



Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

31 May 2023

A hybrid meeting of the **Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston, EH54 6FF** on **Wednesday 7 June 2023** at **11:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members must declare any interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda items and the nature of their interests.
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 02 May 2023 (herewith)
5. Boundaries Scotland - Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Consultation on Provisional Proposals - report by Chief Executive (herewith)
6. Quarterly Performance Report - Quarter 4 of 2022/23 - report by Depute Chief Executive (herewith)
7. Sickness Absence (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)

8. Corporate Strategy Annual Update - Digital Transformation - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
9. Corporate Strategy Annual Update - ICT - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
10. Corporate Strategy Annual Update - Improvement - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
11. Corporate Strategy Annual Update - People - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
12. Customer Service Excellence Assessment Report - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
13. Corporate Strategy Annual Update - Customer Service Strategy 2018/2023 - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
14. Horizon Scan - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
15. Scottish Welfare Fund Review - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
16. Consultation on council tax for second and empty homes and non-domestic rates thresholds - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
17. Library and Museum Services Performance Report - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
18. Collections Partnership Agreement Between West Lothian Council and West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
19. Leave Scheme for Elected Members - report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
20. Workplan (herewith)

NOTE **For further information please contact Val Johnston, Tel No.01506 281604 or email val.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk**



CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (2021)

This form is a reminder and an aid. It is not a substitute for understanding the Code of Conduct and guidance.

Interests must be declared at the meeting, in public.

Look at every item of business and consider if there is a connection.

If you see a connection, decide if it amounts to an interest by applying the objective test.

The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection does not amount to an interest then you have nothing to declare and no reason to withdraw.

If the connection amounts to an interest, declare it as soon as possible and leave the meeting when the agenda item comes up.

When you declare an interest, identify the agenda item and give enough information so that the public understands what it is and why you are declaring it.

Even if the connection does not amount to an interest you can make a statement about it for the purposes of transparency.

More detailed information is on the next page.

Look at each item on the agenda, consider if there is a “connection”, take advice if necessary from appropriate officers in plenty of time. A connection is any link between the item of business and:-

- you
- a person you are associated with (e.g., employer, business partner, domestic partner, family member)
- a body or organisation you are associated with (e.g., outside body, community group, charity)

Anything in your Register of Interests is a connection unless one of the following exceptions applies.

A connection does not exist where:-

- you are a council tax payer, a rate payer, or a council house tenant, including at budget-setting meetings
- services delivered to the public are being considered, including at budget-setting meetings
- councillors’ remuneration, expenses, support services or pensions are being considered
- you are on an outside body through a council appointment or nomination unless it is for regulatory business or you have a personal conflict due to your connections, actions or legal obligations
- you hold a view in advance on a policy issue, have discussed that view, have expressed that view in public, or have asked for support for it

If you see a connection then you have to decide if it is an “interest” by applying the objective test. The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection amounts to an interest then:-

- declare the interest in enough detail that members of the public will understand what it is
- leave the meeting room (physical or online) when that item is being considered
- do not contact colleagues participating in the item of business

Even if decide your connection is not an interest you can voluntarily make a statement about it for the record and for the purposes of transparency.

The relevant documents are:-

- [Councillors’ Code of Conduct, part 5](#)
- [Standards Commission Guidance, paragraphs 129-166](#)
- [Advice note for councillors on how to declare interests](#)

If you require assistance, contact:-

- James Millar, Interim Monitoring Officer and Governance Manager, 01506 281613, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk
- Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor and Depute Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk
- Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621
committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

January 2022

MINUTE of MEETING of the CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 2 MAY 2023.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Tom Conn, Lynda Kenna and George Paul

In Attendance – Donald Stavert (Joint Forum of Community Council's Representative)

Apologies – Councillors Janet Campbell and Damian Doran-Timson; Malcolm Hill (Joint Forum of Community Council's Representative); Karen Nailen (Third Sector Representative); and Heather Hughes (union representative)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 (LVJB Minute & Annual Report) – Councillor Conn stated a connection in that he was Convener of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board.

2. MINUTE

The Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 13 February 2023. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. LOTHIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Chief Executive providing members with details of the business and activities of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board.

The Panel was asked to note:-

1. The Audited Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2022; and
2. The terms of the minutes of the meetings held during 2022/23 of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board.

Decision

To note the content of the report

4. QUALITY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 OF 2022/23

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive reporting the current level of performance for all indicators that support the council's Corporate Plan and are the responsibility of the Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

It was recommended that the Panel note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary for any of the performance indicators in the report.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report
2. To ask the Depute Chief Executive to provide all Panel Members with further analysis of movement in sickness absence levels between the different service areas and which was to include explanatory comments by officers

5. CORPORATE PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/27

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing Council's Corporate Plan for consultation. The Corporate Plan will set out the Council's strategic priorities for the next five years (for 2023/24 to 2027/28).

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Considers the new Corporate Plan;
2. Note, the revised Purpose, Vision, Values and Priorities of the Council;
3. Notes that the revised Corporate Plan and its contents was informed by the responses to the Your Council, Your Say public consultation in 2022;
4. Notes that the Corporate Plan would commence in 2023.

Decision

To note the content of the report

6. EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING AND EQUALITY OUTCOMES

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services presenting a mid-term progress report on the Council's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Framework 2021-2025. The mid-term progress report has been prepared in response to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and proposes next steps for the remaining two years of the current Framework.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Note that the report responds to the legislative requirements of Equality Act 2010 Specific Duties (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and the requirement to publish the council's progress towards

achievement of its equality outcomes.

2. Approve the draft mid-term progress report for the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Framework 2021 – 2025 for referral to Council Executive on the 9th May 2023.
3. Agree to the next steps as proposed for the final two years of the framework.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be forwarded to a future meeting of Council Executive for approval.

7. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing an update on information governance arrangements in place to monitor and scrutinise the council's management of information

It was recommended that the Panel note council performance in relation to information governance.

Decision

To note the content of the report

8. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES PDSP

BOUNDARIES SCOTLAND - REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES: CONSULTATION ON PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise the Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP that Boundaries Scotland has started their Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and is consulting on provisional proposals for constituencies.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is recommended to note and consider the recommendations below which are intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval.

1. Consider the provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament constituencies covering West Lothian
2. Agree a response to Boundaries Scotland consultation on their provisional proposals

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Scotland Act 1998
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	

VII Consideration at PDSP

VIII Other consultations

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background to the Review

Boundaries Scotland is undertaking the Second Review of constituencies and regions of the Scottish Parliament, and has published provisional proposals for constituencies

The legislation governing the review is the Scotland Act 1988. There will be no change to the overall number of constituencies, which will remain at 73. The review of constituencies covers the 70 mainland constituencies as three island constituencies are protected in legislation.

The aim of the review is to recommend constituencies, and regions, of similar electorate size while also taking account of local authority areas, special geographical circumstances, maintenance of local ties and any inconveniences caused by the alteration of the existing boundaries.

The review is based on electorates as at the start of the review (1 September 2022). There is no provision in the legislation for taking account of any changes in electorate after that date. The Electorate Quota, defined as the average local government electorate of the 70 constituencies under review, is 59,902. The electorate of a constituency must be as near the electorate quota as practicable.

The provisional proposals for constituencies are subject to a consultation period of one month.

More information on the review is available at www.boundaries.scot

D2 Provisional Proposals

Currently West Lothian has two Scottish Parliament constituencies wholly within the local authority boundary. The provisional proposals split West Lothian across three constituencies, one of which is shared with City of Edinburgh Council. These are:

Bathgate and Almond Valley (electorate 61,527) comprised of
Ward 6 Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley,
Ward 7 Whitburn and Blackburn
Ward 8 Bathgate
Ward 9 Armadale and Blackridge

Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow (electorate 55,866) comprised of
Ward 1 Linlithgow
Ward 2 Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh
Part of Edinburgh ward 1 Almond

Livingston (electorate 56,009) comprised of
Ward 3 Livingston North
Ward 4 Livingston South
Ward 5 East Livingston and East Calder

Full details of the provisional proposals, including maps of all proposed constituencies are available at boundaries.scot/reviews/second-review-scottish-parliament-boundaries

Comments on the provisional proposals can be made on Boundaries Scotland consultation portal consult.boundaries.scot or by email to boundaries.scot@scottishboundaries.gov.uk. The consultation runs until 17 June, but an extension has been agreed to allow the Council Executive to consider the proposals at the meeting on 20 June.

D5 Next Stages

Following consideration of the responses to the provisional proposals over the summer, Boundaries Scotland will consider if local inquiries are required. If they are, these will be held in Summer/Autumn 2023.

Boundaries Scotland will then develop revised recommendations for Scottish Parliament constituencies, and have another one-month consultation period on these. They will make provisional proposals for the regions, taking into account their deliberations on constituencies, and representations will be invited in the same way as for constituencies

Boundaries Scotland will then consider representations received regarding their revised recommendations and decide whether further modification and consultation are required before submitting final recommendations to Scottish Ministers by 1 May 2025

E. CONCLUSION

Boundaries Scotland is undertaking the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries and is consulting on its initial constituency proposals.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

Contact Person: Caroline Burton; 01506 281651; caroline.burton@westlothian.gov.uk

Name of CMT Member: Graham Hope, Chief Executive,

Date: 7 June 2023

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4 OF 2022/23

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose is to report the current level of performance for all indicators that support the council's Corporate Plan and are the responsibility of the Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary for any of the performance indicators in the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	In compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Challenges current service performance through the evaluation of performance indicators
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Indicators support various outcomes in the SOA
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Met from existing budgets
VII Consideration at PDSP	N/A
VIII Other consultations	None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background





Overseeing and challenging council performance is contained within the remit of every Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP). Scrutiny of performance by elected members in PDSPs forms a key part of the council's wider scrutiny and public performance reporting arrangements.

To support this, each PDSP is allocated areas of the Corporate Plan, strategic priorities and key council performance, relevant to the focus areas of the Panel, and receives quarterly and annual performance reports.

D.2 Quarterly Performance Report

The quarterly performance scorecard report for the Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP contains a range of relevant service performance information for scrutiny.

A summary position of the status of the 56 performance indicators in the Partnership and Resources PDSP scorecard is contained in Appendix 1, with a more detailed commentary provided in Appendix 2 of this report. The 56 performance indicators are categorised as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	31
 Amber	6
 Red	16
 Unknown	3

**Note: the Unknown status occurs when a service does not record performance during the period, for example, if the service did not receive any complaints to process.*

The RAG status is against the performance target that has been set by the service in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. In Appendix 2 a trend chart commentary offers an explanation on the current performance levels (against the target) for each indicator. This information will also highlight to the Panel the measures that services will take to improve performance.

D.3 Red Performance Indicators

The current trend for those indicators that are currently at Red status is summarised.

1. P:ITS017a 9b.1c Percentage of Incidents Resolved at First Point of Contact

Current performance: 25%

Target: 40%

Performance in March dipped below the target and was lower in comparison, to the previous month. Performance can be affected by staff following processes that require to be updated due to changes in technology. Work is ongoing to create up to date process documents and streamlining processes to increase performance.

2. P:LS091 6b.5 Percentage of Taxi/Private Hire Car Applications Not Granted or Refused within 90 Days

Current performance: 7%

Target: 6%

Performance in March 2023 did not meet expected target level as applications were delayed as a result of the impact of applicants and third parties activities who have an integral role in the licensing process.

3. P:PS304 Percentage of rent outstanding for commercial property (Current debt)

Current performance: 5.81%

Target: 4%

The trend from the start of the (financial year) has outstanding rent levels remaining above target level. The service has established a debt recovery / rent arrears group led by the Corporate Estates Manager and involving other financial services (Revenues and Financial Management) to improve the recovery of debts.

4. P:REV027 6b Percentage of Business Rates and Council Tax correspondence processed within 10 working days of receipt.

Current performance: 91.06%

Target: 96.4%

Performance in quarter 4 was below target due to the impact of staff absence in this quarter. There were 14,533 items of correspondence received with 13,234 processed within the target of 10 working days. The level of correspondence received increased by 1,792 from the same quarter in 2021/22 and increased by 2,655 from the previous quarter.

5. There were 7 services triggering red for the percentage of sickness absence:

- Anti-Poverty Service (P:APS041)
- Customer and Communities (CuCS022)
- HR Services (P:HRS525)
- IT Services (P:ITS051)
- Performance and Improvement Service (P:PIS024)
- Property Services (PS112)
- Revenues (REV048a)

6. There was 1 service with an indicator triggering red for the number of complaints received:

- Financial Management (P:FM037)

7. There were 4 services with an indicator triggering red for the number of complaints upheld or part upheld:

- Customer Service Centre (P:CSC063)
- Customer and Communities Service (P:CuCS011)
- HR Services (P:HRS554)
- IT Services (P:ITS012)

D.4 Unknown Performance Indicators

There were 3 performance indicators with an Unknown status that related to the percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld. This is due to services not receiving complaints within the time period presented and therefore the indicators show blank data.

E. CONCLUSION

The performance scorecard shows that a significant proportion of performance indicators are achieving targeted levels of performance. Where performance is not at the expected level, Appendix 2 of this report offers details to the Panel of the corrective actions being taken by services to improve performance.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1 – Partnership and Resources PDSP Performance Scorecard Summary Report

Appendix 2 – Partnership and Resources PDSP Performance Scorecard Detailed Report

Contact Person: Rebecca.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk Telephone: 01506 281891

Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive

7 June 2023








APPENDIX 1







CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES SCORECARD REPORT – QUARTERLY

Traffic Light: **Red**
















Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
	P:APS041_7b.1 Cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Anti-Poverty Service	Head of Finance and Property Services	6.42%	3.6%
	P:CSC063m_6b.4 Percentage of Complaints Upheld and Part Upheld against Customer Service Centre	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	75%	55%
	P:CuCS011q_6b.4 Customer and Communities - The percentage of complaints received by Customer and Communities Service that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	71.4%	60.0%
	P:CuCS022_7b.1 Customer and Communities - Percentage of Sickness absence	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	5.5%	3.6%
	P:FM037_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Financial Management Unit	Head of Finance and Property Services	6	3
	P:HRS525_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in HR Services	Head of Corporate Services	6.31%	3.6%
	P:HRS554_6b.4 Percentage of complaints by HR Services which were upheld/part upheld per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	100%	25%
	P:ITS012_6b.4 Percentage of complaints received that were upheld/partially upheld	Head of Corporate Services	100%	0%
	P:ITS017a_9b.1c Percentage of Incidents Resolved at First Point of Contact	Head of Corporate Services	25%	40%
	P:ITS051_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in IT Services (cumulative)	Head of Corporate Services	6.03%	3.6%
	P:LS091_6b.5 Percentage of Taxi/Private Hire Car Applications Not Granted or Refused within 90 Days	Head of Corporate Services	7%	6%

Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
	P:PIS024_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in Performance and Improvement Service	Head of Corporate Services	9.48%	3.6%
	P:PS112_7b.1 Property Services - Cumulative Percentage of Sickness absence Days	Head of Finance and Property Services	2.97%	2%
	P:PS304_9b.1c Percentage of rent outstanding for commercial property (Current debt).	Head of Finance and Property Services	5.81%	4%
	P:REV027_6b Percentage of Business Rates and Council Tax correspondence processed within 10 working days of receipt.	Head of Finance and Property Services	91.06%	96.4%
	P:REV048a_7b.1 Monthly Sickness Absence Levels	Head of Finance and Property Services	7.29%	2.5%

Traffic Light: **Amber**



Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
	P:CC014_6b.3 Total number of complaints received per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	3	0
	P:CPU020b_9b.1a Percentage of relevant compliant council expenditure per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	93%	100%
	P:CuCS026q_9b.1a Percentage of customer enquiries recorded on the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) which are resolved at the first point of contact	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	71.5%	75.0%
	P:FM048_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in Financial Management Unit - Cumulative	Head of Finance and Property Services	2.6%	2%
	P:IA051_7b.1 Cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Unit	Head of Finance and Property Services	2.59%	2%
	P:ITS011_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by IT Services per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	1	0

Traffic Light: **Green**

Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
	P:APS017_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service	Head of Finance and Property Services	17	25
	P:APS018_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	Head of Finance and Property Services	18%	50%
	P:APS019_6b.5 Percentage of Blue Badges processed within 28 working days (quarterly)	Head of Finance and Property Services	78%	75%
	P:APS060_9b.1a Total quarterly amount the Advice Shop has gained in extra benefits for its customers	Head of Finance and Property Services	£6,110,952	£6,000,000
	P:APS077_9b Housing Benefit monthly new claims	Head of Finance and Property Services	13.91	14
	P:CC016_6b.4 The percentage of complaints by Corporate Communications that were upheld/part upheld per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	0%	0%
	P:CC031_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in Corporate Communications	Head of Corporate Services	0%	3.6%
	P:CC081_9b.1a Percentage of new social media followers on the West Lothian Council sites per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	1%	1%
	P:CPU018a_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in Corporate Procurement Unit	Head of Corporate Services	0%	3.6%
	P:CPU047c_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit on a Quarterly basis	Head of Corporate Services	0	0
	P:CSC007mq_6a.7 Customer Service Centre (CSC) Generic - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the service as good or excellent	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	99.7%	97.0%
	P:CSC062m_6b.3 Total Number of Complaints against Customer Service Centre (CSC)	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	4	7
	P:CSC104q_9b.1a Percentage of Customer Service Centre enquiries resolved at first point of contact	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	93.55%	90%
	P:CuCS007q_6a.7 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	98.1%	99.0%
	P:CuCS010q_6b.3 Customer and Communities - Total number of complaints received by Customer and Community services	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	7	20

Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
✓	P:FM001_6b.5 Percentage of Suppliers paid within 30 Days of Receipt	Head of Finance and Property Services	95%	95%
✓	P:HRS104_9b.2 Number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	4	7.25
✓	P:HRS550_6b.3 Number of complaints received by HR Services	Head of Corporate Services	1	1
✓	P:IA015_9b.1a Average length of time (in weeks) to issue draft audit reports	Head of Finance and Property Services	9.9	10
✓	P:IA066_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud	Head of Finance and Property Services	0	0
✓	P:ITS007_6a.7 Percentage of IT Services Customers Rating the Overall Quality as Good or Excellent	Head of Corporate Services	96%	98%
✓	P:LS013_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by Legal Services	Head of Corporate Services	0	2
✓	P:LS014_6b.4 Percentage of all complaints closed quarterly by Legal Services that were upheld / partially upheld	Head of Corporate Services	0%	0%
✓	P:LS031_7b.1 Percentage Sickness Absence Levels in Legal Services	Head of Corporate Services	0.71%	3.6%
✓	P:PIS011_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Performance and Improvement Service per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	0	1
✓	P:PS301_9b.1a Industrial Portfolio - Percentage of Total Units Let	Head of Finance and Property Services	94.86%	90%
✓	P:PS303_9b.1a Office Portfolio - Percentage of Office Units Let	Head of Finance and Property Services	97.22%	90%
✓	P:REV002_9b Percentage of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) received in the year	Head of Finance and Property Services	97.23%	97%
✓	P:REV047_9b.1a Percentage of income collected in the current year from Council Tax	Head of Finance and Property Services	96.79%	96.2%
✓	P:REV122_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Revenues Unit	Head of Finance and Property Services	19	25
✓	P:REV123_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Revenues Unit that were upheld or partially upheld	Head of Finance and Property Services	18%	25%

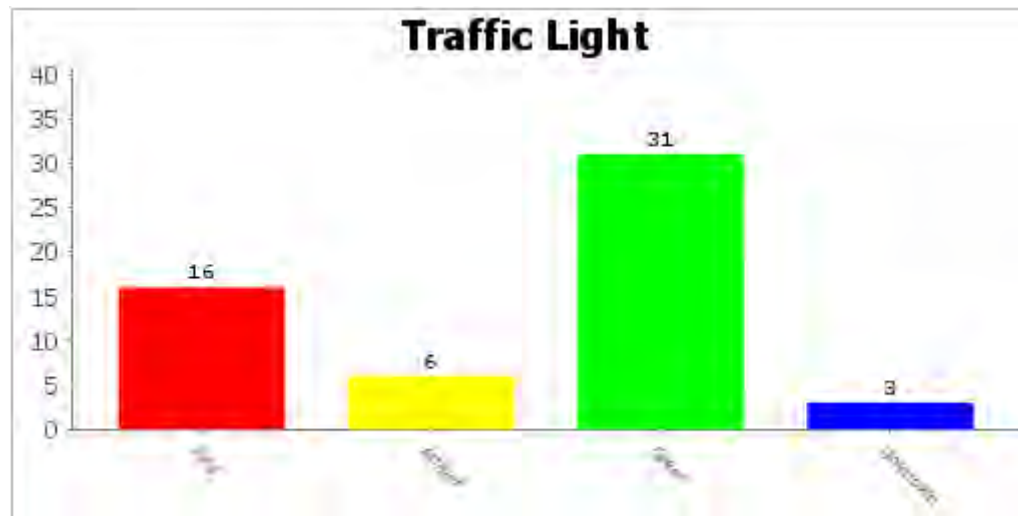
Traffic Light **Unknown**

Status	PI Code & Short Name	Head of Service	Value	Target
	P:CPU047d_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	Head of Corporate Services	N/A	0%
	P:IA067_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud that were upheld or partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full.	Head of Finance and Property Services	N/A	0%
	P:PIS013_6b.4 Percentage of all complaints closed by the Performance and Improvement Service that were upheld / partially upheld per quarter	Head of Corporate Services	N/A	25%

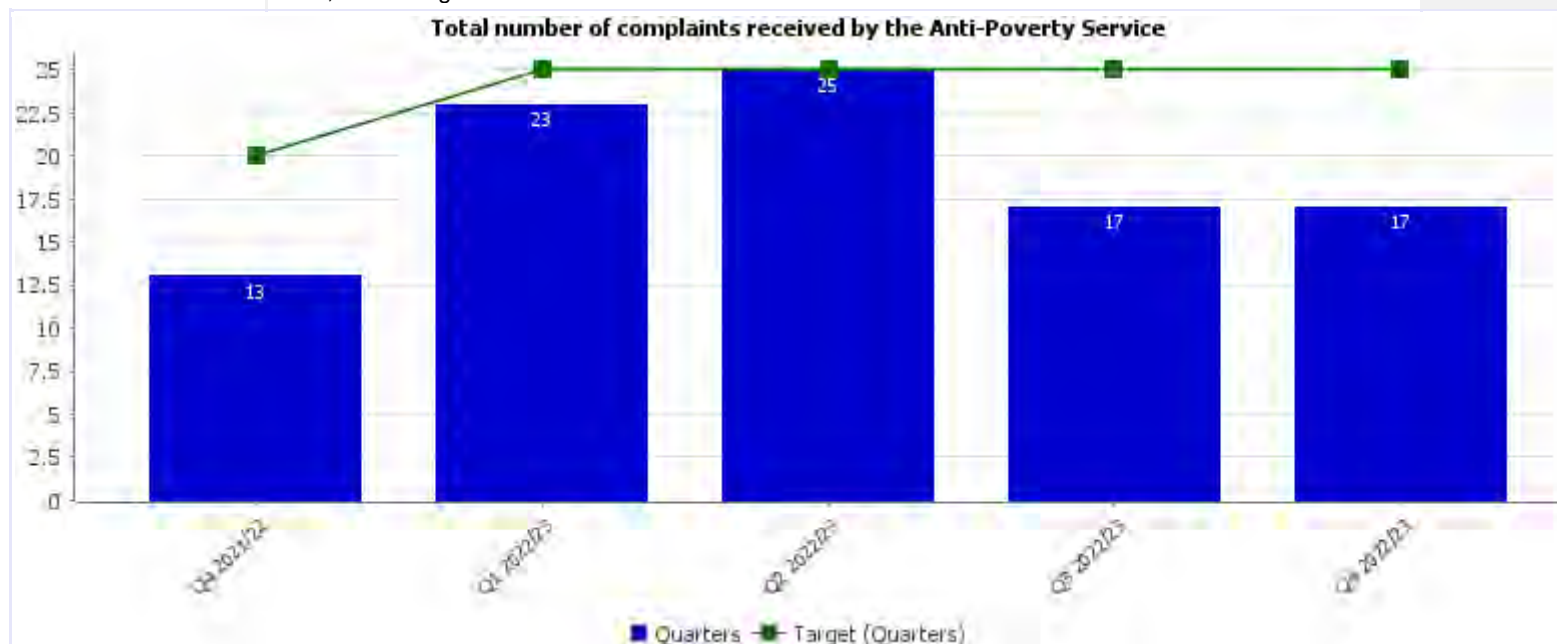
APPENDIX 2

CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES PDSP – QUARTERLY SCORECARD REPORT – ALL (DETAIL)

Generated on: 17 May 2023 14:24



PI Code & Short Name	P:APS017_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service	PI Owner	zAPS_PIAAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service. It is the total number of complaints received by the service at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days). Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted.</p> <p>All complaints are collected throughout each quarter and the complaints are analysed to identify trends and improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.</p> <p>Complaints are collected from all areas of the service including the Advice Shop, Benefits, Scottish Welfare Fund, Blue Badge and Education Benefits teams.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	17
		Current Target	25



Trend Chart Commentary:

The Anti-Poverty Service investigates and manages all complaints by following corporate procedure. We closely monitor and analyse complaints to identify any trends and to make improvements in our service.

2022/23

During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 17 complaints. This is the same number of complaints as the service received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, employee attitude, discretionary payments, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 14 complaints were not upheld, one complaint was partly upheld and two complaints were fully upheld during this period.

Quarter 3 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 17 complaints. This is a decrease compared to the 25 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, employee attitude, incorrect or conflicting advice, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 14 complaints were not upheld, three complaints were upheld during this period.

Quarter 2 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 25 complaints. This is a slight increase compared to the 23 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude, standard of service, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 19 complaints were not upheld, one complaint was partly upheld and five complaints were upheld during this period.

Quarter 1 - During period the Anti-Poverty Service received 23 complaints. This is significant increase compared to the 13 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude, failure to reply, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 19 complaints were not upheld, three complaints were partly upheld and one complaint was upheld during this period. Three complaints were escalated to stage 2. 95% of stage one complaints were completed within 5 days and 100% of stage 2 complaint were completed within the 20 day target.

