



**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL

**From mountain to sea**

# **INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTORATE PLAN 2020 – 2022**

**15 February 2021**

<b>CONTENTS</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
	Foreword	<b>2</b>
<b>1</b>	Introduction	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	Strategic Context	<b>4</b>
	2.1 Strategic Framework	4
	2.2 Council Plan	5
	2.3 Area Plan	7
	2.4 Local and National Policy Issues	8
	2.5 Public Sector Equality Duty	10
	2.6 Sustainability and Climate Change Commitment	10
<b>3</b>	Directorate Profile of Infrastructure Services	<b>11</b>
	3.1 Introduction	11
	3.2 Staffing and Workforce Planning	13
	3.3 Organisational Chart	17
	3.4 Financial Profile	18
	3.5 Efficiency Savings	18
	3.6 Consultation with Other Services and Area Management	19
	3.7 Peer Review	20
<b>4</b>	Directorate Performance Framework	<b>20</b>
	4.1 Performance	20
	4.2 Benchmarking	25
	4.3 Where Are We Now?	26
	4.4 Positive Messages	28
	4.5 Areas for Improvement	31
	4.6 Where Do We Need to Be?	32
<b>5</b>	Risks and Opportunities	<b>34</b>
	5.1 Risks	34
	5.2 Opportunities	35
<b>6</b>	Directorate Improvement Action Plan 2021 - 2022	<b>37</b>

## FOREWORD

I am very pleased to introduce the Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan. The Plan provides a summary of the services and functions within the directorate, describes the organisational structure, resources and performance measures. The Plan is intended to be an integral part of service planning and delivery, performance management and reporting into the Infrastructure Services and Communities Committees. The plan will evolve and adapt as we move through and out of the current pandemic as all services will have to.

Furthermore, the connections to the Council Plan and Priorities are also detailed with specific reference to the lead role of Infrastructure Services to identified strategies. This in turn is connected to the Service Improvement Action Plan where actions, outcomes and performance measures are listed.

The Infrastructure Services Directorate Team will provide an integrated service provision based upon common themes of economic development, environment, and connectivity. These common themes will be developed as the Infrastructure Service adapts to new delivery methods and new ways of working arising from the current situation. Links across Directorates will be explored and enhanced with a view of embedding integrated service delivery from a Council perspective to ensure that all Council Priorities are achieved.

An overview of our services is described within the Plan as well as links and references to more detail such as the Housing Plan and the Economic Development Plan. The Plan is derived from the Council's Pillars and Strategic Priorities and therefore part of the development of the Plan is to demonstrate clear links and specific performance measures which reflect these links. Through the Service Improvement Action Plan specific measures will be agreed and reported to Infrastructure Services and Communities Committees for scrutiny, challenge and review.

As with all Services, those within the remit of the Infrastructure Directorate team are delivered across the whole of Aberdeenshire and therefore inform both the Directorate Plan and Area Plans. Working across and within Areas, communities and towns continues to be a priority and to achieve this requires a harmonisation of not only Plans but also of responsibilities to ensure the most effective delivery of services.

I am motivated by the principles and aims of all Directorate Plans and also to working alongside Councillors, other Services and partners to implement the successful delivery and development of this Plan.

Alan Wood

Director of Infrastructure Services

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Aberdeenshire Council Plan provides the strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by the Council. The Council Plan is the Council's corporate plan and covers two years from 2020-2022.

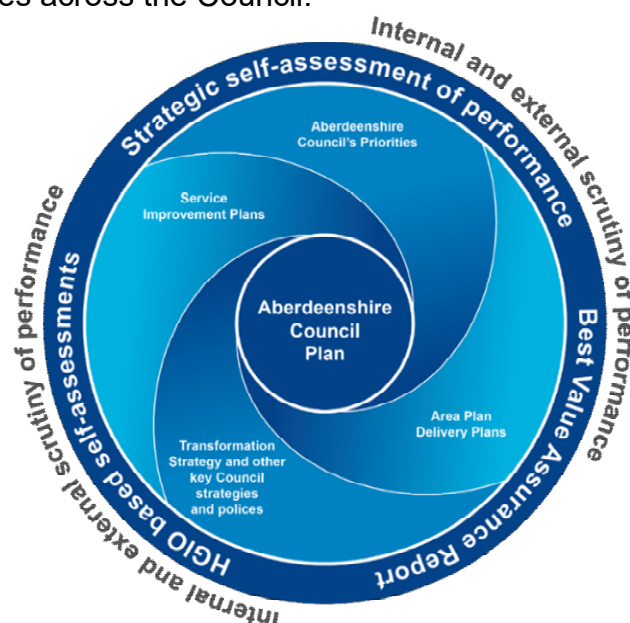
The Council Plan is implemented through six strategic priorities, namely education, health and wellbeing, infrastructure, resilient communities, economy and enterprise and estate modernisation and the day-to-day work carried out by Services across the Council.

Directorate plans are an essential element of the Council's performance management and improvement framework. They set out the key issues for delivering services in support of the Council vision and priorities, provide a focus on performance improvement and describe directorate specific risks that may impact on the delivery of the service.

The Directorate plans need to be strongly rooted in the community impact assessment, with a firm focus on working with our partners and communities to deliver those priorities identified by our residents as important to them during this recovery and renewal period.

Directorate plans are informed by the Strategic Assessment 2019/20 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020 (MTFS). The MTFS is designed to ensure that Council Services remain financially sustainable in the current economic climate. Directorate plans should align clearly with the Council Plan and Community Planning Partnership priorities. They should also clearly demonstrate how they will support delivery of corporate improvement action plans including the Child Poverty Action Plan, How Good is Our Governance and the Best Value Assurance Report 2020.

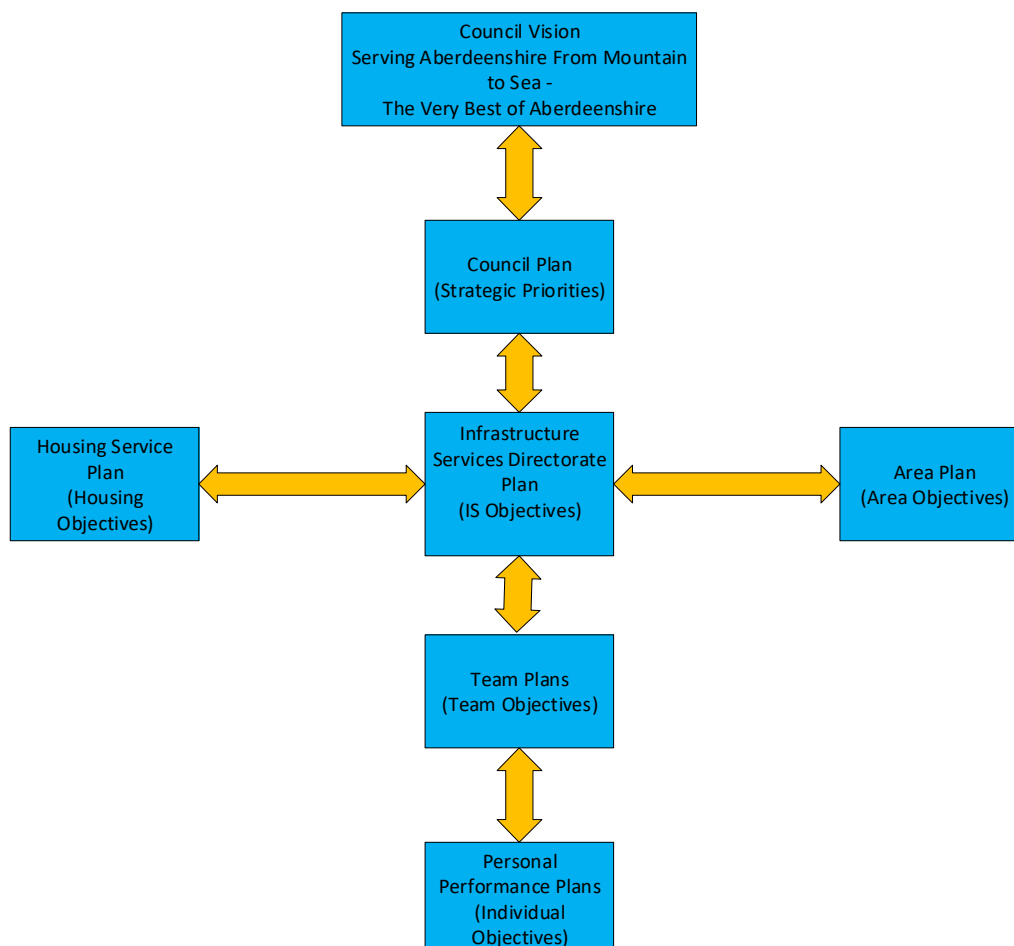
The diagram below provides a graphic representation of the Council's performance management framework and shows the strategic context within which Directorate Plans sit. It also shows the wider performance management and improvement framework which the Council has adopted to ensure rigorous scrutiny of performance and drive directorates across the Council.



## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1 Strategic Framework

The Directorate Plan forms part of the strategic planning framework for Aberdeenshire which ensures that all Council plans and strategies are focused on delivering a shared vision for Aberdeenshire. This framework is critical in ensuring activity is co-ordinated and links individual staff objectives through team plans, service plans and into the Council Plan. This relationship is illustrated in the diagram below:-



Individual objectives are set through Personal Performance Plans (PPP) and are reviewed regularly through 1-2-1's with line managers. Team Plans set out the objectives for the wider team with progress monitored by Team Managers.

The Infrastructure Services Directorate Plan sets out how the service will support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities. Progress with actions will be monitored by the Directorate Management Team and reported to the Infrastructure Services Committee and Communities Committee. The Housing Service Plan is an extract from the Directorate Plan and falls under the remit of the Communities Committee therefore progress with these actions will be reported to the Communities Committee.

There will be an Area Plan for each of the six Council areas. Each Area Plan will represent the Area delivery plan for each service. Progress with the actions will be reported to the Area Committee six monthly.

The Council Plan sets out the Strategic Priorities and outcomes for the Council. A summary of progress against each priority will be reported to Full Council annually.

## 2.2 Council Plan

In October 2020 Council approved the new Council Plan for Aberdeenshire Council for the period 2020-2022. The Plan sets out the strategic priorities for Aberdeenshire Council under the three pillars of Our People, Our Environment, Our Economy.

Six strategic priorities sit under the three pillars as shown in the diagram below.



In support of the strategic priorities, are a number of key principles:

- Right people, right places, right time
- Responsible finances
- Climate and sustainability
- Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans
- Human rights and public protection
- Tackling poverty and inequalities
- Digital infrastructure and economy

Therefore, to support the delivery of the Council Plan several specific Council priorities have been matched to the strategic priorities. Infrastructure Services will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Priorities by taking the lead role in the following Council priorities, many of which will involve cross-Service collaborative working.

