



**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

## **Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

A Meeting of the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee** of North Ayrshire Council will be held in the **Council Chambers, Ground Floor, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE** on **Tuesday, 15 November 2022** at **10:00** to consider the undernoted business.

### **Meeting Arrangements - Hybrid Meetings**

This meeting will be held on a predominantly physical basis but with provision, by prior notification, for remote attendance by Elected Members in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. Where possible, the meeting will be live-streamed and available to view at <https://north-ayrshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

#### **1 Declarations of Interest**

Members are requested to give notice of any declarations of interest in respect of items of business on the Agenda.

#### **2 Minutes**

The accuracy of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 September 2022 will be confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copy enclosed).

#### **3 Petition: Proposed Car Parking Charges: Owenward East and Almswall Road Car Parks, Kilwinning**

Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the terms of a petition received in respect of proposed car parking charges at Owenward East and Almswall Road Car Parks, Kilwinning (copy enclosed).

#### **4 Annual Report on the 2021/22 Audit**

Submit report by the Head of Finance on the Annual Audit report for 2021/22 and receive verbal report by the external auditor (copy enclosed).

- 5 Accounts Commission's Report: Scotland's Financial Response to Covid-19**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of the recently published Accounts Commission report (copy enclosed).
- 6 Year End Performance Reporting: Council Plan Year End Progress Report 2021-22, Annual Performance Report 2021-22 and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Report 2020-21**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on progress with the Council Plan priorities (copy enclosed).
- 7 2021-2022 Complaints Report**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic) providing information on the Council's complaint performance and the volumes and trends of complaints received in Financial Year 2021/22 (copy enclosed).
- 8 Workforce Absence 2019-2022**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (People & ICT) providing a year end summary of sickness absence for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 (copy enclosed).
- 9 Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 2 Update**  
Submit report by Head of Service (Finance) on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 30 September 2022 (copy enclosed).
- 10 Corporate Fraud Team Update Report**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the work of the Corporate Fraud Team between April and September 2022 (copy enclosed).
- 11 Internal Audit Reports Issued**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of Internal Audit work completed between September and October 2022 (copy enclosed).
- 12 National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in Scotland 2022**  
Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) providing an overview of the NFI 2020/21 exercise outcomes (copy enclosed).
- 13 Urgent Items**  
Any other items which the Chair considers to be urgent.

**14 Exclusion of the Public - Para 1**

Resolve in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

**Non Disclosure of Information**

In terms of Standing Order 21 (Disclosure of Information), the information contained within the following report is confidential information within the meaning of Section 50A of the 1973 Act and shall not be disclosed to any person by any Member or Officer.

**15 Investigation Reports Issued**

Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on investigation reports finalised since the last meeting (copy enclosed).

**Webcasting**

Please note: this meeting may be filmed/recorded/live-streamed to the Council's internet site and available to view at <https://north-ayrshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>, where it will be capable of repeated viewing. At the start of the meeting, the Provost/Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed/recorded/live-streamed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy, including, but not limited to, for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available via the Council's internet site.

Generally, the press and public seating areas will not be filmed. However, by entering the Council Chambers, using the press or public seating area or (by invitation) participating remotely in this meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and consenting to the use and storage of those images and sound recordings and any information pertaining to you contained in them for webcasting or training purposes and for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available to the public. If you do not wish to participate in a recording, you should leave the meeting. This will constitute your revocation of consent.

If you have any queries regarding this and, in particular, if you believe that use and/or storage of any particular information would cause, or be likely to cause, substantial damage or distress to any individual, please contact [dataprotectionofficer@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

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## **Audit and Scrutiny Committee Sederunt**

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John Bell (Chair)  
Donald Reid (Vice Chair)  
Eleanor Collier  
Cameron Inglis  
Tom Marshall  
Matthew McLean  
Davina McTiernan  
Ian Murdoch  
John Sweeney

Chair:

Apologies:

Attending:



At a Special Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m. involving participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine.

**Present (Physical Participation)**

John Bell, Donald Reid, Cameron Inglis, Matthew McLean, Davina McTiernan and John Sweeney.

**Present (Remote Participation)**

Tom Marshall.

**In Attendance (Physical Participation)**

C. Cameron, Director, A. Sutherland, Head of Service (Children, Families and Justice) and M. Close, Senior Officer (HSCP); A. McClelland, Head of Service (Education); B. Borthwick and W. Turpie, Senior Managers and J. Smith, Senior Officer (Place); F. Ellis, Senior Manager (Place); M. Boyd, Head of Service (Finance), L. Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud Safety and Insurance), R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services), A. Little and H. Clancy, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

**Also in Attendance (Physical Participation)**

L. Kirkland, B. Griffin and D. Jarrett (NHS).

**Chair**

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

**Apologies**

Eleanor Collier.

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

**2. Minutes**

The Minutes of (i) the Ordinary Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 May 2022; and (ii) the Special Meeting held on 30 June 2022 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

### **3. External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit by West Dunbartonshire Council**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of the recent external review of Internal Audit carried out by West Dunbartonshire Council. The full External Quality Assessment report, including the action plans, was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee agreed to (a) note (i) the findings and action plan from the review of Internal Audit; and (ii) the positive nature of the assessment; and (b) record its thanks to West Dunbartonshire Council Internal Audit for carrying out the review.

### **4. Accounts Commission's Report: Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2022**

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of the Local Government in Scotland Overview 2022 report by the Accounts Commission highlighting key messages and recommendations.

A link to the full report was provided within the Executive Summary which reflected on the evolving and long-term nature of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, considered the second year of the pandemic, building on the previous review of the initial response of Councils to the challenges, and assessed the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and Councils' progress towards recovery and renewal.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

- workforce planning that used a variety of tools and techniques, such as career development, succession planning, vacancy management, redeployment and early release schemes to plan the workforce requirements for the future; and
- a six-monthly review of each Service's workforce plan that is undertaken, to ensure service review and redesign of the workforce is on track.

The Committee agreed to note (i) the findings of the Accounts Commission report; (ii) the recommendations contained in the report; and (iii) North Ayrshire Council's current approach in relation to each recommendation.

### **5. Internal Audit Annual Update Report: North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board (IJB)**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the IJB's Annual Report for 2021/22 and the approved internal audit plan for 2022/23. Substantial assurance was provided over the arrangements in place, and no areas for improvement were identified during the review.

The report also provided details of the Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 and the allocation of 25 audit days from the Internal Audit service of North Ayrshire Council and 10 days from NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Noted.

## **6. Strategic Risk Register 2022/23**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Council's agreed Strategic Risk Register for 2022/23. The Strategic Risk Register Report 2022/23, with detailed actions, was provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

- a range of finance pressures that had been identified, including additional national insurance contributions, energy cost inflation, contractual commitments as well as significant construction inflation;
- Blackstart workshops that would take place to work through a range of scenarios, including the loss of all power and mobile networks; and
- six strategic sites in North Ayrshire identified to house generators which would be used in the event of a national power outage.

Noted.

## **7. Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 1 Update**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 30 June 2022. Appendix 1 to the report provided full details of seven Internal Audit actions which were not completed within the agreed timescale.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to data protection information awareness training arranged for Garnock Academy on 22 November 2022.

The Committee agreed to note (i) the current position with the implementation of the Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (ii) challenges which were faced by those services which have not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales.

## **8. Internal Audit Plan 2022/23: Mid-Year Update**

Submitted report by Head of Service (Finance) on progress made in delivering the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan, including information on two additional audits for inclusion in the 2022/23 Plan and five audits to be deferred to the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the full Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

- four audits undertaken to review controls in the Transport Hub in relation to transportation, with a particular focus on the use of taxis; and
- deferral of five audits till 2023/24 to allow audit days to be aligned with available resources.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the current position; (b) approve the inclusion of two additional audit reviews in 2022/23; and (c) approve the deferral of five audits for consideration as part of the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan.

## **9. Internal Audit Reports Issued**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of Internal Audit work completed between May and August 2022. The findings from eight audit assignments were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, together with the respective executive summaries and action plans.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

IJB Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code

- compliance information that had been circulated to staff via email and training that would be provided to services if required.

Accounts Payable Transaction Testing Q4

- 100% of all invoices that had been checked within one accounting period to test for duplicate invoices for payments to suppliers; and
- the provision of further information to Members on possible duplicate invoices

Social Media

- work undertaken to ensure social media accounts aligned with the Council's Communication Strategy;
- the preparation of an Education Digital Strategy; and
- that the Head of Service (Education) would liaise directly with the Chair in relation to school Twitter accounts; and
- the provision of further information by the Head of Service (Education) in relation to school Twitter accounts

VAT

- thirty transactions that required further investigation to cross-check the information behind the data.

## Off-Payroll Working (IR35)

- the use of agency staff by HSCP, Building Services and Waste Management; and
- no issues had been noted during the review of transactions with five local suppliers whose contract type and company indicated a Personal Service Company (PSC).

The Committee agreed (a) that the Head of Finance provide further information to Members on possible duplicate invoices; (b) that the Head of Service (Education) liaise directly with the Chair in relation to school Twitter accounts; and (c) to note the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed as set out in the report.

## **10. Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the refresh of the Council's Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy. The refreshed Strategy was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report and set out how the Council aimed to address fraud risk.

The Strategy highlighted the areas of the Council's operations that were viewed as being at greatest risk of fraud and corruption and outlined a number of danger signs or 'red flags' to which the Council must be alert in order to maximise the opportunity to identify potential frauds.

Noted.

## **11. Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator 2021/22**

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Council's Annual return on the Charter 2021/21 submission and endorsement of the Annual Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Annual Assurance Statement was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

- an update that would be provided to a future meeting on any links between access not being provided to properties to allow upgrades to be undertaken and the slight increase in tenancy offers being refused;
- a range of information that is held on the Asset Management System, including details of properties with compliant and non-compliant smoke alarms;
- issues with a specific arrangement to upgrade smoke alarms that would be examined by the Senior Manager (Housing Strategy & Development) and an update provided to the local Member;
- upgrades to smoke alarm systems that are now completed when gas safety checks are undertaken;

- improved processes that had been put in place to resolve issues that had been experienced with a contactor's recording system for gas safety checks; and
- the provision of a report to the next meeting on staff absences in the previous 3 years.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Committee Chair sign the Annual Assurance Statement detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; (b) to note (i) the Annual Return on the Charter submission 2021-22; (ii) the supporting evidence provided to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework; and (iii) the Council's Covid related non-compliance with its legal gas, electrical and fire safety responsibilities, including that all outstanding gas safety checks for 2021/22, have now been carried out; (c) that the Director (Place) provide an update to a future meeting on whether there had been a link between access not being provided to allow upgrades to be undertaken and the slight increase in tenancy offers being refused; and (d) that the Head of Service (People and ICT) provide a report to the next meeting on staff absences in the previous 3 years.

## **12. Exclusion of the Public – Para 1**

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

## **13. Investigation Reports Issued**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on investigation reports finalised since the last meeting.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Director, Health and Social Care Partnership provide a report to a future meeting on Blue Badges; and (b) to otherwise note the report.

## **14. Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 1 Update (exempted items)**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 30 June 2022.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### North Ayrshire Council

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**Title:** Petition relating to Proposed Car Parking Charges:  
Oxenward East and Almswall Road Car Parks, Kilwinning

**Purpose:** To advise the Committee of the terms of a petition objecting to the proposed parking charges to be introduced at Oxenward East and Almswall Road Car Parks and requesting that the Council maintain free parking in Kilwinning.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

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### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 In terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee has a remit:

“To receive all petitions and deputations submitted to the Council except those relating to the Council’s planning functions, which shall be considered by the Planning Committee. The arrangements for receiving petitions are as set out in Appendix B to the Standing Orders relating to Meetings and Proceedings of the Council and Committees”.

1.2 This report sets out the background to a hard copy petition supported by 1700+ signatories and submitted on 3 November 2022, objecting to the proposed parking charges to be introduced at Oxenward East and Almswall Road Car Parks and requesting that the Council maintain free parking in Kilwinning. An online version of the petition currently has in excess of 1800 signatories.

### 2. Background

2.1 The petition is detailed below:

*“On behalf of Dino and Sons, Graeme Milliken, and many Kilwinning traders, shopkeepers and residents, we would like to hand deliver this covering letter along with an Online and Paper Petition in regards to our ardent objections to the proposed car parking charges to be introduced at Oxenward East car park and Almswall Road car park.*

We would like to highlight paragraph 4.2 taken from North Ayrshire's Town Centre Parking Strategy dated 2014 – 2020 which is currently available on North Ayrshire Council's website for public viewing. With this strategy actions for Delivery 4 states the following,

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/PropertyServices/InfrastructureDesign/Roads/town-centre-parking-strategy.pdf>

#### 4.2 Maintain Free Parking

North Ayrshire is one of a small number of Councils that provides free parking. This is primarily to support local businesses and maintain visitors within areas identified within high levels of deprivation and where there are a number of large shopping centres that offer free parking. Consultation has also identified that free parking is a key factor in people visiting town centres.

North Ayrshire Council clearly states, 'free parking is a key factor in people visiting town centres.' Therefore, the introduction of parking charges goes against the findings within your own strategy, which additionally highlights that Kilwinning and its surrounding areas of Irvine, the Three Towns and Garnock Valley were identified as one of the significant areas of deprivation within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

With the ongoing energy, fuel, and cost of living crisis, business owners feel that the parking charges are a travesty, and the impact will have a negative effect on keeping business open, consequently, resulting in more independent shop closures within Kilwinning main street. Shopkeepers would rather have a guaranteed current footfall, rather than gambling on an unknown and unguaranteed future footfall.

Considering the feedback from many customers who were asked if they will pay to park, the feedback has been extremely negative, customers have stated that they will shop elsewhere that provides free parking therefore, we must insist that this decision be reversed to ensure that local businesses remain the backbone of Kilwinning's economy, who will continue to support our local community.

We the shopkeepers fear that the proposed parking charges will significantly reduce footfall. Therefore, doing so will have a devastating impact on all small independent businesses who are already striving to compete against the giant supermarkets and large shopping centres within the surrounding area where all parking is free.

A substantial number of our customers and visitors, including tourists, many of whom are elderly, need Kilwinning main street as a community hub. Enabling them to visit shops, socially integrating with friends and family, helping to have a positive effect on mental health and wellbeing. Most importantly no one should have to pay to visit doctors, dentists and nurses within their local surgeries and other such essential healthcare amenities which many depend on for their wellbeing. Our on-street residents have a right to remain parking charge free, like every other area in Kilwinning, relatives and friends should never have to pay to visit their family and friends, ever!

Considering the points above, surely now is not the time to introduce parking fees. May we stress nothing has changed positively since the last survey dated 2014 to 2020, current situations are now, as we are sure you will agree, are worse than when the above information was first printed.

**PLEASE KEEP PARKING FREE IN KILWINNING."**



- 2.2 The Head of Service (Commercial) has provided a briefing note on the background to this matter, which is detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.3 In terms of the procedure for petitions and deputations set out in Standing Orders, representatives of the petitioners have been invited to attend the meeting to address the Committee. Spokespersons should be restricted to addressing the specific points raised in their petition.
- 2.4 The spokespersons have, collectively, 10 minutes to address the Committee. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- 2.5 Once the Committee has heard from the spokespersons for the petitioners, the Chair will invite Members of the Committee to ask questions of the spokespersons.
- 2.6 While it is for the Chair to decide the stage at which officers should speak to their briefing, previous Committee practice has been for the Cabinet Member or Officer to speak to this after the Committee has heard from the petitioners. The Cabinet Member or Officer will then respond to any questions that Members of the Committee may have.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1 There is £440k income per year forecast from this initiative across North Ayrshire. If the initiative does not go ahead it would need to be replaced with an alternative proposal(s) to plug the budget gap ie. other income opportunities to raise £440k or £440k of new savings.

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None arising from this report.

#### **Legal**

- 4.3 None arising from this report.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 None arising from this report.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 None arising from this report.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 None arising from this report.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None arising from this report.

### **5. Consultation**

5.1 The Head of Service (Commercial) has been consulted and made aware of the terms of the petition and has provided a briefing note which is attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

**Aileen Craig**  
**Head of Service (Democratic)**

For further information please contact **Diane McCaw, Committee Services Officer**, on **01294 324132**

### **Background Papers**

N/A

## **Briefing Note: DPE and Car Parking Charges**

### **Background**

On 11 June 2019 Cabinet recommended that DPE be introduced across North Ayrshire and that car park charges should apply in Irvine, Kilwinning, Saltcoats, Largs and Brodick.

Charges were set at:

Proposed Tariff	
Time (Mins)	Short Stay
60	£1.00
120	£1.50
240	£3.00
All Day	Not Permitted

However, following a call in to Audit and Scrutiny the matter was referred back to Cabinet to reconsider the previous decision in relation to the introduction of car parking charges in Brodick and in the inclusion of Arran in DPE.

On 25 September 2019 full Council backed DPE for the entire Council area but not to implement car parking charges on Arran.

In 2020, a global pandemic emerged, and the introduction of the proposals was put on hold due to this.

On 2 March 2022, at its budget setting meeting full Council approved an increase in charges, as follows.

Proposed Tariff	
Time (Mins)	Short stay
60	£1.50
120	£2.00
240	£3.50
All Day	Not permitted

A motion was proposed at the Full Council Meeting on 21 September 2022 that in view of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, the introduction of these measures should be paused and a further review of the impact of these measures on residents and local businesses should be undertaken.

However, following a division and a roll call vote, Council agreed that, 'in light of the deepening financial crisis, a proposal be brought to Cabinet to reconsider the level of charges proposed in the 2022/23 budget.'

### **Key Outcomes of DPE**

#### **Traffic Management**

A key desired outcome of introducing DPE and parking charges is an improved regulation of traffic in our town centres, by directing long stay patrons to free parking slightly further out whilst providing chargeable and short stay parking close to retail and other town centre services.

## Sustainable Transport/Climate Change

The introduction of these measures also aligns with National Transport Policy by encouraging more active and sustainable modes of transport. The Scottish Government has a target to reduce car usage by 20% by 2030 and car parking charges will help contribute to this target by shifting people towards using alternative and sustainable modes of transport.

The introduction of DPE and car parking charges aims to support sustainable and active travel and reduce the impact of transport on our communities. This also aims to reduce the volume of traffic travelling through our towns and to facilitate public transport to support a shift towards more sustainable travel behaviour. This aligns with the Council's agreed Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and furthermore, it aligns with the Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions through our declaration of a Climate Emergency and will contribute to the ambition to achieve net zero by 2030.

The Town Centre Parking Strategy 2014-20, referred to by the petitioner did state that parking would be free, at the time of publishing the report in 2014, however the new Local Transport Strategy will cover this. Since 2014 much change has taken place particularly around Climate Change and the declaration of a Climate Emergency.

## **DPE powers and charges**

### Process to enact DPE

To obtain DPE powers an application has been submitted to Scottish Government to transfer the enforcement powers from Police Scotland to North Ayrshire Council and the statutory process is underway with implementation now expected on 1 July 2023.

DPE powers are currently held by 21 Local Authorities including all our neighbouring local authorities.

### Charges

It is important to note that Decriminalised Parking is not sustainable without the income generated from parking charges.

Transport Scotland recommends that DPE should be financially sustainable as far as possible. It states, 'if a strong financial case cannot be made the Local Authority needs to explain how it would meet any shortfall before Transport Scotland could make a decision on the application.'

It is recommended that when considering taking on DPE powers a robust Business Case outlining how DPE will be funded is required. North Ayrshire Council commissioned robust Feasibility Studies in 2019 which helped inform the Car Parking charges model.

A Financial Assessment was submitted as part of the application to the Scottish Ministers.

### Parking for disabled badge holders/poor parking behaviour

Disabled badge holders will be able to park free of charge in the car parks where charges apply.

A significant problem is that disabled parking bays are being abused with able bodied drivers parking in them preventing disabled badge holders from parking.

There are also issues with inconsiderate drivers parking on double yellow lines, bus stops, 'keep clear' areas near schools etc and DPE powers will help us act on this.

### Pavement Parking Ban

The Scottish Government is introducing a ban on pavement parking in late 2023 and without car park wardens we will be unable to enforce this legislation.

### Car parks where charges will apply

- Irvine – Kirkgate, West Road and East Road
- Kilwinning – Almswell Road and Oxenward
- Saltcoats – Vernon Street, Bradshaw Street, Windmill Street and Kirkgate.
- Largs – Gateside Street.

There is already charging in place at Bellmans Close in Largs.

North Ayrshire Council currently has 55 car parks and 44 will remain free of charge to use, the exceptions being the 10 named above plus Bellman's Close, Largs.

There is free parking available nearby the locations where charges will apply.

In Kilwinning, the Woodwynd Car Park will remain free of charge and there is also on street free parking.

### Implementation Plan

#### Ongoing engagement

Engagement sessions have been arranged with local elected members and will take place between 5 and 8 December 2022.

These engagement sessions offer the opportunity to discuss concerns and issues around the proposals.

#### Car Park usage

Officers have been monitoring parking behaviour in the car parks where charges are to be introduced. In Kilwinning it is proposed to introduce charges in Almswell Road car park and Oxenward car park leaving Woodwynd car park and on street parking free of charge.

From our monitoring exercise we have found there are very few spaces available within both Almswell Road and Oxenward car parks during the day, with these car parks being full of mainly workers and students by 9:00am each day with very little vehicle movement until the evening.

There has been a long-standing issue in these car parks with visitors/shoppers being prevented from getting a space due to the car park being used as a long stay car park. The introduction of car parking charges should help with vehicle turnover and allow visitors/shoppers to access the car parks.

In addition, the disabled bays are also being abused meaning disabled visitors and doctor's patients are unable to park. It should be noted that disabled bays will remain free of charge for blue badge holders, however DPE will mean that the Council can act against the inappropriate use of disabled bays.

These local issues will be discussed with ward members.

### Residents parking permits

The Service are considering the introduction of resident parking bays to address resident's concerns.

### Doctor's surgeries in Kilwinning

A meeting between Council Officers and representatives from the Doctor's surgeries took place on 27 September 2022 and it was agreed to consider the following:

- Provision of a drop off/pick up point for patients.
- Review the number of GP spaces provided.
- Review the number of disabled bays provided.

A patient's representative at the meeting acknowledged it was difficult for patients to get a parking space due to cars being parked in this location all day.

### Level of Charges

In accordance with the Council's decision on 21 September 2022, a report will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 24 January 2023 on charges.

### **Financial Implications**

Car Parking charges were agreed as part of the Council's budget setting process and an income of £440,000 per annum is included in the budget.

Any proposal to review or abolish car parking charges will require details on how the £440,000 funding gap will be met through increased charges/income or new savings.

There is also a cost in providing and maintaining car parks and in the current financial climate this is difficult to sustain without some sort of charge.

## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Annual Report on the 2021/22 Audit</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To invite Committee to note the annual audit report for 2021/22 and to consider a verbal report by the external auditor.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Notes the findings of the 2021/22 audit of the financial statements as contained in the External Auditor's annual report at Appendix 2;</li> <li>(b) Considers the verbal report by the External Auditor;</li> <li>(c) Notes the agreed Action Plan as outlined on Page 30 of the final report; and</li> <li>(d) Approves the audited Annual Accounts for signature.</li> </ul>

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the external audit for 2021/22, Deloitte LLP have produced two reports. The initial report, covering Audit Dimensions and Best Value, was considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 31 May 2022. The second report is the Final Report and includes an opinion on the Council's financial statements.
- 1.2 The unaudited accounts for the year to 31 March 2021 were approved by Council on 22 June 2022 and submitted to the Council's external auditor, Deloitte LLP, for audit. The Audit Director for Deloitte LLP has now issued his proposed Independent Auditor's Report on the financial statements which is free from qualification and confirms that the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Council, its group and the Council's charitable trusts as at 31 March 2022.
- 1.3 As detailed in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.6, a number of adjustments have been identified during the audit process. However, these adjustments do not impact on the reported balance of Unearmarked Reserves which remain unchanged at £11.315m.
- 1.4 Deloitte LLP's final report includes an action plan in relation to one recommendation for improvement identified during the course of the audit. This relates to the useful economic lives of assets classed as Infrastructure Assets. Full details of this and the proposed management action are included at Page 30 of the Auditor's Report.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The 2021/22 audit of the Council's accounts was conducted by Deloitte LLP, the final year of a six year cycle as the Council's appointed external auditors.
- 2.2 As well as auditing the financial statements, Deloitte LLP considered the Council's arrangements in relation to best value and the four audit dimensions of financial sustainability, financial management, value for money and governance and transparency. An initial report covering the audit dimensions and best value was considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 31 May 2022.
- 2.3 The Council's accounts for the year to 31 March 2022 were submitted to Deloitte LLP for audit by the deadline of 30 June 2022. Following an extension to the statutory dates under the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2022, the external auditor is required to complete the audit by 30 November 2022 and to report on certain matters arising to those charged with governance in sufficient time to enable appropriate action to be taken before the financial statements are approved and certified.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 includes letters of representation to be signed by the Head of Finance as the responsible officer for North Ayrshire Council. Deloitte LLP's annual report to members, which summarises the findings of their audit, is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.5 Accounting adjustments totalling £0.679m have been identified during the audit process. These adjustments were related to the treatment of insurance excess transactions and the valuation provided for "experience losses" in relation to our share of the liabilities of Strathclyde Pension Fund.
- 2.6 In relation to the insurance excess transactions, adjustments have been made to recognise the correct treatment of these transactions and upgrade internal procedures to prevent any further recurrence. This resulted in a net reduction of £0.212m in the level the Council's Insurance Fund.
- 2.7 In relation to the valuation of pension liabilities, an adjustment to the actuarial valuation has been made. This resulted in a net increase of £0.467m in the value of the Council's share of Strathclyde Pension Fund's net long term liability.
- 2.8 Further adjustments were identified in relation to transfers between the Council's unusable reserves in relation to the impairment of assets and the restatement of the previous year's service income and expenditure analysis to reflect changes in North Ayrshire Council's internal reporting structure. An upgrade to the Council's financial ledger system linked to revised internal procedures will be undertaken to prevent any further recurrence. The overall level of unusable reserves was not affected and the reported balance of Unearmarked Reserves has remained unchanged at £11.315m.
- 2.9 Pages 9 to 18 of the attached Audit Report (Appendix 2) outline the significant risks and other matters identified in the audit plan for 2021/22 together with the auditor's views of the key judgements and controls in place. These risks relate to:
  - Recognition of Covid-19 Related Income; and
  - Management Override of Controls.



The report confirms that no material issues were identified in relation to these matters.

- 2.10 The report notes that final testing of the charitable trust accounts has been completed and that no issues have been identified. It is anticipated that an unmodified opinion will be issued in relation to this.
- 2.11 The report also notes one issue in relation to an internal control arising from the recognition of the impairment of some assets within our Unusable Reserves, as noted at 2.8 above. Actions to upgrade the financial ledger system are being implemented.
- 2.12 In addition, in relation to the financial statements, the Audit Report has noted that:
- The Council's Management Commentary has been prepared in accordance with the statutory guidance;
  - The auditable parts of Remuneration Report have been properly prepared in accordance with the regulations; and
  - The Annual Governance Statement is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework.
- 2.13 An Action Plan which sets out the main areas identified for action from the annual audit is detailed on page 30 of the final report. The only area identified is in relation to the accounting for Infrastructure Assets which has been subject to an ongoing national review. In order to support this, the nature of the assets held under Infrastructure Assets will be reviewed and engineering advice will be sought to ensure that the assigned useful economic lives are consistent with the nature of the assets in question.
- 2.14 It should be noted that the auditor has received a statutory objection to the accounts relating to the Common Good and Trust Funds and has met with the objector to consider the issues and evidence provided. The auditor has concluded that the issues raised are not material to their opinion and no further adjustments to the financial statements are anticipated.
- 2.15 A link to the final audited accounts will be issued to all members for their information.
- 2.16 Representatives from Deloitte LLP will be in attendance at Committee and will present a verbal report highlighting the main findings of the 2021/22 audit.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that Committee:
- (a) Notes the findings of the 2021/22 audit of the financial statements as contained in the External Auditor's annual report at Appendix 2;
  - (b) Considers the verbal report by the External Auditor;
  - (c) Notes the agreed Action Plan as outlined on Page 25 of the final report; and
  - (d) Approves the audited Annual Accounts for signature.

## **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

### **Financial**

4.1 The financial implications are as outlined in the report.

### **Human Resources**

4.2 None.

### **Legal**

4.3 Under the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2022, the external auditor is required to complete the audit by 30 November 2022.

### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 None.

### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 None.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 This report and the annual accounts directly support the Council Plan 2019 to 2024 by maximising resources and providing value for money to support financially sustainable delivery models.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 The Chief Executive, Executive Directors and other appropriate officers have been consulted as part of the audit process.

**Mark Boyd**  
**Head of Service (Finance)**

For further information please contact **David Forbes, Senior Manager (Strategic Business Partner)**, on **01294 324551** or **DavidForbes@north-ayrshire.gov.uk**.

### **Background Papers**

North Ayrshire Council Unaudited Annual Accounts 2021/22 - Council 22 June 2022;  
North Ayrshire Charitable Trusts: Unaudited Trustees' Annual Report 2021/22 – Council 22 June 2022;  
External Audit Report on Audit Dimensions and Best Value for the year ended 31 March 2022 – Audit and Scrutiny Committee 31 May 2022.





**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Your Ref: Our Ref: PK/NAC/2022

If telephoning please ask for: Mark Boyd ☎ 01294 324560

15 November 2022

Dear Pat Kenny,

## **NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT – YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of North Ayrshire Council ('the entity') for the year ended 31 March 2022 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the entity as of 31 March 2022 and of the results of its operations, other comprehensive net expenditure and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the applicable accounting framework as interpreted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

In addition to the above, this representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the other information in the Annual Accounts, for the purposes set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2016.

We are aware that it is an offence to mislead an auditor of a public body.

On behalf of the entity, I confirm as Responsible Financial Officer, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the following representations.

### **Financial statements**

1. We understand and have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework, as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, which give a true and fair view, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter.
2. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value and assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the entity are reasonable. We have made sufficient and appropriate disclosure of the general increased estimation uncertainty arising from the impact of COVID-19.
3. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of IAS24 "Related party disclosures".
4. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the applicable financial reporting framework requires adjustment of or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

5. There are no uncorrected misstatements and disclosure deficiencies.
6. We confirm that the financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis and disclose in accordance with IAS 1 all matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including principal conditions or events and our plans. We do not intend to cease operations as we consider we have realistic alternatives to doing so. We are not aware of any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt upon the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. We confirm the completeness of the information provided regarding events and conditions relating to going concern at the date of approval of the financial statements, including our plans for future actions.
7. The entity has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the entity's assets and assets pledged as collateral.
8. We have recorded or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities, both actual and contingent.
9. We have reconsidered the remaining useful lives of the property, plant and equipment and confirm that the present rates of depreciation are appropriate to amortise the cost less residual value over the remaining useful lives.
10. We are not aware of events or changes in circumstances occurring during the period which indicate that the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment may not be recoverable.
11. With respect to accounting estimates, we confirm:
  - the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models used to determine accounting estimates in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework are appropriate and have been applied consistently;
  - the assumptions appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity where relevant to the accounting estimates and disclosures;
  - the disclosures related to accounting estimates under the entity's applicable financial reporting framework are complete and appropriate; and
  - there have been no subsequent events that require adjustment to the accounting estimates and disclosures included in the financial statements.
12. We confirm that we consider the depreciated historic cost is an appropriate proxy for the fair value of non-property assets, and are not aware of any circumstances that would indicate that these assets require revaluation.
13. We confirm that the provisions included within the financial statements are our best estimate of the liability due by the entity.
14. We confirm that:
  - all retirement benefits and schemes, including UK, foreign, funded or unfunded, approved or unapproved, contractual or implicit have been identified and properly accounted for;
  - all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for;

- all events which relate to the determination of pension liabilities have been brought to the actuary's attention;
  - the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of the scheme liabilities (including the discount rate used) accord with our best estimates of the future events that will affect the cost of retirement benefits and are consistent with our knowledge of the entity;
  - the actuary's calculations have been based on complete and up to date member data as far as appropriate regarding the adopted methodology; and
  - the amounts included in the financial statements derived from the work of the actuary are appropriate.
15. We have made a reclassification to the prior period financial statements to ensure transparent comparison for the users of the financial statements. This is in relation to the income and expenditure charged to "Chief Executive" and "Other Corporate Items".

### **Information provided**

16. We have provided you with all relevant information and access as agreed in the terms of the audit engagement letter with Audit Scotland.
17. All transactions have been recorded and are reflected in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records.
18. We acknowledge our responsibilities for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error. We are not aware of any deficiencies in internal control of which you should be aware.
19. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
20. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the entity or group and involves:
- (i) management;
  - (ii) employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
  - (iii) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
21. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
22. We are not aware of any instances of non-compliance, or suspected non-compliance, with laws, regulations, and contractual agreements whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
23. We have disclosed to you the identity of the entity's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

24. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. No other claims in connection with litigation have been or are expected to be received.
25. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
26. We confirm that:
  - (i) we consider that the entity has appropriate processes to prevent and identify any cyber breaches other than those that are clearly inconsequential; and
  - (ii) we have disclosed to you all cyber breaches of which we are aware that have resulted in more than inconsequential unauthorised access of data, applications, services, networks and/or devices.
27. We have performed an assessment of the impact on the financial statements of events in Russia and Ukraine including consideration of the impact of sanctions and have disclosed the results of that assessment to you.
28. All minutes of Council and Committee meetings during and since the financial year have been made available to you.
29. We have drawn to your attention all correspondence and notes of meetings with regulators.
30. We confirm that all of the disclosures relating to sections of the Annual Accounts which are considered 'other information' as set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2016 have been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

We confirm that the above representations are made on the basis of adequate enquiries of management and staff (and where appropriate, inspection of evidence) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can properly make each of the above representations to you.

Yours faithfully

**Head of Finance**

Signed as Responsible Financial Officer, for and on behalf of North Ayrshire Council

**HEAD OF FINANCE: Mark Boyd**

Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE

Tel: 01294 310000

Fax: 01294 324544

www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk



**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Your Ref: Our Ref: PK/NACT/2022

If telephoning please ask for: Mark Boyd ☎ 01294 324560

15 November 2022

Deloitte LLP

Dear Pat Kenny,

**NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT – YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of North Ayrshire Council Trust Funds ('the entities') for the year ended 31 March 2022 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements properly present the receipts and payments of the charities as of 31 March 2022 and their statement of balances at that date in accordance with the applicable accounting framework and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

We are aware that it is an offence to mislead an auditor of a public body.

On behalf of the entities, I confirm as a Trustee, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the following representations.

**Financial statements**

1. We understand and have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 which present fairly, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter.
2. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value and assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the entities are reasonable. We have made sufficient and appropriate disclosure of the general increased estimation uncertainty arising from the impact of Covid-19.
3. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of IAS24 "Related party disclosures".
4. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the applicable financial reporting framework requires adjustment of or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
5. There are no uncorrected misstatements and disclosure deficiencies.



6. We are not aware of events or changes in circumstances occurring during the period which indicate that the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment may not be recoverable.

**Information provided**

7. We have provided you with all relevant information and access as agreed in the terms of the audit engagement letter with Audit Scotland.
8. All transactions have been recorded and are reflected in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records.
9. We acknowledge our responsibilities for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error. We are not aware of any deficiencies in internal control of which you should be aware.
10. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
11. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the entities or group and involves:
  - (i) management;
  - (ii) employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
  - (iii) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
12. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entities' financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
13. We are not aware of any instances of non-compliance, or suspected non-compliance, with laws, regulations, and contractual agreements whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
14. We have disclosed to you the identities of the entities' related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
15. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. No other claims in connection with litigation have been or are expected to be received.
16. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
17. We confirm that:
  - (i) we consider that the entities has appropriate processes to prevent and identify any cyber breaches other than those that are clearly inconsequential; and
  - (ii) we have disclosed to you all cyber breaches of which we are aware that have resulted in more than inconsequential unauthorised access of data, applications, services, networks and/or devices.
18. All minutes of Council and Committee meetings during and since the financial year have been made available to you.
19. We have drawn to your attention all correspondence and notes of meetings with regulators.

We confirm that the above representations are made on the basis of adequate enquiries of management and staff (and where appropriate, inspection of evidence) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can properly make each of the above representations to you.

Yours faithfully

**Head of Finance**

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees

# North Ayrshire Council

Report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Members of the Council and the Controller of Audit on  
the 2021/22 audit

Issued on 27 October 2022 for the meeting on 15 November 2022

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# Introduction

## The key messages in this report

Audit quality is our number one priority. We plan our audit to focus on audit quality and have set the following audit quality objectives for this audit:

- A robust challenge of the key judgements taken in the preparation of the Annual Accounts.
- A strong understanding of your internal control environment.
- A well planned and delivered audit that raises findings early with those charged with governance.

I have pleasure in presenting our final report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (“the Committee”) of the North Ayrshire Council (“the Council”) for the year ending 31 March 2022 audit. The scope of our audit was set out within our planning report presented to the Committee in March 2022. This report includes the charitable trusts (“the Trusts”)

This report summarises our findings and conclusions in relation to:

- The audit of the **Annual Accounts**; and
- Consideration of the **four audit dimensions** that frame the wider scope of public sector audit requirements as illustrated in the following diagram. This includes our consideration of the Council’s duty to secure best value.



# Introduction (continued)

## The key messages in this report (continued)

I would like to draw your attention to the key messages of this paper:

### Conclusions from our testing

Based on our audit work completed to date we expect to issue an unmodified audit opinion.

The Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement comply with the statutory guidance and proper practice and are consistent with the annual accounts and our knowledge of the Council.

The auditable parts of the Remuneration Report have been prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations.

A summary of our work on the significant risks is provided in the dashboard on page 9.

We have identified four financial statement adjustments above our reporting threshold of £250k. These relate to a reclassification of prior year income and expenditure, a misstatement within the revaluation reserve and pensions. These are summarised on pages 27 – 29.

### Status of the financial statements audit

Outstanding matters to conclude the audit include:

- Finalisation of the audit of charitable trusts;
- Finalisation of internal quality control procedures;
- Receipt of signed management representation letter; and
- Our review of events since 31 March 2022.

### Conclusions on audit dimensions and best value

As set out on page 3, our audit work covered the four audit dimensions. Our separate detailed report presented to the Committee in May 2022 set out our findings and conclusions on each dimension. In accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, we have included our overall conclusions within this report on page 24. Key highlights include:

**Financial Management** - The Council continues to have robust budget setting and monitoring arrangements in place. This is supported by an experienced finance team and a robust internal audit function, as well as appropriate arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and error.

**Financial sustainability** - The Council has set a balanced budget for 2022/23 and holds unearmarked reserves at a level consistent with its Reserves Strategy, therefore is financially sustainable in the short term. However, it continues to be faced with significant financial challenges over the medium and longer-term.

It is positive to see the work progressing with the sustainable Change Programme, incorporating a comprehensive benefits tracker and a clear commitment to invest in recovery and renewal. However, progress continues to be impacted by the pandemic. It is critical that this work is progressed at pace and scale to ensure that the planned benefits are realised.

# Introduction (continued)

## The key messages in this report (continued)

### Conclusions on audit dimensions and best value (continued)

**Governance and transparency** – The Council continues to have strong leadership, which has been enhanced in the year with the creation of additional capacity at Head of Service level to focus on priorities. The governance arrangements also continue to be robust, with a comprehensive review of the infrastructure to enable hybrid meetings and an effective Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Council continues to be open and transparent and demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement, with the planned development of a Participation Strategy.

**Value for money** — The Council continues to have a clear and robust performance management framework in place which has been enhanced in the year with the Performance Management Strategy and new Performance Dashboard. It has continued to report its performance against the priorities within the Council Plan and also against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) with clear actions in place to address indicators that are adrift of target.

**Best value** - The Council has robust arrangements in place to secure best value and has a clear understanding of areas which require further development.

### Next steps

An agreed Action Plan was included in the separate wider scope report that was presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2022. We also have an Action Plan on page 30 of this report.

### Added value

Our aim is to add value to the Council by providing insight into, and offering foresight on, financial sustainability, risk and performance by identifying areas for improvement and recommending and encouraging good practice. In so doing, we aim to help the Council promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making, and more effective use of resources.

In addition, we included our “sector developments” in the separate wider scope report that was presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2022 which covers our research, informed perspective and best practice from our work across the wider public sector that are specifically relevant to the Council.

### Managing transition to 2022/23 audits

2021/22 is the final year of the current audit appointments. We will minimise disruption to all parties, and maximise the transfer of knowledge of the Council, by working in partnership with Audit Scotland and the incoming auditors.

We would like to put on record our thanks to the Board, management and staff for the good working relationship over the period of our appointment.

**Pat Kenny**  
Associate Partner



# Annual Accounts Audit





# Quality Indicators

## Impact on the execution of our audit

Management and those charged with governance are in a position to influence the effectiveness of our audit, through timely formulation of judgements, provision of accurate information, and responsiveness to issues identified in the course of the audit. This slide summarises some key metrics related to your control environment which can significantly impact the execution of the audit. We consider these metrics important in assessing the reliability of your financial reporting and provide context for other messages in this report.

Area	Grading			Reason
	FY22	FY21	FY20	
Timing of key accounting judgements	●	●	●	Management demonstrated a clear understanding of key accounting judgements and estimates made in the preparation of the Annual Accounts and provided sufficient appropriate evidence of good quality to support these.
Adherence to deliverables timetable	●	●	●	Management provided all evidence in a timely manner, in advance of agreed timelines. Any follow-up requests during the audit were quickly actioned.
Access to finance team and other key personnel	●	●	●	Deloitte and North Ayrshire Council have worked together to facilitate remote communication during the audit which has been successful. There have been no issues with access to the finance team or other key personnel.
Quality and accuracy of management accounting papers	●	●	●	Documentation provided has been of a high standard, which enabled an efficient audit. This is demonstrated by the fact that we only returned 7% of working papers provided by officers for further clarification.
Quality of draft financial statements	●	●	●	A full draft of the Annual Accounts were received for audit on 23 June 2022. We identified a small number of required changes primarily relating to formatting.
Response to control deficiencies identified	!	●	●	We identified one control deficiency during our audit. Further insight can be seen on page 19.
Volume and magnitude of identified errors	!	●	●	We identified 4 misstatements and 2 disclosure misstatements at the time of writing this report. Management have corrected for these adjustments. For further detail see pg. 27-29.



Lagging



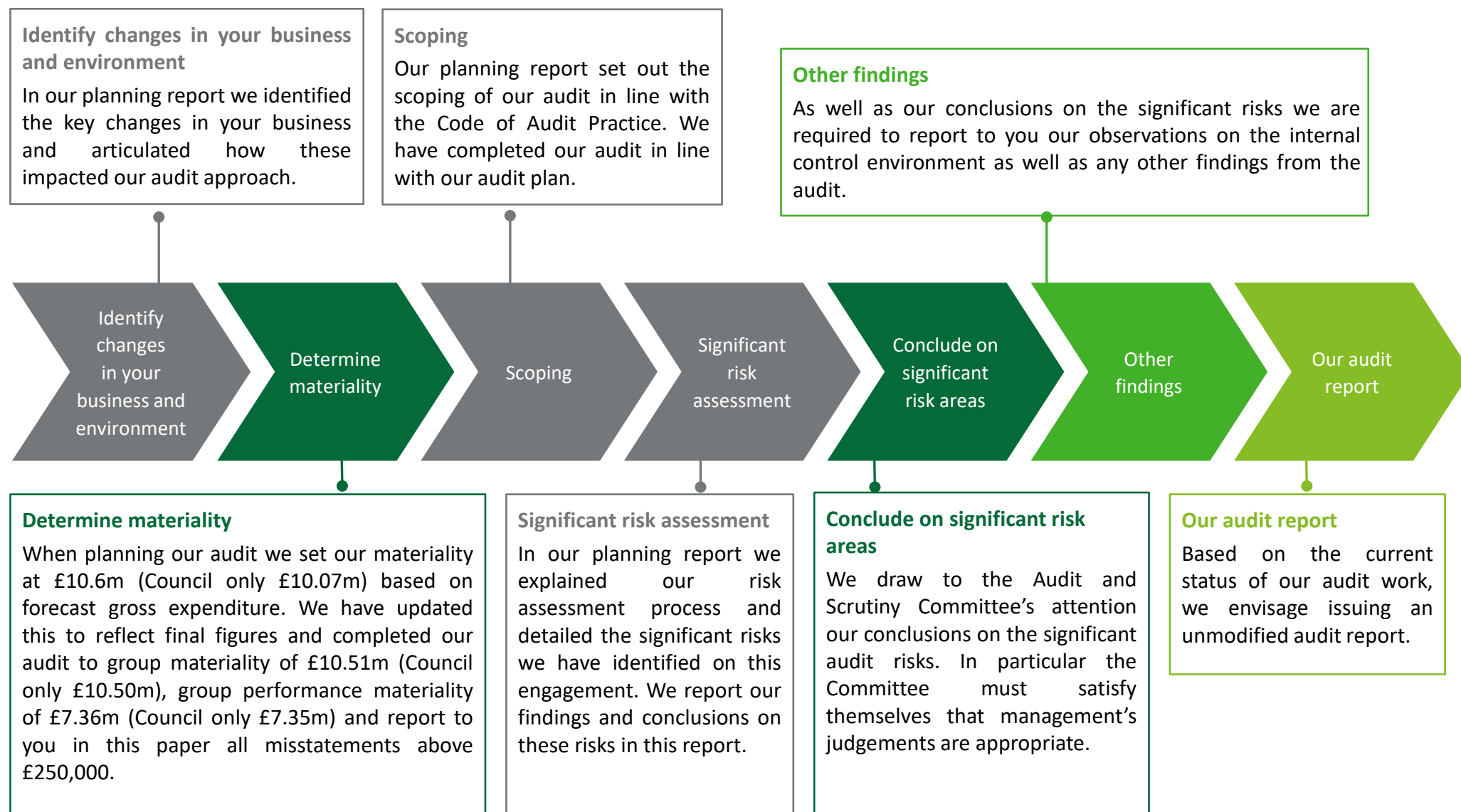
Developing



Mature







# Our Audit Explained

We tailor our audit to your business and your strategy



# Significant Risks

## Dashboard

Risk	Material	Fraud risk	Planned approach to controls testing	Controls testing conclusion	Consistency of judgements with Deloitte's expectations	Comments	Page no.
Recognition of COVID-19 related income			D+I	Satisfactory		Satisfactory	10
Management override of controls			D+I	Satisfactory		Satisfactory	11

Overly prudent, likely to lead to future credit



Overly optimistic, likely to lead to future debit.

**D+I:** Testing of the design and implementation of key controls

# Significant Risks (continued)

## Recognition of COVID-19 related income



### Risk identified and key judgements

ISA 240 states that when identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement due to fraud, the auditor shall, based on a presumption that there are risks of fraud in revenue recognition, evaluate which types of revenue, revenue transactions or assertions give rise to such risks.

We have assessed the income streams of the Council, the complexity of the recognition principles and the extent of any estimates used, and concluded that, with the exception of the funding received in 2021/22 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no significant risk of fraud.

During 2021/22, the Council has received additional funding in relation to COVID-19 mobilisation costs. In addition, there are a number of business support schemes designed to help eligible businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic that are being administered by Councils on behalf of the Scottish Government.

We have pinpointed the significant risk to the completeness and occurrence of the funding for COVID-19 mobilisation costs and the completeness and accuracy of the agency arrangement disclosures.

The key judgements for management are assessing:

- Any conditions associated with the mobilisation cost funding; and
- Whether the Council is acting as a principal or agent in administering the business support schemes.



### Deloitte response and challenge

We have performed the following:

- Assessed the design and implementation of the controls in relation to the accounting treatment of all COVID-19 related funding;
- Tested a sample of funding for COVID-19 mobilisation costs and confirm these have been recognised in accordance with any conditions applicable; and
- Tested the agency arrangement disclosures to confirm, where it is concluded that the Council is acting as an agent, that:
  - Transactions have been excluded from the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
  - The Balance Sheet reflects the debtor or creditor position at 31 March 2022 in respect of cash collected or expenditure incurred on behalf of the principal; and
  - The net cash position at 31 March 2022 is included in the financing activities in the Cash Flow Statement.

#### Deloitte view

We have concluded that income has been correctly recognised in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and the “*Guidance on Accounting for Coronavirus (COVID-19) Grants/ Funding Streams*” issued by LASSAC.

# Significant Risks (continued)

## Management override of controls



### Risk identified

Management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

Although management is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity, we planned our audit so that we had a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements to the Annual Accounts and accounting records.



### Deloitte response and challenge

In considering the risk of management override, we have performed the following audit procedures that directly address this risk:

#### Journals

We have tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the Annual Accounts. In designing and performing audit procedures for such tests, we have:

- Tested the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing;
- Made inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries and other adjustments;
- Selected journal entries and other adjustments made at the end of a reporting period; and
- Tested journal entries throughout the year based on fraudulent characteristics.

### Accounting estimates and judgements

We have reviewed accounting estimates for biases and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. In performing this review, we have:

- Evaluated whether the judgments and decisions made by management in making the accounting estimates included in the Annual Accounts, even if they are individually reasonable, indicate a possible bias on the part of the entity's management that may represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. From our testing we did not identify any indications of bias. A summary of the key estimates considered is provided on the following page; and
- Performed a retrospective review of management judgements and assumptions related to significant accounting estimates reflected in the Annual Accounts of the prior year.

### Significant and unusual transactions

We did not identify any significant transactions outside the normal course of business or any transactions where the business rationale was not clear.

#### Deloitte view

We have not identified any significant bias in the key judgements made by management.

We have not identified any instances of management override of controls in relation to the specific transactions tested.

# Significant Risks (continued)

## Management override of controls (continued)

**Key judgements** The key judgment in the annual accounts relates to our significant risk around the recognition of COVID-19 income (page 10). While not considered to be significant audit risks, we have considered the assumptions used to calculate the pension liability (page 14), and the recognition of expenditure (page 17). In the table below, we set out our challenge of the assumptions used in the determination of property valuations, PFI projects and provisions.

Estimate / judgement	Details of management's position	Deloitte Challenge and conclusions
Property valuations	<p>The Council is required to hold property assets within Property, Plant and Equipment at existing use value provided that an active market for the asset exists. Where there is no active market, because of the specialist nature of the asset, a depreciated replacement cost approach may be needed which provides the current cost of replacing an asset with its modern equivalent asset.</p> <p>The valuations are, by nature, significant estimates based on specialist and management assumptions and which can be subject to material changes in value.</p> <p>The Council has had an independent valuation carried out at 31 March 2022 by its internal valuers to include valuation of 20% of all of the Council's land and property in accordance with its 5-year rolling programme.</p> <p>The valuation method has not changed from the prior year and is in line with International Financial Reporting Standards. The Council's revaluation reserve has experienced a surplus position of £11.509m and the net revaluation movement in the year equated to £11.994m.</p>	<p>We did not identify this as a significant risk in our Audit Plan as our property specialists, Real Asset Advisory, reviewed the methodology applied by the Council's valuer in previous years and concluded it was robust. We have confirmed that the valuer and the methodology applied has not changed in the year.</p> <p>We also tested a sample of revaluations in the year by agreeing this to the valuer's report and tracing the impact to the Revaluation Reserve and/or CIES. An error was identified in relation to the Revaluation Reserve. Further insight can be seen on page 27.</p> <p>We have completed input testing of valuations back to source documentation including floor areas to individual asset site plans.</p> <p>We have challenged management's assessment for those assets not subject to valuation in the year and consulted with our internal property experts. For those valued on Existing Use Value on a market comparable basis, our property experts have confirmed that minimal market value movement would be expected in 2021/22.</p> <p>For those valued on a Depreciated Replacement Cost basis, which would be impacted by changes in build costs during the year, we have performed an analysis of changes in the Build Costs Information Service (BCIS) index and concluded that no material movement would be expected. We are therefore satisfied that there is no indication of a material movement in assets not formally revalued during the year.</p>

# Significant Risks (continued)

## Management override of controls (continued)

Estimate / judgement	Details of management's position	Deloitte Challenge and conclusions
Private Finance Initiatives ('PFI') and similar contracts	The Council currently has 3 PFI and similar projects: Clyde Valley Waste, North Ayrshire Council Schools and Largs Campus. Each PFI liability is valued based on the value of the remaining lease payments under the relevant accounting standards. The minimum lease rental is split between interest and principal using the actuarial method.	<p>We obtained and assessed the initial PFI agreements in place and reconciled to the payment schedules for each model. We identified a factual disclosure error in Note 18 equating to £8.46m for service charges and contingent rentals. Management have corrected this error and we have confirmed that it has not had any impact on the PFI liability. Further details can be viewed on page 29.</p> <p>We have conducted a retrospective review of the prior year liability to assess accuracy, and have challenged any changes made to the model. We have assessed the value of the underlying buildings through our Valuations work.</p> <p>We are satisfied that the PFI liability recognised in the accounts is in line with the models and there is no indication of management bias.</p>
Provisions	<p>The total provisions held within the Council's balance sheet is immaterial, at £1.217m. This comprises of a number of individually immaterial provisions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal Pay / Single Status £0.130m</li> <li>• Termination Benefits £0.161m</li> <li>• Landfill Site Restoration £0.363m</li> <li>• Employee Costs – Paid Absences £0.148m</li> <li>• Teachers Maternity £0.198m</li> <li>• Former Authorities £0.217m</li> </ul>	<p>We examined the rationale for each provision, including a retrospective review of amounts provided in 2020/21. We have consulted with the Council's legal experts to confirm completeness of the provisions.</p> <p>We concluded that the provisions made were reasonable.</p>

# Other Areas of Audit Focus

## Defined benefits pension scheme

### Background

The Council participates in two defined benefits schemes:

- Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme, administered by the Scottish Government; and
- The Strathclyde Pension Fund, administered by Glasgow City Council.

The net pension liability has decreased from £180.577m in 2020/21 to £56.983m in 2021/22. The decrease is a combination of an increase of £94m in the fair value of the assets and a reduction of £30m in the liabilities as a result of demographic changes and financial assumptions.



### Deloitte response

- We assessed the independence and expertise of the actuary supporting the basis of reliance upon their work;
- We reviewed and challenged the assumptions made by Hymans Robertson, including benchmarking against nine leading actuarial firms that we consider appropriate as shown the table below;
- We have obtained assurance from the auditor of the pension fund over the controls for providing accurate data to the actuary;
- We assessed the reasonableness of the Council's share of the total assets of the scheme with the Pension Fund financial statements;
- We have reviewed and challenged the calculation of the impact of the McCloud and Goodwin cases on pension liabilities; and
- We reviewed the disclosures within the accounts against the Code.