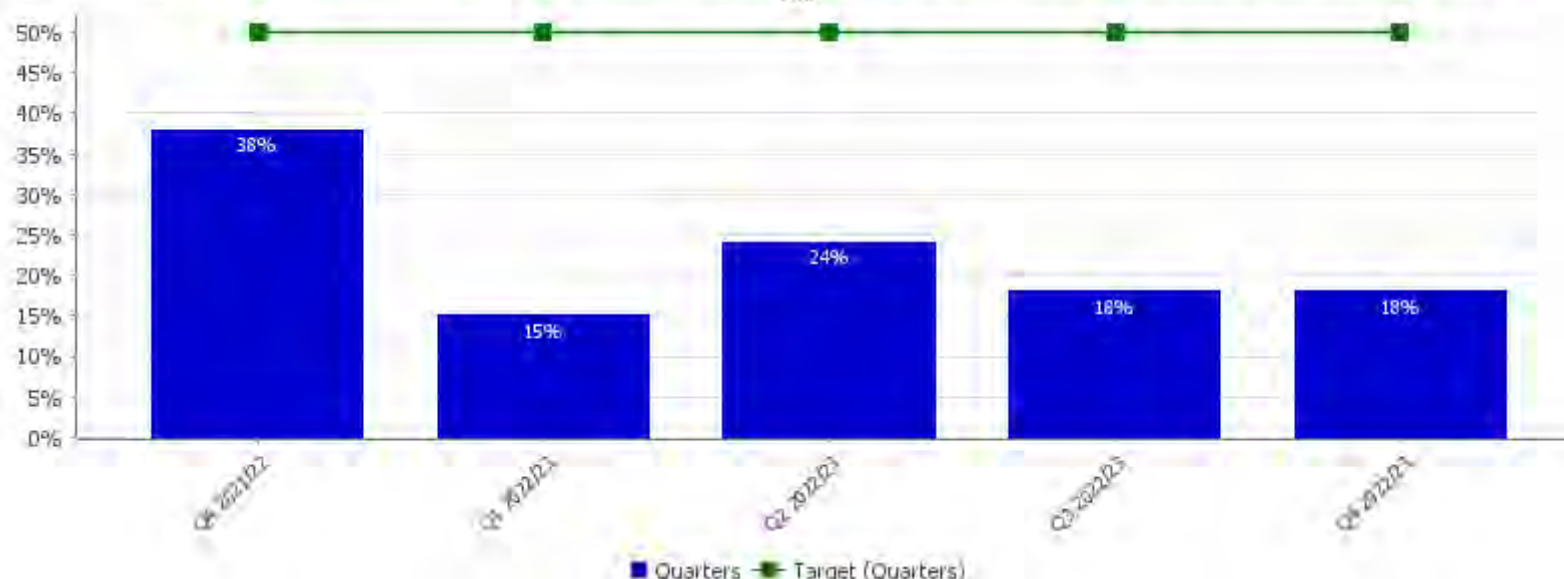
2021/22

Quarter 4 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 13 complaints. This is significant decrease compared to the 27 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude and discretionary payment decision. 8 complaints were not upheld, two complaints were partly upheld and three complaints were upheld during this period. One complaint was escalated to stage 2 and 83% of complaints were managed within the 5 day target.

Target 2022/23 - Our target has increased to 25 complaints per quarter. Due to the ongoing economic recovery, increased cost of living and the increased volume of customer contacts across the broadening service, customers face significant challenges with limited support available. Delivery of difficult messages along with limited available support suggests the service may face increased numbers of complaints. We have set our trigger levels to early identify trends.

PI Code & Short Name	P:APS018_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	PI Owner	zAPS_PAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Anti Poverty Service which were upheld or partially upheld, as a percentage of all complaints received.</p> <p>All complaints are collected throughout each quarter and the complaints are analysed to identify trends and improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.</p> <p>Complaints are collected from all areas of the service including the Advice Shop, Benefits, Scottish Welfare Fund, Blue Badge and Education Benefits teams.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	18%
		Current Target	50%

The percentage of complaints received by the Anti-Poverty Service that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full



Trend Chart Commentary:

The Anti Poverty Service investigates and manages all complaints by following corporate procedure. We closely monitor and analyse complaints to identify any trends and to make improvements in our service.

2022/23

Quarter 4 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 17 complaints. This is the same number of complaints as the service received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, employee attitude, discretionary payments, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 14 complaints were not upheld, one complaint was partly upheld and two complaints were fully upheld during this period.

Quarter 3 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 17 complaints. 18 % of these complaints have been upheld. This is a decrease compared to the 24% complaints being upheld in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, employee attitude, incorrect or conflicting advice, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 14 complaints were not upheld, three complaints were upheld during this period.

Quarter 2 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 25 complaints. 24% of these complaints have been upheld or partly upheld. This is an increase compared to the 15% of the 23 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude, standard of service, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 19 complaints were not upheld, one complaint was partly upheld and five complaints were upheld during this period.

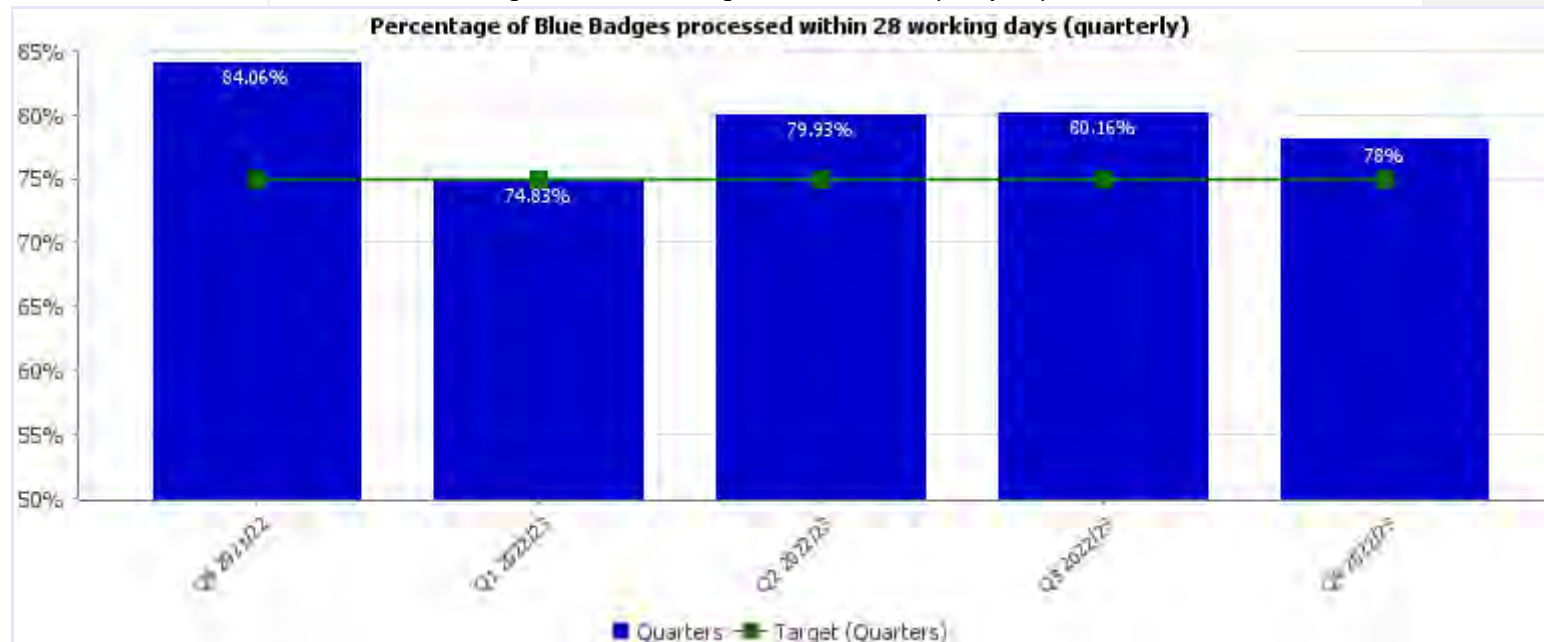
Quarter 1 - During period the Anti-Poverty Service received 23 complaints. This is significant increase compared to the 13 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude, failure to reply, policy related, waiting and response time, and poor communication. 19 complaints were not upheld, three complaints were partly upheld and one complaint was upheld during this period. Three complaints were escalated to stage 2.

2021/22

Quarter 4 - During this period the Anti-Poverty Service received 13 complaints. This is significant decrease compared to the 27 complaints received in the previous quarter. The complaints were relating to standard of service, claims being processed incorrectly, delay in processing, employee attitude and discretionary payment decision. 8 complaints were not upheld, two complaints were partly upheld and three complaints were upheld during this period. 38% of complaints were upheld/ partially upheld during this period and this is a slight increase from the previous quarter.

2022/23 Target - Our target will remain at 50% for this period.

PI Code & Short Name	P:APS019_6b.5 Percentage of Blue Badges processed within 28 working days (quarterly)	PI Owner	zAPS_PIAAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	This indicator measures the percentage blue badge applications that are processed by the service within 28 days on a quarterly basis. This is a service standard to ensure that blue badges are processed in a timely manner. There are two distinct categories of blue badge application, the first is those that automatically qualify by meeting eligibility criteria. The second is discretionary applications, which require desktop assessment and in some cases an Independent Mobility Assessment to assess eligibility. The service aims to process all blue badge applications within twenty eight days to ensure that customers receive a timely decision and blue badges are issued to eligible customers as quickly as possible.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	78%
		Current Target	75%



Trend Chart Commentary:

In line with the information below, the target for Blue Badge administration will remain at 75% within 28 days for 2022/23. This is in recognition of the new Code of Practice due to be introduced within the first couple of months of the 22/23 financial year and the unknown impact this may have on our current performance.

The new processing system for Blue Badges W360 has been developed to provide statistical information on Blue Badges. Over the last quarter, analysis has been done on what information is available and how best to report the performance against the expectation of Transport Scotland in relation to the delivery of Blue Badge administration. The estimated wait time for a Blue Badge from application to receipt is 12 weeks as reported on Transport Scotland website. On analysis of the data available to us, these timescales can be met by some considerable margin. In line with the new reporting tool and analysis of our current performance, the target for Blue Badge administration is being retained at 75% of all claims processed within 28 days. This wait time is in line with current working practices and meets customer expectation. There are 4 different types of Badge, all with differing timelines for completion depending on their complexity. These are Automatic badges; Discretionary badges; Risk In traffic and Organisational Badges. The reported performance will be an average across all badge types.


Q4 2022/23 - 78% of all Blue Badge applications received were processed within 28 days. This is within target. We are currently monitoring the time taken to complete Independent Medical Assessments because they are now taking around 4 months to complete. This may start to impact our ability to process applications within target. We will continue to monitor this area of the work.

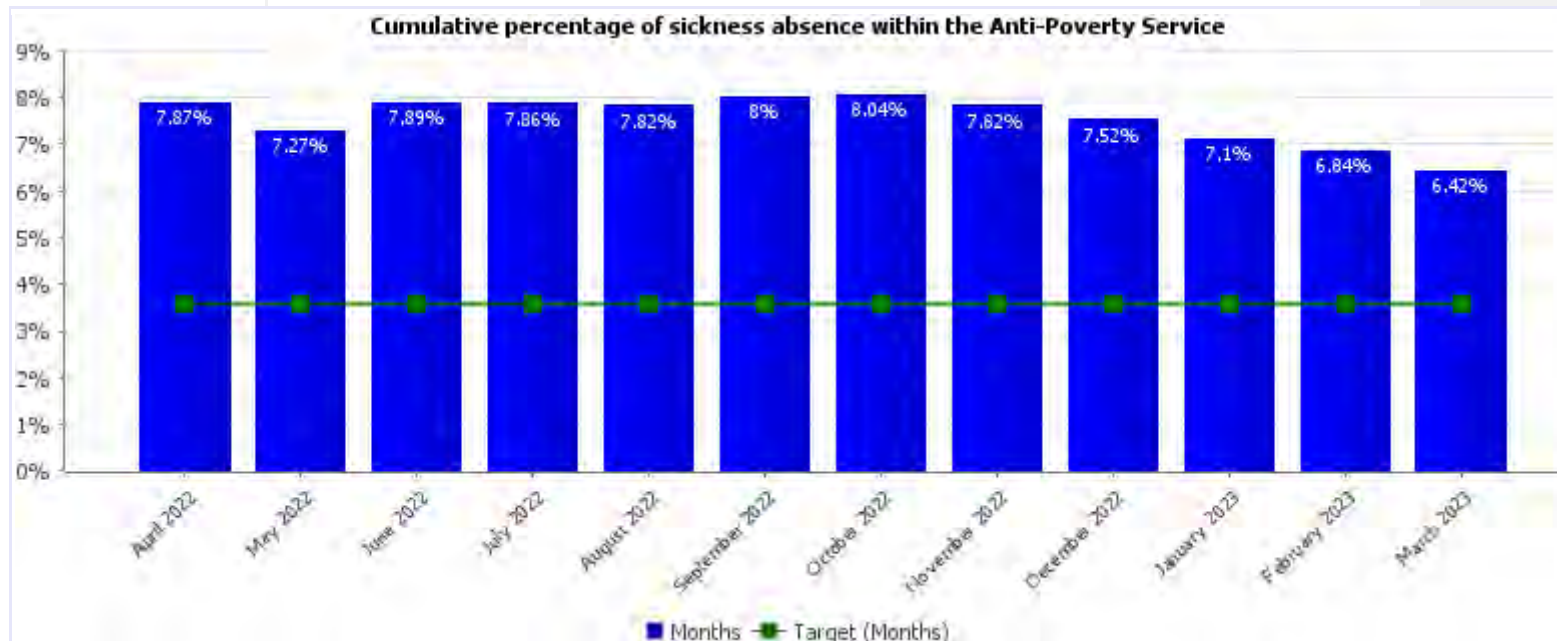
Q3 2022/23 - 80.16% of all Blue Badge applications received were processed within 28 days. This is within target. We are currently monitoring the time taken to complete Independent Medical Assessments because they are now taking around 4 months to complete. This may start to impact our ability to process applications within target. We will continue to monitor this area of the work.

Q2 2022/23 - 79.93% of all Blue Badge applications received were processed within 28 days. This is above target and is a result of additional resource being trained on Blue Badge work to help bring the processing within target. During the 2nd quarter, 1385 application were received. Performance will continue to be monitored.

Q1 2022/23 - 74.83% of all Blue Badge applications were processed within 28 days. This is within target as resource, normally directed to Blue Badges was on occasion redirected to work on other priority areas of work. It is expected that this performance will improve as the overall workload of the team starts to align with pre Pandemic statistics. The performance will continue to be monitored.

Q4 - 2021/22 - 84.06% of all Blue Badge applications were processed within 28 days. This is an excellent achievement given the staff working on Blue Badges also work on National Entitlement Cards for both Bus Pass and Young Scot and within this quarter were dealing with the new Under 22 travel scheme. We will monitor this performance going into the new financial year as the new Blue Badge Code of Practice is introduced to determine if any changes to the scheme impact our performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:APS041_7b.1 Cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Anti-Poverty Service	PI Owner	zAPS_PIAAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	This performance indicator measures the cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Anti-Poverty Service. For each financial year, we aim to have equal to or less than the council's target of 3.6% sickness absence. The SPI figure provided by HR is used to populate this indicator.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	6.42%
		Current Target	3.6%



This key performance indicator was introduced for the Anti-Poverty Service which was developed April 2019. Recording of this information commenced in May 2019. Previously, this information was record under the Advice Shop and Revenues and Benefits.

2022/23

March - The reported figure for March is 6.42% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 6.84%. In total there were 1,540 sick days out of a total 23,995 target days available in March. 72.86% of absences in March were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance policy.

February - The reported figure for February is 6.84% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.1%. In total there were 1,492 sick days out of a total 21,819 target days available in February. 74% of absences in February were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance policy.

January - The reported figure for January is 7.1% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.52%. In total there were 1,436 sick days out of a total 20,229 target days available in January. 75% of absences in January were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

December - The reported figure for December is 7.52% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.82%. In total there were 1,380 sick days out of a total 18,362 target days available between 1st April 2022 and 31st December 2022. 74% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

November - The reported figure for November is 7.82% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 8.04%. In total there were 1,263 sick days out of a total 16,161 target days available between 01st April 2022 and 30th November 2022. 75% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

October - The reported figure for October is 8.04% which is an increase from the previous month which was 8%. In total there were 1,147 sick days out of a total 14,264 target days available between 01st April 2022 and 31st October 2022. 75% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

September - The reported figure for September is 8.00% which is an increase from the previous month which was 7.82%. In total there were 974 sick days out of a total 12,171 target days available between 01st April 2022 and 30th September 2022. 76% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

August - The reported figure for August is 7.82% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.86%. In total there were 790 sick days out of a total 10,104 target days available in between 1st April 2022 and 31st August 2022. 76% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

July - The reported figure for July is 7.86% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.89%. In total there were 631 sick days out of a total 8,028 target days available in between 1st April 2022 and 31st July 2022. 78% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

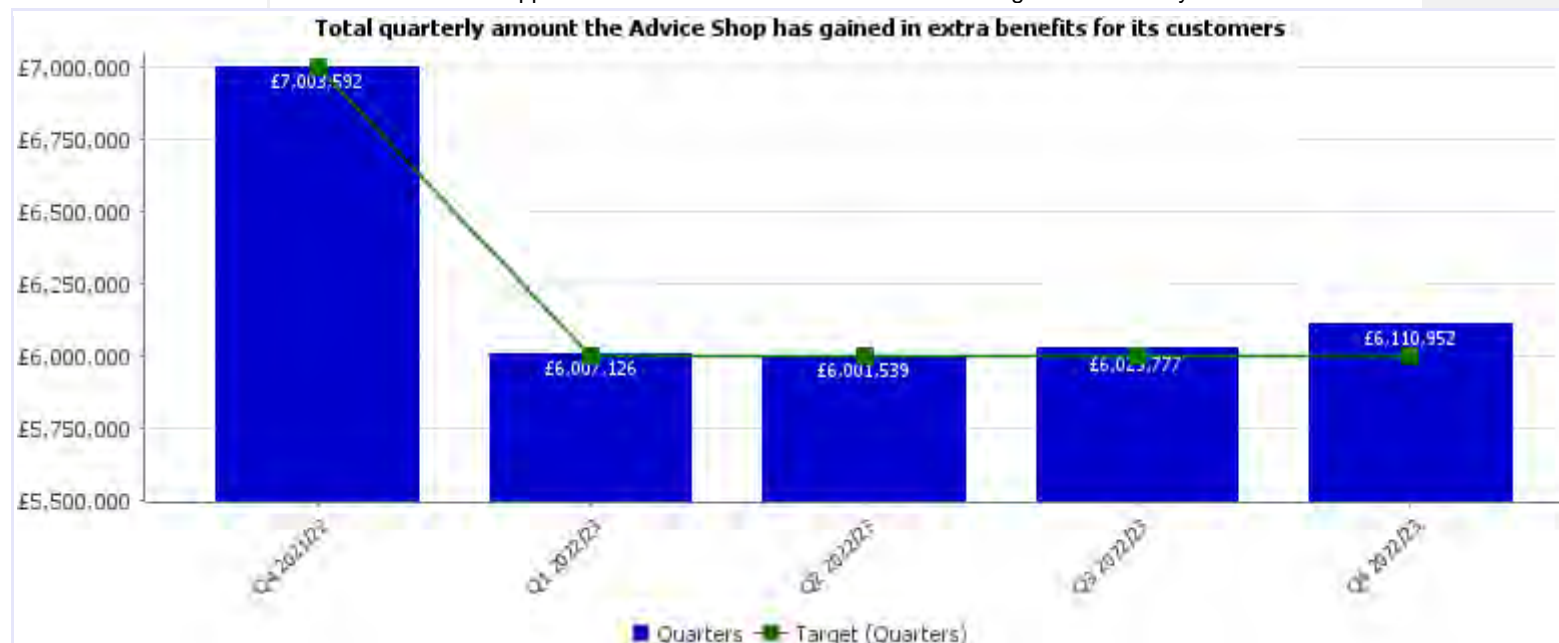
June - The reported figure for June is 7.89% which is an increase from the previous month which was 7.27%. In total there were 475 sick days out of a total 6,017 target days available in between 1st April 2022 and 30th June 2022. 84% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

May - The reported figure for May is 7.27% which is a decrease from the previous month which was 7.87%. In total there were 291 sick days out of a total 4,001 target days available in between 1st April 2022 and 31st May 2022. 79% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

April - The reported figure for April is 7.87% which is an increase from the previous month which was 7.36%. In total there were 152 sick days out of a total 1,932 target days available in between 1st April 2022 and 30th April 2022. 83% of absences were due to long term sickness. The service continues monitor in line with the council's supporting attendance at work policy.

Target 2022/23 - Our target will remain at 3.6% in line with the WLC target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:APS060_9b.1a Total quarterly amount the Advice Shop has gained in extra benefits for its customers	PI Owner	zAPS_PIAAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the amount the Advice Shop has gained in extra benefits for its customers.</p> <p>Information is collected as the service is informed of benefit outcomes and this is reported on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>This figure includes any successful benefit claims and appeals we help customers with. These figures can vary due to many factors such as the time it takes the Department for Work and Pensions to make decisions and for the Appeals Service to set tribunals but these average out over the year.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	£6,110,952
		Current Target	£6,000,000



Trend Chart Commentary

We closely monitor our target on a daily basis and have established partnerships which allow us to target those most in need. Welfare reforms continue to have an impact on this performance indicator and the service has a proactive approach in developing and implementing targeted campaigns and initiatives to meet customer need.

2022/23

Quarter 4 - During this period the service has gained £6,110,951 in extra benefits for customers. This is an increase from the previous quarter. Service delivery has significantly changed over this period due to Covid-19 and the service continues to adapt and develop new initiatives to deliver the service through more digital channels.

Quarter 3 - During this period the service has gained £6,025,777 in extra benefits for customers. This is a slight increase from the previous quarter. Service delivery has significantly changed over this period due to Covid-19 and the service continues to adapt and develop new initiatives to deliver the service through more digital channels.

Quarter 2 - During this period the service has gained £6,001,538 in extra benefits for customers. This is a slight decrease from the previous quarter. Service delivery has significantly changed over this period due to Covid-19 and the service continues to adapt and develop new initiatives to deliver the service through more digital channels.

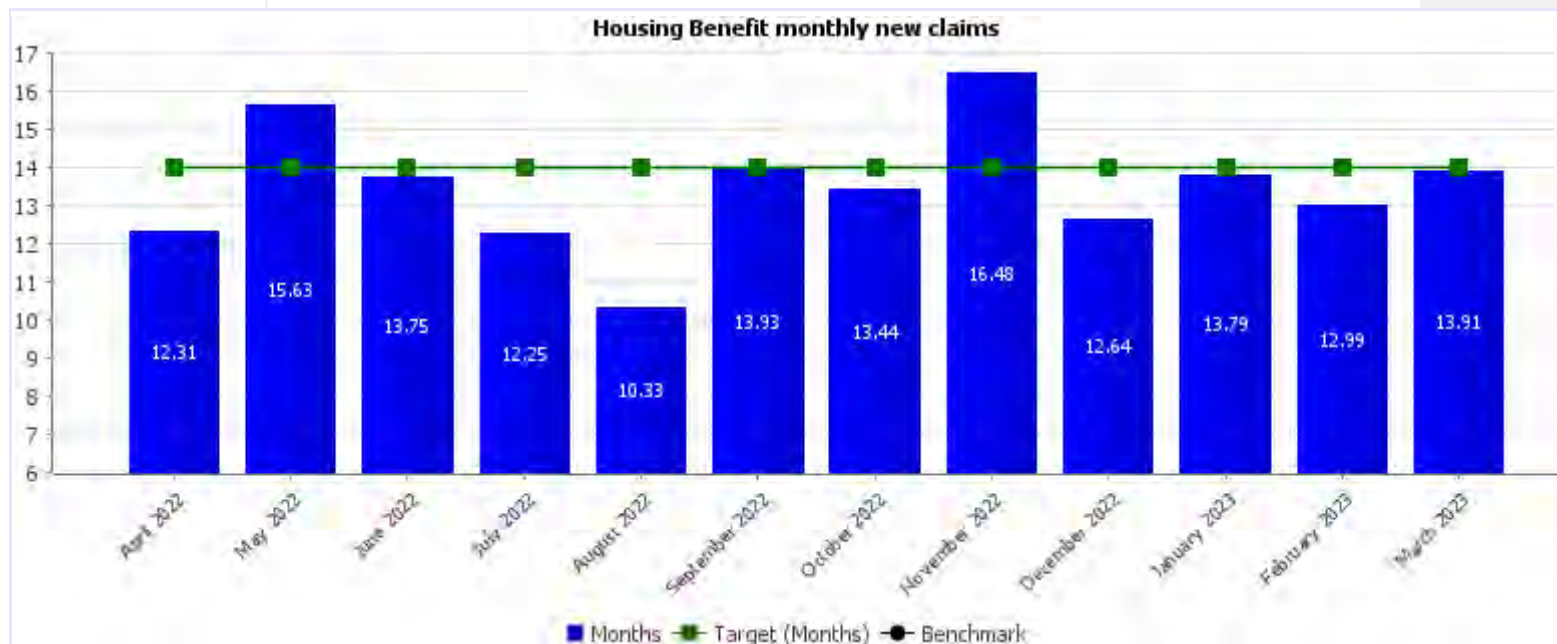
Quarter 1 - During this period the service has gained £6,007,125 in extra benefits for customers. This is a decrease from the previous quarter due to the target changing from £7m to £6m. Service delivery has significantly changed over this period due to Covid-19 and the service continues to adapt and develop new initiatives to deliver the service through more digital channels.

2021/22

Quarter 4 - During this period the service has gained £7,003,592 in extra benefits for customers. This is a slight decrease from the previous quarter and is mainly due to now being up to date with benefit outcome decisions. Service delivery has significantly changed over this period due to Covid-19 and the service continues to adapt and develop new initiatives to deliver the service through more digital channels.

2022/23 Target - Our target has been set to £6,000,000 per quarter for this period. Due to the ongoing economic recovery, increased cost of living and the increased volume of customer contacts across the broadening service, customers face significant challenges with limited support available. Increased complexity of enquiries, an increased demand of support in areas such as Foodbank and Fuel Vouchers along with continued changes in Welfare Benefits such as Universal Credit and Adult and Child Disability Payments has meant there has been a downwards shift in the amount and value of financial gains available to customers.

PI Code & Short Name	P:APS077_9b Housing Benefit monthly new claims	PI Owner	zAPS_PAdmin; Nahid Hanif
Description	This performance indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims on a monthly basis. The average number of days is calculated from the date of receipt of the application to the date that a decision is made. Receipt of a claim for Housing Benefit at any designated office will be the starting point at which the count for the processing time begins. The count for the processing time stops the day the decision is made. This data is gathered by the Single Housing Benefit Extract tool which reports to the Department for Work and Pensions on all data entered on the Housing Benefit processing system. This information allows management to monitor ongoing performance and to compare performance against other Local Authorities. The date that the SHBE is run differs from month to month and is set by the DWP, with the performance information being recorded against the month the data is gathered, regardless of the date of collection within the month.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	13.91
		Current Target	14



Trend Chart Commentary:

The target for 2022/23 remained at 14 days. The target has been set based on last year's performance and factoring in a number of changes that will impact the Benefit Team over the coming year.

2022/23

April 22 - Performance has improved with 121 new Housing Benefit claims processed, on average, within 12.31 days.

May 22- Performance has dipped significantly this month and is out with target due to resources being redirected to administer Winter Support Payments and additional enquiries as a result of a Council Tax Reduction system issue with 84 New Housing Benefit claims being process ion average within 15.63 days.

June 22 - Performance has improved and has returned within target with 114 new Housing Benefit claims processed, on average, within 13.75 days.

July 22 - Performance has improved this month with 110 new Housing Benefit claims processed, on average, within 12.25 days.

August 22 - Performance has improved this month with 114 claims being processed, on average within 10.33 days

September 22 - Performance has dipped this month with 99 claims being processed on average within 13.93 days but remains within target.


October 22 - Performance has improved this month with 102 claims being processed on average within 13.44 days.

