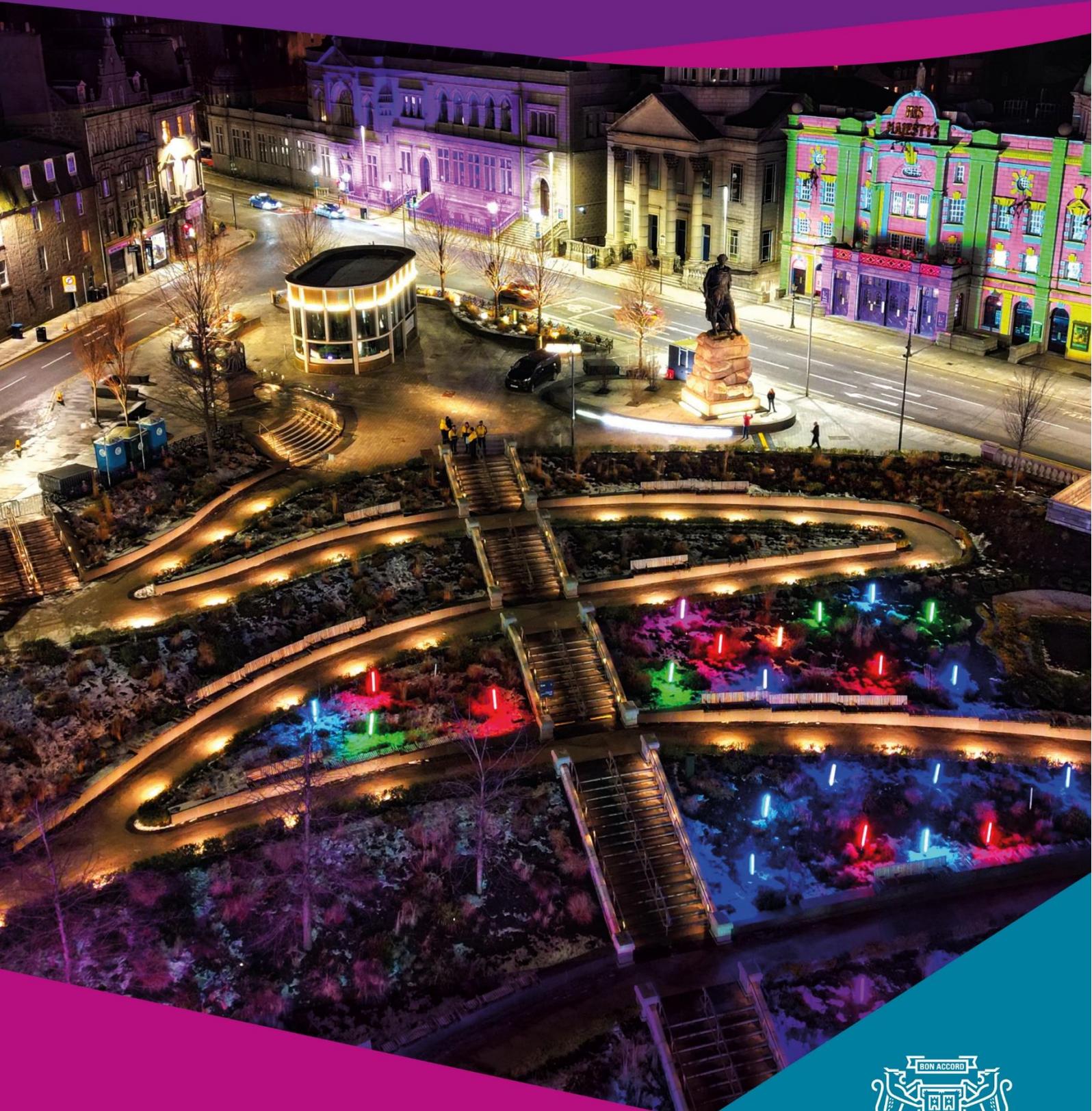


Aberdeen - A place where all people can prosper

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2026-2027



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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

This Delivery Plan is set within the most challenging operating environment local government has faced since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. Demand for public services continues to rise, driven by demographic change, cost-of-living pressures and deep-rooted inequalities, while the resources available to respond to this demand are increasingly constrained.

The Scottish Fiscal Commission's Fiscal Sustainability Report published in April 2025 projected a long-term gap between Scotland's spending and funding, without reform and preventative strategies. It highlighted the demographic pressures from Scotland's aging population as likely to increase demand for health and social care services and place severe strain on public finances. Improving population health was described as critical to ease fiscal pressures.

"Improving Scotland's health is essential to our economic future. A healthier population supports higher employment and productivity, reducing pressure on public services and strengthening the sustainability of the public finances."

Scottish Fiscal Commission, Fiscal Sustainability Report, April 2025

With that context, this Plan is structured around the social determinants of health and the role of local authorities in supporting health and well-being, and within constrained resources the Plan should be read as a managed response to systemic pressure, rather than as a statement that all activity can expand or be sustained at historical levels. It reflects a deliberate shift in how the Council leads, prioritises and accounts for delivery in 2026/27.

Our primary objective for the year ahead is to protect statutory duties, safeguard vulnerable people, and maintain the integrity of essential services, while accelerating the longer-term shift towards prevention and early intervention. Achieving this requires disciplined prioritisation and difficult choices.

There is an increasing expectation on councils to absorb risk created elsewhere in the system. This Plan takes a different approach. It does not seek to displace or obscure risk, but

to identify and manage it openly, so that there is a clear and shared understanding of the Council's operating reality. Where ambitions exceed current capacity, particularly in areas of workforce availability, affordability or partnership dependency, this is acknowledged explicitly. Delivery in these areas will be phased, adapted or re-prioritised as conditions evolve, and progress will be reported transparently through our performance and governance arrangements.

The ability to deliver any plan ultimately rests on our workforce. The actions set out in this Plan are therefore underpinned by a clear recognition of workforce capacity as a finite resource. Protecting staff wellbeing, stabilising critical services, and avoiding unsustainable change overload are not optional considerations; they are prerequisites for safe and effective delivery. This means that in some areas, activity will reduce, stop or change to release capacity for higher-impact, preventative and statutory work.

We will judge success in 2026/27 not by the volume of activity undertaken, but by whether we have acted responsibly, protected the most vulnerable, and positioned the organisation for medium-term stability.

This Delivery Plan represents a Council that understands the scale of the challenge it faces and is responding with realism, integrity and care. It is an honest plan for a difficult year. Our commitment is not to do everything, but to do the right things, in the right way, with the resources entrusted to us.

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.

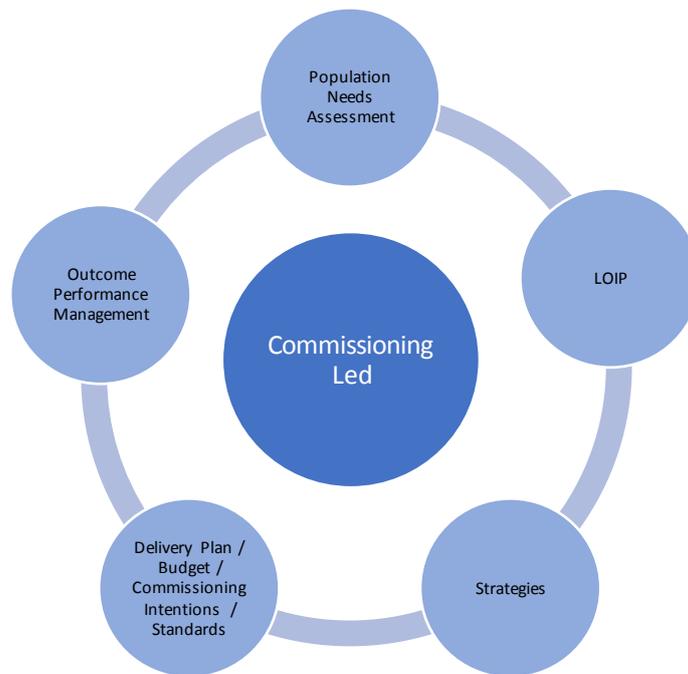
Through early intervention and prevention, we aim to create the conditions for prosperity and support future generations to be prepared and made ready for school, for work, for adulthood and for life itself.

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.

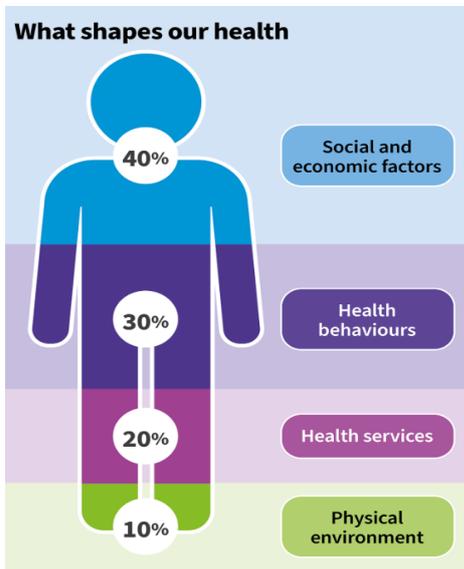


Adopting this commissioning led cycle ensures that:

- 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

As with the 2025/26 Plan, this Delivery Plan is structured around 5 themes which reflect the Social Determinants of Health. Those are all the non-clinical factors that influence people's 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.

Social Determinants

- Children, Families & Lifelong Learning
- Economic Stability
- Communities & Housing
- Neighbourhood & Environment
- Health & Social Care

Throughout this Plan, the 5 themes of the social determinants of health are used to inform priorities, activity and the use of resources in 2026/27.

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) updated in 2025 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 whilst the long-term trends in some factors relating to the determinants of health and wellbeing have been positive, the impact of increases in the cost of living has been, and will continue to be, felt unequally across the City, contributing to levels of poverty, inequality and associated vulnerabilities. It also tells us that there is a projected fall in the number of younger people in the city, with the largest projected population increase being for men aged 75+. The city is also projected to have slow economic growth compared to other UK cities, with an average annual GVA growth of less than 1. However, the city has many strengths and benefits from strong economic foundations and is supported by investment in key infrastructure and a focus on skills, energy transition and diversification.

A summary of some of the central data for 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?

The % of 16-19 year olds in an annual participation destination in 2024/25 was improved at 91.9%. This is lower than the national figure of 93.3%.



The proportion of eligible 2 year-olds attending Early Learning & Childcare provision in 2024/25 was 48%. In 2023/24 this figure was 38%.



In 2024/25, the total tariff point scores of our overall senior phase pupil cohort had risen from 892 to 919, matching the national figure, with material gains at SIMD 2 and 3.



The proportion of Early Learning & Childcare settings with positive assessments at inspection across the Quality Indicator suite rose to 95.6%. In 2023/24, this figure was 83.2%

What has stayed the same?

The proportion of Looked After Children and Young people being cared for in a home setting in 2024/25 was similar to that in the previous year at 13.2%.



The percentage of city schools which were evaluated as being in Good or Satisfactory condition was unchanged from 2023/24 at 96.7, but higher than the national average of 92%.



In primary schools, Curriculum for Excellence measures across P1,4, and 7 combined have remained stable in comparison with 2023/24 outcomes, and with the national trend.



On average, the number of Looked After Children and Young People cared for in a residential setting was 62 in 2024/25. This is the same as the figure for 2023/24.

What has declined?

In 2023/24 the percentage of children with a developmental concern at 27-30 month reviews increased to 13.7% from 10.5% in the previous year. This is lower than the Scotland figure of 16.7%.



The proportion of Looked After Children and Young People being cared for in a kinship setting has, on average, fallen from the 2023/24 high of 23.9% to 20.7% in 2024/25.



The percentage of Primary 1 children recorded as having a healthy weight in 2023/24 reduced from 78.4% to 77.3%. This was just above the Scotland level of 76.5%.



The level of adults in the community expressing satisfaction with schools, had reduced year-on-year to 66.7% from 69.0%. This is marginally below the Scotland level (69.0%) which has also fallen.

The PNA includes a wide range of indicators covering the physical health and mental wellbeing of children and young people. Early childhood experiences set the foundation for future health outcomes. Aberdeen performs well in early years engagement, but socio-

economic disparities continue to influence outcomes, particularly for children from low-income households. These inequalities are often seen in poorer nutrition, limited access to extracurricular activities, and exposure to adverse childhood experiences, all of which can have lasting effects on physical and mental health.

School environments are key settings for promoting health and wellbeing. Initiatives that integrate mental health support, physical activity, and healthy eating into the curriculum are essential for reducing health inequalities. Children living in deprived areas are more likely to experience educational disadvantage, which impacts health behaviours and outcomes later in life. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that combines educational improvement with targeted social support, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Steady improvement has been made in educational outcomes and gains too in children and young people securing positive destinations, however, there are clear differences across geographical areas, with fewer school leavers in the most deprived areas having a positive destination.



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 % of vacant commercial units within the city centre has improved in 2024/25 to 18.4% from 20.7%. This is above the national figure of 11.4%, which also experienced a year-on-year improvement.



The proportion of children living in relative poverty after housing costs has reduced from 21.8% in 2022/23 to 19.1% in the most recent year. Nationally, this figure was 20.7% with a growing negative gap to the city outcome.



