

## REPORT TO KINCARDINE & MEARN'S AREA COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2022

### BUSINESS SERVICES' AREA COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT – MID-YEAR PROGRESS (APRIL 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2022)

#### **1 Executive Summary / Recommendations**

1.1 To provide the Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee with an update on progress in relation to Business Services performance indicators which support the Council Plan Priorities 2020-22.

#### **1.2 The Committee is recommended to:**

**1.2.1 Acknowledge and consider progress made in relation to Business Services performance indicators relating to the Kincardine & Mearns Area;**

**1.2.2 Instruct the Director of Business Services to continue to present reports on progress with performance indicators to the Committee on a six-monthly basis, in line with the Performance Management Framework, evidencing progress and performance supporting the Council Plan 2020-22.**

#### **2 Decision-Making Route**

2.1 The Council Plan 2020-22 was approved at Full Council at the meeting of 7 October 2020. The Plan is centered around three pillars aimed at supporting wider recovery in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 To help support and deliver the Council Plan, Directorate and Area Plans have been developed and approved by their respective committee. The Kincardine & Mearns Area Plan was approved by this committee at its meeting on 18 May 2021.

2.3 The Kincardine & Mearns Area Action Plan details projects/actions specific to the Kincardine & Mearns Area and six-monthly reporting on progress is provided in line with the Performance Management Framework.

2.4 In addition to the Area Plan, each Directorate is responsible for reporting six-monthly on a suite of area-based performance indicators to allow for further scrutiny of performance within each area.

#### **3 Discussion**

3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee on progress with the Business Services performance indicators which help demonstrate how we are working towards delivering the Council's Strategic Priorities.

- 3.2 There are 16 performance indicators being reported and **Appendix 1** to this report details progress along with supporting narrative. All, except two, indicators are being reported on an Aberdeenshire wide basis as the systems will not facilitate reporting at an area basis.
- 3.3 The two measures relating to operational buildings have been revised to facilitate reporting at an area level from April 2022 onwards. Area based information for these measures is included in this mid-year update for the period April-September 2022 attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 For the 16 performance indicators being reported, three are showing as green and on track, one is showing as amber, and five are showing as red. The supporting narrative for each of these measures provides more detail around reasons for the current status and actions being taken to address performance where required. Seven performance measures are 'data only' and relate to benefit and grants claims/payments which are demand-led.
- 3.5 This and future performance indicator monitoring reports are provided to assure and enable the Committee to monitor progress of delivery of the council priorities the Service is responsible for, providing a balanced overview allowing elected members to form a judgement on performance and support improvement as required in line with the scrutiny remit of the Committee.

#### 4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 At its meeting on 7 October 2020, Full Council agreed a new set of six Strategic Priorities detailed in the undernoted table.

<b>Pillar</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation

Underpinning the Priorities are a number of key principles. They are: 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.

This report supports the priorities of: Resilient Communities; Health & Wellbeing; Economy & Enterprise; and Estate Modernisation.

This report supports the key principles of: right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; tackling poverty and inequalities; and digital infrastructure & economy.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First			X

4.3 There are no staffing or financial implications arising directly from this report, however any actions taken to improve performance, where required, may affect the finances of the Service and may be subject to separate reporting where required.

4.4 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out at the screening stage (IIA-000955) and no further detailed assessments are required. This report is a high-level planning document and does not have any differential impact on any of the protected characteristics. Any service changes made as a result of this plan will be subject to separate reporting and integrated impact assessments carried out as appropriate.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate and Directorate Level:

Aberdeenshire Corporate Risks: (*link: [Corporate Risk Register](#)*)

- ACORP001 – Budget Pressures
- ACORP002 – Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation
- ACORP004 – Business & organisation transformation
- ACORP005 – Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)
- ACORP006 – Reputation Management (including social media)
- ACORP007 – Social Risk (e.g. population changes, poverty and social inequality, demographic changes, crime, anti-social behaviour)
- ACORP008 – Data Protection & Cyber Security
- ACORP009 – Operational Risk Management (including Health & Safety)
- ACORP010 – Environmental Challenges e.g. extreme weather events, climate change (this includes localised risks around flooding and air pollution and the need for communities to display resilience)

Business Services Directorate Risks: (*link: [Business Services Directorate Risk Register](#)*).