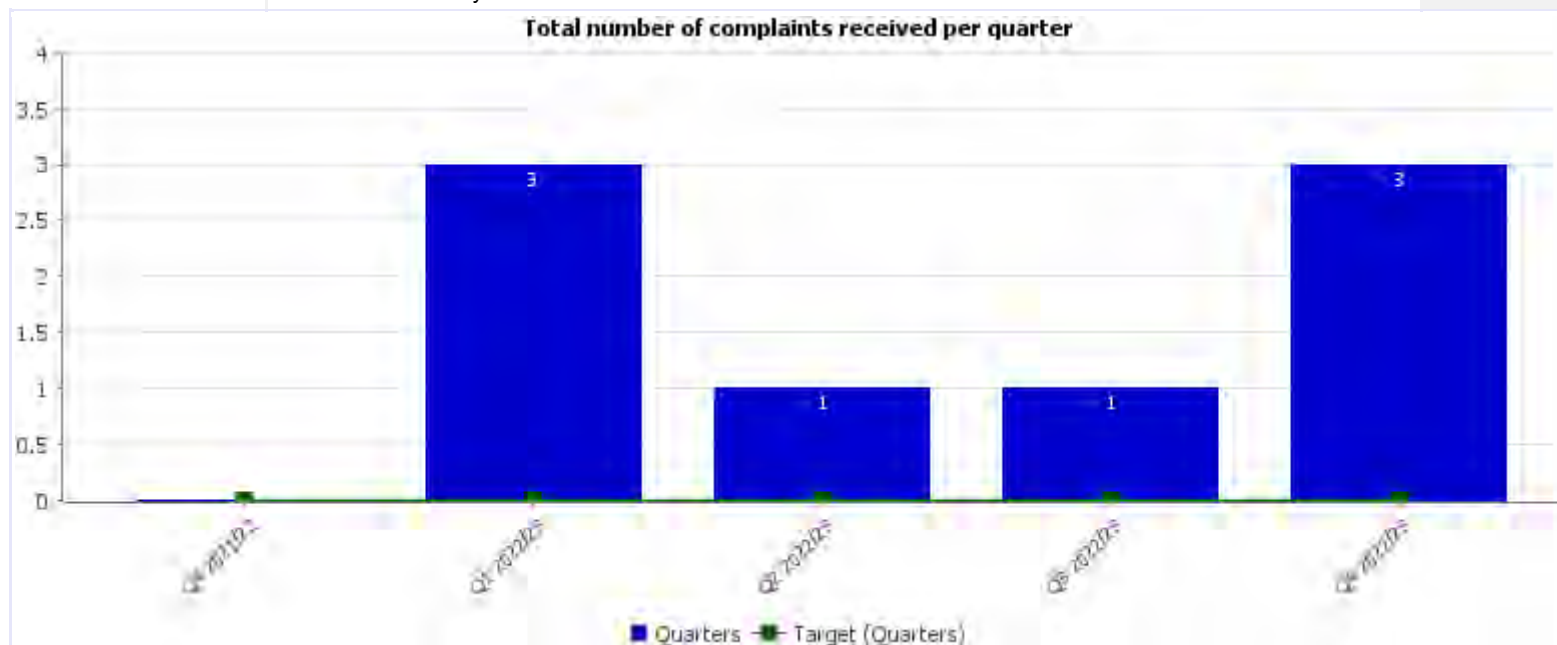
November 22 - Performance has dipped significantly this month with 73 claims being processed on average within 16.48 days. The contributing factor for this increase was 3 claims which took a cumulative amount of 262 days to process. If these had been processed within normal timescales then target would have been met. On investigation our system allocated these tasks to a work queue that was no longer active because the person had left the service and this had gone unnoticed. A report has been identified which will prevent a similar issue arising again, however unlikely this is.

December 22 - Performance has improved considerably from Nov 22, with 92 claims being processed on average within 12.64 days.

January 23 - Performance has dipped in January with 103 new Claims being processed within 13.79 days. This is still within the target of 14 days. Issues with Civica on demand staff (Sickness and Technical issues).

Feb 23 - Performance has improved slightly this month. We processed 103 claims (same as Jan) with 12.99 days.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CC014_6b.3 Total number of complaints received per quarter	PI Owner	zCC_PIAAdmin; Garry Heron
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received quarterly relating to Corporate Communications. Performance is reviewed on a regular basis and reported quarterly to ensure that there is sufficient focus on the quality and standard of customer service. The data for this performance indicator is captured through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Social Media and Councillor Enquiries. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	3
		Current Target	0



Trend Chart Commentary:

The service handle complaints made by members of public through social media and councillor enquiries, the service receives a small number of complaints.

2022/23

Q4 2022/23 - the service received 2 complaints. Both in relation to the website functions relating to payments

Q3 2022/23 - the service received 1 complaint. One in relation to women and girls promotion

Q2 2022/23 - the service received 1 complaint. One in relation to inaccurate web information

Q1 2022/23 - the service received 3 complaints. Two in relation to inaccurate web information. Another in relation to an issue accessing a web form.

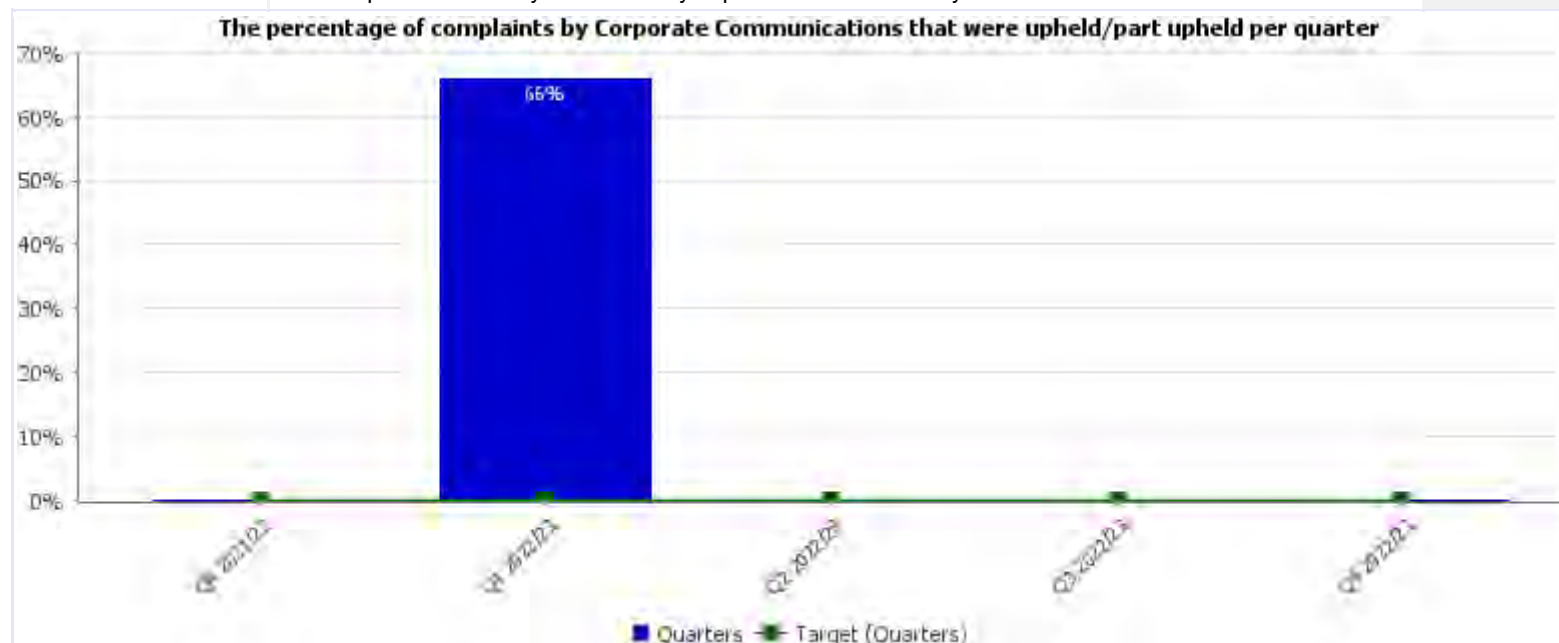
2021/22

Q4 2021/22 - the service received no complaints

Complaints are handled following corporate procedures and analysed to identify trends.

The target for 2023/24 will remain at 0 per quarter, this is to reflect the small number of complaints the service received in previous quarters. Targets are reviewed annually.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CC016_6b.4 The percentage of complaints by Corporate Communications that were upheld/part upheld per quarter	PI Owner	zCC_PIAAdmin; Garry Heron
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of Corporate Communications complaints that have been investigated and upheld or part upheld during each quarter.</p> <p>For each quarter the total number of complaints responded to within relevant timescale is divided by the total number of stage one complaints received to determine a percentage. The data for this indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM).</p> <p>The complaints are analysed to identify improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	0%
		Current Target	0%



Trend Chart Commentary:

Q4 2022/23 2 complaints were received and 2 were not upheld. Both related to web forms not working correctly. However, both issues were caused by an external supplier and related to the Bulky Uplift payments. Therefore, both were not complaints about the website, but the payment system which is external to the team. The issues had also been resolved when the complaints were received.

Q3 2022/23 1 complaint was received and was not upheld.

Q2 2022/23 1 complaint was received and one was not upheld as the complaint related to information provided by another service. The issue was rectified by the service

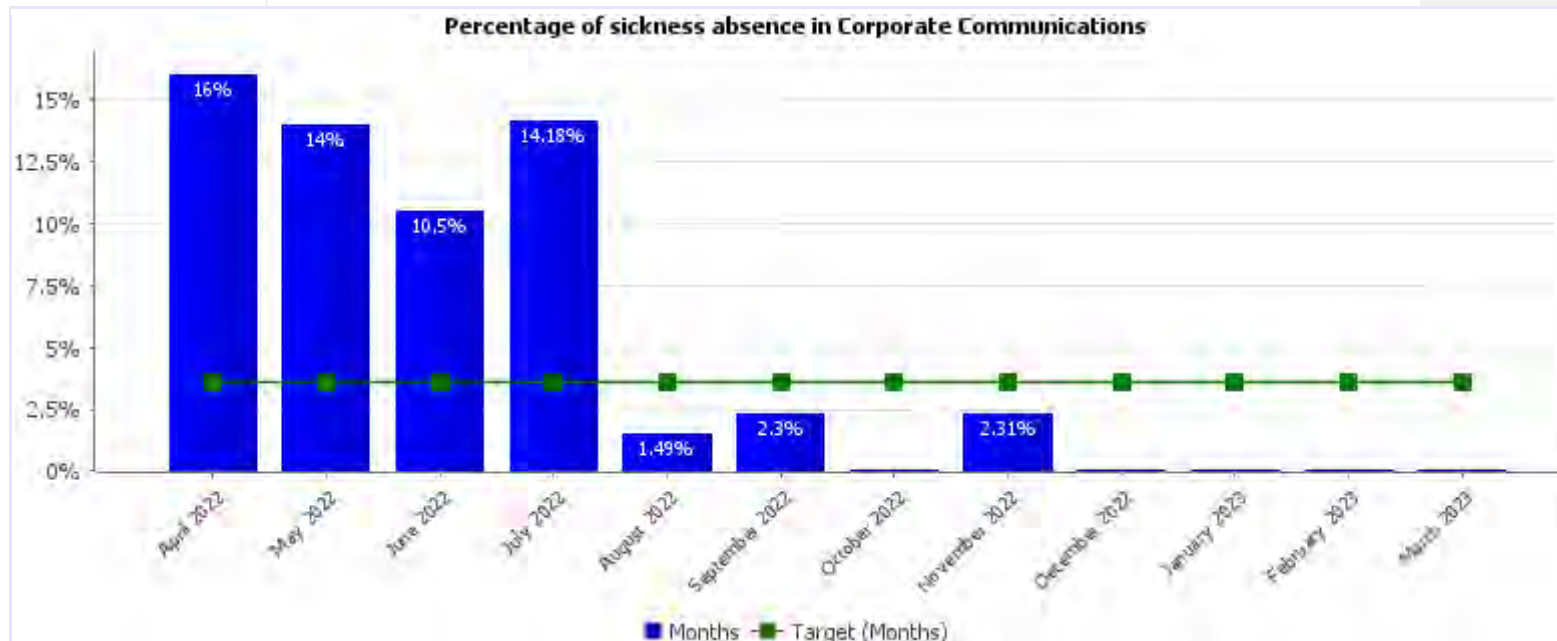
Q1 2022/23 3 complaints were received and 2 were upheld. Both related to incorrect web information that related to another service providing incorrect data

Q4 2021/22 0 complaints were upheld as none were one received

Please note, where there have been no complaints received within the quarter, no value will be added to the chart. Therefore, this will show as blank or missing a one year period on the chart.

The target for 2023/24 will remain at 0% based on previous years' results.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CC031_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in Corporate Communications	PI Owner	zCC_PIAAdmin; Garry Heron
Description	This performance indicator measures, as a percentage, the total level of sickness absence in the Corporate Communications team in Corporate Services. The data is provided by the council's Human Resource Services on a monthly basis and is tracked and monitored to ensure absence is managed appropriately in the service and any corresponding impact on performance is understood and managed.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	0%
		Current Target	3.6%



Trend Chart Commentary:

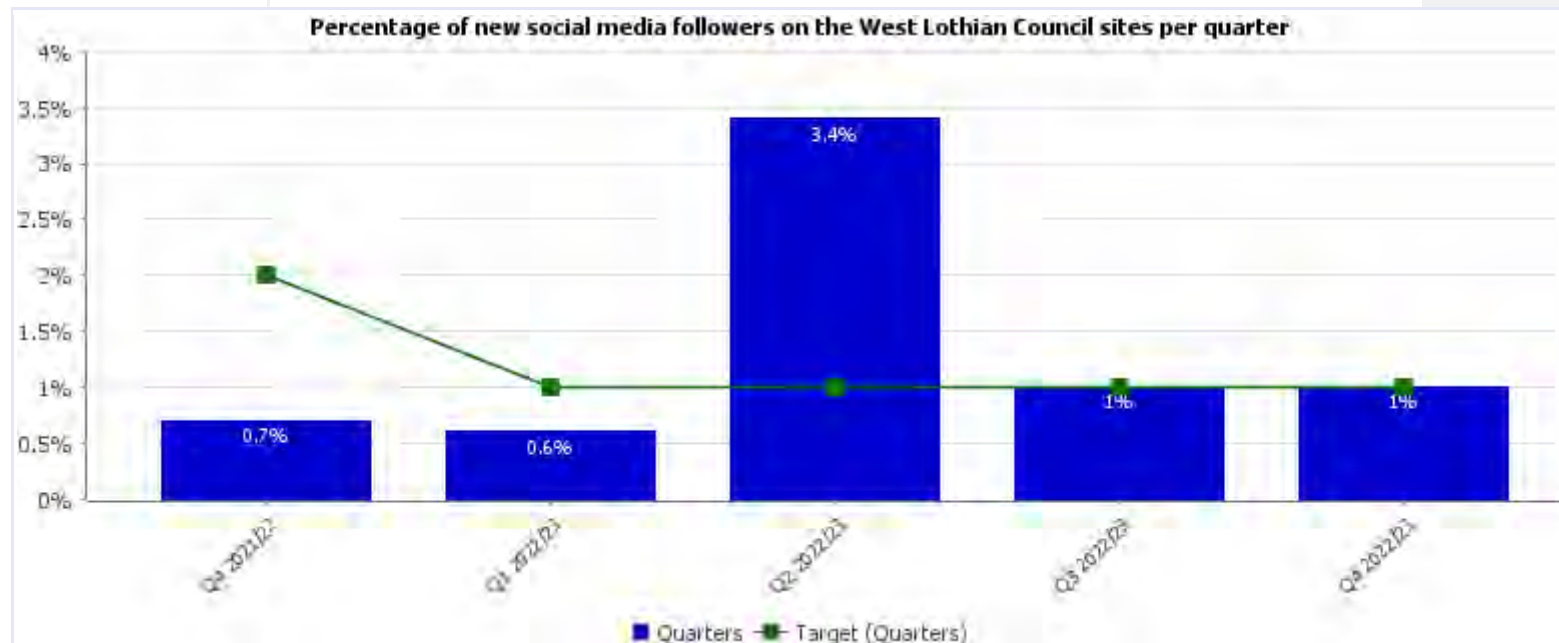
The trend highlights that absence has been below the council target for the entire reporting period. Due to the small size of the team a single absence can have an impact on absence levels.

The trend highlights a rise in absence between April and July 2022. This was caused by one member of staff being off for the entire month with a broken leg. The staff member returned in August and sickness absence rates have returned to below average. One member of staff was ill with flu in November 2022.

Absence is monitored and addressed in line with the council's Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedures.

The corporate target is 3.6%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CC081_9b.1a Percentage of new social media followers on the West Lothian Council sites per quarter	PI Owner	zCC_PIAdmin; Garry Heron
Description	This Performance indicator measures the percentage increase or decrease of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram followers on the main council sites. The data is obtained from the social media platforms and is calculated by comparing the change in numbers and calculating what the percentage change. This indicator allows the corporate communications team to monitor and measure the usage of key social media channels allowing us to evaluate staffing resources and determine the appropriate content required to attract new service users to this communications channel.	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	1%
		Current Target	1%



Trend Chart Commentary:

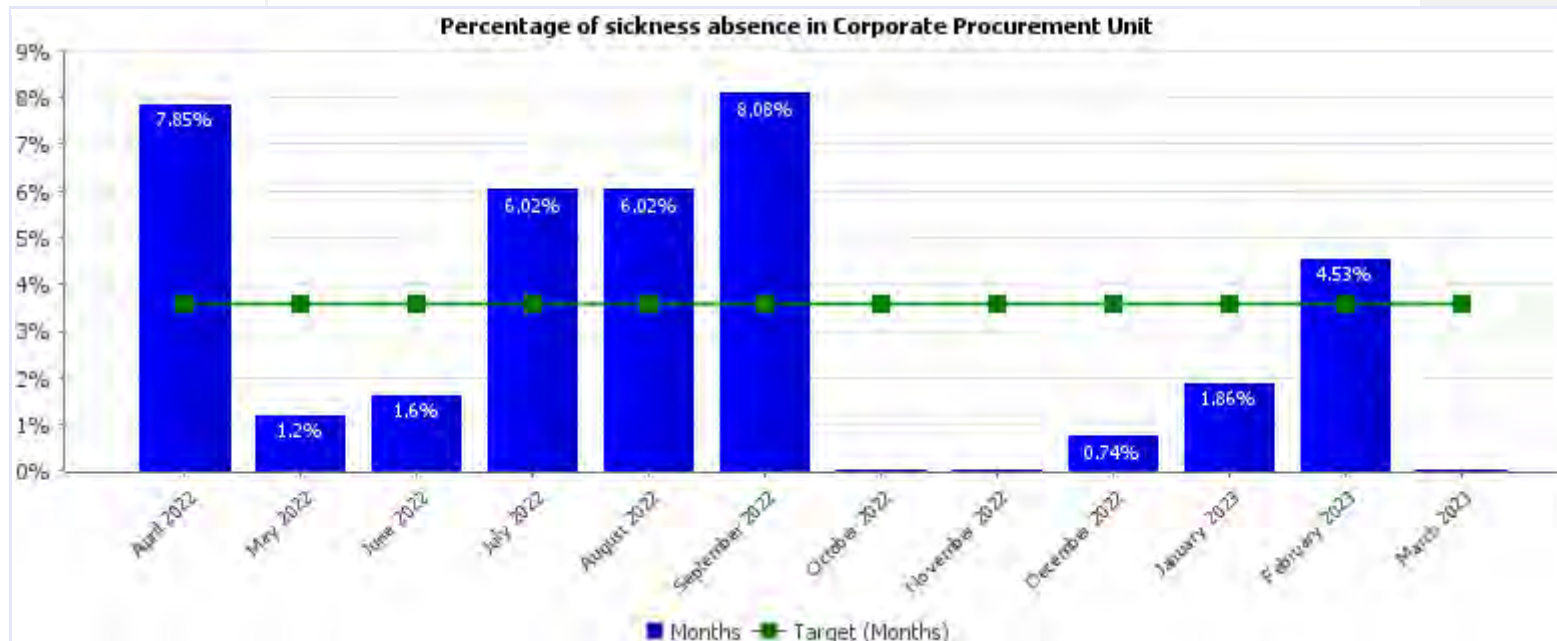
The quarterly chart for number of social media likes generally shows a steady increase of around 1% to 3%. This reflects the growing numbers of residents using social media and choosing to follow our channels. Growth has slowed since then as we reach closer to a saturation point when the majority of local residents with social media follow at least one of our channels.

We have reduced the target for 22/23 to 1% as the previous target of 2% is not considered achievable. A 1% increase still represents close to 900 new followers every three months, which is very challenging to reach. Our existing large following on social media means the majority of residents who use social media and want to engage with the council are likely to already follow us. We also no longer have a dedicated social media officer to enable us to target resources on driving up growth and we are unable to meet the increasing demand from residents for customer service via social media, as this is not currently supported by the council.

We recorded a 3.4% rise in Q2 2022/23, with the majority of new followers on our Facebook channels. This is the largest rise in close to two years, and can be attributed to a number of high-profile posts including updates on strike action and events around the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The trend highlights that growth continued at 1% for Q3 and Q4 2022/23 which was largely down to a growth in Instagram followers.

We will try and improve growth on our Instagram channel in particular during 22/23, after the channels saw a 3.7% rise in Q1 2022/23. Instagram has grown into one of the most popular social media platforms in recent years, and we will look to increase use of it as it has more potential to grow our followers than other channels.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CPU018a_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in Corporate Procurement Unit	PI Owner	zCPU_PIAAdmin; Angela Gray
Description	This performance indicator measures the percentage of sickness absence within the Corporate Procurement Unit on a month by month basis. For each month, the service aims to have equal to or less than 3.6 percent sickness absence. The monthly sickness statistics used for this performance indicator are recorded from data issued by HR services.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	0%
		Current Target	3.6%




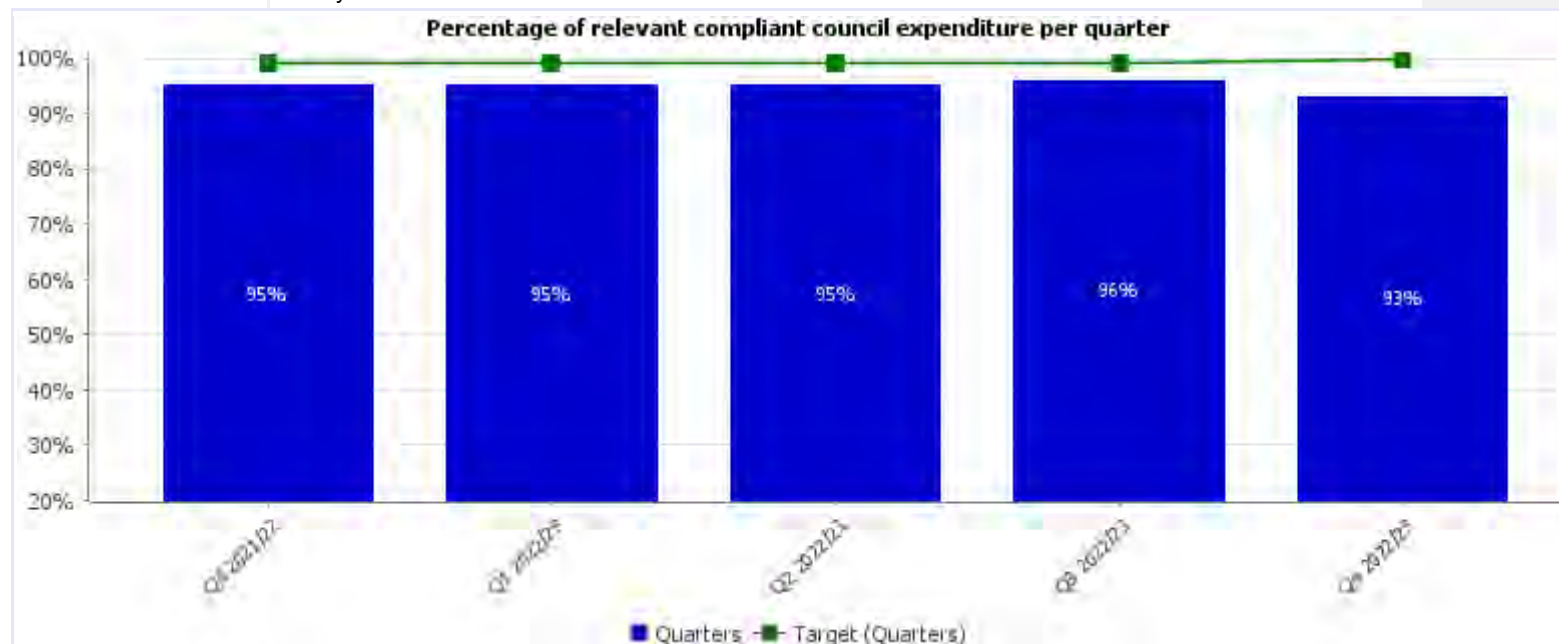
Trend Chart Commentary:

Recorded Performance has been varied in this indicator.

All absences are managed in accordance with the Council's sickness absence policy and procedure. Within a small team of 13.5FTE, carrying 4 vacancies during the period, 2 longer term absence adds pressure for remaining staff, and with remaining vacancies only recently filled, this has had an overall impact on service delivery.

Target performance will continue to be set at the corporate standard of 3.6% for 2022/23.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CPU020b_9b.1a Percentage of relevant compliant council expenditure per quarter	PI Owner	zCPU_PIAAdmin; Angela Gray
Description	This performance indicator measures the percentage of relevant Supplies, Services and Works expenditure covered by contracts awarded in line with standing orders. Relevant Spend is identified as being spend which is influenceable by the Corporate Procurement Unit, Non influenceable spend is identified and removed from the overall spend to allow for a more accurate calculation. Calculated on a quarterly basis, the service identifies the council's contracted suppliers from the Corporate Contract Management System (CCMS) and measures their spend against the total council spend within the council's purchase to pay systems. Levels of spend with non-contracted suppliers is monitored by the service on a quarterly basis to ensure that the year-end target performance is achieved. This performance indicator is related to ensuring that the target savings agreed for the next five years can be achieved through effective procurement activity.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	93%
		Current Target	100%



Trend Chart Commentary

Performance in this indicator has varied by 3 percent across the period shown in the chart, from a low of 93 percent in Q4 2022/23 to a high of 96 percent in Q3 2022/23.

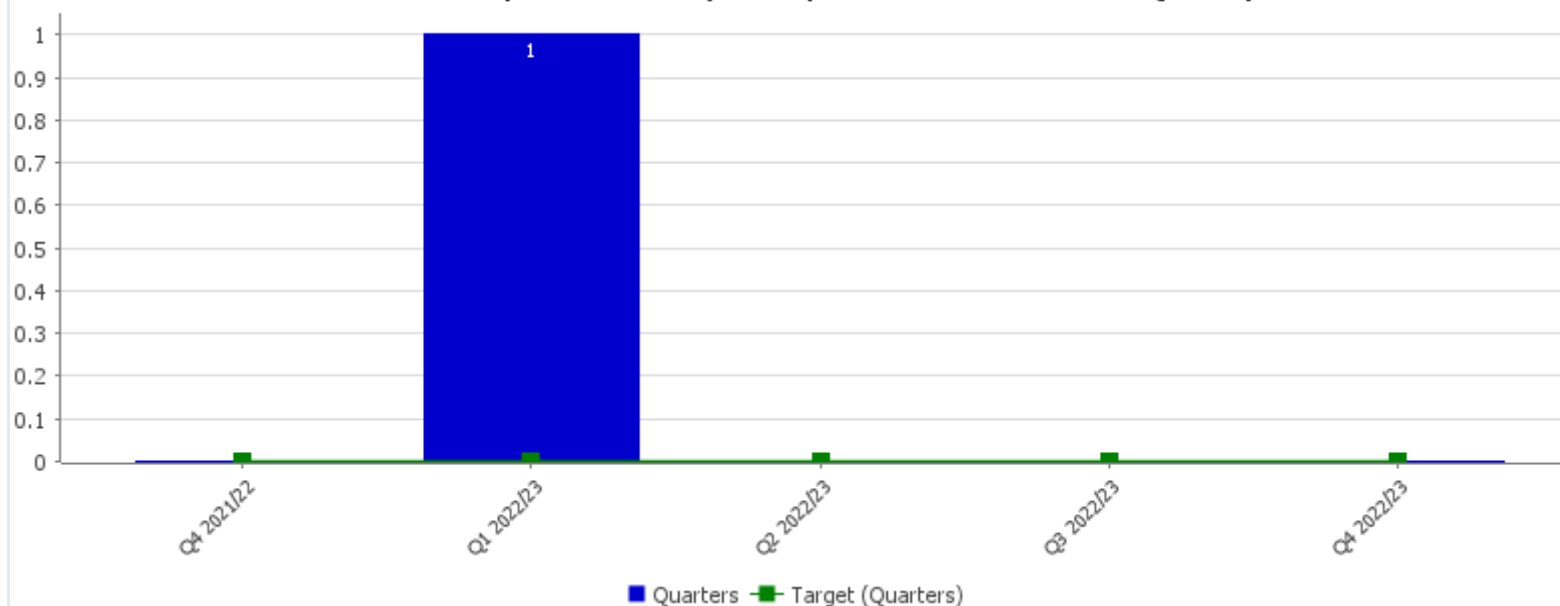
This is predominantly as a result of the new Procurement Thresholds in 2015/16, which introduced new criteria for compliant purchasing at specific levels of spend, and the approach for non regulated procurement continues to allow flexibility in contracting options.