Gross weekly pay in Aberdeen for full time employment has risen to a new measured high of £834 in 2025 from £804 in 2024. The Scottish average has risen by the same amount but is lower at £773.



The percentage of properties with access to the superfast broadband network in 2024/25 was 98.5% in comparison with 97.6% in 2023/24. The national figure in 2023/24 was 97.1%.

What has stayed the same?

The claimant count, as a % of the working age population, has remained stable between 2023/24 and 2024/25 at 3.2%, with a small reduction in the number of claimants. This is in line with the national figure and trend.



The % of those economically active who were in self-employment as at the rolling annual period in June 2025 (3.8%) is similar to that in the same period in 2024 although with a reduction in overall numbers.



In Aberdeen, the total of employee jobs in 2024, and for each of the previous four years, is comparatively unchanged at 158,000



The number of planning applications submitted in 2024/25 was 713 similar to that in 2023/24 (728 applications).

What has declined?

The proportion of people earning less than the Living Wage increased from 8.4% to 9.3%, although the city remains amongst the best performing local authorities. The Scotland figure in 2024/25 was 11.3%.



The number of local business units in Aberdeen in 2025 have fallen by 215 on 2024 to 10,240 after a significant year-on-year rise in the previous year.



In the year to June 2025, 21.4% of Aberdeen's working age population (16-64) were economically inactive compared to the 20.1% recorded between July 2023 and June 2024. The national outcome for this period was 23.1%.



The number of Business Gateway Start-ups had fallen in 2024/25 from 17.1 per 10,000 of population to 12.9 which is in line with the national figure. Consistently, the city has previously performed at levels above the Scotland outcome.

Economic stability remains a cornerstone of health outcomes in Aberdeen. Economic insecurity often correlates with stress, poor mental health, and reduced capacity to engage in preventative health behaviours. Wage levels directly influence access to nutritious food, quality housing, and overall living standards, which in turn impact health and outcomes.

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. The PNA though highlights persistent inequalities in income and employment, though some progress has been made in measures of childhood poverty and in narrowing the gender pay gap.

Employment opportunities remain similar to the previous year. Although there was a slight increase in economic inactivity, this remains below the Scottish average and whilst the wealth gap between the region and Scotland as a whole is narrowing, people in the city still earning more per head of population than across Scotland overall.



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 number of recorded incidents of crime fell from 967 per 10,000 of population in 2023/24 to 921. Aberdeen City has the lowest crude crime rate of the four major city authorities.



Council tenants experienced an improvement in times taken for non-emergency repairs from 8.5 days in 2023/24 to just under 7.5 days in 2024/25, extending the distance to an increasing national response rate.



The incidence of threatening and abusive behaviour recorded in the city has fallen from 68.9 per 10,000 per population to 63.6. This is well below the National figure of 77.8.



In 2024/25, the value of funding available to residents through the Scottish Welfare funding, administered, and supported, by Aberdeen City Council, rose by 12.7% to £1.58m from £1.40m.

What has stayed the same?

The proportion of rent arrears due from all Council tenancies was similar to 2024/25 at 17.9% in comparison with 18.2% in 2023/24. At Scotland level, the % was just under half of this figure at 8.6%.



New homeless presentations that sustained a tenancy for more than a year in 2024/25 was 86.6% in comparison with 86.7% in the prior year and has been constant over 3 years.



Funding provided through Discretionary Housing Payments, providing additional financial support for those in receipt of certain state benefits, was largely constant in 2024/25 at £2.70m. In 2023/24, the figure was £2.64m.



Incident rates where children were referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter for offenses has remained constant for a third consecutive year at 6.3 per 1,000 of 8 to 15 year olds in 2024/25.

What has declined?

In 2024, 8.9% of City Voice respondents stated that they experienced hunger in the course of the last 12 months but did not eat, in part, as a result of financial or availability obstacles. This was a 3% increase on the 2022 survey outcome.



In the most recent City Voice survey, 5.5% of respondents recorded that they were seeking support for the meeting of heating costs. This is an increase from 4.7% in the previous survey in 2022.



A reduced proportion of Community Care Grant applications submitted to address non-urgent needs were decided within 15 days. In 2023/24, this was 78.1% and in 2024/25 it was 66.7%. Application levels were constant, but well above benchmarks.



Social relationships and community cohesion are vital for mental and physical health and Aberdeen enjoys strong community networks and cultural engagement. 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. Further improvements have been seen in overall crime rates this year, however, 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.

There are consistently high numbers of homeless presentations. 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, however, improvements have been made for response repairs.

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.



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?

The % of Household Waste that was recycled in 2024/25 was 43.1%, higher than in both 2023/24 and 2022/23 where it was 41.8%. Nationally, the average figure was 44.3%.



The proportion of those surveyed in 2024 who stated that they actively travelled to work (walking / wheeling) increased by 1% on 2023 to 14%. The national level was 14.2% having fallen slightly on the previous year.



In 2024, the % of Scottish Household Survey respondents indicating that they were within 5 minutes walking distance of a blue/green space rose by 2% to 61%, matching the large city average for the first time in five years.



The number of recorded incidents of vandalism per 10,000 of population reduced from 64.3 in 2023/24 to 58.3 in 2024/25.

What has stayed the same?

The amount of household waste generated in 2024 was 89,333 tonnes, almost identical to the 2023 figure of 89,314 tonnes. This was against a background of rising population and household numbers.



The percentage of population indicating that their main mode of travel was by cycle in 2024 was unchanged from 2023 at 1%.



The LEAMS Street Cleanliness Score for Aberdeen has remained largely unchanged from 2022/23 to 2024/25 at over 89%, just below the national figure in each year.



Carbon emissions related to local authority operations were stable in 2024/25 at 25,971 tCO₂e in comparison with 27,636 tCO₂e in 2023/24, against a background of an expanded measure scope.

What has declined?

Contacts related to reporting of anti-social behaviour had increased in 2024/25 to 4,140 from 3,542 in 2023/24. This latter figure represented a measured lifetime low for the city.



In 2024, 25% of people walked as their main mode of travel, down from 30% in 2023.



The proportion of adults expressing satisfaction with parks and open spaces in 2024/25 fell by 2.7 p.p. to 79.3%. This is the lowest level recorded in SHS surveying of city residents to date.



Efforts to reduce pollution locally, which now includes the Low Emissions Zone, continue through promotion of public transport and cycling. Mixed results were seen in the last year with some improvement in those stating that they actively travel to work, whilst fewer people say that walking was their main mode of travel.

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, and decreased in the last period.

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 marginally below national comparators.

Theme 5: Health & Social Care

What is getting better?

The % of women in the city smoking during pregnancy fell from 9.6% to 9.1% for the period to 2024. This is below the Scotland average of 9.6% which also fell.



Alcohol related hospital admissions fell from 546 per 100K population to 539 in the most recent period. This is slightly better than the Scottish average.



Deaths recorded as drug related for males has fallen in each of the last 2 reported periods (most recent 2019 to 2023 32.1 per 100k population). This is a similar pattern to Scotland, which now has a slightly higher rate.



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?

Deaths from suicide for those aged over 16 has remained stable over the last 5 years. This was 14.4 per 100k population in the period 2020 to 2024, below the Scotland rate of 16.8.



The rate of patients hospitalised for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease increased slightly to 185 per 100k population, but remains lower than recent years and lower than the Scotland figure.



The rate of reported domestic abuse remained similar in the period to 2023/24 to previous years at 110 per 10k population. Slightly below the Scotland figure.



Adults assessing their general health as good or very good remained unchanged in the period 2019 to 2023 at 78%. Significantly above the Scottish average of 72%.

What has declined?

Patients hospitalised for asthma rose for the second period in a row in the period to 2023/24. This upward movement was seen nationally too, with Aberdeen figures slightly below Scotland.



In 2023/24, 17% of people were prescribed drugs for anxiety, depression or psychosis. Whilst similar to the previous period and lower than Scotland, the rate has been increased over recent years.



The rate of patients with emergency hospitalisations in Aberdeen increased slightly to 6,490 per 100k population, but there is a long term downward trend. This is lower than the Scotland figure of 7,243.



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. Lower than the rate for Scotland of 27.5%.

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 5.5 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. Though lower than the Scotland figure and below the rate of the last decade, the rate of deaths from suicides remains concerning.

Domestic abuse remains concerning. In 2023–24, there were 2,512 recorded incidents of domestic abuse, equating to a rate of 110 per 10,000 population—slightly below the Scottish average but still significant.

Some measures for substance misuse improved, including hospitalisations for alcohol related disease and deaths recorded as drugs related, however, other health measures such as emergency hospitalisations and those for asthma rose.

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. Delivery Envelope Framework

The Delivery Envelope is a framework that distinguishes what the Council will deliver, what it will seek to deliver subject to conditions, and what activity is developmental or longer-term in nature. Its purpose is to ensure the Delivery Plan is risk-adjusted rather than an aspirational statement of intent.

The framework categorises every commissioning intention into three groups:

1. **Core Commitments (Must-Do / Funded / In Council Control)** - These are statutory duties, core funded services, and activity that the Council has the governance, workforce and budgetary control to deliver reliably.
2. **Conditional Commitments (Delivery Dependent on External Factors)** - These are commitments that rely on funding, legislative or policy decisions, partner capacity or workforce availability. These will progress where enabling conditions are met.
3. **Developmental or Aspirational Activity (Long-Term System Change)** - This includes policy development, pilots, system redesign, and early-stage reform that contributes to long-term sustainability.

Each intention also includes a deliverability rating and statement of the Primary Constraint.

RAG Deliverability Rating		Primary Constraint
Green	In control, funded, deliverable	Workforce, Funding, Partner, Legislative
Amber	Deliverable with active mitigation	
Red	High risk/outside direct control	

In support of prioritization and deliverability, each Cluster section also outlines where it will be ceasing or scaling back activity.

Proportionate Universalism

Proportionate Universalism is a public service principle that combines universal provision with targeted investment. An assessment for proportionate universalism has been applied to the commissioning intentions in Section V of this Plan. Proportionate universalism recognises that:

- Everyone should have access to core services.
- Additional support must be provided at greater scale and intensity for those with the greatest needs.

In practice, this means:

- **Universal commitments** remain in place for all residents.
- **Targeted interventions** are prioritised for communities and groups experiencing disadvantage.
- **Resource allocation** is scaled proportionately to need rather than equally across the population.

All commissioning intentions in Section V have been reviewed to determine whether:

1. they already reflect a proportionate universalism approach (X)
2. the intention can be amended and services designed to incorporate a proportionate universalism approach (C)
3. the intention is wholly universal (NA)

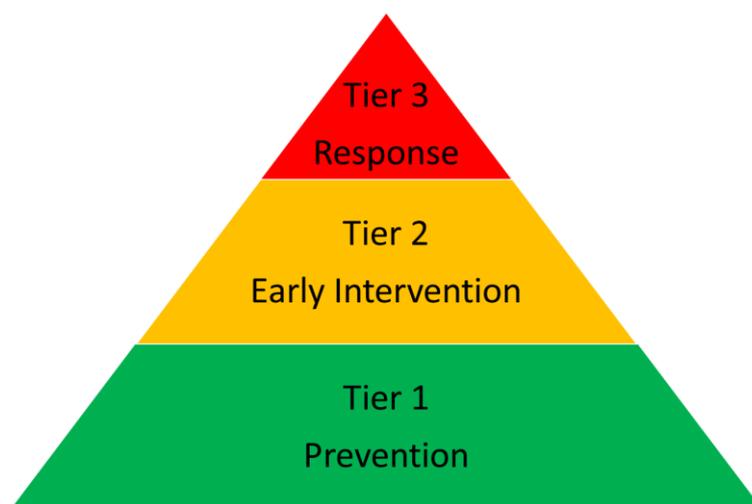
v. Prevention and Early Intervention

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 2026/27 the Council will continue 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.

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).