Strategic Priority	Council Priority (Outcome)
Health & Wellbeing  Resilient Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles.</li> <li>• Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness.</li> <li>• Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required.</li> <li>• Tenancies are sustained/community capacity building communities feel empowered and enabled.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure  Health & Wellbeing  Resilient Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A road and street-lighting network which keeps people safe, encourages active lifestyles and increases active travel opportunities.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure  Resilient Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that residents and businesses across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to the effects of climate change including the risk of flooding.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure  Health & Wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and recycling service which supports our attractive environment and reduces emissions.</li> <li>• It's easy and safe to move around local areas using good quality active travel routes, streets and roads.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure  Economy & Enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping communities connected through the provision of an affordable, reliable and well-connected passenger transport service.</li> <li>• Safeguard the built and natural environment.</li> </ul>
Resilient Communities  Economy & Enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placemaking to meet the current and future needs of communities and supporting communities to help themselves, enabling community wealth building that supports local economic opportunities.</li> <li>• A location of choice that has a diverse economic base of innovative companies with a skilled workforce and return to full employment.</li> <li>• The gap between economic, environmental and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities.</li> </ul>
Economy & Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through the pandemic, EU Exit and energy transition</li> </ul>
Health & Wellbeing  Resilient Communities  Economy & Enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumers are assured that businesses are conforming to regulations. Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification and energy transition.</li> </ul>

The Directorate Improvement Action Plan sets out the actions to be taken to deliver the priorities together with the outcomes and performance measures.

## 2.3 Area Plans

Area Plans have been developed to bring together the Council's service delivery intentions for developments and projects within each of the Aberdeenshire Council Areas for the period of the Council Plan by providing a clear performance and scrutiny framework. The actions contained in the Area Plans include those actions identified in the Directorate Plan that have a specific Area dimension as well as actions that reflect partnership arrangements with local communities, community groups, organisations, individuals and Community Planning Partners.

Responsibility for Area Plans lies with Area Management Teams which consist of service representatives. The plans provide Elected Members with an oversight of service delivery in their area as well as enabling and encouraging appropriate scrutiny.

Area Plans will:

- Set out Directorate Plans at an area level
- Capture and reflect Council and community priorities and delivery of actions
- Collate proposed service delivery and give Area Committees oversight of the service delivery in the area
- Allow the required scrutiny and monitoring that is specific to the area and provide the opportunity for the formal scrutiny process to be taken forward by Area Committees
- Support Area Committees as the decision makers on local issues
- Provide linkage between the Council and the Community Planning priorities
- Reflect and complement statutory and other community plans relative to each area – e.g. Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs), Locality Plans, Community Safety, Community Justice, Children's Services, H&SCP
- Have regard to the public sector equality duty and the climate change commitment recognised by the Council

The following are examples of services that have an Area dimension and will be included in Area Plans: -

**Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles.**

A programme of maintenance work in line with the Open Space Strategy.

**A road and street-lighting network which keeps people safe, encourages active lifestyles and increases active travel opportunities.**

A programme of maintenance activities for roads, streetlighting, bridges and other structures in line with the Roads Asset Management.

**Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding.**

A programme of flood risk and coast protection works based on the Local Flood Risk Management Plan.

**It's easy and safe to move around local areas using good quality active travel routes, streets and roads.**

Projects to reduce the number of casualties on roads as per the Road Safety Plan and Road Casualty Reduction Strategy.



### **Safeguard the built and natural environment.**

The planning and delivery of regeneration projects, the Historic Asset Management Project and Council's countryside path network and a programme of annual maintenance for the seven Aberdeenshire Harbours.

### **The gap between economic, environmental and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities.**

Progress with agreed actions in support of the Council's Regeneration Strategy "From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities".

### **Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required.**

Consultation on the programme of new build homes to be delivered in the Area.

## **2.4 Local and National Policy issues**

Infrastructure Services deliver local services based upon local and national policies. These policies have been developed into a suite of plans and strategies:-

<b>Economic Development and Protective Services</b>	<b>Housing and Building Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Region Deal</li> <li>• <a href="#">Regeneration Action Plan – Developing Excellence in our Communities</a></li> <li>• Regional Economic Strategy and approved revised <a href="#">Vision</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Council's Revised Economic Development Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Tourism Destination Strategy</a>.</li> <li>• Food and Feed Law Service Plan</li> <li>• The Trading Standards Team Plan</li> <li>• Tobacco Enforcement Action Plan</li> <li>• <a href="#">Environmental and Climate Change Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public Sector Climate Change Duties</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Aberdeenshire Council Biodiversity Duty</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Carbon Budget</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Resources and Circular Economy Commitment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">North East Scotland Sustainable Energy Action Plan</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Regulator – Annual Return on Charter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) Programme of Works</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Improvement Programme (HIP)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Safety Strategy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Building Standards Customer Charter</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Building Standards Enforcement Charter</a></li> </ul>

Planning and Environment	Roads, Landscape Services and Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan</li> <li>• The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan</li> <li>• Cairngorm National Parks Local Development Plan.</li> <li>• The Archaeology Service Strategy</li> <li>• Historic Asset Management Plan (HAMP).</li> <li>• Built Heritage Strategy</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Outdoor Access Strategy</li> <li>• Natural Heritage Strategy</li> <li>• Rangers Service Strategy</li> <li>• NESBREC Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Roads Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• Revenue, Capital and Reserve Works Programmes for: -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Roads</li> <li>○ Landscape Services</li> <li>○ Harbours</li> <li>○ Bridges</li> <li>○ Flood Risk and Coast Protection Programme of Measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Roads Winter Maintenance Operational Plan</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan</li> <li>• Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan 2016-2022.</li> <li>• The Parks and Open Space Strategy</li> <li>• The Integrated Sustainable Waste Management Strategy</li> <li>• Energy from Waste plant</li> <li>• Litter Prevention Action Plan (LPAP)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Street Cleansing Policy and Procedures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Transportation	Cross Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Transport Strategy</li> <li>• The Regional Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Council Local Transport Strategy.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Walking and Cycling Action Plan</li> <li>○ The Council's Road Safety Plan 2018 – 2020</li> <li>○ A947 Route Improvement Strategy</li> <li>○ The Grampian Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Fleet Services Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030</li> <li>• Spaces for People</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Council Equalities Policy</li> <li>• IS Modernisation Programme</li> <li>• Council Plan</li> <li>• Best Value Assurance Report 2020</li> </ul>
Area and Partnerships	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Delivery Plans</li> <li>• Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)</li> <li>• Area Locality Plans</li> </ul>	

## 2.5 Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council's responsibilities with regards to equalities are set out in the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the Council are required to identify and publish Equality Outcomes and must demonstrate that due consideration has been paid to equality obligations.

Infrastructure Services is contributing to the delivery of these outcomes through the key objectives identified in this Plan and by following the Aberdeenshire Council Equalities Policy.

Every activity that is identified to support the delivery of the objectives in this Plan, which has the potential to have a differential impact on different groups, will have an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken. An EqIA assesses the impact of the council's policies, procedures and functions on those who have Protected Characteristics. It allows balanced judgements to be made in all decisions. All EqIA's are available on our website.

## 2.6 Sustainability and Climate Change Commitment

Sustainability is embedded in all Directorate Plans ensuring that all Services have ownership of actions relating to sustainability and climate change. Infrastructure Services has a lead role in coordinating the Council's cross-Service approach. Aberdeenshire Council's Carbon Budget sets out the reduction in CO2 emissions that the Council as a whole and each service aim to achieve each year. The Directorate also produced the Council's Sustainability Charter and has a lead role in managing and delivering the Climate Change Action Plan.

The Carbon Budget requires each Director to produce a Net Zero Plan approved by the relevant committee to achieve 75% reduction by 2030.

Specific projects were developed to deliver the agreed reductions including:

- alternative maintenance regimes, including additional tree and wildflower planting supporting biodiversity.
- sustainable and cost-effective approaches to support the increase of habitat and eco systems.
- Composting of green waste in each Area
- The Greenspace Project promotes changes to greenspaces to increase biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.
- Installing LED lighting is more efficient and use less energy
- Reducing emissions from council vehicles through more effective utilisation and through the introduction of electric vehicles.
- Replacing old electric vehicle charge points to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.
- Encouraging a shift from motorised transport to cycling, walking and use of e-bikes.
- 55% of Council Houses meets the Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing.
- Delivering homes across the social housing sector built to the latest energy efficiency standards.

In line with the Scottish Government's Circular Economy Bill Infrastructure Services is encouraging communities to ensure that the maximum value is extracted from resources and that materials are recovered and regenerated through recycling. This Circular Economy will benefit the environment by cutting waste and carbon emissions. Infrastructure Services champions the Council's commitment to a circular economy and will seek opportunities to develop projects and initiatives that support the Government's strategy.

### 3. DIRECTORATE PROFILE OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

#### 3.1 Introduction

Infrastructure Services has a key role in helping to create and sustain the quality of life for the communities within Aberdeenshire. We will achieve this by focussing on the common themes of economic development, environment, and connectivity. These themes not only represent the activities delivered by the Directorate but also demonstrate an integrated and One Council approach to delivering services across Aberdeenshire.

Infrastructure Services deliver a wide range of inter-related functions, within the context of wider social, economic and environmental objectives. This is summarised as follows:

**Area Managers:** Supporting the operation of the Area Committee, leading the Area Management Team, Partnership working, Community Planning, Community Councils, Area Initiatives and Projects and Developer Obligations.

**Economic Development and Protective Services:** Creating the conditions for sustainable economic growth, diversification and regeneration within Aberdeenshire and the wider region. We do this work as a Council and as a partner with bodies including Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and Opportunity North East (ONE), and with a range of partners from the Regional Economic Strategy Steering Group.

Economic Development is also an important policy theme across the Council and therefore the Service actively works across Directorates to embed, support and champion this work.

Other main responsibilities include: Climate change, Carbon Budget, Protective Services including Environmental Health, Statutory Nuisance, Food Hygiene, Trading Standards, Scams and illegal sales, Animal Feed, Animal Welfare, Export Health Certificates, Business Development, European Policy and Programmes, City Region Deal, Industry Support and Regeneration.

**Housing and Building Standards:** Management, maintenance and allocation of almost 13,000 Council homes including sheltered housing. The Service is also responsible for community safety, homelessness services, private landlord registration, tackling fuel poverty, care and repair, Gypsy/Traveller services and the delivery of new build affordable housing across a variety of tenures. The Service links with a number of partners internally and externally including Health & Social Care, private developers, and the third sector. The Housing Service works closely with Aberdeenshire's Health & Social Care Partnership to ensure a clear strategic direction for issues such as dementia and housing for older people.

Building Standards has two distinct roles - verification and enforcement. Verification is achieved through the application of the Building Standards Regulations, when considering Building Warrants and submissions of Completion Certificates. Enforcement duties are contained within the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and ensures that buildings comply with Building Regulations and public safety is maintained.

**Planning and Environment Services:** balances competing demands to make sure that land is used and developed with regard to the long-term interests of our communities. It also manages and provides advice on the quality of design and placemaking across Aberdeenshire.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 promotes a more expansive and strategic role for Planning within Councils, through the alignment of services and strategies to create a delivery focused policy framework. This in turn creates an enabling role to ensure planning and placemaking matters are considered when making strategic decisions about investment and service delivery. The upcoming reforms to the planning system will ensure our focus is on creating sustainable places and transforming outcomes for communities through enhanced engagement and involvement in the planning system.

Aberdeenshire's historic and natural environment is an essential component of the character of Aberdeenshire and one of its most valuable assets. It contributes to the high quality of life enjoyed by local residents, attracts visitors and underpins the local economy. These special assets and resources are finite and need to be carefully managed in a sustainable way for future generations. The Service seeks to protect and enhance these assets and promote an understanding of their importance and maintain and enhance responsible access to them.