CPU will continue to enforce compliant spend to ensure performance is maintained at or above target levels through engagement with Service Areas and promotion of the newly developed Procurement Toolkit and E-learning modules.

The target for performance for 2022/23 will be set at 100%, in line with the Procurement Strategy Target. The strategic target and method of calculation for this indicator will be reviewed for the new strategy period.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CPU047c_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit on a Quarterly basis	PI Owner	zCPU_PIAdmin; Angela Gray
Description	<p>This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit. It is the total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days).</p> <p>Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	0
		Current Target	0

Total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit on a Quarterly basis




Trend Chart Commentary:

Over the period shown on the chart, the service received a total of 1 complaint which was received in Q2 2022/23 and related to standard of service in a tender award.

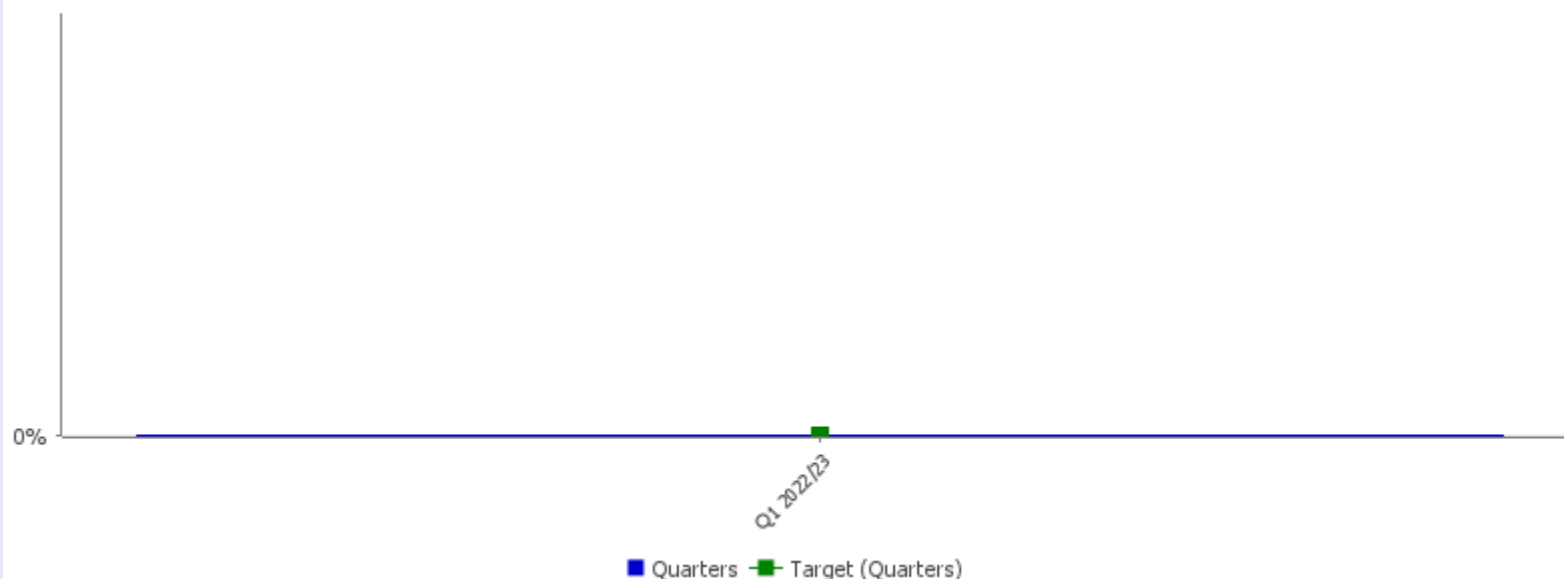
External customers are advised on the corporate complaints procedure from the CPU internet pages. They can also raise questions of clarification through formal tendering and contract notices also provide information on Procedures for review.

Customers are also surveyed following completion of tender exercises. The results of the surveys are discussed at team meetings and You Said, We Did action plans are created where applicable, and published on the intranet / internet.

The target for 2023/24 will remain at 0, in line with the corporate target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CPU047d_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	PI Owner	zCPU_PIAdmin; Angela Gray
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit which were upheld or partially upheld, as a percentage of all complaints received. It is the total number of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days).	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	N/A
		Current Target	0%

The percentage of complaints received by the Corporate Procurement Unit that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full



Trend Chart Commentary:

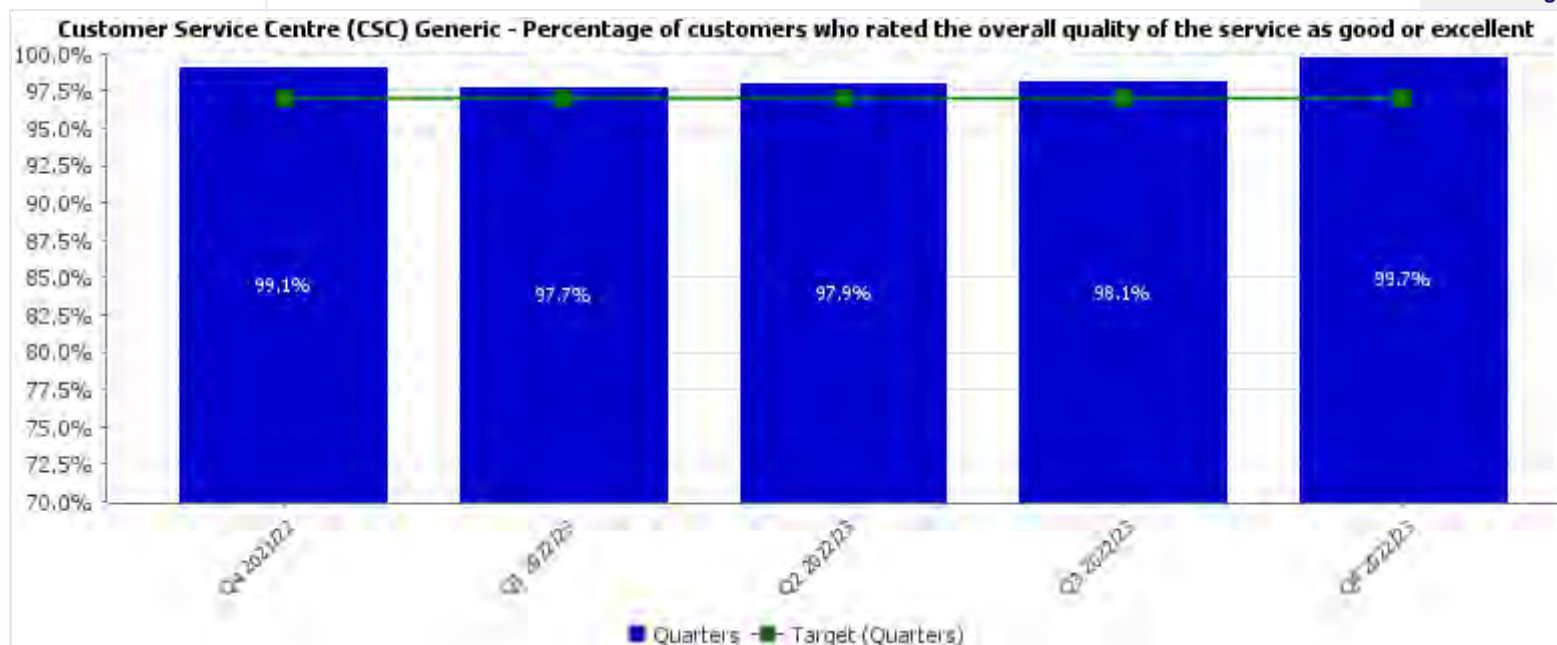
A total of one complaint has been received during 2022/23 about the standard of service during a tender award process and it was not upheld.

External customers are advised on the corporate complaint procedure from the CPU internet pages. They can also raise questions of clarification through formal tendering and contract notices also provide information on Procedures for review.

In lieu of Internal customer complaints procedure, customers are surveyed following completion of tender exercises.

The target for 2023/24 has been set at 0 in line with previous year's performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CSC007mq_6a.7 Customer Service Centre (CSC) Generic - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the service as good or excellent	PI Owner	zCSC_PIAdmin; Anna Brash
Description	This performance indicator measures the percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service as 'good' or 'excellent'. This information is gathered through using our monthly survey and a number of customers are randomly selected. The target is reviewed annually. The data from surveys is analysed to identify service improvements.	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	99.7%
		Current Target	97.0%



Trend Chart Commentary:

For the period shown performance has fluctuated between a high of 99.7% in Quarter 4 2022/23 and a low of 97.7% in Quarter 1 2022/23. These fluctuations in the overall performance are largely influenced by a number of factors, such as the staffing resourcing levels in the CSC, length of time that customers are waiting to have calls answered, changes and disruption in service delivery throughout the organisation, but many surveys are returned with little or no comment on the cause of customers level of satisfaction. We encourage the CSC team to promote and request customer feedback whenever appropriate to do so, which enables CSC to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.

2022/23

Quarter 4- 99.7% based on 335 customers rating the overall performance as excellent or good from 336 surveys completed. Customer satisfaction levels increased by 1.6% from the previous quarter and although this is an increase in satisfaction, ongoing levels of absence and a number of vacant posts continue to impact the teams performance. CSC are recruiting to fill all vacant posts and training is ongoing for new members of staff. Fewer surveys were completed during this period due to an upgrade to the CRM system which prevented surveys from being issued whilst data was migrated, the transition to the new version of CRM has now been completed and the number of surveys issued will be increased from Quarter 1 2023/24.

Quarter 3- 98.1% based on 405 customers rating the overall performance as excellent or good from 413 surveys completed. Customer satisfaction levels increased by 0.2% from the previous quarter and although this is an increase in satisfaction ongoing levels of absence and a number of vacant posts continue to impact the teams performance as well as a period of severe weather which resulted in an increased number of calls relating to burst/frozen pipes and subsequent repairs requests and winter roads maintenance requests, CSC are recruiting to fill all vacant posts and training is ongoing for new members of staff.

Quarter 2- 97.9% based on 375 customers rating the overall performance as excellent or good from 383 surveys completed. Customer satisfaction levels increased by 0.2% from the previous quarter and although this is an increase in satisfaction ongoing levels of absence and a number of vacant posts continue to impact the team's performance. CSC are recruiting to fill all vacant posts and training is ongoing for new members of staff.

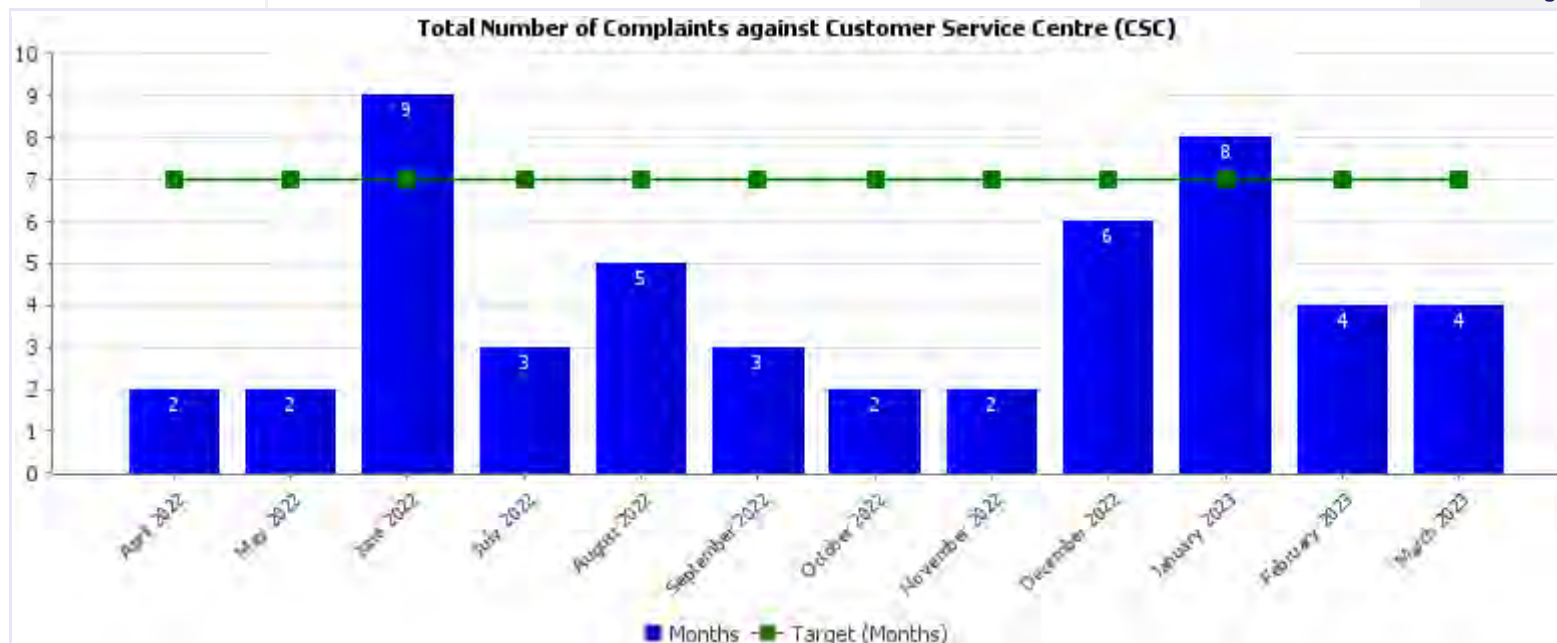
Quarter 1- 97.7% based on 468 customers rating the overall performance as excellent or good from 479 surveys completed. Customer satisfaction levels decreased by 1.4% from the previous quarter, ongoing levels of unplanned absence as well as a number of vacant posts continue to impact this teams performance. CSC are currently recruiting to fill all vacant posts and 5 new staff have completed training and are now calls handling.

2021/22

Quarter 4- 99.1% based on 626 customers rating the overall performance as excellent or good from 632 surveys completed. Customer satisfaction levels increased by 1.5%, although an increase from the previous quarter ongoing unplanned absence and a number of vacant positions continue to impact this performance. CSC are recruiting to fill all vacant posts.

In 2022/23 - following a review, this target has remained at 97% as this is deemed to be an achievable target based on the previous 12 months performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CSC062m_6b.3 Total Number of Complaints against Customer Service Centre (CSC)	PI Owner	zCSC_PIAAdmin; Anna Brash
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received against Customer Service Centre that have been investigated during each month. The data for this indicator is extracted from the customer relationship management system (CRM). The complaints are analysed to identify improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	4
		Current Target	7



Trend Chart Commentary:

Throughout the period the number of complaints received by the service within a month has ranged between 2 complaints in four of the months shown and a peak of 9 complaints in June 2022. Generally, increases in the number of complaints can be attributed to periods when the call volumes are high, and/or waiting times have increased. Periods, when the number of complaints have increased correspond with changes to service delivery including seasonal/weather related incidents. Complaints are analysed by the CSC management team in order to identify service improvements and ways to improve the overall customer experience. For example, complaint information has influenced the development of service training and call standards and is being used to inform investment in new technologies for the CSC.

2022/23

March 2023- 26,019 calls handled- 4 complaints reported, 2 for employee attitude and 2 were for procedure not followed.

February 2023- 25,430 calls handled - 4 complaints reported, 1 was for no action taken, 1 for call not answered and 2 were for procedures not followed.

January 2023- 29,139 calls handled - 8 complaints reported, 1 was for standards not met, 3 were for employee attitude, 1 was for procedure not followed, 2 were for staff conduct and 1 was for standard of service.

December 2022- 30,781 calls handled - 6 complaints reported, 5 were for calls not answered, 1 was for communication.

November 2022- 28,389 calls handled - 2 complaints reported, 2 were for employee attitude.

October 2022- 29,085 calls handled - 2 complaints reported, 1 for employee attitude and 1 for customer standards not met.

September 2022- 30,830 calls handled - 3 complaints reported, 1 for standard of service, 1 for employee attitude and 1 for incorrect/conflicting information.

August 2022- 30,063 calls handled - 5 complaints reported, 2 for standards not met and 3 for employee attitude.


July 2022- 31,113 calls handled - 3 complaints reported, 2 for waiting time and 1 for customer standards not met.

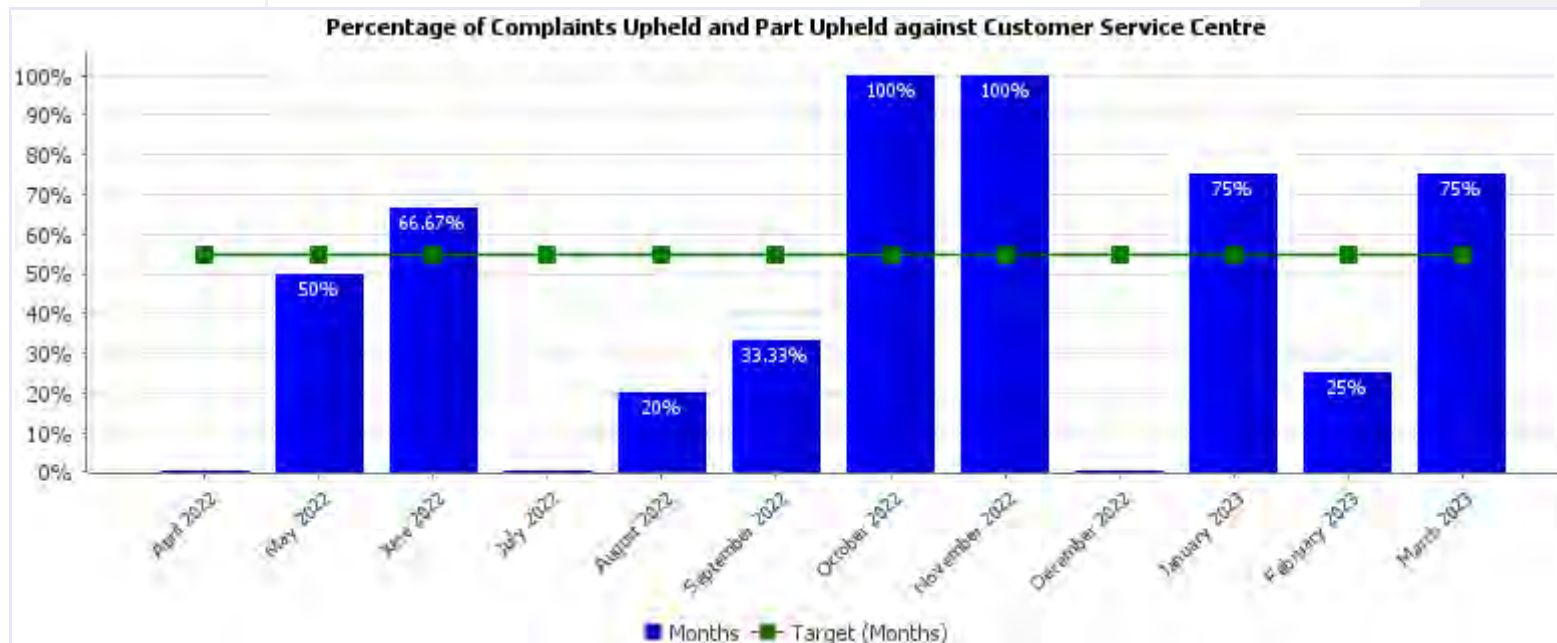
June 2022- 29,966 calls handled - 9 complaints reported, 2 for employee attitude, 1 for lack of communication, 2 for poor communication, 1 for no action taken, 2 for standard of service and 1 for customer standards not met.

May 2022- 35,926 calls handled - 2 complaints reported, 1 for equality and 1 for failed timescales.

April 2022- 34,879 calls handled - 2 complaints reported for standard of service.

In 2022/23, after review the target remains at 7 complaints per month as this was deemed as a challenging but achievable target on the basis of the past 12 months performance. Thresholds were also adjusted to encourage continuous performance improvement.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CSC063m_6b.4 Percentage of Complaints Upheld and Part Upheld against Customer Service Centre	PI Owner	zCSC_PIAAdmin; Anna Brash
Description	This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of Customer Service Centre complaints that have been investigated and upheld or part upheld during each month. For each month the total number of complaints responded to within relevant time-scale is divided by total number of stage 1 complaints received to determine a percentage. The data for this indicator is extracted from the customer relationship management system (CRM). The complaints are analysed to identify improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	75%
		Current Target	55%



Trend Chart Commentary:

Throughout the period the percentage of complaints upheld or part upheld by the service within a month has ranged between 0% in 3 of the months shown and has peaked at 100% in both October and November 2022 when there were only 2 complaints received each month.

The peaks in upheld / part upheld complaints can coincide with periods when the service is receiving higher call volumes, which can lead to longer wait time. The CSC uses complaint categorisations to analyse trends in customer dissatisfaction and identify opportunities to improve the standard of service received by customers. Complaints in relation to employee attitude or communication for example, are addressed by the relevant line manager through call evaluations using call recording technology, the CSC trainer may then be required to deliver additional training for individuals and teams or performance management processes, as appropriate. Customers express dissatisfaction with employee attitude when service resources are negatively impacted. Throughout this period, a number of vacant posts within CSC has resulted in longer waiting times for calls to be answered, some customers expressed dissatisfaction with this standard of service by logging a complaint.

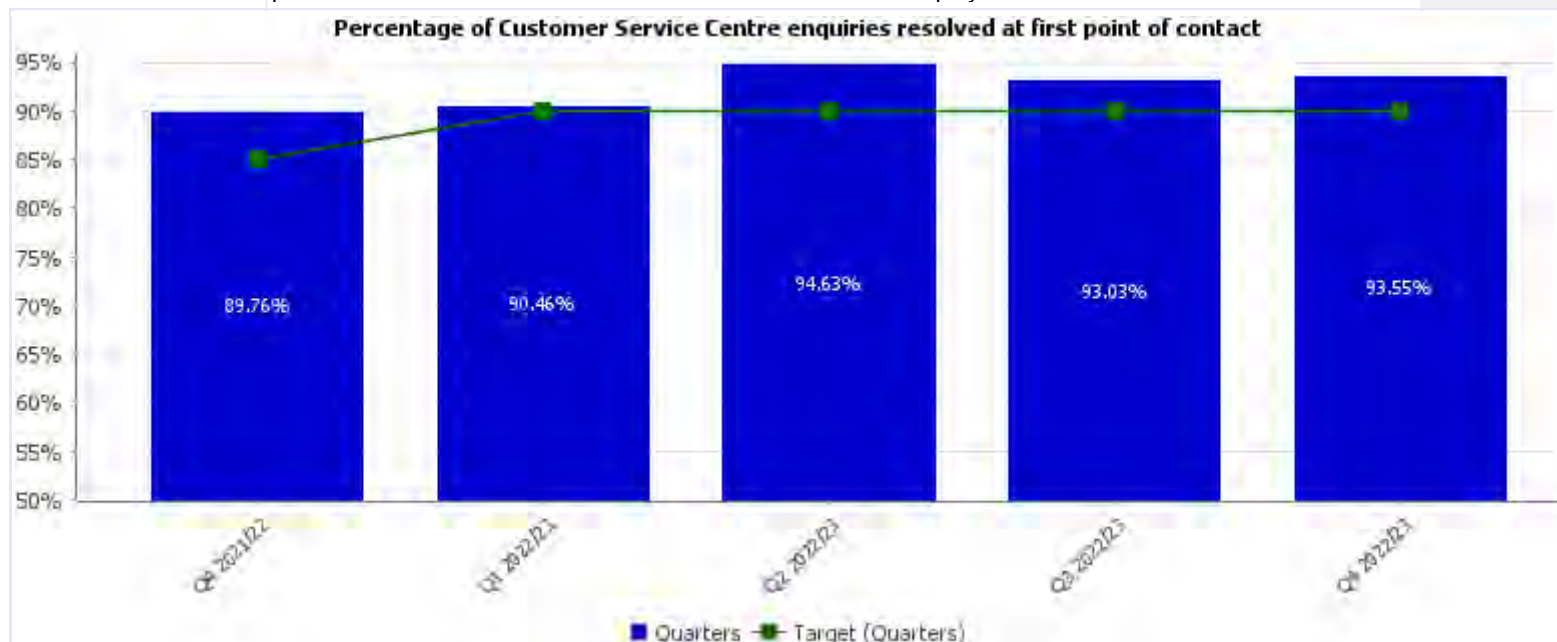
Throughout period shown service changes have been implemented, often before CSC have been updated, this also leads to frustrations from both the customer and employee, and complaints being made.

2022/23

March 2023- 4 complaints received, 2 were upheld, 1 part upheld and 1 was not upheld.
February 2023- 4 complaints received ,1 was upheld and 3 were not upheld
January 2023- 8 complaints received, 2 not upheld, 3 upheld and 3 part upheld
December 2022- 6 complaints received, 0 complaints upheld.
November 2022- 2 complaints received, 1 complaint was upheld and 1 was part upheld.
October 2022- 2 complaints received, 1 complaint was upheld and 1 was part upheld.
September 2022- 3 complaints received, 1 complaint part upheld.
August 2022- 5 complaints received, 1 complaint upheld.
July 2022- 3 complaints received, 0 complaints upheld.
June 2022- 9 complaints received, 4 upheld and 2 part upheld.
May 2022- 2 complaints received, 1 complaint upheld.
April 2022- 2 complaints received, 0 complaints upheld

This target remains at 55% in 2022/23 after a review of the performance in the previous year. This is a challenging target and it will be reviewed as part of annual management planning and performance review. Thresholds were also adjusted to encourage continuous performance improvement.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CSC104q_9b.1a Percentage of Customer Service Centre enquiries resolved at first point of contact	PI Owner	zCSC_PAdmin; Anna Brash
Description	This indicator measures the percentage of customer enquiries that are resolved by the Customer Service Centre so that the customer does not need to make any further contact with the Council. The data for this indicator is extracted in report from the customer relationship management system (CRM). In Quarter 2 2020/21 the content of this report was reviewed and updated to give a truer and more accurate reflection of the percentage of contacts that were handled in line with first point resolution within CSC. Recognised good practice for contact centre is to achieve a minimum of 75% enquiry resolution.	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	93.55%
		Current Target	90%



Trend Chart Commentary:

Over the last year performance for this indicator has reached a high of 94.63% for 1 of the quarters shown and a low of 89.03% in quarter 2 2021/22. An increasing number of customers are able to self serve via automated payments and online web forms. This means a larger number of calls being dealt with are more complex and need support from other services before a resolution can be confirmed. In March 2023, CRM was upgraded and reports are unavailable until further notice.

2022/23

Quarter 4- 93.55% first point resolution, an increase of 0.52% from the previous quarter. Quarter 4 is over 2 months and not 3 as new CRM reports are not available in March 2023.

Quarter 3- 93.03% first point resolution, a decrease of 1.6% from the previous quarter.

Quarter 2- 94.63% first point resolution, an increase of 4.17% from the previous quarter.

