monitoring and reporting of the Council budget.   The Cluster provides financial advice to officers and members and administers the North East Scotland Pension Fund.

Resources 5 Year Trends
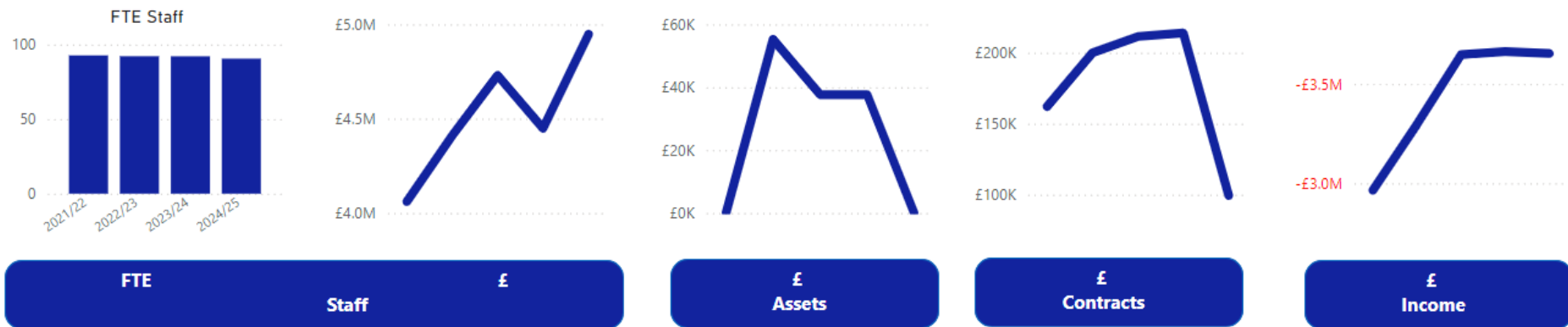
The increase in staff costs is reflective of the pay awards, there has been a planned reduction in contracts.

Performance in 2024/25

The % of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days is reported on a quarterly basis and has only fallen below the target of 90% once since the beginning of 2022/23.

Actual revenue outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure fell from 100.4% in 2022/23 to 97.6% in 2023/24. This is below the Scottish average of 99.6%.

The total usable reserves as a % of budgeted annual revenue was 25.9% in 2023/24 compared to 26.5% in 2022/23. The Scottish average is 23.9%.

The uncommitted fund balance as % of annual budgeted revenue was 2.2% in 2023/24 compared to 2.3% in 2022/23.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
Adult care financial assessments	Control and processes for adult care financial assessments have been identified as a priority area for improvement.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
With colleagues, evaluation of the commissioning / budget cycle	The commissioning / budget cycle is critical for organisational planning and delivery. Annual reviews have been conducted over the last few years. We need to build on these continuously.	Partly paper based review and partly stakeholder engagement. Different aspects of the process may be reviewed individually e.g. consultation, IIAs

The latest published risk register is linked here

Priorities

The 2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect the agreed budget protocol and increasing levels of support being afforded to clusters and the Transformation Board in order to deliver on agreed budget savings.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Enabling Services	Management of Council Finances	Further embed the 3 tier model of prevention as an enabler of rebalancing spend from reactive to early intervention and prevention.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity
Enabling Services	Management of Council Finances	Update the agreed budget protocol, to take into account feedback and timelines for 2025/26 and oversee implementation.	T1	Sufficient internal capacity

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
Accounting:								
1. We will deliver all relevant statutory financial reporting and returns.		✓	✓		L	100%	Tier 1	
2. We will provide budget holder meetings across all Council service areas no less than once a quarter (no to be determined based on risk).	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	100%	Tier 2	

|									
3.	We will ensure that the treasury strategy is prepared and implemented annually to comply with statutory requirements and credit rating updated annually.		✓	✓		L	100%	Tier 1	
4.	We will provide all LSE announcements in line with established timescales.	✓	✓			P	100%	Tier 1	
Process and controls:									
5.	We will process care income assessments within 40 days once all relevant information is received from Care Management.		✓	✓	✓	N	97% (28 days)	Tier 1	
Financial transactions/Business services – shared with Customer Cluster:									
6.	We will pay creditor invoices within 30 days.		✓	✓		P	95%	Tier 1	
7.	We will ensure that 1% of the Council's annual revenue budget is subject to budgeting.	✓				P	100%	Tier 1	
8.	We will send outstanding debt details to the Sheriff Officer no less than quarterly, once our internal collection processes have been exhausted.		✓	✓		N	N/A	Tier 1	

Data Insights (HDRCA)

Role of the Cluster

The Data Insights (HDRCA) cluster is responsible for identifying social, economic and digital trends; how they will impact our city in future; and how we can meet these needs through stronger partnership working. At an institutional level this cluster is responsible for understanding why people use our services, how they access our services and analysing information to understand the impact of the service. The cluster has a role in identifying outcomes which will reduce demand for services across the Council.