**Roads, Landscape and Waste Services:** responsible for the maintenance and management of the Council's road network, footways, street lighting repair and maintenance, ; bridge management and maintenance, coast protection and flood protection as well as management of the Council's quarries and harbours. It is also responsible for winter maintenance.

Landscape services is responsible for the maintenance and management of the Council's 4 country parks, 3,000 hectares of open spaces, the management of Burial Services & Cemeteries, the provision of play areas and maintenance of 37 beaches.

The Waste Service is responsible for the collection and disposal of domestic and trade waste from 124,213 properties, operation of Household Recycling Centres and street cleansing.

**Transportation:** The Service has a pivotal role to play in the planning, management and operation of the transport networks and systems that serve Aberdeenshire. The service is also responsible for the maintenance and management of the Council's fleet, Passenger Transport Unit, roads development, policy and asset management, strategic transport with NESTRANS as a strategic partner.

**Support Services:** Responsible for the provision of a centralised administrative support to the Directorate Management Team. Support Services also includes the management of information and business systems, continuous improvement, performance management and information management.

### 3.2 Staffing and Workforce Planning

Service	FTE
<i>Economic Development and Protective Services</i>	
Economic Development	35
Protective Services	58
<i>Housing and Building Standards</i>	
Housing Officers/Asst Housing Officers	215
Repairs Operatives	122
Mobile Sheltered Housing Operatives	88
Unit Assistants/Hostel Assistants	29
Building Standards Officers	27
<i>Roads, Landscape and Waste Services</i>	
Professional/Technical/Managerial	167
Front Line Operatives	800
<i>Planning &amp; Environment Service</i>	90
Professional/ Technical/ Managerial	27
Admin	
<i>Transportation</i>	
Professional/Technical/Managerial	94
Mechanics/Receptionists/Storepersons	45
Drivers	52
<i>Support Services</i>	
Professional/Technical/Managerial	24
Admin/Clerical	40
<b>Infrastructure Services Total FTE</b>	<b>1913</b>

The mix of staff and their skills, training and experience is regularly reviewed by senior managers within the service to ensure that the service retains sufficient numbers of skilled and experienced staff to deliver all its functions.

COVID-19 has impacted on staff deployment during 2020/21. When the lock-down was introduced in March 2020 many of the services that we provided had to be changed, adapted or in some cases stopped all together. Office based staff adapted to working from home. Many front-line staff were repurposed to ensure priority services were maintained. There continues to be a need for staff to remain flexible both as to the work that they do and where they work from.

#### Workforce Planning

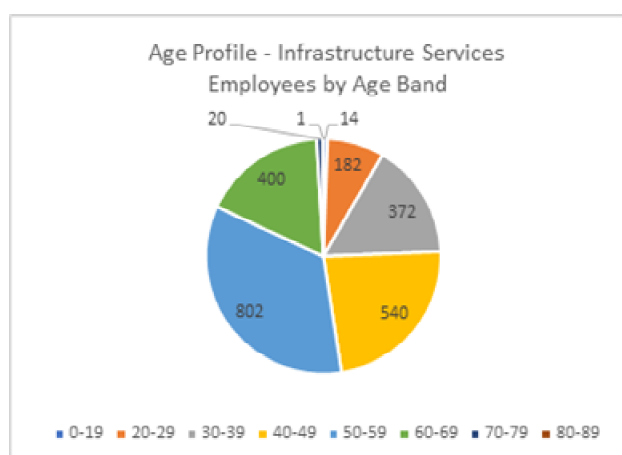
A breakdown of Infrastructure Services employees is in the following table and shows a mix of permanent/fixed-term employees and relief contracts.

Contract Status	Male		Female	
	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	1,238	1,201.2	721	575.6
Fixed-Term	56	53.5	112	82.2
Relief	162	-	42	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>1,254.7</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>657.8</b>

<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>2,331</b>
<b>Total Full Time Equivalent</b>	<b>1,912.5</b>

Top line indicators such as average age and length of service point to a relatively stable overall picture of the workforce. However, deeper analysis identifies that the Infrastructure Services workforce is under-represented in the younger age brackets, with only 8.4% being under the age of 30; this has been the case for many years. We are taking steps to address this, with 29 apprentice opportunities currently filled , with more action required. A large proportion of the workforce (18.1%) is over the age of 60 and this, combined with the recent voluntary severance programme, constitutes a potential risk associated with loss of experience and skills. The gender split is currently 38% female and 62% male.

#### Age Profile



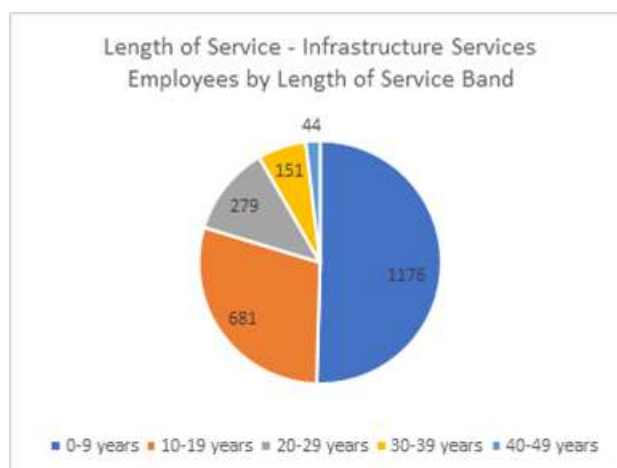
**Average Age = 48.3**

**18.1 % of Infrastructure Services workforce are aged 60 and over**

**8.4% of Infrastructure Services workforce are aged under 30.**

The Infrastructure Services workforce has been relatively stable in recent years. Recruitment and turnover activity are sitting at 15% which reflects the industry standard. Agency spend has significantly decreased with a drop from £600,000 in financial year 2019/20 to £175,000 from April 2020 – January 2021. This reflects the efforts made to deliver services as efficiently as possible, and this trend will continue through the Modernisation Programme projects aimed at multi-tasking and increasing the flexibility of roles.

## Service Profile



**Average Length of Service is 12.3 years**

**Turnover Rate during 2020 was 15.3%**

**56 Infrastructure Services employees have self-declared a disability, representing 2.4% of the workforce within the service.**

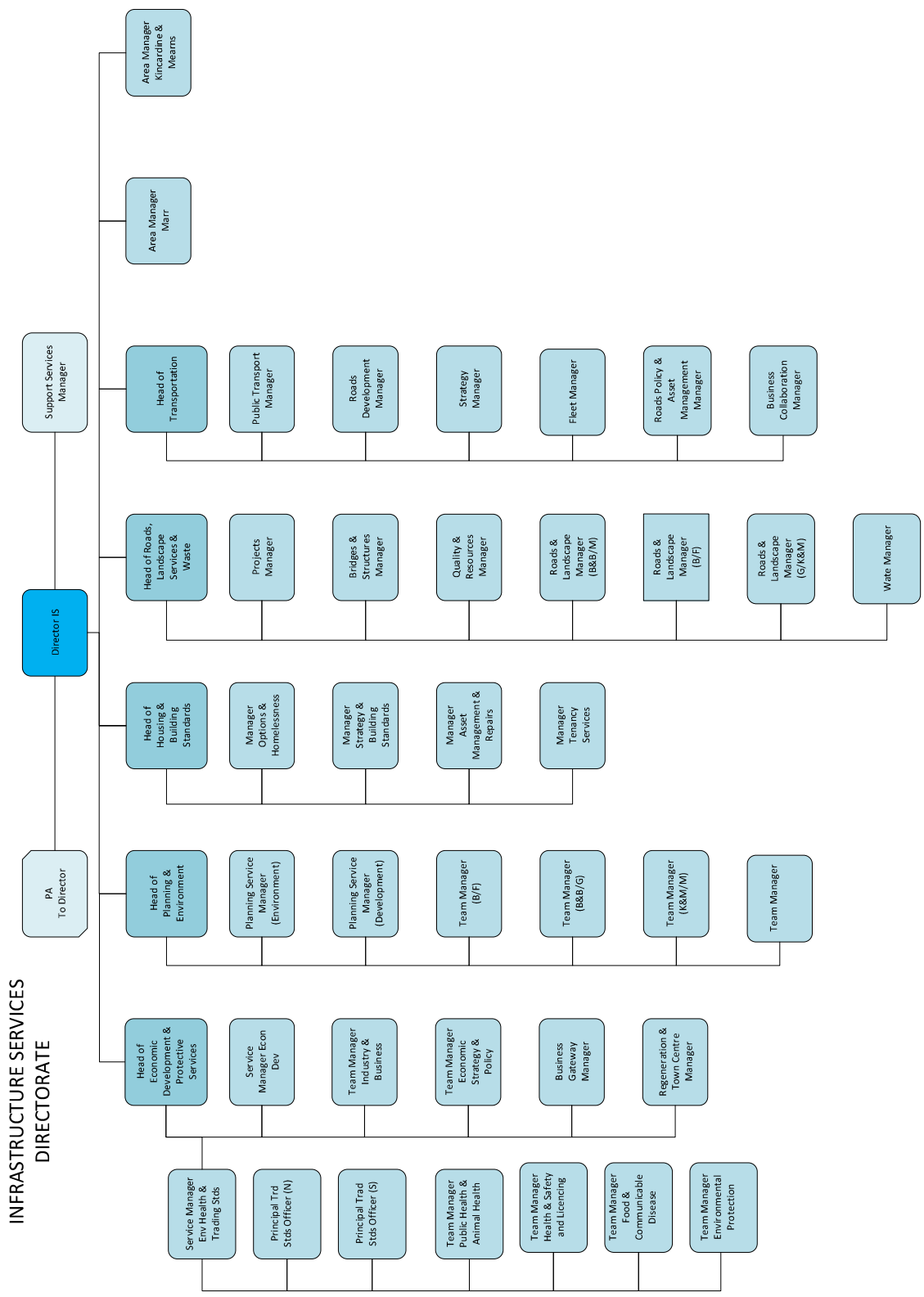
**Sickness across Infrastructure Services equated to 9.94 days per employee in 2020.**

Although relatively stable for some years, the Infrastructure Services workforce is now entering into a period of change through the voluntary severance and the Directorate Modernisation Programme.

This will include the prioritisation of succession planning and talent management within Infrastructure Services over the coming years. The development of detailed workforce plans within Infrastructure Services is already underway, and this will continue to be progressed over the next 24 months. This focused workforce planning may stand alone as plans or be incorporated into service and team plans and will cover elements such as workforce reshaping and reducing, absence, workforce performance, turnover, recruitment, voluntary severance, reskilling/redeployment and talent management.



3.3 Organisational Chart



### 3.4 Financial Profile

The approved revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21 as of March 2020 is –

<b>Service</b>	<b>Base Budget £'000</b>	<b>Base Budget £'000</b>	<b>Base Budget £'000</b>
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Planning &amp; Environment</b>	4,432	4,520	4,611
<b>Economic Development &amp; Protective Services</b>	7,541	7,709	7,882
<b>Roads, Landscape Services &amp; Waste</b>	48,235	48,214	48,175
<b>Transportation</b>	8,042	7,908	7,898
<b>General Fund Housing</b>	5,621	5,665	5,709
<b>Area Managers</b>	928	952	977
<b>Expenditure from Borrowing</b>	(7,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)
<b>IS Total Expenditure</b>	67,799	67,967	68,252
<b>Infrastructure Services Capital Budget</b>	92,928	70,668	35,297
<b>City Region Deal Capital Budget</b>	790	1,573	518
<b>HRA Total Expenditure</b>	64,513	67,155	69,516
<b>HRA Income</b>	(64,513)	(67,155)	(69,516)
<b>HRA Capital Expenditure</b>	60,669	75,123	58,796

### 3.5 Efficiency Savings

The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy aligns resources to the Council's Priorities and supports the delivery of outcomes in the Council Plan. In March 2020 the Council agreed a balanced budget for 2020/21.. Although the 2020/21 budget was balanced it did include £25 million worth of savings that the Council agreed to make.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, has had a significant impact on the Council's financial resources.