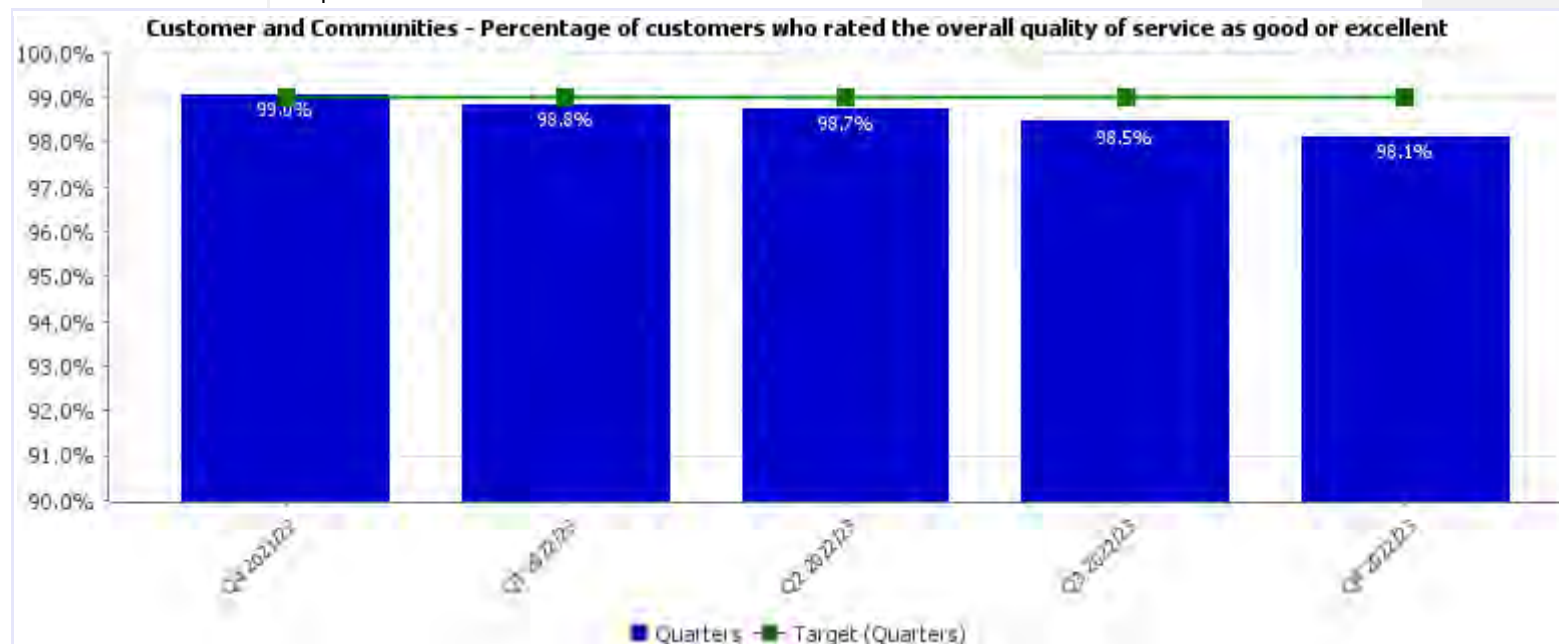
Quarter 1- 90.46% first point resolution, an increase of 0.7% from the previous quarter.

2021/22

Quarter 4 - 89.76% first point resolution, a decrease of 1.21% from the previous quarter

In 2022/23 the target was reviewed and increased to 90% as this is deemed to be an achievable and challenging target based on the previous 12 months performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS007q_6a.7 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent	PI Owner	zCuCS_Admin; George Scott
Description	<p>Service customers are randomly selected to complete a customer satisfaction survey. This indicator shows the percentage of customers rating the overall satisfaction with the customer service they received as good or excellent. The target is reviewed on an annual basis. This information is representative of Bathgate Partnership Centre, Community Facilities, Customer Information Service, Fauldhouse Partnership Centre, Library Services and Registration Services.</p> <p>This performance indicator is part of the performance scorecard for the council's Customer Services Strategy 2018/23 and will contribute to outcome 1 which is that services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	98.1%
		Current Target	99.0%



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

Quarter 4 - 98.1% of customers rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent. There were 748 responses this quarter. Double the responses and performance maintained.

Quarter 3 - 98.5% of customers rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent. There was a total of 323 responses. 318 of the 323 responses rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent, continuing the trend of a strong performance in this area.

Quarter 2 - 98.7% of customers rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent. There was a total of 394 responses.

Quarter 1 - 98.8% of customers rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent. There was a total of 682 responses.

2021/22

Quarter 4 - 516 out of 521 responses rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent

Target: 99% in line with the Customer Service Strategy.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS010q_6b.3 Customer and Communities - Total number of complaints received by Customer and Community services	PI Owner	zCuCS_Admin; Ralph Bell
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Customer and Community services. It is the total number of complaints received by the Customer and Community services at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days). Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	7
		Current Target	20



Trend Chart Commentary:

Overall the number of complaints compared to the number of customers dealt with is very small. However, the performance will be reviewed each year with an aim to continue to improve.

2022/23

Target: the target has been reduced to 20 per quarter - this is a reduction of 26% on previous year and is due to the low numbers of complaints the service has been receiving. All services are now back up and running (post pandemic) so any complaints received will be about service received, staff attitude etc rather than an inability to access services.

Quarter 4 - 7 complaints were received, all at Stage 1. 1 complaint was upheld, 2 were Not Upheld and 4 were Part Upheld. The reason for the complaints being Upheld or Part Upheld were Employee Attitude, Standard of Service and Waiting Time.


Quarter 3 - 12 complaints were received over the period. Of the 12 complaints received, 3 were upheld with two of the three being related to Customer Standards not met - poor communication, which has now been addressed.

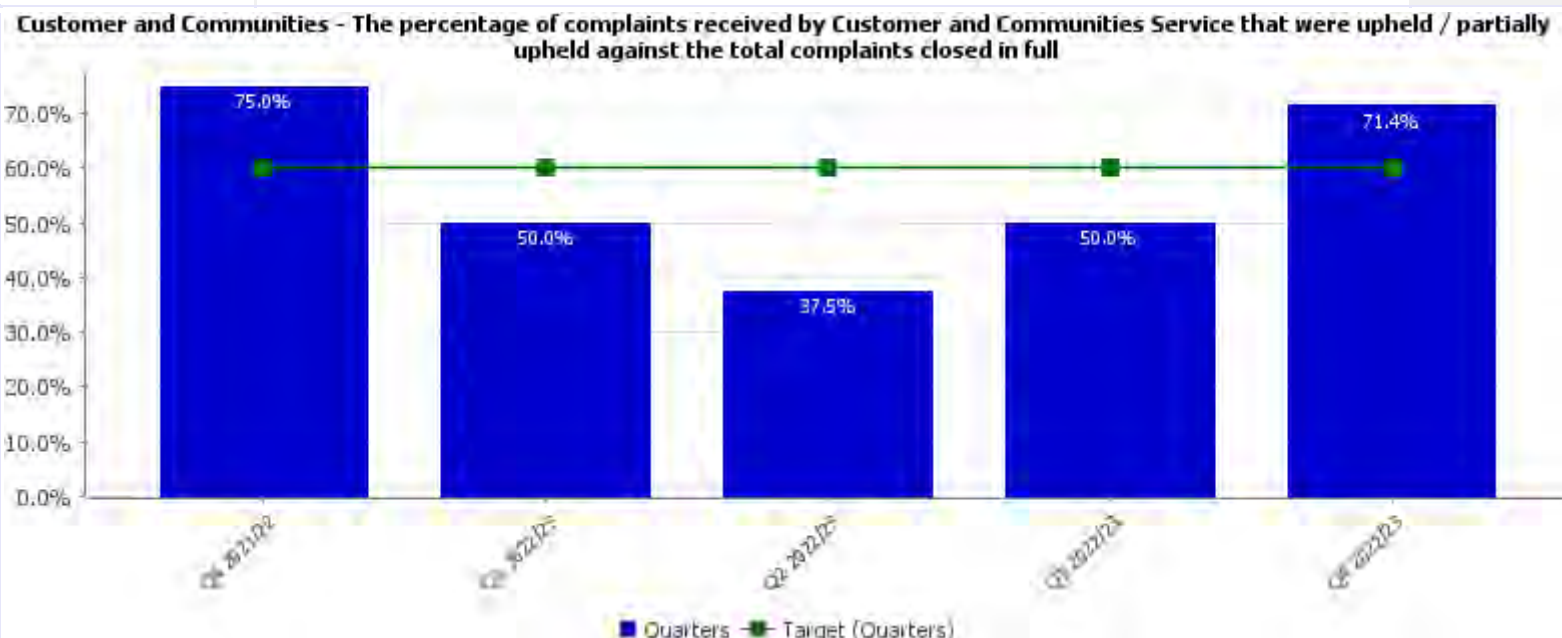
Quarter 2 - 16 complaints were received during this quarter, an increase of 8 from the previous quarter. Of the 16 complaints received, only 5 were upheld with Customer standards not being met accounting for 3 of the upheld complaints. An area of concern was around the appointment system and information provided prior to attending the appointment. This has been addressed with specific training and guidance provided for the new staff engaging with the customer at this first point of contact.

2021/22

Target: was set at 27 based on the limited access to our facilities during lockdown

Quarter 4: 4 complaints were received during this quarter. 1 complaint was received for Community Facilities, 1 complaint for the Customer Information Service, 1 complaint for the Fauldhouse Partnership Centre and 1 complaint for Libraries.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS011q_6b.4 Customer and Communities - The percentage of complaints received by Customer and Communities Service that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full	PI Owner	zCuCS_Admin; Ralph Bell
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by Customer and Communities Service which were upheld or partially upheld, as a percentage of all complaints received. This information is representative of Bathgate Partnership Centre, Community Facilities, Customer Information Service, Fauldhouse Partnership Centre, Library Services and Registration Services.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	71.4%
		Current Target	60.0%



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

The target will remain at 60% - this is based on historic performance

Quarter 4: There were 7 complaints, 1 was upheld, 4 were part upheld and 2 were not upheld during Q4 2022/2023. Of the five that were upheld or part upheld the reason were: Employee Attitude, Standard of Service and Waiting Time

Quarter 3: 12 complaints were received, 3 were upheld 3 were partially upheld, 6 were not upheld.

Quarter 2: 16 complaints in total: 5 upheld, 1 partially upheld and 10 not upheld. There were no themes observed.


Of the six that were upheld/partially upheld, the reasons were: customer standard was not met, incorrect or conflicting advice, poor communication general, Staff conduct/attitude. Staff are regularly involved in training/discussions to ensure customer standards are adhered to and to ensure data/information accuracy which is paramount in the service.

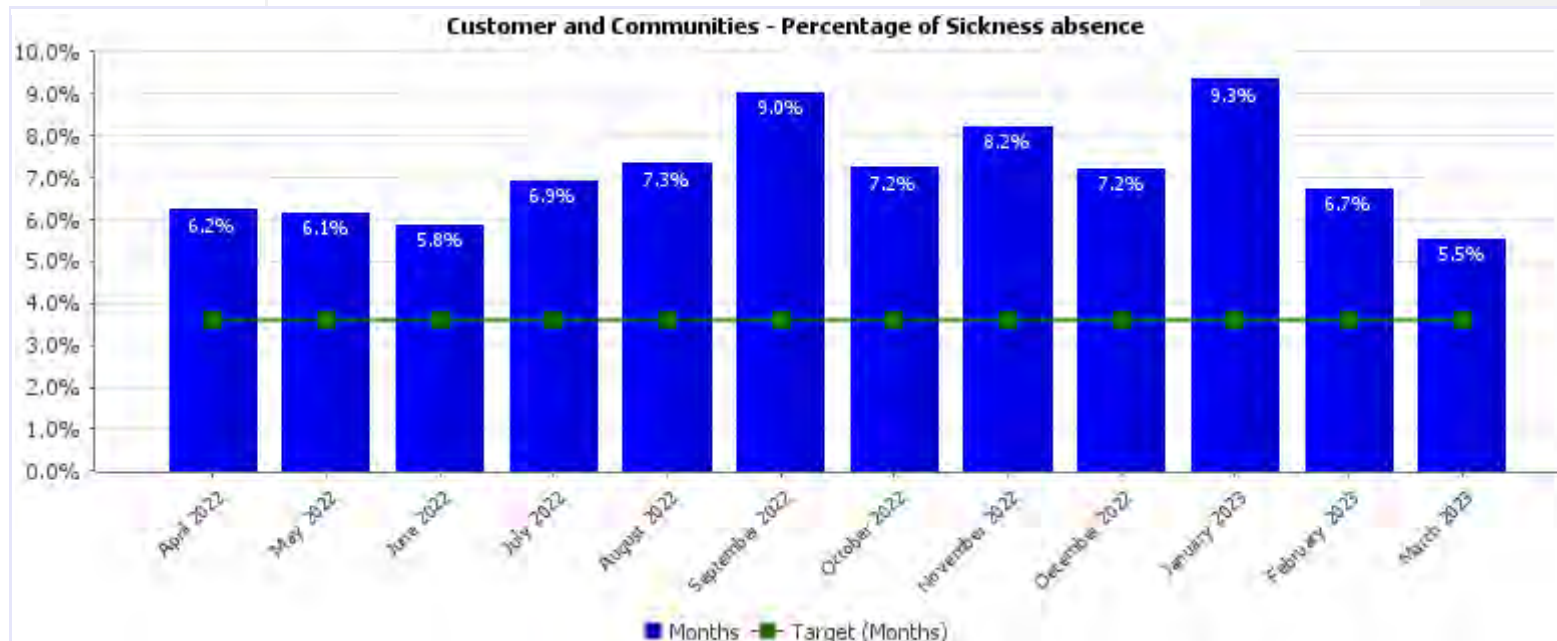
Quarter 1: 8 complaints in total: 2 upheld, 2 partially upheld and 4 not upheld. There were no themes observed. Of the four that were upheld/partially upheld, the reasons were: customer standard was not met, employee attitude, procedure was not followed and the general waiting time for an appointment.

2021/22

The target was set at 60%, based on historic performance

Quarter 4 - 4 complaints received, 3 were upheld. There were no themes observed and the complaints were: staff awareness and sharing of information, a training issue on the process during triage for CIS appointments (wrong information) and standard of cleanliness for a booking in one of the halls for a function - previous user had not tidied up the room booked.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS022_7b.1 Customer and Communities - Percentage of Sickness absence	PI Owner	zCuCS_Admin; Ralph Bell
Description	Number of full time days lost to sickness absence expressed as a percentage of overall full time days. This information is representative of Bathgate Partnership Centre, Community Facilities, Customer Information Service, Fauldhouse Partnership Centre, Library Services and Registration Services.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	5.5%
		Current Target	3.6%



Trend Chart Commentary

After a significant improvement in attendance the trend shows a steady increase in absence. The service continues to utilise the tools and guidelines of the Attendance at Work Policy. Long term continues to be the major factor in absence, with mental & behavioural health issues being the main reason for long term absence.

2022/23

March - Absence recorded at 5.52% with 154 days work days lost from 2,789 working days. Long term absence recorded at 78% - officers continue to apply the processes and procedures of the Attendance at work policy.

February - Absence recorded at 6.66% with 164 days work days lost from 2,462 working days. Long term absence recorded at 79% - officers continue to apply the processes and procedures of the Attendance at work policy.

January 2023 - Absence recorded at 9.3% with 255 days work days lost from 2,741 working days. Long term absence recorded at 77% - officers continue to apply the processes and procedures of the Attendance at work policy.

December - Absence recorded at 7.18% with 197 work days lost from 2,744 working days. Long term absence recorded at 78% - officers continue to apply the processes and procedures of the Attendance at work policy.

November - Absence recorded at 8.20% with 219 lost days from 2,692 working days. Long term absence recorded as 80% of the total absence.

October - Absence recorded at 7.16% with 188 lost days from 2,624 working days. Long term absence recorded as 79% of the total absence.

September - Absence recorded at 8.99% with 227 lost days from 2,526 working days. Long term absence recorded as 79% of the total absence

August - Absence recorded at 7.7% with 208 lost days from 2,709 working days. Long term absence recorded as 79% of the total absence


July - Absence recorded at 6.9% with 368 lost days from 5,409 working days. Long term absence recorded as 82% of the total absence

June - Overall absence improved to 5.8% with long term absence reducing to 79% of all absences. It is anticipated that a further reduction in long term absences over the next month will see an overall reduction in absences levels. Managers continue to utilise the absence management tools at their disposal.

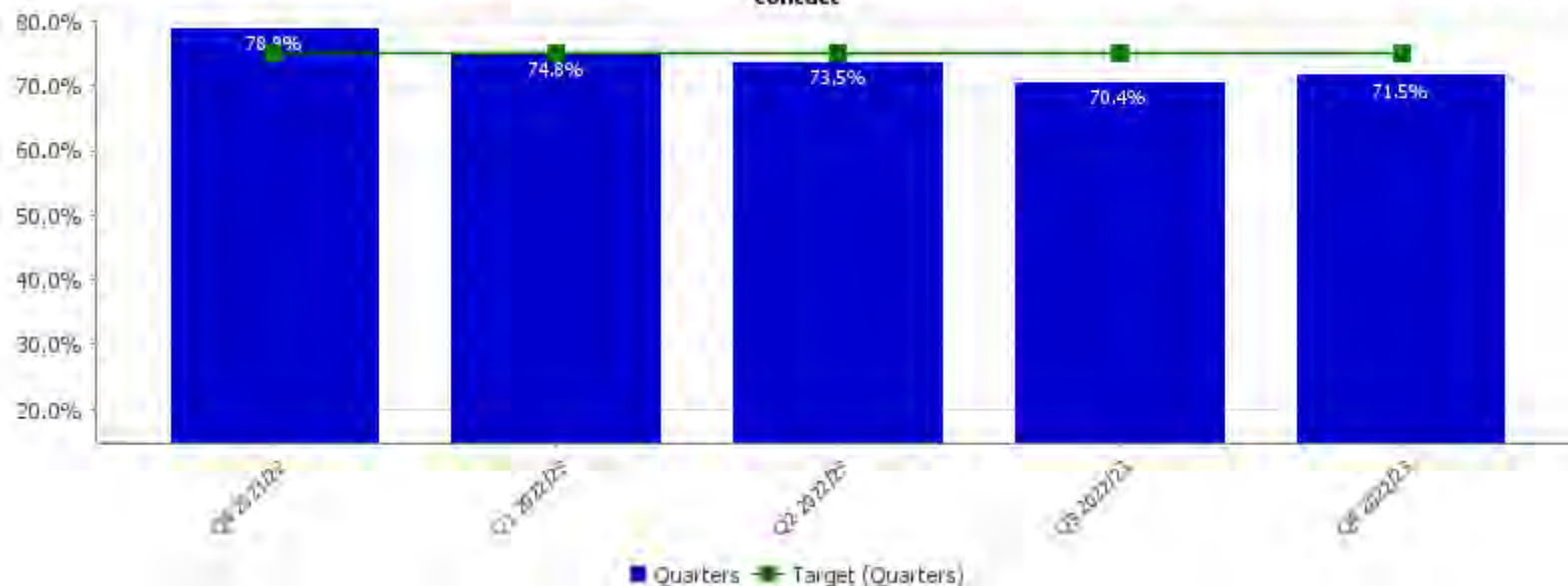
May - Absence recorded at 6.13%, remains in line with the recorded absence for April. Long term continues to be the main concern, this has increased to 88% of the total absence with stress a contributing factor, as well as long term bereavement absence. Managers continue to apply the Attendance at work policy and advice of the four pillars of wellbeing.

April - Absence recorded at 6.2% with 183 lost days from 2,952 working days. This is a reduction of 1.1% from the previous month. Long term absence recorded as 69% of the total absence.

The target for sickness absence is 3.6%, which remains the corporate target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS026q_9b.1a Percentage of customer enquiries recorded on the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) which are resolved at the first point of contact	PI Owner	zCuCS_Admin; Lorraine Evans
Description	This annual indicator measures the percentage of customer enquiries that have been resolved at the first point of contact by staff within the four Customer and Community Service neighbourhoods during the initial customer interaction. This removes the need for the customer to make any further contact with the council to have their enquiry resolved. There is a national target of 75% set by the Customer First initiative (COSLA).	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	71.5%
		Current Target	75.0%

Percentage of customer enquiries recorded on the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) which are resolved at the first point of contact



Trend Chart Commentary

2022/23

Target remains at 75%

Quarter 4: Data for March 2023 is unavailable at present and will be included when available. 71.56% of enquiries were resolved at first point of contact during January and February 2023, this is 3.44% lower than target.

Quarter 3: 70.4% of enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact. This was 4.6% below the target of 75% and 3.1% down on the previous quarter. The service has experienced a high absence rate in Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2022-2023. Combined with a high turnover in staff and the ongoing training of new members of staff and the appointment of the two CIS trainers, the First Time Resolution (FTR) has decreased. It is hoped that as the new trainees progress to more complex enquiry handling and if the sickness absence rate falls an improvement in FTR will be experienced.

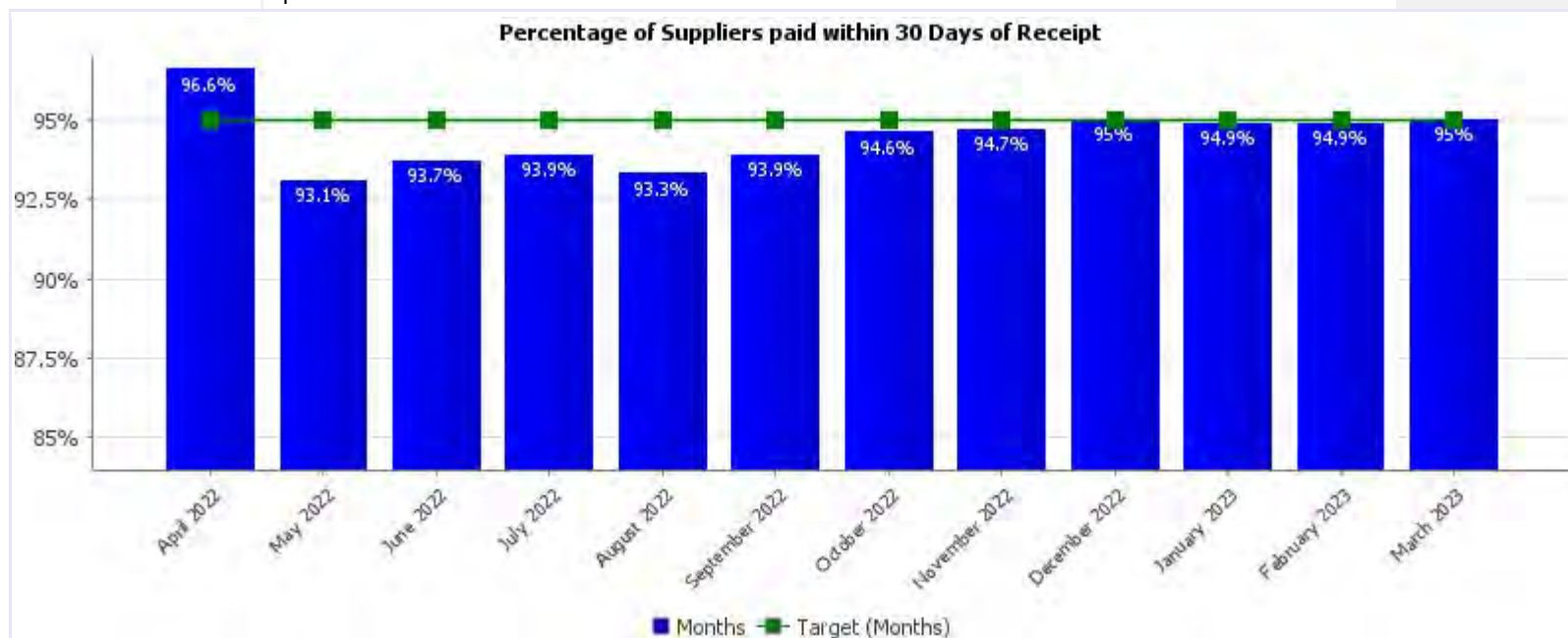
Quarter 2: 73.5% of enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact. This was 1.5% below the target of 75% and 1.3% down on the previous quarter.

Quarter 1: 74.8% of enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact. This is 0.2% below the target of 75%.

2021/22

Quarter 4: 78.9% of enquiries were resolved at the first point of contact. This is 3.9% above the target of 75% and an increase of 11.3% on the previous quarter.

PI Code & Short Name	P:FM001_6b.5 Percentage of Suppliers paid within 30 Days of Receipt	PI Owner	zFM_PIAAdmin; Patrick Welsh
Description	<p>This indicator measures the percentage of correctly presented invoices from suppliers paid within 30 calendar days of receipt. Thirty calendar days reflects the normal credit term period in accordance with the Late Payments of Commercial Debts (Interests) Act 1998. West Lothian Council recognises the importance in paying invoices in a timely manner. The target used is set internally by the Head of Finance and Property and ensures challenging targets year on year which are always higher than the Scottish average. Note that this performance indicator monitors the performance on a monthly basis and the cumulative figure for the year is included in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (Indicator CORP8).</p> <p>The payment of invoices is a key activity for Finance and Property Services, ensuring that the council's suppliers are paid on a timely basis.</p> <p>Note that the performance indicator records the cumulative performance for the year to date, commencing April.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	95%
		Current Target	95%


**Trend Chart Commentary:**

Performance to March 2023 was 95.0% which is in line with the performance target.

Performance in 2021/22 was 95.3% and in 2020/21 it was 95%.

The Financial Management Unit works closely with services to improve invoice processing time and regular reports are issued to services on performance.

The council participates in a benchmarking exercise with the other local authorities in Scotland via the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. The average performance in Scotland was 92.2% for 2021/22. West Lothian Council was ranked 7th out of 32 Scottish Local Authorities in 2021/22 for this indicator. Services will continue to be supported in 2022/23 to ensure that the strong performance is maintained. The target for 2022/23 is 95% taking into account previous year performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:FM037_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Financial Management Unit	PI Owner	zFM_PAdmin; Patrick Welsh
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received during a financial year relating to the Financial Management Unit. Performance is reviewed on a regular basis and reported annually to ensure that there is sufficient focus on the quality and standard of customer service. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	6
		Current Target	3



Trend Chart Commentary:

This core indicator monitors complaints received by the Financial Management Unit and measures the combined level of stage 1 and 2 complaints received.

One complaint was received in the first quarter of 2022/23. This related to an insurance claim and after investigation the complaint was not upheld.

Two complaints were received relating to the Financial Management Unit in quarter 2. Of these, one was a stage one complaint and the other a stage 2 complaint. Both complaints were responded to within the set time limits and neither complaint was upheld. They both related to insurance claims.


One complaint was received in the third quarter of 2022/23. This related to an insurance claim and after investigation the complaint was not upheld.