Resources 5 Year Trends
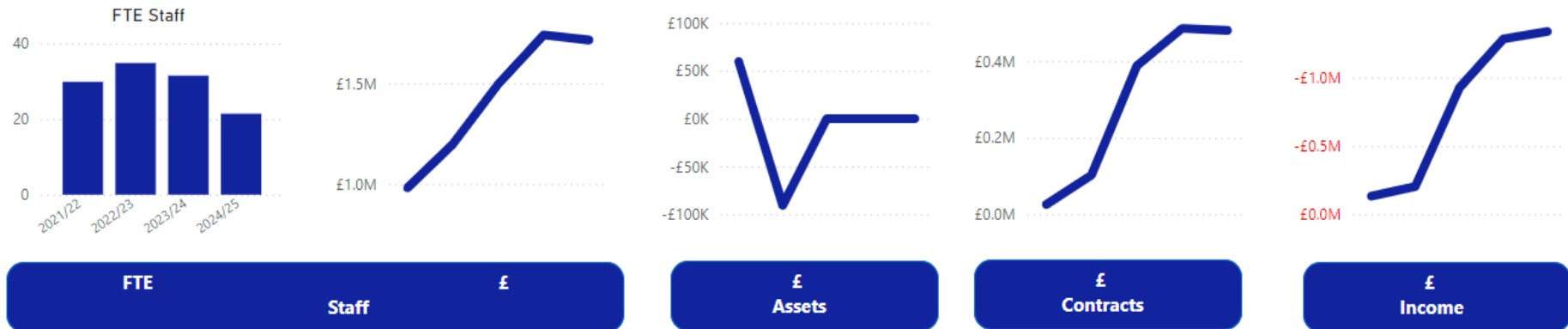
The overall resource of the Cluster changed significantly when external funding was secured for the Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen. This is reflected across all spend categories and balanced by income. In other areas of the Cluster net staffing levels have been reduced over the period shown.

Performance in 2024/25

The collaborative work of the Cluster has been successful extended in 2024/25, including the working with University College London, Public Health Scotland and Scottish Government.

The number of information governance incidents has remained stable. Only 2 incidents required to be reported to the Information Commissioner, neither of these resulted in further action. All incidents received an initial response within 24 hours.

The Council's continued investment in data infrastructure continued in 2024/25 with the operationalisation of a Central Data Platform and master data management.

Improvement Priorities	Justification
School Roll Forecasting	The methodology and dynamic changes in population have made forecasting difficult, but it is critical organisational intelligence. There are multiple inputs for the forecast, many of these rely on partners' data. This has meant producing timely forecasts is not always possible. Currently we are delivering 2 "forecasts" one based on historical methodology the other using actual numbers.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
With colleagues, evaluation of the commissioning / budget cycle	The commissioning / budget cycle is critical for organisational planning and delivery. Annual reviews have been conducted over the last few years. We need to build on these continuously.	Partly paper based review and partly stakeholder engagement. Different aspects of the process may be reviewed individually e.g. consultation, IIAs
Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC)	The externally funded is a new and innovative approach to organisational change. It is important to evaluate the impact of the collaboration.	The evaluation will include both qualitative and quantitative assessments against success criteria agreed with the funder.

The last published risk register is linked here

Priorities

2025/26 priorities have been updated to reflect prioritisation on foundational capability which will enable the Council to realise additional and faster value and insight from data about the City, its people and public services. Working with colleagues and partners, activity will focus on prevention, supporting those most in need, protecting the environment and evaluating the effectiveness of public services. Each element of this foundational capability also strengthens the management and protection of citizens' data.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	ACC Capacity
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Work with Public Health Scotland, University College London (Institute of Health Equity) and local partners to implement the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland, focusing on the Northfield and Torry areas of the city.	T1 & T2	Subject to on-going funding & commitment from partners.
Enabling Services	Data management for insights and improvement	Expand the use of the Council's Central Data Platform to improve speed and quality of insights to support policy making.	T1 & T2	Sufficient internal capacity
Enabling Services	Data management for insights and improvement	Operationalise Master Data Management to enable greater understanding of individual needs and inform targeted and preventative services.	T1 & T2	Some business as usual work will be reduced to release capacity to deliver
Enabling Services	Data management for insights and improvement	Work with local and national partners to promote and enable the effective sharing of data across organisational boundaries.	T1 & T2	Subject to multi-agency resource being secured
Enabling Services	Data management for insights and improvement	Leverage the resources of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration (Aberdeen) to support understanding of the drivers of demand, the effectiveness of interventions and the evaluation of public services.	T1 & T2	Sufficient resource available.