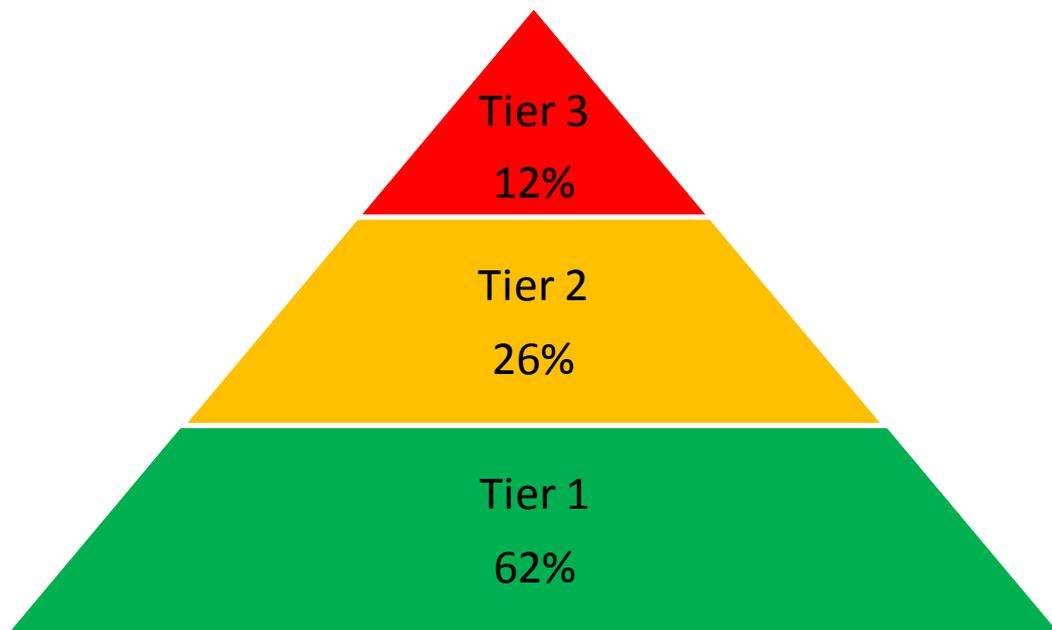
During 2025/26, this tiered model has been applied to a number of strategies and plans as well as the allocation of resources. In developing this Delivery Plan, and in advance of the Council agreeing a 2026/27 budget, we have applied this 3 tier model to:

- 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 26/27 budget process to understand potential impact
- v. undertaken an assessment of tiered resource allocation across the Aberdeen City Council family group

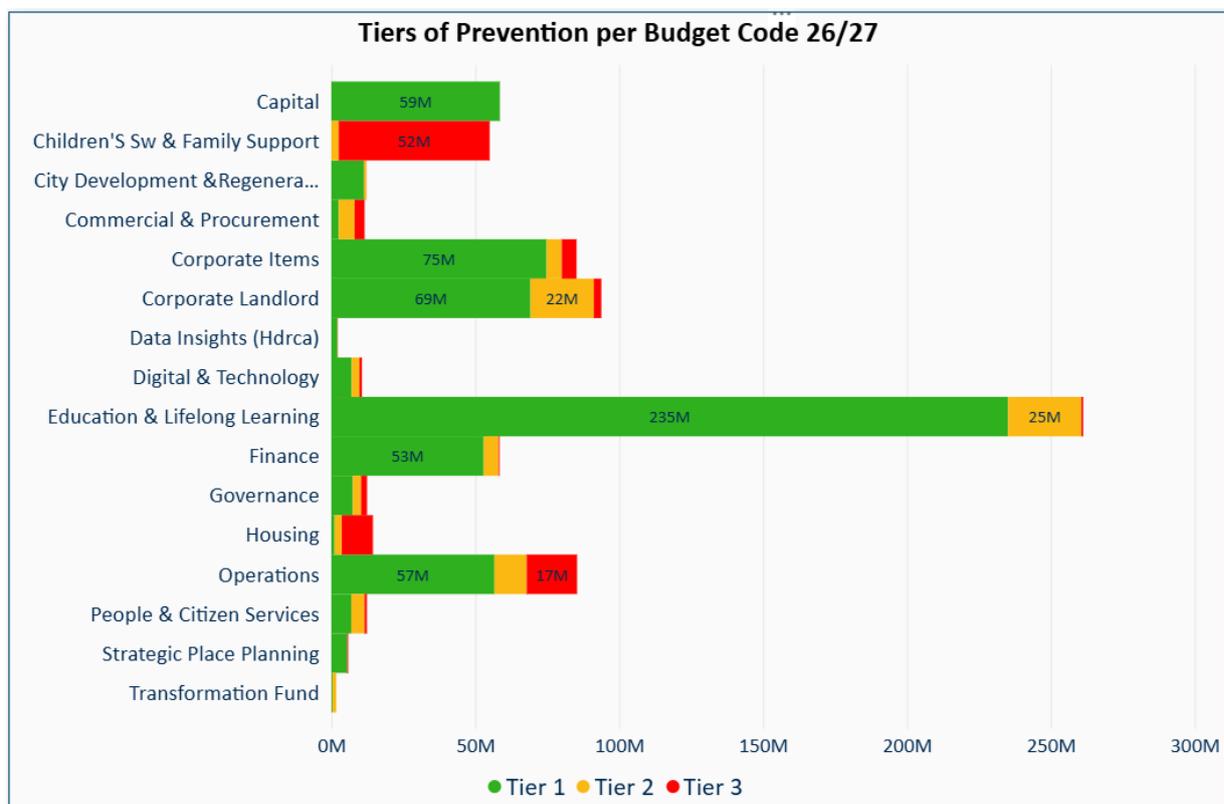
In applying the model the following definitions have been used.

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 2026/27 commissioning intentions and the draft 2026/27 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 2026/27 Commissioning Intentions Identified by Prevention and Early Intervention Tier



Value of 2026/27 General Revenue Budget by Cluster by Prevention and Early Intervention Tier

vi. Strategic Alignment

Alignment of High Level Priorities with the Social Determinants of Health

Theme	Strategic Priorities
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
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	
Communities & Housing	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour
	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims
	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
	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

vii. Aberdeen City Council Commissioning Intentions 2026/27

The following table sets out the 2026/27 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	Delivery Envelope	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	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, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to enter the job market.	Conditional	Funding	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Include a Specialist Employability Service (SES) following recommendations made by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE).	Conditional	Funding	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Establish collaborative partnerships with educational institutions, local businesses to create clear pathways and training courses that facilitate transitions into the workforce.	Conditional	Funding	City Development & Regeneration
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with partners to maximise the use of all resources to increase the range of courses available to young	Conditional	Partners	Education & Lifelong Learning

		people in order to improve outcomes for young people.			
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with employers to support work placements for young people, with a particular focus on those with additional support needs.	Conditional	Partners	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 families in SIMD 1 and 2 into employment when national plan is known.	Conditional	Funding	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction at the new Hazlehead Academy.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction on the Bucksburn Academy extension.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction at the refurbished St Peters Primary.	Core	Funding	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete new Harlaw playing fields pavilion.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete Harlaw Academy extension.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete refurbishment and extension of Ferryhill Primary	Core	Workforce	Capital

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Utilise live pupil tracking data to help close the poverty related attainment gap and determine effectiveness in addressing variation at school and Local Authority level.	Core	Workforce	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.	Core	Workforce	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Deliver a broader curriculum offer through digital and partnership delivery of Phase 4 of ABZ Campus to secure improvement in senior phase attainment.	Conditional	Partners	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	We will actively collaborate with the ACHSCP to deliver effective transition plans for children with complex needs that takes full account of the principles of the National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy. In doing so we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to ensure all young people have a clear transition plan from the age of 15. • From S3, the Transitions Group will determine appropriateness & eligibility. 	Conditional	Workforce	Children's Social Work & Family Support

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes will be communicated to parents/carers in a timely manner. 			
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.	Conditional	Partners	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Prepare for potential requirements of the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill	Conditional	Legislative	Education & Lifelong Learning
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refresh the Council's Play Strategy and extend the scope of the strategy to include adults.	Developmental	Funding	Education & Lifelong Learning Strategic Place Planning Operations
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refurbishment / replacement of a number of amenity and HRA city play areas in 2026/27.	Core	Funding	Operations
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Prevent children & young people entering the criminal justice system & support those who do	<p>We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act and consider the financial implications. In doing so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work to ensure no child under 18 years enters an adult prison. - Ensure our systems and processes recognise the over representation of care 	Core	Funding	Children's Social Work & Family Support/ Finance

		<p>experienced young people in the justice system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - We will develop an enhanced model of support to protect those young people who are criminally exploited 			
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.	Core	Workforce	Education & Lifelong Learning / Children's Social Work Family Support
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Dependent on Scottish Government proposals, respond to options to implement a cruise ship levy.	Conditional	Legislative	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Award and commence construction of the Transportation Link to Bay of Nigg 2026/27.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Enter the operational phase of £160m North East Scotland Investment Zone with a focus on Green Energy and Digital sectors.	Core	Funding	City Development & Regeneration

Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote, develop and implement initiatives aimed at fostering growth, innovation, and sustainability within the offshore wind sector.	Conditional	Partner	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Open discussions with Governments for a second City Region Deal in order to support priority growth sectors.	Conditional	Partner	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support growth in the creative industries through the development of a Creative Industries Action Plan as part of the Regional Economic Strategy.	Developmental	Workforce	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Establish a framework for the successful implementation of the visitor levy in Aberdeen city; aimed at generating revenue to enhance the visitor economy and infrastructure.	Conditional	Funding	City Development & Regeneration/ Finance
Economic Stability	An outstanding natural environment (RES)	Work in partnership with partners to develop and deliver Green Energy research and innovation interventions to attract investment and support job creation.	Conditional	Partner	City Development & Regeneration
Economic Stability	A healthy and skilled population (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.	Developmental	Partner	Commercial & Procurement / 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETZ Jobs Plan • City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan community benefits programme • Projects captured for progression within Capital Plan 	Conditional	Partner	Commercial & Procurement
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh existing Policy and report to Committee • Agree implementation with Shared Service partners 	Conditional	Partner	Commercial & Procurement
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Design and deliver Aberdeen Events 365 Strategy through the Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2026 - 2029, and support through targeted sponsorship and fundraising income, creating opportunities for the most vulnerable in the city	Conditional	Workforce	City Development & Regeneration
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Develop venues to provide best value cultural services and increase opportunities for cultural tourism: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tolbooth Maritime museum Art gallery Provost Skene's House Archives 	Conditional	Funding	City Development & Regeneration

		f. Glover House – investment plan g. Investigate an Arts Hub			
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Through the funded Fairer Future Partnership, continue the Partnership co-design and delivery of: - co-ordinated and targeted whole family preventative services to reduce involvement with statutory services; and - the transition to a future libraries model - roll out the second Request for Assistance process to help meet emerging demand across communities	Conditional	Workforce	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.	Conditional	Funding	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.	Conditional	Partner	Data Insights (HDRCA)
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Deliver the 7 agreed priorities within the Local Housing Strategy in collaboration with other Council	Core	Workforce	Housing

		Clusters and partners, and ensure delivery is proportionate to needs.			
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will review the SHIP once the resource planning assumptions have been issued by Scottish Government.	Conditional	Funding	Housing
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement the Housing Emergency Action Plan to help realise a reduction in the number of void Council houses and reduce the time people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation.	Core	Workforce	Corporate Landlord/ Housing
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement the HRA Housing Asset Plan and keep it under annual review to inform subsequent HRA Business Plans.	Core	Workforce	Corporate Landlord/ Capital/ Housing
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare a costed implementation plan for the implications of the anticipated Net Zero Standard for Social Housing.	Developmental	Workforce	Corporate Landlord/ Finance
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare a costed implementation plan for the implications of Housing Cladding Regulations Bill and Grenfell recommendations.	Core	Legislation	Corporate Landlord/ Finance
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Continue to prepare for the implications of the Housing (Scotland) Act, specifically in relation to Ask and Act, to strengthen our preventative arrangements in collaboration with	Conditional	Partner	Housing

		the relevant partners, to prevent homelessness whenever reasonably possible.			
Communities & Housing		In collaboration and coordination with internal and external partners, we will support asylum seekers and resettlement individuals / households to foster strengthened community cohesion enabling positive integration into Aberdeen's communities.	Conditional	Partner	Housing
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote and secure development opportunities associated with the City Centre and Beach Masterplan including: a. Queen Street b. A new Aberdeen Market c. Beach Masterplan (Beach Park, Events Park and Broadhill – Phase A projects) d. City Centre Streetscape	Core	Workforce	Corporate Landlord
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Complete construction of Union Street Central.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Award and commence construction of Castlegate Streetscape.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with partner organisations, implement the Union Street Empty Shops Plan and	Conditional	Funding	City Development

		support the work of Our Union Street.			& Regeneration
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Implement the refreshed Property Estate Strategy/Action Plan	Core	Workforce	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. Work in 2026/27 will focus on developing a Programme Level Outline Business Case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Funding to prepare the Programme Level Outline Business Case is currently in place via the City Region deal, but further funding will be required after March 2027 to move to the next stage.	Conditional	Funding	Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Update the Mobility Strategy for the city, linked to the development of the Local Development Plan and the 'health in all policies' approach. By linking the Mobility Strategy (/ Local Transport Strategy) to the Local Development Plan, delivery of the Strategy will be dependent	Conditional	Legislative	Strategic Place Planning Capital Operations

		on Scottish Minister's review of the Evidence Report and their timelines at the Gatecheck stage. Progress with continue in 2026, with publication of the updated Strategy expected in 2027.			
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. Deliverability of projects will be dependent on funding allocations.	Conditional	Funding	Strategic Place Planning Capital Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Progress project to install distance markers across popular walking and running routes, considering most appropriate locations. Funding has been allocated from the Bus Lane Enforcement Surplus. Officer resource will determine when in 2067/27 the project can be moved forward.	Conditional	Workforce	Strategic Place Planning Operations
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. Funding and officer resource required to move this project forward and to produce an Outline Business Case.	Conditional	Funding	Strategic Place Planning

Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Work with Scottish Government and through the joint procurement pilot for the North of Scotland to increase installation of electric charging capacity and use renewable energy for these. In 2026/27 the intention is to continue the programme for roll out.	Conditional	Partner	Strategic Place Planning Commercial & Procurement
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Reduce energy consumption across the full council estate in line with the targets in the Council's Climate Change Plan(s) and Carbon Budget(s). New Council Climate & Nature Plan and projects programmed for 2026/27.	Core	Workforce	Strategic Place Planning Corporate Landlord All cluster input
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Award and commence construction of the B999 Shielhill Road Junction Improvement.	Core	Workforce	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	Continue work with external partners to deliver a refreshed Natural Environment Strategy in 2026/27, and subsequently a Spatial Delivery Plan – with a delivery focus towards better addressing socio-economic and environmental risks and inequalities. Delivery is partly dependent on partner capacity; the Council's role is commissioning, collaboration,	Developmental	Partner	Strategic Place Planning Operations Capital

		oversight, funding and escalation through governance routes.			
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	Ensure that public land is managed for nature / increase areas of naturalised grassland and wildflower meadow (e.g Denburn)	Core	Funding	Strategic Place Planning Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	Identify suitable land and expand tree planting on council land.	Core	Funding	Operations Strategic Place Planning
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Review Sclattie Household Waste Transfer Facility to determine how best to update the facility to meet current standards.	Core	Funding	Operations
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Improve waste reduction and product lifespan through ACC procurements.	Core	Legislative	Strategic Place Planning Commercial and Procurement

Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Ensure alignment between the Waste Strategy and the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 and support Operations in relation to ongoing programmes to reduce waste (including exploring opportunities for repair hubs).	Conditional	Legislative	Strategic Place Planning Operations
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.	Conditional	Legislative	Operations
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Demolition of Council owned properties in Balnagask in preparation for Masterplanning	Core	Workforce	Capital
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.	Conditional	Workforce	Education & Lifelong Learning/ Corporate Landlord
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Work with the ACHSPC to develop and test an approach to supporting those who are neurodiverse and awaiting an assessment.	Conditional	Workforce	Education & Lifelong Learning
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Respond positively to changes in national guidance aligned to the Scottish Government 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools and work in	Core	Workforce	Education & Lifelong Learning

		partnership with Trade Unions to support the actions of the locally agreed action plan.			
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) and monitor progress in part through the Promise Board and Champions Board. We will actively plan for the development of the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill and the associated policy and practice change this will require. The above will be contingent on adequate resource being made available from the SG via sustainable revenue funding.	Conditional	Partner	Children's Social Work & Family Support
Health & Social Care	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims	We will continue to develop an integrated and multi-agency approach to supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse. In doing so we will: - continue to 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.	Conditional	Funding	ACHSCP; Housing & Children's Social Work & Family Support; Education & Lifelong Learning

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure a strong emphasis on 'prevention' and the role of schools in tackling misogyny. (Aligned to the SG'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 			
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Complete refurbishment of Bucksburn Pool.	Core	Workforce	Capital
Health & Social Care	Protect Children	Review and refine the delivery of our Bairns Hoose model to ensure that young people, who have been harmed or who have harmed others are supported to give a high quality interview to mitigate the need to repeatedly retell their story and to receive effective health recovery support.	Conditional	Partner	Children's Social Work & Family Support

		Continue to work with NHS Grampian, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service to fully realise the potential of our Bairns Hoose model.			
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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 2026/27 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	Delivery Envelope	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	Lead Cluster
Corporate Governance & Democracy	Continue to strengthen the network of Community Councils through meaningful engagement with relevant points of contact across the organisation.	Core	Partners	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.	Core	Workforce	Governance
Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	In line with the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill, 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	Developmental	Partner	Commercial & Procurement
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Continued modernisation of citizen contact building on AI capabilities and enhanced life events service structure	Core	Funding	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Further development of HR self service capabilities to include other corporate systems and provide increased service capabilities.	Core	Funding	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	Core	Workforce	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Initiate further work to modernise our educational digital offering, taking the opportunity to align schools, libraries and CLD settings.	Conditional	Funding	Digital & Technology

Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Review our delivery of the democratic process and align with modern technologies to enhance the engagement with citizens.	Developmental		Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Drive adoption of generative AI to release resource through automation of tasks allowing increased staff resource to focus on high value human interactions with those most in need.	Developmental	Funding	Digital & Technology
Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Retain PSN and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations.	Core	Funding	Digital & Technology
Support our Health and Social care Partnership in their use of digital technologies	Enable integration with existing council digital platform and development of innovative tools to release capacity within adult social care.	Conditional	Funding	Digital & Technology
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will complete implementation of 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.	Core	Workforce	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 if the necessary skills and knowledge.	Developmental	Workforce	People & Citizen Services
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	Deliver the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plans to align with our new employer and service provider equality outcomes for 2025-2029 to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty.	Core	Workforce	People & Citizen Services
Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Employment Rights Act 2025 (UK) and the Equality (Race & Disability) Bill / Public Reforms,	Conditional	Legislative	People & Citizen Services

	<p>and consider the financial implications. In doing so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure compliance of all Council policies; • align changed reporting/monitoring demands around fair work and employment conditions; • amend data collection systems if required. 			
Reduction in avoidable contact to increase focus on those with most need	<p>We will modernise the Contact Centre and redesign the supporting operating model, to maximise efficiency and support for those most vulnerable, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Core	Funding	People & Citizen Services
Undertake proactive citizen and community engagement	<p>Continue to deliver services and initiatives that empower citizens and communities to participate in decision-making, foster inclusivity and build capacity to influence and shape local priorities in line with our Community Empowerment Strategy</p>	Core	Workforce	People & Citizen Services
Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake	<p>Maintain the Low Income Family Tracker and 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.</p>	Core	Partner	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.	Developmental	Workforce	Finance / Data Insights (HDRCA)
Management of Council Finances	Establish a longer term financial strategy to support the sustainable delivery of prevention and early intervention.	Developmental	Workforce	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.	Core	Workforce	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.	Developmental	Partner	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 the public services.	Developmental	Workforce	Data Insights (HDRCA)

Transformation Programme

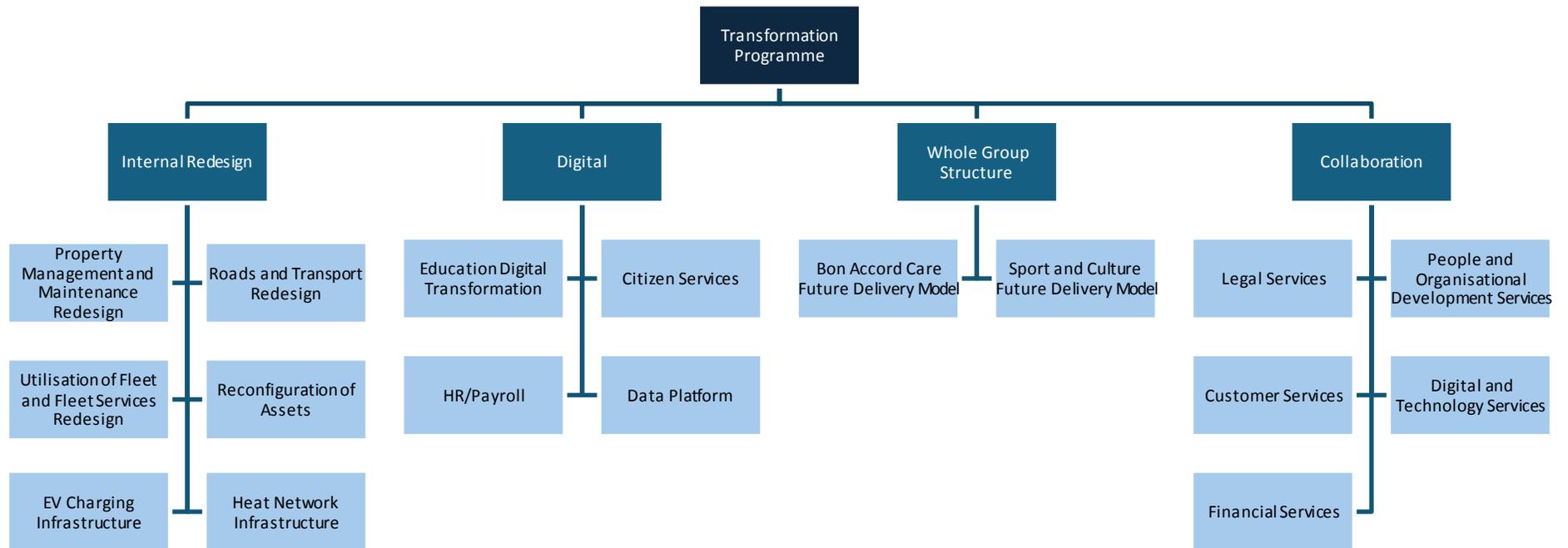
In addition to these commissioning intentions, there are actions and programmes of work which support “How we do business”.

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 Transformation Programme considers all internal and external factors to the Council, as outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), to fully understand the current and future environment and its potential impact on the Council. In response to these internal and external factors, the Programme considers future operating models, both within council, its group structure, and our partners, as well as commercial opportunities, to maximise income and efficiency savings, aligned as appropriate to the budget setting process.

In doing so, the Programme will ensure the Council is a digitally enabled authority with an effective operating model that ensures the Council contributes to the outcomes in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and our enabling strategies.

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

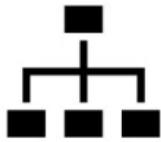


SECTION 4: How We Behave

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 Strategic Workforce Outcomes outlined in TOM 1.2, and the supporting [Workforce Delivery Plan \(2023\)](#) provide a clear vision and route map for the necessary evolution of our culture and support for our employees during rapid change. Our Guiding Principles, designed by colleagues, remain the backbone of organisational culture – and inspire the strategic outcomes and delivery plan 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

Setting up our council in a way that supports our cultural aspirations



Right People

Building our capacity through attracting, recruiting, moving talent



Right Skills

Building capability through awareness, desire, knowledge and ability



Right Place

Working where and when is best for the work and the customer



Right Support

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 as the Workforce Delivery Plan is revised and refreshed during 2026 to align with our ongoing transformation goals and evolving drivers and context both locally and nationally.

Drivers for Change

With the rapid pace of change locally and nationally, our Workforce Delivery Plan continues to respond to new and emerging challenges since 2023 that inform how we need to behave.

- Budget pressures
- Reduced workforce capacity
- Health and wellbeing
- 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 (2025-2029)

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.

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, more general questions sought to understand our cultural position at the time. 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 and to help shape ongoing and future workforce initiatives, in winter 2024/25 we repeated the organisation-wide employee experience survey and through the analysis of this we will identify new priority areas for focus as we progress on our journey of change. Having analysed and reported on the results, these improvement priorities, alongside outstanding strategic objectives from the current Workforce Delivery Plan will be reflected in the refresh.

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 employs 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. The service manages the shops and ensures safe and accessible venues (venues are recognised as both "Warm and Safe Space"). This year the Service will oversee the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives' re-location, and the management of the Beach Ballroom, which includes civic catering,

Economic Development includes supporting the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy, Aberdeen City Region Deal (ACRD), North East Scotland Investment Zone proposal and North East Performs. The Service includes External Funding and sponsorship, employability and skills

activities, including ABZWorks and supporting Corporate Programme Management. 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 includes the Council's Events 365 programme, and Culture and Visitor Strategy with key delivery partnerships such as Visit Aberdeenshire, convention bureau and P&J Live.

The Cluster supports International Trade including inward and outward delegations and Aberdeen City Councils membership of the World Energy Cities Partnership. Invest Aberdeen, a shared service with Aberdeenshire collaborates with partners to create investor proposals and through Partnerships with the Scottish Cities Alliance, Scottish and UK Government supporting development of proposals in line with the UK Industrial Strategy and SG Economic Strategy.

Resources 5 Year Trends



To address financial challenges 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 therefore expands and contracts in response to external funding, inward investment and the delivery of key capital and other programmes of work such as, Events 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 Highlights in 2025/26

The proportion of properties in the city receiving superfast broadband increased from 97.6% in 2023/24 to 98.5% in 2024/25, which is above the Scottish average of 97.1%.



The cost of a museum visit has reduced from £3.66 in 2023/24 to £3.08 in 2024/25. This is below the national average.



Satisfaction with museums and galleries has fell from 76.7% in 2023/24 to 73.7% in 2024/25. Whilst this is slightly down on the previous year, it remains better than the national average of 67%.



The claimant count as a % of the working age population remained virtually unchanged at 3.3% in 2024/25. This is similar to the Scottish average of 3%.



The claimant count as a % of the population aged 16-24 increased from 3.0% in 2023/24 to 3.3% in 2024/25. This is the same as the Scottish average.