A review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in November 2020 identified further pressures on the revenue budget and the estimated savings that would need to be made by 2022 to bring the budget back into balance. Infrastructure Services will be responsible for delivering a significant part of the required savings.

Across Infrastructure Services a review of service delivery arrangements has been undertaken by assessing the scope and standard of current service delivery. From this assessment decisions around a restructured business model specifically linked to the Council's priorities has been taken.

In addition to this action is being taken to manage costs and deliver efficiencies through the management of vacancies, reduced levels of overtime working, reducing the number of agency staff, reviewing temporary contracts as well as considering options for voluntary severance, seeking voluntary reductions in contracted hours and focusing on redeployment and reskilling.

In line with Council policy a review of charges is to be undertaken to ensure that future charges levied reflect the actual cost of providing the service.

The Infrastructure Services Modernisation Programme also seeks to identify and implement efficiency savings through changing how we deliver services, adopting a more digital approach to service delivery and through continuous improvement projects which will identify and eliminate any duplication or inefficiencies.

### **3.6 Consultation with Other Services and Area Management Forums**

The Directorate Plan for Infrastructure Services builds on the work undertaken at a corporate level within the Council on a new set of Strategic Priorities developed to ensure that the Council is able to maximise service delivery and associated resources to all areas and communities within Aberdeenshire.

The 3 pillars and 6 strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan were agreed by Council in October 2020. Following this, work was then undertaken to align existing and future service delivery activities under each of the pillars/priorities.

Development work to support the delivery of the new strategic priorities was undertaken when Policy Chairs, supported by Directors led cross-Service activity in line with the Priorities to agree outcomes and performance measures.

Cross-Party and cross-Committee workshops were held to shape and inform the detailed proposals supported by cross cutting work on the themes to ensure a level of understanding of the work needed to address the priorities across all Services. This work was informed by the refreshed strategic assessment which provided a long-term view of the issues affecting the Council and by community impact assessments which provided an understanding of the local impact of Covid-19 on individual communities and gave communities a voice for how it affected them and the kind of activity they would wish the Council to be pursuing in the future.

The outcome of this work was a set of Council Priorities supporting the strategic priorities and agreement on which Directorate would take the lead delivering each Priority. The final activity then involved developing these actions into the Delivery Plan for the Service. Further work will involve consultations with the Area Managers through the Area Management Teams and Area Committees to identify the Area dimension to each of the actions proposed. This work will inform the development of the Area Plans.

### **3.7 Peer Review**

A peer review of the Plan was carried out firstly by the Infrastructure Services Directorate Management Team and then by the Strategic Leadership Team who acted as a “critical friend” and provided feedback and input into the Plan.

Consultation was also undertaken with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition spokesperson from the Communities Committee as this Policy Committee is the parent committee for Housing and Building Standards and as such their input is essential.

## 4. DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 Performance

Infrastructure Services is committed to effective performance management and its use in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. Regular monitoring of performance is carried out for example on the management of roads maintenance, planning and building warrant application processing, housing maintenance and street lighting maintenance. Computer systems provide managers with real time information enabling targeted intervention as required.

On a six-monthly basis monitoring reports on both performance and progress with action plans are generated through the performance management system and provided to Policy and Area Committees. These reports provide an opportunity for Elected Members to hold Services accountable for performance and progress and so fulfil part of their scrutiny role.

Some parts of the Service are accountable to external regulators. Housing for example must complete an annual return on Charter for the Scottish Housing Regulator and this document shows how the Housing Service is doing against the Scottish Housing Regulator's indicators. A Report for tenants is also provided summarising information provided to the Regulator.

Planning produces an annual [Planning Performance Framework](#) report which covers all aspects of the Service. This report is scrutinised by the Scottish Government and published on the Council's website. The framework gives a balanced measurement of the overall quality of the planning service and is used to drive a culture of continuous improvement.

A similar report is produced by Building Standards each year. Again, this is published on the Council's website. The verification performance report is a strategic planning and management tool that provides information about the local authority Building Standards service, communicates the vision and strategy, and sets out performance against strategy goals and targets. Building Standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the performance report to manage, monitor, review and develop strategies for their business, and should focus on the performance framework's core perspectives and cross-cutting themes.

Housing carries out regular monitoring of tenant satisfaction with the repairs service and every three years carries out a detailed survey of tenant attitudes in line with the requirements set out by the regulator. Both Planning and Building Standards also monitor customer satisfaction.

The Roads Service completes an annual return on a suite of performance information as part of the wider work on Roads Asset Management. In addition, in line with the Road Asset Management Plan (RAMP) the service produces an annual Status and Options Report which summarises the status of the roads assets in terms of size, value and condition and presents a number of investment scenarios for our major road assets. The report helps to inform decisions taken by Members during the budget setting process.

In the 2020 National Highways and Transport Network's (NHT) survey 89% of Aberdeenshire respondents rated Road Condition as "very important" while a further 11% rated it as "fairly important". Similar results to the same question were given in a 2019 "Scotland Roads Survey" by Aberdeenshire respondents with 92% for "very important and 7% for "fairly important". In contrast, when asked about their satisfaction with the condition of local roads, only 6% were "very satisfied" and 26% "fairly satisfied" in the 2020 survey while in the 2019 survey the figures were 1% and 20% respectively.

For some parts of the service satisfaction levels are assessed through the Council's Reputation Tracker. For 2019/20 this showed the following: -

- 87% of people were satisfied with the Parks and Open Spaces.
- 80% of people were satisfied with Refuse Collection.
- 80% of people were satisfied with Street Cleansing.
- 35% of people were satisfied with local roads
- 67% of people were satisfied that the Council ensures appropriate housing

Performance with the key measures for the service for 2019/20 is shown in the table.

Key Performance Measures for Infrastructure Services

The key strategic measures for the service are based around the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Measures. The results for 2019/20 are given below. Each service also uses a range of management indicators to monitor performance against service specific activities.

The table compares performance with that of the previous year (short term trend) and with performance in 2014/15 (long term trend). It also compares performance against the Scottish Average and shows what quartile the indicator falls in compared with the rest of Scotland. Indicators in the top two quartiles are shown as green, 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile as amber and 4<sup>th</sup> quartile as red.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework DATA 2019/20

Indicator Description	Scottish Average	Aberdeenshire Performance	Status	Trend Long Term	Trend Short Term	National Ranking	Quartile Position
SC&L04: Cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	£20,107	£19,184	Green	Declining	Improving	16 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
SC&L05b: %age adults satisfied with parks and open spaces	83.5%	88.9%	Green	Improving	Improving	5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile
SENV01a: Net cost of Waste collection per premises	£75.54	£63.88	Green	Improving	Improving	19 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile
SENV02a: Net cost per Waste disposal per premises	£107.93	£123.21	Red	Improving	Improving	27 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> quartile
SENV03a: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	£15,685	£10,562	Green	Declining	Declining	12 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
SENV03c: Street Cleanliness Index - % Clean	92.3%	96.6%	Green	Improving	Improving	5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile
SENV04a: Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads (2018/19 data only)	£9,823	£7,082	Green	Improving	Improving	8 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile
SENV04b: Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance	30.6%	27.5%	Green	Declining	Declining	15 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile

treatment								
SENV04c: Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	35.0%	23.5%	Green	Declining	Improving	7 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	
SENV04d: Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	35.1%	20.8%	Green	Declining	Improving	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	
SENV04e: Percentage of U class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	37.8%	30.2%	Green	Improving	Improving	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	
SENV05: Cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 population (2018/19 data only)	£20,759	£19,570	Green	Declining	Improving	15 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	
SENV05a: Cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population	£5,952	£4,805	Green	Improving	Improving	12 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	
SENV05b: Cost of Environmental Health per 1,000 population	£13,771	£13,399	Green	Improving	Improving	20 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	
SENV06:The % of total waste arising that is recycled (Annual)	45.0%	44.0%	Green	Improving	Improving	22 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	
SENV07a: % of adults satisfied with refuse collection	74.3%	80.0%	Green	Declining	Declining	13 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	
SENV07b: % of adults satisfied with street cleaning	62.6%	67.6%	Green	Declining	Declining	10 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	
SHSN01: Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as of 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for reporting year (SHR31)	7.3%	4.9%	Green	Declining	Declining	5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	
SHSN02: % of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year (SHR34)	1.07%	2.09%	Red	Declining	Declining	25 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> quartile	
SHSN03: % of stock meeting the SHQS (SHR7)	94.9%	95.4%	Green	Improving	Improving	14 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	

SHSN04: Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs (SHR12)	7.33 days	10.48 days	Red	Declining	Declining	22 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile
SHSN05: Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient (SHR 8)	84.1%	54.7%	Red	Declining	Improving	25 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> quartile
SECON01: % Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes	12.66%	9.59%	Red	Declining	Declining	20 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile
SECON02: Cost of Planning & Building Standards per Planning Application	£4,385	£3,883	Green	Declining	Declining	9 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
SECON03: Average time per business and industry planning applications (weeks)	10.54 weeks	9.27 weeks	Green	Declining	Declining	15 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
SECON05: No. of Business Gateway Start-Ups per 10,000 population	16.41	25.54	Green	Improving	Improving	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> quartile
SECON06: Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population	£98,320	£37,832	Red	Improving	Improving	29 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> quartile
SECON07: Proportion of people earning less than living wage	16.9%	19.2%	Green	Declining	Declining	15 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
SECON08: Proportion of properties receiving Superfast Broadband	89.8%	82.0%	Red	Improving	Improving	27 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> quartile
SECON09: Town Vacancy Rates	11.71%	11.41%	Red	Declining	Declining	18 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile
SECON10: Immediately available employment land as a %age of total land allocated for employment purpose in the Local Development Plan.	36.23%	22.78%	Red	Declining	Declining	21 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile



## 4.2 Benchmarking

The Housing and Building Standards Service has a long tradition of benchmarking. The Housing service provides data to two benchmarking organisations throughout the year. These are the Scottish Housing Network and Housemark. Both organisations provide presentations annually to the Housing Service. The presentations provide an in-depth analysis of what the service does well, what can be improved upon and how well the service compares to others within the sector. An Action Plan to improve the service is developed from this benchmarking activity.

For Building Standards, Aberdeenshire Council, in conjunction with Moray Council and Aberdeen City Council, forms The Grampian Consortium Group. This group meets on a regular basis and its main purposes are to establish a consistent approach to interpretation of policies and technical guidance, provide benchmarking, share best practice and facilitate training. Aberdeenshire Council and the Grampian Consortium Group are actively involved with national policy and working groups via Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS).