	Council	Comments
Discount rate (% p.a.)	2.7	Within reasonable Range
RPI Inflation (% p.a.)	3.65	
CPI Inflation (% p.a.)	3.2	
Pension increase in payment (% p.a.)	3.2	In line with funding valuation
Salary increase (% p.a.)	3.9	
Mortality - Life expectancy of a male/ female pensioner from age 65 (currently aged 65)	19.6/ 22.4	Within reasonable range
Mortality - Life expectancy of a male/ female pensioner from age 65 (currently aged 45)	21/ 24.5	



# Other Areas of Audit Focus (continued)

## Defined benefits pension scheme (continued)

The Council's pension liability continues to be impacted by the ongoing legal cases – known as McCloud and Goodwin, as well as the Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMP) indexation. Our pension specialists have considered the impact and concluded as follows:

- **Goodwin** – this is a legal challenge made against the Government in respect of unequitable benefits for male dependants of female members (based on service after 1988) following the earlier Walker ruling. The 31 March 2020 triennial funding valuation did not allow for the impact of Goodwin, therefore the Council's actuary has used the same percentage allowance that was used last year (0.1% of the liability). Given the lack of relative data available, we have concluded that the actuary's calculation approach is reasonable.
- **McCloud** – this case is in respect of possible discrimination in the implementation of transitional protections following the introduction of the reformed public services pension schemes from 1 April 2014 and 2015. The actuary has advised that an estimated allowance for McCloud has been included within the current service cost, consistent with the prior year. We have concluded that the allowance made and approach taken is reasonable. There is still uncertainty about the form of compensation that will be provided to members and therefore the final actual cost of complying with the ruling may be different to the estimate.

- **GMP indexation** – in order to ensure smooth transition to the single tier State pension and equalisation of GMP benefits between males and females, the Government introduced an interim solution in March 2016 in respect of people who are in public service pension schemes and who have a State Pension Age (SPA) between 6 April 2016 and 5 December 2018, whereby full inflationary increases will be provided by the LGPS. An announcement on 23 March 2021 confirmed that all public service pension schemes, including the LGPS, will need to provide full indexation to members with a SPA beyond 5 April 2021. This is a permanent extension of the previous interim solution. We have confirmed that the 31 March 2020 funding valuation for the whole Fund included an allowance for the additional liability arising as a result of GMP indexation. As this valuation was used as the starting point for the 31 March 2022 valuation, this has also been included in the current year liability. We have concluded that the approach taken is reasonable.

From review of the actuary report, our pension specialists identified the following issue:

- The actuary has calculated an "experience loss" of £1.946m. Based on the data provided during the audit, we have estimated that this should be circa. £2.413m. In the absence of further information to justify the quantum of the experience loss, there is a potential misstatement of £0.467m.

### Deloitte view

Management have agreed to adjust the annual accounts for the above issue. We have therefore concluded that the pension liability in relation to the defined benefits pension scheme is fairly stated.

# Other Areas of Audit Focus (continued)

## Infrastructure Assets

### Background

Infrastructure assets are inalienable assets, expenditure on which is only recovered by continued use of the asset created. They include carriageways, structures, street lighting, street furniture and traffic management systems, and are measured at historical cost.

The CIPFA Code requires that where a component of an asset is replaced:

- the cost of the new component should be reflected in the carrying amount of the infrastructure asset; and
- the gross costs and accumulated depreciation of the old component should be derecognised to avoid double counting.

Auditors have identified that local authorities in the UK have not been properly accounting for infrastructure assets since the move to IFRS in 2010/11 due to information deficits. This is particularly the case in relation to roads, where the engineering records used for maintenance have not been created to map against identifiable components.

CIPFA/ LASAAC attempted to resolve the issues and undertook an urgent consultation on temporary changes to the accounting code. However, it was unable to agree an approach that addressed the concerns of all stakeholders whilst also supporting high quality financial reporting. The Scottish Government has therefore provided temporary statutory overrides while a permanent solution is developed.

<b>Statutory override 1</b>	For accounting periods commencing from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2024, a local authority is not required to report the gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets.
<b>Statutory override 2</b>	For accounting periods commencing from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2024, the carrying amount to be derecognised in respect of a replaced part of an infrastructure asset is to be taken to be and accounted for as a nil amount. No subsequent adjustment shall be made to the carrying amount of the asset with respect to that part.

### Deloitte response

- We have considered the statutory overrides issued by the Scottish Government and confirmed that the Council has opted to adopt both, as summarised above, due to not readily having the information to evidence the derecognition of replaced components of infrastructure assets.
- We have reviewed the updated Annual Accounts and revised disclosures and confirmed that it is compliant with the statutory overrides.
- We have assessed the reasonableness of the Useful Economic Lives (UEL's) applied by the Council in its depreciation calculation and concluded that the UEL's are reasonable, in line with other similar Council and the risk of a material misstatement on the depreciation charge is remote.

### Deloitte view

We have assessed the impact of the adoption of the statutory overrides and confirmed the updated Annual Accounts correctly reflect the required disclosure. We are also satisfied that the depreciation charge for the year, based on UEL's set out within the Council's accounting policy, is not materially misstated. As the Council's Fixed Asset Register has a degree of detail in terms of different types of infrastructure assets held, the Council should revisit its UEL policy to consider whether alternative UEL's should be set for different types of assets.

The Scottish Government expects that Councils will begin to address information deficits to ensure adequate accounting records for the measurement of infrastructure assets and timely adoption of the Code requirements once a more permanent solution is delivered.

# Other Areas of Audit Focus (continued)

## Expenditure recognition

### Risk identified

In accordance with Practice Note 10 (*Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom*), in addition to the presumed risk of fraud in revenue recognition set out in ISA (UK) 240, auditors of public sector bodies should also consider the risk of fraud and error on expenditure. This is on the basis that most public bodies are net spending bodies, therefore the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure may be greater than the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to revenue recognition.

We have considered this risk for the Council and concluded that we are satisfied that the control environment is strong and there is no history of errors or audit adjustments. This was therefore not been assessed as a significant risk area, but continued to be an area of audit focus.



### Deloitte response

We performed the following procedures to address the above risk:

- A review of the number and median value of invoices processed in the year. As illustrated in table opposite, based on the medium amount, the Council would need to omit over 46,620 invoices at year-end to result in a material error. We noted that in the month following the year-end, a total of 7,557 invoices were processed. We therefore concluded that a risk of material misstatement was remote.
- An analytical review to test the completeness and accuracy of year-end creditor balances was carried out. We are satisfied that the amount recorded is reasonable.

	Invoice Analysis
Median invoice amount	£216
Average number of invoices processed per month	6,311
Number of invoices that would need to be unrecorded to cause a material misstatement	46,620
Total invoices processed in April 2022 (one month after year-end)	7,557

### Deloitte view

We have concluded that expenditure has been correctly recognised in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

# Other Areas of Audit Focus (continued)

## Charitable trusts

### Risk identified

From 2013/14, all Scottish Councils who act as sole trustees for any registered charities have to fully comply with the Charities Accounts Regulations. This requires Charities SORP compliant accounts to be prepared for each charity, and a separate audit of each. North Ayrshire Council administers eight such registered charities, disclosed in a single set of annual accounts. This is in accordance with the connected charities rules.

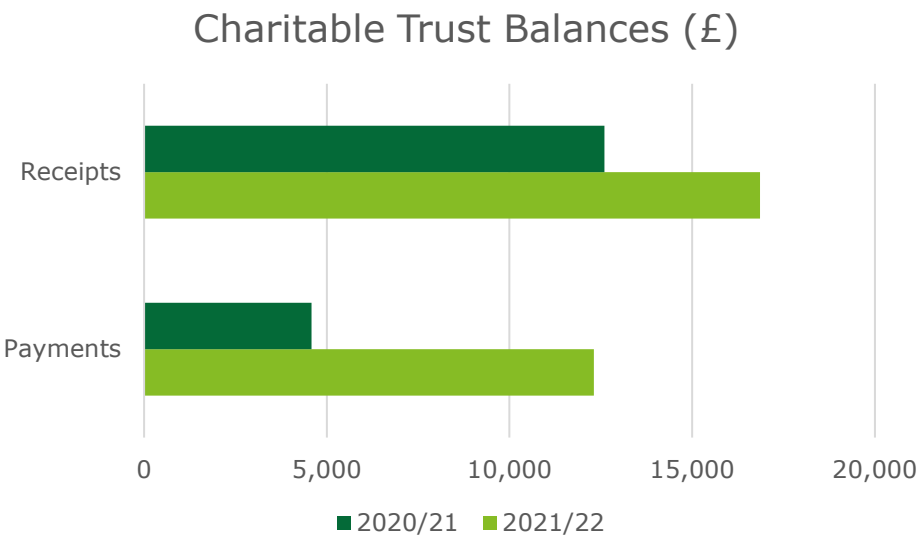
As the gross income of each of the Trusts is less than £100,000, the Council has opted to prepare the charitable trust accounts on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulation 2006. Fully compliant Charities SORP accounts are therefore not required and disclosure is limited to that specified in the Regulations.



### Deloitte response

We have assessed that the Statement of Receipts and Payments and the Statement of Balances to ensure these have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

A summary is provided in the table adjacent. From an initial review of draft annual accounts we note that there has been a large movement in payments which have increased by £7,553 since 2020/21. This is due to the increase in grant awards during the year.




### Deloitte view

Our testing of the charitable trusts is complete with no issues identified We anticipate issuing an unmodified opinion.

# Other Significant Findings

## Internal control

During the course of our audit we have identified one internal control finding, which we have included below for information.

Area	Observation	Priority
Revaluation Reserve Postings	During the course of our audit engagement, management informed us of an error in relation to the revaluation reserve. The error arose as a result of the Integra system inadvertently recognising devaluations in the revaluation reserve. The result of this brought two assets to a negative value. We have summarised this misstatement on page 27.	
	As a result of this, we recommend that management investigate this fault within Integra system with immediate effect. Management should rectify this and input pre-emptive measures to prevent similar errors occurring in the future.	
	We also recommend that management review the revaluation reserve postings prior to preparing the Annual Accounts. This should ensure that similar errors do not occur in the future.	

The purpose of the audit was for us to express an opinion on the financial statements. The audit included consideration of internal control relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. The matters being reported are limited to those deficiencies that we have identified during the audit and that we have concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you.

Low Priority

Medium Priority

High Priority

# Other Significant Findings

## Financial reporting findings

Below, we set out the findings from our audit surrounding your financial reporting process.

### Qualitative aspects of your accounting practices:

The Council has prepared its Annual Accounts in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. We are satisfied that the Council's accounting practices are appropriate.

### Other matters relevant to financial reporting:

We have not identified other matters arising from the audit that, in the auditor's professional judgement, are significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process.

We received an objection to the Council's accounts in accordance with section 1010 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 in relation to the Common Good and Trust funds. We have provided an initial response and currently considering the detail. Any significant matters arising will be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee prior to the approval of the accounts.

### Significant matters discussed with management:

Significant matters have been discussed with management throughout the audit engagement. In particular, we discussed the treatment of the prior year reclassification of income/expenditure adjustment (as outlined on page 28). We also discussed the treatment of infrastructure assets (as outlined on page 16).

### Regulatory Change:

IFRS 16, Leases, comes into effect on 1 April 2022, therefore will be implemented in financial year 2022/23. This will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases. We have considered the preparatory work carried out by management and the disclosures made in the 2021/22 Annual Accounts and are satisfied that the new standard has been appropriately considered.

We will obtain written representations from the Council on matters material to the Annual Accounts when other sufficient appropriate audit evidence cannot reasonably be expected to exist. A copy of the draft representations letter has been circulated separately.

# Our Audit Report

## Other matters relating to the form and content of our report

Here we discuss how the results of the audit impact on other significant sections of our audit report.



### **Our opinion on the financial statements**

Based on our audit work completed to date, we expect to issue an unmodified audit opinion.



### **Material uncertainty related to going concern**

We have not identified a material uncertainty related to going concern and will report by exception regarding the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting.

Practice Note 10 provides guidance on applying ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to the audit of public sector bodies. The anticipated continued provision of the service is relevant to the assessment of the continued existence of a particular body.



### **Emphasis of matter and other matter paragraphs**

There are no matters we judge to be of fundamental importance in the Annual Accounts that we consider it necessary to draw attention to in an emphasis of matter paragraph.

There are no matters relevant to users' understanding of the audit that we consider necessary to communicate in an other matter paragraph.



### **Other reporting responsibilities**

The narrative parts of the Annual Accounts is reviewed in its entirety for material consistency with the annual accounts and the audit work performed and to ensure that they are fair, balanced and reasonable.

Our opinion on matters prescribed by the Controller of Audit is discussed further on page 22.

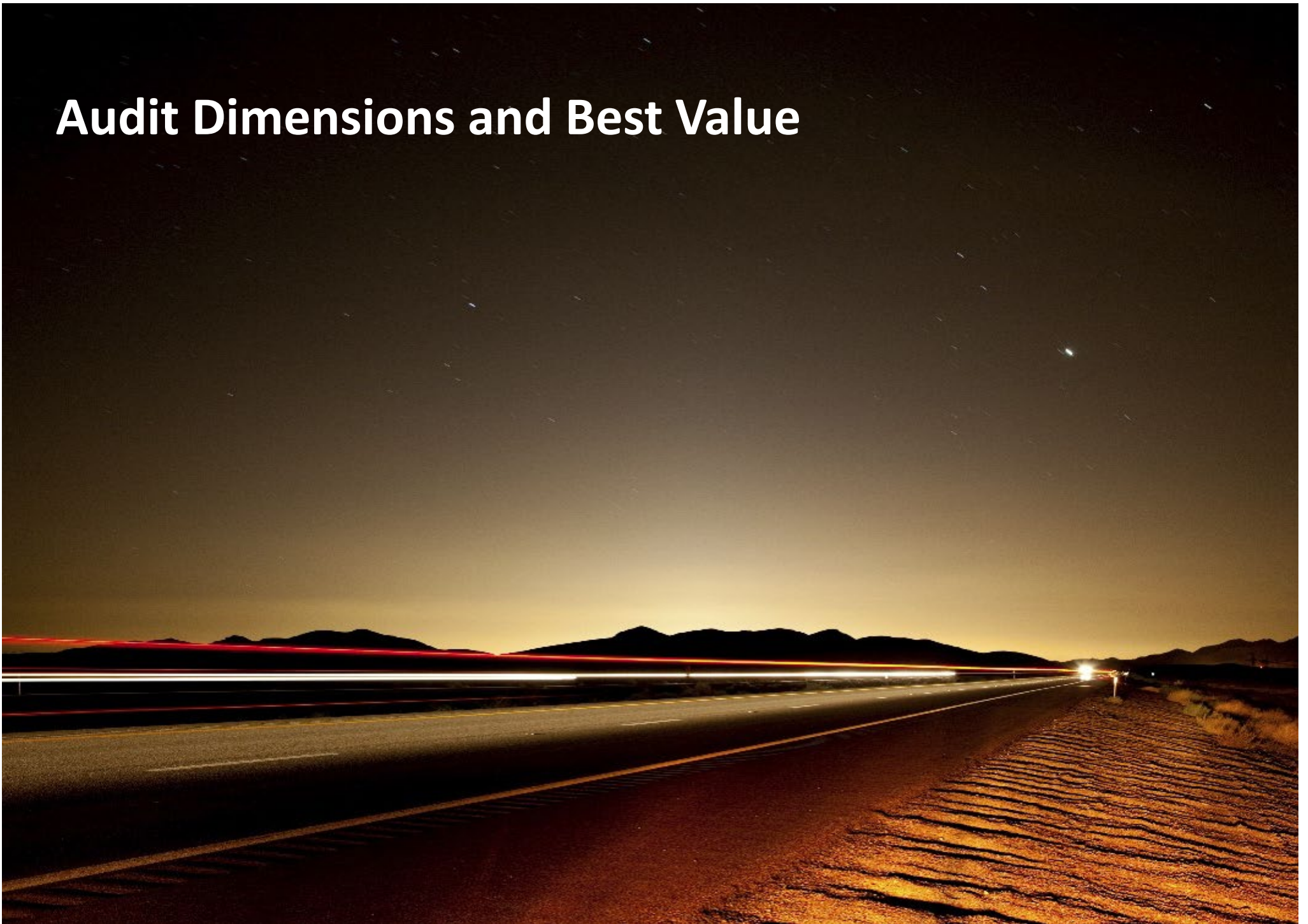
# Your Annual Report

We are required to provide an opinion on the auditable parts of the Remuneration Report, the Annual Governance Statement and whether the Management Commentary is consistent with the disclosures in the accounts.

	Requirement	Deloitte response
Management Commentary	The management commentary comments on financial performance, strategy and performance review and targets. The commentary included both financial and non financial KPIs and made good use of graphs and diagrams. The Council also focuses on the strategic planning context.	<p>We have assessed whether the management commentary has been prepared in accordance with the statutory guidance.</p> <p>We have also read the management commentary and confirmed that the information contained within is materially correct and consistent with our knowledge acquired during the course of performing the audit, and is not otherwise misleading.</p> <p>Following amendments for minor improvements in the final version of the Annual Accounts, we are satisfied that the management commentary has been prepared in accordance with guidance, is consistent with our knowledge and is not otherwise misleading.</p>
Remuneration Report	The remuneration report has been prepared in accordance with the 2014 Regulations, disclosing the remuneration and pension benefits of Senior councillors and Senior Employees of the Council.	We have audited the disclosures of remuneration and pension benefits, pay bands, and exit packages, and we can confirm that they have been properly prepared in accordance with the regulations.
Annual Governance Statement	The Annual Governance Statement reports that the Council's governance arrangements provide assurance, are adequate and are operating effectively.	We have assessed whether the information given in the Annual Governance Statement is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework. We conclude that the Annual Governance Statement is consistent with the financial statements, our knowledge and the accounts regulations.



# Audit Dimensions and Best Value



# Audit Dimensions and Best Value

## Overview and conclusions

As set out in our audit plan and separate report on the “Audit Dimensions and Best Value” presented to the Committee in, May 2022 public audit in Scotland is wider in scope than financial audits. Our separate report sets out our findings and conclusions on our audit work covering the areas set out below. In accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, our overall conclusions on each audit dimension and best value are summarised on the following page.

### Financial management

The Council continues to have robust budget setting and monitoring arrangements in place. This is supported by an experienced finance team and a robust internal audit function, as well as appropriate arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and error.

### Financial sustainability

The Council has set a balanced budget for 2022/23 and holds unearmarked reserves at a level consistent with its Reserves Strategy, therefore is financially sustainable in the short term. However, it continues to be faced with significant financial challenges over the medium and longer-term.

It is positive to see the work progressing with the sustainable Change Programme, incorporating a comprehensive benefits tracker and a clear commitment to invest in recovery and renewal. However, progress continues to be impacted by the pandemic. It is critical that this work is progressed at pace and scale to ensure that the planned benefits are realised.

### Governance and transparency

The Council continues to have strong leadership, which has been enhanced in the year with the creation of additional capacity at Head of Service level to focus on priorities. The governance arrangements also continue to be robust, with a comprehensive review of the infrastructure to enable hybrid meetings and an effective Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Council continues to be open and transparent and demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement, with the planned development of a Participation Strategy.

### Value for money

The Council continues to have a clear and robust performance management framework in place which has been enhanced in the year with the Performance Management Strategy and new Performance Dashboard. It has continued to report its performance against the priorities within the Council Plan and also against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) with clear actions in place to address indicators that are adrift of target.

### Deloitte view – Best Value

The Council has robust arrangements in place to secure best value and has a clear understanding of areas which require further development.

# Purpose of our Report and Responsibility Statement

Our report is designed to help you meet your governance duties

## What we report

Our report is designed to help the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and the Council discharge their governance duties. It also represents one way in which we fulfil our obligations under ISA (UK) 260 to communicate with you regarding your oversight of the financial reporting process and your governance requirements. Our report includes:

- Results of our work on key audit judgements and our observations on the quality of your Annual Accounts;
- Our internal control observations; and
- Other insights we have identified from our audit.

## The scope of our work

Our observations are developed in the context of our audit of the annual accounts.

We described the scope of our work in our audit plan.

## Use of this report

This report has been prepared for the Council, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other parties, since this report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose.

## What we don't report

As you will be aware, our audit was not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Also, there will be further information you need to discharge your governance responsibilities, such as matters reported on by management or by other specialist advisers.

Finally, our views on internal controls and business risk assessment should not be taken as comprehensive or as an opinion on effectiveness since they have been based solely on the audit procedures performed in the procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our report with you and receive your feedback.



**Pat Kenny, CPFA**

**For and on behalf of Deloitte LLP**

Glasgow | 27 October 2022



# Appendices



# Audit Adjustments

## Unadjusted misstatements

There are no uncorrected misstatements up to the date of this report.

## Corrected misstatements

The following misstatements have been identified up to the date of this report which have been corrected by management. We nonetheless communicate them to you to assist you in fulfilling your governance responsibilities, including reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

	Debit/(Credit) Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) £k	Debit/(Credit) in Net Assets £k	Debit/(Credit) prior year Reserves £k	Debit/(Credit) in Income £k	If applicable, control deficiency identified
<b>Misstatements identified in current year:</b>					
Impairment Charge [1]	1,272				
Revaluation Reserve [1]	(1,272)				
Prepayments [2]	212	(212)			
Pension experience items [3]	467	(467)			
<b>Total</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>(679)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	

[1] The Integra system inadvertently recognised devaluations in the revaluation reserve bringing two assets to a negative value. We have discussed this with management and reviewed their workings. We have also recalculated the correcting adjustments and, we have comfort that this only occurred in isolation for two assets. This has been corrected by management and a control deficiency has been summarised on page 19.

[2] An insurance prepayment was made in the year totalling £250,000 and a subsequent reversal should have been made totalling £212,000 as this was no longer a valid prepayment as at 31/03/2022. The closing prepayment at year-end is £38,000. Management has corrected for this misstatement.

[3] As discussed on page 15, In the absence of further information to justify the quantum of the experience loss, there is a potential misstatement of £0.467m.

# Audit Adjustments (continued)

## Corrected misstatements (continued)

The following misstatements have been identified up to the date of this report which have been corrected by management. We nonetheless communicate them to you to assist you in fulfilling your governance responsibilities, including reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

	Debit/(Credit) Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) £k	Debit/(Credit) in Net Assets £k	Debit/(Credit) prior year Reserves £k	Debit/(Credit) in Income £k	If applicable, control deficiency identified
<b>Misstatements identified in prior year:</b>					
Chief Executive Income [4]	39,394				
Other Corporate Items Income [4]	(39,394)				
Chief Executive Expenditure [4]	(41,802)				
Other Corporate Items Expenditure [4]	41,802				
<b>Total</b>	-				

[4] Management reclassified housing discretionary income and expenditure in the current year to Other Corporate Items but did not reclassify the prior year equivalent income and expenditure to this cost centre. This was not in accordance with IAS 1 and the Code which requires entities to present financial statements in a comparative format. Management have correctly restated these figures from Chief Executive to Other Corporate Items for the prior year.

# Audit Adjustments (continued)

## Disclosures

### Disclosure misstatements

The following misstatements have been identified up to the date of this report which have been corrected by management. We nonetheless communicate them to you to assist you in fulfilling your governance responsibilities, including reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

Disclosure	Summary of disclosure requirement	Quantitative or qualitative consideration
Prior Year Reclassification	<p>Disclosures in relation to a prior period reclassification did not initially comply with the Code, which requires the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The nature of the reclassification;</li> <li>b) The amount of each item or class of items that is reclassified, and</li> <li>c) The reason for the reclassification.</li> </ul> <p>Management have since revised the disclosure in accordance with the Code.</p>	The misstatement is quantitatively and qualitatively material for the users of the financial statements.
Private Finance Initiative ("PFI")	Note 18 of the Annual Accounts details contracts that the Council have in place with PFI holders. This includes North Ayrshire Council Schools, Largs Campus and Clyde Valley Waste.	<p>We discovered a factual disclosure error in Note 18 equating to £8.46m for service charges and contingent rentals. This did not impact the liability position at the year-end.</p> <p>This was due to a fault within management's working paper which calculates the split of Note 18.</p> <p>The error is above performance materiality is therefore quantitatively material.</p>

# Action Plan

## Recommendations for Improvement

No.	Area	Recommendation	Management Response	Responsible person	Target Date	Priority
1	Infrastructure Assets	The Council's Fixed Asset Register has a degree of detail in terms of different types of infrastructure assets held, the Council should revisit its UEL policy to consider whether alternative UEL's should be set for different types of assets.	In order to support the ongoing review of the Code requirements in relation to accounting for Infrastructure Assets, the nature of assets held under Infrastructure Assets will be reviewed and engineering advice will be sought to ensure that the assigned UEL's are consistent with the nature of the assets.	Head of Finance	March 2023	High



# Our Other Responsibilities Explained

## Fraud responsibilities and representations



### Responsibilities:

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management and those charged with governance, including establishing and maintaining internal controls over the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

As auditor, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.



### Required representations:

We have asked the Council to confirm in writing that you have disclosed to us the results of your own assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud and that you have disclosed to us all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that you are aware of and that affects the entity or group.

We have also asked the Council to confirm in writing their responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.



### Audit work performed:

In our planning we identified the risk of fraud in relation to recognition of COVID-19 related income and management override of controls as key audit risks for your organisation.

During course of our audit, we have had discussions with management, those charged with governance and the internal audit department.

In addition, we have reviewed management's own documented procedures regarding fraud and error in the Annual Accounts.

### Deloitte view – Conclusion:

We have not identified any errors concerning our fraud risks in relation to the recognition of COVID-19 related income and management override of controls.

We have informed management, the Council and the Committee of their overall fraud responsibilities.

In addition, we have reviewed management's own documented procedures regarding fraud and error in the Annual Accounts. We have also explained throughout our audit report, how we considered the audit capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

# Independence and Fees

As part of our obligations under International Standards on Auditing (UK), we are required to report to you on the matters listed below:

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## Independence confirmation

We confirm the audit engagement team, and others in the firm as appropriate, Deloitte LLP and, where applicable, all Deloitte network firms are independent of the Council and our objectivity is not compromised.

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## Fees

The audit fee for 2021/22, in line with the expected fee range provided by Audit Scotland, is £316,670, as analysed below:

	£
Auditor remuneration	194,200
Audit Scotland fixed charges:	
Pooled costs	20,240
Contribution to PABV	91,869
Audit support costs	10,370
<b>Total fee</b>	<b>316,670</b>

In addition to the above, the audit fee for the charitable trusts audit is £1,200.

No non-audit services fees have been charged for the period.

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## Non-audit services

In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Council's policy for the supply of non-audit services or any apparent breach of that policy. We continue to review our independence and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including, but not limited to, the rotation of senior partners and professional staff and the involvement of additional partners and professional staff to carry out reviews of the work performed and to otherwise advise as necessary.

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## Relationships

We are required to provide written details of all relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) between us and the organisation, its board and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and the DTTL network to the audited entity, its board and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our objectivity and independence.

We are not aware of any relationships which are required to be disclosed.

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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Accounts Commission's Report: Scotland's financial response to Covid-19</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the findings of the recently published report.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That the Committee (i) notes the findings of the Accounts Commission report, (ii) notes the recommendation contained therein; and (iii) notes North Ayrshire Council's approach in relation to these.

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Accounts Commission recently published its national report 'Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2022'. This report reflects on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Scottish Government, Councils and other public sector bodies including fiscal context in which these bodies operated and the ongoing development and implementation of plans for financial recovery. A link to the full report is attached as follows:

[Scotland's financial response to Covid-19](#)

- 1.2 Throughout the report, the Accounts Commissions has identified a number of key messages in relation to the financial response to the pandemic and made recommendations for the Scottish Government, Councils, NHS Boards and integration authorities.
- 1.3 North Ayrshire Council received total Covid related financial support of £126.943m over 2020-21 to 2021-22. At 31 March 2022, North Ayrshire Council retained £23.767m across a number of reserves to support services and communities recovering from the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.
- 1.4 The Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) received Covid related financial support of £35.255m over the same period. At 31 March 2022, the HSCP reported a Covid-19 reserve of £13.321m to support ongoing covid related expenditure.

## **2. Background**

2.1 In June 2022, Audit Scotland published a report entitled 'Scotland's Financial Response to Covid-19'. This report reflects on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Scottish Government, Councils and other public sector bodies including the fiscal context in which these bodies operated and the ongoing development and implementation of plans for financial recovery.

2.2 The report identifies a number of key messages which have been summarised in the report as follows:

- The Scottish Government worked collaboratively and at pace with local and UK government to direct significant public spending in difficult circumstances. It is critical that lessons are learned about what worked well, and what did not to improve the public sector response to any future crises;
- The Scottish Government streamlined governance arrangements to direct funds quickly, but it is hard to see how some financial decisions were reached;
- The Scottish Government directed a large proportion of funding to councils and other public bodies who had existing systems and local knowledge to enable them to spend quickly;
- The Scottish Government has managed its overall budget effectively but some Covid-19 funding remains unspent;
- It is vital for transparency and financial planning that the Scottish Government and other public bodies are clear about how one-off Covid-19 funding has been spent, including where spending commitments may last for several years; and
- More work is needed by the Scottish Government to show how the wide range of Covid-19 spending measures have worked together to address the harms caused by the pandemic.

2.3 The report makes a number of recommendations in relation to the Scottish Government, Councils, NHS Boards and integration authorities, including:

- Improve the transparency of public finances to support scrutiny of Covid-19 funding and spending measures by:
  - collecting, drawing together and analysing Covid-19 funds data to establish how much money was spent, where, and how quickly it was issued and received;
  - reporting through their accounts and management information how Covid-19 funding held in reserves has been spent, and the extent to which Covid-19 funded spending commitments will exist in future years;
  - reviewing their medium-term and longer-term financial plans to reflect the ongoing impact and financial consequences of the pandemic. This should include the longer-term impact on resources and potential costs of continuing to support citizens and restore lost income;

- Continue to monitor and report on fraud and error arising from Covid-19 business support payments to ensure that processes are working in practice, funds are allocated correctly, and steps are taken to recover funds paid in error;
- Work together to learn lessons from the financial response to the pandemic by:
  - collecting and sharing findings from their response, including financial information to demonstrate the impact the spending has had and to allow others to benefit from good practice;
  - considering what systems should be in place to enable consistent spending information to be collected while minimising the administrative burden;
  - collectively understanding the ongoing challenges and longer-lasting impacts of the pandemic which will allow them to work together to recover;
  - developing robust processes which will improve the public sector response to future crises or other cross-cutting issues, such as climate change and child poverty; and
  - evaluating whether Covid-19 spending delivered the desired outcomes.

2.4 In response to the specific recommendations contained within the report, it is noted that within North Ayrshire:

- The level of Covid-19 funding and expenditure has been regularly reported to elected members throughout 2020-21 and 2021-22 as part of the periodic financial reports of both North Ayrshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership;
- The economic, service delivery and funding impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic across North Ayrshire were considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Outlook reported to Council in February 2022;
- The levels and applications of Covid related reserves have been reported to elected members throughout the period;
- Additional control mechanisms to mitigate, detect and prevent fraud in relation to grant awards to businesses were put in place, including a pan-Ayrshire data matching exercise;
- Elected members receive regular updates on the delivery of our Council Plan objectives through our 6-monthly Council Plan Progress Updates which includes information on the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery across the Council and highlights areas of good practice being developed to support recovery and renewal; and
- Our Recovery & Renewal Strategy set out a series of key principles and themes to enable North Ayrshire Council to recover and renew its services in a prioritised way, ensuring that they met resident needs and addressed key areas including economic recovery, financial recovery and education recovery.

2.5 During 2020-21 and 2021-22, North Ayrshire Council received Covid-19 related financial support of £126.943m with £103.176m of this utilised in the delivery of services and the provision of direct support to businesses, families and individuals during this period.

**North Ayrshire Council**  
**Utilisation of Covid-19 Funding 2020-21 and 2021-22**

General Services	2020-2021			2021-22			Total Carried Forward
	Funding Received £m	In -Year Expenditure £m	Carried Forward £m	Funding Received £m	In -Year Expenditure £m	Carried Forward £m	
Support to individuals, families & communities:							
Council Tax Reduction / Scottish Welfare Fund	1.475	0.690	0.785	-	-	-	0.785
Financial Hardship & Welfare Support	4.290	4.290	-	6.876	3.954	2.922	2.922
Community Food and Free School Meals	2.657	2.512	0.145	-0.145	-	-0.145	-
Housing Support	0.418	0.288	0.130	0.314	0.030	0.284	0.414
Community Mental Health	0.370	0.054	0.316	-	0.305	-0.305	0.011
	9.210	7.834	1.376	7.045	4.289	2.756	4.132
Support for Education:							
Education Recovery and Staffing	6.517	2.137	4.380	2.030	3.217	-1.187	3.193
Digital Inclusion & School Transport	0.583	0.583	-	-	-	-	-
CO2 Monitors in Schools	-	-	-	0.077	-	0.077	0.077
	7.100	2.720	4.380	2.107	3.217	-1.110	3.270
Support For Businesses:							
Business Grants	39.244	39.244	-	13.473	13.473	-	-
NDR Grants and Reliefs	14.804	14.804	-	8.401	8.401	-	-
Discretionary Grants	2.124	0.284	1.840	-	1.834	-1.834	0.006
	56.172	54.332	1.840	21.874	23.708	-1.834	0.006
Other:							
General Covid Support	12.597	5.623	6.974	6.731	0.188	6.543	13.517
Employability Funding	1.153	0.994	0.159	-	-	-	0.159
Loss of Income	2.476	-	2.476	-	-	-	2.476
Miscellaneous	0.453	0.148	0.305	0.025	0.123	-0.098	0.207
	16.679	6.765	9.914	6.756	0.311	6.445	16.359
Total General Services Funding	89.161	71.651	17.510	37.782	31.525	6.257	23.767

2.6 Throughout 2020-21 and 2021-22, North Ayrshire Council has approved the earmarking of Covid-19 funding balances to support the future delivery of specific Covid-19 related initiatives and support strategic investment in recovery and renewal activities across the Council. At 31 March 2022, these included:

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Renewal and Recovery Programme	13.467	Fund to support strategic investment in Recovery and Renewal activities aligned to the priorities in the Council Plan and Community Wealth Building strategy. Investment is targeted across the themes of: Economic Recovery; Environmental Initiatives; Support for Vulnerable Families, Citizens and Communities; Sustainable Investment in physical infrastructure and open space; and Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives.
Covid Legacy Fund	3.642	Ongoing support for services impacted by Covid restrictions, including loss of income and adjustments to operating models.
Education Recovery Programme	3.193	Funds to mitigate against the impact of the Covid pandemic and support education recovery for children and young people, including engagement of additional teaching and non-teaching staff and measures to mitigate the impact of the changes in funding in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
CO2 Monitors in Schools	0.077	Ongoing support for the installation of CO2 monitors across our learning establishments to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
Tenant Grant Fund	0.284	Support for tenants in the private and social rented sectors who are struggling with rent arrears and are consequently at risk of homelessness
Financial Insecurity	2.583	Flexible support for businesses and low income households.
Other Miscellaneous Covid Reserves	0.521	Residual staffing and administrative support across services.
	<b>23.767</b>	



- 2.7 During 2020-21 and 2021-22, North Ayrshire HSCP received additional financial support of £35.255m in relation to Covid mobilisation and staff Thank You payments. £21.934m of this was utilised during this period.

**North Ayrshire HSCP**  
**Utilisation of Covid-19 Funding 2020-21 and 2021-22**

	<b>2020-2021</b>			<b>2021-22</b>			<b>Total</b>
	Funding Received	In -Year Expenditure	Carried Forward	Funding Received	In -Year Expenditure	Carried Forward	<b>Carried Forward</b>
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
HSCP Mobilisation	14.811	10.087	4.724	18.232	9.635	8.597	13.321
HSCP Staff Thank You Payments	-	-	-	2.212	2.212	-	-
<b>Total HSCP Funding</b>	<b>14.811</b>	<b>10.087</b>	<b>4.724</b>	<b>20.444</b>	<b>11.847</b>		<b>13.321</b>

- 2.8 At 31 March 2022, North Ayrshire HSCP reported a Covid balance of £13.321m which was being retained to support ongoing covid-19 related expenditure including mobilisation costs, provider sustainability payments and care home occupancy payments. It is currently anticipated that £4.067m of these funds will be required during 2022-23. However, the Scottish Government has indicated an intention to recoup any surplus funds during 2022-23 for redistribution elsewhere in the health and social care system.

### 3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee (i) notes the findings of the Accounts Commission report, (ii) notes the recommendation contained therein; and (iii) notes North Ayrshire Council's approach in relation to these.

### 4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

#### Financial

- 4.1 None.

#### Human Resources

- 4.2 None.

#### Legal

- 4.3 None.

#### Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 None.

#### Climate Change and Carbon

- 4.5 None.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 None.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 No consultation has been required in the preparation of this report

**Mark Boyd**  
**Head of Service (Finance)**

For further information please contact **David Forbes, Senior Manager (Strategic Business Partner)**, on **01294 324551** or **DavidForbes@north-ayrshire.gov.uk**.

### **Background Papers**

None

## **NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**15<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

### **Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Year End Performance Reporting: Council Plan Year End Progress Report 2021-22, Annual Performance Report 2021-22 and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Report 2020-21</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on progress of our Council Plan priorities.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agrees to: a) Note the Council Plan year End Progress Report and supporting performance measures as set out at Appendix One, Two and Three; b) Note the Council Plan Annual Performance Report as set out in Appendix Four; and c) Note the status of the Council's performance indicators within the 2020-21 LGBF report at Appendix Five.

---

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1992 and Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 we have a duty to demonstrate Best Value. To ensure we are supporting our residents and fulfilling our statutory duties, we actively manage performance and develop our performance reporting to make it accessible, in order to invite further scrutiny from our residents and other stakeholders. Our corporate performance reports are published on our website [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance).
- 1.2. This report combines three of our key Council Plan and corporate performance reports:
  - Our six-monthly Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update (Year End 2021-22)
  - Our Annual Performance Report 2021-22
  - The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Report 2020-21
- 1.3. Due to the timing of these three key performance reports and the recent Local Government Election, our Executive Leadership Team decided it would be best to present the reports together at Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to give Elected Members and our residents an overall view of the performance management information we manage corporately.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Our Council Plan 2019-24 was approved by Council on 26 June 2019 and sets out our vision and priorities for the next five years.

The **Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update (Year End 2021-22)** and accompanying appendices provide detailed information on the progress being made towards our strategic priority outcomes. The report includes key activities, areas of focus, case studies and best in class examples from across our Council in a magazine style format to ensure this information is easily accessible. It provides an overview of performance in the six months up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

- 2.2. Our **Annual Performance Report 2021-22** summarises our performance across the entire financial year. For 2021-22, due to the timing of the reports and to reduce duplication, we have designed an infographic style report with links to our more detailed six-monthly Council Plan Progress Reports. It is hoped this 'at a glance' approach will be easier to promote through our North Ayrshire Council social media channels and therefore improve engagement with our performance and encourage scrutiny.
- 2.3. The **Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Report 2020-21**: The LGBF is a national framework which collates performance information from across all 32 local authorities and is specifically referenced within the Accounts Commission Strategic Performance Information Direction. The most recent data available (released in July 2022) relates to 2020/21, which covers the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown periods. As a result, our performance reflects this environment and cannot be compared to previous years or other councils directly (as councils across Scotland redirected resources in bespoke ways to meet the needs of their residents). However, it is intended that more in-depth comparisons and improvement activity will be included in future years.

### 3. Performance Summary

#### 3.1. Key Activities (October to March 2022)

- We delivered a balanced budget for 2022/23 in March including identifying £4.538m in savings for the year. Although the indicative budget gap for 2023/24 was noted as £10.729m at this time, it is recognised that further significant inflationary pressures will likely increase this gap further.
- We are working to resettle those displaced due to the war in Ukraine until it is safe for them to return home.
- Over £7million of our Council budgets was determined through participatory methods, amounting to 2.32% for 2021/22.
- Money Matters generated over £17.5million in income for our residents in receipt of welfare benefits this year.
- An additional £2million was approved for our Community Investment Fund in February, bringing the total approved to £3million this year. Recent approved applications include those from Beith Community Development Trust (£15,582) for a feasibility study into developing a much improved building to meet the needs of the community and West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited (£76,605 over three years) for a Technical and Creative Training Programme and audio visual (AV) service.
- £23.7m was secured for the B714 Upgrade from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund in October 2021 which will aid economic recovery through improved infrastructure and connectivity.
- We continued our ambitious response to the Climate Emergency including the development of Council owned renewable energy projects.
- We published our 10-year Island Plans for Arran and Cumbrae.
- 1,013 of our young people voted in the Scottish Youth Parliamentary Elections to elect four new Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

- We successfully rolled out universal free school meals to Primary Five children in January 2022.
- 1,022 Chromebooks have been delivered to schools for Primary Five and S2 pupils in receipt of free school meals or clothing grants. The remaining 250 laptops from last year's order of 600 have been distributed to eligible Primary Two pupils.
- We have supported 130 local businesses on 249 occasions during the second half of this year (840 businesses in total during 2021/22).
- 136 young people reported improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes following engagement in Community Learning and Development activity.
- We have helped 600 young people progress to employment through our Kickstart initiative, with our Council's Gateway creating 300 of these positions.
- We have successfully created 22 Housing First Tenancies during Year Three bringing the total to 62, exceeding our annual target by 10%.
- We have completed 681 new Council house units (including a small number of staff accommodation units in Sheltered Housing complexes).
- We have identified solutions to support hybrid meetings in line with Covid-19 restrictions.

### **3.2. Areas of Focus**





3.2.1. As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, we are refocusing our resources from our response and towards our priority areas and recovering services impacted by the pandemic such as day services for our residents. The Council Plan Progress Report (Year-End 2021-22) contains areas of focus as at 31st March 2022. Many of these areas are already progressing. As at the end of March we stated we would:

- Work with NHSAAA and Community Planning partners to develop our Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022-23, taking account of the Scottish Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26.
- Scope and progress the "Accessing the Council" initiative to simplify the range of ways to contact our Council and ensure we provide the best service for our residents via a 'no wrong door' approach.
- Launch a new community-based energy support model, to help families across all housing tenures alleviate the impacts of rising energy prices.
- Recruit permanent employees to our Care at Home workforce to address need in the community.
- Further develop our participation strategy and locality planning approach.
- Progress our Ayrshire Growth Deal projects, including working towards the launch of phase one of the Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC) in October.
- Continue our investment in our school kitchens to be prepared for the rollout of universal free school meals to Primary Six and Seven children.
- Further extend our Community Wealth Building approach to support local business by implementing a local only Quick Quotes process when procuring goods and services.
- Progress the procurement of two solar farm installations on the former landfill sites at Nethermains and Shewalton.
- We will further implement solutions that support hybrid meetings across our Council.

### 3.3. Council Plan Performance Indicators

- 3.3.1. Appendix 2 details Performance Indicators from the Council Plan Performance Framework, showing (where available) targets and a traffic light (**Red**, **Amber**, **Green**) symbol to show whether: the target level of performance has been achieved (**Green**); is slightly adrift of target (**Amber**); or is significantly adrift of target (**Red**).
- 3.3.2. Analysis of the indicators is outlined in Table 1 below. Where data is not available for Year End 2021-22, the most recently available data up to the annual figure for 2020-21 is used. 79.3% of indicators where the status is known are on target or slightly adrift of target as at 31st March 2022. This is more than last year, when 78.1% of indicators had this status, however due to surveys on customer satisfaction and employee engagement not being undertaken due to the pandemic, there are slightly more PIs where the status is currently unknown this year. The two-year period covered below reflects the impact of the lockdown periods of 2020-21 and the gradual easing of restrictions during 2021-22.

Table 1

Summary of Performance Indicator Status		
Traffic Light	Year End 2021-22	Year End 2020-21
 on target	18 (62.1%*)	19 (59.4%**)
 slightly adrift	5 (17.2%*)	6 (18.7%**)
 significantly adrift	6 (20.7%*)	7 (21.9%**)
 status unknown or data only	5 (14.7% of all Council Plan indicators)	2 (5.9% of all Council Plan indicators)

\* Of the 29 indicators where status is known




\*\*Of the 32 indicators where status is known

**Note:** 5 of the 11 indicators slightly or significantly adrift (**Amber** or **Red**) were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

### 3.4. Council Plan Delivery Plan

- 3.4.1. Appendix 3 details the actions from the Council Plan Delivery Plan. There are 40 overall actions within the Council Plan supported by 98 sub-actions. The status of the sub-actions informs the overall action status.
- 3.4.2. At Year End 2021-22 94.9% of actions are either on target or slightly adrift of target compared to 97.5% at Year End 2020-21.

**Table 2**

<b>Summary of Overall Action Status</b>		
<b>Traffic Light</b>	<b>Year End 2021-22</b>	<b>Year End 2020-21</b>
 on target	32 (82.1%)	34 (85%)
 slightly adrift	5 (12.8%)	5 (12.5%)
 significantly adrift	2 (5.1%)	1 (2.5%)

*(Between Year End 2020-21 and 2021-22, one action was deemed off program and a second was removed due to duplication, reducing the number of actions to 39.)*

#### **4. Local Government Benchmarking Framework**

##### **4.1. Key Notes include:**

- The range of indicators has increased, with the introduction of four new measures. Of the 101 indicators, data is available for 90. The 11 indicators that have no data are related to satisfaction.
- Short-term (one year) comparisons are available for 82 indicators:
  - **46 (56%) indicators have improved**
  - **21 (26%) have declined** with a further **14 (17%) marginally declining**
  - **One (1%) remains unchanged**
- In terms of quartile, out of 32 local authorities our Council is in the **top quartile (ranked 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>) for 22 (24%) indicators**
- 90 indicators can be compared to the Scottish Average:
  - **45 (50%) indicators are performing better than the Scottish Average**
  - **44 (49%) are below the Scottish Average**
  - **One (1%) is the same as the Scottish Average**
- There is no satisfaction data within the 2020/21 data for any of the 11 indicators, therefore it has not been possible to provide any analysis for this year.
- Our Council Plan Performance Framework 2019-24 contains 34 performance indicators of which eight were sourced from the LGBF during 2020/21. Of these eight indicators, **four improved** and **four declined**.

#### **5. Proposals**

- 5.1. That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agrees to: a) Note the Council Plan year End Progress Report and supporting performance measures as set out at Appendix One, Two and Three; b) Note the Council Plan Annual Performance Report as set out in Appendix Four; and c) Note the status of the Council's performance indicators within the 2020-21 LGBF report at Appendix Five.

## **6. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

### **Financial**

6.1. None

### **Human Resources**

6.2. None

### **Legal**

6.3. This report confirms the arrangements for the Council's compliance with its duties under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1992 and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and our commitment to improving public performance reporting.

### **Equality/Socio-economic**

6.4. None

### **Environmental and Sustainability**

6.5. None

### **Climate Change and Carbon**

6.6. None

### **Key Priorities**

6.7. This report helps to demonstrate our Council's delivery of our strategic priorities.

### **Community Wealth Building**

6.8. There are no community wealth building implications.

## **7. Consultation**

7.1. Feedback from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) informed the content of this report.

Aileen Craig  
Head of Service (Democratic)

For further information please contact **Isla Hardy, Team Manager (Policy and Performance)**, email: [IslaHardy@North-Ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:IslaHardy@North-Ayrshire.gov.uk).

**Background Papers**  
Council Plan 2019-24





## Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update

Year End 2021-22



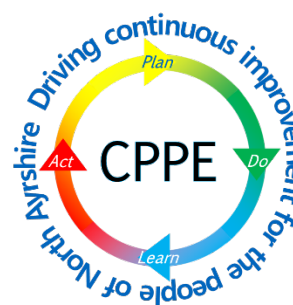
North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

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The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team welcome any feedback you may have. We strive to make our Council and reports as accessible as possible and appreciate opportunities to discuss how this can be achieved. For further information please contact:

**The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team**  
Tel: 01294 324648  
Email: [NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)



## Our Performance at a Glance

**Over £7million of  
our Council  
budgets allocated  
through  
participatory  
methods**

**1,013 young  
people voted**  
in the Scottish  
Youth  
Parliamentary  
Elections

**600** of our young  
people supported into  
employment through  
Kickstart

**Four MSYPs  
elected to the  
Scottish Youth  
Parliament**

**Streetscene  
Training and  
Employment  
Academy launched**  
providing opportunities for  
unemployed residents and  
supporting community  
environmental projects



**153** local groups  
received funding  
through participatory  
budgeting

**136** young people  
reported improved  
mental health and  
wellbeing outcomes  
following engagement with  
Community Learning and  
Development activities

**Island Plans  
published  
for a ten year  
period**



**We obtained a  
balanced budget  
for 2022/23**

**Money Matters**  
generated over  
**£17.5m**  
for our residents in  
receipt of Welfare  
Benefits in 2021/22

**We have retrofitted  
solar PV** on a  
total of **506**  
properties with a total  
installed capacity of  
**1.65MW**



## Welcome

*Welcome to the Year End Progress Report on our Council Plan. This report covers the last six months of 2021/22 and provides an update on our planned activities for 2022/23.*

*At time of writing, we are due to leave the majority of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions behind as we transition to Level Zero in April 2022. However, the efforts of everyone involved to keep our people of North Ayrshire safe and protect our most vulnerable during the past two years will never be forgotten. We are still very much working alongside the pandemic, knowing that we still have a crucial job to do together with our valued partners in the community, public, private and third sectors. We will continue to support our residents and help establish a period of green recovery and renewal. We are actively contributing to the 'Remembering Together' Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme. A commissioning group is in the process of being established with key partners in the response to the pandemic to ensure a suitable memorial is created.*

*As the war on Ukraine develops we are proud to be able to welcome displaced Ukrainians and help them settle in North Ayrshire until the time is right for them to return home safely. Our Housing Teams are working tirelessly to ensure safe accommodation is available and many of our other support services are mobilising to ensure assistance.*

*Our residents are at the heart of everything that we do. The past six months have seen new initiatives brought forward such as our 'Community Benefits Wishlist' - a list of priorities created by our communities that can be fulfilled as we award procurement contracts. We have developed our mental health support within our schools and are in the process of improving provision in our communities. We are planning on reintroducing Older People's Day Services, learning from an approach by Alzheimer's Scotland in Arran. In addition, we have almost completed the refurbishment of our early years estate.*

*These are challenging times, but opportunities are there to create a North Ayrshire that is 'Fair for All'.*

### Our Vision

***A North Ayrshire that is 'Fair for All'***

### Our Mission

***Working Together to improve well-being, prosperity  
and equality in North Ayrshire***

### Our Priorities

#### ***Aspiring Communities***

- ◆ Active and strong communities
- ◆ Children and young people experience the best start in life
- ◆ Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy
- ◆ Residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and well-being
- ◆ Residents and communities are safe

#### ***Inspiring Place***

- ◆ Well connected with effective infrastructure
- ◆ Homes that meet residents' needs
- ◆ Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment
- ◆ A sustainable environment

#### ***A Council for the Future***

- ◆ An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do
- ◆ An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money
- ◆ A valued workforce that delivers high quality services
- ◆ A powerful and respected voice

## Aspiring Communities

### Key Activities

#### Active and Strong Communities

We are working closely with Locality Partnerships and their working groups to consider and address local issues focusing on the refreshed priorities. This includes applications for the Community Investment Fund which was increased by a further £2million in February (an increase of £3million this year). Recent approved applications include from Beith Community Development Trust (£15,582) for a feasibility study into developing a much-improved building to meet the needs of the community and West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited (£76,605 over three years) for a Technical and Creative Training Programme and audio visual (AV) service.

A review of Locality Partnerships is ongoing and a session to brief new Elected Members on both Community and Locality Planning is due to take place in May 2022

Our approach to Locality Charters has evolved to take account of the learning from the pandemic and the aspirations of both our communities and our Council. A [Participatory Democracy Statement of Intent](#) has been created. This summarises the main ways in which our residents can take part in local governance. Cabinet has approved the planned community consultation to co-design a strategy to widen democratic participation which will explore new ways of connecting with our people of North Ayrshire. This work builds on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the joint Review of Local Governance and learning from the pandemic which also informed the Social Renewal Advisory Board.

Four new Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) have been elected to represent North Ayrshire. Five candidates put forward their manifestoes to prospective voters outlining why they deserved to take on the important role. In early November, young people aged 12 -25 years across North Ayrshire voted for the candidates they wanted to represent them at the Scottish Youth Parliament. The total number of votes cast was 1,013 including 88 spoiled votes, bringing the total number of valid votes to 925.

In total we have allocated over £7million of our Council budgets through participatory methods. This amounts to 2.32% for 2021/22, above our target of 1.1% for the year and above the Scottish Government target of 1%.

In addition, 153 Local groups and organisations applied for and secured community grant funding through participatory budgeting. We worked with 33 local residents to short list the applications. In total, £164,000 was allocated to local groups and organisations.

Our Arts and Culture Participatory Budgeting received 27 applications with 24 successful in receiving an award. The Arts Team is continuing to evaluate those who were successful last year.

We launched our Community Planning Partnership's [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2022 - 2030](#). The vision is 'North Ayrshire – Fair for all' with the three priorities of 'Wellbeing', 'Work' and 'World'. We used our 'Your Voice, Your View' online consultation platform in addition to other means to engage with our residents and will continue to do so to develop our plan further.



Our Fairer Food Network has grown from eight Fairer Food locations to 12. New larders have opened in Irvine, Stevenston, Saltcoats and Beith, with further openings in Kilbirnie and Springside due in 2022. As the network has continued to grow, the offer to its members has evolved. For example, the Village Larder at West Kilbride Community Centre has secured funding to run a 'Larder Lunches' programme from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. This will engage members in cooking classes and social activities based around the larder.

We published the first Irvine Chit Chat magazine and there are plans for the concept to be spread to other localities. Information on community services (['Community Books'](#)) is provided on the Community Planning website. We have been developing this approach to ensure a more comprehensive resource for our residents and partners.

We are welcoming the opportunity to become involved in 'Remembering Together' Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme. A commissioning group is in the process of being established, including colleagues from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, arts/creative practitioners' groups and community organisations who were key partners in the response to the pandemic. In March we asked local artists, makers and creative practitioners in all artistic disciplines to register their interest.

Our Streetscene Volunteering Strategy (2022 – 2026) was approved in November, incorporating our commitment to deliver a service that offers volunteering opportunities across North Ayrshire communities and to provide the relevant support for a growing, successful and sustainable network of community volunteers. A series of actions have been developed to form an action plan and ensure the strategy is delivered successfully to maximum effect.

### Children and young people experience the best start in life

Our extensive programme to upgrade our Early Years Estate is in its final stages with projects on Arran and the major refurbishment of Marress House, Irvine remaining. Other main Learning Estate projects continue including the replacement Moorpark Primary School, Kilbirnie; a new primary/early years facility for Montgomerie Park, Irvine; and a significant new learning and community campus at North Shore Ardrossan.


We have continued to make good progress in our efforts to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. During this period, we have progressed with planning for the publication of a revised framework around the Scottish Attainment Challenge which will support recovery and accelerate progress. This has included work to explore how we will use our reducing funding allocation to support learners and prioritise the supports making greatest impact.

We successfully rolled out universal free school meals to Primary Five children in January 2022. The further rollout to Primary Six and Seven children has been delayed nationally, but we will continue to support this when a new date is confirmed. Our Facilities Management, Property Management and Investment team (PMI) and Education Service are working closely to complete work within our kitchens during school holiday periods where possible to minimise disruption. This work will build capacity in our kitchens to ensure we can provide for the anticipated increase in pupils accessing school meals when the free access is fully rolled out.