- BSSR002 – Communities are confident, resilient and inclusive. Individuals feel secure and in control of their circumstances
- BSSR003 – We live within our means and use public money to maximise outcomes for our communities
- BSSR004 – Our asset, property and land are managed to the best financial effect, supporting delivery of our priorities and service ambitions in the medium to long term
- BSSR005 – One Aberdeenshire, people working effectively with each other across public services and across communities
- BSSR006 – Staffing working close to the communities they serve, making decisions based on local need

## **5 Scheme of Governance**

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B 1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to powers to consider, comment on, make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its Area.

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**

Report prepared by Jenn Askildsen, Support Services Team Leader  
17 November 2022

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Business Services Area Performance Indicator Report – Mid-Year Update (April 2022-September 2022)

## BUSINESS SERVICES' AREA COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT – MID-YEAR PROGRESS (APRIL 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2022)



PI Status		Long Term Trends		Short Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving		Improving
	Warning		No Change		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse		Getting Worse
	Unknown				
	Data Only				

Traffic Light: Red - 5; Amber – 1; Green - 3; Data Only - 7

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold			Status	Spark Chart
					Value		
Average call wait times for Contact Centre	5	5.05	5.25	Q3 2021/22	6.53		
				Q4 2021/22	5.14		
				Q1 2022/23	4.26		
				Q2 2022/23	7.13		



This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator. As from 1 April 2022, the current target for this indicator has been reduced from 10 minutes to 5 minutes.

**Reason for poor performance:**

Customer Services have seen a reduction in fully trained staff due to a continually high turnover of staff, with employees resigning and moving to other services within the Council. This has resulted in reduced staffing across all lines until new starts are recruited and complete full training which can take up to 12 months. Training takes a long time because of the number of services and the depth of knowledge required. Unexpected rise in call presented in August, across peak holiday period. Also unexpected rise in calls due to Waste roll out of diamond bins. Calls per month were Q1: April (13,104), May (13,696), June (12,134) and Q2: July (12,195), August (15,522), September (13,374).

**Corrective action:**

Ongoing recruitment and training of new advisors. Advice to Waste service regards alternative options for promoting online self-serve for customers. Provided as a solution to rise in contact for Waste challenges in service delivery – roll out of diamond bins.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Contact Centre call abandonment rate	22%	22.22%	23.1%	Q3 2021/22	30.5%		
				Q4 2021/22	26.48%		
				Q1 2022/23	23.15%		
				Q2 2022/23	35.8%		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

**Reason for poor performance:**

Customer Services has seen a reduction in fully trained staff, due to a continually high turnover of staff, with employees resigning and moving to other services with the Council. This has resulted in reduced staffing across all lines until new starts are recruited and complete full training which can take up to 12 months. Training takes a long time because of the number of services and the depth of knowledge required.



Unexpected rise in calls presented in August, across peak holiday period. Also unexpected rise in calls due to Waste roll out of diamond bins.

Q2 - (Jul - 12195, Aug - 15522, Sept - 13374)

Q1 - (Apr - 13104, May - 13696, Jun - 12134)

**Corrective action:**


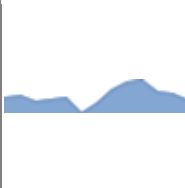
Ongoing recruitment and training of new advisors. Advice to Waste service regards alternative options for promoting online self-serve for customers. Provided as a solution to rise in contact for Waste challenges in service delivery - roll out of diamond bins.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Percentage of web chats which are automated	85%	84.15%	80.75%	Q1 2022/23	0%		
				Q2 2022/23	53.38%		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

The web chat artificial intelligence chat bot went live on 12 July 2022. Since that date, it has successfully answered 6363 web chats without the need for a customer to be transferred to a Customer Service Advisor.


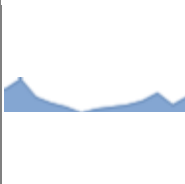
The chat bot learns and improves over time and as customers simplify the questions asked. It is expected that this figure will continue to rise as the artificial intelligence improves.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold			Status	Spark Chart
					Value		
Average number of days: Council Tax Reductions (CTR) new claims	27	28	31.02	Q3 2021/22	27.03		
				Q4 2021/22	24.12		
				2021/22	28.25		
				Q1 2022/23	33.58		
				Q2 2022/23	28.22		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

The average number of days of a Council Tax Reduction claim are greatly affected by Universal Credit. The local authority will be notified when a claimant applies for Universal Credit, but a decision on the Universal Credit is not made until 5 weeks later. The local authority will have to wait for the decision on Universal Credit before calculation can be made on the Council Tax Reduction. Not all claims are Universal Credit based but most working age claimants will be. It is that 5 weeks wait to find out how much Universal Credit a claimant is entitled to that can make the processing days higher.