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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise the promotion, develop and implementation of initiatives aimed at fostering growth, innovation, and sustainability; working with our partners to implement targeted workforce development programmes; and maintaining and delivering Aberdeen Events 365 Strategy and venues to provide best value cultural services and increase opportunities for cultural tourism.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, intentions for 2026/27 below are dependent on the availability of external funding. Scale and pace of delivery will be revised to reflect funding constraints.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Dependent on Scottish Government proposals, respond to options to implement a cruise ship levy.	T1	Legislative	NA

Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Enter the operational phase of £160m North East Scotland Investment Zone with a focus on Green Energy and Digital sectors which benefit regeneration.	T1	Funding	X
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote, develop and implement initiatives aimed at fostering growth, innovation, and sustainability within the offshore wind sector.	T1	Partner	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	In collaboration with Strategic Place Planning and partner organisations, implement the Union Street Empty Shops Plan and support the work of Our Union Street.	T2	Funding	NA
Economic Stability	An outstanding natural environment (RES)	Work with partners to develop and deliver Green Energy research and innovation interventions to attract investment and support job creation.	T1	Partner	NA
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Design and implement targeted workforce development programmes aimed at engaging economically inactive individuals, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to enter the job market.	T1 & T2	Funding	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Establish collaborative partnerships with educational institutions, local businesses to create clear pathways and training courses that facilitate transitions into the workforce.	T1 & T2	Funding	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Include a Specialist Employability Service (SES) following recommendations made by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE)	T1	Funding	X
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Open discussions with Governments for a second City Region Deal in order to support inclusive economic growth.	T1&2	Partner	C

Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Support growth in the creative industries through the development of a Creative Industries Action Plan as part of the Regional Economic Strategy.	T1&2	Workforce	NA
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Design and deliver Aberdeen Events 365 Strategy through the Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2026 - 2029, and support through targeted sponsorship and fundraising income, creating opportunities for the most vulnerable in the city.	T1	Workforce	C
Communities & Housing	Strong community & cultural identity (RES)	Develop venues to provide best value cultural services and increase opportunities for cultural tourism. a. Tolbooth b. Maritime museum c. Art gallery d. Provost Skene's House e. Archives f. Glover House g. Investigate an Arts Hub	T1	Funding	NA
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Establish a framework for the successful implementation of the visitor levy in Aberdeen city; aimed at generating revenue to enhance the visitor economy and infrastructure.	T1	Funding	NA

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, with partners, support new business start-ups in the city through the Business Gateway service within 5 working days of approach.		✓	✓	✓	N	100%	Tier 1	
3.	We will maintain Accreditation standards for the Art Gallery. UK Museum Accreditation Scheme	✓	✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	
4.	We will maintain Accreditation standards for Archives. Archive Service Accreditation	✓	✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	
5.	We will maintain Accreditation standards for Museums. UK Museum Accreditation Scheme	✓	✓	✓		P	100%	Tier 1	
6.	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	
7.	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 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 Highlights in 2025/26

'Financial Close' has been achieved and works are underway for a small number of significant large projects; Harlaw Academy Extension; Ferryhill Primary School; Beach Pedestrian Spine



The cluster is targeting to deliver a spend rate of 65% 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.



25/26 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 65% 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 through the course of 26/27, such as Union Street Central and Ferryhill Primary School. 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.	26/27 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 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

2026/27 priorities have been written to reflect the reprofiling of the capital programme as a result of construction inflation and project slippage. In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, the cluster will prioritise delivery of current in contract works to time & cost; awarding the main works contract award for Hazlehead Secondary School, Berryden Corridor and South Harbour Link Road projects; and progressing redesign of the service to ensure it is equipped to deliver projects on time and within budget.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, the delivery of smaller scale projects will be conditional on resources.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Complete construction of Union Street Central.	T1	Workforce	NA
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction at the new Hazlehead Academy.	T1	Workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction on the Bucksburn Academy extension.	T1	Workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Award and commence construction at the refurbished St Peters Primary.	T1	Funding	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete new Harlaw playing fields pavilion.	T1	Workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete Harlaw Academy extension.	T1	Workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Complete refurbishment and extension of Ferryhill Primary	T1	Workforce	X

Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Award and commence construction of the B999 Shielhill Road Junction Improvement.	T1	Workforce	NA
Economic Stability	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Award and commence construction of the Transportation Link to Bay of Nigg 2026/27.	T1	Workforce	X
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Complete refurbished Bucksburn Pool.	T1	Workforce	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Award and commence construction of Castlegate Streetscape.	T1	Workforce	NA
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Demolition of Council owned properties in Balnagask in preparation for Masterplanning	T1	Workforce	NA

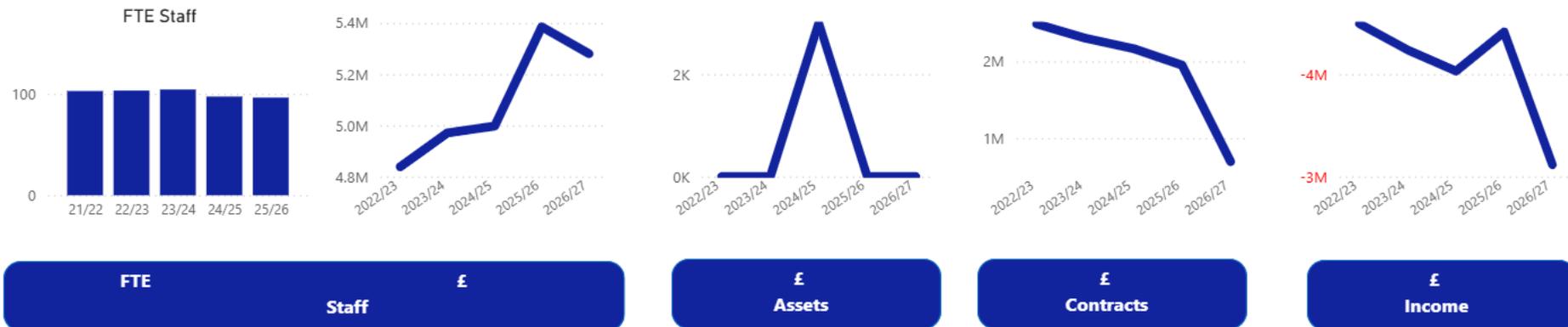
Service Standards		Availability	Responsive	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed (P) or not (N)	Last Actuals	Prevention and Early Intervention (Tier 1,2 or 3)	Risk
1.	We will ensure the specification on new construction projects meet the required environmental and building quality standards.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

Strategic Place Planning

Role of the Cluster

The Strategic Place Planning cluster works to support the Council and city’s ambitions to address the climate and nature emergency, including shaping and delivering strong governance and collaborative action 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 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, climate change (incl. net zero) 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



The graphs above show 5 year positions in relation to staffing, assets, contracts and income. Changes in staffing (FTE) reflect changes to the structure as a result of the Council’s updated Target Operating Model, and the resulting move of the Housing Strategy team out of Strategic Place Planning and into Housing. Changes to staff costs reflect the change in National Insurance payment and the costs associated with changing to a 35 hour week. In terms of assets, the service generally has no assets to report on, with the £3,000 shown in 2024/25 relating to an external funding award which was used to clean the wayfinding totems in the city centre. The contacts figure shown reflects that, for the

year to come, the Council's annual grant to Nestrans has not been included, as this will be subject to approval by both Council and Nestrans Board. The request from Nestrans is as per previous years meaning that, if approved, the contract figure for 2026/27 will increase from the level currently shown on the graph above. Finally, in terms of income, this graph primarily reflects fee income into the service, for instance from fees related to planning applications and building warrants. The income shown includes 'actual' figures for the years 2022/23 – 2024/25, a projected figure for the current financial year, and the 'target' figure for 2026/27, which the service would hope to meet or exceed, but which will be heavily dependent on external factors in the construction industry over which we have no control.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

The average time to complete business & industry planning applications fluctuates due to the nature of applications. Whilst the figure rose in 2024/25 to 12.8 weeks, this is below the figure for 2020/21 and similar to the national average of 11.7 weeks.



In the last 12 months the % of building warrant applications issued within 10 working days rose from 83% to 87.5%. This compares to an agreed target of 80%.



The cost of planning, and building standards per planning application, decreased from £8,948 in 2023/24 to £7,416 in 2024/25. This is below the average for similar councils.



Improvement Priorities	Justification
<p>Planning Performance and service delivery.</p>	<p>The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 states that planning authorities must prepare a report on their performance on an annual basis. A new approach to meet this requirement was piloted by the Improvement Service in 2024/25. The Council's new National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) was prepared in 2025, and subsequently agreed with the National Planning Improvement Champion. The NPIF is supported by an Improvement Action Plan, progress on which will be reviewed annually, and reported to the Council's Planning Development Management Committee via Service Update. Copies of the NPIF, the Action Plan and the annual Progress Updates are available via the Improvement Service website.</p>

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Cost of undertaking planning applications	Although the relative cost of undertaking planning applications is reducing, we believe there may still be opportunities for improvement.	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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraints, in 2026/27 this cluster will (in addition to its regulatory role) prioritise focus on net zero, transport and the natural environment. In particular, projects focusing on reducing emissions in the most impactful categories (e.g. from buildings and transportation) and to alleviate some of the challenges for the council and city in terms of adaptation and resilience (e.g. nature based solutions). This will require close cross service working with a strong focus on outcomes particularly in the areas of *Just Transition* to help alleviate fuel, transport and nature poverty which impact on the most vulnerable in our society. Success year on year will show continued progress in meeting our strategic priorities.

Our 'Top 3' delivery priorities for 2026/27 will be: 1) cross Council collaboration to develop and approve a new Council Climate & Nature Plan 2026-30; 2) cross city collaboration to refresh the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap & strategies, including the Natural Environment Strategy; and 3) developing the Aberdeen Rapid Transit Programme Level Outline Business Case (and related work on a new Mobility Strategy).

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, coupled with the increasingly difficult picture in relation to securing additional external funding, activity on some projects will have to be scaled back. Some examples of this include the installation of distance markers across popular walking and running routes, work on which will progress once sufficient officer resource is available to move forward in a meaningful way with communities. Other projects currently scaled back include School Travel Planning (beyond I Bike and School Streets) and work to progress an options appraisal to build a new foot and cycle bridge over the River Dee.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions by increasing public transport	<p>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.</p> <p>Work in 2026/27 will focus on developing a Programme Level Outline Business Case for Aberdeen Rapid Transit. Funding to prepare the Programme Level Outline Business Case is currently in place via the City Region deal, but further funding will be required after March 2027 to move to the next stage.</p>	T1	Funding	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	<p>Update the Mobility Strategy for the city, linked to the development of the Local Development Plan and the 'health in all policies' approach.</p> <p>By linking the Mobility Strategy (Local Transport Strategy) to the Local Development Plan, delivery of the Strategy will be dependent on Scottish Minister's review of the Evidence Report and their timelines at the Gatecheck stage. Progress with continue in 2026, with publication of the updated Strategy expected in 2027.</p>	T1	Legislative	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by	<p>Work with stakeholders to maximise the opportunities for active travel as part of the beach and city centre masterplans.</p> <p>Deliverability of projects will be dependent on funding allocations.</p>	T1	Funding	X

	increasing active travel				
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions and support physical and mental wellbeing by increasing active travel	Progress project to install distance markers across popular walking and running routes, considering most appropriate locations. Funding has been allocated from the Bus Lane Enforcement Surplus. Officer resource will determine when in 2067/27 the project can be moved forward.	T1	Workforce	X
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. Funding and officer resource required to move this project forward and to produce an Outline Business Case.	T1	Funding	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Work with Scottish Government and Commercial & Procurement through the joint procurement pilot for the North of Scotland to increase installation of electric charging capacity and use renewable energy for these. In 2026/27 the intention is to continue the programme for roll out.	T1	Partner	X
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and	Continue work with external partners to deliver a refreshed Natural Environment Strategy in 2026/27 and subsequently a Spatial Delivery Plan – with a delivery focus towards better addressing socio-economic and environmental risks and inequalities. Delivery is partly dependent on partner capacity; the Council's role is commissioning, collaboration, oversight,	T1	Partner	C

	quality of green spaces	funding and escalation through governance routes.			
Neighbourhood & Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from infrastructure	Reduce energy consumption across the full council estate in line with the targets in the Council's Climate Change Plan(s) and Carbon Budget(s). New Council Climate & Nature Plan and projects programmed for 2026/27.	T1	Workforce	X
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	Legislative	NA
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Work with Operations to ensure alignment between the Waste Strategy and the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 and support Operations in relation to ongoing programmes to reduce waste (including exploring opportunities for repair hubs).	T1	Legislative	X

As noted above, the Commissioning Intentions listed in this section will be progressed by the service in addition to our regulatory roles as Local Planning Authority and Local Authority Building Standards team. The Service Standards outlined below provide a way to measure our regulatory performance, in addition to the reporting requirements that the service has to the Scottish Government. For planning these are reported nationally [here](#) and, for building standards, [here](#).

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 12 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 decrease in staff numbers is due to reorganisation of Council structures. 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 Highlights in 2025/26

The net cost per waste disposal per premises increased slightly from £105.14 per premises in 2023/24, to £114.4 in 2024/25. Above the national average of £105.19.



The % of adults satisfied with street cleaning have remained almost unchanged in 2024/25 at 56.3%. This is only slightly above the national average of 57%.



The net cost of street cleaning has fallen from £12,438 per 1,000 population in 2022/23 to £9,125 in 2024/25. This is significantly lower than the national average of £17,616.



The proportion of household waste that has been recycled increased from 41.8% in 2023/24 to 43.1% in 2024/25. Slightly below the national average of 43.1%.



The street cleaning score for the city was 89.3% in 2024/25. A slight decrease from 89.7% the previous year. This is lower than the national average of 91.7%.