We are working on a pilot programme to develop the Outdoor Strategy. This work is being supported by the Scottish Government and Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative. A training programme has also been developed to support practitioners' continued professional development in this area. Outdoor environments continue to be developed in line with the blueprint for Early Learning Centre (ELC) design and include collaboration with the Woodland Trust and tree planting programme. This work will continue to be evaluated and refined to aid the completion of the Outdoor Strategy in 2022.





1,022 Chromebooks have recently been delivered to school for Primary Five and S2 pupils in receipt of free school meals or clothing grants. The remaining 250 I pads from last year's order of 600 have been distributed to eligible Primary Two pupils. As this is a rolling project, more devices will be purchased as budget becomes available to ensure all our children and young people have vital access to digital technology.

A pilot programme was created for a community swap shop in Garnock Valley to address poverty and inequality. Run by our young people it is working in partnership with our Education Service and parents to establish an exchange of school items for young people from the Garnock Valley locality. Plans are in place to fund further developments including utilities to wash clothes. This will be rolled out to other localities with our young people taking the lead.

Three of our Youth Workers have been shortlisted in the [National Youth Work Awards](#) in categories of 'Digital and Stem', 'Volunteer Youth Worker' and 'Lifetime Achievement Award – Fellowship of YouthLink Scotland'.

### *Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools*

We have developed a range of materials and approaches to support teams, parent, carers and children to manage anxiety. These have been shared with a range of stakeholders to help raise awareness of the resources and approaches. There are also further awareness raising and employee development sessions organised, with all resources available on both our Glow Blog (secure internet space for our Education teams and pupils) and the Education Psychology Service website.

'Let's Introduce Anxiety Management' (LIAM) continues to be developed with training now offered to Area Inclusion workers. We continue to publish regular news bulletins and have updated our employee Glow blog to share and signpost the most up to date resources and approaches. We are tying this in with the recently published Whole System Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing and professional learning resource.

We continue to offer a counselling and wellbeing service in Primary schools demonstrating positive outcomes for our children and young people.

We evaluated the first year of Community Mental Health and Wellbeing (CMHWB) supports and services framework and plan to continue with those most effective for our children and young people. These include Play Therapy, [Aberlour](#) and our own Family Centred Wellbeing support service. We have invested additional funding for Classroom Assistants to support wellbeing and have implemented both Nurturing North Ayrshire Recovery and Building on Positive Relationships approaches to support our young people.

North Ayrshire's Family Centred Wellbeing team now has five workers in place and are using a range of approaches such as signposting, Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), and support with routines and boundaries in two of our localities. An Education Psychologist is working in partnership to support their understanding of additional support needs.

Several of our young people have been trained in Peer Mentoring and will be initiating locality-based drop-in services over the coming term.

The restrictions which limited the presence of our Family Learning Team in schools are easing. This has increased the number of schools requesting to have their Family Learning Worker based in school, thus helping to re-establish relationships with school teams, children and families. 718 families have attended a variety of programmes since the beginning of the academic year, with a large proportion being in-person delivery.

### *Inclusive, growing and enterprising economy*

Our Protective Services Team continue to support businesses and our communities to beyond level zero of the national Covid-19 restriction levels.

The Ayrshire Regional Skills Investment Plan has been developed for consideration at the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee in June for approval and implementation. The plan will ensure that communities and businesses have the opportunity to engage with and benefit from investments delivered through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

The Integrated Joint Boards of East, South and North Ayrshire Councils signed the Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter. The Anchor Charter mission is: "To commit to long-term collaboration between Ayrshire Anchor Institutions, supporting shared Community Wealth Building (CWB) goals to improve

collective wellbeing and create a strong, resilient, and inclusive local and regional economy.”

We continue to offer employability support, with our Equal employability programme supporting 135 residents with disabilities during the past year.

### *Procurement and Community Benefits*

Procuring goods and services locally is a key pillar of our Community Wealth Building Strategy, supporting local businesses and communities.

As part of Challenge Poverty Week in October we launched a “Community Benefits Wishlist” for potential suppliers. This ensures that when contracts are awarded, additional benefits within them (which can range from training through to assistance in community projects) are identified by and directly relevant to the needs of our communities. This was formally included in our Community Benefits Strategy launched in December 2021.

At year end, 44 community groups had submitted a combined total of 94 wishes for the list. Fourteen wishes have been fully delivered, with a further seven in progress and five more in discussion.

We have been proactively promoting Community Wealth Building through procurement activities. This includes public library sessions with businesses, coaching, 1-2-1 meetings with businesses and linking opportunities with businesses.

We have supported 130 local businesses on 249 occasions during the past six months, 840 businesses in total during the year. We provided support on digital initiatives, energy including transitioning to more environmental ways of working, as well as advice on procurement. Our Business Development team have worked closely with our Corporate Procurement team to adapt the process for procuring lower value goods and services (known as the ‘Quick Quote’ process) to make it more accessible for local businesses. Overall, this support will help strengthen local supply chains.

We have helped 600 young people progress to employment through our Kickstart initiative, with our Council’s Gateway creating 300 of these positions.

## ***Community Wealth Building Overview***

Our [Community Wealth Building Strategy Annual Report 2020/21](#) was launched in October 2021 during Challenge Poverty Week. All thirteen team members are now in post across the three Ayrshire councils. Key achievements include:

**216** companies received support

**50** enterprises received financial support

**37** enterprises less than a year old supported

**47** local businesses registered on Public Contracts Scotland (our procurement portal)

**63** businesses attended 121 procurement support sessions

**12** businesses attended one to many ‘fair work’ workshops

**4** referrals to Fair Work Ayrshire programme

**6** businesses supported with employee ownership / cooperative status

Targets for supported businesses and 1-2-1 procurement support exceeded in the first year

Though Fair Work Ayrshire Referrals are currently 50% of target, this is expected to increase following the successful recruitment of the team and the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. The initial recruitment challenges have resulted in an underspend in year one of 50% which will be aligned to increased programme activity going forward in order to deliver better outcomes.



## Residents and communities, enjoy good, life-long health and wellbeing

Planning for the for remobilisation of Older People's Day Services continues. The service has been engaging with Alzheimer's Scotland who re-opened its Day Service in Ardrossan, on a greatly reduced capacity basis, in late 2021. The Health and Social Care Partnership has been working with colleagues from Alzheimer's Scotland to build capacity based on prioritising those on the waiting list for Day Services.

Additional winter investment has been confirmed and provides an opportunity to continue to grow our in-house Care at Home workforce to address unmet need in our communities. Addressing the full needs of our residents is dependent on successful recruitment which continues to be a challenge.

We are supporting KA Leisure as it builds its membership and explores a wider role as a community health and wellbeing organisation. Attendances (excluding pools) remain at 16% of pre Covid-19 levels, however they are increasing steadily, from 41,083 in Quarter 1 to 104,166 in Quarter 4. Recovery and renewal plans are progressing in order to return to a positive financial position.

Our Arts Team has been successful in gaining funding for a digital storytelling project. The project will raise awareness relating to the lives of people with learning disabilities, highlight their successes and the contribution they make within the community. Their stories will be captured as a short film in their own way and in their own voice, which will then form the core of a touring exhibition.

We have launched a survey to understand the views of those who may require access to free period products across a range of sites in North Ayrshire. Schools, community centres and halls, libraries, community hubs, community ladders and public offices have period products available for use by members of the public, staff, pupils and visitors. We want to identify any improvements which can be made.

Our [Ayrshire Shared British Sign Language \(BSL\) Local Plan 2018 – 2024 Mid Term Report](#) noted good progress including:

- ◆ Implementation of training, including basic online awareness, basic introductory face to face courses and longer-term courses in BSL; as well as promotion of contact Scotland-BSL Support Service.

- ◆ Development of BSL information on public facing websites and adoption of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI Technology). Our Sensory Impairment Team were provided with smartphones during the first Covid-19 lockdown, to allow them to communicate more effectively with the BSL/Deaf Communities.
- ◆ Engagement with the BSL Community, including through the Ayrshire Deaf Club and work within schools and post-educational settings.

## Financial Support

The Better Off Hub currently delivers vital advice services in a new holistic way, focussed on the whole person with an objective to resolve underlying issues and reduce future demand on services. The proposals align with Community Wealth Building ambitions and support our economic recovery. A total of 183 people from the Three Towns engaged with Better Off during 2021-22. Overall, 64 children within supported families benefitted from the service. To combat pressures identified in the first half of the year, new referral pathways were established and vacancies were filled in October 2021.

Our **Money Matters Team generated over £17.5m in financial gains for our residents** in receipt of Welfare Benefits during the year. The service received 4,432 enquires via their Advice Line. This included referrals from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS, Council employees and our website. We ensure our most vulnerable residents have support to check their entitlements and ensure they are receiving their legal benefit entitlement.

Whilst the number of benefit appeals continue to drop throughout the UK, the Money Matters Team continues to have a high success rate, with 78% of appeals successful for service users. The service also advised/assisted 87 families to claim Scottish Child Payment, with 75 awards made this year. This resulted in financial gains of over £80k to families with children under six years old (£80,819.58).

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

Our Community Mental Health Service continues to provide critical, essential and routine care. Due to changes in restrictions, care has been delivered, where possible, in different ways; with increased use of telephone consultations and digital opportunities. Required face to face consultations continue but with strict infection control measures in place. Employee absence in addition to increased demand for services has resulted in some delays specifically within brief interventions and psychological therapies.

As part of the new 'Mental Health in Primary Care' plan, we have submitted a pan Ayrshire first year plan to the Scottish Government to increase the number of Mental Health Practitioners (MHP) across Ayrshire. If successful, this will mean every GP practice in Ayrshire will have MHP cover.

136 young people reported improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes following engagement in Community Learning and Development activity including: youth participation work such as youth forums; mental health and wellbeing courses and activities; employability one to one sessions as well as groupwork; and issue-based youth work.

We launched the 'Ground Force' Project in Eglinton Community Gardens. A tree nursery project for serving and ex-service personnel of the Armed Forces and their families. The project aims to provide practical, hands-on opportunities involving a variety of outdoor activities, all of which can contribute to positive health and wellbeing and a sense of community.

Organisational change work within the HSCP is ongoing with the team coordinator for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Neurodevelopmental team in a place and a preferred candidate for the Service Manager for CAMHS Neurodevelopmental Team identified. CAMHS administration management support is now provided by the North Ayrshire HSCP.

### Residents and communities are safe

In line with the national Equally Safe strategy, the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership developed a robust programme delivered throughout the 16 Days of Activism which ran from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November until the 10<sup>th</sup> of December. This year's theme was 'young people and healthy relationships', targeting schools in particular. During the 16 Days of Activism, a variety of activities took place such as the launch of 'Ask for Angela' safety initiative, extensive communications programme, Ayrshire Adult Support and Protection Event and launch of our Domestic Abuse Policy for Tenants and Residents.

The [North Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Policy](#) sets out our commitment to support tenants and residents affected by domestic abuse and recognises it is unacceptable behaviour which will not be tolerated. The policy is aligned to the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Make a Stand campaign,' and has been developed by an inter-agency group comprising of our own Housing Services, Cunninghame Housing Association, Riverside Scotland, our own Tenant

Participation Team and North Ayrshire Women's Aid. The policy sets out to provide help to anyone in North Ayrshire who is at risk of, or is experiencing, domestic abuse and provides support to those who are worried about the wellbeing of another individual.

An agreement to procure quad bikes to enhance community safety, reduce antisocial behaviour, fly tipping and graffiti through a joint initiative with Police Scotland. The bikes will allow the Police access to particularly rural areas more quickly to provide an enhanced community safety response.

We have embarked on a project with Health Improvement Scotland aimed at Reducing Harm and Improving Care for people experiencing homelessness who require alcohol and drug services within North Ayrshire. This is to allow us to identify and understand where prevention activities could intervene to reduce the risk of crisis and subsequently homelessness.

Our inter-agency [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24](#) details our ambitious targets for allocations to homeless households over five years. We undertook a pilot to allocate 100% lets to homeless households during the third quarter of 2020/2021. We prioritised: households with children, recognising the impact of homelessness on adverse childhood trauma; households in employment, given the cost of temporary accommodation and the impact it can have on employment and affordability; and women experiencing domestic violence, to reduce the risk of further trauma. The percentage of households homeless for longer than six months is currently 30% at year end, compared to 76% prior to the pandemic.

Housing First provides settled housing as a first response for our residents who are experiencing homelessness as well as additional challenges. As well as providing settled accommodation, we also provide personalised support. We have successfully created 22 Housing First tenancies during Year Three bringing the total to 62 exceeding our annual target by 10%. We remain on target to settle 100 people over five years (by 31st March 2024) with support being provided through our Housing First model. In addition, we are currently supporting a further 11 residents to obtain sustainable accommodation.

Our specialist HSCP Addiction and Mental Health posts are now established within the Housing First Team. Our Peer Support Service for Housing First Clients commenced in December 2021. To date we have completed 15 referrals to this service.

## Case Study – The North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network – Taking a moment to learn and improve

The North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network is a community pantry/larder scheme which provides food for its members. For a small fee, individuals are allowed to pick produce in a shop environment. It is a lifeline for many of our families, especially due to the current cost of living crisis, and grew considerably during 2021. As at February, 11 pantry/larder locations were operating in North Ayrshire (12 at year end).

While a few of the larders have support from paid staff (for example The Wee Shoap or Choices), most of them rely solely on volunteers. In addition, different membership and pricing structures have evolved, impacting the need for funding that each location has to consider. January and February was a good time to review progress, identify opportunities for collaboration and share good practice.

The Fair for All Development Officer and Community Economic Development Officer developed a meeting template in advance of visiting each site. This allowed larder teams consider their priorities and include the feedback of other people working on the project who weren't able to attend the meeting (e.g. treasurers and other volunteers).

Meeting with those running the larders in person on location (where possible) also made a big difference in terms of getting a sense of scale, the offer, how things work and the experience in each environment. In addition to the official meetings, the anecdotal information shared during the walkarounds in the larder was extremely valuable in identifying the scale of issues and opportunities.

The most common concerns for the larder teams are funding and sustainability, especially rising food costs. In the North Ayrshire models, the food is bought rather than donated, so cost is vitally important. The motivation to shop locally can be difficult to implement when national supermarket value ranges can drastically undercut prices even of wholesalers. This poses a challenge in a Community Wealth Building context. However, there is a desire to pursue local spend with independent businesses where it's feasible to do so as well as recognition of the high-quality produce offered by our local butchers, greengrocers and other suppliers.

Another concern is applying for funding. While some locations have employees or volunteers with a lot of funding experience, this is not the case across the network.

As a result, we have developed a way forward:

- ◆ To address rising food costs and provide better equity of access to fresh food across the network, the network will pilot a group buying model for fresh fruit and vegetables.
- ◆ The support available will be broadened and aligned to a more preventative rather than reactive approach to food insecurity – building on work such as West Kilbride's 'Larder Lunches' programme, funded through the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.
- ◆ We will work to build confidence in applying for and reporting on funding. We will support this on an ongoing basis both through specific training and by adapting processes for disbursing funds internally, similar to how we distributed and managed Scottish Government Winter Hardship Funding using a straightforward online application and follow up discussions.
- ◆ We will facilitate face-to-face meetings and networking opportunities to build relationships and support mechanisms.
- ◆ We will improve communication - feeding back activities that are working in other places is important, both to share good news and to reduce the chance of others duplicating efforts.

There is a huge level of community assets within the network in terms of experience, networks, ideas and background; bringing that to the fore to ensure everyone is benefitting from shared knowledge and leadership will be really important to the longevity of the network as a whole.

# Aspiring Communities

## *Areas of Focus*

Over the next six months we will focus on the following areas:

### Active and Strong Communities

- ◆ We will work to welcome and resettle Ukrainian refugees.
- ◆ We will further develop our participation strategy and locality planning approach.
- ◆ We will continue to develop our community hub approach to serving communities.
- ◆ We will further develop the community services information available on our Community Planning website to make it as user friendly as possible.

### Children and young people experience the best start in life

- ◆ We will work with NHSAAA and other Community Planning Partners to develop our Child Poverty Action Plan for 2022-23, taking account of the [Scottish Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 'Best Start, Bright Futures'](#) published in March.
- ◆ We will develop our approach to the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and Pupil Equity Fund (PEF).
- ◆ We will continue our investment in our school kitchens to be prepared for the rollout of universal free school meals to Primary Six and Seven children when new dates are confirmed.
- ◆ We will complete our review of Additional Support for Learning.
- ◆ We will fulfil our Outdoor Strategy, supporting our children and young people to learn in the natural environment. This work is being supported by the Scottish Government and Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative.

### Inclusive, growing and enterprising economy

- ◆ The Ayrshire Regional Skills Investment Plan will be presented to the Ayrshire Joint Committee in June for approval and implementation. The plan will ensure that communities and businesses have the opportunity to engage with and benefit from investments delivered through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

- ◆ We will continue to develop our Community Wealth Building approach including implementing a local only Quick Quotes process when procuring lower value goods and services as well as works up to £500k. Quick Quote is a quicker, less onerous procurement process than a tender so should encourage more local businesses to bid.

### Residents and communities, enjoy good, life-long health and wellbeing

- ◆ We will review results of our survey on period poverty and the provision of period products.
- ◆ We will recruit permanent employees to our Care at Home workforce to address unmet need in the community in North Ayrshire.
- ◆ We will await the outcome of first year plan to increase the numbers of Mental Health Practitioners across Ayrshire from the Scottish Government (due May 2022). If successful, we will begin recruitment of practitioners.
- ◆ We will progress the KA Community Health and Wellbeing approach.
- ◆ We will continue our Active Schools focus on inclusion.

### Residents and communities are safe

- ◆ We will continue to learn from experience and build our North Ayrshire Food Network, especially due to potential increased demand over the coming months.
- ◆ We will continue to support businesses to keep our residents and visitors safe as we transition to level zero Covid-19 restrictions in April 2022.



## Inspiring Place

### Key Activities

#### Well connected with effective infrastructure

##### *Ayrshire Growth Deal Infrastructure*

Our **Great Harbour** project has passed the first project stage. Detailed designs are being developed following the appointment of a masterplan design team in October. A public engagement strategy has been developed and Stakeholder Reference Group has been set up to guide the consultation process and methodology. The first phase of public consultation, which focussed on the Coastal Hub as a first phase of developments, was completed at the end of March. Procurement has commenced for various developments, namely the design and build of the play park as well as the Harbourmaster's House restorations - with associated public space to the front and car park to the rear.

**Ardrossan Harbour** – Agreement is in place to develop a tender package for the project incorporating the marine and landside works. To inform the tender package, consultation on the landside works was undertaken in February/March.

**Ardrossan Marina** – Heads of Terms for a lease and fundings agreement with the operator Clyde Marine was signed in March. Appointment of a design team to develop the detailed design will take place in April. A funding package for works continues to be developed with recent approval of £800k from North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVt), the submission of an Outline Business Case to Scottish Government for the Ayrshire Growth Deal funding in March and the submission of an application to the Crown Estate Scotland Boat Based Tourism Fund for £750k also in March.

**Ardrossan North Shore** – We issued the enabling works tender package in November with tender responses received March 2022. These tender responses are currently being evaluated. Planning consent for the advance works package was secured in March.

**Hunterston** - Work is ongoing to unlock opportunities for Hunterston, its assets and investments, to maximise its impact across energy, circular (sustainable) economy and blue (marine) economy sectors. This has secured leading expertise through universities to assist in developing a strategic proposal for Hunterston. This has been presented to partners

and approved by Cabinet and will position Hunterston within a wider approach to unlocking blue economy opportunities.

**International Marine Science and Environmental Centre (IMSE)** – Extensive work has been progressed to underpin the strategic case for both IMSE and Hunterston, with both aligning with a particular nationally significant blue (marine) economy and energy opportunity. This has included development of an informal academic partnership, research, analysis and industry engagement and formation of partnerships related to project development and delivery for Hunterston. We are working towards formalising academic partnerships to progress both IMSE and Hunterston projects. We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding partnership with the University of Stirling as lead academic partner. The organisations are working to identify a business case development route.

**Marine Tourism** - Our development of marine tourism project looks at marina facilities at Ardrossan, Arran and Cumbrae. The Programme Business Case was submitted in March to enable the flow of Outline Business cases for each of the three locations. The Ardrossan Outline Business Case was also submitted in March as the first place-based project of this programme. Viability studies and scoping is being undertaken for Arran and Cumbrae marinas. Community steering groups have been established on both islands and are engaged with us as well as contractors to develop marina projects.

#### **13 Digital Innovation Campus**

We signed a collaboration Agreement for Phase One of the **Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)** on 28 March 2022. Additional funding has been agreed between partners and Scottish Enterprise to cover the expected Phase One shortfall for refurbishment works. A grant offer from Scottish Enterprise was received on 29 March.

We will advertise our tender for refurbishment works in May. Discussions with the Project Management Office and UK Government will take place around our approach to completing the Outline / Programme Business Case stage. We expect the Phase One facility to be launched in October 2022.

Likely cost increases for the Phase One **Flexible Business Space unit** have been highlighted to the Scottish Government. We are seeking support to proceed with Phase One which is now progressing towards tender publication and are awaiting a revised

valuation to enable progress of land purchase. The Full Business Case is likely to be reported to the Joint Committee from September. We are seeking to include this work as part of a Levelling Up Two funding submission in July.

### *External Funding and Initiatives*

Our Active Travel and Transport Team has secured funding from a range of sources for the continued implementation of active travel and transport priorities across North Ayrshire. This includes:

- ◆ Brodick to Corrie Cycle Path - £300k for detailed design and construction.
- ◆ Bus Corridor Improvements - £200k for improvements to bus stop infrastructure.
- ◆ Bus Route Congestion Reduction Measures - £100k for the continued implementation of an Urban Traffic Control system to support bus priority.
- ◆ Irvine Cycle Friendly Town - £250k for continued implementation of the Study recommendations.
- ◆ Bus Partnership Fund - £200k for extension of the Bus Routes Congestion project and to investigate the potential for bus lane extension at Pennyburn Roundabout.
- ◆ Travel Smart - £126k for the continued implementation of Trinity Active Travel Hub activities and changing the travel behaviour of residents.
- ◆ B714 active travel links - £100k for design development.

£23.7m was secured for the B714 Upgrade from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund in October 2021. The acceptance of the funding and commencement of the project was approved by Cabinet in January. A tender exercise was undertaken to appoint the designer for the route and to support the ongoing development of the Business Case. An initial development funding award of £1.212m has been approved to support this stage. The full funding for the project will be confirmed when the Final Business Case is approved by the Department for Transport. The Levelling Up Fund requires the approval of a Full Business Case to allow the project to formally commence.

Our funding application to the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund for the Island Connectivity Study as part of the Green Islands Programme was successful, with the overall award being £456,617. We are now considering the potential for electric

vehicle infrastructure, active travel hub provision and the development of a 'Mobility as a Service' project to support sustainable travel on the Islands. The report will be complete in June 2022.

Cabinet approved the expenditure of the £0.259m allocation under the 2021/22 Islands Infrastructure Fund to:

- ◆ Upgrade of the car park at the Mountain Rescue Centre in Brodick on the Isle of Arran.
- ◆ Upgrade of a series of lay-bys at strategic locations on the Isle of Cumbrae.
- ◆ Implement a series of recommendations identified by the Islands Connectivity Study.

As part of our Electric Vehicle Strategy 2021-25 we have implemented a new charging tariff to help improve turnover and availability at our charging points and help meet the costs of public charging provision as electric vehicles become more widely adopted. The Local Authority Investment Programme (LAIP) from Transport Scotland, provides capital grants for the installation of electric vehicle charge points. We were awarded £80k for this year, with almost £70k committed to sites in Skelmorlie and Arran so far.

In addition, we secured £50k of funding from the Scottish Futures Trust and Transport Scotland for the development of a business case for alternative delivery models of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Phase One of the implementation of the new highway infrastructure asset management system commenced on 1 March 2022, this will bring improvements for Roads inspectors and technical officers particularly when working remotely. Phase Two will introduce mobile working for operational employees which will ensure a more effective and efficient means of managing reactive and routine works.

The implementation process for public Wi-Fi rollout is almost complete with all existing BT Wi-Fi sites upgraded and two of the seven new sites live, with the others expected to be complete in April.

**Garnock Community and Visitor Hub** - Construction commenced in June 2021 and is on target for completion in August 2022. Community and stakeholder consultation is ongoing and designs for the Parkland are being finalised through consultations, taking account of feedback from local communities. A final newsletter will be circulated

across the Garnock Valley in Quarter One 2022/23 to update on how feedback has shaped the proposals. In addition, a procurement exercise has been undertaken for construction of the proposed 5km leisure route. It is anticipated that this work will commence in Spring 2022.

The Green Action Trust is also preparing woodland planting proposals for the Lochshore parkland. An application for £15m was submitted to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund to advance the delivery of this element project as part of the Gateway to the West Coast and Clyde Island Project. The bid was unsuccessful as the fund was oversubscribed. However, Cabinet approval was secured for its resubmission and a revised bid is being developed for submission to Round Two of the fund for the July 2022 deadline.

### Homes and Houses That Meet our Residents' Needs

[The Strategic Housing Investment Programme \(SHIP\) 2022-2027](#) was approved by Cabinet in November. A total of 681 new Council homes (including a small number of staff accommodation units in Sheltered Housing complexes units) have been completed since our development programme commenced. We have been monitoring the time and financial impacts of both Covid-19 and Brexit due to labour and material shortages and an increase in material costs.

By locality, our development programme is as follows:

**Irvine and Kilwinning** – We completed the 33 homes at Dalrymple Gardens, Irvine on 25 October 2021 and completed the Towerlands, Irvine development on 15 March 2022 with all 50 homes occupied. Works are currently on site for 71 homes at Irvine Harbourside and 79 homes at St Michael's Wynd in Kilwinning (24 of these had been completed at the end of March 2022).

**Garnock Valley** - The former Garnock Academy site has been increased to 50 homes to provide replacement homes for the Garnock Valley regeneration projects at Laburnum Avenue, Beith and Newhouse Drive, Kilbirnie. The Laburnum Avenue site can deliver approximately six new homes whilst the Newhouse Drive site can accommodate around seven new homes.

**Three Towns and Arran** – We completed the 14 homes Springvale development in Saltcoats in October. 85 new homes are planned for the Three Towns area at the former James Reid School, Saltcoats, Afton and Caley Court in Stevenston and the former James McFarlane school in Ardrossan. Works are currently underway on site to develop the 15 homes and employee base at Caley Court, Stevenston.

34 new homes are being developed at Brathwic Terrace, Arran. Works are currently on site with 19 homes completed at the end of March.

**North Coast and Cumbrae** - The 123 units at Flatt Road were completed on 16 December 2021. A further 41 new homes are being developed at St.





Colm's Place, Largs and at the site of the former Largs Police Station. Works have commenced on site to develop a new sheltered housing complex at St. Colm's Place, Largs.

We committed to buying back four empty homes in 2021/22 to bring them back into the affordable housing supply. We purchased three properties across Irvine, Dreghorn and Dalry. Though we identified a fourth property in Kilbirnie, the owner did not wish to proceed.

Selective work has commenced on the former King's Arms building in Irvine, ahead of the planned refurbishment into six amenity flats to support our residents with an accessible housing need.

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We have completely reconfigured tenant participation over the past 20 months due to the impact of Covid-19. Our employees and tenants are continuing to support and embrace new methods such as e-participation and engagement methods. We were able to carry out our annual rent consultation between November and December, this was the second fully digital consultation we have conducted and saw a 5% increase in responses.

A new approach for Tenant Led Budgeting has been presented to the North Ayrshire Network and approved.

### Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment

The installation of new play equipment and street furniture as part of the £900,000 public realm investment is underway with the projects currently in the tendering stage. In addition, new higher capacity litter bins have been installed in almost all coastal areas.

The first round of the [Repurposing Property Grant Fund](#) of £200k was launched to support landowners and communities to bring vacant land and properties back into positive use. This provides funding of up to £25k for building and site studies, market advice and feasibility studies to identify potential options for sites and assess their viability.

As part of our Streetscene Volunteering Strategy (2022 – 2026), we are introducing a North Ayrshire 'Adopt a Spot' initiative. This is a new approach to provide members of the community, local businesses and schools with an opportunity and support to

voluntarily litter pick in an area of their choice within North Ayrshire.

The 10-year Island Plans and Annual Action Plans for Arran and Cumbrae were approved by Cabinet and published in February 2022. These documents have been developed with local communities, ensuring that island communities, stakeholders and partners are fully engaged and involved in the development phase. Work is now underway to develop governance models to oversee the implementation of the plans

Our Planning Service is reviewing the recent Open Space Audit. Once finalised, the Open Space audit report, maps and GIS data will be used to inform the review and update of the Open Space Strategy 2016 – 2026 and accompanying Open Space Asset Management Plan, planned for completion by Spring/Summer 2022.

Funding was secured from the UK Government Community Renewal Fund (CRF) to pilot the Place Framework approach in October 2021. This has been aligned with funding from the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) to support the development of the pilot project. Initial engagement with Elected Members and key stakeholders has been undertaken. Wider stakeholder and community engagement is planned for April and May 2022. The project needs to be complete by June 2022 in line with the CRF requirements.



Our first Making Waves Festival is due to take place during 23 and 24 July 2022 at Irvine Harbourside. It will provide top quality outdoor concerts as well as activities on and off of the water for our residents and visitors to enjoy. It is linked to Ayrshire Growth Deal



tourism projects such as Marine Tourism and the Great Harbour.

To ensure our residents benefit from tourism, we published our [Visitor Management Plan](#) in February which will support the positive economic impact of tourism in North Ayrshire. Prior to the pandemic, in the 2019 calendar year there were 3.2m visitor overnight stays, generating £211.8m for the North Ayrshire economy. With domestic tourism expected to remain popular, this will allow North Ayrshire to positively benefit from those visiting our outstanding area.

## A sustainable environment

### *Waste Reduction*

Significant work has taken place to reduce the impacts of waste on our environment as part of our response to the Climate Emergency. Our Waste Service has been collaborating on a feasibility study to outline options and recommendations for the potential scope of a 'remakery' project to support an increase in re-use and repair, which also aligns to the principles of Community Wealth Building, the Zero Waste Strategy and contributes to the development of a circular economy. The draft feasibility report is currently being finalised.

We have issued tenders to improve signage and waste separation within our household waste recycling centres, including improving opportunities for reusing mattresses and more furniture through our bulky waste reuse partner. New mobile technology is being progressed for our refuse collection vehicles. Both projects are being funded through successful bids to the Recycling Improvement Fund and will be implemented in Spring 2022, subject to supplier



delivery times. The total fund value will be confirmed after this procurement stage.

Work is continuing to progress the Single Use Plastics Waste Prevention Action Plan. A communication plan linking to our [Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#) has been developed to encourage our employees and residents to be 'Plastic Smart'.

Our Waste Service is engaging with Zero Waste Scotland, the Renewable Energy Association and our Council's waste processing contractors to develop clear guidance for residents to advise which compostable items are suitable for recycling via our organic recycling collection service.

### *Energy Provision*

The district heating installation at Flatt Road, Largs was completed on 29th November 2021. The Flatt Road District heating network also has sufficient spare capacity to provide heat to properties in the proposed new development on the site of the former St Mary's Primary School.

As at the end of March we have completed solar panel installations (solar PV) for 216 homes. The project is now complete and including the properties in phase one, we have now retrofitted solar PV on a total of 506 homes with a total installed capacity of 1.65MW.

Community Composting on Arran: Waste Resources and Economic Development are supporting the Third Sector to try and establish a green waste composting project as part of a pilot Public Social Partnership on Arran. We have provided funding to a third sector partner to conduct a feasibility study on the viability of the project.

A pilot recycling system is ongoing within seven participating schools, which aligns their collection system in the school with the system that is currently in place for household collections. Monitoring is ongoing regarding the quality of the recyclate, bin capacity and the collection frequency, to ensure these are sufficient for each school's needs. A report will be prepared on the pilot findings, with recommendations relating to any potential scope for the extension of the system.



## Case Study –Ukrainian Resettlement Programme

We are committed to welcoming people displaced by the war in Ukraine to North Ayrshire and ensuring they have safe homes and support networks. The scale of the Ukrainian resettlement programme is much larger than other programmes and we are determined to support vulnerable families fleeing the conflict.

We are working alongside the UK and Scottish Governments, COSLA and our Community Planning Partners to identify safe and comfortable homes and ensure that individuals and families have adequate support, tailored to their individual needs. This has included integrated support from our Refugee Task Force, which is made up of a number of internal and external Services, including Housing, Health and Social Care, Protective Services, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, DWP, Education, Connected Communities, Ayrshire College, Employability, NHS, and the Third Sector.

An initial 60 social rented properties have been identified for use under the Scottish Super Sponsor scheme – 54 Council properties and six from local Housing Associations. These consist of mainstream, sheltered and amenity housing ranging from one bedroom accommodation to four.

Additionally, we have carried out sponsor disclosure checks, property checks and safeguarding and support home visits for private housing under the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. A £10,500

per person tariff has been introduced by the Government to cover education, service referrals, support for finding employment and registering for benefits, homelessness assistance, community integration and temporary subsistence.

Through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, we have been advised of 25 matched sponsors in North Ayrshire, with 13 of the 25 households having already arrived. Safeguarding and support visits have been made and an emergency payment of £200 has been made to each person. All disclosure, environmental and property checks have also been completed.

As part of the wider Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme, we have prioritised 67 private householders from an initial list of 204 who expressed an interest in providing accommodation in North Ayrshire. We have contacted all 67 potential hosts to let them know that following checks, their details will be passed to COSLA and the Scottish Government for matching to Ukrainians in need of accommodation and assistance. We have currently prioritised properties based on those who have offered either self-contained accommodation or property with exclusive use of a bathroom. We have also prioritised mainland properties due to recognised housing and other support pressures within our island communities.

Feedback from the Ukrainian individuals and families who have arrived in North Ayrshire has been generally very positive. The homes provided by our Council are all decorated and furnished to a high standard with most of the items needed to help people settle quickly.

Communities are responding positively, with reports of small gifts being handed in for distribution. We ensure new Ukrainian families are located closely to one another to provide support to each other. Colleagues from the Third Sector have promoted community interaction, while Community Link Workers have organised get-togethers to make sure everyone feels supported and nobody is left isolated.

Feedback from host families has also been positive. [Our dedicated web page, email address and telephone number](#) mean that information is available and officers are able to respond quickly and positively to requests for assistance.

## Inspiring Place

### Areas of Focus

Over the next six months we will focus on the following areas:

#### Well connected with effective infrastructure

- ◆ We will appoint a Digital Renewal Manager to support the development of digital infrastructure and digital economic transformation in North Ayrshire.
- ◆ The Roads Asset Management Plan (RAMP) will be updated to include refreshed information on the condition of assets. This will inform any future improvement actions.
- ◆ We will implement Phase Two of the new highway infrastructure asset management system which will introduce mobile working for operational staff ensuring a more effective and efficient means of managing reactive and routine works.
- ◆ We will complete the roll-out of public Wi-Fi within our scheduled properties.
- ◆ **Ardrossan Marina** – We will appoint a design team to develop detailed design work.
- ◆ **Ardrossan North Shore** – We will issue a contract for the enabling works tender package following evaluation of tender responses.
- ◆ **I3 Digital Innovation Campus**
  - **Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)** – We will publish the tender for refurbishment works in May and develop Full Business Cases for Phases One and Two by June. (With aim of launching Phase One facility in October.)
  - We will include Phase One of the **Flexible Business Space** in a Levelling Up Two Funding submission by July. We will complete the Full Business Case for Phase One and submit to the Joint Committee in the autumn.
- ◆ We will progress completion of the estate for our Early Years and Childcare Expansion Programme including the final Arran based projects and provision at Marress House, Irvine.
- ◆ We will continue investment in our wider learning estate by progressing our Moorpark Primary School and Montgomerie Park Primary School projects.
- ◆ **Garnock Community and Visitor Hub**
  - We will complete construction of the hub by August 2022.
  - We will commence work on the proposed 5km leisure route in Spring 2022.

- We will resubmit an application for £15m of funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund by July 2022.

#### Homes that meet resident's needs

- ◆ We will transform the former Largs police office into housing.
- ◆ We will install driveways at Council properties, in agreement with tenants, in both the Dirranns area of Kilwinning and Keppernburn Avenue, Fairlie to alleviate current parking issues.

#### Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment

- ◆ We will use data from the recent Open Space Audit to update our Open Space Strategy 2016 – 2026.
- ◆ We will proceed with the next round of the Repurposing Property Grant Fund, supporting landowners and communities to bring vacant land and properties back into positive use.
- ◆ We will refresh our Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy and present to Cabinet for approval.
- ◆ We will implement our Visitor Management Plan to manage the impact of tourism on our places and improve the experience of visitors.

#### A sustainable environment

- ◆ We will progress the procurement of two solar farm installations on the former landfill sites at Nethermains and Shewalton.
- ◆ We will launch a new community-based energy support model, to help families across all housing tenures alleviate the impacts of rising energy prices.
- ◆ We will progress work on a detailed route map for decarbonisation of our fleet of vehicles in line with our net-zero aspirations.
- ◆ We will undertake wider stakeholder and community engagement during April and May 2022 to support the Place Framework.
- ◆ We will finalise proposals around a 'remakery' project led by our Waste Service.
- ◆ We will improve signage and waste separation within our household waste recycling centres, including improving opportunities for reusing mattresses and more furniture through our bulky waste reuse partner during Spring 2022.
- ◆ We will implement new mobile technology in our refuse collection vehicles during Spring 2022.
- ◆ We will review findings of the pilot recycling system within seven participating schools.



## A Council for the Future

### *Key Activities*

#### **An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do**

Our 'Accessing the Council' project is continuing to simplify the range of ways to contact our Council and ensure we provide the best service for our residents via a 'no wrong door' approach to accessing services.

We have installed upgraded public Wi-Fi at 30 council locations. This includes 15 libraries, the Harbour Arts Centre, the Heritage Centre in Saltcoats and Eglinton Country Park. In addition, implementation of the new cloud based wireless network solution across our main Council buildings and schools is over 95% complete.

The Service Level Agreement with The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) has been refreshed and updated in the context of Community Wealth Building and the need for increased third sector input into Community Asset Transfer. Funding for this has been allocated from the Community Asset Transfer Start Up Fund.

We have procured web accessibility software which will ensure our documents published on our website and intranet are as accessible as possible. It will also improve the efficiency of publishing documents.

A new central location on our Council website for [Online Services](#) has been created that enables online reporting, requesting, applications and payments. As a result, the Report-It app has been decommissioned.

We have strengthened our ICT and Cyber Security team, which now comprises an ICT and Cyber Security Architect and two Cyber Security Officers. This ensures our Council has the required resources to continue to deliver a resilient and robust ICT and cyber security capability.

A Council-wide business continuity exercise was completed in October based around the scenario of a major ransomware attack. This enabled services to evaluate the effectiveness of their business continuity plans in coping with a long-term technology outage.

#### **An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money**

We delivered a balanced budget for 2022/23 in March including identifying £4.538m in savings for the year. The indicative budget gap for 2023/24 is £10.729m and £8.785m for the following year in 2024/25. We are continuing to explore ways to meet the pressures on our finances.

We are looking at solutions to enable hybrid meetings in line with Covid-19 restrictions. The first fully hybrid Council meeting is expected to take place following the Local Government Elections in May.

Following the publication of the Accounts Commission Statutory Direction 2021 in December, discussions have been held with the Executive Leadership Team on how to implement the direction in full, including a refreshed approach to self-assessment within our Council services.

Due to the successful roundabout advertising and floral bedding pilots, further potential for assisting local businesses to advertise have been considered, leading to the development of an Advertising and Sponsorship Framework, which will be taken to Cabinet shortly. This will provide guidance to services looking at utilising assets in this respect. Current examples being explored include advertising on refuse vehicles and digital screen technology for festival events.

#### **A valued workforce that delivers high quality services**

Our Professional Learning Academy (PLA) team continue to deliver interventions and support for practitioners across North Ayrshire. Since January, 622 of our employees within primary and secondary schools took part in 'twilight' evening training sessions. The Olevi programme (Outstanding Teacher Programme and Outstanding Classroom Assistant Programme) was delivered for the first time to eight classroom assistants from five schools (four primary and one secondary) and seven teachers from five primary schools. The programme supports a reflective approach, increased confidence and creative support for learning. The team continue to update online resources on the Glow blog (Education's secure internet space) for practitioner use and to support remote learning.



In November, we launched the opportunity for Senior Leaders to apply for a supported place on the Strathclyde University MBA programme. This programme will commence in April 2022 and is a fantastic opportunity to assist individuals with their own development and well as supporting career aspirations within the organisation.

A number of Connected Leadership virtual sessions have been hosted such as our work on The Promise, Environmental Sustainability, Prevent awareness (a duty for authorities to prevent people being drawn into extremism) and Cyber Security Sessions, and all have been positively received. Further events are planned for 2022 and give an opportunity discuss major initiatives and share knowledge across our Council.

Our Journey into Leadership (JIL) employee development programme continued to be delivered remotely. The most recent session commenced in February 2022.

A new “Managers Guide to Agile Working” has been launched as part of the Leadership Academy Knowledge Nugget series – this is to support managers as we move into the new phase of hybrid working. This nugget contains information on our four workstyles (Agile, In Building, Mobile and Home), advantages of agile working, guidance on building and maintaining trust with your team together with case studies from an employee and manager perspective.

We have made improvements to our Wide Area Network (WAN) separating school and corporate internet traffic. This means both Education and Corporate users now have higher internet bandwidth availability giving faster connection speeds and an improved user experience. Additionally, approximately 60 sites have had WAN connection upgrades completed.

### Employee Wellbeing

Communication of wellbeing resources continues to be promoted utilising the excellent resources provided by our Occupational Health provider. Topics covered included – Dry January, Building Resilience, Financial Wellbeing, World Cancer Day and Time to Talk Day. There were also resources to support Rest and Recovery (highlighting the importance of sleep) and Nutrition and Hydration awareness.

For our **Livewell / Workwell programme** - there was a focus on Winter Wellbeing including DrEAM (Drop

Everything and Move), Healthy Eating – Fake Away (which promoted using the money allocated for a takeaway to cook a new healthy alternative instead) and promotion around No Smoking Day in March.

**Carer Positive** – We have held Carer Positive Level Two status (Established) since 2019 and are currently working towards Level Three status (Exemplary). In support of this, the Supporting Carers Policy has recently been updated to reflect the introduction of our workstyles and our buying of additional annual leave scheme.

**Long Covid** – We produced guidance to provide managers with supporting information for colleagues experiencing Long Covid. This was launched in February.

**Supporting employees with cancer** – Launched in March, we produced this guide to support managers and employees with cancer from diagnosis to treatment and return to work. It draws on best practice from MacMillan Cancer Support and CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development).


We launched a **Shared Cost Salary Sacrifice Additional Voluntary Contribution scheme** to support employees to plan and save for retirement.

### A powerful and respected voice

The outcome of the funding applications to Round One of the Levelling Up Fund was received in October 2021. This confirmed an allocation of £23.7m to the B714 Upgrade. Unfortunately, the Gateway to the West Coast and Clyde Islands project was unsuccessful during this first round of funding, however we met with the UK Government in December to discuss the applications and this will help inform the resubmission of the Gateway project to Round Two of the fund.

In November Cabinet approved the submission of an application to the Levelling Up Fund Round Two with South Ayrshire Council for the Central Ayrshire constituency. This application will focus on the commercial estate and associated low carbon infrastructure within the Prestwick to Irvine corridor.

We received notification of three successful bids to the Community Renewal Fund which we made on behalf of local partners totalling just over £1m. They include Place Framework, Impact Arts project and Islands Green Programme. Grant funding agreements have been put in place for all three projects and initial funding has been released.



## A Council for the Future

### *Areas of Focus*

Over the next six months we will focus on the following areas:

#### **An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do**

- ◆ We will continue to scope the 'Accessing the Council' initiative and develop the approach.
- ◆ We will reopen our front facing offices in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- ◆ We will prepare for the Local Government Elections scheduled for May 2022.
- ◆ We will develop an Accessibility Approach that will help to raise the profile of digital accessibility including online information and embed good practice across our Council.
- ◆ We will implement a new Customer Portal for our residents that will be fully integrated with the national MyAccount.

#### **An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money**

- ◆ Refresh approach to self-assessment within Council services.
- ◆ We will further implement solutions that support hybrid meetings across our Council.
- ◆ We will work towards the renewal of our Public Services Network compliance certification.

#### **A valued workforce that delivers high quality services**

- ◆ We will build on our Carer Positive Level 2 status (Established) to work towards Carer Positive Status Level 3 (Exemplary)
- ◆ We will continue our Connected Leadership sessions to help share knowledge and discuss initiatives across our Council.
- ◆ We will work towards becoming an Ambassador for Recruit with Conviction, ensuring we are promoting safe and sustainable employment.
- ◆ We will continue the wide and local area network upgrade (WAN and LAN).

#### **A powerful and respected voice**

- ◆ We will prepare the resubmission of the Gateway to the West Coast and Clyde Islands project to the UK Levelling Up Fund (round two of funding).
- ◆ We will work with South Ayrshire Council to prepare an application for the Central Ayrshire constituency. This will focus on the commercial estate and associated low carbon infrastructure within the Prestwick to Irvine corridor.

## Performance Summary

Where performance indicator information is pending, the most recent status up to 2020/21 year-end is used. Indicators and actions adrift of target and not previously reported are detailed on the following pages.

### Legend

On Target

Slightly Adrift of Target

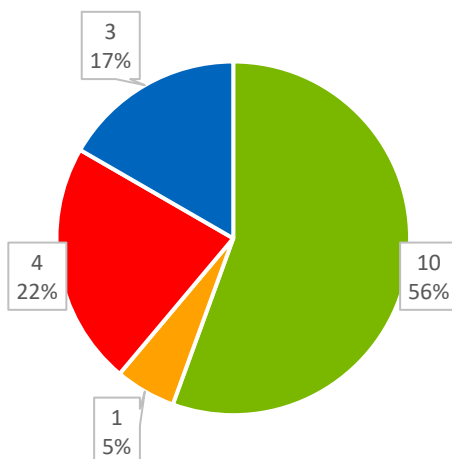
Significantly Adrift of Target

Status Unknown / Data Only

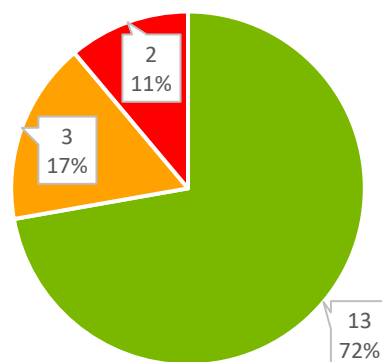
### Aspiring Communities

- ◆ Active and strong communities
- ◆ Children and young people experience the best start in life
- ◆ Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy
- ◆ Residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and well-being
- ◆ Residents and communities are safe

#### Performance Indicators



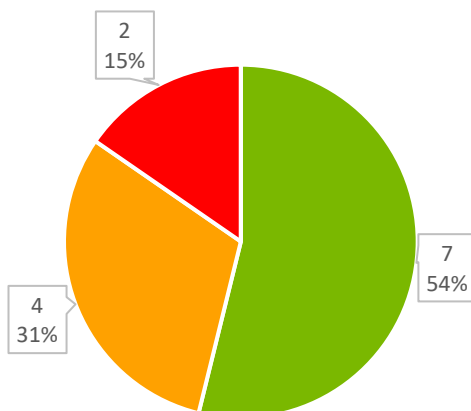
#### Actions



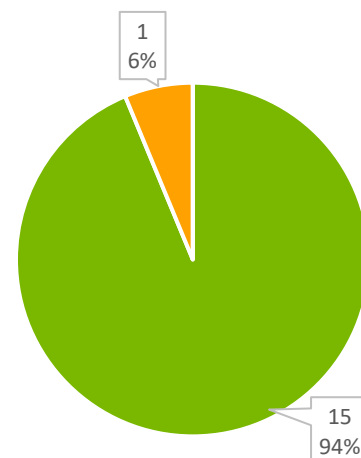
### Inspiring Place

- ◆ Well connected with effective infrastructure
- ◆ Homes that meet residents' needs
- ◆ Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment
- ◆ A sustainable environment

#### Performance Indicators



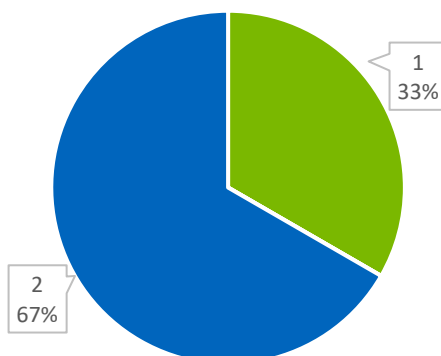
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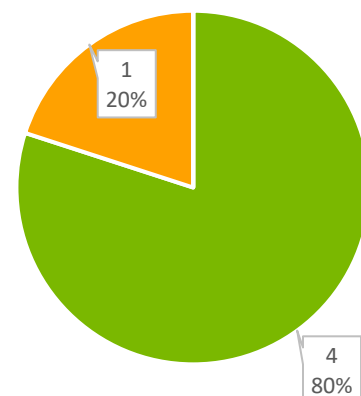
### A Council for the Future

- ◆ An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do
- ◆ An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money
- ◆ A valued workforce that delivers high quality services
- ◆ A powerful and respected voice

#### Performance Indicators



#### Actions



## Performance Indicators Adrift of Target

This section details the performance indicators adrift of target and the action being taken to address performance. Due to expected data lags the most recent data may relate to previous time periods but may only now be available to report. To avoid duplication, only data that has not previously been reported to our Cabinet is included in this section.

### *Aspiring Communities*

#### ● CP\_04 Percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school

The most recent data available relates to 2020/21 but is included in this report for the first time. 72% of our children achieved their developmental milestones by the time the child started primary school, below the target of 80%. The Early Years Milestones evaluations were not collected in 2019/2020 due to the Covid-19 lockdown periods. The decrease in the percentage of children reaching their pre-school developmental milestones in Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy is largely due to the long periods of Home Learning and lack of social/play interaction with Early Years practitioners as well as their peers. This year there can be no direct comparison with the pre-pandemic period which saw 78% of children meet these milestones in 2018/19.

#### ▲ CP\_07 Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations (LGBF)

This data is sourced from the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework \(LGBF\)](#) and the most recent data became available in April 2022 and relates to 2020/21. The percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations has increased in 2021, reflecting the first signs of post-pandemic economic recovery. The percentage of leavers in employment has increased by almost four percentage points. The percentage of leavers entering higher education has also increased compared to 2020.

#### ● CP\_09 Percentage of working age population in employment

As at September 2021 (Source: Nomis) 66.4% of working age people living in North Ayrshire are in employment, below the target of 70% and last year's value of 69%. Our economy has been greatly impacted by the pandemic, however we have developed a 'No One Left Behind' Delivery Plan to increase employment levels across North Ayrshire.

### *Inspiring Place*

#### ▲ CP\_19 proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use (LGBF)

This data is sourced from the LGBF and the most recent data became available in April 2022 and relates to 2020/21. Performance has improved from 90.89% to 91.05% in the past year and is expected to improve further due in part to the rationalisation of the additional support needs school estate including the opening of Lockhart Campus which took place after this LGBF reporting period.

#### ▲ CP\_21 Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband (LGBF)

This data is sourced from the LGBF and the most recent data became available in April 2022 and relates to 2020/21. 94.7% of properties are receiving superfast broadband. We monitor this indicator however, we do not have direct influence over the rollout of broadband. The speed of the rollout appears to be slowing, this may be due to focussing on more rural areas of North Ayrshire which take longer to influence this percentage due to housing density. (This slower rollout was apparent between 2018/19 and 2019/20, prior to the pandemic lockdown periods.)

#### ● CP\_26 Tourism Visitor Numbers

The figure of 315,620 visits relates to the 2020 calendar year and became available at the end of 2021 due to delays. Tourism was of course severely affected by the Covid-19 lockdown periods during this period. Figures for the 2021 calendar year are expected very shortly. Various plans are underway for 2022 including the Making Waves festival in July as well as the longer-term blue economy work being undertaken as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.



#### ▲ CP\_27 Street Cleanliness Index – Percentage Clean (LGBF)

This data is sourced from the LGBF and the most recent data became available in April 2022 and relates to 2020/21. Performance reduced from 94.64% to 91.34%, below the 93% target. The largest impact on our performance was the essential diversion of Streetscene resources to waste collections during Covid, together with the impact of Covid restrictions limiting activity. However, we expect performance to recover as restrictions ease.

#### ▲ CP\_28 Hectares of vacant and derelict land in North Ayrshire

The amount of vacant and derelict land has decreased between 2020/21 and 2021/22 from 1,204 to 1,198 hectares respectively. During this time eight sites totalling 9.3ha were removed and eleven sites totalling 3.9ha were added.

We are reviewing how we can support a reduction in the amount of vacant and derelict land in North Ayrshire through revising our Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy, with the intention to present to Cabinet later in the financial year.

#### ● CP\_29 Overall carbon emissions (tonnes)

Overall carbon emissions are currently 22,653 against a target of 21,247 tonnes. This is a provisional figure as not all data required is available until the end of Quarter One and estimates have been used where data is pending. Carbon emissions associated with energy in buildings, transport and travel, street lighting and waste have been used to calculate this figure.

Adhering to Covid-19 ventilation guidance, such as the requirement to leave windows open in occupied spaces including schools for natural ventilation, causes more heating fuel to be used to achieve comfortable temperatures. This has affected all building groups, particularly sheltered housing, schools and community centres.

Monthly progress of actions within the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy are reported to Senior Management in order to ensure progress. Recommendations from Energy Performance Certificate surveys are being developed into an action plan to help reduce emissions from energy use in buildings.

### Performance Indicator Amendments

An important element of the Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team's role is to monitor the robustness of indicators and ensure the framework remains relevant to our Council Plan priorities. This ensures we are measuring the correct areas and have the information we need to make decisions. As a result, the following areas have been highlighted.

#### *CP\_12 Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities*

This measure currently captures the employability opportunities aligned to the Trindlemoss Day service and for Learning Disability Service users only. This does not capture the wider work in relation to job coaching and employability support provided by other agencies including our employability team to a wider cohort of residents with additional support needs. As a result, this measure needs to be removed from the Council Plan following 31st March 2022. A replacement measure based on wider employability activity is currently being investigated and will be proposed in the Mid-Year Council Plan Progress Report.

#### *CP\_13 Percentage of children with BMI centile >91 at 27 month review*

It is recommended that this indicator is replaced within the Council Plan. Currently the data gathered measures the children where a review is undertaken and a clinical intervention is indicated, rather than being a measure which is reflective of the health of the wider population. Additional information recently available will potentially provide a better performance indicator. We are working with the HSCP and will propose this replacement within the Mid-Year Council Plan Progress Report.

#### *CP\_14 Percentage of households in fuel poverty*

It is proposed that the 2023/24 target is increased from 27% to 28% due to the expected increase of the Ofgem energy price cap.