Apart from Housing many other parts of the service share performance information through benchmarking groups and use the feedback received to identify areas for improvement. For example, Roads complete an annual return on a suite of performance information as part of the wider work on Roads Asset Management. This allows benchmarking to be undertaken and comparison against national trends. The Roads Asset Management Plan (RAMPs) is informed by the detailed performance results submitted annually. Key indicators from this suite are included in the LGBF. The service also provides a detailed RAMP Performance and Options Report for Committee annually.

Roads, Landscape Services and Fleet are also members of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks. Annual APSE surveys provide opportunities to benchmark against family groups. Key indicators from this suite are included in the LGBF.

The Roads Service has periodic involvement in the NHT surveys to gather the public's views on the performance of the road network. These surveys allow comparison against other Roads Authorities.

Through Heads of Planning Scotland, the Planning and Environment Service participates in benchmarking exercises every quarter. During these discussions best practice in the interpretation and application of planning policy and guidance is discussed as well as performance enhancement.

Each year Infrastructure Services collects information for the Improvement Service which feeds into the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). The LGBF is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services. It reflects a commitment by SOLACE (Scotland) and COSLA to develop better measurement and comparable data as a catalyst for improving services, targeting resources to areas of greatest impact and enhancing public accountability.

The framework provides high-level measures which are designed to focus questions on why variations in cost and performance are occurring between similar councils. They encourage councils to engage with each other to 'drill down' and explore why these variations are happening.

The LGBF helps councils compare their performance against a suite of efficiency, output and outcome indicators that cover all areas of local government activity. Publication of the LGBF forms part of each council's statutory requirements for public performance reporting, replacing the previous SPI regime.

### 4.3 Where Are We Now?

Prior to the pandemic, the Economic Development of Aberdeenshire was showing improved performance in terms of the number of business start-ups assisted by Business Gateway, the number of jobs created or sustained through the Support for Aberdeenshire Business scheme and the number of unemployed helped into employment or training. The pandemic has had a significant impact on businesses and employment services and the service has had to refocus the support that it is providing to businesses to help them through. A new Action Plan for Economic Development is being developed which will set out the future direction for the service to 2022 in line with the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy and new Council priorities.

The performance of Trading Standards and Environmental Health has fallen slightly against some of their key measures, but this is partly due to resourcing issues which are being addressed. Both services will have important roles in supporting the local economy during the pandemic and ensuring compliance with new regulations. Environmental Health will also have a key role with regards inspecting licenced premises and fishing vessels in order to comply with regulations covering the export of food products to the EU following EU Exit.

The Annual Status and Options Report summarises the status of our road assets in terms of size, value and condition and presents a number of investment scenarios for our major road assets. Some of the key findings of the 2020 report were as follows:-

#### Bridges

No bridges carrying:-	Black Flag	Red Flag	Amber Flag	Yellow Flag	Green Flag
Vital roads (predominantly A class)	0	6	18	32	260
Important (predominantly B class)	1	3	3	28	234
Standard Roads (predominantly C class and unclassified)	12	1	30	69	606

Black Flags indicate bridges are closed, the other flags (Red, Amber, Yellow and Green) indicate the likelihood of safety led weight restriction/closure in next 5 years if no further investment in maintenance or replacement.

**Roads** Results from the current (year 2018-2020) Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey indicates the following condition split for Aberdeenshire's roads:

Green	73.75%	4103.9km	2550.1 miles
Amber	22.70%	1263.4km	785.0 miles
Red	3.54%	197.7km	122.8 miles
SRMCS PI	26.2%	1461.1km	907.9 miles

### Key

Green indicates the carriageway is generally in a good state of repair; amber indicates some deterioration is apparent and red indicates where the carriageway is in poor overall condition.

While this result puts Aberdeenshire Council in the top quartile of roads authorities it does indicate that there is a considerable length of the network that requires further work to bring it back into a good condition.

**Footways** The results from the 2019 footway survey showed over a quarter of the network being in a deteriorated condition (21.2% condition rating 3 and 4.1% condition rating 4). This is significantly worse than that recorded in the 2014 footway survey where only 11.0% was assessed as being Condition 3 and 0.5% as being Condition 4.

The overall quality of the Housing Service is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Each year the Housing Service must submit an assurance statement saying how it is meeting its legal and statutory obligations against 16 outcomes. In November the annual assurance statement was signed off by Communities Committee. The statement provided evidence to demonstrate performance against each outcome. Overall, the service was performing well but there were some areas here improvements were required, these are discussed at para 4.5 below.

Each year Building Standards publishes a report on its performance in compliance with the Building Standards Verification Framework. The report for 2019-2020 showed the service as being on target or slightly below target for all its key performance indicators. The pandemic has impacted adversely on service delivery and new ways of working have had to be developed to respond to the restrictions imposed by the virus, such as virtual site visits. These new ways of working have been so successful it is expected they will continue once the pandemic eases.

The Planning & Environment Service has continued to operate throughout the pandemic adapting the way the Service is delivered. Through utilising digital technologies work has progressed on the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 which will shortly be submitted to Scottish Ministers for examination. Although initially planning application numbers dropped as the development industry responded to the constraints created by the pandemic we have experienced a sustained recovery in recent months with application submissions returning to pre-covid numbers. However, through moving to virtual committees and virtual site visits we have continued to determine planning applications while enhancing our relationship with our customers. This is reflected by the positive feedback received from the Scottish Government in relation to Planning Performance Framework 2019/20 with the Service scoring 13 green and 1 amber rating out of 14 key markers

## 4.4 Positive Messages

The onset of Covid-19 and the subsequent lock-down in March this year has required the service to make significant and rapid changes to the way it works and the services that it provides. Due to the hard work and commitment of everyone within Infrastructure Services we have continued to provide vital services to our communities.

The Economic Development service was reconfigured to focus predominantly on supporting businesses and individuals with access to services and grant funding and advising businesses on their plans for reopening. During the latter part of 2020, when grant funding from the Government lessened, the Economic Development service launched its own recovery focused schemes (Phoenix Town Centre Fund and Business Resilience and Sustainability Scheme). The service also increased its capacity to support unemployed people through new keyworker posts and a wage subsidy scheme, part-funded by the European Social Fund.

Through the £190,000 Aberdeenshire Town Centre Phoenix Fund a total of 25 projects covering things like marketing; building a phone app, loyalty schemes; digital resilience, initiatives to promote trails and walking and mini public realm have been supported.

During the lock-down phase and following easing of some of the restrictions we have continued to provide a range of key services or have adapted existing services to meet the new challenges.

Housing and Building Standards adapted quickly and efficiently to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that the majority of the services provided to tenants and other service users continued. This has meant changes to ways of working right across the board. The pandemic has meant that the majority of office-based staff have had to work from home and in many cases have had to juggle their workload whilst providing home-schooling or other support to their family during lock-down.

For area- based staff new ways of working have had to be introduced based around innovative uses of technology allowing virtual home visits or site meetings to take place. The provision of emergency repairs in homes was continued after safe working practices were developed and appropriate protective safety equipment procured.

The pandemic has impacted on other parts of the Housing service. For example, rent arrears began to rise at the start of lockdown but levels are now relatively stable compared to other Scottish Local Authorities as a result of early intervention support by Housing officers. The pandemic has also seen an increase in levels of support offered to vulnerable groups by Tenancy Management based on a person-centred approach.

The Waste Service has continued to provide a full domestic waste collection service during this crisis. There was some disruption to the Household Waste Recycling Centres during lock-down, but they have now reopened on an appointment only basis and are operating well. Under the Covid-19 redeployment, many of our employees from Roads, Landscape Services and Waste Management were required to work longer hours, commute to new locations and undergo training in unfamiliar activities. As a result of the redeployment, some activities such as grass-cutting and road repairs were suspended. These have now resumed.

The efforts of staff to maintain the waste service and the commitment of the wider Aberdeenshire community to continue to recycle even during the depths of the pandemic were acknowledged by Zero Waste Scotland during National Recycling Week in September.

Many staff also played an important role in ensuring the council's Burial Services continued to proceed with professionalism and dignity despite a rise in funerals across Aberdeenshire.

Fleet Services have worked hard to keep Council services on the road during the crisis and have worked with colleagues across the Council to ensure vehicles were available to allow safe working practices to be adopted.

The return of children to school has presented Transportation with a number of complex issues in ensuring pupil safety on school transport. On top of this Transportation has been involved in organising transport to ensure key workers could get to their places of work safely and delivering medicines and food to the more vulnerable individuals within our communities.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards continue to offer advice and assistance to businesses to ensure compliance with the emergency Covid-19 restrictions. The Environmental Health Team has been part of a national Expert Group for Covid-19. This group is a mixture of Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers from across Scotland. In October the Expert Group were awarded the Overall Covid-19 Outstanding Team Contribution Award by the UK Chartered Trading Standards Institute 'Hero Awards'.

Throughout the course of the pandemic Planning & Environment and Building Standards have continued to support local developments. The development and introduction of new ways of working to overcome the constraints created by the Pandemic will be retained due to the improvements they have made to the quality of service we provide. The adoption of new technology to facilitate virtual site visits has allowed planning and building warrant applications to be progressed without the need for staff to carry out site visits reducing the carbon footprint and cost. Transitioning to a digital engagement platform has aided the progression of the proposed Local Development Plan. More than 1300 representations were received in relation to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020. The success of the consultation is evidenced by a significant proportion of the representations being from people that have not previously engaged in the development planning process.

A one-stop-shop led by Infrastructure Services was set-up to support local businesses as the north east emerged from lockdown. The forum comprised of Officers from Services across the Council that came together to agree a consistent approach to advising businesses of grant support, legislative relaxations, constraints and permissible adaptations to their operations. This Service has been warmly received by local communities and has been a resounding success in safeguarding Aberdeenshire businesses during the pandemic as well as supporting business start-up.

The Environment Service has continued to deliver key workstreams through the pandemic such as extending the Deeside Way and carrying out essential repairs to the Formartine and Buchan Way. The Rangers Service has adapted their approach to community engagement and education by introducing webinars and virtual wildlife forums. New Built Heritage, Natural Environment and Rangers strategies have been delivered outlining the work of the Environment Service over the period 2020-2023.

Measures have been put in place to provide safe spaces to support physical distancing and the suppression of Covid-19 in several Aberdeenshire Town Centres through the “Spaces for People” project.

Prior to the on-set of the pandemic the Housing Service was making considerable progress with its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and the overall time taken to close homeless cases and time spent in temporary accommodation had been significantly reduced. During lock-down we continued to provide essential services to homeless presentations including temporary accommodation but were unable to facilitate moves to more permanent accommodation due to the lock-down restrictions. Since these restrictions started to be lifted, we have worked with Registered Social Landlord partners and colleagues across the Council to provide Housing First support and assist people into permanent accommodation.

A review of progress with the Local Housing Strategy in September showed that 24 out of the 33 indicators in the Strategy were on track at the end of March. Highlights included the establishment of an affordable housing hub, the development of a match maker scheme to make it easier for people wanting to buy an empty property to connect with property owners and a successful bid for funding to support the installation of energy efficiency measures in properties.

Over the past year a total of 249 properties were built in towns across Aberdeenshire as part of the Council’s new build programme and work has now started on a further 297 properties.

Work has been completed on the Greenbanks Gypsy/Traveller site in Banff. Although delayed by the pandemic the fully refurbished site was able to reopen for business in August.