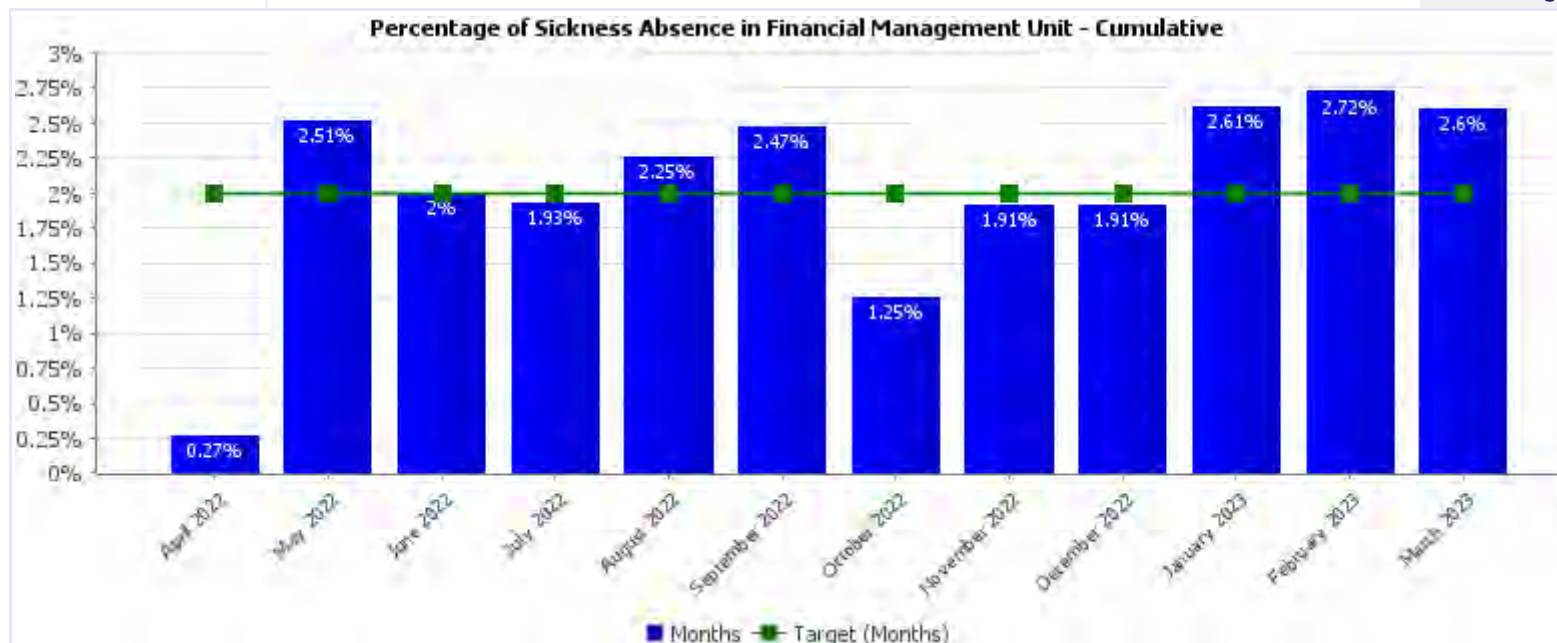
Six complaints were received in the final quarter of 2022/23. Three of these related to insurance claims and two complaints were in regards to the increase in council tax for 2023/24, these five complaints were not upheld. The final complaint received was from a customer who had received documents incorrectly and this complaint was upheld.

The majority of complaints received by FMU, and all complaints received in 2021/22, relate to complaints regarding the handling and outcomes of Insurance claims. The council continually works with its insurers to minimise such occurrences and improve the service provided to our customers.

The Financial Management Unit will continue to aim to minimise all complaints where possible and where they do arise that these are dealt with timeously.

The target for 2022/23 is to receive no more than 3 complaints per quarter which is consistent with the 2021/22 target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:FM048_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in Financial Management Unit - Cumulative	PI Owner	zFM_PIAAdmin; Patrick Welsh
Description	This performance indicator measures, as a percentage, the total level of sickness absence in the Financial Management Unit on a cumulative basis. The data is provided by the council's Human Resource Services on a monthly basis and is tracked and monitored to ensure absence is managed appropriately in the service and any corresponding impact on performance is understood and managed.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	2.6%
		Current Target	2%



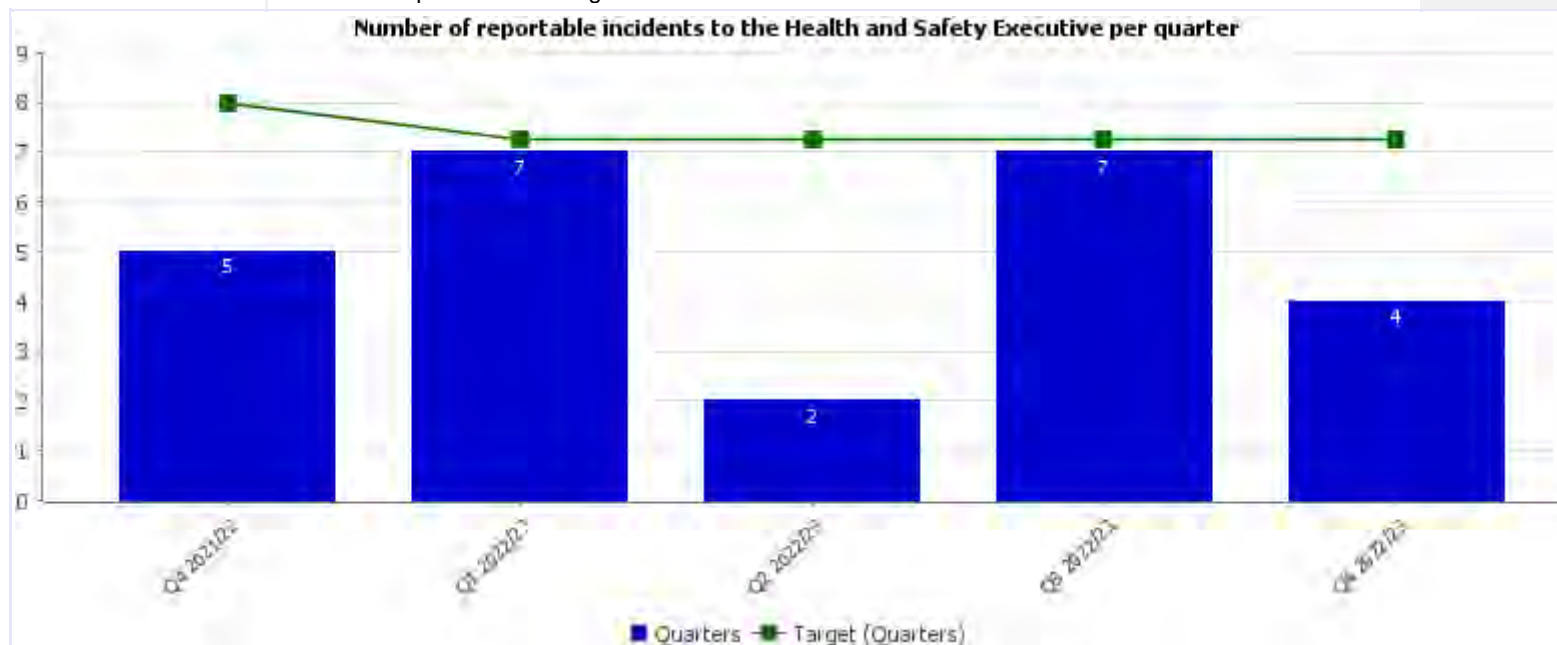
Trend Chart Commentary:

Cumulative sickness absence for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 was 2.60 percent. Most sickness absence (54 percent) was long term absence.

All line managers within the unit comply with the council's sickness absence policy and seek specialist advice if required from Human Resources when there are more complex sickness absence situations arising.

The target set by the service for 2022/23 is 2.0 percent.

PI Code & Short Name	P:HRS104_9b.2 Number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive per quarter	PI Owner	zH&S_PIAdmin; Kim Hardie
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive on a quarterly basis. Reportable incidents are occurrences which must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the legislative requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. When an incident meets the criteria outlined in the regulations, a formal notification report must be submitted by the authority to the Health and Safety Executive within timescales stipulated in the regulations.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	4
		Current Target	7.25



Trend Chart Commentary:

Reportable incidents are occurrences which must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the legislative requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. When an incident meets the criteria outlined in the regulations, a formal notification report must be submitted by the authority to the Health and Safety Executive within timescales stipulated in the regulations. This records the total number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive per quarter.


Although the indicator is reported in quarters there is nothing that would warrant comparing one to quarter against another and the annual target better reflects the aimed reduction in RIDDOR reportable incidents.

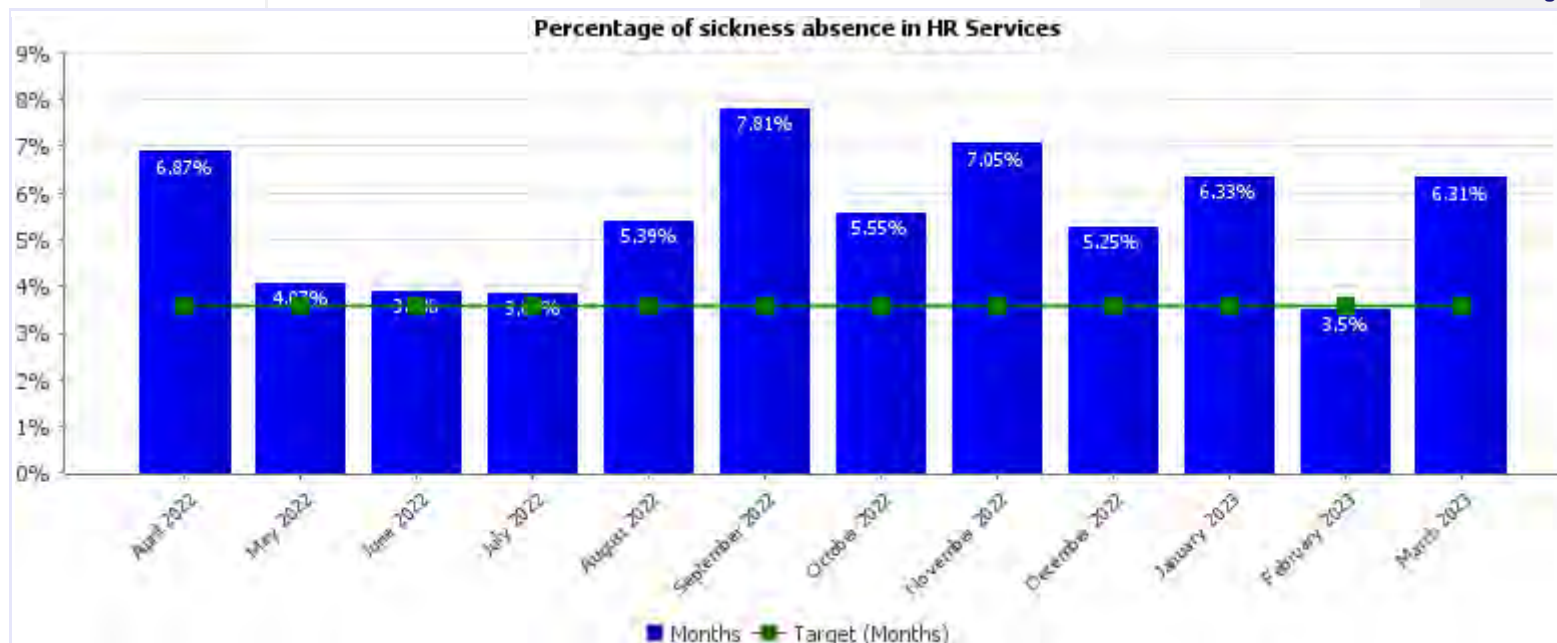
Each incident recorded in the online safety management system should be investigated. Where specific criteria are met as outlined in the Incident Investigation Guidance the investigation is completed by a Health and Safety adviser. The investigation aims to identify the immediate, underlying and root causes of an incident and to ensure that corrective and preventative measures are implemented to prevent a recurrence of a similar type of incident as far as reasonably practicable.

All RIDDOR reportable incidents are escalated to each responsible Head of Service and to the Corporate Management team on a monthly basis for consideration.

Overall Incident statistics are monitored examined to establish potential trends and identify required actions to be incorporated into service annual health and safety action plans and corporate health and safety work plan for 2022/2023.

The aim is to decrease the number of reportable incidents by a further five percent annually.

PI Code & Short Name	P:HRS525_7b.1 Percentage of sickness absence in HR Services	PI Owner	zHRS_PIAAdmin; Claire Wallace
Description	This measure records the Human Resources Shared Services Sickness/ Absence level as is reported through monthly management reports from HR Services using the standard performance indicator percentage. It is used to review the effectiveness of sickness absence management.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	6.31%
		Current Target	3.6%



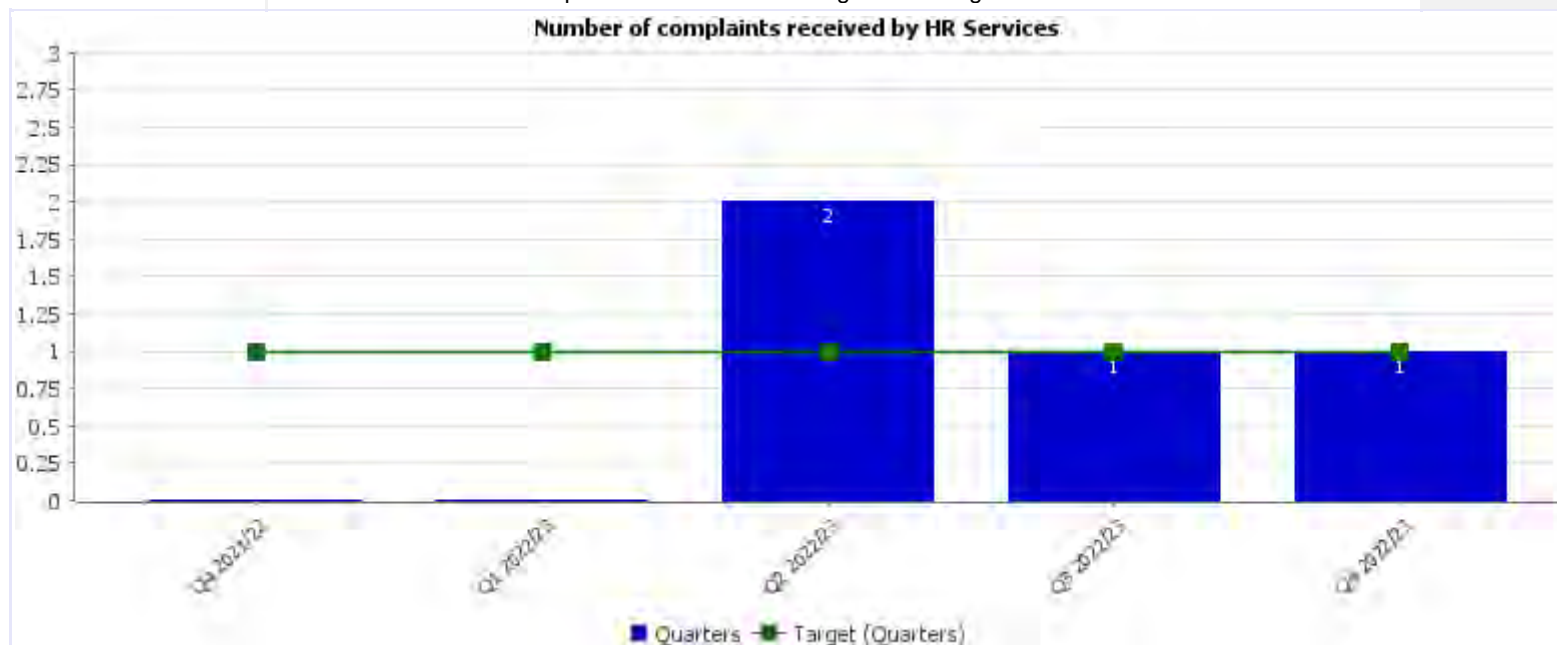
Trend Chart Commentary:

Performance is likely to fluctuate over the reporting period the current rate for March 2023 is 6.31%. Performance variation has been as a result of employees being off and then returning from periods of short- and long-term absence. The service continues to have employees off on long- and short-term absences. We have seen an increase in this which has resulted in a higher figure for March 2023.

All cases of absence are actively managed in accordance with the requirements of the council's Policy & Procedures for Supporting Attendance at Work.

As absence rates have fluctuated over the reporting period, the target remains at the council target of 3.6%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:HRS550_6b.3 Number of complaints received by HR Services	PI Owner	zHRS_PIAAdmin; Claire Wallace
Description	<p>This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by HR Services. It is the total number of complaints received by HR Services at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days).</p> <p>Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	1
		Current Target	1

**Trend Chart Commentary:**

Complaints into HR and Support Services are low with performance being at or better than target in all but one Quarter of the reporting period.

In Quarter 4 of 2022/23 there was 1 complaint received and upheld

In Quarter 3 of 2022/23 there was 1 complaint received and upheld.


In Quarter 2 of 2022/23 there were 2 complaints received - both upheld in part.

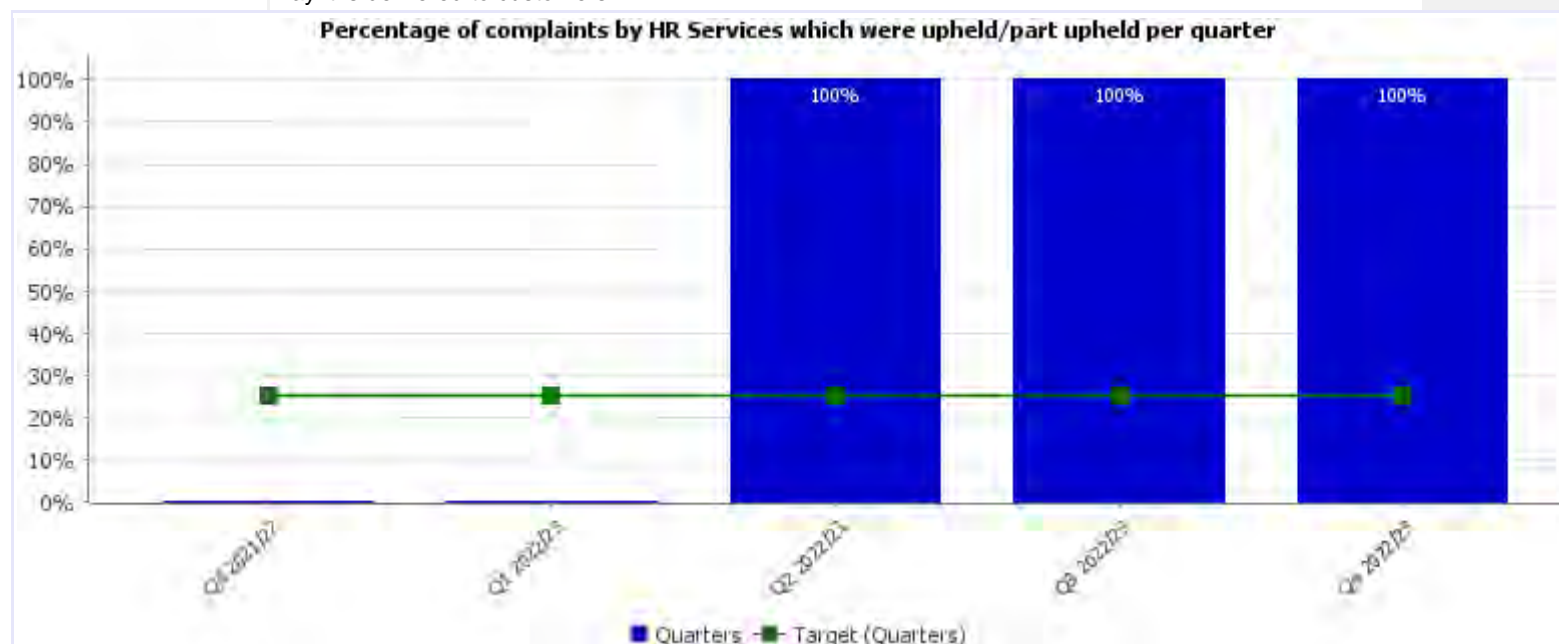
In Quarter 1 of 2022/23 there were no complaints received.

In Quarter 4 of 2021/22 there were no complaints received.

Most complaints received relate to either a failing in service deliver or misapplication of council HR policy and practice. All complaints trigger reviews of process to reduce the likelihood of similar service failure in the future.

The complaints target of 1 per quarter is based on the average number received over the reporting period.

PI Code & Short Name	P:HRS554_6b.4 Percentage of complaints by HR Services which were upheld/part upheld per quarter	PI Owner	zHRS_PIAdmin; Claire Wallace
Description	This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of closed complaints received by HR Services that have been upheld or part upheld during each quarter. In each period, the total number of upheld and partially upheld complaints is divided by the total number of complaints closed to determine the overall percentage. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	100%
		Current Target	25%



Trend Chart Commentary:

As a result of the low complaint numbers, an upheld complaint has a significant impact on the percentage of upheld complaints.

2022/23

Quarter 4 - One complaint was received and fully upheld.

Quarter 3 - One complaint was received and fully upheld.

Quarter 2 - Two complaints were received and both were partly upheld.

Quarter 1 - There was one complaint in this quarter and it was upheld.

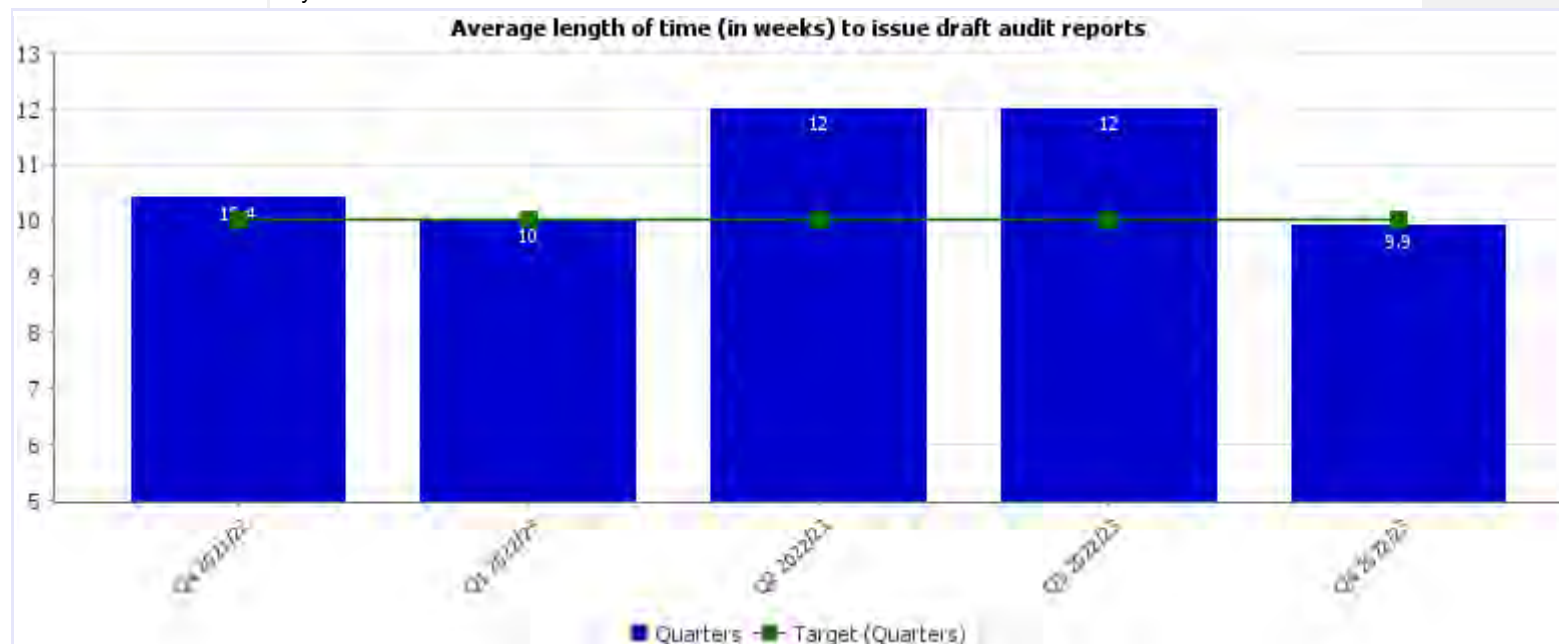
2021/22

Quarter 4 - The service did not receive any complaints.

Complaints received normally relate to the misapplication of a council policy, failure in administrative process or delays in processing timescales. All complaints trigger reviews of process to reduce the likelihood of similar service failure in the future.

Target: the service has always received low numbers of complaints which results in large fluctuations in the performance of this indicator, making target setting more challenging. Annually the service targets a total of 4 complaints or less and expects that around one quarter of those complaints will be upheld or partly upheld, therefore a target of 25 percent is applied throughout the year.

PI Code & Short Name	P:IA015_9b.1a Average length of time (in weeks) to issue draft audit reports	PI Owner	zIA_PIAdmin; Kenneth Ribbons
Description	This performance indicator is part of the performance scorecard for the council's Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Strategy and will contribute to outcome 1 "the deployment of an internal audit service which provides assurance on the council's risk management, control and governance processes, and adds value to the council's operations". This indicator measures the average length of time in weeks to issue draft audit reports. The date of issue of the draft audit report is subtracted from the date that the audit commenced to show the number of weeks taken. The date of commencement is agreed with our customers and we aim to complete all risk-based audit work within 10 weeks of this date. This indicator is reported on quarterly and a 12-month average is calculated to the end of each quarter. The objective of our 10-week target is to ensure that audit reports are issued timeously so that they are current and meaningful to both the service area and any related stakeholders.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	9.9
		Current Target	10

**Trend Chart Commentary:**

The target for this performance indicator is to achieve 10 weeks and is in line with the council's Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Strategy.

Performance to quarter four 2022/23 was 9.9 weeks, and was slightly under target.


Performance to quarter four 2021/22 was 10.4 weeks, and therefore did not quite meet the target of 10 weeks.

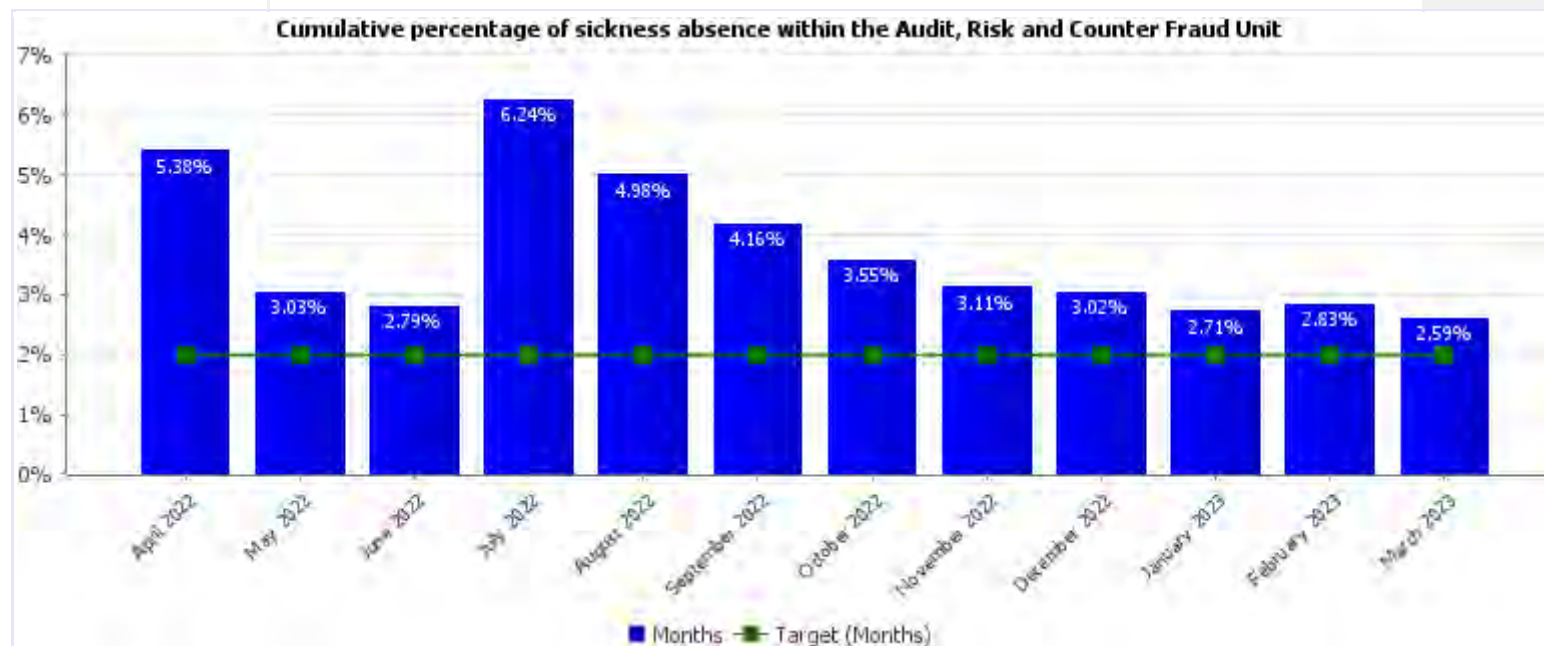
The 10-week target and the appropriateness of the timescales achieved is substantiated by reference to Indicator IA001: Percentage of customers who rated internal audit's timeliness as good or excellent, for which high performance is also reported and shows that customers are satisfied with the timescales being achieved.