#### *CP\_16 Percentage of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home (LGBF)*

Some historical data relating to this PI has been refreshed following the most recent LGBF data release in April. No statuses or trends were changed as a result.

#### *CP\_23 Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)*

The targets for this indicator are approved by Cabinet as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), then updated in the Council Plan. As a result, the original indicative target of 1,375 for 2023/24 has been removed and will be updated once the target is available.

#### *CP\_24 Number of empty homes brought back into use (cumulative)*

This is a cumulative PI and the target for 2023/24 has been amended from 600 to 1,452 to reflect the overall total, rather than purely for that year.

#### *CP\_25 Percentage of Council dwellings that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (LGBF)*

Some historical data relating to this PI has been refreshed following the most recent LGBF data release in April. No statuses or trends were changed as a result. In addition, the method used to calculate this PI is changing so targets for 2022/23 and 2023/24 have been removed and we will continue to monitor this indicator.

#### *CP\_29 Overall carbon emissions (tonnes)*

Due to stronger than expected performance in this area, the 2023/24 target has been reduced from 35,000 to 19,500 tonnes.

#### *CP\_31 Percentage of total household waste that is recycled (calendar year as per SEPA) (LGBF)*

It is proposed the target for 2023/24 is amended from 62% to 57%. The original target was estimated as part of the Zero Waste Strategy in 2017. Though starting to recover, actual recycling performance has been less than anticipated due to the Covid-19 pandemic negatively impacting recycling performance across Scotland.

#### *CP\_33 Percentage of Self-Service Transactions*

It is proposed this target is increased from 50% to 55% due to increasing volumes of online transactions over the past two years.

## Actions Adrift of Target

Within our Council Plan Delivery Plan overall actions are supported by sub actions. Officers provide an update on activity and an estimate of the current status (red, amber or green). Where a sub action is adrift of target (amber or red) this sets the status of the overall target so that any off-target performance can be highlighted, with significantly adrift (red) statuses taking priority. This section highlights the reasons for underperformance within each action and efforts being made to remedy it. An overview of action performance can be shown in appendix two of this report.

Actions adrift of target will continue to be managed during 2022/23.

 <b>CP_05 – We will expand our learning and childcare estate, including ensuring all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free childcare each year.</b>	
 <p>CP-SUB-08 Deliver major educational new build and refurbishment projects aligned to Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy: "Connecting People, Places and Learning". (Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 – See 'Sub-Actions Relating to the Education Service Plan' section below.)</p>	<p><i>The extensive programme to upgrade our Early Years Estate is in its final stages with only those projects on Arran, and the major refurbishment of Marress House, remaining to be completed. The other main Learning Estate projects - a replacement Moorpark Primary School, a new primary/early years facility for Montgomerie Park, Irvine and a significant new learning and community campus at North Shore Ardrossan, have continued to be developed throughout Quarter Four.</i></p> <p><i>The concept design for Ardrossan Campus was refined in March to a point where it meets Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 2 standards, and this will be considered by the Project Board and SFT before the project can advance to RIBA Stage 3.</i></p> <p><i>The construction of Moorpark Primary School has commenced, but materials delays have adversely impacted on progress and this project will be delivered later than anticipated. Officers are working with the contractor to update the programme to minimise delay.</i></p> <p><i>Montgomerie Park Primary School is being procured through Hub South West Scotland (HubSW), and this process has been elongated by Covid, materials and costs issues. All large-scale capital projects across our Learning Estate have been adversely affected by external factors which have hampered progress and delivery.</i></p>
 <p>CP-SUB-09 Develop an Outdoor Play Strategy to support Early Years Practitioners to provide excellent learning and developmental opportunities.</p>	<p><i>(On target – no remedial note required.)</i></p>
 <b>CP_15 We will let people decide how best to manage their own care needs and support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible</b>	
 <p>CP-SUB-31 Re-design Older People's Services - Home First approach.</p>	<p><i>(On target – no remedial note required.)</i></p>
 <p>CP-SUB-32 Grow Care at Home capacity. (Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)</p>	<p><i>Additional winter investment confirmed in late 2021 has been welcomed and provides an opportunity for permanent recruitment to the Care at Home workforce to address unmet need in the community in North Ayrshire, however this will be dependent on successful recruitment which continues to be a challenge.</i></p> <p><i>There have been a number of actions taken to grow the Care at Home workforce throughout 2021 and early 2022, which are detailed below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Advertising Via MyJobScotland recruitment website, local and social media as well as leaflet distribution.</i></li> </ul>

- ◆ Regular interviews including online/digital when restrictions ceased face to face interviews
- ◆ 30+ Care at Home recruitment events held since September 2021
- ◆ Continued recruitment events weekly in 2022 to date, including extending venues across wider localities and weekend events
- ◆ Permanent investment which will see the recruitment of over 80 new permanent posts into the Care at Home service in North Ayrshire.
- ◆ CIS Care Academy ongoing and supporting candidates to interview/appointment (joint initiative with employability team)
- ◆ Modern Apprentices scheme
- ◆ Long Term Unemployment/Skills for Life Project (joint initiative with employability team)
- ◆ Supporting initiative with Ayrshire College 'Career in Care'
- ◆ Promoting permanency of roles available



CP-SUB-33 Prioritise Day Services Model and Support for Carers.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

The Integration Joint Board (IJB) approved a plan for remobilisation of Older People's Day Services in August 2021 and the planning continues. The service has been engaging with Alzheimer's Scotland who re-opened its Day Service in Ardrossan in late 2021. The Partnership's inhouse Day Services remain temporarily closed at this time and plans to re-open have unfortunately been impacted by significant workforce challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Partnership continues to provide outreach Day Services support. The Carer's Support Team have been working with colleagues from Addiction Services to build capacity to support carers and encourage uptake of Adult Carer Support Plans.



CP-SUB-34 Prioritise integrated Island services, including unscheduled care.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Recruitment continues to be very challenging at the moment, particularly for services in remote and rural locations including Arran. There are very small teams on the Island therefore a small number of vacancies can have a disproportionate impact on service delivery. The service continues to pro-actively recruit to remaining roles.



CP-SUB-35 We will help individuals to have better choice and control of their support at an early stage by reinvigorating the HSCP charging policy.

(On target – no remedial note required.)



CP-SUB-35a We will help individuals to have better choice and control of their support at an early stage by reinvigorating Self-Directed Support.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

The Scottish Government Pandemic Self-Directed Support Guidance is being promoted with services as best practice to embed it in our ways of working.

The HSCP Senior Management Team have endorsed a new Self-Directed Support Review and Learning Board. Terms of Reference have been drafted and experience/ expertise will be drawn from the HSCP, third sector and independent advisory partners to map, evaluate, plan and remodel the approach taken to meet our duties under the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

The HSCP and our Council Finance team successfully implemented the national uplift of wage rates for the Personal Assistant workforce.

	<b>CP_16 We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.</b>
	<p>CP-SUB-36 We will provide opportunities for people to be more active more often, through the Active Communities Strategy</p> <p>(On target – no remedial note required.)</p>
	<p>CP-SUB-37 We will work with Scottish Government as a trailblazer site for the whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight (public health priority)</p> <p><i>(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)</i></p> <p><i>As employees in Public Health continue to be seconded elsewhere, the work of the Trailblazer has been paused. The Lead Officers have attended the regular catch-up events and skills sharing events to keep abreast of developments across the sector.</i></p>
	<p>CP-SUB-38 Prioritisation of children and young people receiving support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.</p> <p><i>(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)</i></p> <p><i>The organisational change work is ongoing. The team coordinator for CAMHS Neurodevelopmental team is in place and a preferred candidate has been identified for the Service Manager for CAMHS Neurodevelopmental Team.</i></p> <p><i>Recruitment is ongoing for the CAMHS Unscheduled and Intensive Support Team with interviews commencing from April.</i></p>
	<p>CP-SUB-39 Prioritise community mental health services supporting people within their communities.</p> <p><i>(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing high levels of demand against a background of reduced staffing due to Covid-19 related absences and lack of additional investment in specific fields such as community psychiatric nursing, remain challenging.</i></p> <p><i>From a social work perspective, we outlined the need for staff in the Mental Health Officer Service and the care management aspect of the social work team, in order to provide a service capable of meeting current need in both areas across North Ayrshire. The funding of several posts within the service has now been agreed and the team are progressing this.</i></p> <p><i>From a strategic view, on a Pan Ayrshire basis we have constructed a 1st year plan for 'Mental Health in Primary Care'. This has been submitted to the Scottish Government with results expected around the end of May 2022. If approved this will be a significant piece of work until 2025.</i></p>
	<p>CP-SUB-40 We will place Mental Health Practitioners into GP practices to offer triage calls, urgent and routine face to face assessments as well as directing patients to the most appropriate support without unnecessary referrals to mental health services.</p> <p><i>(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)</i></p> <p><i>There has been ongoing engagement with primary care regarding the deployment of Mental Health Practitioners. Following absences, we are now in the process of returning employees to work which will improve this area. As part of the new 'Mental Health in Primary Care' plan, we have submitted a pan-Ayrshire 1st year plan to increase the Mental Health Practitioner numbers across Ayrshire to original business case submission. If successful, this would mean that every practice will have Mental Health Practitioner cover, and employee absence could be factored into NHS Ayrshire and Arran workforce practice standards. This has been submitted to the Scottish Government with results expected around the end of May 2022.</i></p>
	<p>CP-SUB-41 We will improve emotional and mental health and wellbeing through physical and social participation in community activities, including for young people</p> <p>(On target – no remedial note required.)</p>





## CP\_17 We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.



CP-SUB-42 Work closely with colleagues in Acute Services and Police Scotland to address the levels of unscheduled care in mental health.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Following confirmation of additional monies, the Unscheduled Care Mental Health Service has recruited posts dedicated to the development of an emergency services mental health pathway. Final touches are being made to this pathway, with education and training being vital for referring partners prior to planned launch in May 2022.

The Unscheduled Care Mental Health Service is also in the process of identifying accommodation that would allow the development of a mental health assessment hub. This hub would alleviate the need to utilise emergency departments as a place of safety, allowing direct assessment to specialist mental health staff - bypassing the need to attend emergency departments. It would also allow a safe place for assessment in addition to individuals' homes and local health centres, meeting the vision of Caring for Ayrshire, providing the right care, at the right time, by the right clinician.



CP-SUB-44 We will implement the Safer North Ayrshire Strategy 2020-2025 along with our Community Planning Partners

(On target – no remedial note required.)



CP-SUB-46 Introduce a Better Off Hub to provide holistic short and long term financial stability for our residents and reduce impact on services.

(On target – no remedial note required.)



CP-SUB-47 We will ensure all our residents are able to access food with dignity

(On target – no remedial note required.)



## CP\_18 We will extend the 'Housing First' pilot to address homelessness



CP-SUB-48 We will implement a 'Housing First' approach in our provision of homelessness services, providing mainstream, settled accommodation for our tenants as quickly as possible  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 but see 'Action Amendments' section below.)

(On target – no remedial note required.)



CP-SUB-49 We will further improve support to young people to enable them to sustain their tenancies  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 but see 'Action Amendments' section below.)

This project is on hold due to the impact of Covid-19. This will resume once the restriction levels are at zero.




## CP\_19 We will provide well-maintained, integrated travel and transport networks, supporting alternative and sustainable transport.




CP-SUB-50 We will support the development of the Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 but see 'Action Amendments' section below.)


Transport Scotland (TS) previously confirmed that the Regional Transport Appraisal (RTA) would be part of the Strategic Transport Projects Review Two (STPR2) process. At this stage, there remains little clarity on the approach to regionally significant projects. A number of these are currently deemed as out of scope for STPR2 due to being viewed as local projects.


Phase Two was expected to report in late 2021 on investment over the longer term. This was published in January 2022. Our response has been prepared for submission to Transport Scotland in April 2022. This reinforces the points raised in the Phase One consultation response and in particular, our Council's disappointment in the lack of any North Ayrshire specific interventions and the need for more clarity on the RTA approach.


 CP-SUB-51 We will implement active travel and transport projects including the promotion of strategic active travel projects with partners including Sustrans and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. (On target – no remedial note required.)


 CP-SUB-52 We will implement an Electric Vehicle Strategy, and work in partnership with government agencies to deliver further electric charging infrastructure throughout North Ayrshire (On target – no remedial note required.)


#### CP\_38 We will use technology to improve access to and delivery of our services

 CP-SUB-90 Implement Cloud solutions where appropriate giving consideration to business need, solution availability, viability of business cases, cyber security and information governance. (On target – no remedial note required.)

 CP-SUB-91 Support Service re-design through the use of digital and technology solutions. (On target – no remedial note required.)

 CP-SUB-92 Deliver Cyber Resilience Digital Services to support technological innovation and provide confidence in the security of our infrastructure, data management and technology. (On target – no remedial note required.)

 CP-SUB-93 We will review, refresh and re-launch the Digital Strategy taking account of learning from the Covid-19 pandemic. Draft high-level strategy produced, however this requires to be revisited to consider the work of Digital Office.  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

 CP-SUB-94 We will work collaboratively with our communities to streamline the benefits process – helping residents maximise income opportunities and build relationships to support them. (On target – no remedial note required.)  
(Due 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 but see 'Action Amendments' section below.)

## Action Amendments

To ensure transparency, where the Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team in partnership with services feel an alteration to an action may result in more effective performance management, these recommendations are listed below:

*CP\_05 We will expand our early learning and childcare provision to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free care each year*

It is proposed this action is amended slightly to read “We will expand our learning and childcare estate, including ensuring all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free childcare each year”. Currently building works on our educational estate are included as a sub action to this action, as well as other activities supporting 1140 hours provision. However, the original wording doesn’t take account of the construction work so the status could potentially be misleading.

### *Sub-Actions Relating to the Education Service Plan*

To ensure full alignment with the Education Service Plan 2020-22 and therefore academic year, it is proposed that all Council Plan sub-actions sourced from the Education Service Plan are extended from 31st March 2022 to the end of June 2022 (Quarter One and Term 4). This will ensure continuity of updates from Education while the new Education Service Plan is developed for August 2022. New actions from this plan for inclusion in our Council Plan will be proposed in the Mid-Year Council Plan Progress report.

*CP-SUB-45 We will roll-out the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) wellbeing model piloted in Kilwinning locality to all localities*

This action was originally introduced in 2019, based on the assumption that it would be appropriate to roll out the same model across all areas. Progress has not been reported on at Year End 2021/22, however work in the important area of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people is already included in the related sub-action CP-SUB-17 “We will develop a comprehensive approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing (of our children and young people) in partnership with other agencies, cognisant of the impact of Covid-19” so it is proposed this action is removed. This reflects the tailored approach to supporting the wellbeing of young people being adapted across the localities, with targeted interventions being established in school settings where appropriate.

*CP-SUB-48 – We will implement a ‘Housing First’ approach in our provision of homelessness services, providing mainstream, settled accommodation for our tenants as quickly as possible.*

This action is currently on target, with a due date of March 2022. However, the actual end date of this programme is 31st March 2024 so the end date has been amended. The aim of Housing First is to settle 100 people over five years.

*CP-SUB-49 We will further improve support to young people to enable them to sustain their tenancies*

This action was impacted by lockdown restrictions with planned resumption once Covid-19 restriction levels are at zero. This is expected to be from April 2022 onwards. In addition, this action is a longer-term action than originally anticipated. As a result, it is recommended that this action is extended from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to March 2024 to enable effective management of performance through the lifetime of our Council Plan.

*CP-SUB-50 We will support the development of the Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal.*

This action is currently slightly adrift of target as it was due to complete on 31st March, however this action has become more complex. More clarity is required to determine the approach to regionally significant projects as they are currently being viewed by Transport Scotland as local projects and therefore out of scope. A response to Phase Two has been prepared for submission to Transport Scotland in April 2022. To ensure we can capture the outcomes of these discussions and progress, it is recommended that this action is extended by one year to March 2023.





*CP-SUB-68 We will help private sector residents to improve the condition of their homes by implementing the actions within the North Ayrshire Scheme of Assistance*

This is an ongoing action and it is proposed it is extended to March 2023.

*CP-SUB-80 We will implement actions within the Zero Waste Strategy which will incorporate the implementation of enhanced waste and recycling services and move towards becoming a 'Plastic Free Council' by reducing use of single use plastic.*

This sub-action was due to expire on 31st March 2022, however it is recommended to extend the action to 31st December 2022 to cover the implementation of the national ban on most single use plastics in June. This will also provide time for a new strategy to be developed which will be heavily reliant on the Scottish Government's Route Map consultation published on 30th May 2022.

*CP-SUB-88 We will develop a Whole Systems Approach with our communities to make it easier for citizens to contact us for advice, support and information*

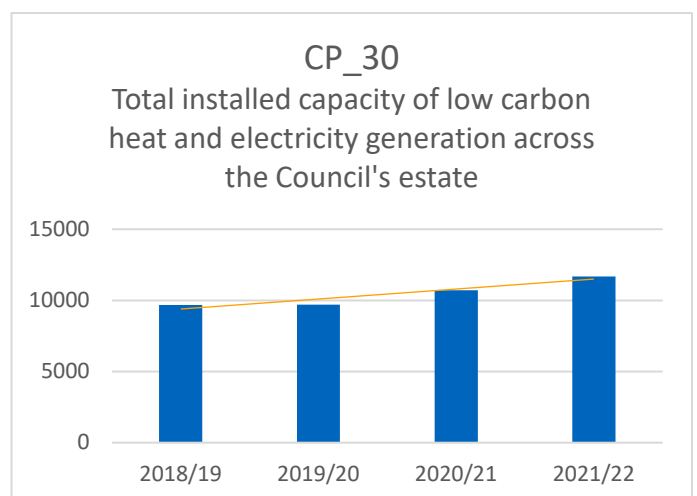
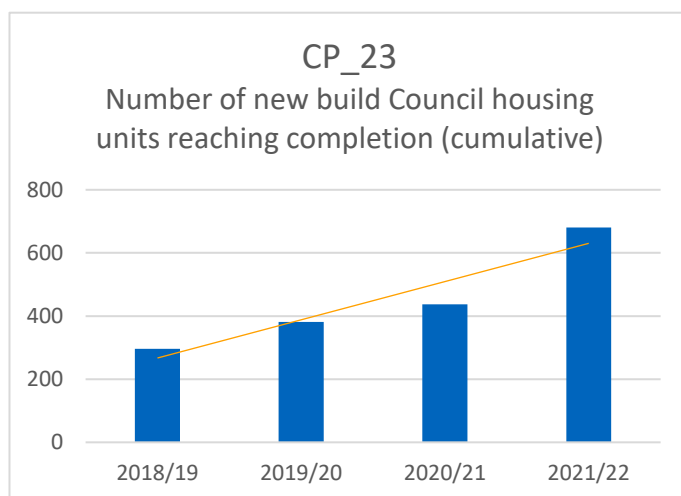
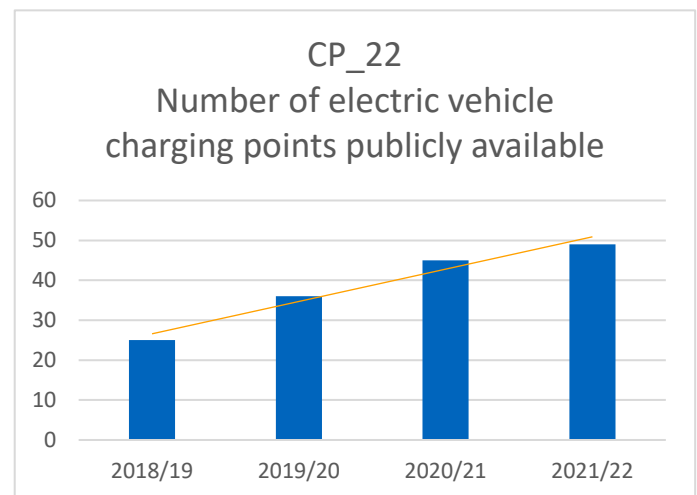
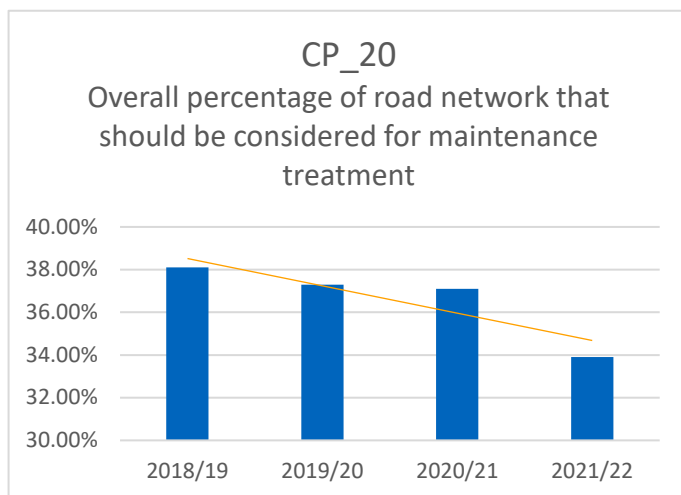
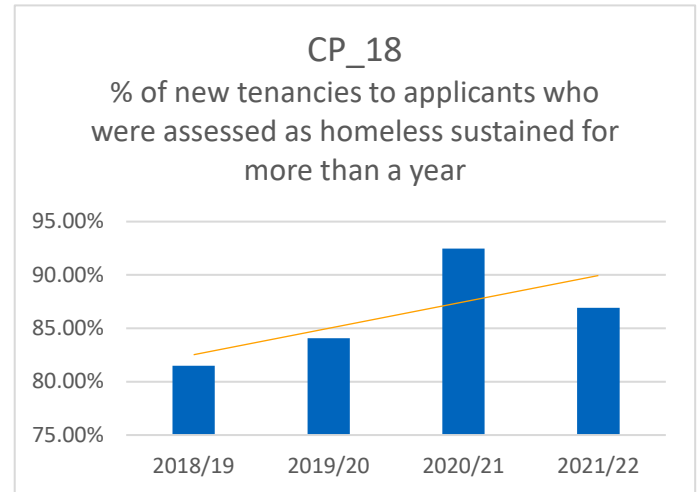
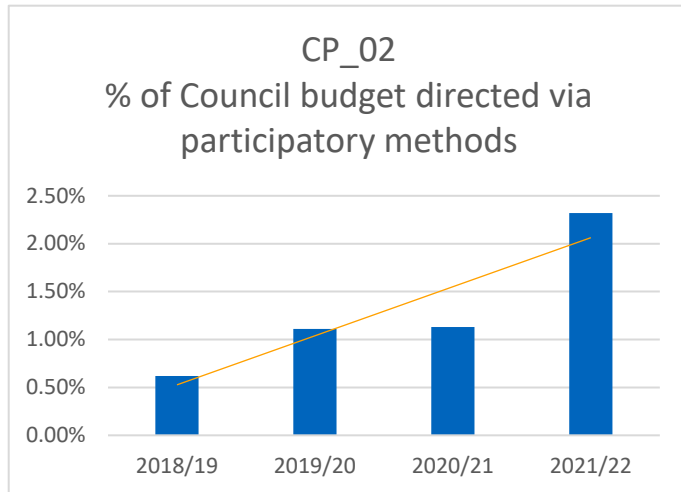
It is proposed the end date for this action is extended from 31st March 2022 to 31st March 2024 so we can continue to report on progress.

*CP-SUB-94 We will work collaboratively with our communities to streamline the benefits process – helping residents maximise income opportunities and build relationships to support them.*

It is proposed the end date for this action is extended from 31st March 2022 to 31st March 2024 so we can continue to report on progress.

## Trend Charts

Key: Trendline —



## Best In Class

This section outlines how we are working with others to learn and continually improve our services.

### Sharing Learning

Our Coding Clubs from 2017 have inspired a national initiative by Digital Scotland called [Code The Future](#). It is looking at reversing the decline in uptake of computer science at both Higher and National level.

Our Library and Information Manager and Lifelong Learning Coordinator presented at the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) Showcase in November. They described the successful 'Grow North Ayrshire' project which encourages communities to come together and grow food. Feedback was very positive *"Trailblazer is the word I would use to describe this project!... The presentation really brought things to life and shows the art of what is possible."* – SLIC representative.

We are continuing to attend the Scottish Local Authority Customer Services Group and have recently shared experiences and ideas for delivery of face-to-face services post Covid.

The GIS and Analytics team are regularly being cited externally as an exemplar for both data analytics and GIS. They are often approached by councils and other bodies for advice or to give presentations on various projects they have delivered using Power BI and the ArcGIS Enterprise suite.

To promote best practice, we launched our Community Benefits Newsletter in December. The newsletter is intended to highlight best practice among Council contractors and to share good news stories from across the community benefit spectrum. The second newsletter was issued in March.



## What Our Customers Say

This section captures a range of feedback from our residents and business representatives who have contacted us recently.

"Hi – just to let you know that I was most impressed by the speed with which you dealt with the lighting problem at Parkend Road! Thanks so much."

*(North Ayrshire Resident)*

"I just wanted to say thanks to the Roads Department for fixing the potholes on Anthony Road, Largs so quickly and doing such a good job."

*(North Ayrshire Resident)*

"Unfortunately we have had two occasions in the past few months to contact Bereavement Services.

We have already taken steps to pass on our compliment to the contribution of two of the cemetery staff (Willie and Lee) who most recently facilitated the scattering of my sister's ashes at the family lair, however we feel it is also important to thank Fiona most sincerely as she made everything run smoothly and her advice was invaluable. Her sensitive approach to matters and her friendly disposition made the whole process seamless.

Fiona has been outstanding in the provision of factual information, advice and options available to our family. She truly is an asset to your organisation."

*(North Ayrshire Resident)*

"I would like to thank the caretaker/usher who was assisting at the civic centre in Ardrossan in late November where I was attending for my booster. The queues were huge even with appointments. I can only say thank you to this man who, recognising my hidden disability, got me a wheelchair. I still wonder how I would have managed if he hadn't come to my aid. Thank you - hope you see this."

*(North Ayrshire Resident)*

"Hi, my bins have been missed on multiple occasions and for the various colours too. I'm not sure why this is happening??!"

*(North Ayrshire Resident)*

"Thank you for getting in touch. Following our chat I can see that you are using the wrong version of our bin collection calendar. Here are the correct dates and we have also emptied your bins just now too."

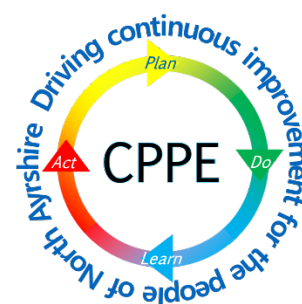
*(North Ayrshire Council Representative)*










For further information please contact:



















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## Appendix 2 – Council Plan Performance Indicators

### Priority - Aspiring Communities

PI Status	
	Significantly Adrift of Target
	Slightly Adrift of Target
	On Target
	Data Only
	Data Not Available

















PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_01 Percentage of population who are involved in local decision making (see description)	51%			45.53%			6.67%			55.78%				
CP_02 Percentage of Council budget directed via participatory methods	0.62%			1.11%	0.89%		1.13%	1.2%		2.32%	1.1%		1.5%	1.5%
CP_03 Percentage of residents who agree they have access to opportunities to participate in their local community	47%			47%	47%		47%	47%		Data pending	47%		47%	50%
CP_04 Percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school	78%			Data not collected due to Covid-19	79%		72%	80%		Data available in June 2022	78%		TBC	85%

PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_05 Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas	638.1	715		685.8	718		744.7	724		Data available in Feb 2023	710		TBC	745
CP_06 Average tariff score: All Leavers	780.7	885		857.4	895		912	900		Data available in Feb 2023	880		TBC	890
CP_07 Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations (LGBF)	94%	95.7%		92.5%	96%		95.2%	96.2%		Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	93.5%		TBC	TBC
CP_08 Percentage of Children living in Poverty (after housing costs)	27.1%	-		27.9%	26.5%		Data pending	26.5%		Data not available	26.5%		26.5%	25%
CP_09 Percentage of working age population in employment	69.7%	64.7%		70.2%	70%		69%	64.7%		66.3%	70%		68%	73%
CP_10a Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises	20.31%			19.98%	23%		21.39%	23.5%		Data pending	24%		25%	26%
CP_11 Percentage of people earning less than the living wage (LGBF)	24.3%			16%	24%		16.2%	23%		Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	22%		21%	20%
CP_12 Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities	23.88%	30%		23.84%	30%		0%	25%		25.69%	25%		This indicator will be replaced at Q2 2022/23	



PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_13 Percentage of children with BMI centile >91 at 27 month review	9.98%	10.5%	✓	13.19%	10.5%	⛔	11.59%	10.5%	⛔	Data available in July 2022. Q3 states 13.79% (Red).	10.5%	?	This indicator will be replaced at Q2 2022/23	
CP_14 Percentage of households in fuel poverty	26%	26%	✓	28%	25.5%	⛔	28%	28%	✓	Data available Feb 2023.	28%	?	28%	28%
CP_15 Number of attendances at indoor sports & leisure facilities (excluding pools)	1,886,930	-	?	1,859,843	1,964,100	⛔	71,913	736,915	⛔	298,806				
CP_16 Percentage of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home (LGBF)	66.68%	65.6%	✓	67.63%	66%	✓	69.51%	66%	✓	Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	66%	?	66%	65%
CP_17 Emergency Admissions (Number)	20,933	20,257	⚠	19,150	20,257	✓	16,283	20,257	✓	15,171	20,257	✓	20,000	20,000
CP_18 Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as homeless sustained for more than a year	81.48%	82%	✓	84.07%	82%	✓	92.48%	85%	✓	86.92%	85%	✓	86%	88%

## Priority - Inspiring Place

PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_19 Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use (LGBF)	91.01%	92%		90.89%	93%		91.05%	93%		Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	93%		93%	93%
CP_20 Overall percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment	38.1%	39.3%		37.3%	38.1%		37.1%	38.1%		33.9%	37.5%		33.8%	33.8%
CP_21 Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband (LGBF)	93.7%			94.1%	97%		94.7%	97%		Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	97%		100%	100%
CP_22 Number of electric vehicle charging points publicly available	25	25		36	30		45	42		49	43		60	81

PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_23 Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)	296	296	✓	381	351	✓	437	755	⛔	681	630	✓	866	TBC
CP_24 Number of empty homes brought back into use (cumulative)	295	60	✓	594	500	✓	594	600	⚠	1,052	600	✓	1,252	1,452
CP_25 Percentage of Council dwellings that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (LGBF)	99.19%	99.4%	✓	99.36%	99.4%	✓	99.09%	99.5%	✓	Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	99.5%	?	TBC	TBC
CP_26 Tourism Visitor Numbers	1,519,260	📊		1,599,400	1,534,968	✓	315,620	1,534,968	⛔	Data pending	1,534,968	?	1,600,000	1,650,000
CP_27 Street Cleanliness Index - Percentage Clean (LGBF)	94.5%	94%	✓	94.6%	94%	✓	91.34%	94%	⚠	Data expected May 2023 from LGBF	94%	?	92%	94%
CP_28 Hectares of vacant & derelict land in North Ayrshire	1,279	1,269	✓	1,180	1,244	✓	1,204	1,194	✓	1,198	1,144	⚠	1,094	1,094

PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_29 Overall carbon emissions (tonnes)	40,666	45,137	✓	37,508	39,320	✓	22,846	35,127	✓	22,653	21,247	✗	21,000	19,500
CP_30 Total installed capacity of low carbon heat and electricity generation across the Council's estate	9,682	9,600	✓	9,700	9,700	✓	10,720	9,800	✓	11,680	11,000	✓	11,800	12,000
CP_31 Percentage of total household waste that is recycled (calendar year as per SEPA) (LGBF)	54.6%	54.5%	✓	56.3%	59%	⚠	52.1%	52.1%	✓	56.4%	53.1%	✓	56.8%	57%

## Priority - A Council for the Future

PI Code & Description	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target	Target
CP_32 Percentage of Customers delighted with the overall Customer Service	81%	77%	✓	81%	77%	✓	Surveys suspended due to Covid-19 and due to resume in 2022/23.						77%	77%
CP_33 Percentage of Self Service Transactions	40.09%	35%	✓	41.26%	40%	✓	58%	45%	✓	58.33%	50%	✓	50%	55%
CP_34 Employee Engagement Level - Council Wide	No survey planned			70.67%	70%	✓	No survey planned							72%

## Appendix 3 - Council Plan Action Tracker

\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Aspiring Communities	What we' ll do to make active and strong communities	CP_01	We will build stronger relationships between the council, communities and partners.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_02	We will co-produce a local charter with our communities which sets out the things we jointly commit to do for each other, to help each other create a better North Ayrshire.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_03	We will extend our participatory approach, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision-making.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_04	We will support communities to achieve what's important to them through strong local networks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
	What we' ll do to ensure our children and young people experience the best start in life	CP_05	We will expand our learning and childcare estate, including ensuring all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free childcare each year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	▲	▲								
		CP_06	We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	✓	✓	✓	▲	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_07	We will offer opportunities to our young people and their families to play a more active role in school life and encourage more participation in learning opportunities.	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								

\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	What we' Il do to have an inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy	CP_08	We will work with all young people to build their resilience, supporting their mental health and physical well-being.																	
		CP_09	We will work with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and partners to deliver education, skills and training, helping people into work and sustaining employment.																	
		CP_10	We will make sure that everyone has the ability and knowledge to participate in the digital world.																	
		CP_11	We will support our local businesses to become more innovative and competitive.																	
		CP_12	We will promote fair employment practices.																	
		CP_13	We will develop and implement a Community Wealth Building (CWB) strategy.																	
	What we' Il do to make sure North Ayrshire residents and communities enjoy good life-	CP_14	We will continue our work with partners, including the Scottish Government, to explore the feasibility of a Scottish Basic Income Pilot.						Complete											
		CP_15	We will let people decide how best to manage their own care needs and support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.																	
		CP_16	We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.																	



\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	What we will do to ensure North Ayrshire residents	CP_17	We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.																	
		CP_18	We will extend the 'Housing First' pilot to address homelessness.																	
Inspiring Place	We will do to make North Ayrshire well-connected with effective infrastructure	CP_19	We will provide well-maintained, integrated travel and transport networks, supporting alternative and sustainable transport.																	
		CP_20	We will work with partners to make sure there is sustained investment in our roads, ports and harbour infrastructure to ensure that travel is resilient and																	
		CP_21	We will work with partners to extend public wi-fi and improve our digital connectivity.																	
		CP_22	We will provide an appropriately sized, fit for purpose, energy-efficient and digital- enabled property portfolio, including our schools.																	
		CP_23	We will attract investment, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and other means, to support regeneration and job creation at our key development sites of i3 Irvine, Hunterston, Lochshore, Ardrossan Marine Quarter, and the Irvine Great Harbour.																	
		CP_24	We will support our communities to maximise the use of community assets (such as schools) and encourage Community Asset Transfers.																	
		CP_25	With our social landlord partners, we will build new, modern, energy-efficient lifelong homes for life, tailored to the needs of tenants.																	

\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	What we' ll do to provide our residents with	CP_26	We will actively promote a mix of homes by facilitating private housing development.	✓	✓	✓	⚠	⚠		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_27	We will work with property owners and landlords to make sure our private housing is suitable for the needs of our residents.	✓	✓	✓	✓	⚠		✓	✓	✓								
	What we' ll do to make North Ayrshire a vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment	CP_29	We will provide well-kept public places and town centres which will benefit our residents, visitors and businesses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_30	We will, where possible, bring empty properties back into use.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_31	We will work with communities to improve the quality of the local environment through a participatory approach.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_32	We will develop North Ayrshire as a coastal and island destination, attracting tourism investment and visitors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	⚠		✓	✓	✓								
	What we'll do to make sure we all live in a sustainable environment	CP_33	We will support a circular economy by re-using, recycling and generating energy from the waste we manage.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_34	We will develop additional low carbon renewable energy schemes and networks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								














\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
		CP_35	We will protect our communities by delivering the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the Shoreline Management Plan and the Millport and Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Schemes.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
A Council for the Future	An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do	CP_36	We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_37	We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
		CP_38	We will use technology to improve access to and delivery of our services.	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	✓		✓	✓	⚠								
		CP_39	We will make our case nationally, regionally and locally levels to secure investment to support delivery of our priorities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
	A powerful and respected voice																			

\*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

\*\*Council Plan Delivery Plan was in development during Q1.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1**	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money	CP_40	We will review what we do and how we do it to ensure we deliver the best possible services.						This action was removed as approved by Cabinet in August 2021 as it duplicates CP_36 and CP_37.											
	A valued workforce that delivers high quality services	CP_41	We will empower and invest in our workforce to develop new and innovative ways of working.																	

# Annual Performance Report 2021-22



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



# Welcome

## Welcome to our Annual Performance Report 2021-22.

This report provides an at a glance summary of how we've supported our residents of North Ayrshire over the past year. You can find full details in our magazine style Council Plan Progress Reports published on our website ([www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance)).



Thankfully 2021-22 has seen a transition from Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns to a more normal way of living and delivering our services in a covid-safe way. We have been delighted to re-open many of our services and once again have the opportunity to support you in person. Our focus is now on recovery, building on our strong relationships and what we have learned during the past two years to improve the lives of all our residents.

It certainly continues to be a challenging time, but we are confident that by working together, really listening to each other and supporting each other, we can rise to these challenges and make a positive difference for all our communities.

We are proud to serve our people of North Ayrshire and would like to say thank you to everyone who has supported the delivery of our services including our communities, Third Sector, public and private partnerships and of course our employees. Together we will continue to make a difference and ensure **North Ayrshire is Fair For All**.



**Councillor Marie Burns**  
Leader of the Council



**Craig Hatton**  
Chief Executive

## About us



### Elected members

- SNP: **12**
- Scottish Conservative and Unionist: **10**
- Labour: **9**  
(3 use description Labour and Co-operative Party)
- Independent: **2**



### Employees

- **6,225.38** Full Time Equivalent employees
- **75.7%** Female
- **24.3%** Male



### Population

- **134,300**
- Life expectancy:  
Female – **80.1 years**  
Male – **75.3 years**



### Economy

- **64.9%** of adults in employment
- **135** residents with disabilities supported by our Equal employability programme
- Streetscene Training and Employment Academy launched
- **24.7%** of our children and young people in child poverty
- **27%** of our datazones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland
- **3,260** business operating in North Ayrshire
- **840** businesses supported



### Key assets include:

- Early Years Centres:  
    **41** Council owned  
    **16** in Partnership
- **48** Primary schools
- **8** Secondary schools
- **1** Additional Support Needs school
- **13,130** Council houses
- **1,044km** of roads





# Financial overview



## Funding (£000s)

- Scottish Government General Grant £285.526 (72%)
- Council Tax £59.887 (15%)
- Non Domestic Rates £28.392 (7%)
- Scottish Government Specific Grant £21.326 (6%)

## Allocation (£000s)

- Communities £151.467 (38%)
- Chief Executive's £26.28 (7%)
- Financing Costs £28.842 (7%)
- Other Corporate Items £9.613 (3%)
- Health and Social Care Partnership £107.059 (27%)
- Place & Education £71.87 (18%)

# Our Council plan

Our Council Plan is our commitment to our communities. It underpins everything we do for our people in North Ayrshire.

The Council Plan has three priorities: 'Aspiring Communities', 'Inspiring Place' and 'A Council for the Future'. During 2021/22:

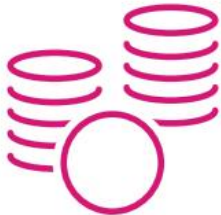
79.3% of our Council Plan performance indicators and 94.9% of actions are on or only slightly adrift of target.

## Aspiring Communities



Over £7million of our Council budget (2.32%) directed by our communities

Money Matters generated over £17.5million for residents in receipt of welfare benefits



£3million approved for our Community Investment Fund

Our £31.3million Additional Supports Needs school Lockhart Campus opened in August



153 local groups received funding through participatory budgeting

On average every £1 of Community Investment Funding has leveraged £2.80 of additional funding for our communities



Lockhart Campus



**136**  
Young people reported improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes through Community learning and Development activities



**1,013**  
of our young people voted in the **Scottish Youth Parliamentary Elections** to elect four new Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament



**Universal school meals rolled out to all Primary Four and Five children**



**1,022 Chromebooks** distributed to Primary Five and S2 pupils in receipt of free school meals or clothing grants



**600 young people** helped into employment through Kickstart – our Council's Gateway created 300 of these jobs



Our first **Cost of the School Day** conference attracted over **100 online participants**



**69.5%** of our residents aged over 65 and with long term care needs are supported at home



The percentage of households homeless for more than six months has **reduced** from 76% prior to the pandemic to 22%.



**86.9% of tenancies** for former homeless residents have been sustained for over a year



**Streetscene Training and Employment Academy** launched, providing training and employment for our unemployed residents and support for community environmental projects



## Inspiring Place



**£23.7million** was secured for the **B714 upgrade** via the UK Government Levelling Up Fund

We are **resettling** those displaced by the **war in Ukraine**



**506 Council homes** have solar panels fitted, with a total capacity of **1.65MW**



## 10-year Island Plans published

for Arran and Cumbrae to support our island communities



We have further **developed** Council owned renewable energy projects



**56.4%** of household waste recycled



**49 electric vehicle** charging points available



**244 new Council houses** completed in total (including a small number of employee accommodation units in sheltered housing complexes)



Council housing



## A Council for the future

### Balanced budget achieved

for 2022/23  
including  
**£4.538million**  
in savings



**Public Wi-Fi upgraded**  
at 30 Council locations  
including libraries



We delivered a  
**Covid-safe**  
Scottish Parliament  
Election and Dalry and  
West Kilbride By-Election



**58.3% of transactions**  
with our Council are  
self-service (online)



**622 employees**  
in schools took part in our  
Professional Learning  
Academy evening training



**Our workstyles were reviewed**  
based on learning from the  
pandemic, with each post  
allocated a  
workstyle of  
'Inbuilding',  
'Mobile', 'Agile'  
or 'Home'



Through **technology** we can  
now share the **condition**  
of our Council estate  
**immediately** – enabling  
**real time decisions**  
to be made



**Council-wide business continuity exercise**

completed to ensure we  
are prepared as possible  
for any cyber-attacks



**Face to face services re-opened**



You can see how our performance compares to other Scottish local authorities through the national **Local Government Benchmarking Framework** online tool.  
[www.scotland.myllocalcouncil.info](http://www.scotland.myllocalcouncil.info)

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team welcome any feedback you may have. We strive to make our Council and reports as accessible as possible and appreciate opportunities to discuss how this can be achieved.

For further information please contact:

**The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team**

Tel: 01294 324 648

[NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)





## Benchmarking Framework

### 2020-21 Data Analysis

(Data Released July 2022)



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## Introduction

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) provides an opportunity to benchmark our performance with other local authorities in Scotland. It is administered by the Improvement Service in partnership with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and highlighted within the Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Information Direction 2021 which defines how local authorities can demonstrate that they are achieving Best Value for the people they serve. As a result, many of the indicators are used within our Council Plan. Further information on Best Value, the Direction, LGBF and benchmarking can be found in [Our Performance Strategy](#).

This report analyses our performance relative to other local authorities, details LGBF indicators used within our Council Plan and segments the full range of indicators by service. The most recent data (released in July 2022) relates to 2020/21 and covers the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic lockdown periods. As a result, though this report details our performance as at 2020/21, it does not contain comments on planned improvement activity as comparisons over time and with other local authorities represent limited value on this occasion.

The LGBF brings together a range of performance indicators covering nine key themes detailed in the table to the right. The 2020/21 dataset sees the introduction of four new indicators.

- % of children living in poverty (After Housing Costs).
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita.
- Claimant Count as % of Working Age Population.
- Claimant Count as % of 16-24 Population.

By recording the same indicators as other local authorities across a wide range of themes, in more normal years we can identify opportunities to learn from each other. In addition, local authorities with similar traits such as geography and deprivation are categorised into "family groups" to enable as close as a like for like comparison as possible (see [Family Groups section](#)).

LGBF Themes	
Adult Social Care	
Children's Services	
Corporate Services	
Culture and Leisure	
Economic Development	
Environmental Services	
Financial Sustainability	
Housing	
Tackling Climate Change	

## About the Data

The most recent LGBF data was released by the Improvement Service in July 2022 and relates to 2020/21. This is later than usual due to the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. There are 101 indicators across the nine themes. The number of indicators has increased from 97 to 101 (8%) between 2019/20 and 2020/21. They are themed as follows:

Breakdown of indicators by theme and data collection			
Theme	No. of Indicators	2020/21 Data Available	
Adult Social Care	11	7	64%
Children's Services	32	31	97%
Corporate Services	10	10	100%
Culture & Leisure	8	4	50%
Economic Development	13	13	100%
Environmental Services	15	13	87%
Financial Sustainability	5	5	100%
Housing	5	5	100%
Tackling Climate Change	2	2	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>89%</b>

There are 11 indicators with no data which are satisfaction indicators. During the lockdown period, resources tended to be shifted to frontline activities. Due to this as well as the practicalities of conducting surveys during this time, satisfaction surveys were put on hold.

For the purposes of this report, 101 indicators have been segmented into overall genres (see below).

- Financial – All financial related performance
- Performance – All non-financial and non-satisfaction related performance
- Satisfaction – All satisfaction performance. Seven of the 11 satisfaction indicators are based on a rolling three-year average. There is no satisfaction data for 2020-21.

Breakdown of indicators by areas and data collection			
Theme	No. of Indicators	Data Returns	
Financial	28	28	100%
Performance	62	62	100%
Satisfaction	11	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87%</b>

We use three time periods used to compare data. They are:

Comparative Years		
Description	Start	End
Short Term (One Year)	2019/20	2020/21
Medium Term (Three Years)	2017/18	2020/21
Long Term (10 Years)	2011/12	2020/21

### *Data Trends*

Within the current dataset, only 90 of the 101 indicators have data available for 2020/21 as satisfaction data is not available. In addition, trend data may not be available for certain time periods for some indicators depending on when they were introduced into the LGBF. A breakdown of comparable data is shown to the right.

Comparison Year	No. of Indicators	%
Short Term	82	81%
Medium Term	82	81%
Long Term	57	56%

To assess performance the terms “improved” or “declined” are used in this report, rather than referring to data as “increased” or “decreased”. This terminology is used as for some indicators a value increasing is improved performance (such as satisfaction), however, for some indicators a value increasing is declining performance, (such as some financial indicators).

### *Impact of Covid-19 Coronavirus*

Prior to the release of the LGBF data, an Improvement Service LGBF learning event highlighted several areas that appear to be most affected by the impact of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. This section explores how we compare with members of our Family Groups in these areas.

Due to essential closures during the lockdown periods, the cost per attendance at sports facilities has risen sharply from £1.91 to £50.35, a rise of 2536%. This scale of increase has been seen throughout Scotland.

Our cost per library visit has risen due to the essential closures of our libraries during lockdown, many of which were utilised as Community Hubs during this period. However, it is not as affected as other cost per visit measures as the LGBF includes digital as well as physical visits for this indicator.

Our cost per dwelling of collecting council tax has decreased considerably in contrast to other members in our Family Group. The cost has reduced from £5.02 to £1.58. This is the biggest reduction not only within the Family Group but also with all 31 Local Authorities and has resulted in an improved rank from fifth to first in Scotland.

The percentage of total household waste that is recycled reduced by four percentage points between 2019/20 and 2020/21 but has since recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The reduction between 2019 and 2021 was in line with other members of our family group who all saw a reduction in the household waste that is recycled. Only six local authorities out of the 32 managed to improve performance.

Full details on our response with partners to the Covid-19 pandemic can be found in our 2020/21 ‘Supporting North Ayrshire Together’ six monthly reports available on our website [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance).



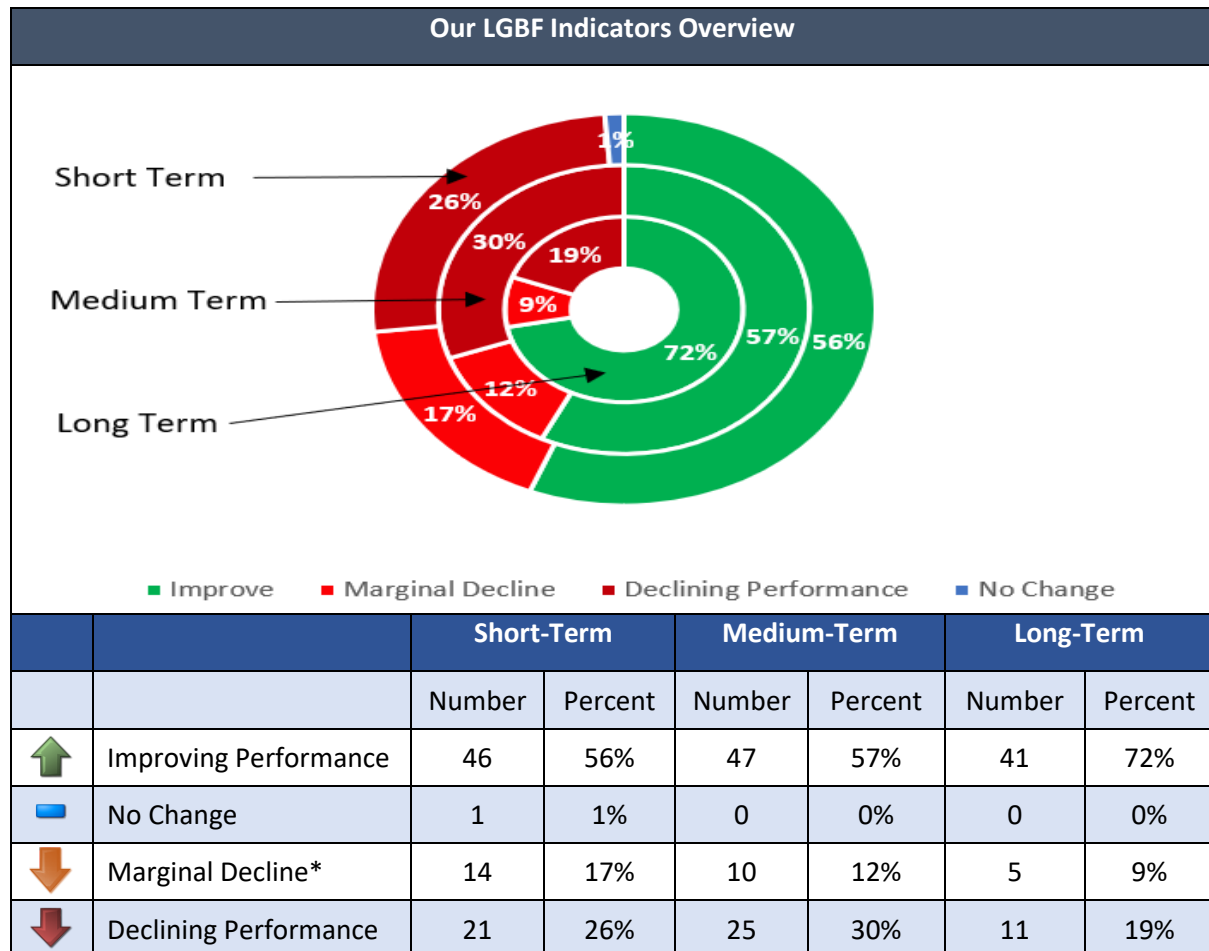
## Areas Expected to be Most Impacted by Covid-19

Indicator	18/19 Data	19/20 Data	20/21 Data	Family Group 19/20	Family Group 20/21	Short Term Variance 2019/20 to 2020/21*
Cost per attendance at sports facilities	£1.90	£1.91	£50.35	3	5	-2536%
Cost per library visit	£2.62	£2.35	£4.29	6	5	-83%
Cost per visit to Museums & Galleries	£0.43	£0.42	£0.49	1	1	-16.67%
Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population	£19,798.12	£24,098.33	£15,836.13	5	4	34%
Overall Average Total Tariff	792.94	807.55	868.56	7	7	7%
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 1	627.00	599.00	672.00	6	6	11%
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 2	781.00	815.00	836.00	4	7	3%
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 3	850.00	974.00	1041.00	4	2	6%
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 4	1011.00	1055.00	1073.00	5	5	2%
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 5	1157.00	1180.00	1184.00	4	6	0%
The cost per dwelling of collecting council tax	7.78	5.02	1.58	3	1	69%
Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population	5.70	5.50	8.30	8	8	-51%
Claimant Count as a % of 16-24 Population	6.63	6.47	10.59	8	8	-64%
No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	21.66	21.75	8.42	2	6	-61%
Proportion of people earning less than the real living wage	24.30	16.00	16.20	2	4	-1%
% of total household waste arising that is recycled	54.60	56.34	52.10	3	4	-8%

\*Improved performance is shown as positive percentages. Declined performance is shown as negative percentages.

## Summary of Performance

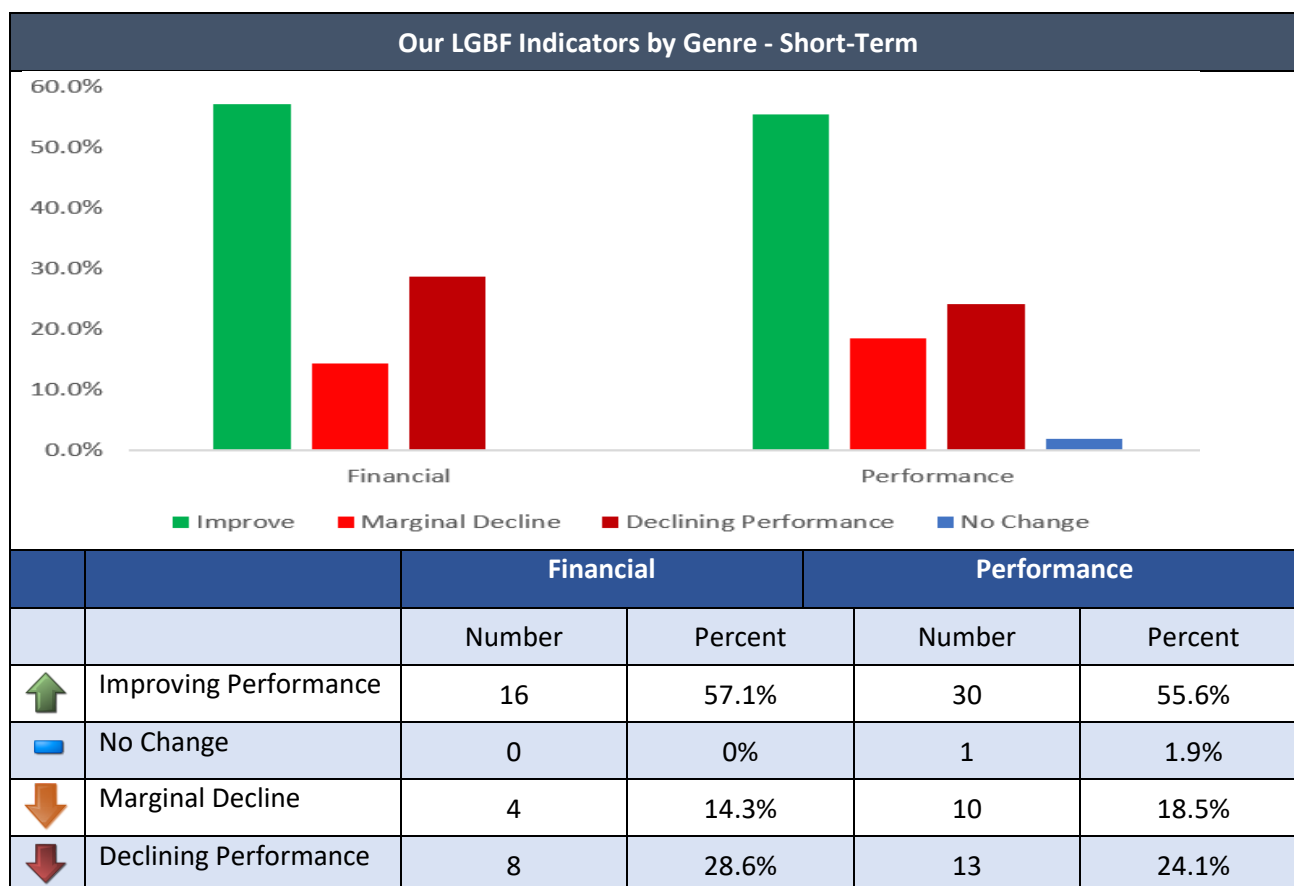
Where a short-term comparison is available, 56% of all indicators have improved, 1% have not changed and 43% have declined (though 17% have declined only marginally). Medium-term, 57% of indicators have improved and long-term, 72% have improved. The table below examines this in more detail.