The net cost per waste collection per premises has fell ed from £63.95 per premises in 2023/24, to £57.72 in 2024/25. This is lower than the national average of £77.81.



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.
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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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise the refurbishment of Sclattie Household Waste Transfer Facility, recommissioning of Altens Material Recycling Facility, and supporting the Council in developing the infrastructure to enable the move from carbon based to alternative fuelled fleet.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Services in Operations have finite resources and service standards are based on the budget allocated. Many of the operational services have statutory functions which is required to be delivered. Given the scale of demand on these services and the finite workforce capacity and budget any additional works have to be prioritised and this may mean that non-statutory service functions will be affected and /or limited to existing budgets. This may have an impact on supporting events and / or delivery of council aspirations.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
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Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refurbishment / replacement of a number of amenity and HRA city play areas in 2026/27, focusing on areas of highest need.	T1	Funding	C
Neighbourhood & Environment	Minimise the levels of waste created and optimise waste collection and disposal	Review Sclattie Household Waste Transfer Facility to determine how best to update the facility to meet current standards.	T2	Funding	NA
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	Legislation	NA
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces	Ensure that public land is managed for nature / increase areas of naturalised grassland and wildflower meadow (e.g Denburn)	T1	Workforce	NA
Neighbourhood & Environment	Increase the amount of land managed for nature to decrease flood	Identify suitable land and expand tree planting on council land.	T1	Workforce	NA

	risk management and increase access to and quality of green spaces				
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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	90%	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	100%	Tier 1	
3.	We will complete all priority 1 amenity / street tree maintenance work (emergency work on dangerous trees) within 3 weeks.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 2	
4.	We will inspect all amenities / street trees a minimum of once every 5 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 12 weeks, where resources allow.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 1	
10.	We will remove offensive graffiti from public buildings and structures within 10 days.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 3	
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	100%	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 ECO Stars scheme ratings Euro iv, v or vi.			✓		L	N/A	Tier 1	
4.	We will complete all Scheduled Safety inspections within 2 days.		✓	✓		N	100%	Tier 1	
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% B/Mark 42.3%	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 - biannual cyclical gulley maintenance		✓	✓		L	100%	Tier 1	
6.	We will provide services which achieve a “Satisfactory” rating on the Scottish Roadworks Commissioner Annual Report.		✓	✓		P	Satisfactory	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 2025/26

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.



The numeracy attainment gap at P1,4 and 7 has reduced in each of the last 5 years. Whilst the gap in literacy has increased marginally over the past two years from 22.8% to 23.7%.



The proportion of eligible 2 year-olds attending Early Learning & Childcare provision in 2024/25 was 48%, In 2023/24 this figure was 38%.



The proportion of adults satisfied with local schools decreased in 2024/25 to 66.7%, slightly below the Scottish average figure of 69%.



Satisfaction with local libraries in 2024/25 sits at 65.7%, slightly down from the previous year, but higher than the Scottish average.



The overall average tariff score for all pupils at S4 had risen from 885 in 2022/23 to 919 in 2024/25 and is now at the same level as the Scottish average.



In 2025, city-wide Early Learning and Childcare provision achieved an average grading, through Care Inspection evaluations, that exceeded the National Standard for a first time since the Standard's introduction in 2022.



In 2024/25, the % of pupil school leavers in a positive destination was 93.6, unchanged from the previous year, but below the Scottish average of 95.7%.



The average total tariff Score of S4 pupils from the most deprived areas of the city increased from 486 to 541 in 2024/25, compared to a Scottish average of 655. 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	Although systems in place are reporting improvement in ELC inspections there is still variability in both primary and secondary school inspection outcomes with a small number requiring a return visit.
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.

Test of change for secondary pupils	This project will look at support offered to secondary pupils who are struggling to engage in the formal offer with strategies to allow them to reengage with their home school.	The evaluation will be undertaken by the educational psychology team and assess the implementation of the project against its plan and the impact of the intervention for children and staff.
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The last published risk register is published [here](#)

Priorities

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise addressing the variation in inspection outcomes through focusing on learning, teaching and assessment as well as leadership.

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 for the year will be to continue to broaden the curriculum across our secondary schools to ensure all young people engage with an employability pathway being planned and delivered for the start of 27/28. Delivery of a 0 – 99 play strategy will support communities to be active and engage positively with their environments.

Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, new initiatives will be limited and only statutory asks will be progressed.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with partners to maximise the use of all resources to increase the range of courses available to young people in order to improve outcomes for young people.	T1 & T2	Partners	X

Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population (RES)	Work with employers to support work placements for young people, with a particular focus on those with additional support needs	T1 & T2	Partners	X
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 families in SIMD 1 and 2 into employment when national plan is known.	T1 & T2	Funding	X
Communities & Housing	Reduce child poverty	Through the funded Fairer Future partnership, continue to 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	Workforce	X
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	Funding	X
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	Workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Raise attainment	Utilise live pupil tracking data to help close the poverty related attainment gap and determine effectiveness in addressing variation at school and Local Authority level.	T1	workforce	X
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	Workforce	X

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	Workforce	X
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of children and young people	Respond positively to changes in national guidance aligned to the Scottish Government 5 Point Plan to support a reduction in distressed behaviour in schools and work in partnership with Trade Unions to support the actions of the locally agreed action plan.	T2 & T3	workforce	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	Deliver a broader curriculum offer through digital and partnership delivery of Phase 4 of ABZ Campus to secure improvement in senior phase attainment.	T1	Partners	X
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	Partners	X
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Prepare for potential requirements of the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill	T1	Legislative	NA
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	workforce	X
Health & Social Care	Support improvement in the health & wellbeing of	Work with the ACHSPC to develop a test an approach to supporting those who are neurodiverse and awaiting an assessment.	T2	Workforce	X

	children and young people			
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	A healthy and skilled population	Refresh the Council's Play Strategy and extend the scope of the strategy to include adults.	T1	Funding X

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 2025/26

The cost of children looked after in residential care remained similar to the previous year at £4,146. This is below similar councils' average of £5,936. The cost of those looked after in a community setting increased slightly to £711 and is above other councils' £609.



The proportion of children re-registering on the Children Protection Register within 18 months of being taken off the register reduced to 2.3%. Below the Scottish average of 5.8%.



The % of Looked After and Accommodated children who have had more than 1 placement in the last year has remained stable over the last 4 years around 20% and is marginally below the average for similar councils.



Improvement Priorities	Justification
<p>Improve the balance of care to ensure more children remain in their communities</p>	<p>ACC's % of looked after children 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 significant financial cost. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Work with Education partners to explore the development of local provision to support young people who are disconnected from education. • Explore the development of intensive support for 16/17 year olds who are in conflict with the law to mitigate risk of secure care.

Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM) within 28 days	The National Child Protection Guidance requires CPPM's to be held within 28 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.
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Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Evaluate the impact of the IRD process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p> <p>We will continue to support the understanding of the concept of significant harm across the multi-agency workforce.</p>
Fairer Futures Partnership	<p>The Fairer Futures Pathfinder is a change programme funded by the Scottish Government and runs over 2025/26 and 2026/27. It is focusing on integration of services and support around communities and families. National and local evaluation of the programme will be undertaken.</p> <p>Development of a Family Support Model will be core to the change programme and will align to our commitment to deliver The Promise by 2030.</p>	Evaluation of implementation and impact will be co-ordinated between Council services, local partners, the Scottish Government and CELCIS.
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 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, dependent upon SG funding.

	our evaluation of establishing a Bairns Hoose and the impact of this on children, young people and families.	In partnership with Children First we will continue to ensure we capture and utilise the voice of children and young people to further develop recovery support from our Bairns Hoose. The University of Edinburgh will provide reports to support our iterative development of our Bairns Hoose.
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The last published risk register is linked [here](#)

Priorities

In the context of workforce and financial constraints, this cluster will prioritise referrals and activities focused on protecting children and young people at risk of significant harm, fulfilling our corporate parenting duties, and supporting families on the edges of care. Ongoing capacity and resource constraints will continue to affect our ability to meet the full level of demand, requiring us to target support based on assessed risk. While proposed policy and legislative changes are welcome, they must be adequately resourced to ensure expectations remain achievable. Central to delivering our priorities is sustaining an engaged, skilled workforce capable of supporting children, young people and families whose needs are increasingly complex and shaped by the multifaceted impacts of poverty.

2026/27 priorities have been updated to better reflect the work of the cluster and the Cluster’s continuing 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. Our 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.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, children’s services will continue to prioritise support based on risk and need. This means some support that families would like may not be provided. We will focus on helping children stay safely within their communities, reducing the need for out-of-authority placements, while continuing to meet all legal requirements.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Support transition to positive destinations	<p>We will actively collaborate with the ACHSCP to deliver effective transition plans for children with complex needs that takes full account of the principles of the National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy. In doing so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to ensure all young people have a clear transition plan from the age of 15. • From S3, the Transitions Group will determine appropriateness & eligibility. • Outcomes will be communicated to parents/carers in a timely manner. 	T2 & T3	Workforce	X
Health & Social Care	Support care experienced children and fulfil our role as corporate parents	<p>Work with Partners to deliver on the Promise Plan (24 - 30) and monitor progress in part through the Promise Board and Champions Board. We will actively plan for the development of the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill and the associated policy and practice change this will require.</p> <p>The above will be contingent on adequate resource being made available from the SG via sustainable revenue funding.</p>	T2 & T3	Partner	X

Health & Social Care	Support multi-agency efforts to reduce domestic abuse and support victims	<p>We will continue to develop an integrated and multi-agency approach to supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic abuse. In doing so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to 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 • Review the delivery of our MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) processes to ensure victims of domestic abuse are supported timeously and effectively. • Ensure a strong emphasis on ‘prevention’ and the role of schools in tackling misogyny. (Aligned to the SG’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	Funding	X
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Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	Prevent children & young people entering the criminal justice system & support those who do	<p>We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act and consider the financial implications. In doing so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • We will develop an enhanced model of support to protect those young people who are criminally exploited. 	T2 & T3	Funding	X
Health & Social Care	Protect Children	<p>Review and refine the delivery of our Bairns Hoose model to ensure that young people, who have been harmed or who have harmed others are supported to give a high quality interview to mitigate the need to repeatedly retell their story and to receive effective health recovery support.</p> <p>Continue to work with NHS Grampian, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service to fully realise the potential of our Bairns Hoose model.</p>	T2 & T3	Partner	X

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 28 days.		✓			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 graphs above show 5 year positions in relation to staffing, assets, contracts and income. 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 2022/2023), in addition to fluctuations in demand and fixed term arrangements. The position in the past couple of years has remained relatively stable, with permanent appointments now being made to resolve interim arrangements that have been in place. The ongoing use of hotels to meet temporary accommodation needs is reflected in the contract

expenditure. Whilst a decrease was observed in 2024/2025 and 2025/ 2026, the position is uncertain against a sustained increase in demand that has been experienced and is anticipated to continue in 2026/2027. The increase in assets in 2025/26 is largely due to an increase in our temporary accommodation stock.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

73.3% of our Council housing met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in 2021/23. This increased to 88.6% in 2024/25. This is significantly above the Scottish average of 82.9%.



In 2024/25 the percentage of rent due that was lost due to Voids (empty properties) was 8.0%, similar to the previous year, but higher than the 2.3% for similar councils.



The average length of journey in days for applicants assessed as unintentionally homeless has fallen from 161 to 115 over the last 2 years.



The average length of journey in days for applicants assessed as unintentionally homeless as at Quarter 3 2025/26 was 116. This compares with 139 days for the same period in 2024/25 and a national average of c. 340.



At the end of December 2025, 90.9% of tenancies have been sustained for more than a year, evidencing an improvement from our reported position of 90.26% in 2024/25.



In 2025 the Satisfaction with Aberdeen City Council's overall service was 81%. This is aligned with the Scottish average of 81.2% and an improvement from our reported positions of 39.9% in 2024 and 62.3% in 2021.



Improvement Priorities	Justification
In line with the approved Housing Emergency Action Plan and in collaboration with Corporate Landlord, we will reduce the number of voids (empty Council properties) and decrease the average time to let a property.	The current percentage of void properties is significantly above the Scottish average, impacting on opportunities to rehouse people who have a housing need and limiting the potential rental income that could be invested 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. Building on improvement actions already underway as part of the Housing Emergency Action Plan, we will accelerate efforts to reduce voids and streamline re-letting. These actions will ensure homes are brought back into use promptly, improving housing outcomes and financial sustainability.
Reduce the homeless journey	The increase in the number of homeless applications received by the Council continues to be a challenge. The homeless journey has reduced over the course of 25/26, there remains an ambition for this to reduce further recognising the importance of people being in secure settled accommodation. The impact of increasing applications and an increasing level of need for temporary accommodation has led to the Council breaching the unsuitable accommodation order due to reliance on hotel accommodation, to supplement the temporary furnished accommodation. Our Housing Emergency Action Plan highlights our priority focus areas of reducing the journey time to 100 days and eliminating our breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order. Our improvements in these areas are focused both in the single system across voids and our homeless processes. Our work to reduce the demand will continue to focus on our activity in a collaborative plan through the Homewards collaboration and Partnership with The Royal Foundation.
Housing Support and Tenant Participation	Following the feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out in 2025, which identified a relatively low level of contact with their Housing & Support Officer, activity will be undertaken to enhance the contact and relationship between & Support staff and our tenants, creating opportunities for a more visible presence within local communities. A refined model of tenant participation is being developed and implemented in Spring 2026.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Housing Policy	Through the continued exploration of data and other insights at the Housing Board and our self-evaluation	

	activity through the Quality Improvement Framework we will identify potential areas(s) for evaluation.	The approach used follows an agreed “ACC Approach to Evaluation”, developed with the Health Determinants Research Collaborative.
Rent Assistance Fund (in collaboration with People & Citizen Services)	Aberdeen Centre For Evaluation at the University of Aberdeen will undertake the next evaluation of the Rent Assistance Fund. This work will commence in 2026/27 for reporting to Communities, Housing & Public Protection Committee in 2027/2028. This further evaluation of its implementation and impact will be important in planning future options.	