Service Standards	Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1. We will ensure reported data protection related incidents receive an initial response within 24 hours (weekdays).	✓	✓			L	100%	Tier 3	
2. We will make relevant and up to date data, information and insights permanently available to stakeholders through our online Aberdeen Outcomes Framework, Aberdeen City Data Observatory; Aberdeen City Council's Public Performance Reporting arrangements; and internal performance portals and dashboards available as per agreed schedules.	✓		✓		L	100%	Tier 1	
3. We will provide school roll forecasts every two years.		✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	
4. We will schedule monthly data forums with Council colleagues and deliver data products in line with timeframes agreed by the Forums.	✓	✓			N	100%	Tier 1	

All Cluster Service Standards

Ref		Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
Access to Information									
1.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Stage 1 complaints within 5 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	76%	Tier 3	
2.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	51%	Tier 3	
3.	**Corporate** - We will respond to escalated stage 2 complaints within 20 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	69%	Tier 3	
4.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.		✓			L	86%	Tier 3	
5.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Environmental Information Regulation Requests within 20 working days.		✓			L	89%	Tier 3	
6.	**Corporate** - We will respond to non complex Subject Access Requests within 1 month and respond to complex Subject Access Requests within 3 months (as per the ICO definition of a complex Subject Access Request)		✓			L	72%	Tier 3	
7.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Access to School Records requests within 15 school days.		✓			L	100%	Tier 3	
8.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Data Protection Right requests within 1 month.		✓			L	100%	Tier 3	
9.	**Corporate** - We will respond to Members enquiries submitted via our online portal within 15 working days or within timescales agreed with the Member.		✓			N	80%	Tier 3	
Equalities									
10.	We will complete an Integrated Impact Assessment for committee reports which include proposals which impact on people with protected characteristics.		✓	✓		Y	100%	Tier 1 &2	

Section 6: Performance and Improvement

The implementation of commissioning intentions and service standards will be supported and scrutinised through the Council's Performance Management Framework, which establishes robust performance management of service delivery whilst ensuring everyone within the organisation knows their personal contribution towards achieving outcomes.

The purpose of the performance management framework is to provide assurance of performance levels and to deliver improvement. During 2024/25, through the scrutiny of the Council's committees and the executive leadership of a "Performance Board", improvement projects were established in response to underperformance. These included:

- Housing Rent Arrears
- Repair and Letting of Empty Housing (Voids)
- Sickness Absence in Targeted Areas
- Customer Complaints
- Subject Access Request Handling in a Targeted Area.

In 2025/26 officers will report performance improvement priorities and progress towards improvement through the arrangements set out within the Council's Performance Management Framework, providing the Council's committees and the Performance Board with information to undertake relevant scrutiny and consider and agree areas where further improvement activity should be initiated.

For each priority improvement area identified the undernoted steps are followed:
i. Define the desired improvement - a concise description of the issue to be addressed / the performance to be improved upon.
ii. Identify the nature of the improvement - there are 3 categories of improvement project. The improvement methods applied and the tools used will vary, depending on which category the project falls in to. The categories are:
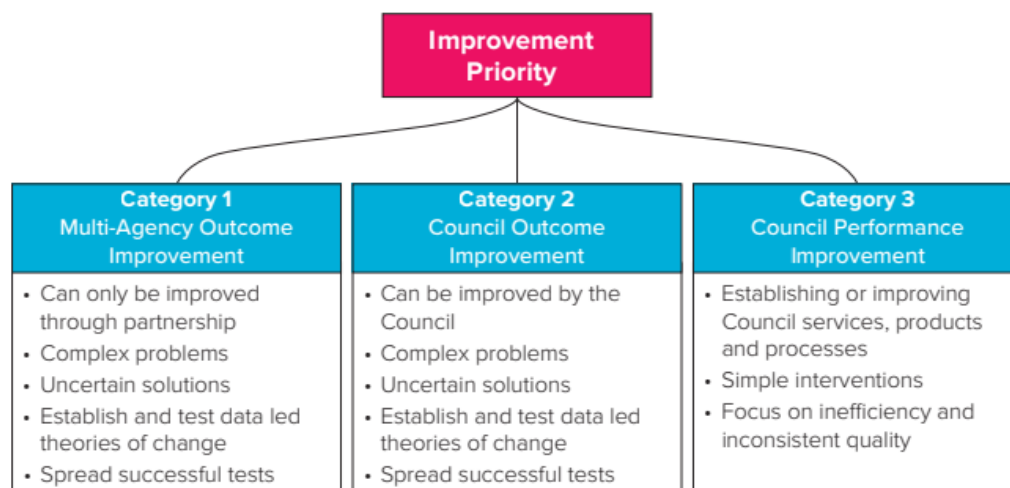
iii. Establish and implement improvement projects - How each improvement project is taken forward will also depend on which category applies.
iv. Monitor the effectiveness of improvement projects.