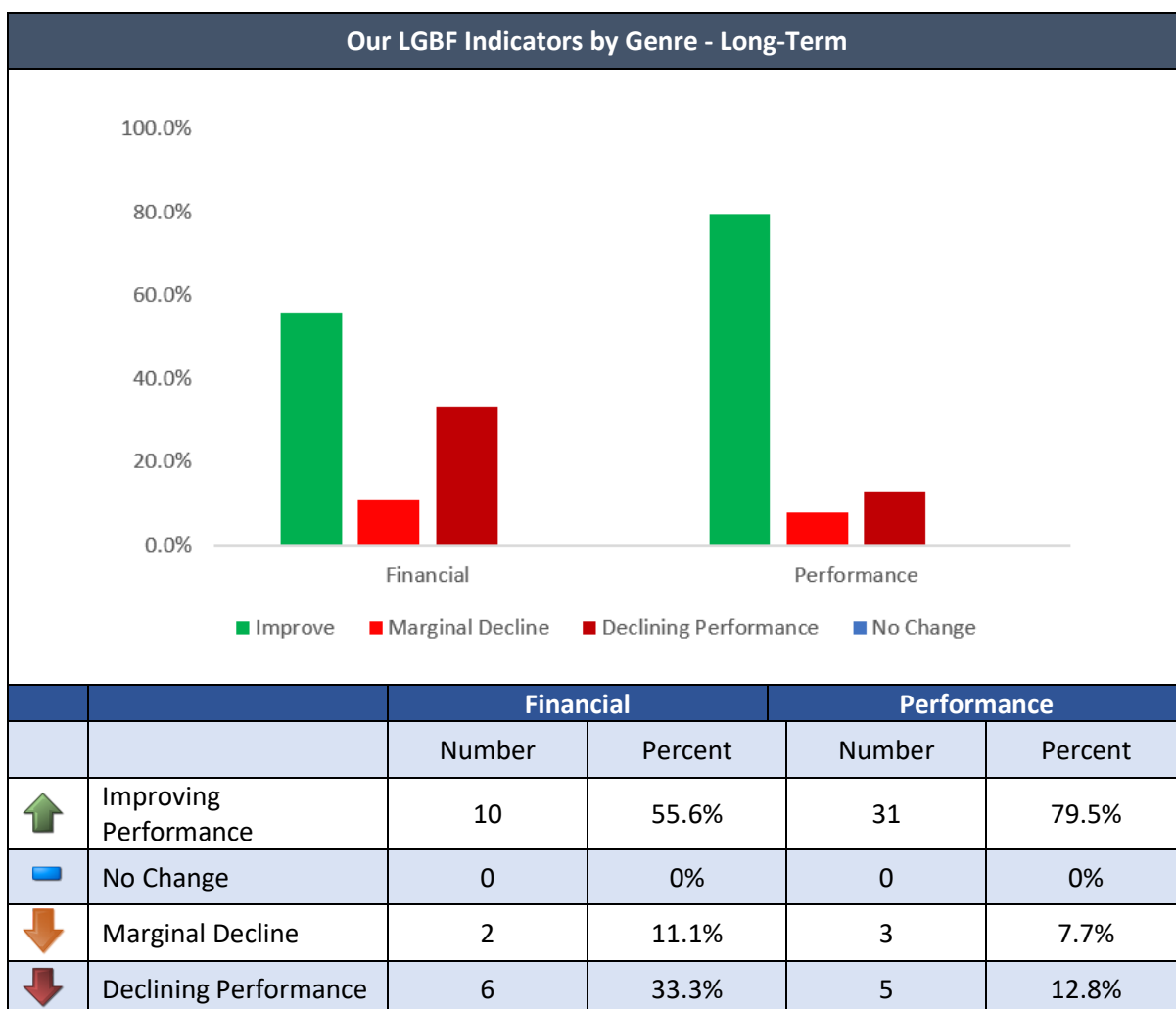
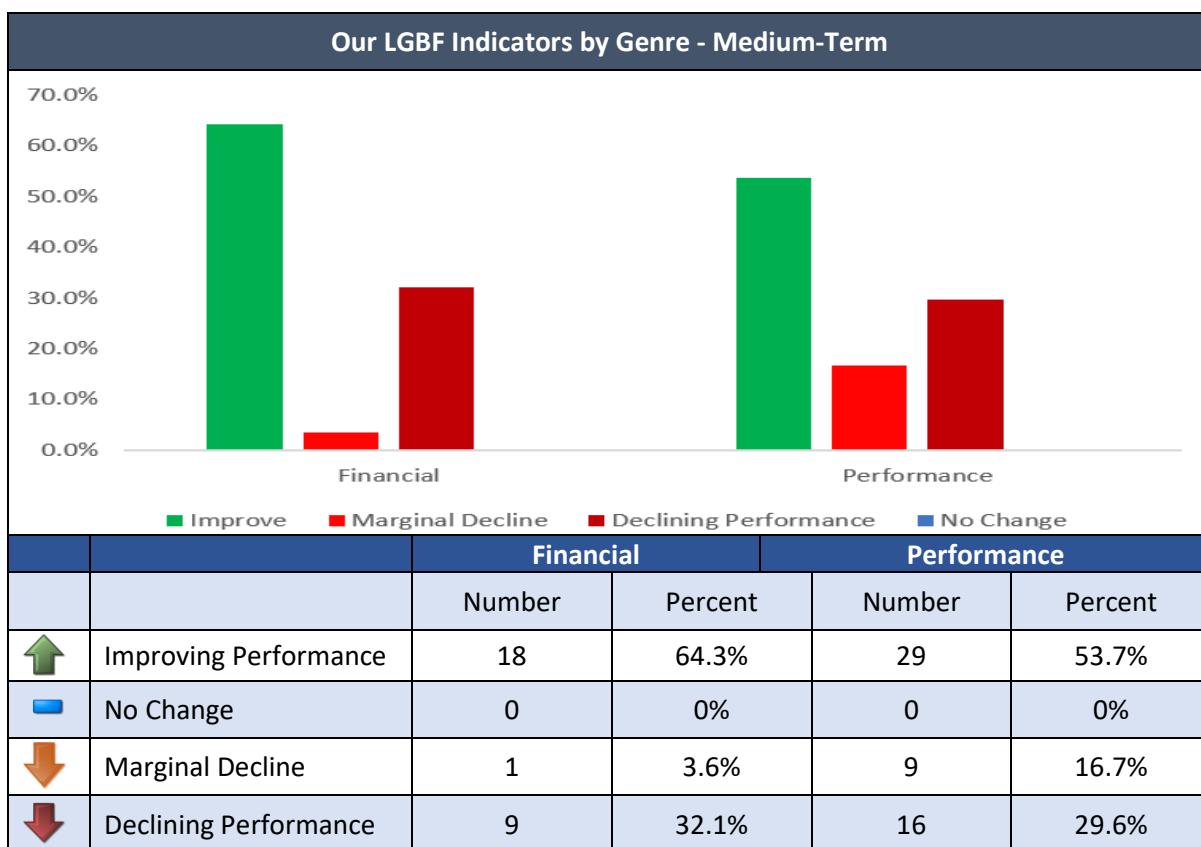


\*Marginal decline - where the variance is less than 5%.

As shown below, when viewed per genre over the short-term (one year) period, 57% of financial indicators and 56% of performance indicators have improved. Over the long-term (next page) 56% of financial indicators and 80% of performance indicators have improved. Overall, this shows the majority of measures have improved over the past ten years in terms of financial and performance indicators.

As previously mentioned, there are no values for any of the 11 indicators relating to satisfaction for 2020/21.





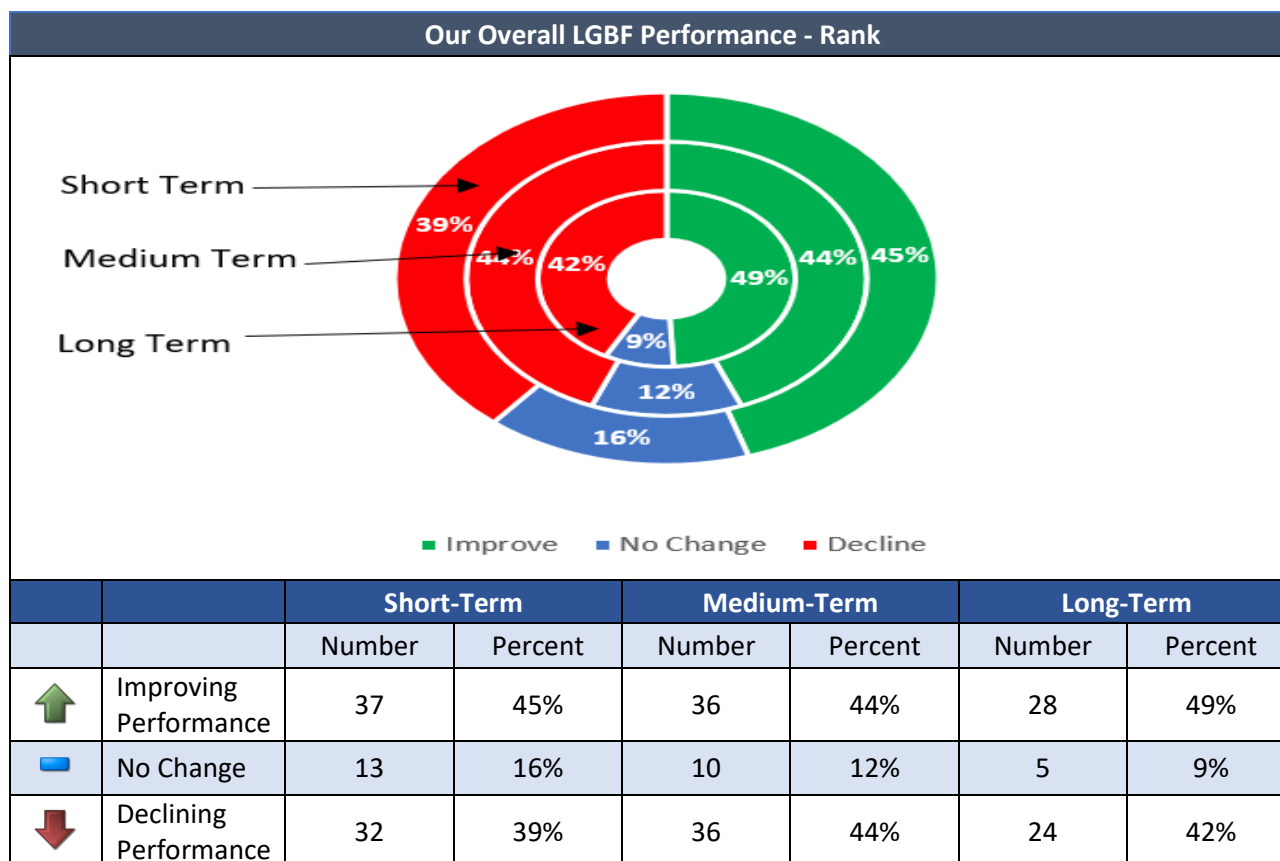
## Rank

Ranking is a useful tool in comparing performance between all 32 local authorities in Scotland, however an increase in ranking does not necessarily correspond to better outcomes for our residents. The purpose of ranking is to easily identify local authorities we can approach to learn from. An accurate comparison is highly dependent on each council's strategic approaches. For example, a low cost per visit indicator may result in an increased ranking, however cost per visit can be affected by a decrease in the number of venues in the same way as an increase in the number of visitors. Similarly, the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work can be greatly affected by whether a local authority is assisting highly skilled unemployed residents, or those who need substantial support. Ranking is therefore a useful tool but must be used cautiously.

Our Council has been ranked in the top three for 11% of our indicators for the past two years:

Top Three Ranking		
Comparison Year	No. of Indicators	%
2020/21	11	12%
2019/20	10	11%
2017/18	9	10%
2011/12	3	5%

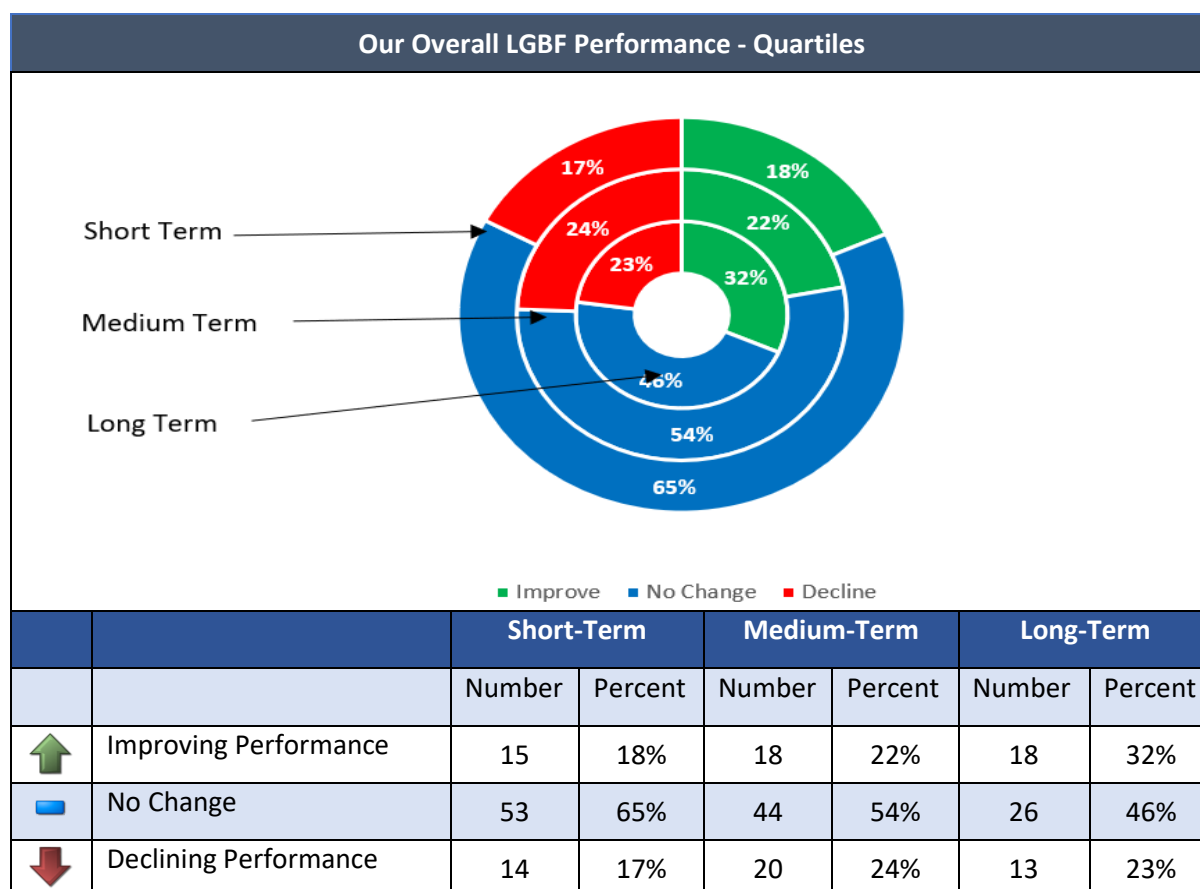
We have seen an improvement in rank for 45% of indicators, a decline in rank for 39% of indicators with the remaining 16% the same as the previous year. The medium term shows 44% of indicators improved their rank. Over the long term, 49% of indicators have improved ranks, though fewer comparisons are available. The table below looks at this in more detail.



## Quartile

Quartiles group the rankings into four sections, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Quartile showing ranking positions 1-8 for each local authority and the 4<sup>th</sup> Quartile showing ranks 25-32. It is less prone to fluctuations year on year, particularly where results for all councils for an indicator are very similar. In the short term, 83% of indicators have either improved or not changed their quartile. In the long-term, 32% of indicators have improved their quartile, with 23% declining.

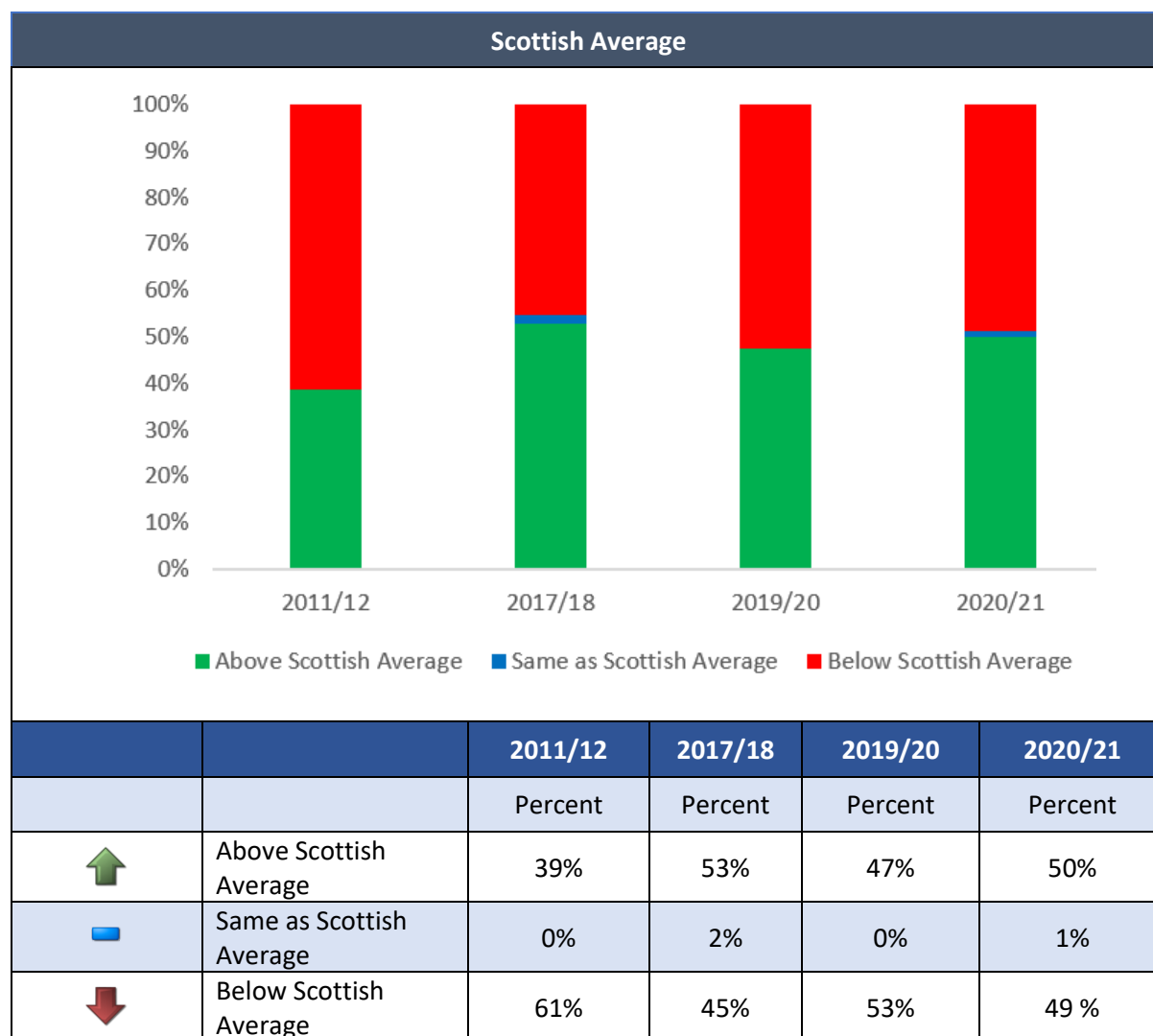
‘No-change’ can be the result of our Council already being in the top quartiles, so is not necessarily an indication of poor performance. For 2020/21 and 2019/20, there were 22 indicators in the first quartile. 17 indicators have remained in the top quartile since 2019/20. The chart below shows our quartile performance in the short, medium and long term.





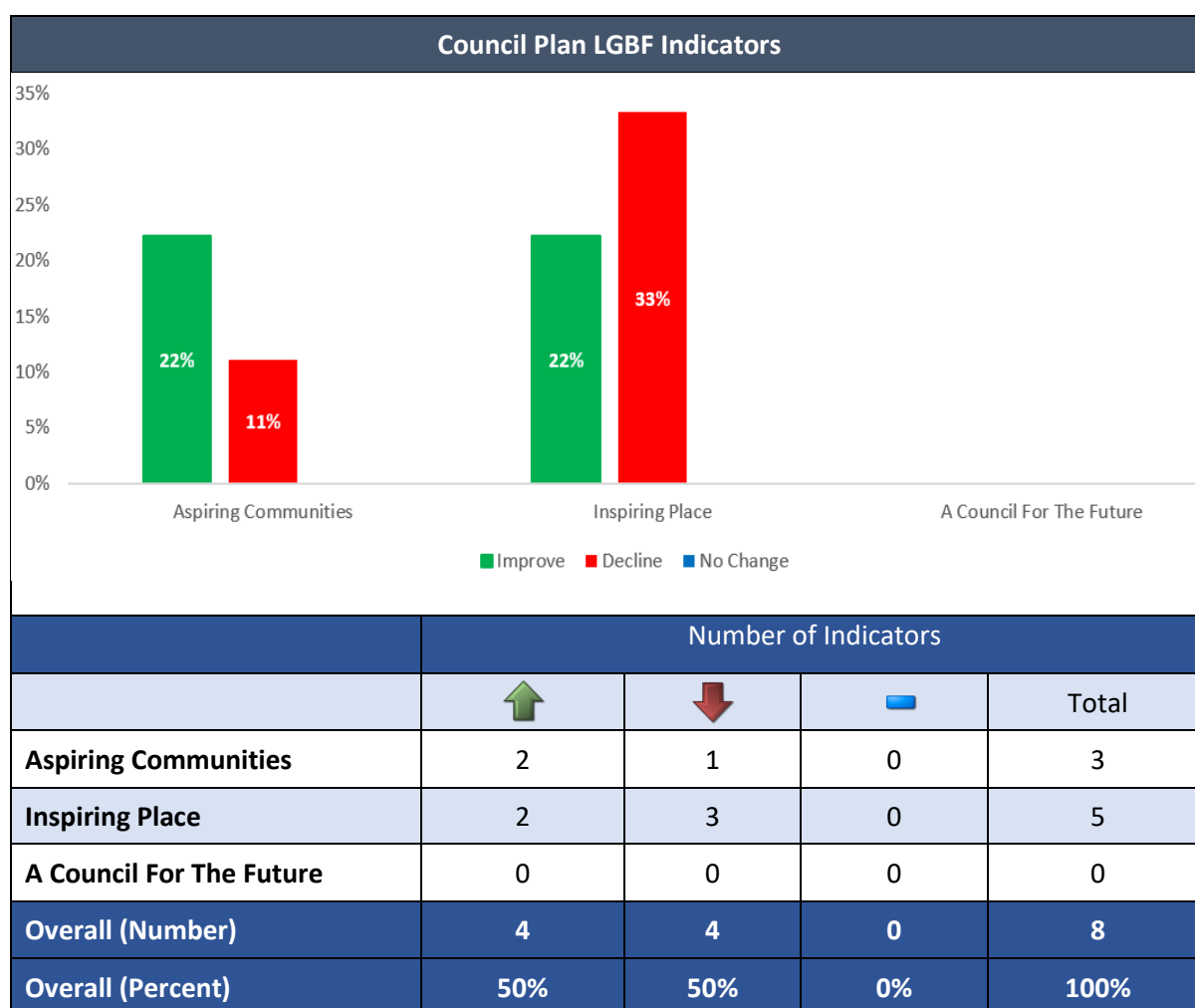
## Scottish Average

























This section looks at our performance compared to the Scottish Average. Our performance is above the Scottish Average for 50% of the indicators during 2020/21. This is similar to 2017/18 when we performed better in 53% of the indicators. In 2011/12 and 2019/20, we only performed better than the Scottish Average in 39% and 47% of the indicators. The table below looks at this in further detail.















































## Council Plan Indicators

Our Council Plan sets out our priorities for the period 2019-24. Our Council Plan is supported by the Council Plan Performance Framework which includes 34 performance indicators (including eight LGBF indicators). For context, within our Council Plan as at 2020/21, performance had improved in 19 (59.4%) and declined in 13 (40.6%). There was no comparative data available for two indicators. In terms of the eight LGBF indicators within our Council Plan, performance increased in four.





Council Plan LGBF Indicators - Performance Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Data -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	92.45%	95.2%		23	23		3	3	
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	16%	16.2%		9	12		2	2	
% of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	67.6%	69.5%		5	4		1	1	
% of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	90.89%	91.1%		10	9		2	2	
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	94.1%	94.7%		17	17		3	3	
% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	99.36%	99.1%		2	1		1	1	
Street Cleanliness Score	94.64	91.3		11	18		2	3	
% of total household waste arising that is recycled	56.34%	52.1%		6	7		1	1	

# Council Plan LGBF Indicators – Scottish Rank (SR) and Family Group (FG)

Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
		Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
CHN11	Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	18	5	10	1	23	5	23	5						
ECON7	Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	-	-	17	3	9	2	12	4					-	-
SW3a	% of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	21	6	11	5	5	3	4	2						
CORP-ASSET1	% of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	3	1	11	4	10	3	9	2						
ECON8	Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	-	-	18	4	17	3	17	3					-	-
HSN3	% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	6	5	4	1	2	1	1	1						
ENV3c	Street Cleanliness Score	9	2	20	6	11	2	18	5						
ENV6	% of total household waste arising that is recycled	7	4	7	2	6	3	7	4						

## Family Groups

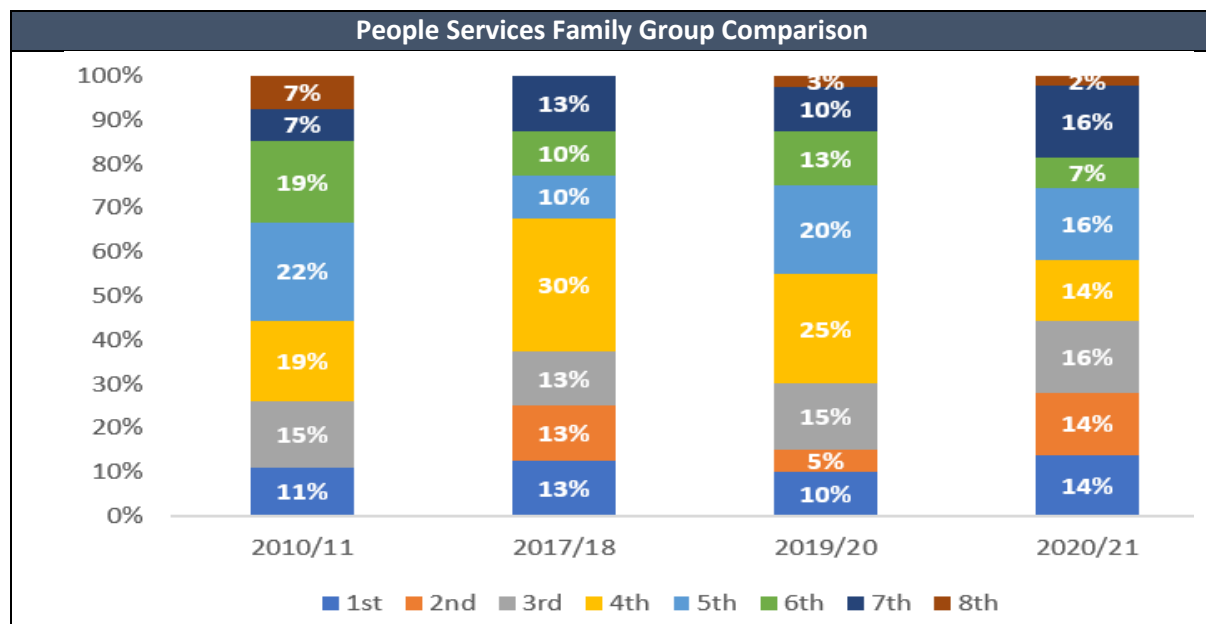
Family groups enable local authorities to make as close to a like for like comparison as possible with other councils by grouping those within similar traits such as levels of rurality or deprivation.

North Ayrshire Council's LGBF Family Groups	
People Services (Family Group 4)	Other Services (Family Group 2)
 <p>For indicators relating to Children, Social Work and Housing, North Ayrshire Council is grouped with the following Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</li> <li>• Dundee City Council</li> <li>• East Ayrshire Council</li> <li>• North Lanarkshire Council</li> <li>• Inverclyde Council</li> <li>• West Dunbartonshire Council</li> <li>• Glasgow City Council</li> </ul>	 <p>For indicators relating to Corporate Services, Culture &amp; Leisure, Economic Development, Environmental Services, Financial Sustainability and Tackling Climate Change, North Ayrshire Council is grouped with the following Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perth and Kinross Council</li> <li>• Stirling Council</li> <li>• Moray Council</li> <li>• South Ayrshire Council</li> <li>• East Ayrshire Council</li> <li>• East Lothian Council</li> <li>• Fife Council</li> </ul>

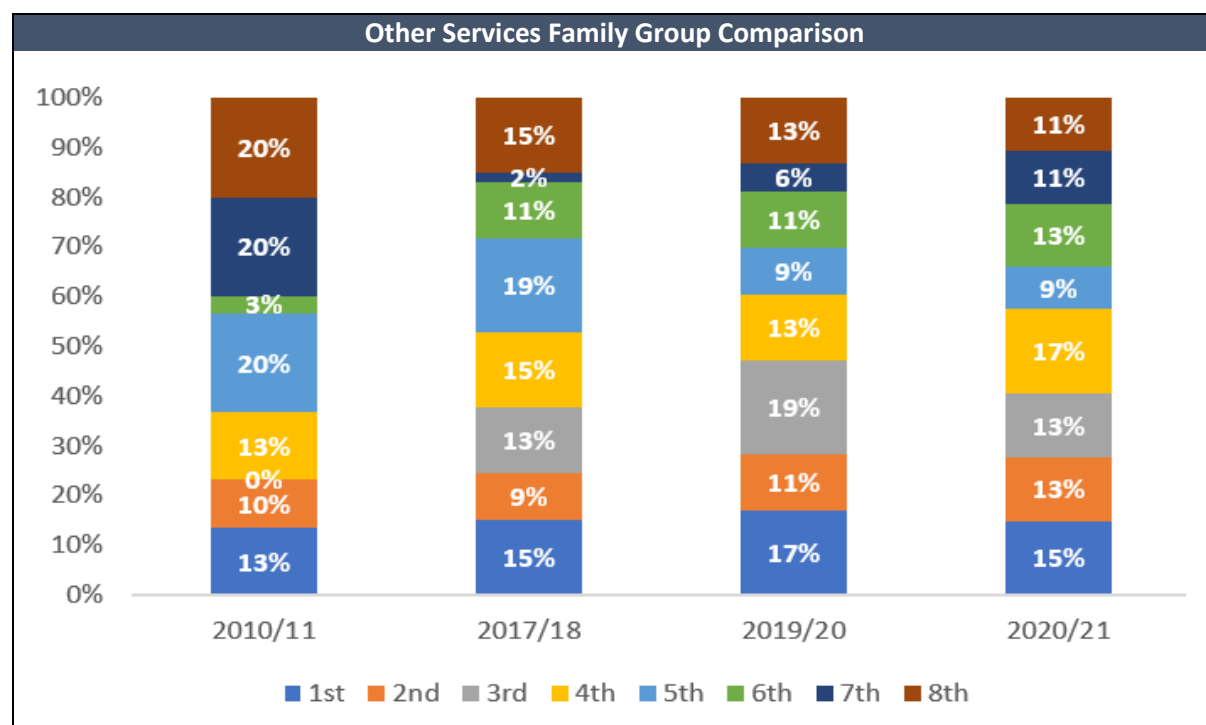
Direct comparisons with all Scottish local authorities are available through the Improvement Service [“My Local Council” online tool](#).

The charts below segment our performance in terms of percentage of indicators in each rank within each family group. Not all local authorities provided data for all indicators in the most recent LGBF data release. The following charts are based on available data.

During 2020/21, within the People Services Family Group 14% of our indicators were ranked at number one and 58% were ranked between one and four. Only 2% of People Services Family Group indicators were ranked lowest at rank eight.



Within the Other Services Family Group 15% of all indicators were ranked at number one and 57% of our indicators were ranked one to four. In comparison, 11% of our indicators in the Other Services Family Group were ranked lowest in rank eight.





## Directorates and Services

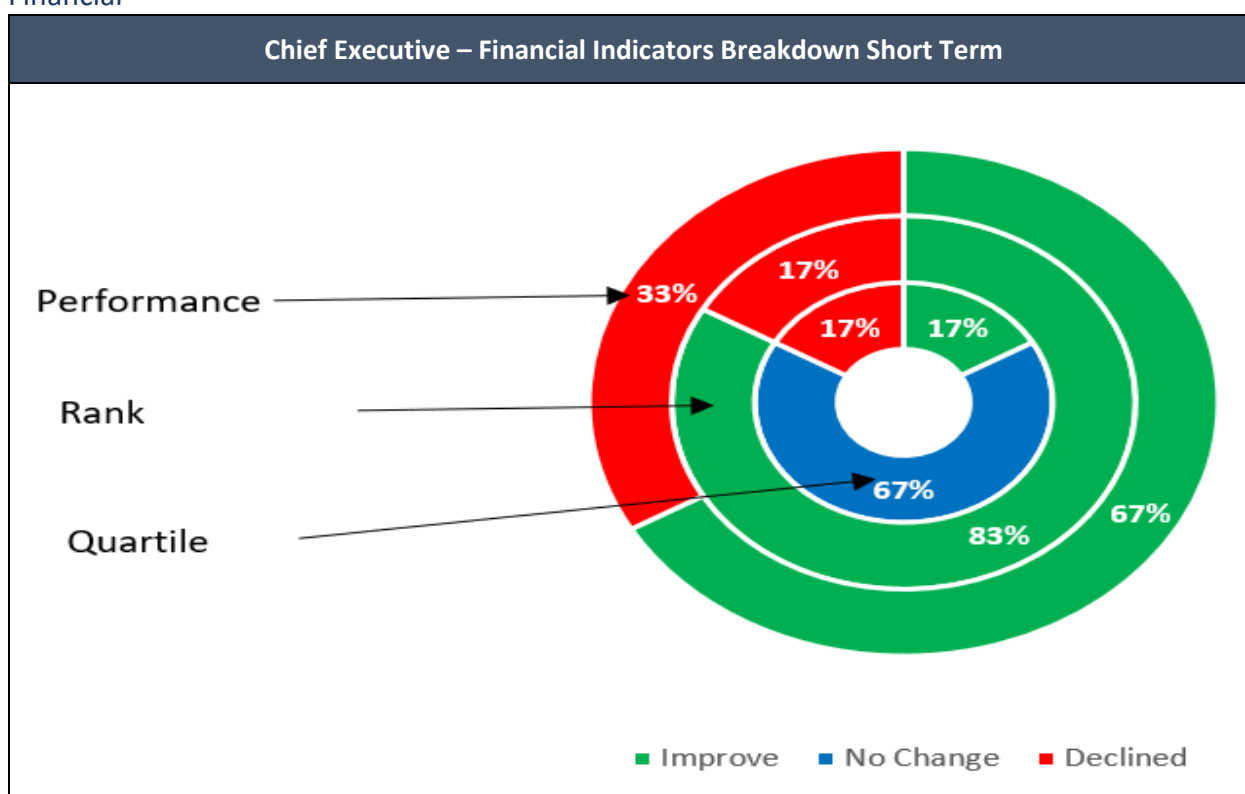
This section explores the LGBF performance of our directorates and services.

### Chief Executive Services

Our Chief Executive Services have a total of 13 LGBF indicators. These are split by the following:

Financial	6
Performance	7
Satisfaction	0

#### Financial

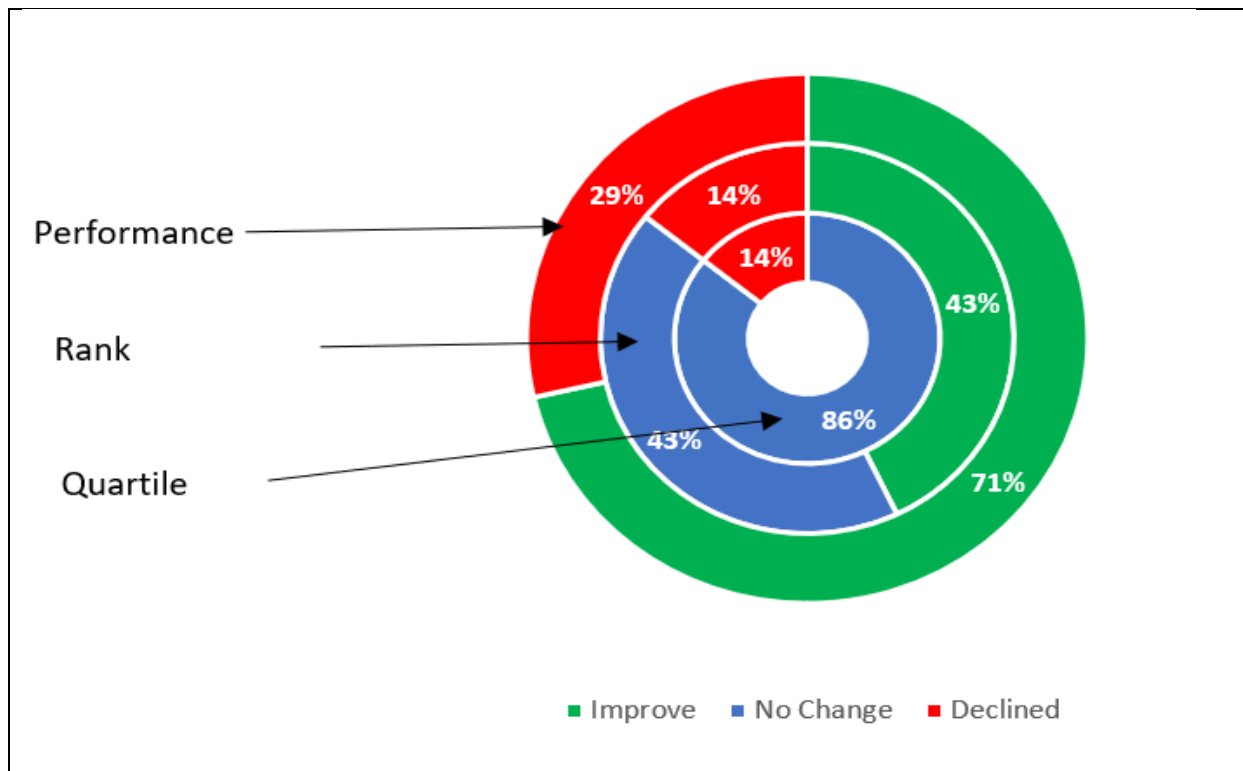


Of the financial indicators that fall under the Chief Executive services, in the short-term and medium-term, 67% of the indicators have seen an improvement in performance.

Chief Executive Services – Financial Indicators - Performance Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
The cost per dwelling of collecting council tax	£5.02	£1.58	↑	5	1	↑	1	1	▬
Cost per attendance at sports facilities	£1.91	£50.35	↓	8	22	↓	1	3	↓
Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue	11.4	19.3	↑	26	23	↑	4	3	↑
Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	2.8	3.2	↑	11	10	↑	2	2	▬
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund	4.5	3	↑	6	3	↑	1	1	▬
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account	17.1	17.7	↓	10	9	↑	2	2	▬

Chief Executive Services – Financial Indicators - Detail																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CORP 4	The cost per dwelling of collecting council tax	15	5	16	6	5	3	1	1	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
	C&L1	Cost per attendance at sports facilities	24	5	10	4	8	3	22	5	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟡
	FINSUS1	Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue	-	-	22	5	26	6	23	6	🟢	🟡	🔴	🔴	-	-
	FINSUS2	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	-	-	24	8	11	4	10	4	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	-	-
	FINSUS3	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - General Fund	-	-	4	1	6	1	3	1	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	-	-
	FINSUS4	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account	-	-	5	2	10	3	9	2	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	-	-

## Performance



Of the performance indicators that fall under the Chief Executive services, in the short-term, 71% of the indicators have improved. This is in comparison for the medium-term which saw improvement in 57% of the indicators.

Chief Executive Services – Performance Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Support services as a % of total gross expenditure	2.71	2.67	↑	2	2	▬	1	1	▬
% of the highest paid 5% employees who are women	60.79	61.92	↑	5	5	▬	1	1	▬
The gender pay gap (%)	1.78	1.31	↑	12	9	↑	2	2	▬
Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	8.94	9.24	↓	1	15	↓	1	2	↓
% of income due from council tax received by the end of the year	93.35	92.09	↓	32	31	↑	4	4	▬
% of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	93.27	93.96	↑	16	16	▬	2	2	▬
% of procurement spend spent on local enterprises	16.65	17.89	↑	27	26	↑	4	4	▬

Chief Executive Services – Performance Indicators - Detail																
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
			Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CORP 1	Support services as a % of total gross expenditure	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1						
	CORP 3b	% of the highest paid 5% employees who are women	8	1	10	3	5	2	5	2						
	CORP 3c	The gender pay gap (%)	-	-	7	2	12	5	9	3					-	-
	CORP 6b	Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	10	2	13	5	1	1	15	6						
	CORP 7	% of income due from council tax received by the end of the year	30	8	29	7	32	8	31	8						
	CORP 8	% of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	29	7	21	5	16	4	16	4						
✓	ECON4	% of procurement spend spent on local enterprises	28	7	23	5	27	6	26	7						



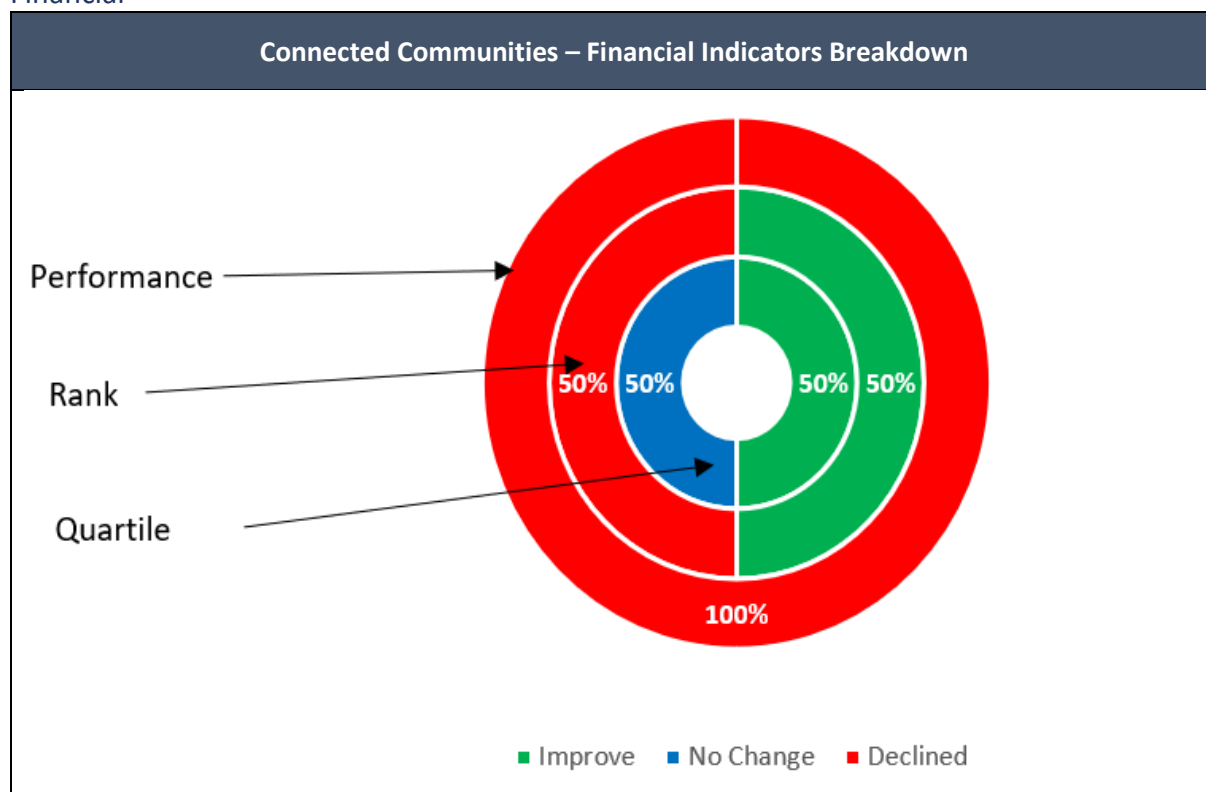
## Connected Communities Service

Our Connected Communities Service has six LGBF indicators. These are split by the following:

Financial	2
Performance	0
Satisfaction	4

*There is no satisfaction data for 2020/21*

### Financial



There are only two financial indicators that fall under the Connected Communities Service, in the short-term, none of the indicators showed improved performance. This is in comparison to the medium-term which saw improved performance in one indicator.

Connected Communities Service – Financial Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Cost per library visit	£2.35	£4.29	↓	19	14	↑	3	2	↑
Cost of museums per visit	£0.42	£0.49	↓	2	4	↓	1	1	▢

Connected Communities Service – Financial Indicators - Detail																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
		Cost per library visit	7	2	14	5	19	6	14	5	🟢	🟢	🔵	🔵	🔴	🔴
		Cost of museums per visit	4	1	3	1	2	1	4	1	🔴	🔵	🔴	🔵	🔵	🔵

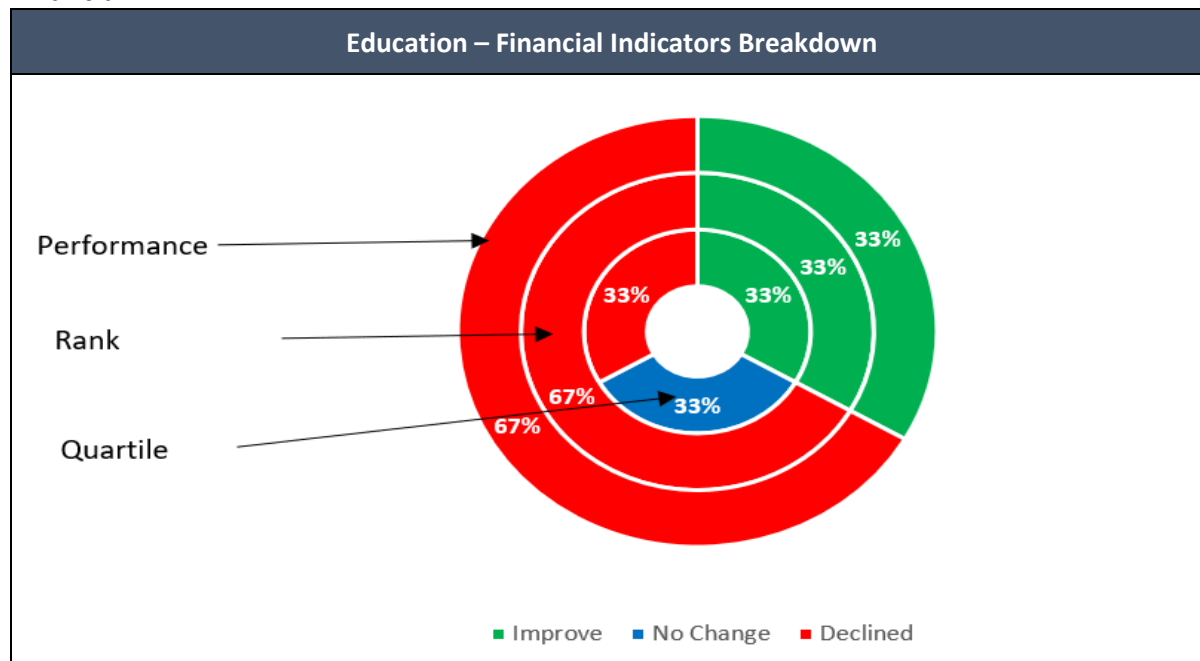
## Education Service

Our Education Service has a total of 27 LGBF indicators. These are split by the following:

Financial	3
Performance	23
Satisfaction	1

*There is no satisfaction data for 2020/21*

### Financial

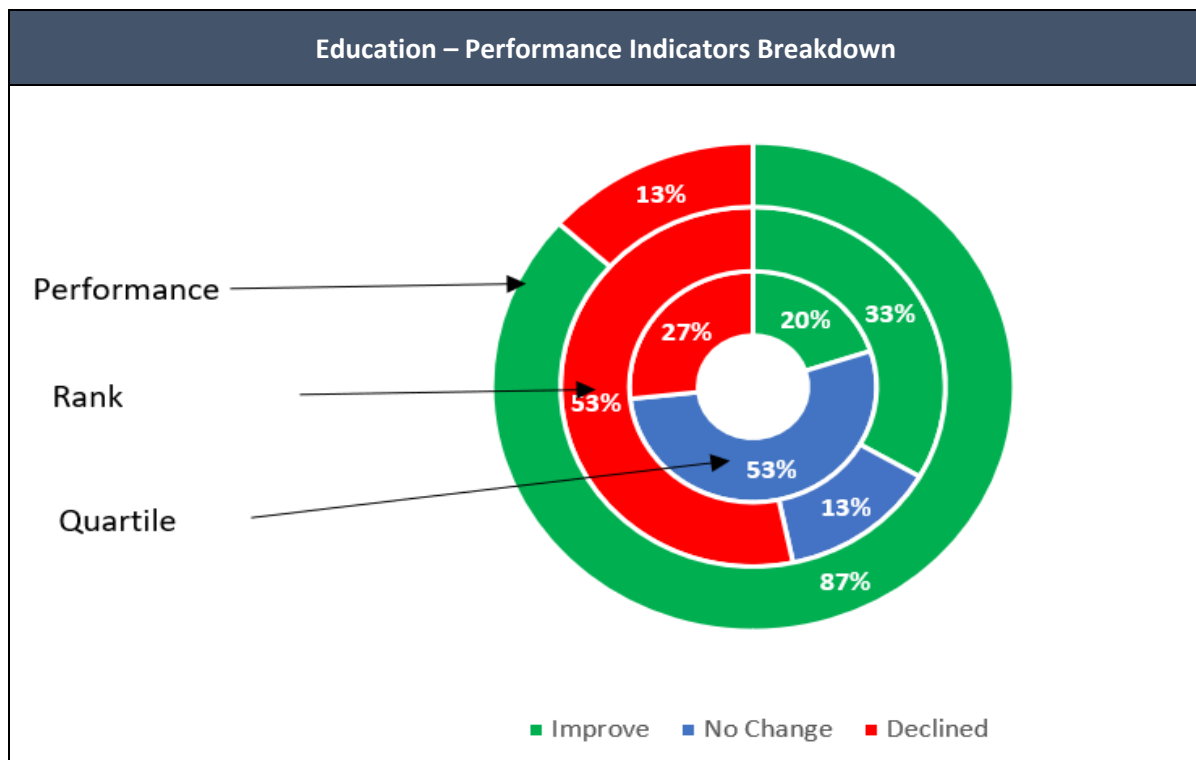


These indicators relate to cost per pre-school, primary and secondary pupil. Of the Education Service's financial indicators, 33% have improved in the short term and medium term. Due to the particular challenges North Ayrshire faces in terms of deprivation, a higher investment in our young people relative to other local authorities (shown as declining performance in terms of rank) should not necessarily be viewed as negative performance.

Education Service – Financial Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Cost Per Primary School Pupil	£6,670	£6,710	↓	27	28	↓	4	4	▢
Cost per Secondary School Pupil	£8,252	£7,945	↑	21	25	↓	3	4	↓
Cost per Pre-School Education Registration	£8,638	£9,749	↓	27	19	↑	4	3	↑

Education Service – Financial Indicators - Detail															
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement				
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CHN1	Cost Per Primary School Pupil	27	7	16	4	27	6	28	7	↓	↓	↓	↓	▢
	CHN2	Cost per Secondary School Pupil	19	4	28	7	21	4	25	6	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓
	CHN3	Cost per Pre-School Education Registration	24	3	23	5	27	6	19	3	↑	↑	↑	↑	▢

## Performance



Of the non-financial / satisfaction indicators assigned to our Education Service, 87% have seen an improvement in performance in the short-term. This is in comparison to the medium-term where 73% of the indicators saw improved performance.