The average length of time to issue draft audit reports can fluctuate as a result of factors such as the complexity of individual audits, the time taken for the customer to provide audit information and respond to queries, and the level of reactive work which may be given priority over routine audits.

The number of draft audit reports issued for each rolling 12 month period reported was: 2021/22 Q4(19), 2022/23 Q1(19), Q2(19), Q3(19) and Q4 (18).

The 10 week target continues to be appropriate and will remain in place for 2023/24.

PI Code & Short Name	P:IA051_7b.1 Cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Unit	PI Owner	zIA_PIAAdmin; Kenneth Ribbons
Description	This performance indicator measures the cumulative percentage of sickness absence within the Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Unit each month for the financial year to date. At the end of each financial year at 31 March, we aim to have less than 2 percent sickness absence. The sickness absence percentage figure provided by Human Resources is used to populate this indicator.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	2.59%
		Current Target	2%



Trend Chart Commentary

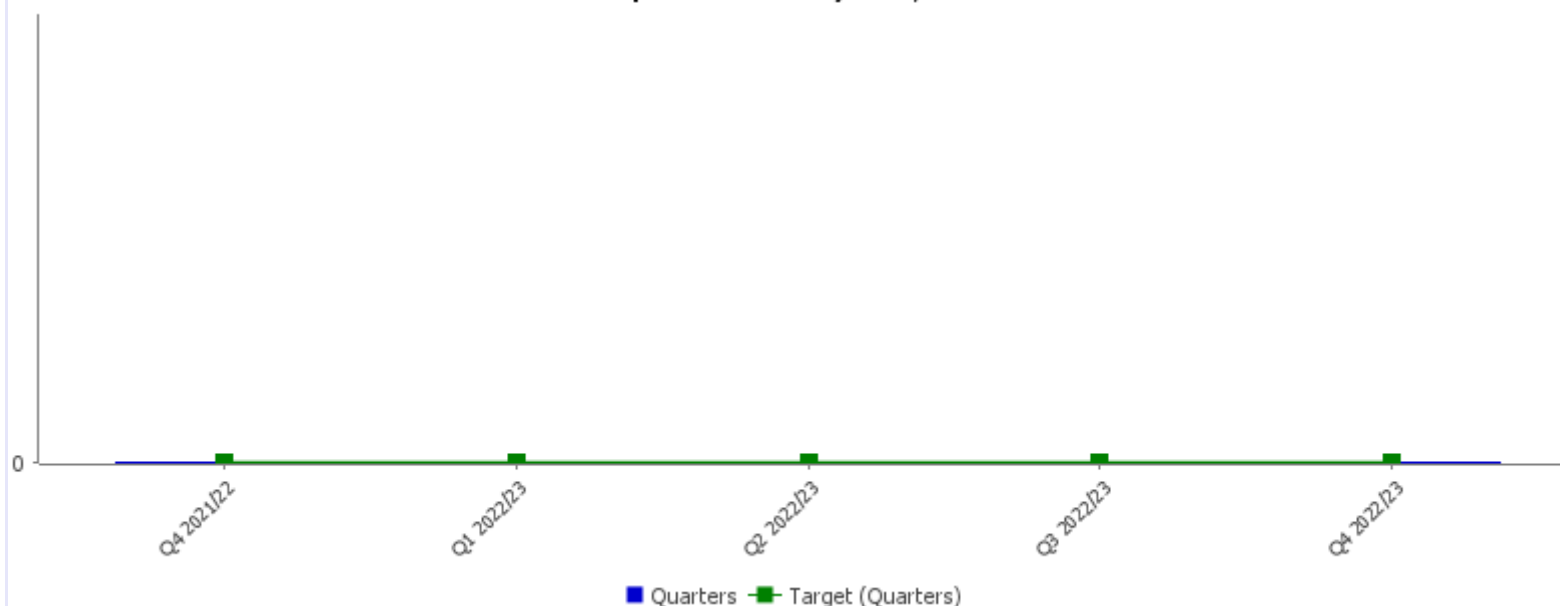
There have been 41 days sickness absence to February 2023, most of which relates to long term absences resulting in the absence rate of 2.83%.

Performance for 2021/22 was 0.25 percent.

The target for 2022/23 remains at 2 percent.

PI Code & Short Name	P:IA066_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud	PI Owner	zIA_PIAdmin; Kenneth Ribbons
Description	This performance indicator measures the combined level of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received by the service each quarter. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	0
		Current Target	0


Total number of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud



Trend Chart Commentary:

The service has had no complaints since 2016.

Target per quarter is set at 0 complaints.

PI Code & Short Name	P:IA067_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud that were upheld or partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full.	PI Owner	zIA_PIAdmin; Kenneth Ribbons
Description	<p>This Performance Indicator measures service failure of the combined level of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints shown as a percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld against the total number of complaints received.</p> <p>The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	N/A
		Current Target	0%

The percentage of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud that were upheld or partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full.



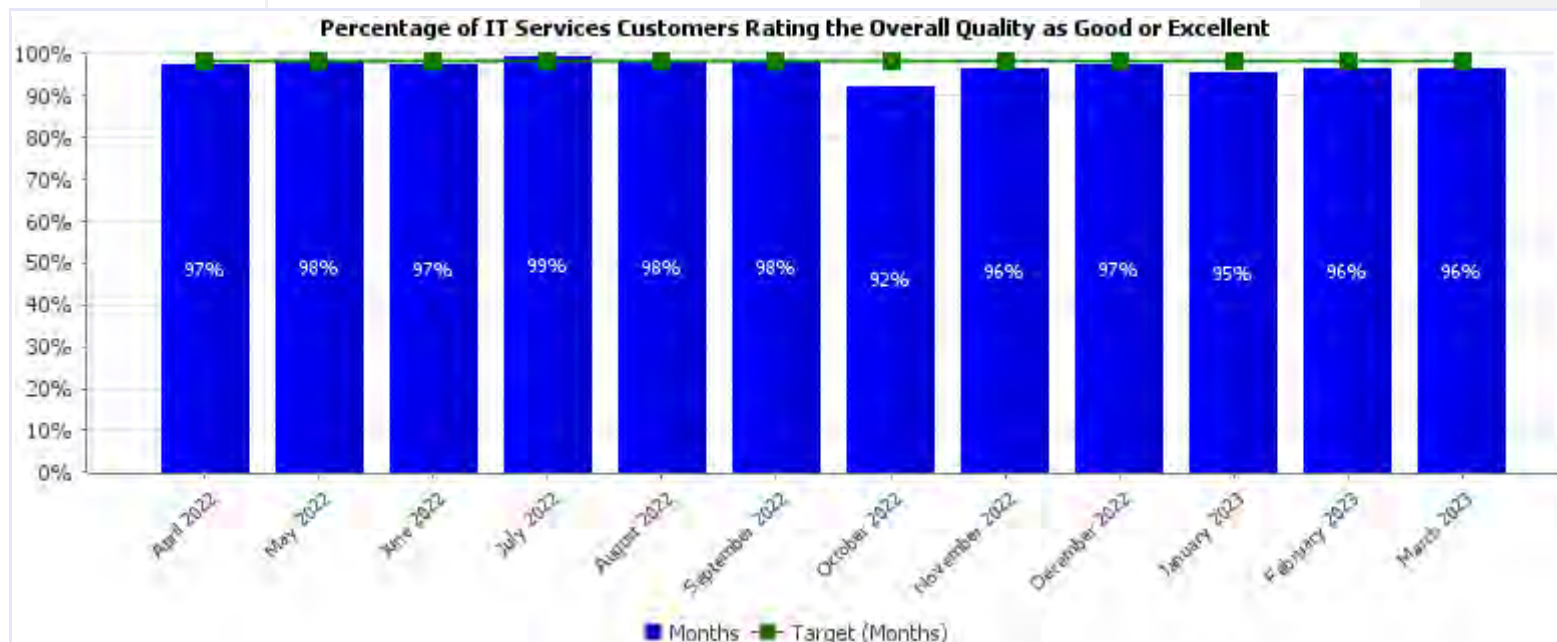
Trend Chart Commentary:

The number of complaints received by Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud has been historically low. No complaints were received in 2022/23, 2021/22, 2021/22, 2020/21 or 2019/20.

A service wide complaint improvement action report is prepared on a quarterly basis and is reported to both the Head of Finance and Property Services and the Complaints Steering Board.

The target for 2023/24 will remain as 0.

PI Code & Short Name	P:ITS007_6a.7 Percentage of IT Services Customers Rating the Overall Quality as Good or Excellent	PI Owner	zITS_PIAAdmin; Ian Forrest
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the percentage of customers that rated the overall quality of the service as good or excellent. Collected as part of our monthly survey, customers are asked to rate the quality of the service provided as excellent, good, adequate, poor, very poor or not applicable. The results are analysed to identify improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers.</p> <p>This survey is directed to all customers that have had work completed either as an Incident (fault) or a Service Request (enhancement) by IT Services within the last full month. Data is available from the 18th of each month.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	96%
		Current Target	98%



Trend Chart Commentary:


Performance from April 2022 to March 2023 demonstrates that performance regularly meets or falls just below target of 98%. Performance ranges from 92% to 99%.

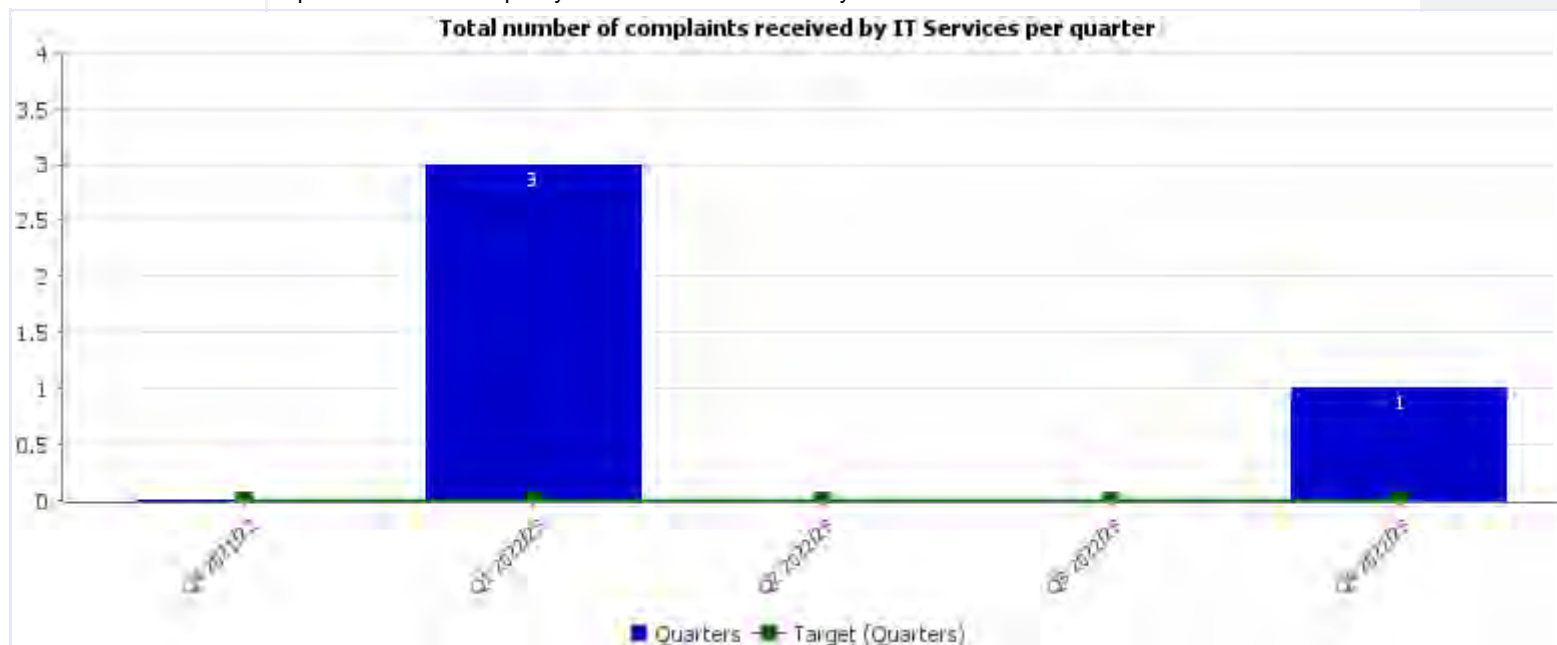
Performance in March 2023 achieved 96% missing target by 2%. This KPI can be affected by long wait times for incident and service requests to be dealt with along with wait times for calls to be answered when calling the IT Service Desk. Levels of planned and unplanned absence on IT Service Desk can attribute to these results as well as major incident. For example, there were major incident relating to the IPT system and Network failures in April 2023.

Performance is continuously monitored by team leaders and managers, who review customer feedback and identify and address the areas where customers are dissatisfied and discuss with them their concerns with relevant themes discussed at team meetings and directed with staff at one to ones to improve service.

The average response for 2023 is 154 surveys completed for every 1442 Incidents and Service Requests logged.

The target for 2022/23 was 98% to reflect previous year's performance and encourage improvement. The target for 2023/24 remains at 98%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:ITS011_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by IT Services per quarter	PI Owner	zITS_PIAAdmin; Ian Forrest
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received during each quarter relating to IT Services. Performance is reviewed on a regular basis and reported annually to ensure that there is sufficient focus on the quality and standard of customer service. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	1
		Current Target	0



Trend Chart Commentary:


Performance from Q4 2021/22 to Q4 2022/23 is mixed with four complaints over the period.

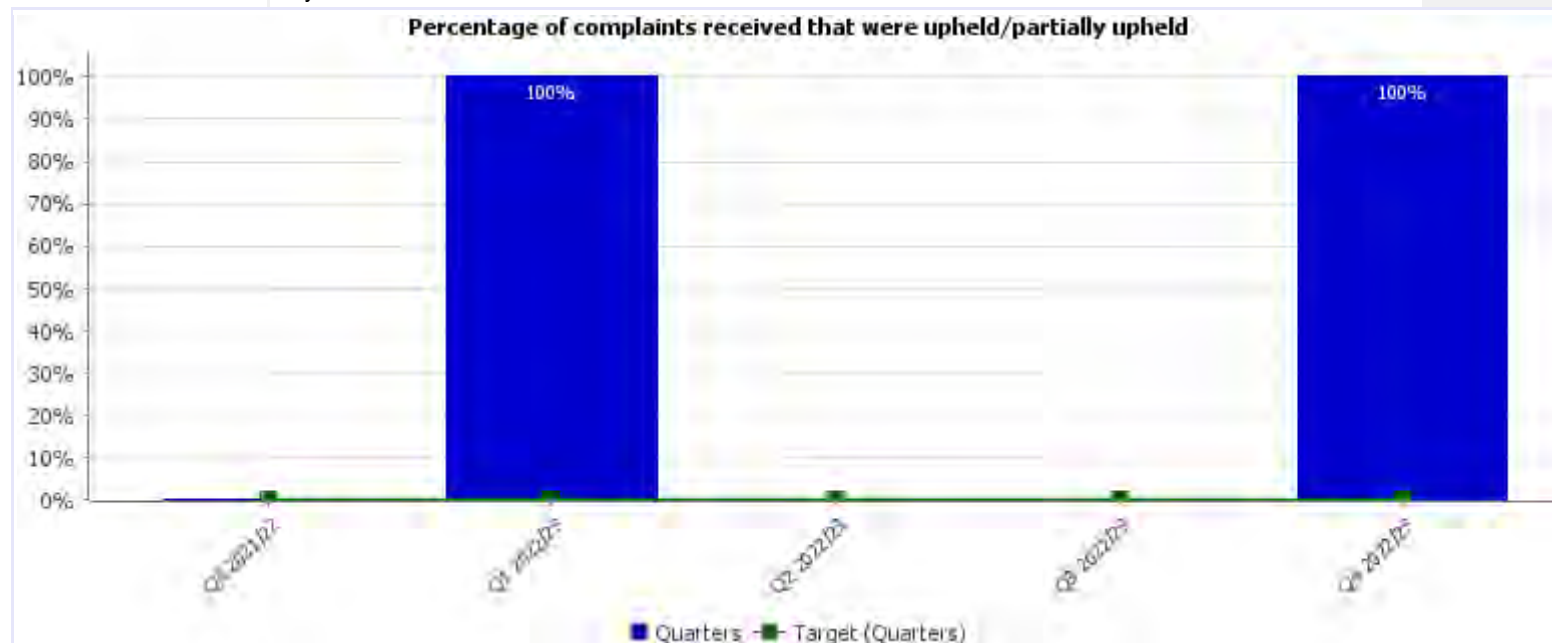
Q4 2022/23 received 1 complaint in relation to communication between IT Services internally and to the customer, this complaint was discussed at both the Service Centre and IT Helpdesk, highlighting the importance of clear and concise communication. Support and guidance were also provided by the Service Centre Manager in conjunction with the review of the call to improve future communications.

Q2 & Q3 2022/23 have received no complaints during both periods.

Q1 2022/23 received complaints in relation to windows updates and the service received from the IT Helpdesk. A review of the deployment method of software has been completed to prevent future incidents to members and CSC, with training session planned with the service desk team to highlight service needs and appropriate escalation actions.

The target for 2023/24 will remain at zero to ensure that focus on customer service remains a priority in the provision of IT across the council.

PI Code & Short Name	P:ITS012_6b.4 Percentage of complaints received that were upheld/partially upheld	PI Owner	zITS_PIAAdmin; Ian Forrest
Description	This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of closed complaints received by the IT Services that have been upheld or part upheld during each quarter. In each period, the total number of upheld and partially upheld complaints is divided by the total number of complaints closed to determine the overall percentage. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	100%
		Current Target	0%



Trend Chart Commentary:


During periods where no complaints were received the chart will show as a blank.

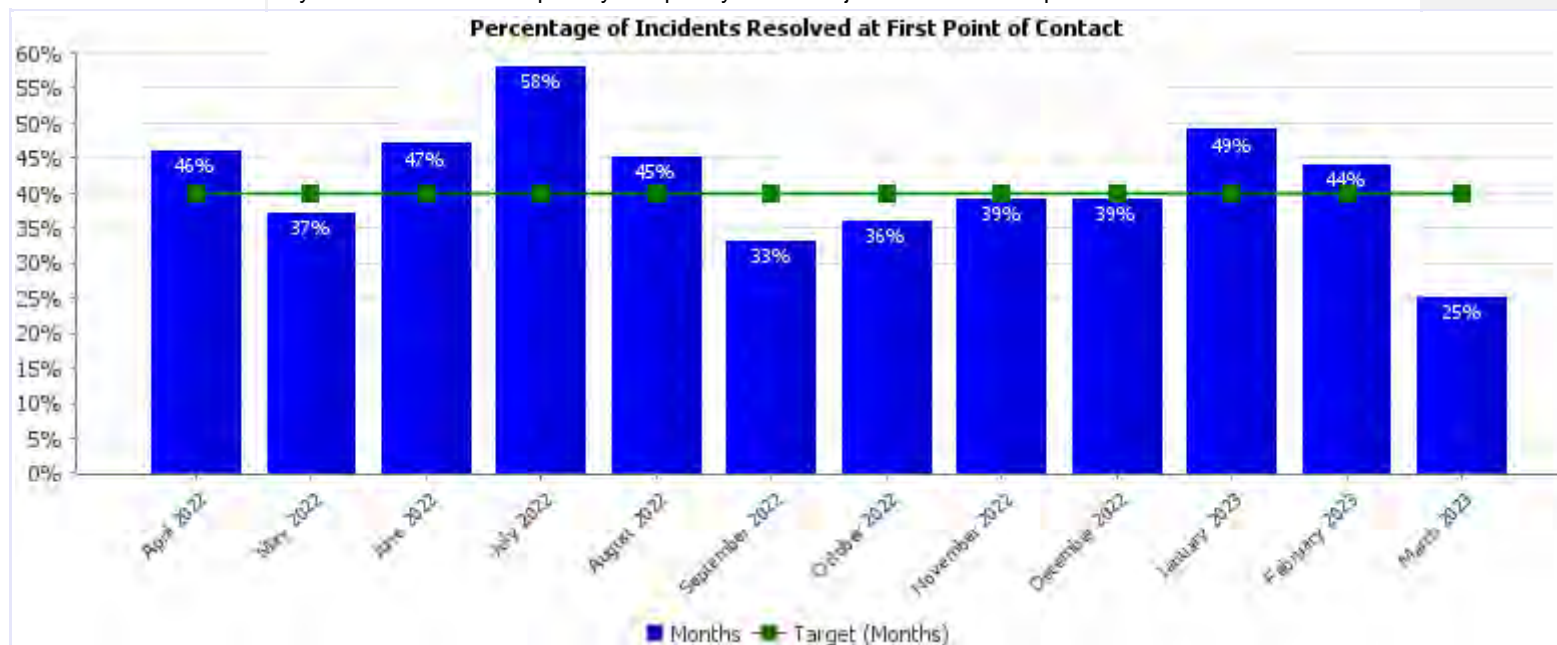
Q4 2022/23 received 1 complaint in relation to communication between IT Services internally and to the customer, this complaint was discussed at both the Service Centre and IT Helpdesk, highlighting the importance of clear and concise communication. Support and guidance were also provided by the Service Centre Manager in conjunction with the review of the call to improve future communications.

Q2 & Q3 have received no complaints during the period.

Q1 2022 received complaints in relation to windows updates and the service received from the IT Helpdesk. A review of the deployment method of software has been completed to prevent future incidents to members and CSC, with training session planned with the service desk team to highlight service needs and appropriate escalation actions.

The target for 2023/24 will remain at zero percent to ensure that focus on customer service remains a priority in the provision of IT across the council.

PI Code & Short Name	P:ITS017a_9b.1c Percentage of Incidents Resolved at First Point of Contact	PI Owner	zITS_PIAAdmin; Ian Forrest
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of IT incidents (faults) resolved within at the first point of contact with the customer in a monthly period. The data for this indicator is extracted from the IT Services work tracking system.</p> <p>The IT Service Centre may be unable to complete a resolution to an incident (fault) where the issue is beyond their technical capability/complexity or is a major incident that requires advanced technical skills.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	25%
		Current Target	40%



Trend Chart Commentary:


Performance from April 2022 to April 2023 demonstrates an inconsistent period of target achievement with the IT Service Desk achieving or exceeding target on 6 occasions in the rolling 13 month period.

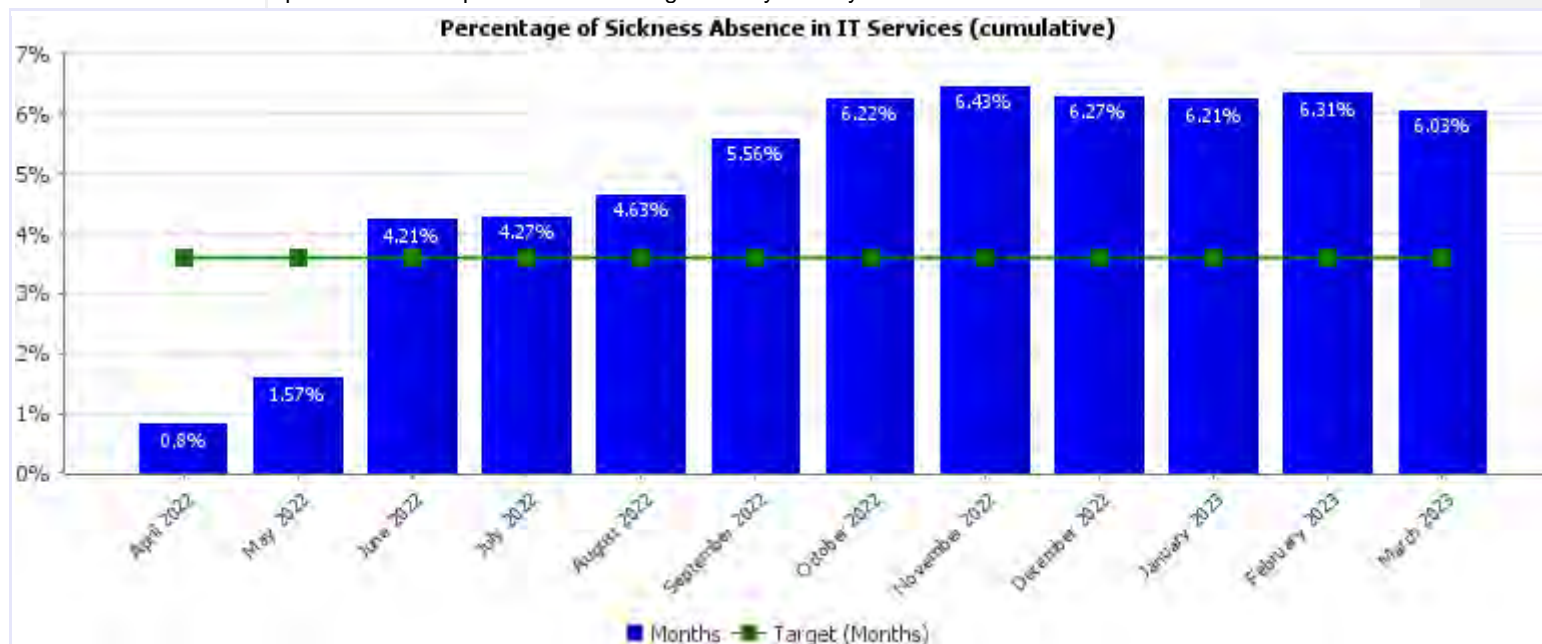
Performance ranges from 25% to 58% and is heavily influenced per month by the number of calls logged, major Incidents logged, planned and unplanned absence as well as school term times.

During the 13 month rolling period (April 2022 - March 2023) we have seen the service meet or just miss the target for this indicator.

IT Service Desk staff have been reminded to ensure all calls are logged and first line resolved to ensure no first line fixes are missed on the reporting.

Performance can also be affected by staff following processes that require to be updated due to changes in technology. Work is ongoing to create up to date process documents and streamlining processes to increase performance. A project brief is also being submitted for August 2023 board to allocate dedicate resource to this task.

PI Code & Short Name	P:ITS051_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in IT Services (cumulative)	PI Owner	zITS_PIAAdmin; Ian Forrest
Description	This performance indicator measures the percentage indicator of sickness absence in IT Services. The percentage is a cumulative measure of sickness absence over the period of the financial year. HR Services calculate the percentage comparing sickness days as a percentage of total available staff days and provide the monthly data on approximately the 17th day of the following month. The data is then verified and uploaded into the performance management system by the service.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	6.03%
		Current Target	3.6%



Trend Chart Commentary:

The trend chart illustrates sickness absence levels in IT Services. All sickness absence is managed in accordance to the Sickness Absence Policy and procedures.