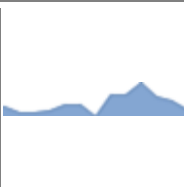
Processing days are measured from the date of receipt of claim, until the date of calculation of the claim.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold			Status	Spark Chart
					Value		
Average number of days for Changes in Circumstances: Council Tax Reduction	10	11	14	Q3 2021/22	7.99		
				Q4 2021/22	4.32		
				2021/22	7.66		
				Q1 2022/23	5.39		
				Q2 2022/23	6.76		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.



The average processing days of a change of circumstances is measured from the date of receipt of the change up to the date of the calculation of that change.

These can fluctuate through the year depending on work levels and the time of year.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Number of Discretionary Housing Payments awards made	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	216		
				Q4 2021/22	284		
				2021/22	1,738		
				Q1 2022/23	719		
				Q2 2022/23	425		


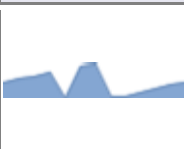
This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

DHP awards are made either for a year, or for 6 or 3 months at a time. This is very much dependant on the reason for the claim. A claim made to mitigate the effect of the bedroom tax on Social Housing will be made for a year. Therefore, in the months of March and April there will always be higher levels of claims awarded as the local authority works on the claims for the next year.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Committed Discretionary Housing Payments expenditure	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	£323,907		
				Q4 2021/22	£27,767		
				Q1 2022/23	£842,097.67		
				Q2 2022/23	£656,409.97		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.



When an award is made it is made for the year, 6 months or for 3 months, committed expenditure relates to the awards that are made up to the end of the award period. For example those that are living in local authority housing will receive a credit to the rent account weekly. Therefore, as the year progresses and the weekly payment periods pass, the committed expenditure will come down as the weekly awards are paid.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Net Discretionary Housing Payments paid to date	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	£1,007,553		
				Q4 2021/22	£1,365,568		
				Q1 2022/23	£292,973.19		
				Q2 2022/23	£695,472.57		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.



Net Discretionary Housing Payments paid to date reflect the actual monies that have been paid out to the claimants. Awards are made either weekly into council housing rent accounts, 2 weekly to private tenancies where payments are made direct to the claimant, or 4 weekly where those payments are made directly to the landlord at the claimants request. Therefore quarter 1 payments will always be lower than those by Quarter 4 as the payments that are made accumulate as the year progresses.


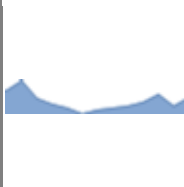
Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
The average time taken to process new Housing Benefit claims from the date of receipt to the date of decision (days)	27	28	31.02	Q3 2021/22	19.56		
				Q4 2021/22	19.94		
				2021/22	23.08		
				Q1 2022/23	25.48		
				Q2 2022/23	21.20		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

The number of new claims that are received month by month has decreased as claimants naturally migrate across to Universal Credit. Those on Universal Credit will in general have their housing costs paid along with their Universal Credit award. Only those cases that are pension age, living in Supported Exempt Accommodation or in temporary housing due to homelessness will still be entitled to claim Housing Benefit.

Those claims in temporary housing due to homelessness are predominantly in receipt of Universal Credit due to their age, whereby their housing costs are met through Housing Benefit, their weekly income will still be Universal Credit and subject to the waiting time of 5 weeks if they are new claimants.

ASAT (Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team) have done considerable work in reducing the time taken to process a claim in recent months which has resulted in those times fluctuating as it settles into a new routine.





Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
The average time taken to process change of circumstances for Housing Benefit claims from the date of receipt to the date of decision (days)	10	11	14	Q3 2021/22	9.58		
				Q4 2021/22	4.63		
				2021/22	8.44		
				Q1 2022/23	14.17		
				Q2 2022/23	14.15		

This is an Aberdeenshire wide performance indicator.

During the last two years the priorities for the section have been the processing of new claims and payments in relation to Scottish Welfare Fund. This subsequently led to a backlog of processing changes of circumstances.

There are considerable changes of circumstances which are reported to the local authority by real time means for example changes to award of Universal Credit or the awarding of other state benefits like Personal Independence payments. These real time changes are dealt with within 3 days of receipt. However those changes that have been received via other means have formed the backlog of work.

The hiring of temporary staff to concentrate on the Scottish Welfare Fund has allowed processing staff to concentrate on changes of circumstances. Higher process times are as a result of the reduction of backlog.



Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Crisis Grant Claims Paid	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	1,442		
				Q4 2021/22	1,538		
				2021/22	5,312		
				Q1 2022/23	1,509		
				Q2 2022/23	1,341		
Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
Amount paid out for Crisis Grants	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	£195,180.23		
				Q4 2021/22	£217,359.06		
				2021/22	£732,496.89		
				Q1 2022/23	£210,318.01		
				Q2 2022/23	£186,537.20		



The Crisis Grant Claims performance indicators are Aberdeenshire wide.

The budget and processing times 'continue' to be closely monitored as the economic pressures continue to impact on the volume of applications and repeat applications. So far in 2022/2023 there has been a 14.87% increase in the number of Crisis Grants received and a 3.63% increase in Community Care Grants compared to the same period in 2021/2022.

The Scottish Government have now published the 2021/2022 statistics and they can be found by visiting the following web page: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statistics-annual-update-2021-22/>

Following a staffing realignment within the Aberdeenshire Support & Advice Team, the Scottish Welfare Fund team have continued to meet the one-day turnaround for crisis grant applications.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Status	Spark Chart
Community Care Grants Paid	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	302		
				Q4 2021/22	328		
				2021/22	1,111		
				Q1 2022/23	256		
				Q2 2022/23	317		



Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Status	Spark Chart
Amount paid out for Community Care Grants	N/A	N/A	N/A	Q3 2021/22	£167,900.06		
				Q4 2021/22	£190,078.84		
				2021/22	£642,350.58		
				Q1 2022/23	£149,188.66		
				Q2 2022/23	£180,484.26		

The Community Care Grant performance indicators are Aberdeenshire wide.

The budget and processing times 'continue' to be closely monitored as the economic pressures continue to impact on the volume of applications and repeat applications. So far in 2022/2023 there has been a 14.87% increase in the number of Crisis Grants received and a 3.63% increase in Community Care Grants compared to the same period in 2021/2022.

The Scottish Government have now published the 2021/2022 statistics and they can be found by visiting the following web page: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statistics-annual-update-2021-22/>

Following a staffing realignment within the Aberdeenshire Support & Advice Team, the Scottish Welfare Fund team have continued to meet the one-day turnaround for crisis grant applications.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Status	Spark Chart
Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use %	82.31%	81.49%	78.19%	2019/20	74.96%		
				2020/21	77.4%		
				2021/22	77.87%		

The current status of operational buildings in Aberdeenshire and the Kincardine & Mearns Area are detailed below:

**Aberdeenshire-wide**

There are 615 operational assets within Aberdeenshire. The number of operational facilities has increased slightly by 4 facilities since April position with this predominantly attributed to co-location of a number of H&SCP storage facilities into a larger property. Overall performance indicators as at 1 October 2022 generally remains static, with 478 operational assets assessed as suitable for their current use - equating to 77.72% (a reduction of 0.15% from 1 April 2022). A number of underperforming assets are subject to review by Services and/or form part of ongoing strategies currently being implemented e.g. workSPACE/Office Space Strategy, Depots etc.

**Kincardine & Mearns**

There are 98 operational assets within the Kincardine & Mearns area. The total number of operational assets/features within Kincardine & Mearns extends to 98 which equates to 13.98% of Aberdeenshire's total operational portfolio. Of Kincardine & Mearns operational assets/features 61 (or 70.93%) are assessed as suitable for their current use.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold	Value		Status	Spark Chart
				2019/20	2020/21		
Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition %	89.2%	88.31%	84.74%	2019/20	87.56%		
				2020/21	90.82%		
				2021/22	91.59%		

The current status of operational buildings in Aberdeenshire and the Kincardine & Mearns Area are detailed below:

**Aberdeenshire-wide**

The total gross internal floor area (GIFA) has increased slightly by 435sqm since 1 April 2022 with this predominantly attributed to co-location of a number of H&SCP storage facilities into a larger property. Overall performance indicator as at 1 October 2022 generally remains static with 620,601sqm assessed as being in satisfactory condition - equating to 91.62% (an improvement of 0.03% from 1 April 2022). Condition Surveys of operational assets continues in line with Scottish Government guidance.

**Kincardine & Mearns**

There are 98 operational assets within the Kincardine & Mearns area. The total gross internal floor area (GIFA) of operational assets within Kincardine & Means extends to 107,839sqm which equates to 15.92% of Aberdeenshire's total GIFA. Of Kincardine & Mearns operational floor area, 105,685sqm (or 98%) is assessed as being in satisfactory condition.