Education Service – Performance Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	61	65	↑	20	20	▬	3	3	▬
% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6	33	35	↑	22	23	↓	3	3	▬
% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD)	46	54	↑	10	8	↑	2	1	↑
% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD)	19	23	↑	13	12	↑	2	2	▬
Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	92.45	95.2	↑	23	23	▬	3	3	▬
Overall Average Total Tariff	808	869	↑	27	29	↓	4	4	▬
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 1	599	672	↑	17	14	↑	3	2	↑
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 2	815	836	↑	9	15	↓	2	2	▬
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 3	974	1041	↑	11	8	↑	2	1	↑
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 4	1055	1073	↑	13	17	↓	2	3	↓
Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 5	1180	1184	↑	15	21	↓	2	3	↓
% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy	-	58.60	-	-	30	-	-	4	-
% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy	-	67.36	-	-	30	-	-	4	-
Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	-	21.47	-	-	9	-	-	2	-



Education Service – Performance Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	-	23.61	-	-	18	-	-	3	-
% of children meeting developmental milestones	83.27%	82.24%	↓	23	25	↓	3	4	↓
% of funded early years provision which is graded good/better	96.5%	98.15%	↑	8	2	↑	1	1	▢
School attendance rate	-	91.4%	-	-	26	-	-	4	-
School attendance rate (Looked After Children)	-	88.78%	-	-	10	-	-	2	-
School exclusion rates (per 1,000 pupils)	-	9.57	-	-	9	-	-	2	-
School exclusion rates (per 1,000 'looked after children')	-	32	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
Participation rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)	90.56	90.12	↓	26	29	↓	4	4	▢
Sickness absence days per teacher	5.53	4.78	↑	11	25	↓	2	4	↓

Education Service - Performance Indicators - Detail																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CHN4	% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	29	6	21	4	20	4	20	3						
	CHN5	% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6	28	6	23	4	22	4	23	4						
	CHN6	% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD)	10	4	10	4	10	4	8	2						
	CHN7	% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD)	7	3	12	4	13	4	12	4						
✓	CHN11	Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	18	5	10	1	23	5	23	5						
	CHN12a	Overall Average Total Tariff	30	7	20	4	27	7	29	7						
	CHN12b	Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 1	8	3	9	2	17	6	14	6						
	CHN12c	Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 2	26	8	6	2	9	4	15	7						
	CHN12d	Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 3	17	6	4	2	11	4	8	2						
	CHN12e	Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 4	14	5	14	6	13	5	17	5						
	CHN12f	Average Total Tariff SIMD quintile 5	18	4	14	4	15	4	21	6						
	CHN13a	% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	7	-	-	-	-	-	-

Education Service - Performance Indicators - Detail																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CHN13b	% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN14a	Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN14b	Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN17	% of children meeting developmental milestones	-	-	26	4	23	1	25	4	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	🟦	⬇️	⬇️
	CHN18	% of funded early years provision which is graded good/better	15	4	9	3	8	2	2	1	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️
	CHN19a	School attendance rate	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN19b	School attendance rate (Looked After Children)	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN20a	School exclusion rates (per 1,000 pupils)	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN20b	School exclusion rates (per 1,000 'looked after children')	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CHN21	Participation rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)	-	-	24	3	26	4	29	7	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	-	-
	CORP 6a	Sickness absence days per teacher all	11	5	15	4	11	4	25	7	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️

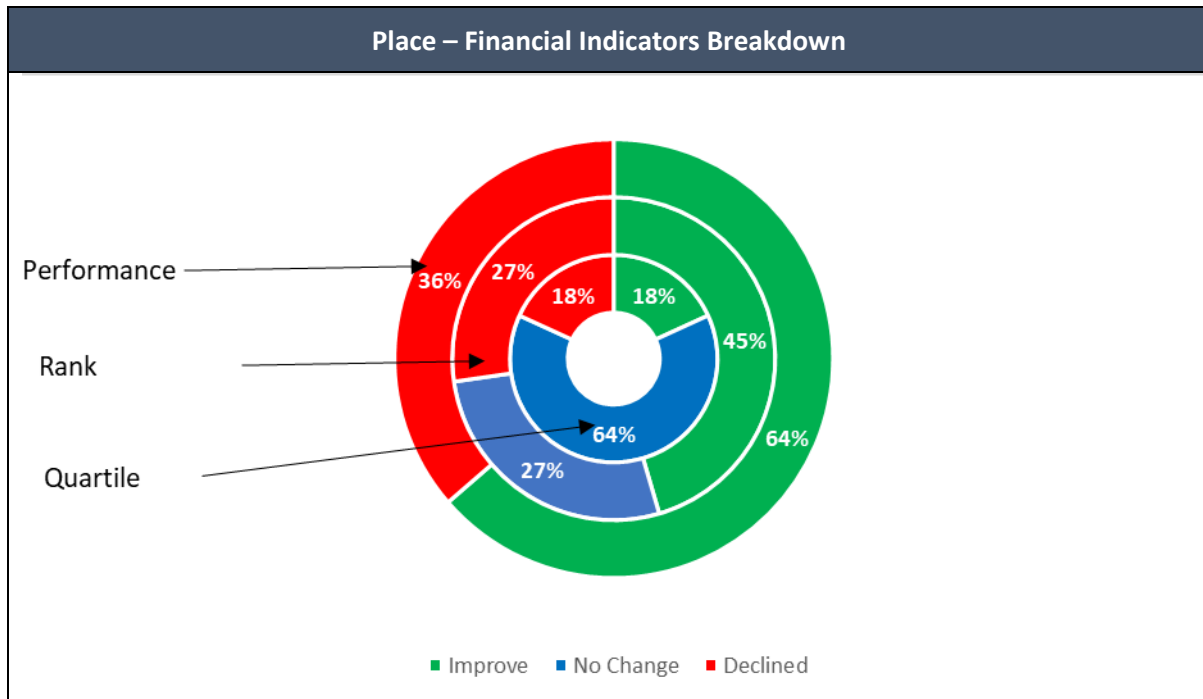
## Place Directorate

The Place Directorate has a total of 37 LGBF indicators. These are split as follows:

Financial	11
Performance	24
Satisfaction	2

*There is no satisfaction data for 2020/21*

### Financial

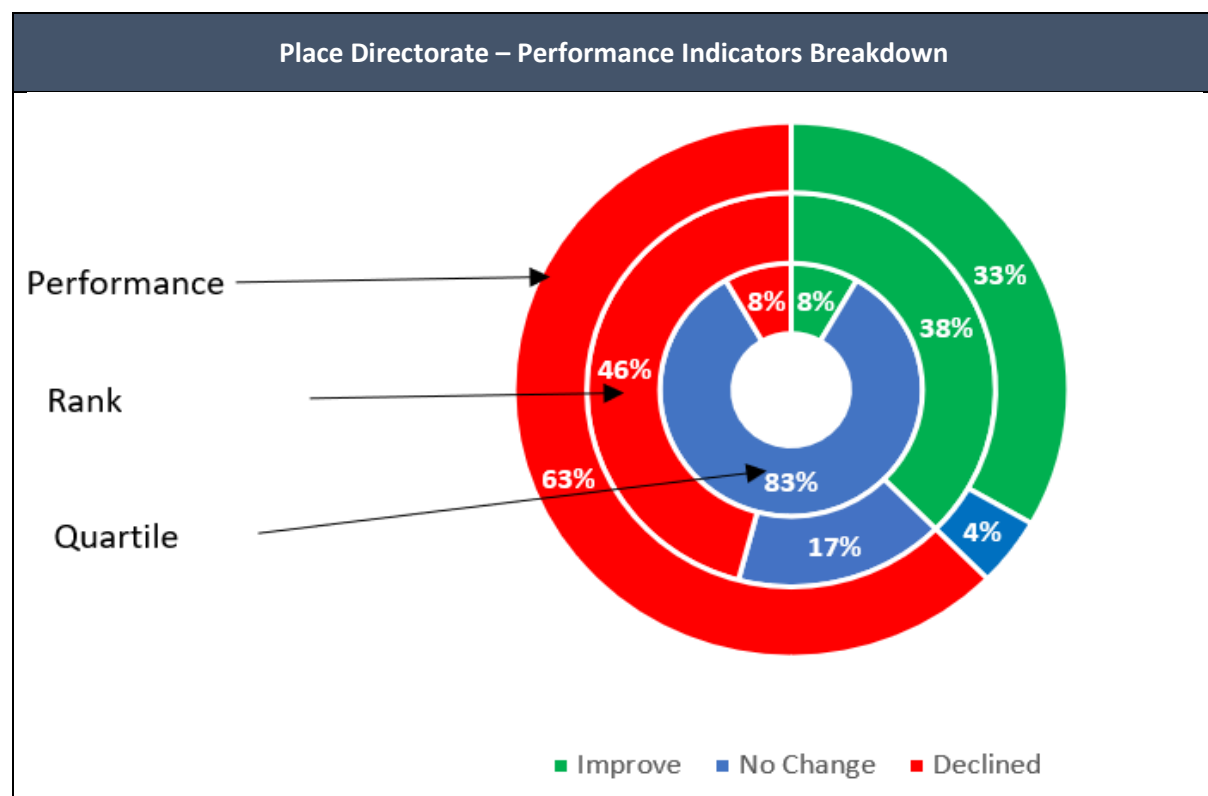


Of the financial indicators that fall under the Place Directorate, in the short-term, 64% of the indicators show improved performance. The medium-term shows an improvement across 73% of the indicators.

Place Directorate – Financial Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population	£24,098	£15,836	↑	21	14	↑	3	2	↑
Net cost of waste collection per premise	£58.39	£63.62	↓	13	12	↑	2	2	▬
Net cost of waste disposal per premise	£103.52	£93.56	↑	15	9	↑	2	2	▬
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	£16,958	£17,929	↓	24	26	↓	3	4	↓
Cost of roads per kilometre	£10,632	£10,806	↓	16	19	↓	2	3	↓
Cost of Trading Standards and environmental health per 1,000 population	£12,445	£10,734	↑	1	1	▬	1	1	▬
Cost of Trading Standards per 1000	£2,771	£2,078	↑	1	2	↓	1	1	▬
Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	£9,674	£8,655	↑	5	5	▬	1	1	▬
Cost of planning and building standards Per Planning Application	£4,494	£4,224	↑	17	8	↑	3	1	↑
Investment in of Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 Population	£115,560	£90,026	↑	23	23	▬	3	3	▬
Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita	£16,973	£16,372	↓	28	26	↑	4	4	▬

Place Directorate – Financial Indicators – Detail																
Council Plan P1 (P)	Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
			Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	C&L4	Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population	27	7	22	6	21	5	14	4	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	ENV1a	Net cost of waste collection per premise	-	-	7	3	13	3	12	3	↑	▬	↓	▬	-	-
	ENV2a	Net cost of waste disposal per premise	-	-	12	6	15	7	9	5	↑	↑	↑	↑	-	-
	ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	27	8	21	6	24	6	26	6	↓	▬	↓	▬	↑	↑
	ENV4a	Cost of roads per kilometre	14	4	16	5	16	5	19	7	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	ENV5	Cost of Trading Standards and environmental health per 1,000 population	23	5	3	2	1	1	1	1	▬	▬	↑	↑	↑	↑
	ENV5a	Cost of Trading Standards per 1000	-	-	7	3	1	1	2	1	↓	▬	↑	↑	-	-
	ENV5b	Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	-	-	6	3	5	1	5	2	▬	↓	↑	↑	-	-
	ECON2	Cost of planning and building standards Per Planning Application	23	7	13	5	17	4	8	2	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	ECON6	Investment in of Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 Population	18	7	26	8	23	8	23	7	▬	↑	↑	↑	↓	▬
	ECON11	Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita	28	7	30	8	28	7	26	6	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

## Performance



Of the performance indicators within the Place Directorate, 33% of the indicators have improved performance in the short-term and 38% improved in the medium-term.



Place Directorate – Performance Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Street Cleanliness Score	94.64	91.34	↓	11	18	↓	2	3	↓
% of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	38.78	36.3	↑	30	29	↑	4	4	▬
% of B Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	36.83	32.6	↑	25	18	↑	4	3	↑
% of C Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	46.93	44.9	↑	30	31	↓	4	4	▬
% of U Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	33.65	35.6	↓	11	16	↓	2	2	▬
% of total household waste arising that is recycled	56.34	52.1	↓	6	7	↓	1	1	▬
Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	3.65	5.46	↓	3	5	↓	1	1	▬
% of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	0.61	0.47	↑	4	2	↑	1	1	▬
% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	99.36	99.09	↓	2	1	↑	1	1	▬
Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	6.3	9.75	↓	9	16	↓	2	2	▬
% of council dwellings that are energy efficient	98.38	97.58	↓	2	2	▬	1	1	▬
% of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	90.89	91.05	↑	10	9	↑	2	2	▬
% of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition	94	94	▬	12	11	↑	2	2	▬
% of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated / funded employability programmes	20.13	9.06	↓	6	8	↓	1	1	▬

Place Directorate – Performance Indicators – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)	5.1	5.41	↓	1	1	▬	1	1	▬
No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	21.75	8.42	↓	5	24	↓	1	3	↓
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	16%	16.2	↓	9	12	↓	2	2	▬
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	94.1%	94.7	↑	17	17	▬	3	3	▬
Town Vacancy Rates	12.55%	13.26	↓	12	11	↑	2	2	▬
Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan	60.82%	45.77	↓	10	14	↓	2	2	▬
Claimant Count as a % of Working Age population	5.5	8.3	↓	32	32	▬	4	4	▬
Claimant Count as a % of 16-24 Population	6.47	10.59	↓	30	32	↓	4	4	▬
CO2 emissions area wide per capita	6.07	5.43	↑	25	24	↑	4	3	↑
CO2 emissions are wide: emissions within scope of LA per capita	5.68	5.07	↑	24	23	↑	3	3	▬

Place Directorate- Performance Indicators - Detail																
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
			Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
✓	ENV3c	Street Cleanliness Score	9	2	20	6	11	2	18	5	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓
	ENV4b	% of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	30	8	28	6	30	7	29	7	↑	▬	↓	↓	↑	↑
	ENV4c	% of B Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	28	6	25	4	25	5	18	3	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	ENV4d	% of C Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	30	8	31	8	30	8	31	8	↓	▬	▬	▬	↓	▬
	ENV4e	% of U Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	19	5	15	5	11	3	16	4	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
✓	ENV6	% of total household waste arising that is recycled	7	4	7	2	6	3	7	4	↓	↓	▬	↓	▬	▬
	HSN1b	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	-	-	3	1	3	1	5	1	↓	▬	↓	▬	-	-
	HSN2	% of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	1	↑	▬	↓	▬	↓	▬
✓	HSN3	% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	6	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	↑	▬	↑	▬	↑	▬
	HSN4b	Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	-	-	6	3	9	3	16	5	↓	↓	↓	↓	-	-

Place Directorate- Performance Indicators - Detail																
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
			Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	HSN5a	% of council dwellings that are energy efficient	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2						
✓	CORP-ASSET1	% of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	3	1	11	4	10	3	9	2						
	CORP-ASSET2	% of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition	20	5	1	1	12	3	11	3						
	ECON1	% of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated / funded employability programmes	-	-	6	3	6	2	8	2					-	-
	ECON3	Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1					-	-
	ECON5	No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	-	-	7	2	5	2	24	6					-	-
✓	ECON7	Proportion of people earning less than the living wage	-	-	17	3	9	2	12	4					-	-
✓	ECON8	Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	-	-	18	4	17	3	17	3					-	-
	ECON9	Town Vacancy Rates	-	-	14	5	12	6	11	6					-	-
	ECON10	Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan	-	-	6	1	10	2	14	3					-	-
	ECON12a	Claimant Count as a % of Working Age population	31	8	31	8	32	8	32	8						

# Place Directorate- Performance Indicators - Detail

Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
			Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	ECON12b	Claimant Count as a % of 16-24 Population	31	8	30	8	30	8	32	8	↓	→	↓	→	↓	→
	CLIM1	CO2 emissions area wide per capita	23	4	25	3	25	3	24	4	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	→
	CLIM2	CO2 emissions are wide: emissions within scope of LA per capita	23	4	22	4	24	4	23	4	↑	→	↓	→	→	→

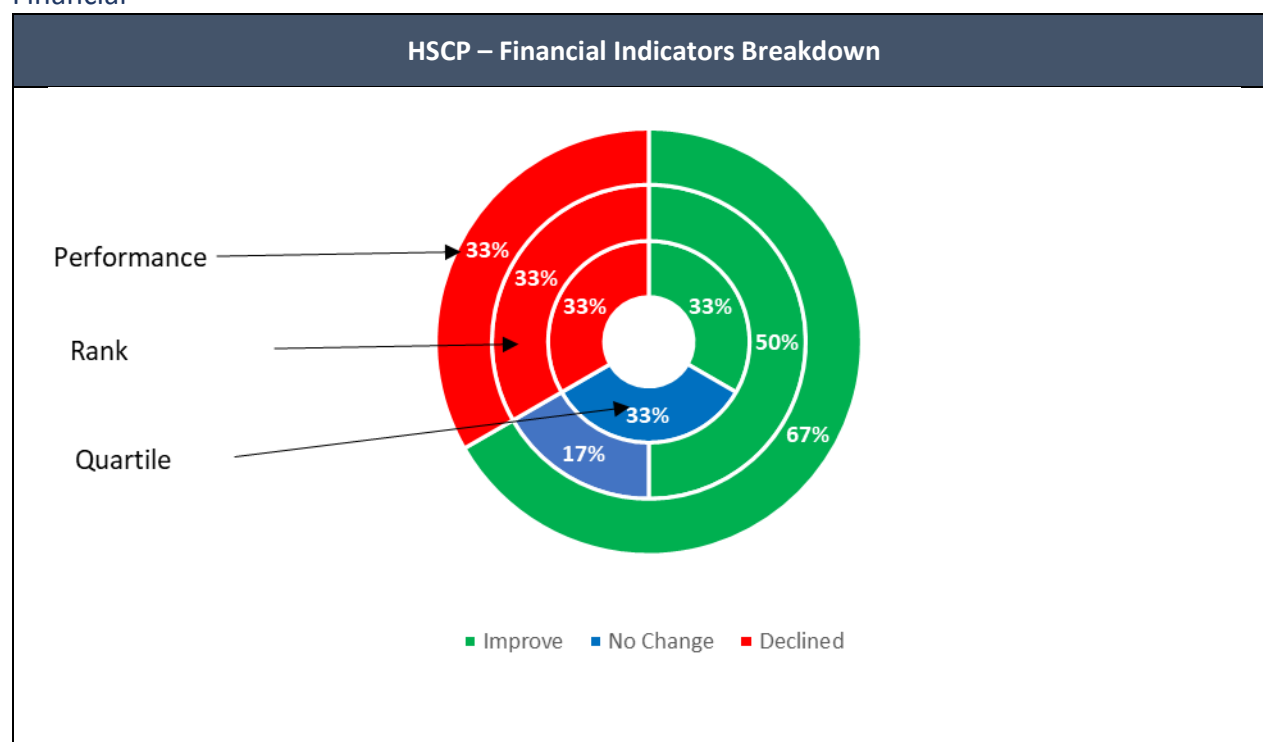
## Health and Social Care Partnership

The Health and Social Care Partnership has a total of 18 LGBF indicators assigned to them. These are as follows:

Financial	6
Performance	8
Satisfaction	4

*There is no satisfaction data for 2020/21*

### Financial



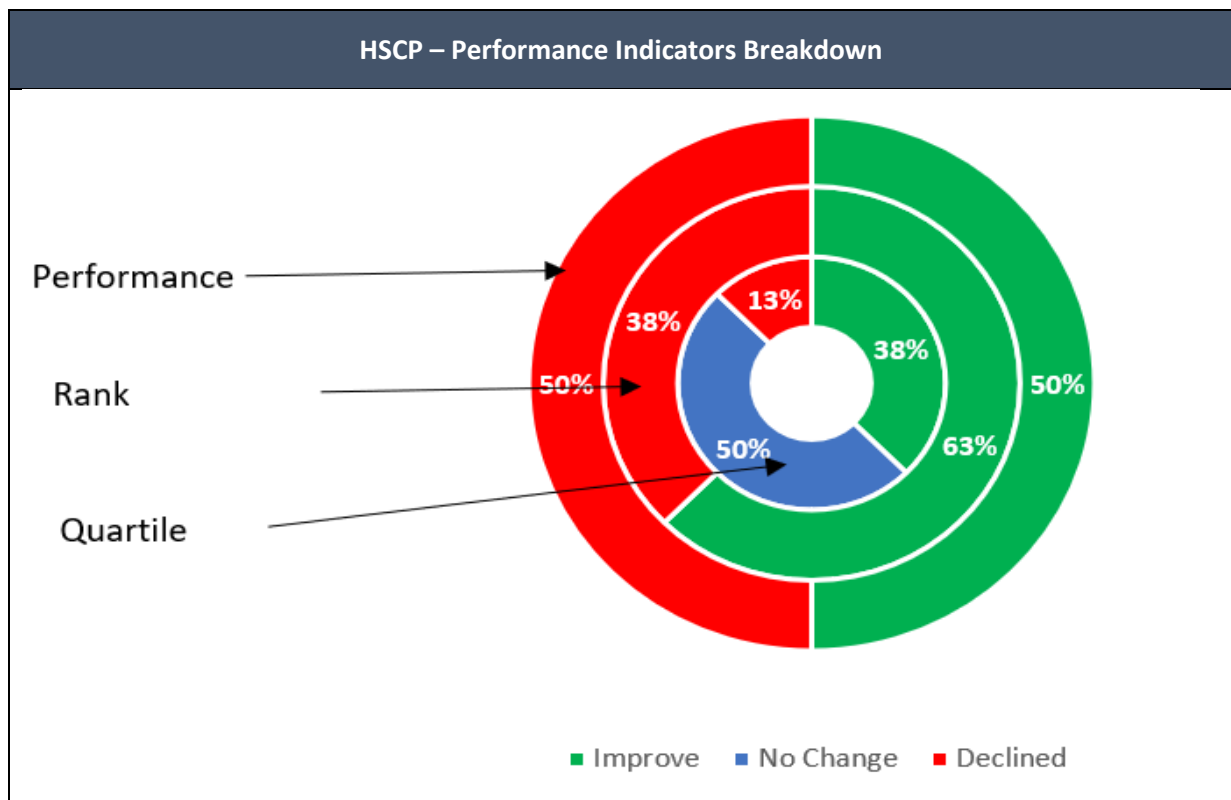
Of the financial indicators that fall under the HSCP, in the short-term, 67% of the indicators have seen an improvement in performance, this was also the case in the medium-term.

HSCP – Financial Performance – Performance, Rank and Quartile									
	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per Child per Week	£3,839	£3,209	↑	15	6	↑	2	1	↑
The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per Child per Week	£330	£376	↓	15	19	↓	2	3	↓
% of children living in poverty (after housing costs)	27.92	24.73	↑	31	31	▬	4	4	▬
Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over	£31.67	£29.82	↑	25	21	↑	4	3	↑
Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over	£399	£369	↑	13	11	↑	2	2	▬
Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	£99.32	£89.59	↓	15	31	↓	2	4	↓



HSCP – Financial Performance – Performance, Rank and Quartile																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	4F6family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CHN8a	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per Child per Week	17	3	13	4	15	4	6	3	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	▢
	CNH8b	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per Child per Week	14	5	17	6	15	5	19	7	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	CHN24	% of children living in poverty (after housing costs)	-	-	31	7	31	7	31	2	▢	↑	▢	↑	-	-
	SW1	Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over	14	5	26	7	25	5	21	5	↑	▢	↑	↑	↓	▢
	SW5	Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over	6	1	14	3	13	3	11	3	↑	▢	↑	▢	↓	↓
	FINSUS5	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	-	-	31	8	15	5	31	8	↓	↓	▢	▢	-	-

## Performance



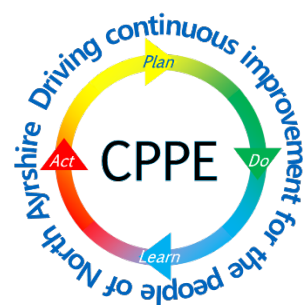
Of the performance indicators assigned to the HSCP, 50% of the indicators have seen an improvement in performance in the short term and 63% have seen an improvement in the medium term.

	Performance			Rank			Quartile		
	19/20	20/21	Performance -/+	19/20	20/21	Rank -/+	19/20	20/21	Quartile -/+
% of children being looked after in the community	90.26%	89.27%	↓	15	16	↓	2	2	▬
% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	15.04%	8.4%	↑	29	21	↑	4	3	↑
% LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July)	18.26%	21.65%	↓	14	26	↓	2	4	↓
Self Directed Support (Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets) spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+	3.56%	3.96%	↑	26	23	↑	4	3	↑
% of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	67.63%	69.51%	↑	5	4	↑	1	1	▬
Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	112.25	121.4	↓	20	19	↑	3	3	▬
Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections	87.6%	87.2%	↓	9	11	↓	2	2	▬
Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	1328.71	381.64	↑	30	18	↑	4	3	↑

HSCP – Performance Indicators – Detail																
			2011/12		2017/18		2019/20		2020/21		Movement					
Council Plan PI (P)	Reference	Description	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	Scottish Rank	Family Group Rank	SR Short-term Trend	FG Short-term Trend	SR Medium-term Trend	FG Medium-term Trend	SR Long-term Trend	FG Long-term Trend
	CHN9	% of children being looked after in the community	17	6	17	5	15	5	16	4	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	CHN22	% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	-	-	17	4	29	7	21	4	↑	↑	↓	▬	-	-
	CHN23	% LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July)	9	5	12	4	14	6	26	8	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	SW2	Self Directed Support (Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets) spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+	23	4	29	6	26	5	23	5	↑	▬	↑	↑	▬	↓
✓	SW3a	% of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	21	6	11	5	5	3	4	2	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	SW6	Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	22	5	22	6	20	6	19	5	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	▬
	SW7	Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections	32	8	16	5	9	3	11	3	↓	▬	↑	↑	↑	↑
	SW8	Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	-	-	26	7	30	7	18	4	↑	↑	↑	↑	-	-

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team welcome any feedback you may have. We strive to make our Council and reports as accessible as possible and appreciate opportunities to discuss how this can be achieved. For further information please contact:

**The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team**  
Tel: 01294 324648  
Email: [NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)





## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

**Title:** 2021/22 Complaint Report

**Purpose:** To inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's complaint performance and the volumes and trends of complaints received in Financial Year 2021/22.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee notes the report and the information provided.

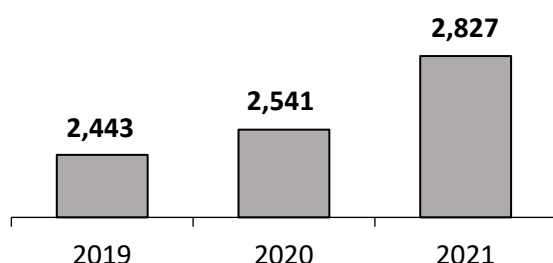
### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details complaint information relating to North Ayrshire Council during 2021/22, covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 1.2 To allow comparisons to be made the report also details some complaint data relating to 2019 and 2020.
- 1.3 Performance is measured through a number of Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) performance indicators, some of which have national targets. Reporting on complaints is a statutory requirement and is monitored by Audit & Scrutiny.
- 1.4 When considering the report it should be noted that the coronavirus pandemic continued to cause disruption to the Council, however, services continued to operate and critical and key services were maintained.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 This section contains statistical information and commentary on some of the key complaint performance indicators. More information relating to the indicators can be found in the attached report.

#### 2.2 *Volume of complaints received and closed*





2.2.1 Whilst Council services continued to be impacted by the pandemic during 2021, there was a modest increase in complaints when compared with the previous year.

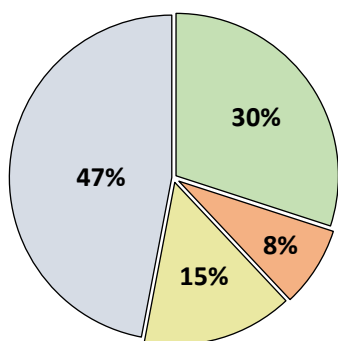
### 2.3 *Complaints closed at each Stage*

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Stage One</b>	2,302	2,417	2,671
<b>Stage Two</b>	141	124	156

2.3.1 Whilst there is no national target for the number of complaints to be closed under each Stage, the Council always seeks to maximise closure at Stage One as complainants receive a quicker resolution, it reduces the impact on complaint handler time and reduces the possibility of SPSO referrals.

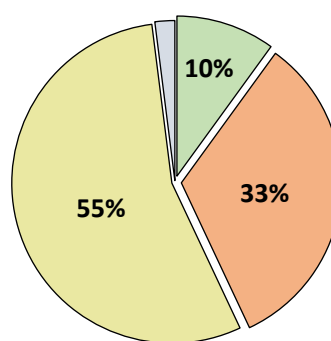
### 2.4 *Complaint outcomes*

**Stage One**



■ Upheld ■ Partially Upheld ■ Not Upheld ■ Resolved

**Stage Two**



■ Upheld ■ Partially Upheld ■ Not Upheld ■ Resolved (2%)

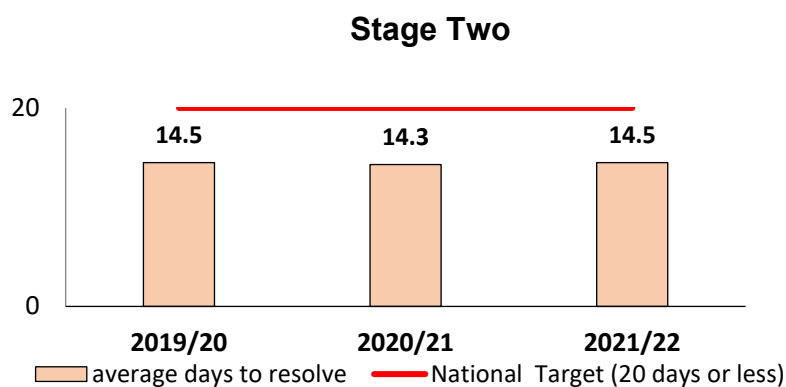
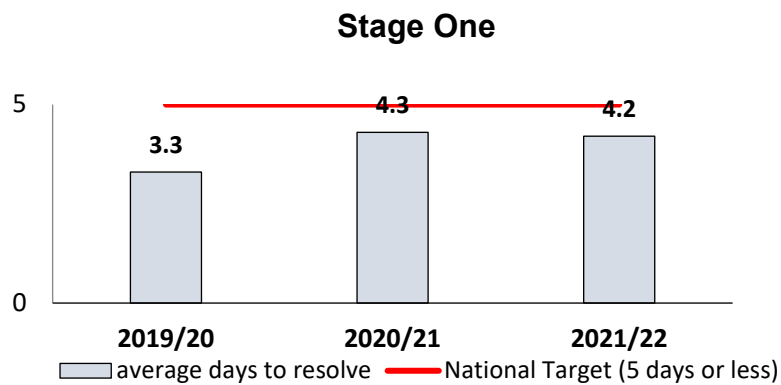
2.4.1 Up to 31 March 2021, a complaint that meets our complaint criteria could be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. From 1 April 2021 a fourth outcome became available to use called 'Resolved'. Resolved complaints are where the Council has taken action to address a problem or issue without making a decision on whether there were any failings (this would happen where we agree a solution with the complainant at the outset without needing to actually investigate the complaint).

2.4.2 Analysis shows the majority of Resolved complaints related to missed bin collections, where complainants simply wanted the bins collected.

2.4.3 Half of all upheld and partially upheld complaints also related to Waste Services, however it should be noted over 102,000 household waste bins are collected each week. As this equates to approximately 5 million collections a year, from a complaint perspective this results in a small percentage complaint rate of 0.03%.

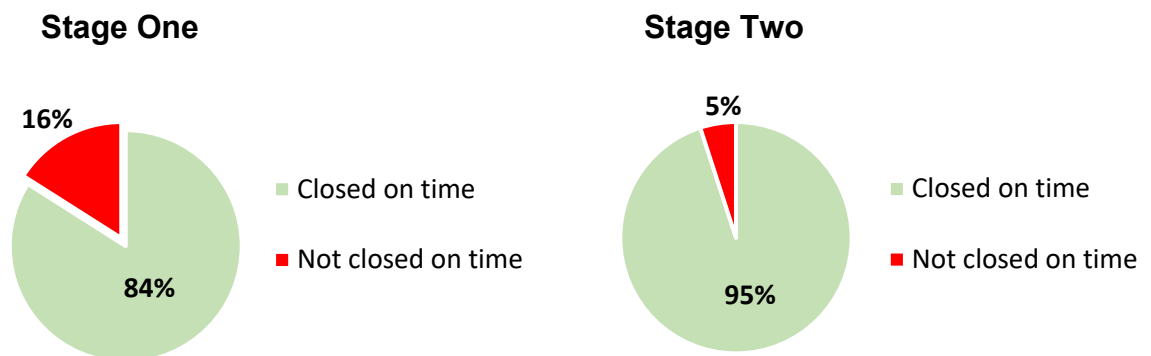
2.4.4 Many complaints not upheld related to policies, regulations or complaints that turned out to be unfounded after investigation.

## 2.5 Average time in working days for a full response at each Stage



2.5.1 The average time in working days for a response under both Stages has exceeded the SPSO target response timescales for the last three years.

## 2.6 Complaints closed within timescale



2.6.1 The national target for complaints closed on time under Stage One is 80% or above and the target was exceeded. The national target for complaints closed on time under Stage Two is 85% or above and again this target was exceeded.

2.6.2 Further details of complaints not closed on time are contained in the attached report.

## **2.7 Complaint timescale extensions**

2.7.1 Stage One complaints should be responded to within 5 working days but can be extended an additional 5 working days under certain circumstances. Stage Two complaints should be responded to within 20 working days but again Services can extend the timescale if certain circumstances are met.

2.7.2 A total of 106 complaints had their timescales extended during the year and over two thirds were Stage Ones. Reasons for extension included complainants and individuals being unavailable to assist with investigations, additional information having to be sought to support investigations and issues arising from the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak.

## **2.8 Trends identified from upheld/partially upheld complaints**

Key complaint topics for upheld or partially upheld complaints are detailed on page 9 and 10 of the attached report.

## **2.9 Changes or Improvements made as a result of complaints**

Not all Services can implement improvements as a result of complaints due to a number of factors, including the feasibility of making changes and resource/budget considerations. That said, improvements were made in some Services as a result of complaints received during the year and a selection are noted in page 15 of the attached report.

## **2.10 Compliments**

The Council recorded over 240 compliments received during the year. Some praised specific individuals or teams, some related to more than one Service and some were raised by employees complimenting other employees. A selection can be found in page 16 of the attached report.

## **3. Proposals**

3.1 It is proposed the Committee approves the report and now the Council's complaint handling performance.

## **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

### **Financial**

4.1 None.

### **Human Resources**

4.2 None.

### **Legal**

4.3 None.

### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 None.

### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 None.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The Two Stage Complaint Handling Procedure supports the Council's key priority of delivering more effective and efficient service provision. It demonstrates commitment through focussing on and determining trends to service improvement and delivery for North Ayrshire residents, customers and visitors.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 None.

**Aileen Craig**  
**Head of Democratic Services**

For further information please contact **Darren Millar, Manager Information Governance**, on **(01294) 322988**.

### **Background Papers**

0



## Corporate Complaints 2021/22



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## Introduction

North Ayrshire Council always seeks to deliver the best services possible to its customers and residents but it is recognised that dissatisfaction will sometimes occur. When it does we want to know what went wrong, why it went wrong and what we can do to make things right.

The Council recognises valuable lessons can be learnt from complaints which are defined as expressions of dissatisfaction from members of the public about actions, or lack of actions, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The Council's complaint handling procedure (CHP) has two stages for handling complaints from the public:-

1

**Stage One** complaints (also known as *Frontline Resolution* complaints) are straightforward, non-complex complaints the Council can resolve at the initial point of contact or as close to the point of service delivery as possible. The Council has up to 5 working days to resolve these.

2

**Stage Two** complaints (also known as *Investigation* complaints) are complaints the Council is typically unable to resolve at Stage One and requires more time to carry out further investigation. This may be because the nature of the complaint is complex, serious or high risk. The Council has up to 20 working days to resolve these.

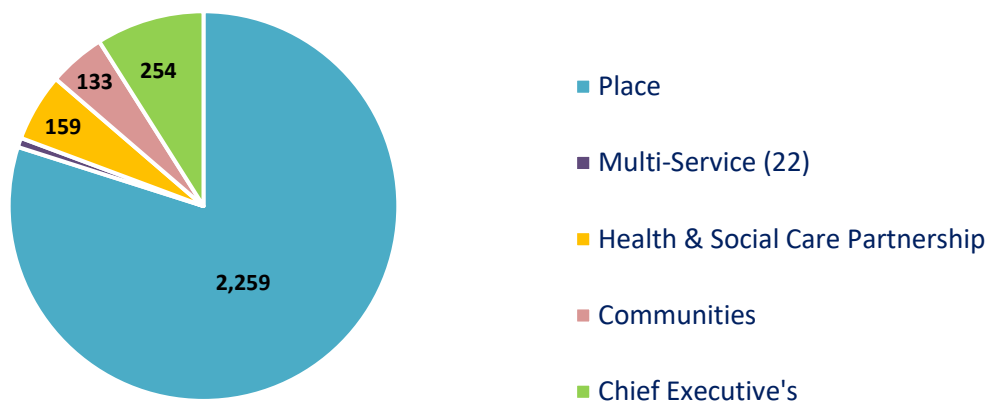
This report details the Council's complaint handling performance covering financial year 2021 (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022). Performance is measured via several Scottish Public Services Ombudsman indicators (some of which have national targets) and complaint data relating to previous years has been included in certain sections to allow comparisons to be made.

Reporting on complaints is a statutory requirement and is monitored by Audit Scotland.



## 1 Volume of complaints closed

The Council received 2,859 complaints during 2021/22 and closed 2,827. The chart below provides a breakdown of the closed complaints per Directorate:



The following tables highlight complaints closed per Directorate under each Stage:

Place	Stage One	Stage Two
Building Services	208	4
Business Development	-	1
Facilities Management	27	-
Housing	166	25
Planning	5	2
Property Management & Investment	74	4
Protective Services	9	1
Regeneration	2	-
Roads	88	6
Streetscene	129	1
Sustainability	2	-
Transport	2	-
Waste Services	1,498	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>49</b>

Multi-Service	Stage One	Stage Two
Complaints involving more than one service	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

Health & Social Care Partnership	Stage One	Stage Two
Children, Families & Criminal Justice	31	23
Health & Community Care	65	24
Mental Health	3	4
Support Services	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>54</b>

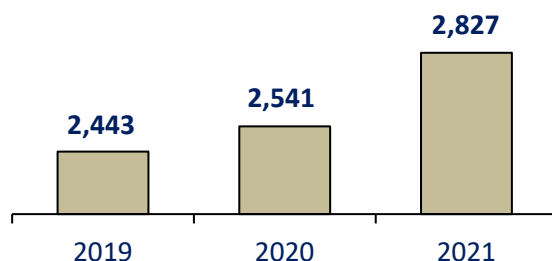
<b>Communities</b>	Stage One	Stage Two
Community Facilities	2	-
Education (HQ)	31	24
Education (Schools)	60	9
Information & Culture	6	-
Sports & Activity	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>

<b>Chief Executive's</b>	Stage One	Stage Two
Committee & Member Services	-	1
Customer Services	204	7
Financial Services	14	-
Fraud & Internal Audit	1	-
HR	1	-
Information Technology	20	-
Legal Services	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>9</b>

- Although there is no target for the volume of complaints handled under each Stage, the Council seeks to maximise closure at Stage One wherever possible and 94% were handled at this Stage during the period.
- Some Services handled all their complaints at Stage One.
- Whilst 53% of all complaints received related to Waste Services (the majority being missed bins and assisted pullouts), the Service empties over 102,000 household waste bins each week. As this equates to approximately 4.9 million collections over the year, 0.03% of these collections resulted in complaints being raised. This is worth highlighting given Waste Services experienced significant operational challenges due to the Covid pandemic during the year and was still able to maintain a bin collection service.
- Multi-Service complaints have a table of their own as they are not attributable to a specific Service.

## Year on Year comparison

The graph below shows a comparison of the volume of complaints received each year over the last three years:



The table below shows the volume breakdown for each Directorate over the last three years (based on the Council's new 2020 structure):

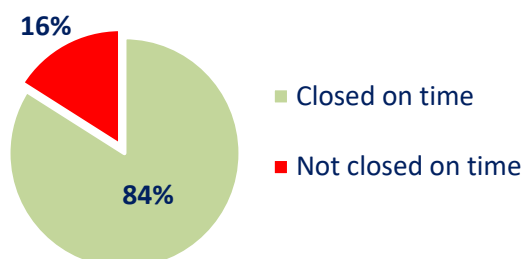
Directorate	2019	2020	2021	Variance (2020 – 2021)
Chief Executive's	188	176	254	+44%
Communities	136	90	133	+48%
HSCP (Social Work complaints)	125	127	159	+25%
Place	1,978	2,128	2,259	+6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,427*</b>	<b>2,521*</b>	<b>2,805*</b>	<b>+11%</b>

\*Multi-service complaints have been excluded to allow for true Directorate comparisons

- Whilst the Council maintained various measures, policies, processes and practices to combat the ongoing pandemic during 2021/22, there has only been an 11% increase in complaints when comparing 2021 with the previous year.
- The 44% uplift in Chief Executive complaints can be attributed to increases in Customer Services, IT and Finance complaints. Key complaint topics are detailed in section 4 of this report.
- The 48% increase in Communities complaints is the result of a considerable uplift in school-related complaints received. Key complaint topics are detailed in section 4 of this report.

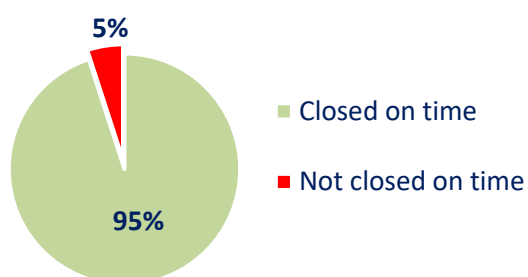
## 2 Volume of complaints closed on time at both Stages

### Stage One



- The national target for closing Stage One complaints on time is 80% and above.
- The volume closed on time includes extended complaints that met their new due dates.

### Stage Two



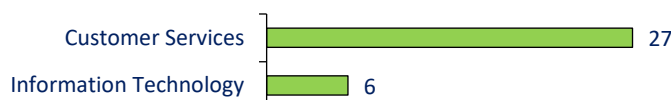
- The national target for closing Stage Two complaints on time is 85% and above.
- The volume closed on time includes extended complaints that met their new due dates.

## 3 Volume of complaints not closed on time per Directorate

This section provides details of complaints not closed on time under each Stage and includes extended complaints that did not meet their new timescales.

### Stage One

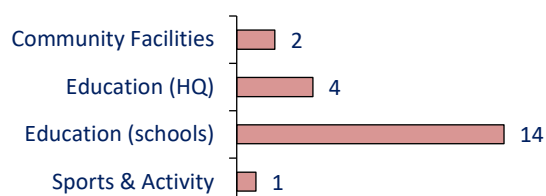
#### Chief Executive's



#### Notes

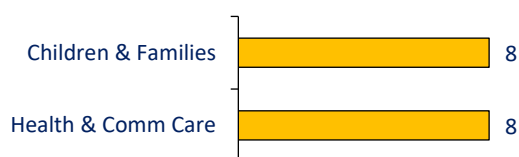
Customer Services complaints breached mainly due to resourcing issues (including self-isolations) and delays in obtaining information from complainants/3<sup>rd</sup> parties to progress complaints. Extensions could have been considered for around 70% of these given they were closed within the extra 5 working day extension allowance. IT complaints breached due to the complexity of the system(s) issues, awaiting further information from complainants and complaints being incorrectly routed. Extensions could have been considered for 50% of these for the same reason given above.

#### Communities



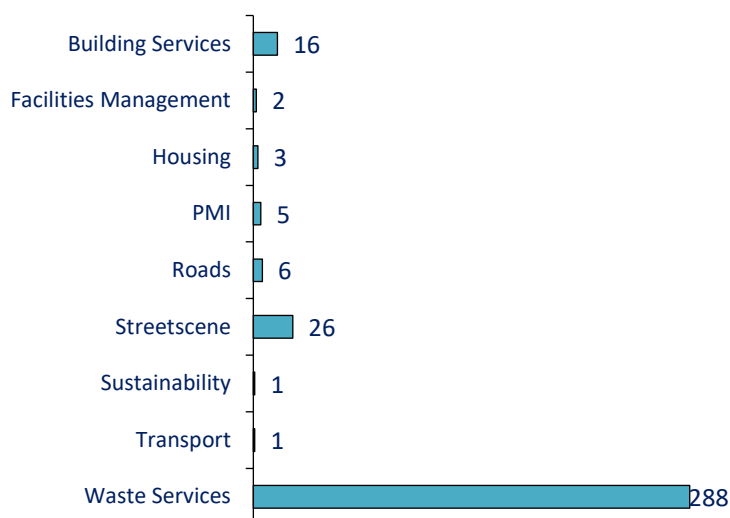
Some complaints breached due to complaint handlers being unable to contact complainants in order to discuss or agree the issues. Some Education complaints also breached as they were received when the schools were closed. Extensions could have been agreed for 60% of all Communities complaints not closed on time given they were closed within the extra 5 working day extension allowance.

### HSCP (Social Work complaints)



These complaints breached due to multiple reasons and no specific trends were identified, however, extensions could have been considered for some of these given they were closed within the extra 5 working day extension allowance.

### Place



Reasons for complaints not closed on time included complaint handlers being unavailable to progress complaints for various reasons, complainants/3<sup>rd</sup> parties being unavailable to assist with investigations, resourcing issues related to Covid-19 and the complexity of the complaints.

Of the 348 Place complaints not closed on time, 64% could have been considered for the extra 5 working day extension given they were closed within 10 working days.

Regarding the volume of Waste complaints that did not meet timescale, see additional commentary below.

### Waste Services (operations) complaints in 2021/22

Waste Operations continued to operate under Covid-related restrictions for the full period of 2021/22 and additional labour was carried throughout the year to ensure vehicles could be resourced. Additional vehicle hires were also extended throughout 2021/22 as availability of vehicles became a pinch point causing operational disruption and service disruption.

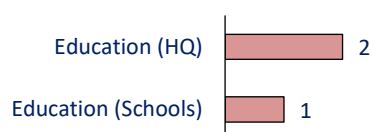
The impact of Covid was seasonal with waves of absences following the general trends seen in the wider community. There was a particular peak as the omicron variant became prevalent from the festive period into the second half of the winter. At one point a suspension of the brown bin service was necessary in January as the omicron surge peaked.

The service had to make operational decisions to prioritise resourcing beats unfortunately at the expense of bin deliveries. A focus has been undertaken to ensure priority is given to any complaints relating to assisted collections.

When reviewing the complaint data for Waste Service, particularly Waste Operations, it is evident that despite significant operational challenges, the majority of bin collections took place without issue.

## Stage Two

### Communities



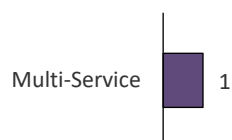
These complaints were sensitive in nature and required detailed investigation. Extensions could have been considered for these.

### HSCP (Social Work complaints)



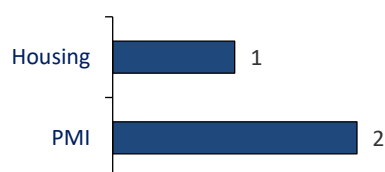
This complaint breached due to service pressures caused by resourcing issues as a result of the pandemic.

### Multi-Service



This complaint breached by one day as approval was required from a Chief Officer before the response could be issued.

### Place



These complaints breached due to delays in the Stage Two response letters being approved prior to issue.

## 4 Key complaint topics

Key topics for upheld and partially upheld complaints for Services are listed below. Services will not be listed if there were low complaint volumes that did not allow meaningful analysis.

### Chief Executive's

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Customer Services	• Issues with Council Tax
	• Communication
	• System issues
	• Waiting times
Information Technology	• Systems issues

## Communities

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Education (HQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive issues relating to teachers and/or pupils</li> <li>• Service provision/delivery</li> </ul>

## HSCP (Social Work complaints)

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Children & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service provision/delivery</li> <li>• Alleged employee behaviour</li> </ul>
Health & Community Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service provision/delivery</li> <li>• Alleged employee behaviour</li> </ul>

## Place

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Building Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Up appointments</li> <li>• Quality issues</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>
PMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas Central Heating (incl. maintenance)</li> </ul>
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road conditions</li> </ul>
Streetscene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality/lack of grass cutting</li> </ul>
Waste Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed collections (all colours)</li> <li>• Missed pull out collections (all colours)</li> <li>• Waste Bins not delivered (all colours)</li> <li>• Failed special uplifts</li> <li>• Alleged employee behaviour</li> </ul>

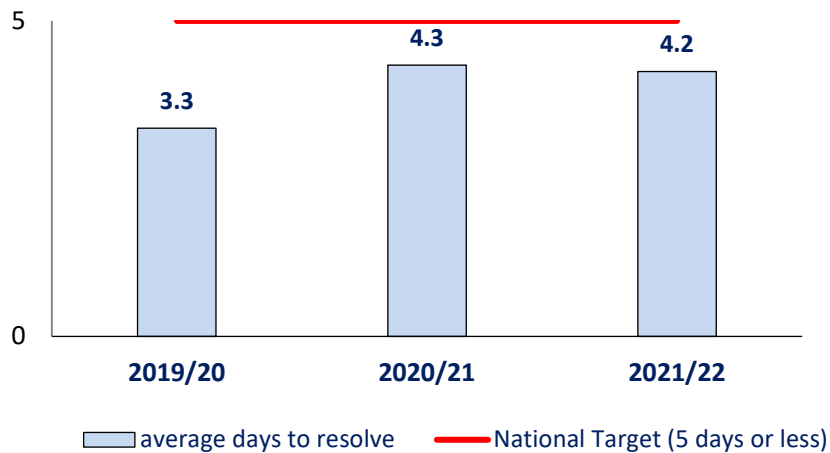
- 'Alleged employee behaviour' appears as a key topic for some Services but the definition is broad and has been used where complainants perceived employee actions or behaviour to be unacceptable. Where unacceptable behaviour was identified by Services appropriate action will have been taken to address.



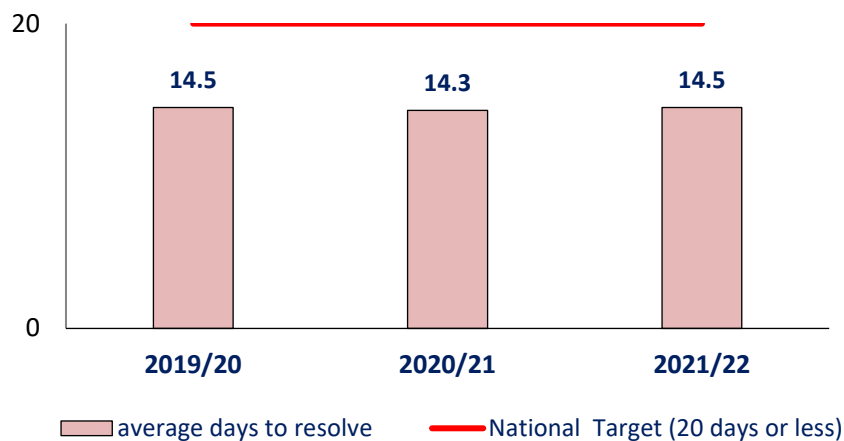
## 5 Average time in working days for a full response

The average time in working days to close complaints under both Stages during the period is noted below. Values for previous years have been included to allow comparisons to be made and any complaints that had their timescales extended have been excluded from the calculations.

### Stage One



### Stage Two

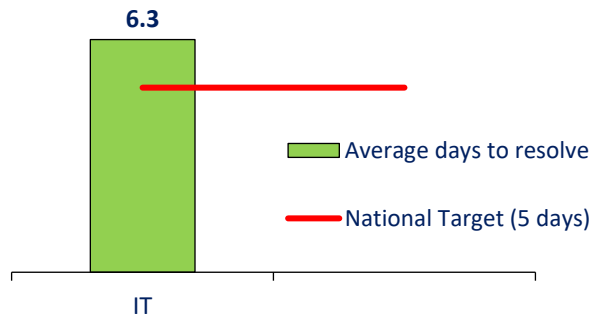


- The average time to close complaints under both Stages has consistently exceeded target.

The bar charts on the following two pages detail Services that did not meet the average time in working days for a response under either Stage. Services that met the target are not listed and any complaints that had their timescales extended have been excluded from the calculations.

## Chief Executive's

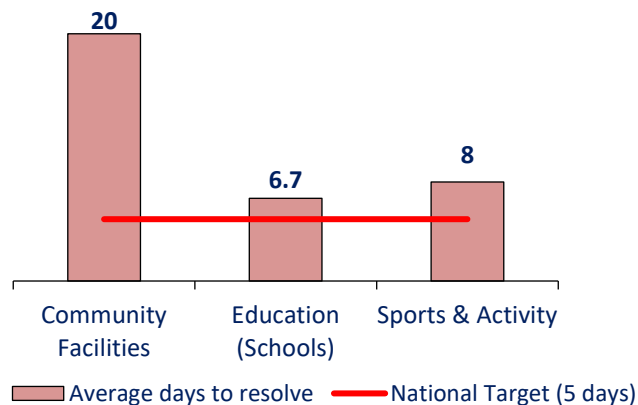
### Stage One



Two IT complaints that were received were resolved beyond 20 working days, resulting in the average days to resolve target not being achieved. One complaint was hindered due to the delay caused by the complainant not providing further information. The other complaint involved a number of services and delays were encountered in receiving their responses in order to address and fix the issue.

## Communities

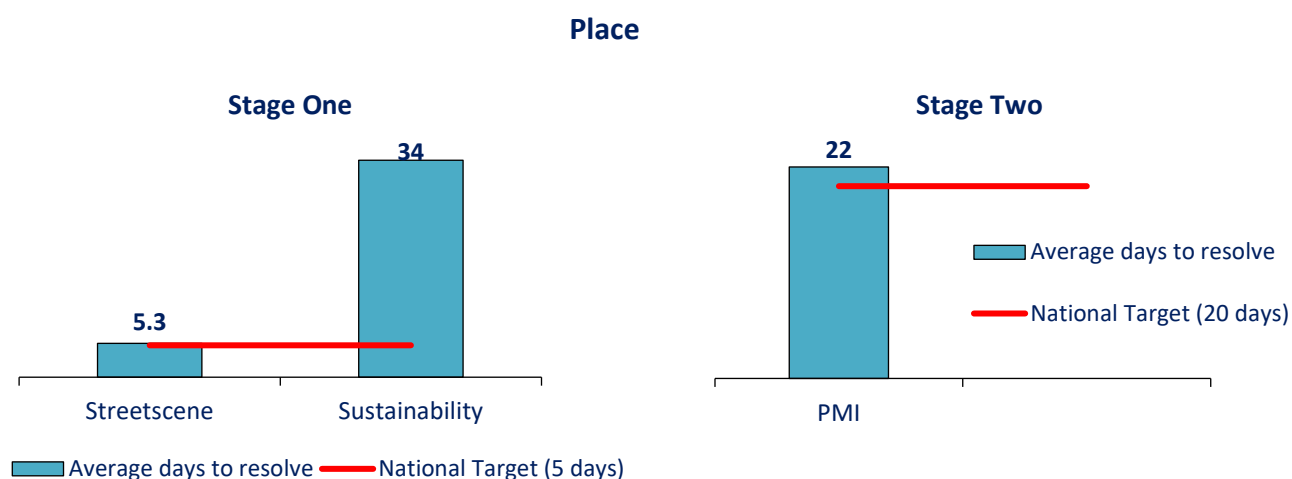
### Stage One



Two complaints were received for Community Facilities and one was closed significantly beyond the 5 working day target due to resourcing issues in the service and delays encountered when engaging the relevant community group to assist in investigating the complaint.

A small number of school complaints were closed significantly beyond the 5 working day target as they had been received when the schools were closed for the summer holidays and so could not be progressed.

One Sports & Activity complaint was received and closed on day 8, breaching the target. This complaint could have been considered for the 5 working day extension.



A small number of Streetscene complaints were closed significantly beyond the 5 working day timescale, impacting on the average days to close. Reasons for this included difficulties in contacting complainants to progress complaints and the complexities of the complaints. Some of these complaints could have been considered at Stage Two.

Energy & Sustainability received two complaints during the year, one of which was closed on working day 64. The delay was due to multiple issues, including bereavement leave, issues with the complaint being directed to the appropriate team to investigate and a breakdown in communication between services involved.