During the year the latest phase of the resettlement programme for Syrian New Scots was completed. Nearly 200 refugees have been successfully resettled in Aberdeenshire under this scheme – around 60 families.

Progress has been made in respect of the Sheltered Housing Review and the development of a new model of service provision. Sheltered Housing teams have ensured the safety of tenants throughout the pandemic by focusing on social distancing and infection control requirements within schemes.

The development of a new approach to Community Safety in Aberdeenshire has continued with the adoption of an operational, tactical and strategic model. A new Community Safety Strategy has been implemented emphasising a joint agency approach to dealing with specific issues impacting on communities throughout Aberdeenshire.

A new Tenant Participation Strategy has been developed and implemented following extensive consultation that emphasised the need to engage with tenants in new and innovative ways. The Strategy also promotes the development of close links with communities to empower tenants to influence service delivery in their area.

Considerable progress was also made with other key projects across the Council area. For example, in October Kintore saw the return of rail services after almost 60 years following the opening of the new £15 million station funded by Transport Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council and NESTRANS. The station also has the largest electric vehicle charging location in north east Scotland with 24 of the 168 parking spaces fitted with charging points. The new station will make it easier for people to travel into Aberdeen, both easing congestion and reducing emissions.

A report published in September showed the impact the Council has made in reducing road casualties across Aberdeenshire. Between 2015 and 2019 there was a fall of 10% in the number of people killed on our road and a fall of 23% in the number of casualties.

The restoration and redevelopment of the Category B Faithlie Centre in Fraserburgh was completed earlier this year. The building has been redeveloped to provide a Council service centre, office premises and offices for business use. The restoration project successfully won an award in the Scottish Design Awards in the category of “best reuse of buildings.”

#### 4.5 Areas for Improvement

During early 2020 the Council was subject to an audit of its approach to Best Value by Audit Scotland. Although the strength of the Council's approach to Best Value was recognised certain areas of weakness were identified including those relating to performance and benchmarking, self-evaluation and involvement of communities in decision making.

In November, Housing submitted its return to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This return identified a number of areas where performance had been below expectations, these included:-

- The Council will not meet its Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (EESH) by the end of the year. This is due to a range of reasons exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic. There have been various delays with the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programmes of work. The contractors were just addressing these issues and were making good progress with Year 2 of the works when the pandemic struck. When work recommenced after lock-down it was at a slower pace due to measures brought in to ensure safe working practices. A significant number of planned upgrades have yet to be delivered but the service is working with Property colleagues and the contractors to ensure works are delivered as quickly as possible.
- The pandemic has impacted on the delivery of general repairs, many of which were put on hold during the lock-down.



- Housing is currently performing below expectations with regards to void turnover times resulting in delays for rehousing applicants and associated rental loss. A review has been undertaken to streamline the void process. In conjunction with a modified re-lettable standard, it is hoped to significantly improve performance in this area.
- Rent Arrears have risen during the pandemic. Although action has been taken to stabilise this increase, arrears remain unacceptably high and work is being undertaken to address this issue.

The Council has agreed an ambitious new build housing programme over the next five years to address affordable housing needs in the area. The supply of new build affordable housing is heavily dependent on agreements with developers and a slow-down in the economy and local housing market has reduced the supply of such properties. Overall provision of new build affordable housing has not met expectations.

Although recycling rates continue to improve the Council still has a long way to go to meet the Government's Zero waste targets. Although the Energy from Waste Plant will further reduce the volume of material going to landfill a lot of work still needs to be done to educate people to refurbish and reuse materials so extending the overall lifecycle of materials in line with the circular economy commitment.

The Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged people to be more active but further work remains to be done to change behaviours on a permanent basis.

The reductions in road casualty numbers are welcome but further work needs to be done to make our roads as safe as possible. A new Road safety Strategy is in development by the Government which is expected to set even more robust targets for reducing accident rates on our roads.

#### **4.6 Where Do We Need To Be?**

Currently we are still living with Covid-19 and the exact nature of the impacts of the pandemic and the future needs of our communities, our environment and our economy as a result are not yet fully known or understood. Whilst the Community Impact Assessments carried out earlier in the year have provided an excellent snapshot of current impacts and needs, more work will need to be done as we move through the pandemic to identify what more has to be done to support recovery.

The impact of the pandemic on Council finances has been significant with the latest forecasts predicting that the Council's spending will be £46.578 million over budget by the end of the next year unless action is taken. In November the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy was updated as part of the preparations towards the recovery phase of operations. As part of the development of the revised strategy each Director has reviewed service delivery arrangements through the agreed governance process to present service delivery options, including potential savings, to Councillors for their consideration.

The aim of the Council is to achieve a balanced budget position by the end of March 2022 which will require each service to deliver significant savings over the period and in order to deliver these savings what we do and how we do it will have to change. However, the focus will remain on delivering essential services to businesses and communities to help them recover from the pandemic.



A key priority will be to support economic recovery and Economic Development and Protective Services will have a major role to play in this. This will include signposting businesses to agencies who may offer assistance and also administering grant funding where that is applicable. Support and assistance will also need to be provided to businesses who trade with EU countries to help them with the new export requirements following EU Exit. These issues will be addressed by the new Economic Development Action Plan. The Environmental Health and Trading Standards service will continue to advise and support businesses to adhere to Covid-19 restrictions and will enforce adherence as necessary.

To give certainty and clarity to developers investing in Aberdeenshire as well as give direction to strategic infrastructure investment the Planning and Environment Service will progress towards adoption of the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020. In response to changes in legislation and taking cognisance of the Community Impact Assessment and Best Value Audit the Service is working in partnership with Area Management Teams, Council Services and partner organisations as well as local communities to deliver Place Plans for the main settlements in Aberdeenshire. The proposed Local Development Plan and future Place Plans will provide a framework for placemaking as well as promoting high quality design as a means to safeguarding the creation of sustainable places that support the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Housing and Building Standards Service has already taken a range of actions to ensure it is better able to meet the future needs of the service. There has been an overall review of the Housing and Building Standards Service to ensure the correct structure is put in place to meet the existing and emerging demands on the service, this builds on the work previously undertaken to review Community Safety and the on-going review of Sheltered Housing designed to rationalise accommodation and improve the support provided to tenants. An action plan has also been developed to address issues identified by the regulator. Further actions are also being taken to improve housing quality standards through the Housing Improvement Programme and energy efficiency standards through acceleration of EESSH works. Work is already on-going to prepare for the EESSH2 standards.

The Service will continue to take a lead role on sustainability and climate change commitments and will develop and implement a range of projects to reduce carbon emissions. Projects that are currently being delivered include the LED installation programme for street lighting, the procurement of electric vehicles by fleet and the installation of electric vehicle charge points in our communities.

In line with the revised Waste Strategy, revisions to the current collection regime will be phased in. Work will also be undertaken to implement a return-deposit scheme. These changes should help improve recycling rates and reduce the level of waste materials going to landfill in line with Zero Waste Targets. Further changes will be introduced once the Energy from Waste Plant comes on stream.

It is intended that there will be a further focusing of activity on developing active travel routes and projects to continue to encourage people to active travel more frequently, both addressing congestion and emission issues as well as delivering health and wellbeing benefits.

Work will continue on activities such as the A947 route improvement strategy to reduce road accidents. The aim is to make our roads as safe as possible for all types of road users.

A more integrated and comprehensive Open Space Strategy will be delivered. This will ensure that open space is provided and maintained in the most suitable way. Open space provision as part of new development will continue to be required, with a broader remit on potential uses. A review of playpark numbers and play value will ensure access to good quality play environments for a range of ages. The Service will build on its biodiversity programme and work with communities to identify areas of open space that can be managed differently to enhance biodiversity.

As part of Aberdeenshire's Food Strategy greater support will be provided to allotment groups to provide opportunities for food growing. In response to the findings of the Best Value Audit and in order to continue to improve the efficiency of service delivery action will continue across Infrastructure Services to improve performance and to develop a culture for continuous improvement. The aim is to empower people to identify and make changes to the way they work and also to generate opportunities for improvement through regular self-assessment exercises using the How Good is Our Council methodology.

Despite these activities and the additional commitments imposed on the service by new legislation etc it is accepted that considerable work must be done to deliver the reductions in spending outlined in the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy. These savings will impact on the services to be delivered, how they are to be delivered and, on the staff, currently delivering them.

## **5. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **5.1 Risks**

It is of increasing importance in the Organisation that managers are "risk aware". This is different from "risk averse", and the proposed approach will allow managers to fully understand the risks being faced and support them to manage the risks accordingly. It is important to note that risk is often unavoidable particularly during periods of significant transformational change.

There will however be a level where a risk is no longer deemed acceptable or tolerable (known as "risk appetite"), and as such appropriate management action will require to be taken to mitigate the impact of the risk. Escalation procedures may also be embedded into the process to ensure directorate and corporate risk registers will be populated as appropriate.

This approach would ensure that all directorate risk registers, including the Corporate Risk Register, will be aligned to the revised approach of identifying and recording risk and will secure a more consistent approach to directorate level risk recording which will be further enhanced through incorporating risk registers within directorate and service planning activity. This will allow directorate and service objectives and priorities, performance measures and directorate and service risks to be captured in a single document. These areas will always be closely aligned, and this approach will offer real benefits in business planning, service delivery, and performance and risk management.

A summary of key risks within the directorate at this time together with details of the current controls to mitigate these risks is provided in the table below. The full Corporate Risk Register is available [here](#).

RISK	MITIGATION – CURRENT CONTROLS
Range of risks related to Economic Development service – changes to industries and our ability to meet demand for services in the face of challenges such as COVID 19 and EU Exit.	Mitigation of these risks is addressed through departmental (Service) plans and the Directorate Business Continuity Plan, which identifies our Critical Activities and puts in place plans to ensure our ability to continue to operate and deliver these vital services. Additionally, a Head of Service assumes responsibility for each of our identified risks and ensures that appropriate plans for mitigation are put in place and reviewed regularly.
Risks related to failure of fuel supplies	
Risks related to failures to deliver vital infrastructure services e.g. burials, roads, waste, homelessness, emergency repairs	
Risk of failing to meet Climate Change requirements and responsibilities	
Risks related to failure to deliver responsibilities e.g. Transportation Strategic Partnerships, Planning Determination requirement.	
Risks related to organisational failures e.g. equalities provision, industrial relations etc	

Impacting on everything is the Corporate Risk relating to Balancing the Books. The financial pressures being experienced by the Council mean that budget savings will need to be identified in line with the new Medium-Term Financial Strategy. A key risk is that money is reduced but transformational change does not take place to realise the true savings.

## 5.2 Opportunities

2019 and 2020 have brought significant challenges which have included the contraction of the oil industry, the societal upheaval caused by COVID-19 and a continuing lack of clarity on the requirements for the impending changes associated with EU Exit from January 2021. These major challenges should not be viewed in purely negative terms as they also represent opportunities in that they force us to review the Services we deliver and the way that we deliver them. The pressures of the current situation have, fostered originality, agility, resourcefulness and a boost to the impetus of our efforts to modernise and transform our Service. During 2020 we have, from necessity, found quicker and more efficient and resourceful ways to deliver or amend existing services, which have utilised creativity to allow the achievement of efficiencies in terms of time and workforce requirements. Some examples, from across the Directorate, include:

Our Waste, Roads and Landscape Services staff have demonstrated their commitment and flexibility by quickly and efficiently learning and performing alternative duties, at short notice, to ensure continuity of vital services through redeployment. This adaptable approach offers scope to maximise the effectiveness of our staff resource and the ability to flexibly target our resources towards the greatest need.