The last published risk register is linked [here](#)

Priorities

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, in 2026/27 this cluster will prioritise the delivery of the priorities within the Local Housing Strategy, in particular, reducing empty properties, speeding up the letting times and maximise opportunities for rehousing, particularly for communities at higher risk of homelessness or with complex needs; strengthening preventative support to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens, including those seeking asylum or resettlement; and building resilient and cohesive communities.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, new initiatives will be limited and only statutory asks will be progressed, during periods of high demand this will lead to our prioritisation of people within vulnerable groups.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Deliver the 7 agreed priorities within the Local Housing Strategy in collaboration with other Council Clusters and partners, and ensure delivery is proportionate to needs.	T1, T2 & T3	Workforce	C
Communities & Housing	Reduce homelessness and respond appropriately to those who do become homeless	Continue to prepare for the implications of the Housing (Scotland) Act, specifically in relation to Ask and Act, to strengthen our preventative arrangements in collaboration with the relevant partners, to prevent homelessness whenever reasonably possible.	T1, T2 & T3	Partner	X
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	We will review the SHIP once the resource planning assumptions have been issued by Scottish Government.	T1	Funding	X
Communities & Housing	Asylum and Resettlement	In collaboration and coordination with internal and external partners, we will support asylum seekers and resettlement individuals / households to foster strengthened community cohesion enabling positive integration into Aberdeen's communities.	T2 & T3	Partner	X

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 (B/mark 340)	Tier 2	
3.	We will ensure a decision is made on all Tenancy Management actions (specifically Abandonment, Assignment, Joint Tenancy, Lodger, Single Abandonment, Single Termination, Sublet, Succession) as per statutory timescales.		✓			L	88%	Tier 2	
4.	We will incrementally reduce the length of the void path to 123 days	✓	✓			N	257 days	Tier 1	
5.	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	
6.	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 posts 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 Highlights in 2025/26

In 2023/24 the average time taken to complete a non-emergency housing repair was 8.5 days. This fell to 7.4 days in 2024/25. This remains below the Scottish average of 10 days.



The % of operational buildings that were suitable for their use has improved from 75.4% in 2018/19 to 76.7% in 2024/25. This compares to a Scottish average of 85.7%.



91.2% of our properties are currently in a satisfactory condition, the same number as the previous year. Whilst this is above the Scottish average, it is likely to come under pressure in coming years as available budgets restrict maintenance work.



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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise a reduction in the number of void Council houses; development and implementation of a refreshed Property Estate Strategy and Action Plan; and reduce the time people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation; preparation of a costed implementation plan for the implications of the anticipated Net Zero Standard for Social Housing.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, the Cluster is likely to experience pressure in the sale and letting of commercial properties, lease and rent review be agreed timeously. Given previous budget challenges standards are reducing across elements of soft facilities management such as cleaning.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Neighbourhood & Environment		Develop and implement the refreshed Property Estate Strategy/Action Plan focusing on investment in those areas and groups of the City most in need.	T1	Workforce	C
Neighbourhood & Environment	A thriving innovation driven economy (RES)	Promote and secure development opportunities associated with the City Centre and Beach Masterplan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Queen Street b. A new Aberdeen Market c. Beach Masterplan (Beach Park, Events Park and Broadhill – Phase A projects) d. City Centre Streetscape 	T1	Workforce	NA
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement, in collaboration with Housing, the Housing Emergency Plan to help realise a reduction in the number of void Council houses and reduce the time people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation.	T2 & T3	Workforce	X

Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Implement, in collaboration with Capital and Housing, the HRA Housing Asset Plan and keep it under annual review to inform subsequent HRA Business Plans.	T2	Workforce	X
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare a costed implementation plan for the implications of the anticipated Net Zero Standard for Social Housing with a focus on reducing and mitigating fuel poverty.	T1	Workforce	X
Communities & Housing	Housing needs analysis and delivery	Prepare a costed implementation plan for the implications of Housing Cladding Regulations Bill and Grenfell recommendations.	T1 & T2	Legislation	NA

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 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	
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	
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	
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			✓		L	100%	Tier 1	

2.	(Cleaning) We will complete Void Housing and Response cleaning alerts within the following timescales: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)	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. Staffing numbers and costs increased in 2024/25 due to organisational redesign and the inclusion within the Cluster of additional services. The services within Governance have low dependency on assets. Contracts are directly aligned to enforcement.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

The cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 population has reduced from £27,904 in 2022/23 to £25,507 in 2024/25. This is above the Scottish average of £20,999.



The % of high priority public health requests responded to within 2 days is reported quarterly and, over the last 12 months, has fluctuated, but has remained above 98% in 3 of the last 4 quarters.



The cost of environmental health per 1,000 of population fell from £20,684 in 2022/23 to £18,927 in 2024/25. This remains above the national average of £13,779.



Improvement Priorities	Justification
Risk Assurance	Work is ongoing to review and streamline the organisation's approach to the scrutiny of risk management to provide assurance that the relevant governance controls are in place across the organisation.
Digitisation of Parking	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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise continuing to strengthen our CIPFA accredited governance framework; we will further improve the risk culture and capability of the organisation to embed risk management; and we allocate resources to plan for the impacts of legislative change.

By the end of 2026/27 we will have improved the organisation’s capability to plan and respond to the impact of legislative change. Key governance risks will be assessed and controlled. We will have a mature risk culture which supports openness, transparency and constructive challenge.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, the Governance cluster experiences high demand in a broad range of services across the organisation. Given finite resources it is inevitable there will be some unmet demand and response to unplanned activity will be dependent on resources.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
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	Partners	NA
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	Workforce	NA

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 deal with requests for business advice within 14 days.		✓			L	N/A	Tier 1	
4.	We will respond to initial non-domestic noise nuisance requests within 5 days.		✓			L	82% (2 days)	Tier 2	

5.	We will respond to initial pest control requests within 2 days for high priority infestations and 5 days for low priority infestations.		✓			N	89%	Tier 2	
6.	We will respond to initial public health requests within 2 days for high priority cases.		✓			N	87%	Tier 3	
7.	We will respond to initial public health requests within 5 days for low priority cases.		✓			N	N/A	Tier 2	
8.	We will respond to dog incident requests within 5 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



Workforce volumes have remained broadly consistent across the five-year period, this reflects the shared-service model with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Highland Councils, where costs are split through the formal collaboration agreement. Budget structure across functional areas as per below:

Team	Cost Allocation
Category & Commercial Management team	Split three ways (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire & Highland)
Social Care Commissioning	Split 50/50 (Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire)
Insurance Team	Shared between Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire (ACC recharged by Aberdeenshire)
Contracts Team	ACC only – responsible for PFI Schools

Commercial Legal Team	ACC only – legal support for contracts and commercial arrangements
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The cluster operates within tight financial parameters, absorbing increased demand without parallel growth in resource, workforce capacity is a constraint in managing planned priorities.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

<p>The % of spend with local suppliers was 31% of total spend in 2024/25. This remains above our target and higher than the national average. The spend with local small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) decreased slightly to 22% in 2024/25 compared to 24% in the previous year.</p> 	<p>16 of 17 regulated contracts in 2024/25 included requirements relating to Fair Work Practices (including Real Living Wage).</p> 	<p>17 of 17 regulated contracts in 2024/25 included Community Benefit requirements, up from 95% the previous year.</p> 
<p>483 Community benefit outcomes imposed across 17 regulated contracts in the reporting year.</p> 	<p>The % of spend covered by contract was 88.8% in 2024/25 compared to 85% in 2023/24.</p> 	<p>The % of spend covered by collaborative contracts was 25% in 2024/25 compared to 9.54% in 2023/24.</p> 

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, a draft dashboard was presented to the Risk Board in December 2025 with feedback received which will be used to inform the assurance reporting approach going forward.

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. 2026/27 priorities have been updated to reflect procurement activity to achieve key outcomes within the LOIP and this Delivery Plan.

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will focus on the below top 3 delivery priorities below for 2026/27:

- 1. Embed Community Wealth Building and Deliver the Sustainable Procurement Policy** - A priority will be to implement the updated policy in partnership with Shared Service partners, ensuring regulated procurements maximise local economic, social, and environmental value, especially for local suppliers and communities in greatest need. Procurement activity will align with the Council's strategic objectives, including climate change, net zero, and the circular economy, and support the development of the Aberdeen Community Wealth Building Action Plan. Collaboration with wider public sector partners will focus on maximising community benefits and efficiencies. Additionally, a system will be introduced to capture and evidence community, economic, and environmental outcomes.
- 2. Refresh and Implement the Joint Procurement Strategy** - Refresh and implement an updated Joint Procurement Strategy to meet current legislation and support the Council Delivery Plan. Work with partners to embed clear objectives, emphasising local economic, social, and environmental value, and ensure a consistent, high-impact approach to all procurement and contract management.
- 3. Advance Procurement Compliance and Assurance** - Work will focus on strengthening assurance reporting, embedding improved processes, and providing bi-annual compliance updates to the Risk Board. Key actions include developing dashboards, delivering targeted training, and sample-testing all contracts over £50k for compliance, sustainability, and community benefits. This supports best value, reduces procurement risk, and improves assurance on contract management, including monitoring supplier sustainability—particularly for local suppliers—as procurement strategies evolve.

Success for priority areas will be measured through the below:

- Delivery against action plan evidenced with data captured evidencing Community Wealth Building in Procurement Outcomes
- Increased volume and visibility of community benefits delivered through major contracts, with demonstrable impact in Aberdeen's most disadvantaged communities
- Robust Assurance and Compliance Framework
- Refreshed Joint Procurement Strategy and Sustainable Procurement Policy published

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity:

Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, support for procurement activity which is not directly aligned to the three priorities above, such as lower value procurement exercises without significant community, economic or environmental benefit or impact on a key strategic priority, or non-essential policy development, will be scaled back. This is in recognition of finite workforce capacity and the need to

maximise impact with available resources. As noted in priority three above there will be continued development of training and support available for Delegated Procurers to support compliance and assurance measures will be in place to monitor activity.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Economic Stability	A healthy and skilled population (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	Partner	X
Enabling Services	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	In line with the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill, 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	Partner	X
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETZ Jobs Plan • City Centre and Beachfront Masterplan community benefits programme • Projects captured for progression within Capital Plan 	T1 & T2	Partner	X
Economic Stability	Increase the value of community benefits, including employability benefits	Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh existing Policy and report to Committee • Agree implementation with Shared Service partners 	T1	Partner	X

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				✓	P	75%	Tier 1	
5.	We will monitor compliance, every six months and escalate non-compliance as required and 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 remain focused on the delivery of modern, flexible 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. Consolidation of systems into the cloud platforms continues as does the modernisation of the education estate. The cluster has been augmented by the transfer of the Business Systems Teams which is indicated in the change of figures and staffing above. Assets remain consistent at around £150k with contract spend decreasing as the rationalisation of the infrastructure works through. A proportion of contract spend links directly to transformation activity as opposed to business as usual. Income remains at the 2025 level.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

The cluster completed 18,500 devices into schools as part of the £17.7m capital investment for schools digital services.



The cluster continues to achieve accreditation around cyber security, achieving accreditation to the Public Services Network (PSN) and Cyber Essentials Plus.



The cluster facilitated the launch of the Council's new website and updated AI chatbot for citizen contact that is helping to reduce failure demand



Successfully migrated all network connections off the Scottish Wide Area Network ahead of the March 2026 deadline.



The cluster supporting the migration of the Regional Communication Centre to the new national digital platform.



The cluster continues to monitor incident performance in the face of increasing demand.



Digital and Technology has developed a new 3 year roadmap aligned to the outcomes contained in the delivery plan and the wider transformation programme.

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
Review of service catalogue and self service	Moving low level, routine demand to self-service will free up capacity to focus on more strategic opportunities.	Demand and capacity via IT Self Service will be monitored with service-based teams to ensure focus is maintained in the right areas.