PMI closed a small number of Stage Two complaints during the year, two of which were closed a few days beyond the 20 working day timescale. The delay in closing the complaints was due to the response requiring approval before being issued.

## 6 Extended complaints

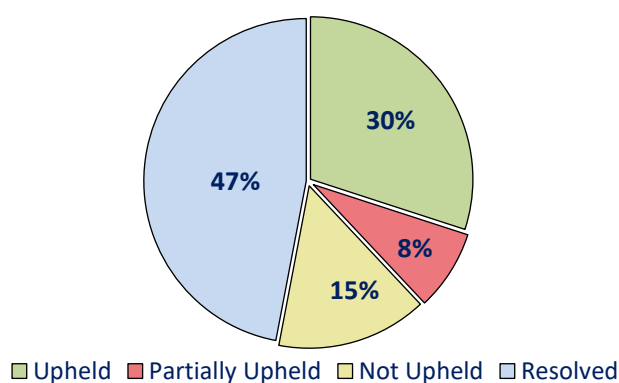
- 106 complaints had their timescales extended during the year - 77 at Stage One and 29 at Stage Two. The complaints related mainly to two Directorates - HSCP (30%) and Place (40%).
- There were numerous reasons for extending, including complainants, 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and employees being unavailable to assist or support with investigations, additional information having to be sought to support investigations and issues arising from the ongoing pandemic (particular lack of resource through self-isolations).
- Of the 106 complaints that had their timescales extended, 81% were closed within their new due dates.

## 7 Complaint Outcomes

Up to 31 March 2021, a complaint that meets our complaint criteria could be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. From 1 April 2021, a fourth outcome became available to use called 'Resolved'. Resolved complaints are where the Council has taken action to address the problem/issue without making a decision on whether there were any failings (this would happen where we agree a solution with the complainant at the outset without needing to actually investigate the complaint).

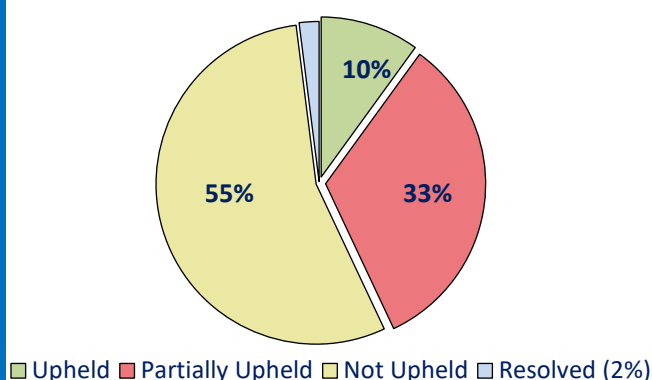
The charts below detail the number of complaints upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or resolved under both Stages.

### Stage One



- Of the 38% of complaints upheld and partially upheld\* at Stage One, over half related to Waste Services and in particular bin collections. This was anticipated given issues the service continued to experience as a result of the pandemic.
- Over two thirds of all Resolved complaints also related to Waste Services (mainly missed bin collections) which indicates many residents simply wanted their bins collected.
- The 15% of complaints not upheld related to policies, regulations or complaints that were poor quality/unfounded.

### Stage Two



- All the Stage Two complaints that were upheld or partially upheld\* were split across all Directorates and multiple services.
- A very small number of complaints were marked as 'Resolved' at Stage Two. As complaints can only typically be 'Resolved' at Stage One, an investigation is underway to determine if the outcomes for these complaints are correct and if not, remedial action will be taken to address.
- Of the 55% of complaints not upheld, these related to various reasons, including policies, regulations and complaints that were unsubstantiated.

\*Partially Upheld complaints are complaints that contain more than one complaint element and at least one of them is upheld

## 8 Improvements made as a result of complaints

Council officers continually seek to make improvements in service delivery and complaint information is analysed regularly to inform service improvements. The largest proportion of complaints raised were experienced within Waste Services and work is ongoing to reflect learning into service delivery arrangements and complaint processing practices to achieve a reduction in complaints received.

Many improvements were made as a result of complaints received during the year and a selection is noted below.

What happened?	What we did
A customer advised they were in the process of booking a special waste uplift when the payment system went down. This resulted in the payment being taken but no uplift.	An apology was offered to the complainant, the special uplift payment refunded and consideration given to adding a statement to the website advising customers what to do when payment receipts are not generated.
This complaint was a sensitive matter regarding a child and an additional support needs Early Years (EY) placement.	An apology was offered to the complainant and it was determined the criteria for the allocation of places to be more clearly communicated with families. It was also agreed EY Management would clarify the process with EY managers regarding who makes contact with a new provider when a child moves locality; EY Management would clarify the start time for an Early Years placement (on birthday or term after birthday); to reconcile the Team Around the Child process regarding the allocation of any placement and to improve communication and sharing of information in a timely fashion; full assessment of needs to be shared with each prospective setting to inform and help decisions to be taken in a timely fashion.
A resident contacted the Council in order to have their address updated as a new build property but was unable to speak to someone using the Street Naming & Numbering (SNN) telephone number in order to get issue resolved.	An apology was offered to the complainant as it was identified the telephone number was not fully operational. Use of a new communications application has allowed the SNN telephone phone number to become usable again and the SNN page on the Council's website will be reviewed to ensure the most appropriate contact details and information.
A customer complained as they called the Council's Contact Centre about a matter and were placed in a queue, however the call was then prematurely terminated, resulting in the customer having to call in a second time and queue again to speak to someone.	A call-back queue has been introduced in the Contact Centre which allows customers to request a call back instead of holding on in a queue. An apology was offered to the complainant for the problems encountered.

## 9 Compliments

Over 240 compliments were recorded cross-Council during the year. Although they cannot all be highlighted in this report, a selection are noted below.

*"I'd like to commend the **Streetscene** fly-tipping team. Any reports I have made have been dealt with quickly whether in the town or out in the country. Well done to all for which has so far been an excellent service."*

Multiple compliments received for **Waste Services** regarding returning to collect missed bins, delivering new bins and the attitude of the employees working at the Recycle Centres

*"Quick response and excellent service from Pest Control Officer from **Environmental Health** today. He was very knowledgeable about wasps and bees that I felt reassured following his inspection. Great work NAC"*

*"I'd like to compliment the **Money Matters Team** - great support and help with my child's DLA appeal. Caring and brilliant at what they do."*

*"I had a plumber from **Building Services** visit my property today to carry out some work. His workmanship was outstanding and he was also very polite and courteous. He is a credit to NAC and I would like his bosses to recognise what an asset he is."*

*"I would like to thank **Housing** and the **Welfare Team** for their help and support as I felt very low and the people I spoke to were very kind, understanding and helpful. I am grateful for their kindness and support during a very difficult time for me"*

*"I would like to pass on my thanks to the Assistant Registrar in **Customer Services** who conducted my wedding in June. The ceremony itself was lovely and she and her colleague let us delay the start as a guest was running late. We were kept updated regularly which was lovely and reassuring. Thank you."*

Several compliments received from residents of Montgomerie Park regarding ground works undertaken by **Regeneration** back in June

*"I would like to express my thanks to two members of your **Streetscene** Team who came to my aid yesterday afternoon when my car broke down in Largs. They were a very calm presence in an otherwise very stressful situation. I do not know what I would have done without them".*

*"We have had a new wet room put in by **Building Services**. I have nothing but praise for the three men who fitted it - what a pleasant experience it was. Friendly, professional and Covid aware. Thank you so much"*

Compliment letter received from a bowling club commending an employee from **Licensing** and an employee from **Environmental Health** for their help and support when adhering to Covid-19 restrictions

## 10 ALEO complaints

An Arms-Length External Organisation (ALEO) is an organisation formally separate from a local authority but still subject to its control and influence. North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) is an ALEO for North Ayrshire Council and this section highlights complaints handled by NALL in 2021/22 using the same Two Stage procedure the Council operates.

### Complaints received per Business Area and Complaint Category

Business Area	Complaint Category	Volume to date
<b>LEISURE</b>		
Irvine	Activities & Programming	40
	Facilities General	26
	Facilities Cleanliness	7
	Customer Service	30
	Marketing/Promo	1
	Policy/General	25
Three Towns	Activities & Programming	10
	Facilities General	9
	Facilities Cleanliness	2
	Customer Service	12
	Marketing/Promo	0
	Policy/General	3
Garnock & Kilwinning	Activities & Programming	6
	Facilities General	10
	Facilities Cleanliness	1
	Customer Service	5
	Policy/General	2
North Coast & Arran	Activities & Programming	8
	Facilities General	26
	Facilities Cleanliness	0
	Customer Service	6
	Policy General	6
	Marketing/Promo	1
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>		
Active Lifestyles	Activities & Programming	3
	Customer Service	0
	Policy/General	3
Community Sport	Activities & Programming	1
	Customer Service	0
Support Team	Customer Service	2
	Policy General	8
	Marketing/Promo	0

- 253 complaints were received by NALL during the year.



### Complaints per 1,000 visits for each department

Department	Complaint Volume	Attendances	Complaint Rate
Leisure	221	697,243	0.32
Physical Activity	12	72,205	0.17
Support Team	20	n/a	n/a

- Whilst the above table only highlights complaint volumes for the first three quarters of 2020/21, the volume of complaints received over the period is small compared to the number of people visiting NALL facilities/venues during the period.

### Complaint categories by volume

Category	Volume
Facilities General	71
Facilities Cleanliness	10
Customer Service	55
Activities and Programming	68
Policy/General	47
Marketing and Promotion	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>

### Three-year Complaint Category comparison

Category	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Facilities General	23	25	71
Facilities Cleanliness	7	12	10
Customer Service	22	56	55
Activities & Programming	27	41	68
Policy/General	17	16	47
Marketing/Promotion	4	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>253</b>

### Complaints handled at each Stage by category

Category	Stage One	Stage Two
Facilities General	36	25
Facilities Cleanliness	5	3
Customer Service	33	11
Activities and Programming	40	22
Policy/General	28	14
Marketing and Promotion	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>75</b>

### Examples of complaints received

Category	Nature of complaints	NALL Response/Action
<b>Facilities General</b>	Customer complained regarding the low temperature of the main pool at Vikingar first thing in the morning.	Apology offered and customer advised that the thermostat had now been set to heat the pool an hour earlier than normal to benefit early morning swimmers.
<b>Facilities Cleanliness</b>	Customer complained about the cleanliness of the sports halls and toilets at Greenwood Academy.	Apology offered to customer and comment passed to the school facility management team who are responsible for school cleaning. KA Leisure staff have also been instructed to monitor cleanliness in these areas.
<b>Customer Service</b>	Customer complained that their direct debit payments were higher than expected.	Apology offered to customer, direct debit amount corrected and refund issued for excess fees collected.
<b>Activities &amp; Programming</b>	Customer complained that live streaming classes were not starting on schedule or sometimes not at all.	Apology offered. Customer was advised that all instructors have been told to ensure classes start at the time advertised. Customer also advised that there are alternative online classes available via the KA App.
<b>Policy/General</b>	Customer complained about having to pay a joining fee which was a deciding factor in joining up.	Apology given but customer advised that KA Leisure was running a join now, pay nothing until January promotion and provided the customer the Promo Code to take advantage of the offer.
<b>Marketing/Promo</b>	Customer complained that they were unable to get in contact with Arran Community Sport Hub or find details on the web site.	Apology offered to customer and a contact number and full list of activities on offer provided.

## 11 SPSO complaint referrals

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about Local Authorities in Scotland. The table below details the volume of complaints relating to the Council that were referred to the SPSO during 2021/22:

Type of Complaint	Volume
Economic Development	1
Education	1
Environmental Health & Cleansing	3
Finance	2
Housing	11
Legal & Admin	2
Planning	3
Social Work	1
Welfare Fund - Crisis Grants	1

- The SPSO received 1,189 complaints about Scottish Local Authorities during 2021/22 which equates to 2% relating to the Council. This referral rate is consistent with previous years (typically between 2% and 3%).
- The highest number of referrals made to the SPSO related to Housing but this was expected given the majority of Local Authority referrals made to the SPSO during the year related to Housing or housing services.

The outcomes of the 24 North Ayrshire Council complaints that were referred to the SPSO and determined are noted below.

Stage	Outcome	Volume
Advice	Premature	3
	Unable to proceed	4
Early Resolution	Discretion – Insufficient benefit achieved by investigation	3
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	9
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	1
	Time limit (s 10)	1
	Unable to proceed	3
Investigation	<i>None received</i>	<i>n/a</i>

- All referrals made by North Ayrshire complainants were resolved by the SPSO at the Advice or Early Resolution stages. None were taken to Investigation stage.
- Some referrals at Advice stage were premature i.e. complainants approached the SPSO before exhausting the Council's Two Stage process.

- The majority of complaint referrals handled at Early Resolution were discretionary in nature, meaning the Council had discretion in terms of how to action them. It is pleasing to note many were considered 'good complaint handling' complaints, meaning the SPSO was satisfied with the way the Council handled them.

More details regarding complaint referrals for North Ayrshire Council can be found on the SPSO website at <https://www.spsa.org.uk/decision-reports>.

## 12 Glossary

Term	Explanation
Stage One	Stage One (aka <i>Frontline Resolution</i> ) aims to resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any employee may deal with complaints at this stage and they can be resolved via any channel. The main principle is to seek resolution at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. Stage One complaints must be responded to within 5 working days unless an extension (a maximum of 5 additional working days or 10 if the complaint relates to Social Work) is requested and approved by a senior manager. The Council should, however, always aim to resolve these types of complaints within 5 working days.
Stage Two	Not all complaints are suitable for Frontline Resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints therefore handled at Stage Two (aka <i>Investigation</i> ) typically require a detailed examination before the Council can state its position. These complaints may already have been considered at Stage One, or they may have been identified from the outset as being complex, serious or high risk and needing immediate investigation. The investigation under a Stage Two should establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position. Stage Two complaints must be responded to within 20 working days unless an extension is approved by senior manager in conjunction with the customer. Stage Two complaints require a written response, signed by a senior manager.

### Complaint criteria

When an expression of dissatisfaction is received the Council determines if the issue falls into one of six complaint categories:

- A service the Council should be providing is not being provided (or is not available)
- A request for a service was provided but not to an appropriate standard
- A request for service has not been answered or actioned within the agreed timescale
- A Council employee was rude, unhelpful or unprofessional
- A Council employee did not attend an appointment or call-out on a date/time agreed
- The complaint relates to a policy (internal or external)

If the issue being raised relates to one or more of the above, the matter is considered a complaint and will be recorded and handled as such. If not, the matter will be handled as something else i.e. a request for a service, observation or enquiry and processed accordingly.

**END OF REPORT**



**15 November 2022****Audit & Scrutiny**

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**Title:** **Workforce Absence 2019-2022**

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**Purpose:** This report provides a year end summary of sickness absence for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22.

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**Recommendation:** That the committee notes the absence levels over the last three-years and the support provided to the workforce.

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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the sickness absence levels and productivity associated with this for the 3-year period from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022. The report highlights the policies, procedures, and proactive interventions to support the Council's workforce.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 It is imperative that the Council effectively manages absence levels to ensure a healthy and productive workforce. To do so each Section, Service and Directorate sets an annual absence target. Absence targets are based on analysis of the absence levels in previous years, FTE and external factors which may influence health and wellbeing. All targets are approved by the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 Absence levels are monitored throughout the year, with a 6 monthly report being provided to the Executive Leadership Team. Where required actions plans have been developed and updates on progress are provided to the Chief Executive.
- 2.3 The Wellbeing@Work (Supporting Attendance) Policy was implemented in 2021. The policy aims to ensure our employees are supported to maintain high levels of attendance, thereby minimising the detrimental effects of sickness absence on service provision, our service users, and colleagues. The policy will ensure a fair, consistent, and compassionate approach to supporting employee attendance, considering individual circumstances, whilst ensuring compliance with all associated legislation.

**3. Overview**

- 3.1 The table below provides the number of days lost per FTE for the whole Council against the respective annual attendance target for the last 3 years. Employee numbers increased in 2019/2020 to enable the Council to respond to the COVID19 pandemic, meeting increased demand on services, whilst also delivering additional services to support the most vulnerable within the community.



Days Lost per FTE NAC					
Year	FTE	Actual	Target	Variance	Change from Previous Year
2019/2020	6574	10.15	7.91	2.24	0.53
2020/2021	6038	6.79	8.70	-1.91	-3.36
2021/2022	6225	9.87	8.70	1.17	3.08

3.2 Mental Health and Musculo Skeletal have been the primary reasons for absence over the last three years. There are multiple initiatives in place to support the workforce specifically targeting these areas, these are summarised at the support section of this report.

3.3 The Council is required to provide statistics for employee absence levels as part of the National Statutory Performance indicators. The stats are based on the average days lost per employee and are categorised separately for Teachers and Non-Teaching employees. The tables below provide a 3-year summary for each category. Scottish Local Authority (SLA) ranking indicates the ranking of North Ayrshire Council's absence levels in relation to the other Councils in Scotland with 1 being the best performing and 32 the worst.

The benchmarking table for absence rates in 2021/22 will not be published until early 2023 at which point the ranking for that year will become available. Policies for managing absence with Councils are determined locally. This may result in different approaches and length of time given to manage an absence. As a result, the SLA ranking gives an indication of performance against other Councils however it is not based on a like for like comparison.

Average Days Lost per FTE per Teachers							
Year	FTE	Actual	Target	Variance	No of Days Lost	Change from Previous Year	SLA Ranking
2019/2020	1416	5.53	6.00	-0.47	7,834	1.83	11
2020/2021	1444	4.78	5.72	-0.94	6,907	-0.75	25
2021/2022	1494	7.20	5.72	1.48	10,764	2.42	-
Average Days Lost per FTE per Employee Non-Teaching							
Year	FTE	Actual	Target	Variance	No of Days Lost	Change from Previous Year	SLA Ranking
2019/2020	5158	8.94	7.91	1.03	46,104	-0.28	1
2020/2021	4594	9.24	9.62	-0.38	42,468	0.30	15
2021/2022	4731	12.90	9.62	3.28	60,828	3.66	-

## Directorate

- 3.4 The table below provides details at a directorate level of average days lost and attendance levels. The attendance level percentage is a measure of the number of employees who had no absence. In April 2020 the Finance and Corporate Support Directorate was consolidated within the Chief Executive's Directorate.

Directorate	2019/2020				2020/21				2021/2022			
	Days Lost	Target	Variance	Attendance	Days Lost	Target	Variance	Attendance	Days Lost	Target	Variance	Attendance
Chief Executives	3.95	5	1.05	55%	3.92	5.69	1.77	77%	6.29	5.62	0.67	70%
Communities & Education	7.54	6	1.54	57%	4.53	6.51	1.98	72%	7.52	6.5	1.02	55%
Finance & Corporate Support	6.06	6	0.06	53%	N/A							
HSCP	14.43	11	3.43	45%	11.47	12.42	0.95	57%	15.29	12.5	2.79	49%
Place	11.75	7.91	3.84	54%	6.95	9.8	2.85	75%	9.54	9.84	0.3	61%

- 3.5 2020/21 and 2021/22 absence rates were impacted by COVID19, as absences due to COVID19 were treated as special leave and not sickness absence. The pandemic has also resulted in longer than usual waiting times for treatment. During this time the Council has continued to support employees on long term absence through individual case management. 2019/20 was the last 'normal' year in relation to measuring sickness absence and it is hoped that absence in 2022/23 will also return to a 'normal' year that will allow a more relevant comparison.

## Productivity

- 3.6 The table below outlines the loss of productivity in the last 3 years. The loss equates to 3% of the paybill in 2019/2020 and 2021/22 and 2% in 2020/21. This reflects pay due to employees for the days they were absent and does not include replacement cover for critical posts such as teachers and care workers. It should be noted that the significant increase within the Chief Executives Directorate can be attributed to the consolidation of the Finance and Corporate Support directorate in April 2020.

Directorate	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Chief Executives	£47,810	£240,491	£379,679
Communities & Education	£2,879,874	£1,903,832	£3,592,952
Finance & Corporate Support	£279,334	N/A	N/A
HSCP	£2,374,393	£2,137,681	£3,263,909
Place	£1,919,167	£1,290,981	£2,022,175
<b>NAC</b>	<b>£7,500,578</b>	<b>£5,572,985</b>	<b>£9,258,715</b>

## COVID-19

- 3.7 During the height of the COVID19 pandemic the Council was required to stand down some services resulting in an element of the workforce being inactive, where appropriate, some employees were redeployed to alternative roles primarily supporting the community.
- 3.8 In addition, employees with significant health conditions were instructed by the Scottish Government to shield from March 2020 until August 2020. The table below outlines the impact shielding had on the Council.

Directorate	Inactive - Shielding		
	Occurrences	Working Days Lost	Impact on Productivity
Chief Executive			
Communities & Education	72	6,483	£503,204
HSCP	60	5,180	£357,231
Place	60	5,145	£330,153
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>16,808</b>	<b>£1,190,589</b>

3.9 During this time a further 107 of the employees who were advised to shield due to health conditions continued to work either undertaking alternate duties or by working from home. Had these options not been available the loss in productivity to the Council resulting from inactivity due to shielding would have been £1.9m.

3.10 Employees who had COVID19 symptoms, tested positive or were required to self-isolate were granted special leave paid for up to 12 weeks and were exempt from the Council's Wellbeing@Work absence triggers. This arrangement was reduced to 10 days in April 2022 and then ceased in June 2022. The number of employees who were absent in this instance, working days lost and loss in productivity to the Council is detailed in the table below. The loss in productivity does not include replacement cover. In addition to inactivity the table below also includes the details where employees were able to continue to work whilst impacted by COVID19 either by working from home or by undertaking alternate duties.

Directorate	Inactive - Loss in Productivity			Working From Home		Alternate Duties	
	Occurrences	Working Days Lost	Loss in Productivity	Occurrences	Working Days	Occurrences	Working Days
Chief Executive	13	152	£17,000	31	374		
Communities & Education	398	4,000	£387,001	745	7,984	41	3,987
HSCP	230	2,782	£205,807	82	2,560	6	1,496
Place	319	2,473	£174,792	50	380	4	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>9,407</b>	<b>£784,600</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>11,298</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>5,575</b>

## Support

3.11 Wellbeing@Work continues to be high on the Council's agenda with several policies, procedures, and initiatives in place to support employees back to work and while at work.

3.12 HR provide support through individual case management, policies, and guides such as Work Life Balance, Menopause, working with Cancer, Carers leave and Agile Working (Workstyles).

3.13 A suite of Occupational Health interventions are available such as Counselling, CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), Physiotherapy, and online resources. The table below details Occupational health usage during the last 3 years and between April 2022 to September 2022.

Year	Referrals
2019/2020	7,004
2020/2021	3,473
2021/2022	3,624
April 2022 – Sept 2022	2,608

During 2020/21 the provision was initially paused and then a reduced service was provided by telephone and virtual methods. 2021/22 continued to be a limited offering in line with COVID workplace guidance with the provision returning to a pre-pandemic provision in the last quarter of 2021/22.

- 3.14 Livewell is an employee led healthy working lives programme that hosts a variety of initiatives such as Yoga, Walking clubs, Mindfulness and Paddleboarding. The calendar of activities focusses on physical activity, healthy eating, weight management, general health, mental health, and financial wellbeing. Wellbeing Warriors were introduced in 2020 to support, listen and signpost individuals to internal and external support. These 30 employees undertook a qualification in mental health first aid to provide them with the skills and knowledge to provide compassionate support.
- 3.15 A variety of development supports are in place throughout the council to ensure the workforce is supported in the skills and knowledge required in relation to their role. These opportunities range from policy and leadership courses such as managing stress which equips managers in the skills required to define and support employees to practical health & safety interventions, such as manual handling to reduce the risk of Musculo skeletal injuries and risk assessment
- 3.16 In addition to the variety of support outlined above, Directorates also provide complimentary wellbeing interventions and a flavour of this is provided below.
- 3.17 Within Communities & Education, a whole school/community approach is being taken to wellbeing. This is built on an ethos and culture that supports inclusion, welcomes employees and their views, builds relationships, and encourages listening. Regular staff briefings were introduced during COVID to promote and support employee wellbeing, due to the success these continue to be a key tool. There is a specific team that support mental health and wellbeing of young people which is now being extended to support the workforce. Information is available online and is supplemented with information provided through professional learning. Collaboration within the Head Teacher network and localised initiatives allow for best practice to be shared and identify next steps to support wellbeing.
- 3.18 The Health and Social Care Partnership have taken a targeted approach to wellbeing, focusing themes such as on Physical Activity, Mental Health Support, Leisure and Recreation Activities, Staff Wellbeing hubs and management support. These themes harness and enhance the support interventions already available within the Council through the Livewell Programme and Occupational Health.
- 3.19 The Place Directorate, takes an inclusive approach to wellbeing, engaging employees, trade unions and managers to discuss absence and recognise attendance. There is also, a focus on increasing employee satisfaction levels and morale through training and further education opportunities. In addition to utilising Occupational Health and corporate initiatives, the Directorate has worked in partnership with Ayrshire College to develop and deliver a bespoke “Customer Service & Resilience” training course, this has supported employees to build resilience and better equip them to deal with challenging situations.

## **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 The Committee note the content of the report and the interventions in place to support

the workforce.

## **5. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

### **Financial**

5.1. The loss of productivity associated with absence are outlined within this report.

### **Human Resources**

5.2 Council's approach supports the health and wellbeing of its workforce.

### **Legal**

5.3 None

### **Equality/Socio-economic**

5.4 None

### **Climate Change and Carbon**

5.5 None

### **Key Priorities**

5.6 None

### **Community Wealth Building**

5.7 None

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 The Chief Executive and Executive Directors have been consulted in the creation of this report.

Fiona Walker  
Head of Service (People & ICT)

For further information please contact **Jackie Hamilton, Senior Manager Employee Services** on **01294 324694**.

### **Background Papers**

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**NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****15 November 2022****Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

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**Title:** **Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans:  
Quarter 2 update**

**Purpose:** To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 30 September 2022.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee (a) notes the current position with the implementation of Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (b) challenges those Services that have not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales.

---

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The CIPFA document 'Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland' highlights that Audit Committees should monitor and review the progress made in implementing audit recommendations.
- 1.2 Service managers are responsible for ensuring that agreed actions arising from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reviews are implemented. This provides assurance that identified control weaknesses have been addressed and are being managed effectively.
- 1.3 All actions are monitored on the Pentana system and service managers are responsible for updating Pentana as they progress each action. This enables Internal Audit to monitor progress on a 'real-time' basis and address any delays in implementation.
- 1.4 This report details the position at 30 September 2022.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The last report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 27 September 2022 highlighted that there were 28 actions outstanding at the end of June 2022: nine that had not been started or were only partially implemented and 19 where the due date had not yet passed.

- 2.2 In addition to these 28 carried forward actions, there have been eight new actions agreed, giving a total of 36 action points for review.
- 2.3 Services have completed 23 actions since the last report. All Council Services are required to retain evidence of work carried out in completing their actions and Internal Audit carries out 'spot-checks' on a sample of completed actions on an ongoing basis.
- 2.4 Of the remaining 13 actions, one was either not started or only partially complete at 30 September 2022 and the remaining 12 were not due for completion until after that date.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 to this report provides the Committee with full details of the action that was not complete within the agreed timescales.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee (a) notes the current position with the implementation of Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (b) challenges those Services that have not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1 None.

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None.

#### **Legal**

- 4.3 None.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 None.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 None.

#### **Key Priorities**

- 4.6 The effective implementation of agreed Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.



## **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

### **5. Consultation**

5.1 Council Services are consulted during the completion of each Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud review and have also provided updates on progress made in implementing action points.

Mark Boyd  
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294 324524**.

### **Background Papers**

None.

## Actions due by 30<sup>th</sup> September but not started or partially complete

<b>Code</b>	IA2020PA032a	<b>Description</b>	<b>Audit Action:</b> Arran should be aligned with the mainland's processes and procedures. <b>Audit Finding:</b> Staff on the mainland and Cumbrae are managing the interment process electronically, whilst staff on Arran continue to use manual records. <b>Risk:</b> Business continuity issues due to operating a completely separate system on Arran; manual records are not backed-up in the same way that electronic records are.		
<b>Priority</b>	2	<b>Latest Note</b>	The Service is working with IT to complete the Data Protection Impact Assessment in order to progress with the upgrade, we are confident this will be completed and processed by end of December 2022.		
<b>Progress Bar</b>	<div><div>95%</div></div>	<b>Original Due Date</b>	31-Mar-2021	<b>Due Date</b>	31-Jul-2022
<b>Parent Code &amp; Title</b>	IA2020PA032 Bereavement and Burial Services			<b>Managed By</b>	David Hammond
				<b>Assigned To</b>	Mark McNeil

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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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**Title:** Corporate Fraud Team update report

**Purpose:** To provide the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with an update report on the work of the Corporate Fraud Team between April and September 2022.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee notes the work carried out by the Corporate Fraud Team.

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Corporate Fraud Team provides the Council with the capacity to investigate fraud both within and against the organisation.
- 1.2 Committee receives bi-annual updates on the work of the team. This report provides an overview of the activity of the team between April and September 2022.

#### 2. Background

##### Referrals

- 2.1 Referrals for investigation have been made to the team from a number of different sources, including Revenues and Benefits and Housing, members of the public and other agencies and local authorities. The publicity used by the team, including posters and leaflets, advertising on Council vans and contact information on the Council website, continues to be successful in generating a stream of referrals.
- 2.2 Investigations have been carried out across a range of areas including employee-related matters as well as Council Tax, Discretionary Housing Payments, Scottish Welfare Fund, Blue Badges and Housing tenancy issues. Although responsibility for investigating Housing Benefit fraud now lies with the DWP Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), issues may be identified by the Corporate Fraud Team which can result in changes being made to benefits in payment. Joint working with the DWP paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, but has since recommenced. This formal joint working arrangement is in place for cases where there are suspected frauds relating to both DWP benefits and Council Tax Reduction.

- 2.3 The team investigates all tenancy abandonments which are referred by Housing. While Housing focus on recovering the tenancy, the Corporate Fraud Team can add value by locating the missing tenant, which can often lead to changes to benefits or discounts in payment elsewhere, as well as enabling Housing to recover costs associated with house clearances and cleaning.
- 2.4 Employee-related investigations are the subject of a separate report to the appropriate Service and the findings are also reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee as each investigation is finalised.

#### Financial outcomes for April to September 2022

- 2.5 The team received 176 referrals for investigation during the first half of 2022/23 (2021/22: 169 referrals). The team investigates 100% of referrals made. During the period, 161 cases were closed (2021/22: 144 cases). These can be categorised as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
Closed with no issues identified	75
Referred to another agency (including SFIS) or Council Service for investigation	42
Closed with results achieved (fraud, error or other recovery/action)	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>161</b>

- 2.6 Fraud and error totalling £0.079m were identified and are categorised in the table below:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Value (£000)</b>
Housing Benefit	13
Council Tax (including CTR, Single Person Discount and other recoveries)	33
Housing	8
Other (including employee investigations)	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

#### Non-financial outcomes for April to September 2022

- 2.7 In addition to the financial outcomes noted above, other outcomes/benefits were noted as follows:
- Twenty-six tenancies were recovered by Housing with some assistance from the Corporate Fraud Team;
  - One warning letter was issued for blue badge misuse, with a further badge being recovered for misuse.
  - One application for a new tenancy has been refused as a result of pro-active checks on tenancy successions, joint tenancies, and tenancy exchanges.
  - Two employee investigations have been taken forward to disciplinary action by services.
  - One case was referred to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) for them to consider prosecution.

### Pro-Active work

- 2.8 Two data matching exercises commenced in 2021/22 using data from the council tax and payroll systems, the aim of which was to identify any anomalies in the council tax accounts of council employees. £0.030m of recoveries were reported in the year end report for 2021/22 presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2022. A further 18 cases were closed in 2022/23 with single person's discount anomalies amounting to £0.025m.
- 2.9 This brings recoveries from the full exercise to £0.055m (2021/22: £0.030m; 2022/23: £0.025m).

### National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

- 2.10 The NFI is a long-established exercise which takes place across the UK every two years and involves the matching of relevant datasets across public bodies to identify possible fraud or error for further investigation. The team co-ordinates the Council's participation in the NFI.
- 2.11 Potential data matches from the 2020/21 exercise were received from the Cabinet Office between February and September 2021 and passed to the appropriate teams for investigation. Following conclusion of investigation work, the outcomes for North Ayrshire Council were as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Value (£000)</b>
Blue badges (89 errors)	51
Council Tax Single Person Discount (30 frauds and 1 error)	26
Business rates (1 error)	8
Council Tax reduction (1 error and 3 frauds)	3
Housing Benefit (1 error)	2
Creditor Payments (1 error)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>

- 2.12 The NFI exercise for 2022/23 is underway, commencing with the completion of compliance declarations. The Council's data sets are due to be submitted to the Cabinet Office imminently with data matches expected to be available in early 2023. The outcomes from that exercise will be reported to a future meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

### International Fraud Awareness Week

- 2.13 International Fraud Awareness Week takes place from 13 – 19 November 2022. With the removal of COVID-19 restrictions, plans are in place to once again hold events at properties across North Ayrshire. The purpose of these visits is to raise knowledge and awareness of the Corporate Fraud Team.

## **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the work carried out by the Corporate Fraud Team.

#### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

##### **Financial**

4.1 None.

##### **Human Resources**

4.2 None.

##### **Legal**

4.3 None.

##### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 None.

##### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 None.

##### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The work of the Corporate Fraud Team helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

##### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

#### **5. Consultation**

5.1 No consultation has been required in the preparation of this report.

Mark Boyd  
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294 324524**.

##### **Background Papers**

None

## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

**Title:** Internal Audit Reports issued

**Purpose:** To inform the Committee of the findings of Internal Audit work completed between September and October 2022.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee considers the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed.

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's local Code of Corporate Governance requires effective arrangements to be put in place for the objective review of risk management and internal control. Internal Audit is an important element in this framework as it reviews internal controls and offers Elected Members and officers an objective and independent appraisal of how effectively resources are being managed.
- 1.2 The remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee includes the monitoring of Internal Audit activity. The submission and consideration of regular reports assists the Committee in fulfilling this remit.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 This report provides information on Internal Audit work completed between September and October 2022. Internal control reviews have been completed in respect of the areas detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. The aim of these reviews is to provide assurance that the internal control framework within the areas examined is appropriate and operating effectively.
- 2.2 The findings from each audit assignment have been notified in writing to the Chief Executive, the Section 95 Officer and the relevant Executive Director and Head of Service on the completion of each assignment. Where appropriate, this has included an action plan with recommendations for improving internal control. Appendix 1 includes the report and action plan from each audit.
- 2.3 The findings from three separate audit assignments are detailed at Appendix 1 to this report and the levels of assurance for each are noted in the table below:



<b>Audit Title</b>	<b>Assurance Level</b>
Building Services Procurement	Substantial
Roads – Stores Controls	Substantial
Care Home Admissions	Substantial

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed between September and October 2022.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1 None.

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None.

#### **Legal**

- 4.3 None.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 None.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 None.

#### **Key Priorities**

- 4.6 The work of Internal Audit helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

#### **Community Wealth Building**

- 4.7 None.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The relevant Services are consulted on Internal Audit findings during each audit assignment.

Mark Boyd  
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294 324524**.

**Background Papers**

None.

## **BUILDING SERVICES PROCUREMENT**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 Building Services procurement was last audited in 2017/18.

### **2 Objectives and Scope**

- 2.1 The objective of this audit was to:-
- Ensure the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts are being applied when procuring goods and services
  - Confirm that invoices authorised for payment in ROCC URM are subject to the same level of scrutiny and authorisation as those being processed directly through Integra.

### **3 Findings**

#### **Standing Orders relating to Contracts**

- 3.1 The Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts sets out the process for awarding a contract, depending on the anticipated level of spend.
- 3.2 Audit selected a sample of 20 suppliers with varying levels of actual spend and reviewed the contract in place to ensure if complied with Standing Orders. The following issues were highlighted during testing:-
- 3.3 Audit noted 2 suppliers where levels of spend were sufficient to require a quick quote or contract to be put in place. Discussions with Building Services confirmed that both of these suppliers are used at the request of other services, which makes it difficult to estimate an annual spend for tendering. Building Services highlighted that 3 written quotes are obtained for such jobs, thereby ensuring best value is being obtained. Audit confirmed this via sample testing.
- 3.4 One supplier was found to have a contract in place, but the Council had spent in excess of the contracted value. Discussions with Corporate Procurement and Building Services highlighted that they had already identified this issue and had taken steps to address it. The Services explained that a business case had been produced that confirmed staying with the supplier was the best option for the Council and a new contract was negotiated, with a start date of April 2022.
- 3.5 Building Services have confirmed that they have a process in place for monitoring supplier spend against contracts. Audit did not test this system in detail during the audit.

#### **ROCC URM transactions**

- 3.6 The majority of Building Services' purchases are managed via a job costing system called ROCC URM. This system allows Officers to raise purchase orders, receipt goods and approve invoices as fit for payment. A feeder is then used to transfer approved invoices into Integra for payment.

- 3.7** Audit confirmed that officer's authorisation levels in ROCC correspond with those in Integra.
- 3.8** Audit selected a sample of 10 invoices originating in ROCC and ensured:-
- purchase orders have been approved by an authorised officer
  - any variations to the original order have been approved by an authorised officer
  - goods received information is available (if applicable – some orders are for sub-contractors rather than goods)
  - invoice is marked as 'reconciled'.
- 3.8** No issues were noted during detailed testing.

## **4 Internal Audit Opinion**

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard the elements of Building Services procurement processes covered by this audit.

### **Definitions of Assurance Levels:**

<b>Substantial</b>	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exist, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Reasonable</b>	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Limited</b>	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>None</b>	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

## **ROADS – STORES CONTROLS**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1** Goldcraigs depot is responsible for controlling the issuing, replenishment, and security of Roads stock.

### **2 Objectives and Scope**

- 2.1** The objective of this audit was to ensure that:-
- The Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts are being adhered to
  - Robust procedures are in place regarding stock purchases
  - Robust procedures are in place for recording the issuing of stock
  - Physical controls are in place to protect stock from loss or theft

### **3 Findings**

#### **Standing Orders relating to Contracts**

- 3.1** Audit identified the top 5 stock suppliers in 2021/22 and in 2022/23 (up to the end of August 22) and reviewed the contractual arrangements in place.
- 3.2** All contracts were found to be in line with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders.

#### **Stock Purchase Procedures**

- 3.3** Roads use a dedicated stock management system called RCM.
- 3.4** A combination of RCM and manual processes are used to order stock, record stock movements and approve invoices.
- 3.5** Once approved, invoices are keyed into Integra for payment.
- 3.6** Audit selected a sample of 10 stock invoices paid in 2022/23 and for each ensured:
- the order was approved by an authorised signatory
  - RCM stock records had been updated to reflect the receipt of goods
  - Invoiced quantities had been compared to goods received
  - Invoices had been approved by an authorised signatory
- 3.7** Audit testing highlighted that 9 out of the 10 orders reviewed had not been approved by authorised signatories (although the subsequent invoice had been approved by an authorised signatory).
- 3.8** This issue was immediately raised with Roads Management who agreed that the officers who had been 'approving' orders should have the authority to do so, and therefore took steps to have them approved as authorised signatories.

#### **Issuing of stock**

- 3.9** Audit testing on the process of issuing stock was limited to on-site discussions with officers at Goldcraigs.

**3.10** Officers were able to demonstrate the daily paper trail involved in the issuing of stock and confirmed that all paperwork is reconciled daily before any stock adjustments are noted in RCM.

**3.11** The recording of issued stock was considered as part of the testing of stock controls below.

### **Stock controls**

**3.12** Weekly stock checks of the 45 most commonly used items confirms the ongoing accuracy of RCM.

**3.13** A full count of all stock is undertaken annually - in line with the Council's year-end financial procedures.

**3.14** Any differences identified during these counts must be reported to a Team Leader, who will seek explanations and adjust the stock records on RCM as necessary. No staff at the depot have the ability to amend stock records.

**3.15** Audit testing involved:-

- Requesting evidence of 6 of the weekly counts
- Attending the depot and performing a stock count of 10 stock items
- Performing a high level review of site security.

**3.16** No issues were noted during testing.

## **4 Internal Audit Opinion**

**4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to Roads stock controls.

**4.2** Roads took immediate action to correct the issue regarding authorised signatories highlighted in 3.7 above and are now aware of the need to ensure that authorisation levels are applicable to purchase orders as well as invoice approvals.

### Definitions of Assurance Levels:

<b>Substantial</b>	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exist, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Reasonable</b>	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Limited</b>	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>None</b>	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.



## **CARE HOME ADMISSIONS**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1** Since September 2020 there has been a change to the care homes admissions process and new managers have taken on the process. This audit was to assess whether previous issues with admissions have been addressed.
- 1.2** Care homes have continued to admit new residents throughout the Covid-19 pandemic with the inclusion of additional Infection Prevention and Control measures being in place to ensure this was managed as safely as possible. In addition the HSCP were asked by Scottish Government to ensure appropriate oversight arrangements were in place for care homes during the pandemic, the North Ayrshire Care Home Oversight Group has been in place since April 2020 initially meeting daily and continuing to meet at least fortnightly to take an MDT approach to oversight and assurance over care homes in North Ayrshire.

### **2 Objectives and Scope**

- 2.1** The main objectives of the audit were to ensure that:
- sufficient information was available to make an informed choice
  - the process is robust and fair
  - there is a financial trail
  - the admission process is more efficient.

### **3 Findings**

#### **Informed Choices**

- 3.1** There are 24 care homes in the North Ayrshire Council catchment area, 12 of which offer nursing care level of support. The council runs three of these homes, four are managed by voluntary organisations and the rest are privately owned. Information on their location, client reviews and performance are available on the Care Home North Ayrshire website.
- 3.2** The Care Inspectorate is responsible for the inspections and maintenance of standards. Inspection reports are published online and available to read online on the Care Commission's website.
- 3.3** Since 2019 there have been 32 inspections by the Care Inspectorate with the following themes:
- How good is our leadership?
  - How good is our setting?
  - How well do we support people's wellbeing?
  - How good is our staff team?
  - How well is care and support planned?
- 3.4** During the Covid 19 period the Care Commission visited seven care homes two of which received poor ratings subsequently upgraded after a second visit. Four visits were not assessed. The oversight for care home inspection gradings,

feedback and actions required is undertaken by the Care Home Oversight Group. The Integration Joint Board receive an annual update in the Annual Performance Report of the inspection gradings of all registered social care services during the year.

## **Admissions**

- 3.5** During the COVID period the admissions process from the community remained in place. Whilst pre-pandemic funding restrictions limited the number of care home placements and led to waiting lists, these restrictions were lifted over the Covid-19 response period. Over the same time hospital admissions were prioritised, and a discharge to assess methodology was used with assessments retrospectively completed.
- 3.6** Each potential care home resident is appointed a social worker who discusses options with the person and their families. These options reflect the needs and preference of the resident and their family. There are three preferred care home options which the family can rate in preference. Where a preferred option is not available then an interim plan or placement can be considered. Following this process, a financial assessment is completed and presented to the Care Assessment Review Group (CARG) along with supporting documentation which includes bank statements, POA documentation.
- 3.7** Currently there is no community waiting list for long term care home placements. There is an active a waiting list for hospital discharge to care homes, the majority of which relate to patients who lack capacity and under the AWI legislation there are no legal powers in place to facilitate a move to permanent care.

## **Decisions**

- 3.8** The CARG, which is the group that approve placements, meet weekly on a Thursday, prior to September 2020 this was monthly. The exception to this was during the Festive period holiday when the Council offices were closed.
- 3.9** A selection of 9 CARG meetings covered 190 individual cases. The maximum cases reviewed in one meeting was 33 and the minimum was 9.
- 3.10** To test client satisfaction with the CARG decision process a review of the internal complaints recorded on the Council's LAGAN stage one, two complaints and enquiries was undertaken. Analysis was difficult due to the methodology of recording events on LAGAN however for 202 stage one and two complaints there were 12 were related to the CARG. One was with the process itself; one was in relation to the client's home and the others with regards the financial process itself. 13 enquiries were received in relation to care homes.
- 3.11** External complaints are investigated and recorded by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). There were 29 Decision notices between August 2011 and November 2020, none related to care homes. There were no investigations after this period.

## **Compliance**

- 3.12** A random sample of 9 clients was selected from the CARG decision cases, these included a mixture of both residential and nursing care placements. Preferred Care homes were listed for 7 of the cases and information provided to the CARG was complete for each decision, one case was awaiting Power of Attorney to be appointed by the court.
- 3.13** Information for all financial assessments were compliant with guidance, complete and accurate.
- 3.14** Budgetary performance is tracked on a complex Microsoft excel sheet. This workbook was created in July 2013. Although nine years old, the data when tested was robust.

## **4 Internal Audit Opinion**

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to admission process.
- 4.2** The care home environment and market faces considerable challenges in terms of sustainability in the future. It is imperative that the HSCP continue to have an efficient admissions process and oversight arrangements in place in relation to care homes in North Ayrshire.

### **Definitions of Assurance Levels:**

<b>Substantial</b>	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
<b>Reasonable</b>	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
<b>Limited</b>	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
<b>None</b>	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.



## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

15 November 2022

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

**Title:** National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in Scotland 2022

**Purpose:** To provide the Committee with an overview of the NFI 2020/21 exercise outcomes.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee notes the outcomes of the exercise.

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Audit Scotland has published its most recent biennial National Fraud Initiative (NFI) report. The report is provided in full at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 North Ayrshire Council's participation in the NFI exercise is coordinated by the Corporate Fraud Team, with matches investigated by appropriate teams across the Council.
- 1.3 Investigation of the 2020/21 data matches was concluded earlier in 2022.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The NFI is a major counter fraud exercise carried out across the UK every two years. Participating bodies provide sets of data and, following matching of data provided by various public sector bodies, anomalies in the data are provided for investigation.
- 2.2 The exercise is coordinated across the UK by the Cabinet Office, and in Scotland is delegated to Audit Scotland through the powers in the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.3 The NFI exercise in Scotland is well established and remains the most comprehensive detective and preventative scheme in which vast amounts of data across numerous public bodies can be compared and matched using dedicated software. A data match does not necessarily mean there is fraud or error present, but highlights that further investigation is required in order to make a determination. Outcomes are recorded on the system and collated for each public body in order to arrive at a total value of recoveries across the whole of Scotland.
- 2.4 132 public bodies across Scotland participated in the 2020/21 NFI exercise, with 507,354 matches recommended for investigation across the country. Matches are

categorised into risk priority to enable resources to be focussed on the matches with the most likely outcomes and recoveries.

- 2.6 The value of fraud and error identified across Scotland in 2020/21 was £14.9m, resulting in cumulative outcomes of £158.5m since the NFI first launched in 2006/07. In the UK, the 2020/21 result was £442.6m, and £2.4bn cumulatively since 2006/07.
- 2.7 The majority of the NFI results arise from the following key match areas:
- Council tax discounts
  - Blue badges
  - Pensions
  - Housing benefit
  - Housing tenancy
  - Council tax reduction
  - Housing waiting lists
  - Creditors
- 2.8 For North Ayrshire Council, financial recoveries from the 2020/21 exercise amounted to £0.091m.
- 2.9 External audit also carried out an assessment of the Council's planning and progress with the NFI and makes recommendations for improvement where appropriate. North Ayrshire Council was assessed as Satisfactory.
- 2.9 Audit Scotland continues to work with the Cabinet Office in developing new ways to prevent and detect fraud. This includes piloting new data matching opportunities, and where pilots achieve matches that demonstrate a significant level of success these are extended nationally and included in the main NFI exercise going forward.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the content of the Audit Scotland report on the National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2022.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1 None.

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None.

#### **Legal**

- 4.3 None.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 None.

### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 None.

### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The work of the Corporate Fraud Team, including participation in the NFI, helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 No consultation has been required in the preparation of this report.

Mark Boyd  
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294 324524**.

### **Background Papers**

None



# The National Fraud Initiative in Scotland 2022



Prepared by Audit Scotland  
August 2022

# Key messages

The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a counter-fraud exercise which aims to prevent and detect fraud. The exercise operates across the UK public sector and includes 132 public bodies in Scotland. The NFI shares and matches data held by public bodies and helps confirm that services and payments are provided to the correct people. See [Appendix 1](#) for more information about the NFI exercise.

- 1 The 2020/21 NFI exercise has identified **outcomes** valued at £14.9 million ([see page 4](#)).
- 2 The cumulative outcomes from the NFI in Scotland since 2006/07 are now £158.5 million. Across the UK, the cumulative total of NFI outcomes are now £2.4 billion ([see page 4](#)).
- 3 The overall level of fraud identified by the NFI has fallen since our last report. Outcomes from the Scottish NFI exercise fell by £0.4 million in 2020/21, from £15.3 million in 2018/19. The reduction in outcomes could be due to less fraud and error in the system, strong internal controls or due to some key data sets from previous exercises not being included in the latest exercise ([see page 4](#)).
- 4 Data sharing enables matches to be made between bodies and across national borders. Data submitted by Scottish bodies for the 2020/21 NFI exercise helped other organisations in Scotland and across the UK to identify outcomes of £1.2 million ([see page 17](#)).
- 5 Most bodies that participate in the NFI continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to counter fraud and the NFI ([see page 18–19](#)). However, a lower percentage of participating public bodies managed their roles in the 2020/21 NFI exercise satisfactorily compared to the 2018/19 NFI exercise.
- 6 Pilot work to look at potential data matches for future NFI exercises identified £2.2 million in incorrect non-domestic rates relief. The pilot work also identified one £25,000 fraudulent Covid-19 grant payment and 1,737 national entitlement travel cards which should have been cancelled ([see pages 20–23](#)).

An NFI **outcome** describes the overall amounts for fraud, overpayments and error that are detected by the NFI exercise as well as an estimate of future losses that it prevents ([see Appendix 3](#)).



# Recommendations

## 1. Maximise the benefits

All participating bodies in the NFI exercise should ensure that they maximise the benefits of their participation. This includes reviewing matches timeously and prioritising high-risk matches.

NFI users should review the guidance within the NFI secure web application, to help ensure the most effective use of limited resources when reviewing and investigating NFI matches.

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## 2. Self-appraisal

The NFI self-appraisal checklist should be reviewed by the audit committee, or equivalent, and staff leading the NFI process. This is to ensure that their organisation's planning, approach, and progress during the next NFI exercise is appropriate.

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## 3. Take improvement action

Where local auditors have identified specific areas for improvement, participating bodies should act on these as soon as possible.

# Outcomes from 2020/21 National Fraud Initiative

Trends in overall outcomes between 2018/19 and 2020/21 NFI exercises



**The number of public bodies participating in the NFI exercise has increased by eight since the last exercise, to 132 bodies.**



**Outcomes in Scotland have fallen by £0.4 million since the last exercise, from £15.3 million to £14.9 million.**



**The number of matches generated has fallen by over 73,000 since the last exercise, to 507,354.**

NFI participants include all councils, NHS bodies, colleges and all larger central government bodies, for example, the Scottish Government, Revenue Scotland and Transport Scotland. In addition, 14 councils include data from Arm's-Length External Organisations (ALEOs), joint boards or subsidiaries within their NFI submissions. A list of all participating bodies is available on our [website](#).

Reduced levels of outcomes could be due to less fraud and error in the system, strong internal controls or some key datasets from previous years not being included in the latest exercise. Residential care home data, direct payments and social care customers' data were not matched in the 2020/21 exercise due to a legal question being raised around the definition of patient data. Immigration data was also not included in the 2018/19 and 2020/21 exercises due to restrictions placed on it by the Home Office.

NFI participants have identified pressures on staffing and services particularly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the strengthening of controls where previous fraud or error has been identified, as contributing to reduced outcomes in the 2020/21 exercise.

## NFI outcomes



**£14.9 million**

NFI outcomes in Scotland from the 2020/21 exercise



**£158.5 million**

NFI outcomes cumulatively in Scotland since 2006/07

## UK NFI outcomes



**£442.6 million**

from the 2020/21 exercise

**£2.4 billion**

cumulatively since 2006/07



**4 cases**

referred for prosecution in Scotland

Having fewer outcomes provides some assurance there does not appear to be significant problems in the areas covered by the exercise. However, participants still benefit from the deterrent effect the NFI creates.

The fall in the number of matches is mainly due to the matches between housing benefit and payroll or pensions not being included in the matches returned to councils during the 2020/21 NFI exercise. Instead, this data was matched in Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) systems ([see page 11](#)). In addition, the removal of immigration, residential care home, direct payments and social care customers' data has also reduced the number of matches.

Four cases were referred to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for prosecution. One resulted in Police Scotland issuing a caution and the offender is now repaying the money. The outcomes from the other three cases are not yet known.

Although the main purpose of the NFI is to ensure funds and services are provided to the correct people, the review of NFI matches may also identify that a customer is entitled to additional services or payments.

A breakdown of the recorded outcomes for Scottish participants is on our [Counter-fraud hub](#).

# Results

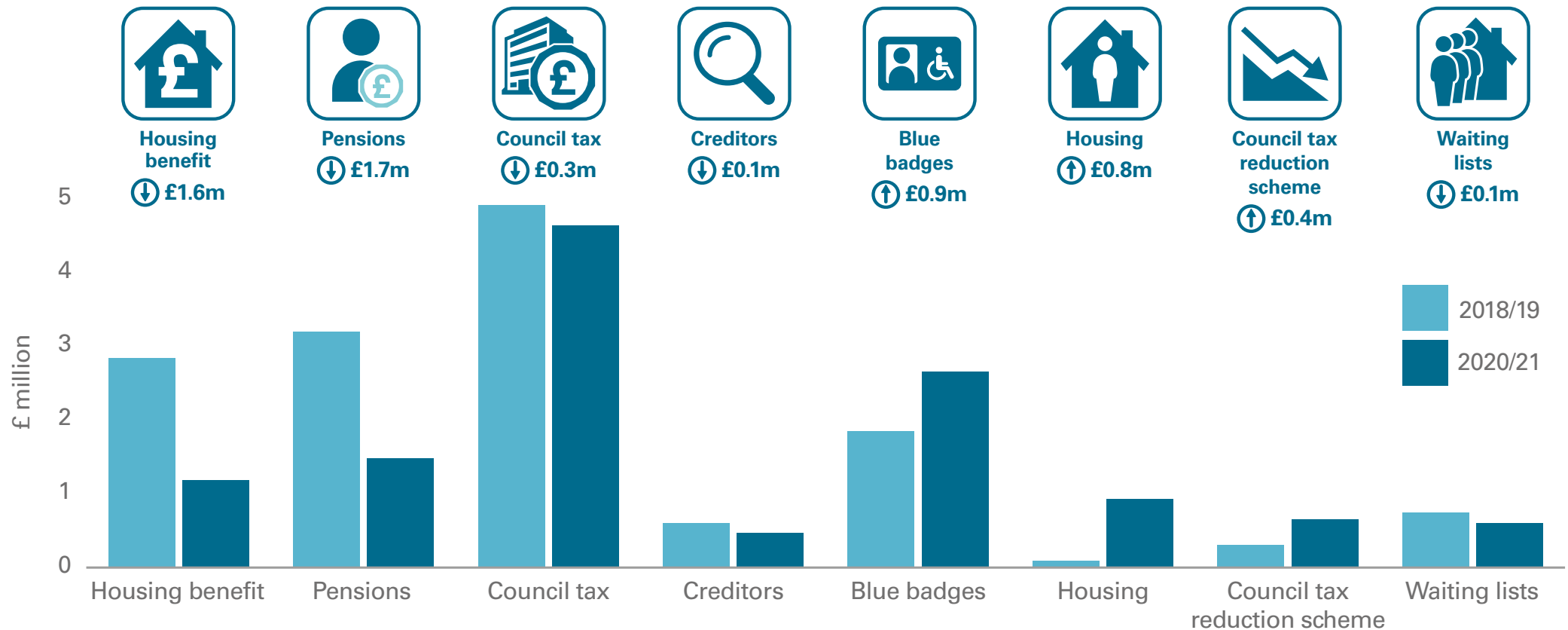
## Overall outcomes

### How the latest outcomes compare to the last exercise

The areas with significant changes are:



NFI outcomes in Scotland have fallen by £0.4 million, to £14.9 million in the 2020/21 exercise



## NFI participants have cited the following reasons as to why outcomes are less in the 2020/21 exercise:

- staff have had less time available to commit to NFI because of the added pressures on services caused by the Covid-19 pandemic
- external agents were used instead of the NFI to carry out certain data matching such as the council tax single occupant discounts
- new controls were introduced because of previous errors identified through the NFI
- a new system was introduced for reporting the death of customers.