All of our office-based staff have successfully adapted to working from home and have adapted and streamlined processes to allow continuation of service. This offers scope for to permanently reduce the office space requirement and travel time and expenses across many parts of the Directorate.

Homelessness applications pre-COVID-19 always had to be made in person at an office. Due to the restrictions of COVID-19 an alternative approach had to be developed rapidly and applications are now successfully dealt with by telephone calls, speeding up the process and reducing stress and expense for service users.

The Housing Repairs Team have accelerated the implementation of a new app which allows repairs reporting and requests to be made over a video link– this facilitates a pre-visit assessment/inspection, reduces the number of visits, speeds up the repair and thus both improves the service to tenants and allows better and more intensive use of our available resources.

The Directorate has a Modernisation Programme in place that is working to take forward this approach, increase the pace of change and modernise our ways of working across a range of areas. The projects fall into 3 main themes: -

- Flexible Workforce
- Continuous Improvement
- Digital & Data

## 6. DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2021/22

The majority of the performance measures shown relate to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) measures as detailed in Section 4.1. Additional measures will be developed by the service and will be reported to Committee as part of the regular performance reporting process.

Each of the actions to be undertaken by the service in support of the Council priorities have been grouped under the themes of Economic Development, Environment and Connectivity.

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
<b>Economic Development</b>					
Infrastructure Economy & enterprise	Review outcomes from the LGBF data each year. Develop action plans to improve performance of key measures.	Aim is to improve performance to ensure measures that are of strategic importance to the service are in the top two quartiles when compared with other councils in Scotland.	Based on the LGBF measures	Director of IS to agree	Annual action plan will be developed following reporting of measures
Resilient communities Economy & enterprise <i>A location of choice that has a diverse economic base of innovative companies with a skilled workforce and return to full employment</i>	Develop new Economic Development Service Plan setting out new priorities and actions in line with the new Council Plan and Priorities and revised Medium Term Financial Strategy. Seek approval for Plan from Committee then implement agreed actions.	The new Service Plan will layout a new approach to deal with the economic and employability crisis. The plan will ensure that:-  Unemployment and business failures due to Covid-19 shock are stabilised with rate gradually returning to pre-2020 levels.	% Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes (ECON1)  No. of Business Gateway Start-Ups per 10,000 population (ECON5)  Investment in Economic Development and	Service Manager Economic Development	Present new Service Plan to Committee. Deliver actions within Service Plan to 2022.

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
		An economic base that has diversified from reliance on oil and gas, with a more sustainable and diverse company base.	Tourism per 1,000 population (ECON6)  Proportion of people earning less than living wage (ECON7)  Proportion of properties receiving Superfast Broadband (ECON8)  Town Vacancy Rates (ECON9)		
Resilient communities Economy and enterprise  <i>The gap between economic, environmental and social outcomes in Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead and the Aberdeenshire average is closed and other towns at risk have avoided becoming regeneration priorities</i>	Delivery of transition plans for the four towns, moving away from the previous strategy to a more sustained partnership and co-designed set of priorities	Actions being taken in the four northern towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead will close the gap between the economic, environmental and social outcomes experienced in the rest of Aberdeenshire.	Number of vacant units brought back into use  Number and value of town centre transformation projects developed and implemented	Service Manager Economic Development	On-going Activity

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
<p>Economy &amp; enterprise</p> <p><i>Supporting Aberdeenshire businesses through pandemic, EU Exit and energy transition</i></p>	<p>(i) Provide support to businesses to help them adapt to the additional customs processes that are to be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 when the UK leaves the EU Customs Union.</p>	<p>This helps businesses export to the EU and reduces hold-ups at the borders due to incorrect paperwork etc. through supporting the export of goods the service is helping to protect businesses and safeguard jobs and the local economy.</p>	<p>Number of businesses supported each year</p>	<p>Service Manager Economic Development</p>	<p>By 2023</p>
	<p>(ii) Support the exporting of products of animal origin (POAO) to the EU through inspection of licenced premises and fishing vessels to ensure full compliance with the export supply chain and the issuing of Export Health Certificates (EHC) in order to clear EU border controls.</p>	<p>The EHC confirms that the exported goods meet the health and quality requirements of the destination country. They are required to ensure producers can continue to export their products to the EU, so safeguarding businesses and protecting jobs.</p>	<p>Number of export health certificates provided to companies trading with European Union economic zone after 12 months following the end of the Transition Period</p>	<p>Service Manager Environmental Health and Trading Standards</p>	<p>On-going activity</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Resilient communities</p> <p>Economy and enterprise</p> <p><i>Consumers are assured that</i></p>	<p>Deliver a Trading Standards/consumer advice service to citizens and businesses within Aberdeenshire through:-</p>	<p>Consumers are assured that they are protected by businesses conforming to regulations and relevant requirements. As required enforcement action taken to protect</p>	<p>Cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 population (ENV5)</p>	<p>Service Manager Environmental Health and Trading Standards</p>	<p>On-going activity</p>



Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
<p><i>businesses are conforming to regulations. Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification and energy transition</i></p>	<p>(i) Provision of advice and assistance to consumers.</p> <p>(ii) Provision of advice and assistance to businesses to help them comply with the law.</p> <p>(iii) Ascertaining and securing compliance with the law through identifying potential infringements and seeking to remedy them by appropriate means.</p>	<p>consumer safety and prevent exploitation of citizens due to scams and rouge trading</p> <p>Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, thus leading to increased consumer confidence.</p> <p>Support also provided for diversification and new product lines to ensure longevity and investment in their infrastructure and wider communities.</p>	<p>Cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population (ENV5a)</p> <p>Percentage of high-risk premises visited within the timescales by Trading Standards</p> <p>Percentage of Trading Standards consumer complaints that were dealt with within 14 days.</p>		
	<p>Provide a comprehensive Environmental Health Service to citizens and businesses within Aberdeenshire involving food safety and standards, public health, waste, built environment, workplace health and safety, animal health</p>	<p>The service strives to improve, protect and maintain in a prioritised and affordable way, the health and wellbeing of people in Aberdeenshire</p>	<p>Cost of Environmental Health per 1,000 population (ENV5b)</p> <p>Percentage of Type-A private water supplies samples completed in accordance with statutory sampling programme.</p> <p>Number of compliance visits within agreed timescales and</p>	<p>Service Manager Environmental Health and Trading Standards</p>	<p>On-going activity</p>



Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
	and welfare and pollution control.		controls confirmed in place at high-risk premises  Number of responses to statutory nuisance complaints within agreed timescales. Delivery of the food law inspection program.		
	Ensure a modern and streamlined approach is taken by Protective Services to monitor, enforce and provide permissions to business, individuals and communities.  Submit assurance statement each year to show compliance with the new regulatory framework issued by the Scottish Regulator under the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014	Reduction in duplication of staff time, Minimised staff travel Extensive use of technology to streamline processes and increase efficiency The aim is to ensure regulatory activities are exercised in accordance with the principles of better regulation.	Assurance statement is submitted	Service Manager Environmental Health and Trading Standards	On-going activity
<b>Environment</b>					
Health & wellbeing Resilient communities	(i) Develop and deliver a programme of maintenance and	Affordable, environmentally sustainable biodiversity	Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population (C&L4)	Roads and Landscape Services	Approval March/April

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
Open spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles	improvement works for open spaces each year.	public areas that are maintained in a manner to boost the perception of Aberdeenshire, attracting visitors, and encouraging commercial and social activity.	%age adults satisfied with parks and open spaces (C&L5b)	Managers (G & KM), (BB & M), (B & F)	Delivery - on-going activity
	(ii) In line with the Open Space Strategy implement initiatives such as the Greenspaces project to increase biodiversity across the public owned spaces in Aberdeenshire.	Increase in the percentage of open spaces converted to areas of biodiversity following consultation and collaboration with the communities and elected members.	Year on year %age increase in land converted to biodiversity	Roads and Landscape Services Managers (G & KM), (BB & M), (B & F)	On-going activity
Infrastructure Health & wellbeing Waste and recycling service which supports our attractive environment and reduces emissions	(i) Submit bids for funding and if successful move towards implementing a 3 weekly kerbside collection service with the non-recyclable waste bins emptied once and the recycling bins emptied twice in three weeks.	A safe, efficient, affordable, waste service that provides appropriate opportunities for all households and business across Aberdeenshire to appropriately dispose of their unwanted goods in a manner which supports the circular economy aspiration and protects the health and wellbeing of our citizens.	Net cost of Waste collection per premises (ENV1a)  Net cost per Waste disposal per premises (ENV2a)  The % of total waste arising that is recycled (ENV6)	Waste Manager	Applications for funding open April 2021.  Expected to start spring 2022  Implement changes as required in 2021
	(ii) Review recycling centre permit system and recycling centre service provision				

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
	(iii) Work to increase to increase the number of recyclable materials accepted at recycling centres and to reduce non-recyclable waste by promoting waste reduction measures and recycling, including the Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility schemes as they are introduced.				On-going exercise, develop and implement changes as appropriate
	(iv) Delivery of operational Ness EfW Plant				Current timescales for EfW plant to be fully operational is December 2022.
	(v) Review options and finalise arrangements for bulky waste treatment in 2021/22.				Complete development of options during 2021
	(vi) Review opportunities for further community engagement in delivery of the LPAP	A safe, efficient, affordable, street cleansing service that promotes a positive anti littering message that contributes to attractive and economically vibrant towns centres,	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (ENV3a)  Street Cleanliness Index - % Clean (ENV3c)	Waste Manager	On-going activity

Council priority	Key Action	Anticipated outcome	Performance measure	Responsible person	Timescale
		while also contributing to the health and wellbeing of our citizens.			