The latest published risk register is linked [here](#)

Priorities

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise 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.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, intentions for 2026/27 are dependent on the availability of capital funding. Scale and pace of change will be revised to reflect constraints.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Continued modernisation of citizen contact building on AI capabilities and enhanced life events service structure	T1 & T2	Funding	NA
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best	Further development of HR self service capabilities to include other corporate systems and provide increased service capabilities.	T1 & T2	Funding	NA

	possible service experience				
Enabling Services	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	T1 & T2	Workforce	NA
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Initiate further work to modernise our educational digital offering, taking the opportunity to align schools, libraries and CLD settings.	T1 & T2	Funding	NA
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Review our delivery of the democratic process and align with modern technologies to enhance the engagement with citizens.	T1 & T2	Funding	NA
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Drive adoption of generative AI to release resource through automation of tasks allowing increased staff resource to focus on high value human interactions with those most in need.	T1 & T2	Funding	C
Enabling Services	Use of digital technology to support the best possible service experience	Retain PSN and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations	T1 & T2	Funding	NA
Enabling Services	Support our Health and Social care Partnership in their use of	Enable integration with existing council digital platform and development of innovative tools to release capacity within adult social care.	T1 & T2	Funding	C

	digital technologies			
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Service Standards		Availability	Response	Quality	Eligibility	Legislated for (L), prescribed	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 our employees to deliver the best service and outcomes for our citizens, communities, businesses and visitors to our city. The cluster provides vital frontline and support functions, fundamental to the effective delivery of services and interactions with our workforce and our citizens. It also plays a key role in coordinating and supporting Community Planning Aberdeen, working collaboratively with partners to deliver shared priorities and improve outcomes for communities across the city. The cluster actively improves outcomes for themes such as poverty and inequality, people development, person centricity and community engagement.

Resources 5 Year Trends



Staffing numbers and costs increased significantly in 2024/25 due to organisational redesign and the inclusion within the Cluster of additional services. Further redesign occurred in 2025/26.

Performance Highlights in 2025/26

Staff absence (excluding teachers) reduced to 14.1 days in 2024/25, similar to the Scottish average of 13.9. Evidence, shows this figure is likely to fall for 2025/26.



The current gender pay gap for all Council employees is -3.75% (in favour of women). On average, female employees are paid at a higher hourly rate than male employees.



In 2025/26, the cluster made significant enhancements to SAR handling by increasing capacity and improving processes, which led to reduced delays, better performance, and outstanding cases resolved.



Improvement Priorities	Justification
Support targeted clusters to improve employee attendance	People & Citizen Services has a role in supporting all parts of the Council to improve employee attendance. During 2025/26 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 2026/27.

Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Flexible working policy	A revised flexible working policy has been implemented during 2025/26. The 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

Priorities need to 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.

- 1 Given reducing capacity, there will be a focus on supporting our workforce and our citizens to help themselves through digital transformation, automation and the use of AI so that our people resources and contact and engagement can focus on those who are most vulnerable and require support to access services. Increased digitisation will be implemented to improve efficiency and we will continue to assist service users to help themselves through self-serve channels, supported by AI, to reduce demand on resources and enable our focus to be on the most vulnerable, who require one to one support.
- 2 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.
- 3 We will focus council investment in community planning and wider partnership working on enabling high impact, system level change at a city-wide and community level to support prevention of harm and improvement of outcomes in the longer term for people and communities.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity:

Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, we will redirect resources away from delivery of multiple, low impact improvement projects to driving fewer, more transformative improvement initiatives across the city and local communities. We will reduce the support available to our staff and citizens, outside our digital channels, where individuals are able to self-serve in order to focus on those that cannot.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff	We will complete implementation of a new HR / Payroll and Case Management System which will improve our efficiency by automating a number of our processes,	T1	Workforce	NA

	and the Organisation	improving our reporting functionality and our employee experience.			
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	Workforce	X
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	Deliver the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plans to align with our new employer and service provider equality outcomes for 2025-2029 to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty.	T1	Workforce	X
Enabling Services	Support and Develop Staff and the Organisation	We will actively prepare for the implementation of the Employment Rights Act 2025 (UK) and the Equality (Race & Disability) Bill / Public Reforms, and consider the financial implications. In doing so we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure compliance of all Council policies; • align changed reporting/monitoring demands around fair work and employment conditions; • amend data collection systems if required. 	T1	Legislative	X
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	T1	Funding	X

		citizens to access Council and partner agency services.			
Enabling Services	Undertake proactive citizen and community engagement	Continue to deliver services and initiatives that empower citizens and communities to participate in decision-making, foster inclusivity and build capacity to influence and shape local priorities in line with our Community Empowerment Strategy	T1	Workforce	X
Enabling Services	Support multi-agency efforts to increase benefits uptake	Maintain the Low Income Family Tracker and 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	Partner	X

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	100%	Tiers 1 &2	
2.	We will allocate an investigating officer, when required, within 5 days of P&OD receiving complete paperwork from the commissioning manager.		✓			N	N/A	Tiers 1 &2	
3.	We will allocate a People and Organisation advisor to formal casework within 5 working days.	✓		✓		N	74%	Tier 2	
4.	All People Development courses will operate at 80% occupancy or above.	✓				N	94%	Tier 1	
5.	We will make initial contact with redeployees within 5 working days of redeployment confirmation.			✓		N	100%	Tiers 1 &2	

6.	We will pay our people correctly and on time, in line with notifications of changes received within deadlines.			✓		N	99.9%	Tier 1	
7.	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	Y	Tier 1	
8.	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:			✓		L	Y	Tier 1	
9.	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	Y	Tier 1	
Registrars – Births, Deaths and Marriages									
10.	We will ensure accurate Registration of all Births, Deaths and Marriages.			✓		P	99%	Tier 1	
11.	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									
12.	We will answer Contact Centre contact within an average of 5 minutes.		✓			N	4 mins 17 secs	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



Organisational redesign has transferred staff to Finance. This is reflected in the increase in FTE. Staff costs are reflective of the pay awards, there has been a planned reduction in contracts.

Performance in 2025/26

The % of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days was 90.3% in 2024/25 and was above our benchmark family group for the first time for a number of years.



Actual revenue outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure was 99.1% in 2024/25 which is below the Scottish average of 100.1% and our benchmark family group of 101.3%.



The total usable reserves as a % of budgeted annual revenue was 23.1% in 2024/25 compared to 25.9% in 2024/25. This is above the Scottish average 19.3%.



The uncommitted fund balance as % of annual budgeted revenue was 1.9% in 2024/25, identical to the Scottish average.



The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax fell from £6.48 in 2023/24 to £6.25 in 2024/25. This is better than the average for similar council areas of £10.80.



The % of Council Tax received by the end of the year remained at the same level in 2024/25 at 92.8%. This is less than the Scottish average of 95.5%.



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

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise maintaining robust financial governance through unqualified opinion from external audit on the annual accounts for which the Council and Aberdeen Integrated Joint Board, North East Pension Fund and Council charities and trusts has responsibility for; effective and robust billing and collection arrangements for local taxation and income sources; strengthening the Council's longer term financial planning.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Given the scale of demand and finite workforce capacity, the Finance cluster experiences high demand. It is inevitable there will be some unmet demand as we focus on the core capabilities.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
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	Workforce	X
Enabling Services	Management of Council Finances	Establish a longer term financial strategy to support the sustainable delivery of prevention and early intervention.	T1	Workforce	NA

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 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)	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	
Revenues and Benefits									
9.	We will process all new housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims within 35 calendar days on average.		✓			N	32	Tier 1	
10.	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	
11.	We will process Crisis Grant applications within 2 working days.		✓			L	98.4%	Tier 3	
12.	We will pay the correct amount of housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction to customers.			✓		N	96%	Tier 1	
13.	We will process Community Care Grant applications within 15 working days.		✓			L	73%	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 2025/26

The collaborative work of the Cluster has been successfully extended in 2025/26, with further partnership working with Public Health Scotland, The Improvement Service, Scottish Government and others.



The number of information governance incidents has reduced in 2025 compared to the previous year. All incidents received an initial response within 24 hours.



The Council's continued investment in data infrastructure continued in 2025/26 with the initial implementation of Microsoft Fabric as the foundation for the Central Data Platform.



Evaluation Opportunities	Justification	Scope / Approach
Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland (CHES)	Aberdeen's participation in the Collaboration for Health Equity, along with Public Health Scotland, the Institute for Health Equity and University College London and 2 other Scottish Local Authorities will be evaluated ahead of an assessment of future actions.	Preparations for the evaluation have been discussed with PHS. The exact scope and method will be subject to agreement.

The last published risk register is linked [here](#)

Priorities

In the context of workforce capacity and financial constraint, this cluster will prioritise 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. This means our focus is on 1. continuing development of the central data platform; 2. intelligent sharing and use of data with our partners to support the redesign and delivery of services to citizens; and 3. improving the use of research and evidence through the Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen. These priorities are foundational capability and will support colleagues and partners focus on prevention, supporting those most in need, whilst also strengthening the management and protection of citizens' data.

By the end of 2026/27 we will have created dataflows to ingest key Council datasets to Microsoft Fabric based data platform and improved the organisation's capability to use, share and gain insights from this data. Demonstrable progress will be made on the integration of research and evidence within the Council's strategic planning framework.

Ceasing or Scaling Back Activity: Data Insights (HDRCA) experiences high demand for support in information and data management and in the production of reports. Given finite resources it is inevitable there will be some unmet demand as we focus on the development of foundational capability. Demand is prioritised through data forums.

Social Determinant of Health Theme	Strategic Priority	Commissioning Intention	Prevention & Early Intervention	Deliverability Rating / Primary Constraint	PU
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.	T1 & T2	Partner	X
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, prioritising those with greatest impact for poverty, health and wellbeing.	T1 & T2	Workforce	C
Enabling Services	Data management for	Work with local and national partners to promote and enable the effective sharing of data across	T1 & T2	Partner	C

	insights and improvement	organisational boundaries prioritising those with greatest impact for poverty, health and wellbeing.			
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 the public services.	T1 & T2	Workforce	X

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
Complaints and Access to Information									
1.	Corporate - We will respond to Stage 1 complaints within 5 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	69%	Tier 3	
2.	Corporate - We will respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	70%	Tier 3	
3.	Corporate - We will respond to escalated stage 2 complaints within 20 working days or within timescales agreed with the complainant.		✓			L	59%	Tier 3	
4.	Corporate - We will respond to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.		✓			L	82%	Tier 3	
5.	Corporate - We will respond to Environmental Information Regulation Requests within 20 working days.		✓			L	74%	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	89%	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	75%	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	
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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 2025/26, 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 2026/27 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.

Areas for improvement will include those identified through the application of the Council's Quality Improvement Framework.

Quality Improvement Framework – The Aberdeen Way

The Aberdeen Way is a unified framework to help secure and improve service quality across all council functions and clusters, aligning with national efforts to enhance self-evaluation and reduce audit burdens.

It responds to the complex landscape of scrutiny, reporting, and regulatory requirements faced by local authorities, aiming to bring coherence to governance, performance improvement, and audit activities.

Core Concepts

The Aberdeen Way explores the different approaches to improving quality. Namely:

- Quality Control: Operational checks and testing to meet standards and correct defects (e.g., compliance with FOI response times).
- Quality Assurance: Systematic activities and processes to prevent defects and ensure consistent quality (e.g., practice guidelines for social workers).

- **Quality Improvement:** Continuous efforts to enhance all aspects of operations, focusing on impact and outcomes, and fostering a culture where everyone seeks improvement

The Framework sets out how self-evaluation will be utilised to support our quality improvement activities.

Approaches to self-evaluation

There are different approaches that can be taken to self-evaluation, depending upon how important external validation is.

- Internal:** Conducted by council staff using internal resources.
- Assisted:** Involves external partners for support and challenge.
- Validated:** Includes scrutiny bodies for external validation.
- Thematic:** Deep dives into specific areas, often triggered by strategic concerns or external events.



The Framework

What key outcomes have we achieved?	How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?	How good is the delivery of key processes?	How good is our management?	How good is our leadership?
1 Key performance outcomes	2. Impact on service users	5. Delivery of key processes	6. Policy development and planning	9. Leadership
1.1 Improvements in performance	2.1 Impact on service users	5.1 Delivering services	6.1 Policy review and development	9.1 Leadership and direction
1.2 Fulfilment of statutory duties	3. Impact on staff	5.2 Developing, managing and improving partnerships	6.2 Cluster planning and strategic planning	9.2 Leadership of innovation, change and improvement
	3.1 Impact on staff	5.3 Inclusion, equality and fairness	7. Management and support of staff	
	4. Impact on local community	5.4 Improving the quality of services	7.1 Sufficiency, recruitment and retention	
	4.1 Impact on local community		7.2 Deployment and teamwork	
			7.3 Development and training	
			8. Resources	
			8.1 Delivering services in partnership	
			8.2 Financial management	
			8.3 Resource management	
			8.4 Information systems	
10. Capacity for improvement				

Each of the sections within the framework includes quality indicators (QIs), potential sources of evidence that could be explored to evidence judgements, and reflective questions to guide the self-evaluation process.

Implementation of the Framework

A comprehensive guide to the Quality Improvement Framework has been produced and training and support will be provided throughout 2026/27 to deliver self-evaluation and improvement at Corporate, Cluster and Team levels.

A programme of implementation at each of the levels has been prepared with initial prioritisation at the corporate level focusing on Best Value themes beginning with Asset Management.