More information about the outcomes for each category is provided on [pages 8 to 15](#).

A full breakdown of outcomes for each participating body is available on our [Counter-fraud hub](#).

Once overpayments have been identified, public bodies can take appropriate action to recover the money.



At 31 March 2022

**£4.3 million**

(95%) of cash overpayments were being recovered

## How NFI matches help to identify areas for improvement

The NFI exercise has helped participants to identify system weaknesses and to make improvements. These include the introduction of:

- a more robust control environment in the creditors system. This includes monthly purchase ledger reviews, improved checks on new suppliers, and controls to identify duplicate payments and duplicate suppliers
- revised procedures when setting up new suppliers
- a review and cleansing of data held in systems
- strengthened controls in the blue badge system
- improved controls around the change of bank details
- a review of policies aimed at supporting good governance such as declaring interests, registering of conflicts of interest and checks for identifying potential related parties.





# Council tax discounts

People living on their own, or with no countable adults in the household, are eligible for a 25 per cent single person discount (SPD) on their annual council tax bill.

The 2020/21 NFI exercise found that the total council tax discount incorrectly awarded across Scottish councils totalled £4.6 million.

**£4.6 million**

Total outcomes  
in 2020/21 exercise

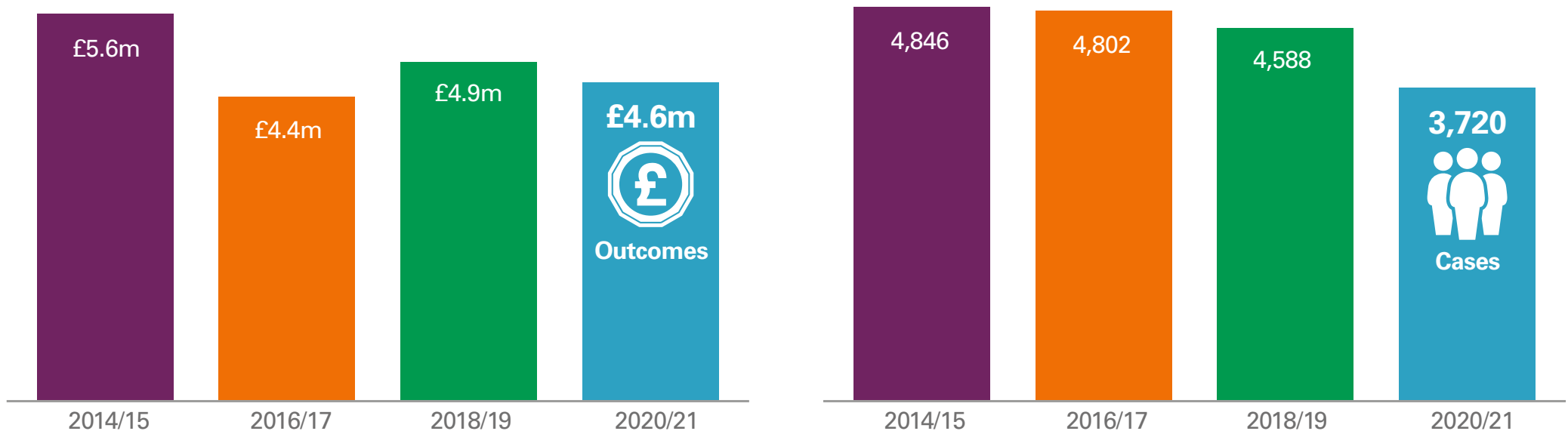
**£1,248**

Average outcome

**3,720**

Cases

Four councils reported that they did not use the NFI and instead used alternative data matching or verification arrangements to review SPD cases during 2020/21. The graphs below include outcomes from the other 28 councils.



## Council tax data is matched to:



Electoral register



Note. Due to an error with the data deletion schedule in the Cabinet Office, some supporting evidence for 11 councils was inadvertently deleted. Therefore, full supporting documentation is not available for these councils. The Cabinet Office has taken steps to prevent this error from re-occurring.



# Blue badges

The blue badge parking scheme allows people with mobility problems to park for free at on-street parking meters, in 'pay and display' bays, in designated blue badge spaces, and on single or double yellow lines in certain circumstances.

The 2020/21 NFI exercise identified 4,616 blue badge outcomes, an increase of 1,401 (44 per cent) since the last exercise. The estimated value of these outcomes is £2.7 million.

**£2.7 million**

Total outcomes  
in 2020/21 exercise

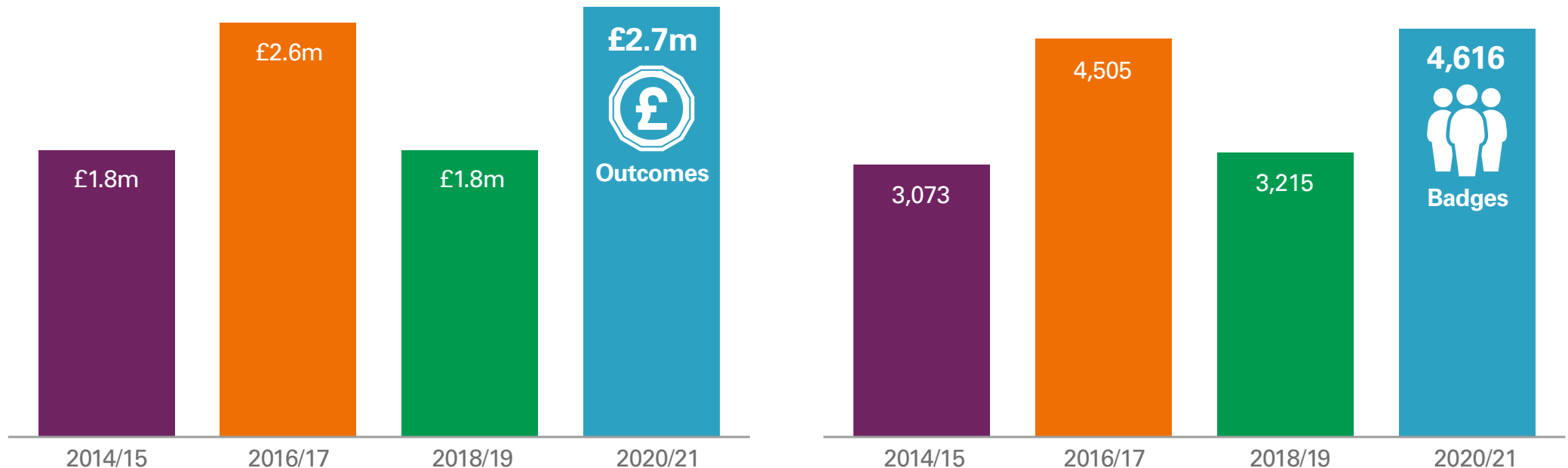
**4,616**

Total number of blue  
badge outcomes in  
2018/19 exercise

**1,401**

Increase from NFI  
2018/19 exercise

Blue badges are sometimes used or renewed improperly by people after the badge holder has died. It is an offence for an unauthorised person to use a blue badge.



## Blue badge data is matched to:



Deceased  
persons



Amberhill  
data<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amberhill is a system used by the Metropolitan Police to authenticate documents presented for identity



# Pensions

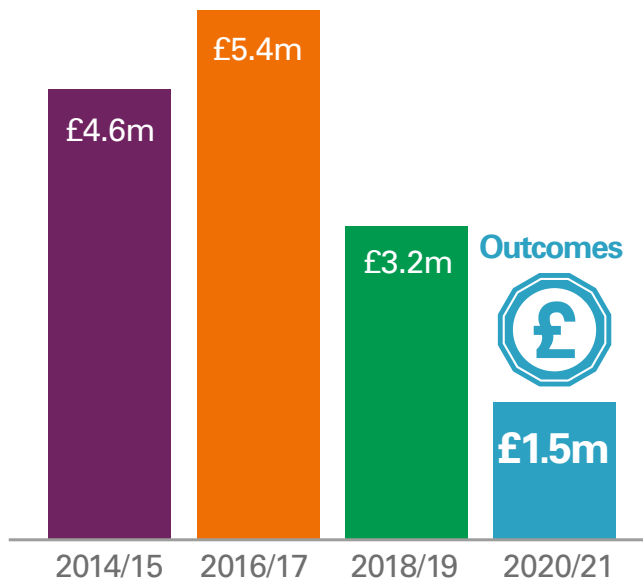
The NFI provides both councils that administer pensions and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) with an efficient and effective way of checking that they are only paying people who are alive.

## £1.5 million

Total outcomes in 2020/21 exercise

## £1.7 million

Reduction on the 2018/19 NFI exercise



In total, pension outcomes for the 2020/21 NFI exercise are £1.5 million, down £1.7 million (53 per cent) from the 2018/19 NFI exercise. This includes two outcomes identified through the pre-application screening (AppCheck)<sup>2</sup> part of the NFI system.

Pension outcomes may have fallen due to the 'tell us once'<sup>3</sup> reporting process and to controls working effectively within pension bodies.

### Pension data is matched to:



Deceased persons



Payroll



Housing benefit



Injury benefits



Amberhill data

### Case study



An NFI match identified one fraud with a gross annual pension amount of £10,560 which was stopped and resulted in an overpayment of £6,601. The fraudster had notified Fife Pension Fund of a change of bank details for receipt of the pension after the pensioner had died. The council reported the fraud to Police Scotland which identified the person who submitted the fraudulent bank mandate. Following a police caution, the full amount was repaid. This case was reported as part of a 2020/21 NFI Progress Update to both the council's Standards and Audit Committee and the Superannuation Fund & Pensions Committee in December 2021 for their consideration.

<sup>2</sup> AppCheck is an NFI data matching service used at point of applications for a service or benefit.

<sup>3</sup> 'Tell us once' is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations when registering the death.



# Housing benefit

Housing benefit helps people on low incomes pay their rent. The NFI provides councils and the DWP with the opportunity to identify a wide range of benefit frauds and errors.

**£1.2 million**

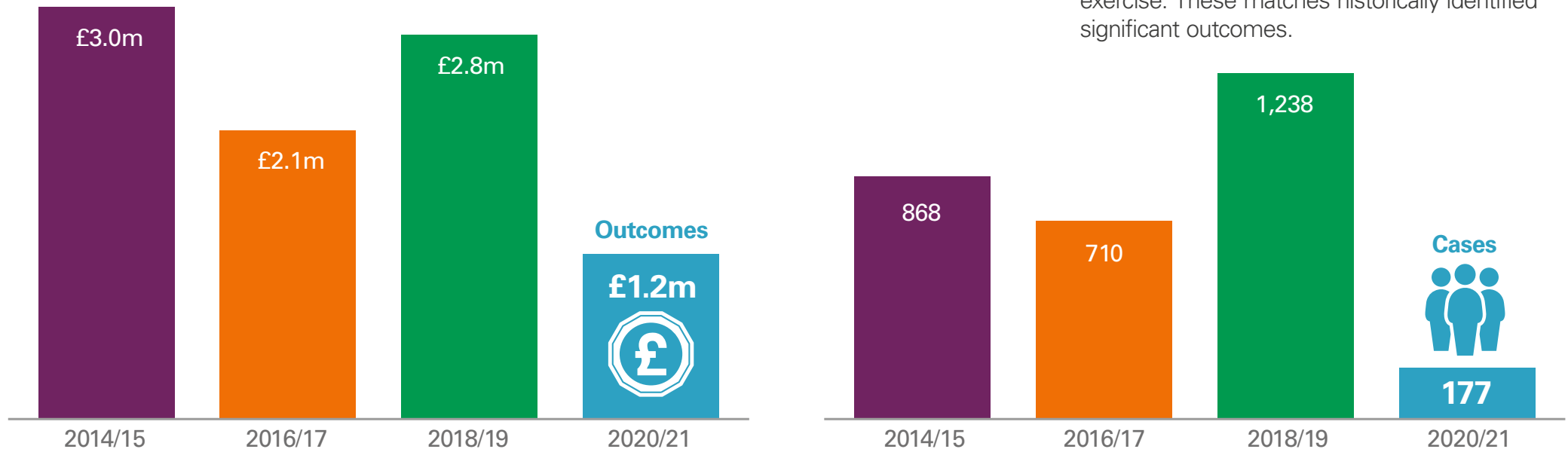
Total outcomes  
in 2020/21 exercise

**£6,663**

Average individual  
value of overpayments

**177**

Cases



The value and number of housing benefit cases recorded with overpayments has significantly reduced, from £2.8 million from 1,238 cases in the 2018/19 NFI, to £1.2 million from 177 cases in the 2020/21 NFI. Over the same period, the average individual value of overpayments has risen from £2,292 in 2018/19 to £6,663 in 2020/21.

The fall in outcomes is mainly due to the matches between housing benefit and payroll or pensions not being included in the 2020/21 NFI exercise. These matches historically identified significant outcomes.

## Housing benefit data is matched to:



Student loans



Housing  
benefit



Housing  
tenants



Right to buy  
(in England)



Licences



Deceased  
persons



Amberhill  
data

These matches were not included in the 2020/21 NFI exercise as similar data matching is undertaken by the DWP's Verify Earnings and Pensions (VEP) Alerts service which identifies discrepancies between payroll and pension details held by HM Revenues & Customs and council benefits services. Alerts from VEP are sent to councils to investigate discrepancies.



# Housing tenancy

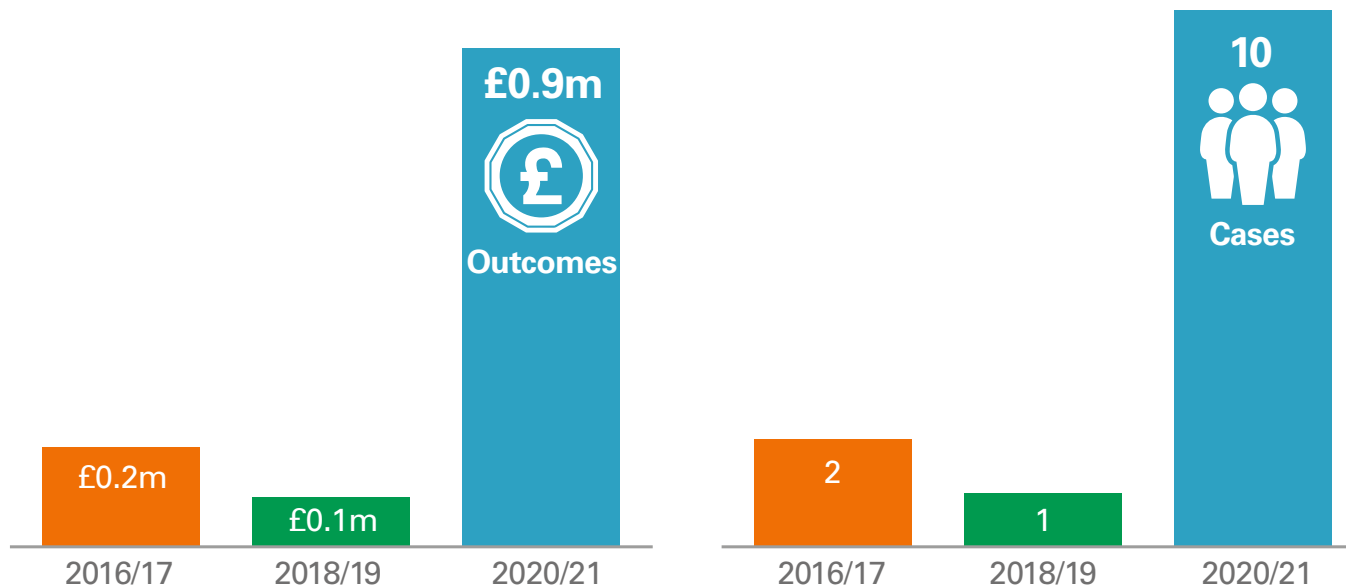
The NFI uses housing tenants' data to identify possible cases of tenancy fraud. This may happen when a tenant has sublet their property. It also helps identify cases where the tenant has died, and the property is either empty or has other individuals living in it.

**£0.9 million**

Total outcomes in 2020/21 exercise

**10**

Cases



## Housing tenancy data is matched to:



Waiting list



Housing benefit



Housing tenants



Right to buy  
(in England)



Deceased  
persons



Amberhill data



Council tax  
reduction

## Case study



An NFI match identified a Midlothian Council tenant who had failed to disclose that they had purchased a property within another council area at the same time they had been allocated a council house. Enquiries established the tenant moved into the owned property ten years ago and sublet their council house to a family member. The council has recovered the property.

NFI matches resulted in councils recovering ten properties as part of the 2020/21 NFI exercise, compared to one property in 2018/19.

The estimated value of these cases is £0.93 million, based on a calculation of the average four-year fraudulent tenancy.



# Council tax reduction

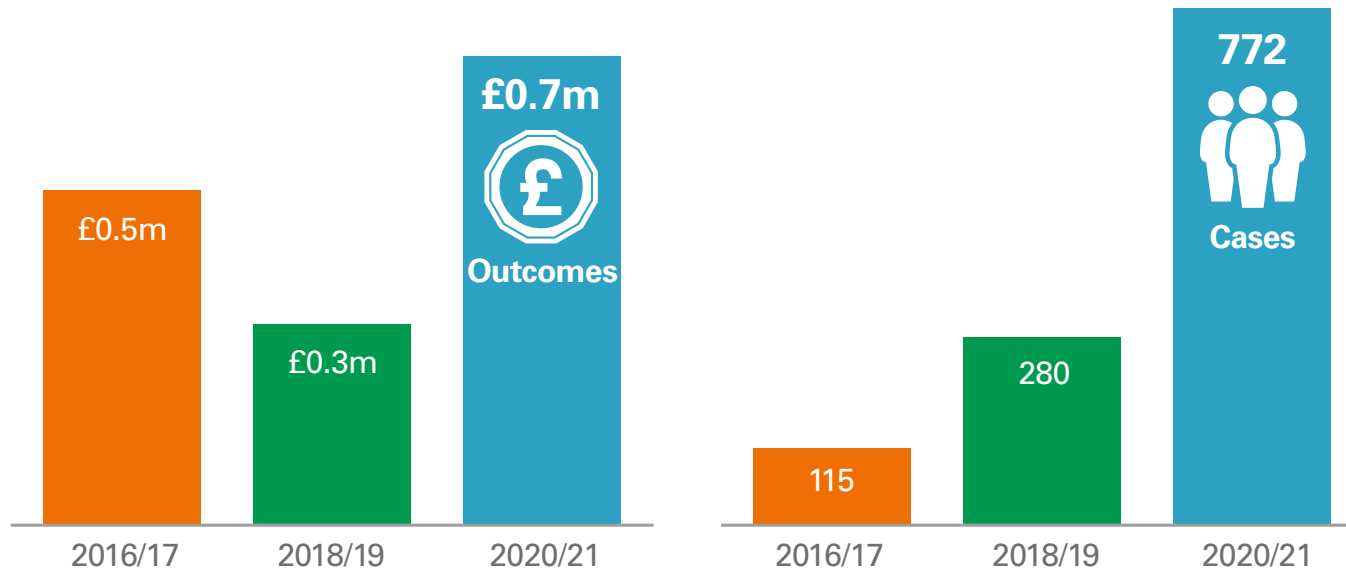
Council tax reduction helps people on low incomes to pay their council tax bills. The NFI provides councils with the opportunity to identify a range of council tax reduction frauds and errors.

**£0.7 million**

Total outcomes in 2020/21 exercise

**772**

Cases



## Council tax reduction data is matched to:



Council tax reduction



Payroll



Pensions payroll



Housing benefit



Housing tenants



Right to buy (in England)



Licences



Deceased persons



Amberhill data

## Case study



An NFI match identified that a council tax reduction claimant in Renfrewshire Council had failed to declare their company pension and pension lump sum. This resulted in the claimant fraudulently receiving £14,450 council tax reduction. This amount is being recovered by the council.

This is a relatively new match which has been included in the NFI since 2016/17.

Outcomes of £0.7 million were identified in the 2020/21 NFI, an increase of £0.4 million from the £0.3 million reported in 2018/19.

Councils have identified 772 cases in 2020/21, more than 2.5 times the number of cases in 2018/19 (280).

One council advised that the increase in outcomes was directly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, an increase in mortality rates for those with underlying health conditions disproportionately impacted on people in receipt of disability benefits, council tax reduction and blue parking badges. In addition, there was an increase in the number of un-notified increases in the hours worked by those in lower paid service jobs who are more likely to be in receipt of council tax reduction.



# Housing waiting lists

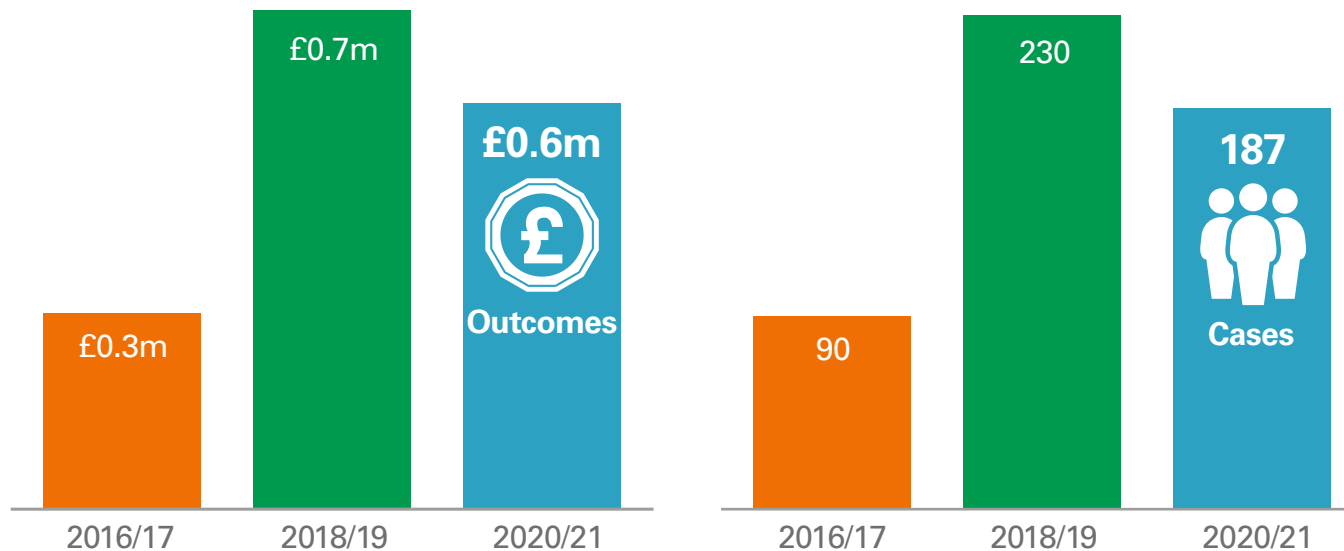
The NFI uses housing waiting list data to identify possible cases of waiting list fraud. This may happen when a person has registered on a council's waiting list but there are possible undisclosed changes in circumstances or false information has been provided. Social housing provides affordable accommodation, allocated according to need. It usually provides a more secure, long-term tenancy when compared to private renting.

**£0.6 million**

Total outcomes in 2020/21 exercise

**187**

Cases



Councils identified 187 cases in 2020/21 where applicants were removed from waiting lists (230 in 2018/19).

The estimated value of these cases is £0.6 million. This is based on a calculation of the annual estimated cost of housing a family in temporary accommodation and the likelihood a waiting list applicant would be provided a property ([see Appendix 3](#)).

## Housing waiting list data is matched to:



Waiting list



Housing benefit



Housing tenants



Right to buy  
(in England)



Deceased  
persons



Amberhill data





# Creditors

The NFI provides an efficient way to check for duplicate payments and that payments are only made to appropriate creditors. A creditor is a person or an organisation that a public body pays money to for a good or service.

**£0.5 million**

Total outcomes  
in 2020/21 exercise

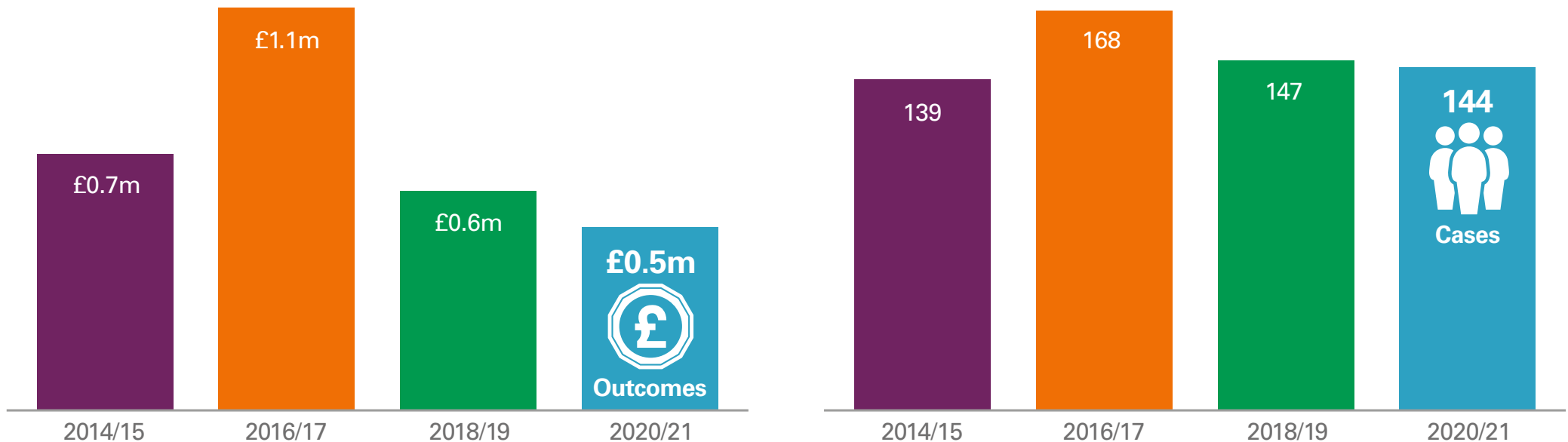
**100%**

Recovery action  
is taking place

**144**

Cases

The 2020/21 NFI exercise identified 144 creditor outcomes of £0.5 million, a fall of three outcomes and £0.1 million from 2018/19. Recovery action is taking place for these overpayments.



Creditor data is matched to:



Creditor data



Payroll



# Other data matches

## Payroll

The NFI also matches all participating bodies' employee payroll data as well as those of MSPs and councillors to identify cases of potential payroll fraud. The 2020/21 NFI exercise identified three outcomes valued at £27,000 compared to eight outcomes valued at £20,000 in the 2018/19 exercise.

Past NFI exercises have identified larger outcomes for payroll. This fall in outcomes is partly due to immigration data not being included in the 2020/21 exercise due to restrictions placed on it by the Home Office.

**2018/19**



eight outcomes valued at

**£20,000**

**2020/21**



three outcomes valued at

**£27,000**

## Case study



An NFI match identified an employee who left Fife Council in September 2019 and who continued to be paid their salary until February 2021. The council overpaid a total of £20,288 to the ex-employee. Recovery of the overpayment is in progress and internal audit services have investigated the circumstance surrounding the overpayment. Recommendations for improvements have been discussed with management and an audit on the council's leavers process is part of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan. This case was reported as part of a 2020/21 NFI Progress Update to the council's Standards and Audit Committee in December 2021 for consideration.

## Case study



New NFI matching of non-domestic rates small business bonus scheme (SBBS) in East Dunbartonshire Council identified a case where a ratepayer had failed to declare other business premises in another council area. This resulted in almost £11,000 in SBBS relief being claimed from April 2018. The case is being referred to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for prosecution. We understand this is the first business rates case to be reported for prosecution in Scotland.

# Matches benefiting other public bodies

A key benefit of a UK-wide data matching exercise is that it enables matches to be made between bodies and across national borders. For those public bodies taking part in the NFI which may not always identify significant outcomes from their own matches, it is important to appreciate that other bodies and sectors may do so.

Data provided by Scottish participants for the 2020/21 NFI exercise helped other public bodies, both within and outwith Scotland, to identify outcomes worth £1.2 million (a reduction of £0.5 million from 2018/19).

Most of these outcomes relate to housing benefits, housing waiting list and council tax reductions where, for example, payroll data from an NHS board may allow a council to identify a council tax reduction fraud or error.



**Councils**

£601,591



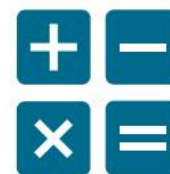
**Central  
government**

£483,943



**NHS**

£100,456



**Colleges**

£0



**Total**

£1,185,990

**2018/19**

£854,760

**2018/19**

£759,879

**2018/19**

£120,408

**2018/19**

£12,672

**2018/19**

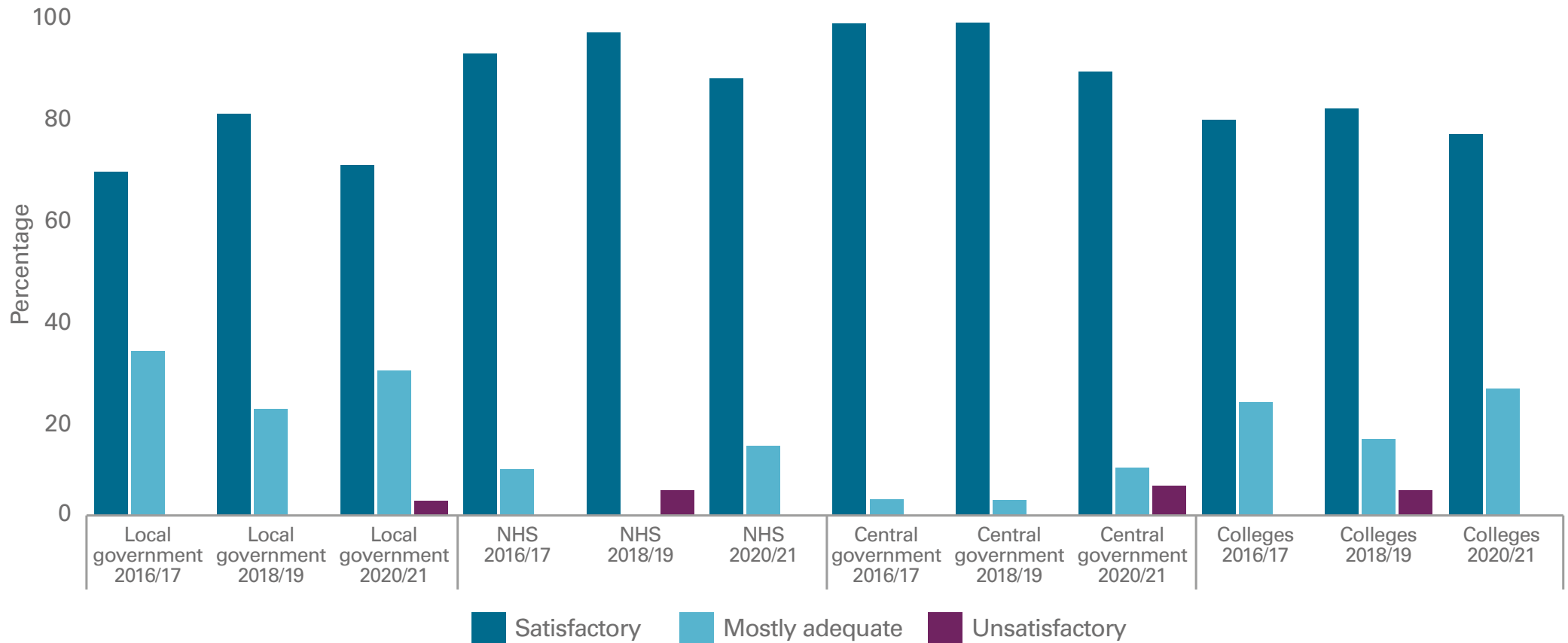
£1,747,719

# How bodies worked with the NFI in 2020/21

How bodies work with the NFI

## Overall rating of NFI arrangements by year

Auditors reviewed each participating body's planning and progress with the NFI and provided recommendations for improvement where appropriate.



Most participating bodies continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to counter fraud and the NFI. However, across all sectors, a smaller percentage of participating bodies managed their roles in the 2020/21 NFI exercise satisfactorily compared to the 2018/19 NFI exercise.

Auditors identified that some bodies could be more pro-active in their approach to the NFI. One central government body was unable to review matches due to a cyber-attack, one council did not review matches citing resource issues as the reason, and a central government body was unable to action matches due to the impact of reallocating resources to the provision of Covid-19 grant funding to organisations.

Six **key contacts** felt they did not have sufficient time and/or resources to allow them to oversee the NFI exercise. In four bodies, the key contact considered that they lacked sufficient authority to seek action across the relevant departments.

The Covid-19 pandemic created additional pressures for public bodies and impacted upon the resources available to support the NFI exercise. Auditors reported that 15 bodies reduced their participation in the NFI exercise due to resourcing issues including staff vacancies, sickness absences or changing priorities as a result of Covid-19.

We recommend that all bodies use our [checklist](#) to self-appraise their involvement in the NFI before and during the 2022/23 NFI exercise. For the 2020/21 NFI exercise, 64 per cent of bodies completed the checklist, although not all presented it to their audit committee; ten per cent reviewed it but did not complete it; and just over a quarter did not review it. This was reported as being because either the key NFI contact had changed and was unaware of the checklist, staff had prior experience of the NFI process, and Covid-19 pressures.

A **key contact** is appointed by the NFI participating body. They are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the overall NFI exercise, ensuring outcomes from investigations are accurately recorded and nominating appropriate users of the NFI system.



### Public bodies usage of our NFI checklist



**64%** completed the checklist

**26%** did not review it

**10%** reviewed it but did not complete it

# Pilots help identify the value of extending the NFI exercise

Audit Scotland undertakes new areas of data matching on a pilot basis to test their effectiveness in identifying fraud.

Only pilots which achieve matches that demonstrate a significant level of success are extended nationally and included in the main NFI exercise going forward. A small number of serious incidents of fraud or a larger number of less serious ones may both be considered successful.

The NFI pilots undertaken or under way over the last two years are shown on the following pages.

## Exemptions for NHS dental and ophthalmic charges



Data matching was undertaken to help identify NHS patients who have claimed to be exempt from NHS dental and ophthalmic charges, when they are not entitled. Patient exemption claims were matched to payroll data to ensure that dental and ophthalmic exemptions, eg for glasses or dental treatment, are only awarded to those patients qualifying for exemptions.

NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Services (CFS) received the matches in the second half of 2019. It worked to identify the highest-risk matches and then started verifying payroll details before undertaking investigations. As part of this investigative work, CFS asked dentists and opticians to supply the original exemption claim signed by the patient. However, CFS was unable to progress this part of the investigation due to dentists, opticians and the CFS being required to close down due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. CFS then decided not to use the matches as originally intended but instead use them as intelligence, for example, as an alert if the same people claim again. CFS considered it not worthwhile re-doing the pilot in 2021 as there were very few exemptions claimed between April to December 2020. This was due to opticians and dentists initially being closed and then only able to do emergency treatment which was free of charge. CFS intends to re-run the exercise after new payroll data goes into NFI in autumn 2022.

## Covid-19 grants for businesses



Following a Covid-19 grants data matching pilot exercise in England in the summer of 2020, it was decided to expand the English pilot to cover Covid-19 business grants paid to Scottish businesses.

These grants were paid under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF). Scottish councils submitted data from early in 2021. Initial matches were released in April 2021, however, match numbers were low. The Scottish schemes were more complex than similar schemes in other parts of the UK, eg in respect to second and subsequent properties held by each ratepayer. As a result, the algorithms were rechecked and additional matching was undertaken.

Additional matches were released in September 2021. Despite the data having been rematched, only one fraudulent grant payment of £25,000 was identified. Due to Covid-19 grant payments having stopped, it is not expected that this matching will be required again. However, the systems are in place should the matching be required for any similar grants or payments in the future.



**Only one fraudulent grant payment of £25,000 was identified**

## Additional counter-fraud measures introduced by NFI participants in respect of Covid-19 grant funding



Auditors identified that around 43 per cent of NFI participating bodies awarded Covid-19 funding during the pandemic.

Almost three-quarters of these bodies introduced additional counter-fraud measures such as new internal controls. This included actively working through national networks, such as the Scottish Local Authority Investigators Group, the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation, the National Anti-Fraud Network, and with Police Scotland as well as strengthening internal controls. This resulted in, for example, Dundee City Council preventing 143 attempted fraudulent applications valued at £381,500 from being paid in 2020/21. It also resulted in Aberdeenshire Council identifying eight fraudulent grants totalling £107,000 plus 14 attempted frauds totalling £151,000. The bodies that did not take additional counter-fraud measures reported these were not necessary as for some, payments were made to existing customers using the existing controls whereas others relied on existing controls around the setting up of new suppliers and associated payments.



**Aberdeenshire Council identified eight fraudulent grants totalling £107,000**

## Non-domestic rates – Small Business Bonus Scheme



In 2019/20, a pilot was undertaken with the Scottish Government and seven Scottish councils to help identify businesses inappropriately claiming Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) relief. The SBBS provides rates relief to owners of non-domestic properties with rateable values under certain thresholds.

The seven participating councils provided 81,827 ratepayer records to the NFI system, which were then matched across the councils and with data from Companies House in order to identify SBBS fraud. The pilot identified £412,974 in incorrect awards.

Due to the success of this pilot, a national roll-out of this data matching exercise was carried out in 2021/22.

The 2021/22 pilot identified 17,676 matches which resulted in £2.2 million in incorrect SBBS relief being identified in 208 SBBS awards. Councils will now try to recover SBBS which was incorrectly awarded. Recovery is already in progress for 119 cases with a value of almost £745,000 in incorrectly awarded relief.

Given the success of the 2021/22 pilot, consideration is now being given as to how this data match can be repeated on a regular basis as part of the main NFI exercise. The pilot report is available on [our website](#).



**The pilot identified £412,974 in incorrect awards**

## National entitlement cards for travel



The National Entitlement Card (NEC) is Scotland's National Smartcard. Supported by the Scottish Government to deliver national and local services, the NEC makes it convenient for people to access various public services and facilities with only one card. The NEC can be used for services such as a travel pass, a library card, a leisure membership card and a Young Scot card as well as providing access to other local services.

In 2021/22, a pilot was undertaken with Fife Council, to match travel passes for elderly and disabled customers with deceased customer records. Fife Council provided a total of 112,044 NEC records for matching against deceased person records. This resulted in 1,737 matches being identified for review by Fife Council (a return rate of 1.6 per cent).

Following Fife Council's review, all 1,737 cards (100 per cent) were cancelled on the NEC system as it was established that the customers had died. This means no further cards can be requested for these customers, and the card will be blocked should someone attempt to use it. No matches were identified where the customer was still alive.

Thirteen matches showed cause for concern as the NECs appeared to have been used after the death of the cardholder. Two of these cards were used for journeys to the value of almost £2,300 for one, and £240 for the other. The value of the journeys for the other 11 cards varied from £3.10 to £69.00.

Given the success of this pilot, consideration will be given as to how this data match can be expanded to other councils in Scotland and included in the main NFI exercise in the future. The pilot report is available on [our website](#).



## Case study

A new NFI pilot matching National Entitlement cards in Fife Council against deceased person records identified one card that had been fraudulently used for bus travel valued at almost £2,300 after the cardholder had died. Investigations are continuing into the individual(s) who used this card.



## Applications for student awards

A pilot was undertaken with Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) to help confirm residency and address details for students applying for awards for tuition fees, grants and bursaries. SAAS funds students from Scotland and as such it is interested in verifying the address of student applicants and flagging where students are potentially fraudulently misrepresenting their address to benefit from the more attractive financial support offered to Scottish students.

Student applications were matched against data held in the NFI system. An initial batch of 50 applications was processed which SAAS found very helpful in verifying and querying address details. One known fraud was put through the NFI pre-application screening service (AppCheck) to test the system. A match was highlighted, demonstrating the benefit AppCheck can bring in preventing fraud.

SAAS is now looking to expand the pilot to allow the upload of a large batch of applications to the NFI system quickly, securely and easily.



## Social security benefits

A pilot is under way with Social Security Scotland to identify any instances where claimants received support but were not residing in Scotland, or where claimants appear to have claimed benefits more than once, eg from more than one Scottish address. Claimant data was matched to data already in the NFI system from across the UK. Data was submitted in March 2022, with matches released to Social Security Scotland in May 2022. Social Security Scotland is currently reviewing the matches.



## Police Scotland's use of AppCheck

Police Scotland's Serious and Organised Crime Interventions Team deals with vetting applications, eg for landlord registration and pre-contract procurement check requests from public bodies such as councils and the NHS. These checks aim to prevent and detect fraud within public procurement and other public services such as landlord registration and taxi licencing. Police Scotland is undertaking a pilot to identify if data in the NFI data base can be used to help its vetting processes to prevent and detect fraud. Data has yet to be shared.



**A match was highlighted, demonstrating the benefit AppCheck can bring in preventing fraud**

# Future developments

The 2022/23 NFI exercise is due to start in late summer 2022. Datasets have been reviewed and updated as necessary.

Audit Scotland continues to work with the Cabinet Office in developing new ways to prevent and detect fraud. This includes piloting new data matching opportunities.

[The Scottish Parliament](#) approved [The Digital Government \(Scottish Bodies\) Regulations 2022](#) in March 2022. These Regulations name Audit Scotland under Regulation 3 - 'Scottish bodies for the disclosure of information in relation to fraud against the public sector'. This allows Audit Scotland to access HM Revenue & Customs income and savings data for Scottish residents for future NFI exercises. This will help identify outcomes where customers have received benefits and services above what they are entitled to.

Audit Scotland continues to work with the Scottish Government in promoting and enhancing participation in the NFI across Scotland.

The Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee (PAC) is considering the expansion of legislative powers around the NFI. This may include expanding the NFI to bodies in receipt of significant amounts of public funding that do not fall under the audit remit of the Auditor General for Scotland or the Accounts Commission.

[The Cabinet Office](#) recently consulted on extending its legal powers around the purposes for which data matching can be used. It is looking to potentially extend its legal powers in the following areas:

- to assist in the prevention and detection of crime other than fraud
- to assist in the apprehension and prosecution of offenders
- to assist in prevention and detection of errors and inaccuracies. The NFI data could be used to help public-sector bodies to ensure citizens get access to their full benefit entitlements. For example, a number of passported benefits across the welfare system entitle recipients to help with housing costs, free school meals, etc. A match could identify citizens entitled to additional help they are not claiming
- to assist in the recovery of debt owing to public bodies. Public bodies may need to trace individuals with outstanding overdue debt and with no arrangement to pay in place. In some instances, these individuals may be difficult to trace. The NFI data could be used to help identify where a debtor was living or working, for example.

The Cabinet Office is considering the responses and will publish a formal consultation response in due course.

[Section 97 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing Act 2010](#) already permits Audit Scotland to use data matching for the first two purposes. We will monitor developments.

# Appendix 1. Background to the NFI

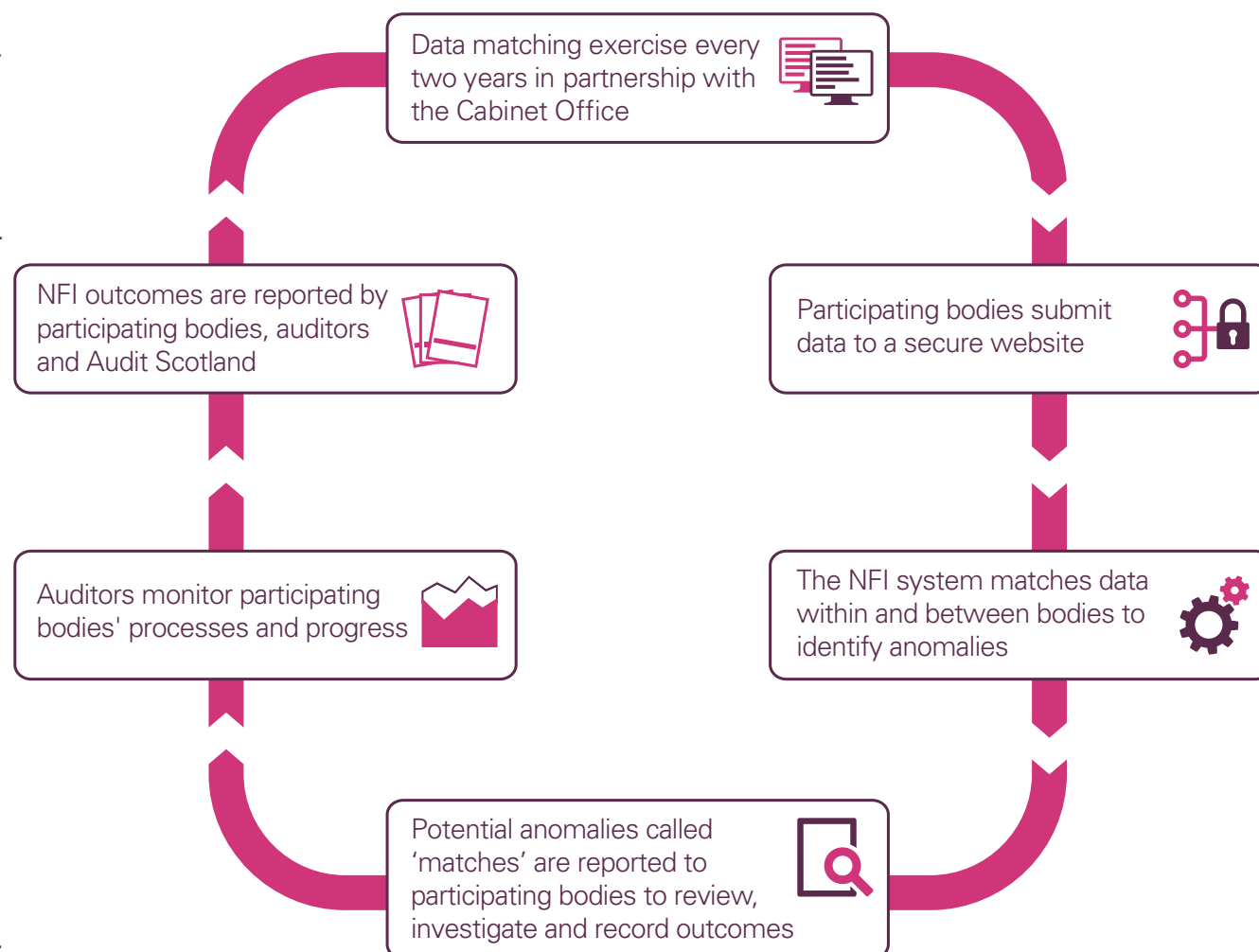
The NFI is a counter-fraud exercise across the UK public sector which aims to prevent and detect fraud. The Cabinet Office oversees it, and Audit Scotland leads the exercise in Scotland, working with a range of Scottish public bodies and external auditors.

The NFI uses data sharing and matching to help confirm that services are provided to the correct people. The NFI takes place every second year. 132 public-sector bodies in Scotland participated in the 2020/21 exercise including councils, NHS bodies, colleges and larger central government bodies such as the Scottish Government, Revenue Scotland and Transport Scotland. A full list of participants is available [here](#).

The NFI enables public bodies to use computer data matching techniques to detect fraud and error.

We carry out the NFI under powers in The Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. It is important for all parties involved that this exercise is properly controlled, and data is handled in accordance with the law. [The Audit Scotland Code of Data Matching Practice](#) includes a summary of the key legislation and controls governing the NFI data matching exercise.

Although the main purpose of the NFI is to ensure funds and services are provided to the correct people, the review of NFI matches may also identify that a customer is entitled to additional services or payments, eg housing benefit matches may identify customers entitled to council tax discount or reduction.



# Appendix 2. Costs and benefits of participating in the NFI

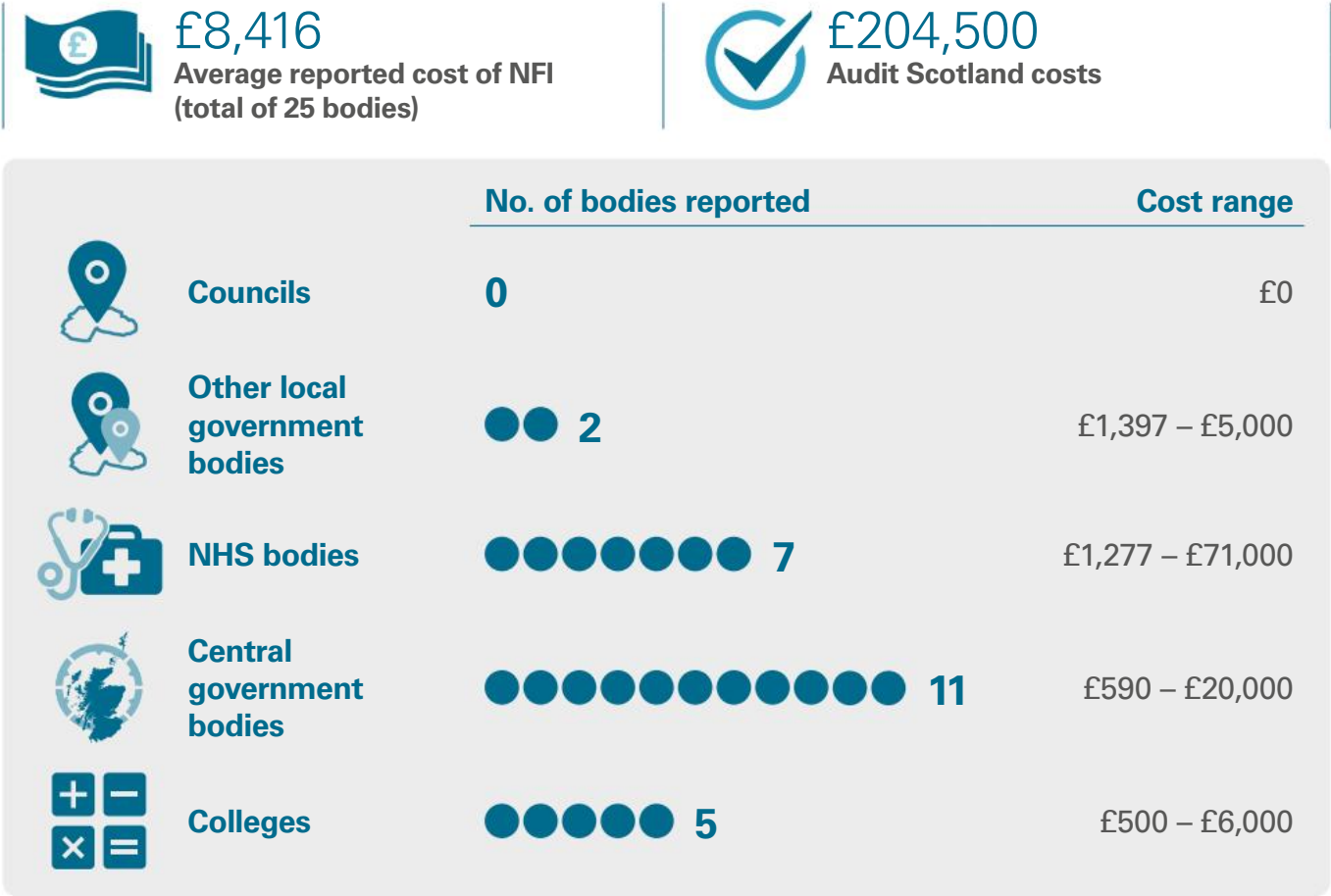
The Scottish Parliament provides funding to Audit Scotland to cover public-sector participants' NFI fees for the biennial data matching exercise.

Participating bodies incur costs following up matches and investigating. Participating bodies also incur costs for pilot work and additional services such as the AppCheck pre-application screening and the ReCheck<sup>4</sup> flexible data matching service.

Many bodies do not keep separate records for NFI costs as it is just one of many counter-fraud activities they are doing. Those that do have records were able to estimate that their costs ranged from £500 to £71,000. This compares favourably with the average outcome for each public body in Scotland of £113,000 for the 2020/21 NFI exercise.

Overall, the £14.9 million of outcomes from the 2020/21 NFI outweigh the costs.

<sup>4</sup> ReCheck is a flexible data matching service that complements the NFI biennial national exercise. It allows NFI participants re-perform the existing NFI data matching at a time that suits them.



# Appendix 3. Estimation bases

The figures used in this report for fraud, overpayments and errors include outcomes already delivered (actual amounts participants have recorded) and estimates. Estimates are included where it is reasonable to assume that incidents of fraud, overpayments and errors would have continued undetected without NFI data matching.

Details of estimate calculations used in the report are shown below.

Data match	Basis of calculation of estimated outcomes
<b>Council tax single person discount</b>	Annual value of the discount cancelled multiplied by two years.
<b>Housing</b>	£93,000 per property recovered, based on average four-year fraudulent tenancy. Includes: temporary accommodation for genuine applicants; legal costs to recover property; re-let cost; and rent foregone during the void period between tenancies.
<b>Housing benefit</b>	Weekly benefit reduction multiplied by 21 weeks.
<b>Pensions</b>	Annual pension multiplied by the number of years until the pensioner would have reached the age of 85.
<b>Payroll</b>	£5,000 for each employee dismissed or resigns as a result of NFI matching, or £10,000 for each resignation or dismissal for employees who have no right to work in the UK.
<b>Council tax reduction scheme</b>	Weekly change in council tax discount multiplied by 21 weeks.
<b>Housing waiting lists</b>	£3,240 for each case based on the annual estimated cost of housing a family in temporary accommodation, the duration a fraud may continue undetected and the likelihood a waiting list applicant would be provided a property.
<b>Blue badges</b>	Number of badge holders confirmed as having died multiplied by £575 to reflect lost parking and congestion charge revenue.

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