Infrastructure Economy & Enterprise <i>Safeguard the built and natural environment</i>	Deliver heritage regeneration projects in the towns of Banff, Macduff, Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Seek funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and from other external sources to support some of the projects identified.	These projects help to improve the environment and support tourism and economic activity in the four towns.	Delivery of regeneration priorities	Planning Service Manager (Environment/ Specialist Services)	On-going activity
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Resilient communities Economy & enterprise  <i>Placemaking to meet the current and future needs of communities and supporting communities to help themselves, enabling community wealth building that supports local economic opportunities</i>	Support the development of the 17 Community Place Plans, covering the whole of Aberdeenshire; Use of Masterplans to promote development delivery	These will be evidence-based, focused 3-year action plans to address any gaps between the needs and aspirations of communities, against existing service provision (assets, resources, plans and strategies).	Number of plans and associated action plans developed each year	Planning Service Manager (Development Management)	On-going activity
<b>Connectivity</b>					
Infrastructure Health & Wellbeing Resilient communities <i>A road and street-lighting network which keeps people safe, encourages active lifestyles and increases active travel opportunities</i>	(i) Develop and deliver a programme of road maintenance and improvement works each year.  (ii) Provide an efficient and effective street lighting repairs service.  (iii) Continue the delivery of a six-year programme to upgrade	A hierarchical road network, where finite resources are prioritised to support vibrant, sustainable communities through the safe, efficient, movement of people and goods within, and across, Aberdeenshire.  A street lighting network that promotes the safety of pedestrians, encourages active travel, and reduces the associated environmental impacts. Upgrades will reduce	Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads (ENV4a)  Percentage of each class of roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment (ENV4b – ENV4e)  (ii) Percentage of all streetlight repairs completed within 7 days.  (iii) Quantity of energy consumed by Council streetlights per annum	Roads and Landscape Services Managers (G & KM), (BB & M), (B & F)	Approval March/April  Delivery - on-going activity
				Roads and Landscape Services Managers (G & KM), (BB & M), (B & F)	On-going activity

	traditional streetlights with LED lanterns.	maintenance costs, energy costs and carbon emissions.			Complete programme by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
	(iv) Develop and deliver a programme of bridge works each year.	Ensures that bridges on primary routes remain open and without restrictions minimising corresponding economic and social disruption.	Percentage of bridges with weight or width restriction (SPI)	Structures Manager	Approval March/April. Delivery - on-going activity
	(v) In line with the Winter Maintenance Operational Plan deliver an efficient and effective gritting and snow clearing service during the winter months.	Minimum disruption due to ice and snow occurs during winter months, priority routes are kept open to ensure safe movement of goods and people across the road network.	Percentage of primary gritter routes treated by 8.30 a.m.	Roads and Landscape Services Managers (G & KM), (BB & M), (B & F)	On-going activity
Infrastructure Resilient communities <i>Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding</i>	(i) Develop and deliver a programme of flood risk and coastal protection works each year.  (ii) Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2022 – work with partners to deliver the actions in the plan  (iii) Delivery of the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan 2016-2022 - work with the	Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to adapt to the effects of climate change including protecting themselves from the risk of flooding. Through a partnership approach, take appropriate proactive action to mitigate and reduce significant risks.	Programme agreed by Area Committee each year.	Projects Manager (Flood Management/ Coastal and Harbours)	Approval Feb/April Delivery - on-going activity

	partners to implement the actions agreed in the plan for Aberdeenshire.					
Infrastructure Economy & enterprise <i>Keeping communities connected through the provision of an affordable, accessible, reliable and well-connected passenger transport service</i>	Agreed Implementation Plan of 'Clean Sheet Review' of the supported bus network	The provision of an affordable, accessible, reliable and well-connected passenger transport service.	Review completed and implemented.	Passenger Transport Manager	By end of 2021	
Infrastructure Health & wellbeing <i>It's easy and safe to move around local areas using good quality active travel routes, streets and roads</i>	Deliver actions in the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) relating to active travel (walking, cycling etc) including the development of integrated Travel Town Masterplans for all relevant towns in Aberdeenshire. (i) Provide a road safety service which includes implementing measures to promote road safety; undertake studies into collisions; taking measures to reduce and prevent accidents. Review	This action will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of the people in Aberdeenshire.	Increase in the number of active travel journeys made by children going to school as measured by the annual Hands-up survey.	Strategy Manager	On-going activity	
		Roads are made safer for all users through reducing the number and severity of accidents on Aberdeenshire's roads.	Meet or exceed Government road casualty reduction targets in relation to:- Number of people killed on our roads; Number of people seriously injured;	Strategy Manager	On-going activity	

	existing strategy as required.			Number of children killed on our roads; Number of children seriously injured.		
	(iii) Deliver the short/medium term actions within A947 Route Implementation Strategy.	Development of a route which is fit for purpose of connecting the communities along the route in a safe, effective and sustainable manner, while fully supporting the regeneration activity in North Aberdeenshire.		Number of road casualties along route	Strategy Manager	On-going activity
Health and Wellbeing <i>Consumers are assured that businesses are conforming to regulations. Businesses are supported to ensure compliance with legislation, economic diversification and energy transition.</i>	(i) Take action to improve standards within the private rented sector through routine compliance checks, routine advertising checks and Below Tolerable Standards Checks. (ii) Assist with regulating the new energy efficiency requirements in the private rented sector.	The aim is to improve the quality of housing in the private rented sector and the performance of private landlords.	(i) Complete 100% fit and proper tests for all persons applying to become registered landlords. (ii) Complete 10% routine checks to ensure that landlords are complying with registration requirements.		Private Sector Housing Team Leader	This is action is subject to regular checks throughout the year
	(iii) In accordance with requirements contained within the Buildings Scotland Act 2003 carry out enforcement actions to ensure compliance.	Building Standards will ensure that buildings comply with Building Regulations and public safety is maintained in relation to defective and dangerous buildings.	Time taken from notification of a dangerous building report to assessment by a member of staff (Target 100% within 4 hours)		Team Leader Building Standards	This is a continual action as required



	(iv) Submit assurance statement each year to show compliance with the new regulatory framework issued by the Scottish Regulator under the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014	The aim is to ensure regulatory activities are exercised in accordance with the principles of better regulation.	Assurance statement is submitted	Housing Strategy and Building Standards Manager	Annual
Health and Wellbeing and Resilient Communities. <i>Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness.</i>	Delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan & Action Plan 2019 – 2024.	A rapid rehousing approach that ensures that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring	<p>The total number of homeless households to whom the local authority has a statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation presenting each year.</p> <p>The number of homeless cases closed and average days to complete</p>	Housing Manager Options and Homelessness	Delivery of the RRTP Action Plan will take place over a five-year period 2019 – 2024.
	(i) Provide an efficient and responsive repairs and maintenance service to tenants.	<p>Minimise time taken to complete repairs and ensure right first time.</p> <p>Ensures repairs and maintenance is managed effectively and tenant satisfaction with service is maintained.</p>	<p>Average length of time to complete non-emergency repair (days)</p> <p>Average time to complete an emergency repair (Hours)</p>	Housing Manager (Asset Management & Repairs)	Monitored monthly to constantly improve performance
(ii) Deliver programme Health and Safety improvements in		All our properties to meet the standard (LD2)	Percentage of properties meeting standards set out in	Housing Manager (Asset)	By February 2021 or as

	relation to fire detection in council houses.	set out in the new fire detection legislation.	the fire detection legislation	Management & Repairs)	soon as possible after.
	(iii) Meet the Energy Efficiency Standards for Scottish Social Housing (EESH 1) as part of the Housing Improvement programme (HIP).	All properties conform to requirements by deadline. Improving the energy efficiency of housing stock is helping the area to reduce its carbon footprint and contributes to alleviating fuel poverty	% of council dwellings that meet the EESH 1 standard	Housing Manager (Asset Management & Repairs)	All properties to meet EESH 1 standard by end of 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.
	(iv) Develop and implement a programme of works in relation to the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESH2)	All properties conform to requirements by deadline.	Percentage of properties that meet the EESH 2 standard	Housing Manager (Asset Management & Repairs)	All properties meet the EESH 2 standards by 2032
	(v) Deliver the Housing Improvement Programmes in partnership with colleagues in Property and private contractors.	The 4 -year HIP programme is successfully delivered improving the overall quality of the housing stock.	% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards	Housing Manager (Asset Management & Repairs)	Programme to be complete by 2021/22
	(vi) Improve the time to relet vacant properties (Void turnaround)	Reduces the time taken to relet a void property to below average of 40 days.  Reduces rent loss due to void properties.	Average relet time in days  Percentage of rent due lost through the properties	Housing Manager Tenancy Services in conjunction with Housing Manager	Deadline of April 2022. Monitored by way of bi-weekly reporting

			being empty during the last year	(Asset Management & Repairs)	
Health and Wellbeing and Resilient Communities. <i>Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required.</i>	In accordance with regulations prepare and submit a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to the Scottish Government each year.	This sets out the investment priorities for affordable housing over a five-year period for achieving the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy.	Plan is approved by Committee	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards	Annual submission to Scottish Government by November each year
Health and Wellbeing and Resilient Communities. <i>Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required</i>	Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 in relation to (i) affordable housing	These actions will increase the supply of social rented housing and intermediate housing, including mid-market rent and affordable home ownership options in the area. It will contribute to meeting housing need and will assist in the regeneration of town centres.	Number of social rented properties completed per year (Target 225).  Number of Mid-Market and Low-Cost Shared Equity properties completed each year (Target 25).	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards in partnership with Property colleagues, local developers and RSL partners.	Activity over the life of the Local Housing Strategy
	Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 in relation to (ii) fuel poverty, sustainability and energy efficiency.	The energy efficiency of both rented accommodation and properties in private ownership will be improved addressing issues of fuel poverty and contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Energy efficiency measures installed in the private sector housing (Target 357).	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards	Activity over the life of the Local Housing Strategy

	Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy in relation to (iii) Independent living	This involves providing new build housing which meets the needs of people with disabilities or working with partners to adapt existing properties to help support people with particular needs within their own homes.	Number and percentage of new build properties developed and fully accessible for clients with a particular need.  Number of disabled adaptations carried out in Private Sector  Number of disabled adaptations carried out in Local Authority  Average time to complete medical adaptations in working days	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards in partnership with Health and Social Care Partners and RSLs.	Activity over the life of the Local Housing Strategy
	Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy in relation to (iv) minority ethnic communities	This involves identifying barriers to meeting the housing needs of the minority ethnic community and providing appropriate housing information, advice and support.	Number of families/households resettled in Aberdeenshire under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards	Activity over the life of the Local Housing Strategy
	(v) Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 in relation to the private sector	These actions assist private sector homeowners and tenants to maintain the standards of their home. It contributes to sustaining tenancies as well as helping to maintain the well-being of individuals.	Number of individuals receiving advice or assistance to help them to repair/maintain their home through Scheme of Assistance	Housing Manager Strategy and Building Standards	Activity over the life of the Local Housing Strategy

Housing					
<p>Health and Wellbeing Resilient Communities. <i>Tenancies are sustained/community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enabled.</i></p>	(i) Provide pre-tenancy support to new tenants in advance of them taking up their tenancy.	Improved levels of tenancy sustainment Reduced numbers of abandonments	Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year; all sources of let  Abandonments as a percentage of stock	Housing Manager Tenancy Services	Performance measured monthly
	(ii) Provide out-reach housing support to meet the needs of people who require help to prevent homelessness and keep people living independently in their tenancies.		Number of individuals receiving help or support	Housing Manager Tenancy Services	Constant service activity
	(iii) Provide support to people who run into rent arrears to manage their debt and pay back the arrears once they are able	Reduction in evictions Reduction in current tenant arrears	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.  Rent collected from tenants as a percentage of total rent due in the reporting year  Evictions as a percentage of stock	Housing Manager Tenancy Services	Constant service activity
	Improve links with individual communities and with Community Safety Partners and others to ensure that a	Tenants feel safer in their communities. Incidents of criminal and anti-social behaviour are reduced.	Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases closed in year as a percentage of those opened.	Housing Manager Strategy and Building standards	Constant service activity

	comprehensive and coordinated approach is offered to tenants, particularly when criminal and anti-social activities are involved.				Community Safety Manager	
	Empowering tenants and service users to have a real say in delivery of services  Carry out a tenant satisfaction survey using a telephone-based model to allow greater engagement with tenants and explore the reasons for their dissatisfaction.	Development of a more informed and flexible approach to tenant participation. It will lead to improved levels of tenant involvement and participation and improved tenant satisfaction levels in surveys.	Percentage of Tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making process	Housing Manager (Tenancy Services)	Engagement measured six monthly  Tenant satisfaction survey to be completed by end of 2021	