Performance May 2022 - March 2023 increased as a result of the reduction of 3 long term absences over the period.

The target is at an overall council level target of 3.6%.

Please note monthly data is provided by HR on approximately 17th day of the following month.

PI Code & Short Name	P:LS013_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by Legal Services	PI Owner	zLS_PIAAdmin; Carol Johnston
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by Legal Services. It is the total number of complaints received by Legal Services at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days). Information regarding complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 is scrutinised within the service and utilised to assist in identifying improvements to service delivery and support corrective action in respect of any particular trends which may emerge. Information is collated from the councils CRM system	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	0
		Current Target	2

Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted.



Trend Chart Commentary:

The trend shows that there were no complaints received during the reporting period to April 2023, with the exceptions of 3 stage 1 complaints received in August 2022, and one complaint received in each of October and December 2022 and January 2023. The complaints received in August all related to licensing policy. The complaints received in October and December were dealt with in terms of the Councils Complaints procedure at Stage 1. The complaint received in January 2023 was dealt with as a stage 2 complaint.

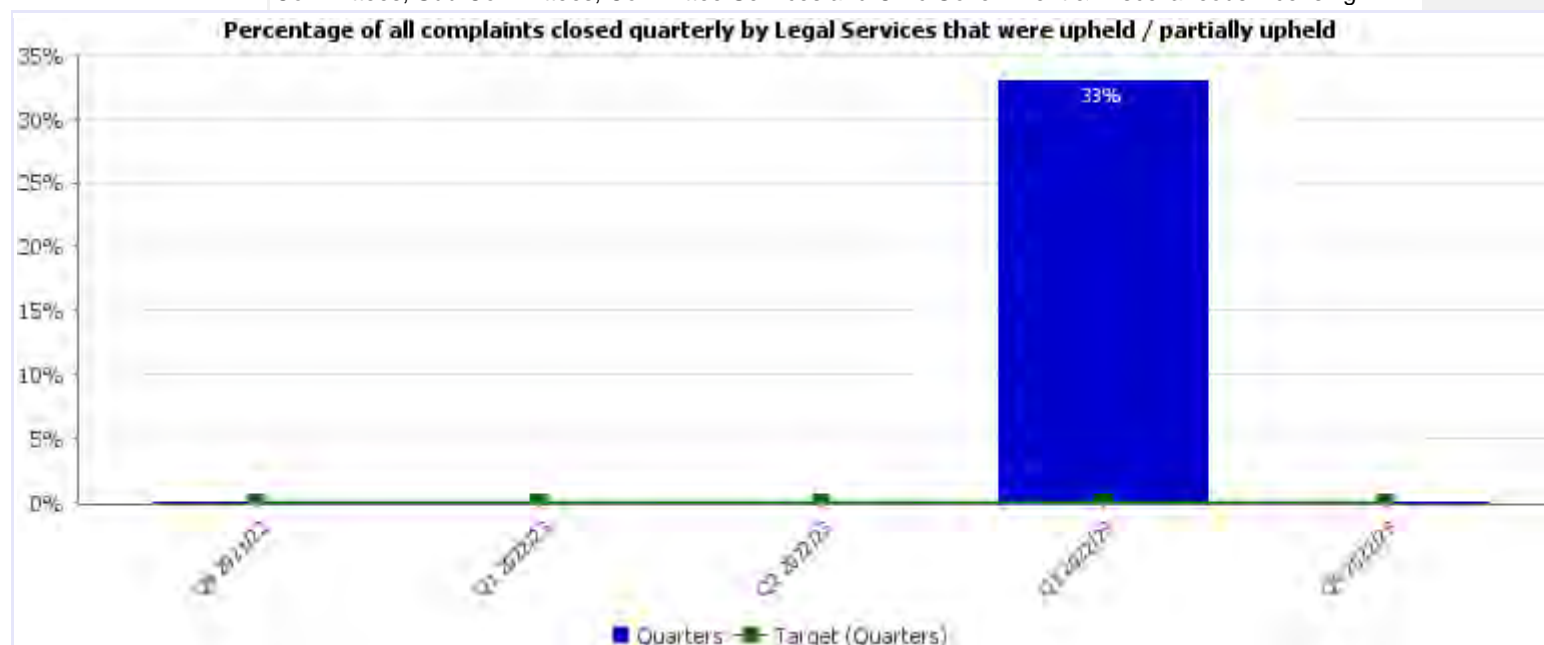
During August 2022, 3 Stage 1 complaints were received. These all related to licensing policy and were not upheld. October 2022 1 complaint was received. It related to failure to meet FOI internal review response timescale, the complaint was upheld. One Stage 1 complaint was received in December relating to licensing policy and unlicensed operations., this complaint was not upheld. One Stage 2 complaint was received in January 2023 relating to licensing policy, it was not upheld. One Stage 1 was dealt with within 5 days in accordance with the council's complaint procedure. The other stage 1 complaint was responded to within 30 working days. The Stage 2 complaint was dealt with within timescale.

Complaints regarding the service can be made in accordance with the Councils complaints procedure, in addition to contacting the Service Manager or Head of Service directly. Where complaints are received, the service takes full advantage of the opportunity to reflect on its performance and identify areas for improvement to avoid similar complaints recurring.

During 2020 Benchmarking was undertaken with all 31 local authorities and 11 public bodies. Of the 8 local authorities and 4 public bodies responding to this element, none specifically record or report on the number or nature of complaints regarding legal services. Further Benchmarking activity is planned during 2022/23.

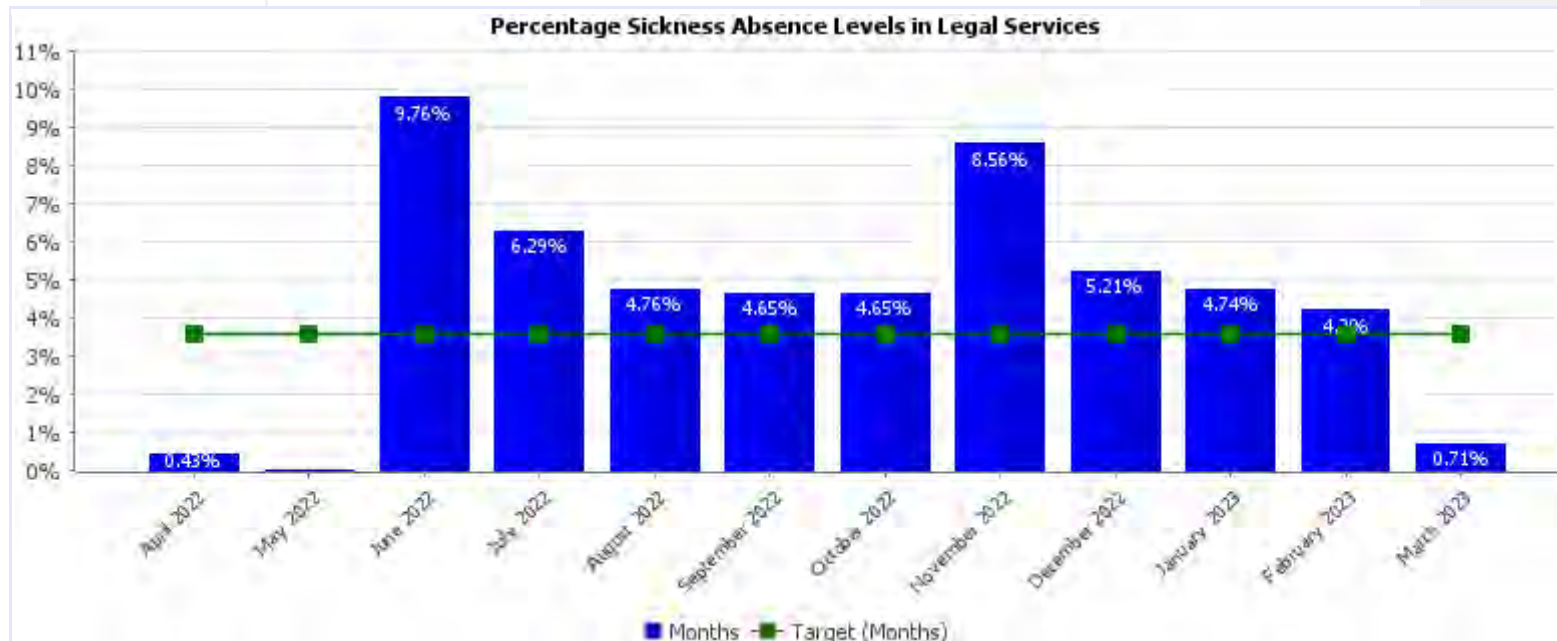
The target is reviewed quarterly at service performance meetings. The target for 2022/23 remains at 2 having regard to historical performance.

PI Code & Short Name	P:LS014_6b.4 Percentage of all complaints closed quarterly by Legal Services that were upheld / partially upheld	PI Owner	zLS_PAdmin; Carol Johnston
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of closed complaints received by Legal Services that have been upheld or part upheld during each quarterly period. In each period, the total number of upheld and partially upheld complaints is divided by the total number of complaints closed to determine the overall percentage. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.</p> <p>Legal Services provides legal services to West Lothian Council including conveyancing, litigation, tribunals and inquiries, planning, transportation, social services, education, clerking to the Licensing Board, Committees, Sub-Committees, Committee Services and Civic Government & Miscellaneous Licensing.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	0%
		Current Target	0%



Trend Chart Commentary: 3 complaints were received during the reporting period to Q4 2022/23. All 3 were received during Q3 2022/23. Two were Stage 1 and one was a Stage 2 complaint. One Stage 1 complaint was upheld. Complaints regarding the service can be made in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure, in addition to contacting the Service Manager or Head of Service directly. Where complaints are received, the service takes full advantage of the opportunity to reflect on its performance and identify areas for improvement to avoid similar complaints recurring. During periods where no complaints were received the chart will show as a blank. Following review of historical performance, and consideration of the nature of complaints which are generally received, the nature of those complaints, the target for 2022/23 was set at 0%

PI Code & Short Name	P:LS031_7b.1 Percentage Sickness Absence Levels in Legal Services	PI Owner	zLS_PIAAdmin; Carol Johnston
Description	This measure records Legal Services Sickness Absence levels as reported through monthly management reports from HR Pay and Reward. This indicator measures the actual absences during each month. It is used to review the effectiveness of sickness absence management. The sickness absence data for each month is not available until the 18th of the following month.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	0.71%
		Current Target	3.6%




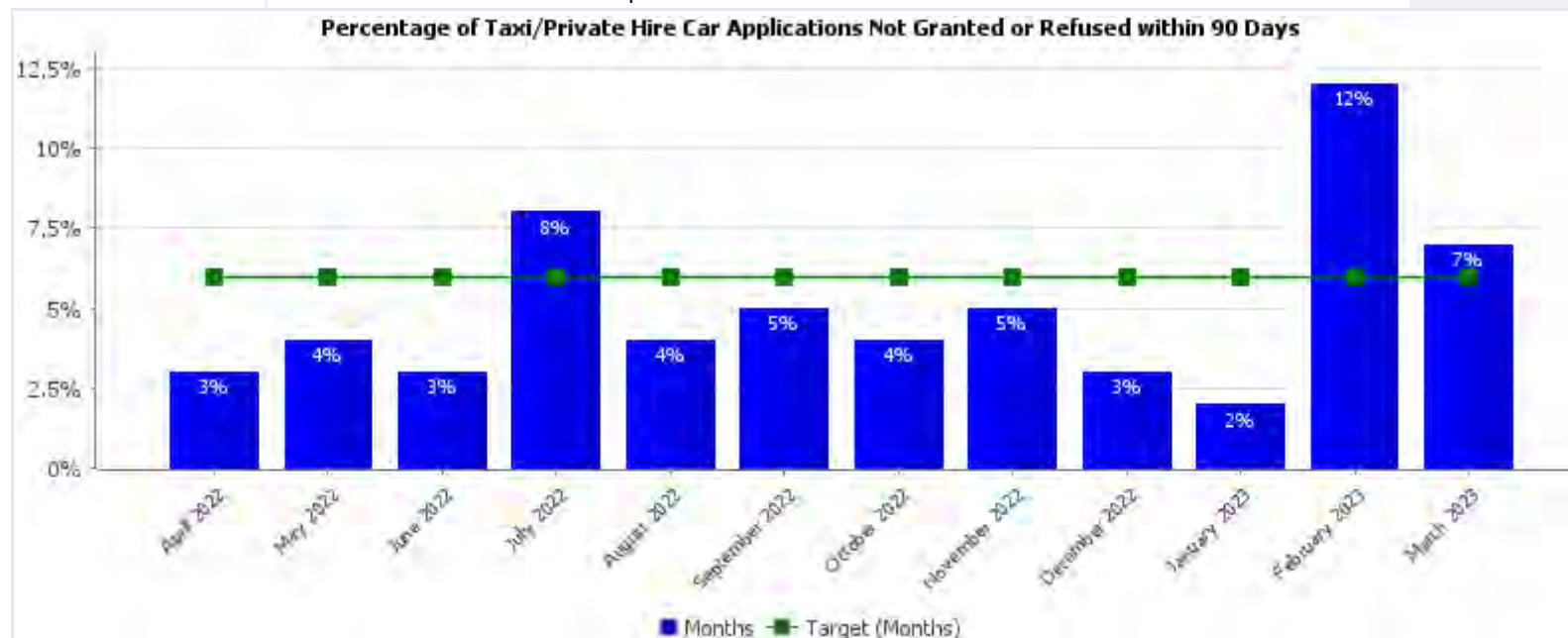
Trend Chart Commentary

The chart shows that whilst there have been variations in levels of sickness absence, the service has experienced increased levels of absence above the corporate target. During June 2022 until January 2023 are varying rates of sickness absences above the corporate trigger. The rates vary month to month. Underlying this period was an extended period of long-term absence, and short term absence which increased absence levels. Given the nature of the absences, essentially planned and long term, it was anticipated that the impact would continue over the reporting period June 2022 to February 2023, which is evidenced from the trend. The Long-term absences taking place during this period have resolved and sickness absence levels returned below the corporate target in March 2023. Since then, further long terms absence has occurred and it is expected that performance compared to the corporate target will decline. Data for April 2023 will be published by end May 2023.

As Legal Services are a relatively small team, a few absences can have a significant impact on the sickness absence levels. Incidents of short term sickness absence experienced are due to minor ailments. There are no general patterns of sickness absence within Legal Services which would give rise to particular concerns. All absences are managed in accordance with the Councils Supporting Attendance at Work policy.

The target is set in accordance with the Corporate target which for 2022/23 is 3.6%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:LS091_6b.5 Percentage of Taxi/Private Hire Car Applications Not Granted or Refused within 90 Days	PI Owner	zLS_PAdmin; Audrey Watson
Description	The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 originally set a statutory deadline of 6 months for an application to be granted or refused, that deadline was extended to 9 months for applications received after 1 May 2017. That deadline has been temporarily increased to 12 months by emergency legislation following the coronavirus pandemic. The Licensing Team has set a local target of 90 days for applications to be granted or refused. The process of determining applications for a licence involve referral to and input from third party agencies. The manner in which those agencies manage their input into the process can affect the progression of the application from the point it is made, to the point it is determined. The Licensing Team has no influence over those parts of the process which rely upon third parties either in respect of timescales or outcomes. This can have an impact on overall customer satisfaction levels.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	7%
		Current Target	6%

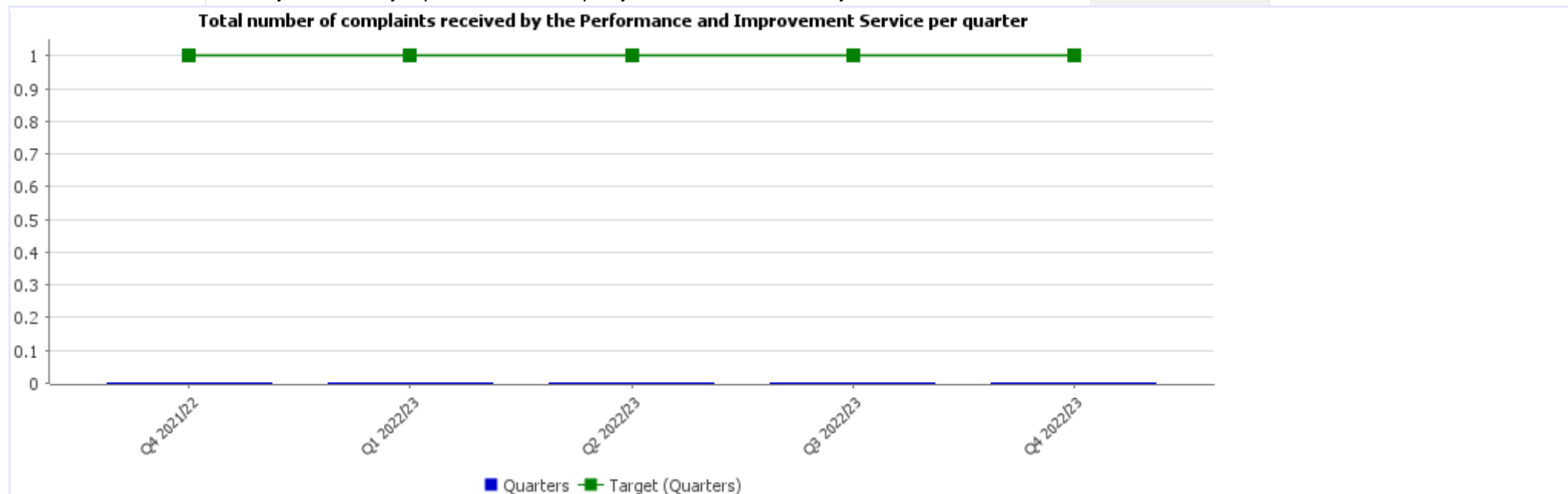


Trend Chart Commentary

The trend shows that performance is generally within target during the reporting period to April 2023. There have been three months during the report period when the target was not met. The target was not achieved in July 2022. This was largely due to delays by applicants. The target was not met in February 2023. The delays were largely due to the applicants delaying in having their vehicles tested or delays caused by the medical process. During March applications were delayed as a result of the impact of applicants and third parties activities who have an integral role in the licensing process

The 2022/23 target is 6% having regard to historical fluctuations in performance but will be closely reviewed in conjunction with review of processing timescales which may impact the service ability to achieve performance in line with target.


PI Code & Short Name	P:PIS011_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Performance and Improvement Service per quarter	PI Owner	zPIS_PIAAdmin; Rebecca Kelly
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of complaints received during each quarter relating to the Performance and Improvement Service. Performance is reviewed on a regular basis and reported quarterly to ensure that there is sufficient focus on the quality and standard of customer service. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	0
		Current Target	1



Trend Chart Commentary

The service has recorded no complaints in the period of the chart (Q4 2021/22 to Q4 2022/23). The Blue Badge entitlement process was transferred to the Anti-Poverty Service in June 2019 and this was the source of past complaints received by the Performance and Improvement Service. It is expected that the number of complaints received by the Performance and Improvement Service will be below historic levels.

Target: the target was set at one complaint per quarter for 2022/23 and will remain in place for 2023/24.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PIS013_6b.4 Percentage of all complaints closed by the Performance and Improvement Service that were upheld / partially upheld per quarter	PI Owner	zPIS_PIAAdmin; Rebecca Kelly
Description	This performance indicator measures the overall percentage of closed complaints received by the Performance and Improvement Service that have been upheld or part upheld during each quarter. In each period, the total number of upheld and partially upheld complaints is divided by the total number of complaints closed to determine the overall percentage. The data for this performance indicator is extracted from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is used to manage and monitor complaint handling procedures in the council. All complaints received are analysed to identify improvements to the quality of the service and the way it is delivered to customers.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	N/A
		Current Target	25%

Percentage of all complaints closed by the Performance and Improvement Service that were upheld / partially upheld per quarter

■ Quarters ■ Target (Quarters)


Trend Chart Commentary

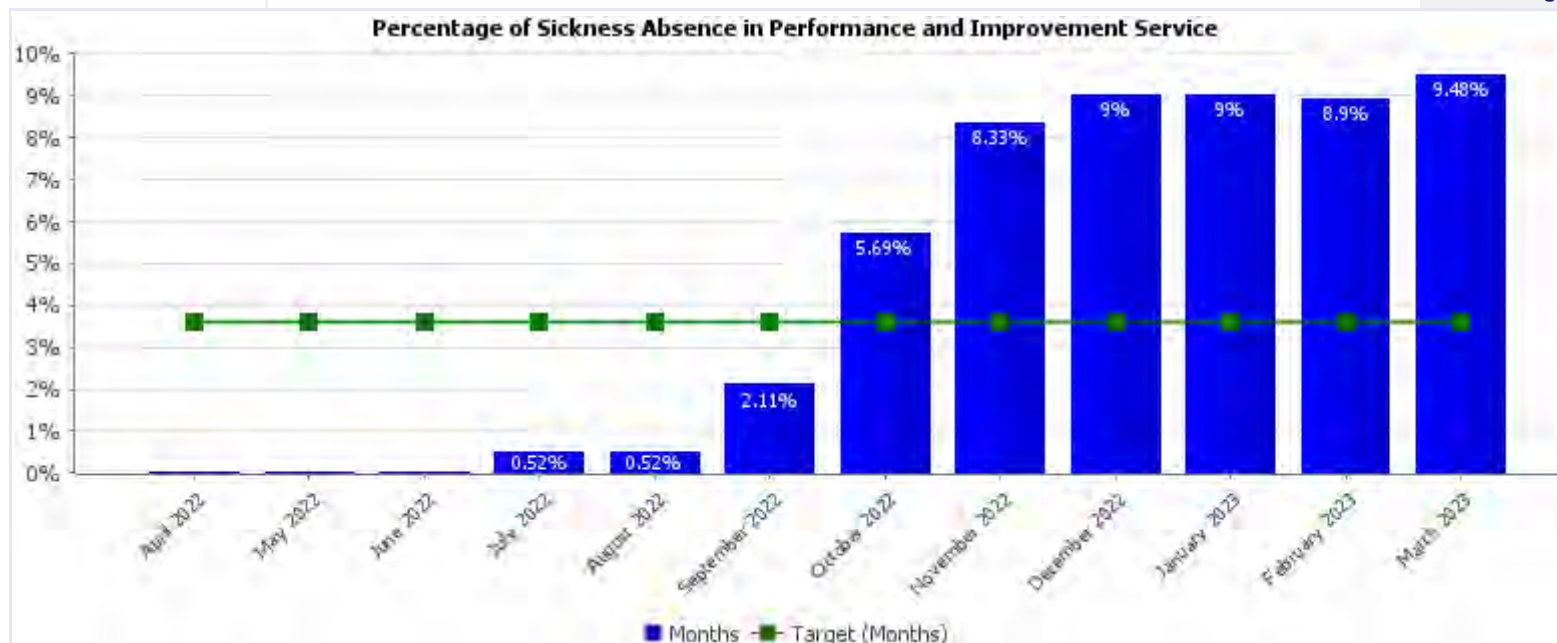
The service typically receives a low number of complaints each quarter as much of the activity delivered is an enabler/support function.

2022/23: The service received no complaints in Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 2022/23.

2021/22: The service received no complaints in Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 2021/22.

Target: a target of 25 percent has been set for 2023/24.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PIS024_7b.1 Percentage of Sickness Absence in Performance and Improvement Service	PI Owner	zPIS_PIAAdmin; Rebecca Kelly
Description	This performance indicator measures, as a percentage, the total level of sickness absence in the Performance and Improvement Service in Corporate Services. The data is provided by the council's Human Resource Services on a monthly basis and is tracked and monitored to ensure absence is managed appropriately in the service and any corresponding impact on performance is understood and managed.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	9.48%
		Current Target	3.6%




Trend Chart Commentary

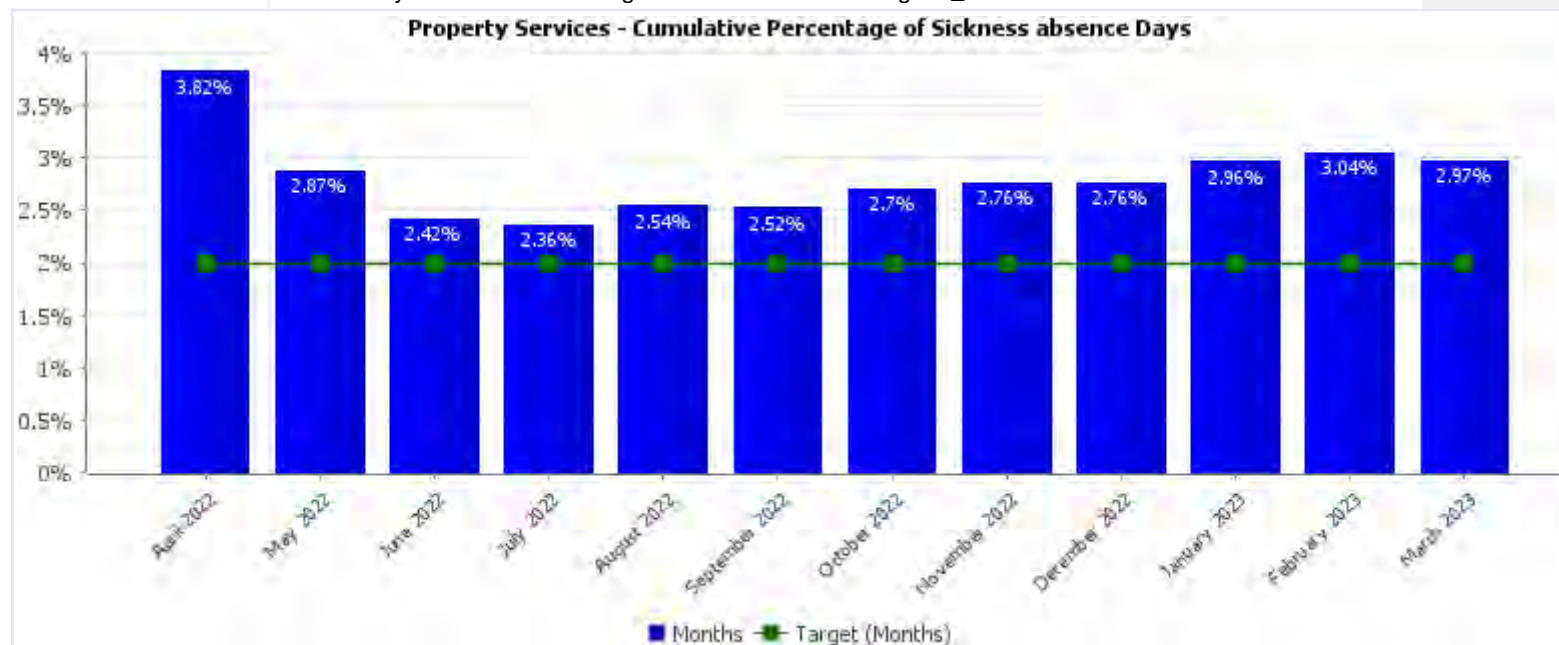
The Performance and Improvement Service comprises 10.44 full time equivalents and due to the size of the service, a small number of staff absent from work can greatly impact the performance in this indicator.

The trend shows that there were five periods where performance was 0 or less than 1 percent. Periods of absence in the service are historically mostly short-term. There were 5 days in March 2022, 1 day in July and August 2022 and 4 days in September 2022. In October to December the absence recorded during this period can be attributed to one long-term absence in the service.

Sickness levels are monitored on a monthly basis and the service takes the appropriate action in compliance with the Council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and procedures to manage all periods of absence.

Target: the corporate target of 3.6% is used and will remain at this level for 2023/24.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PS112_7b.1 Property Services - Cumulative Percentage of Sickness absence Days	PI Owner	zPS_Admin - Property Services PS; David Baird
Description	<p>This monthly performance indicator records the cumulative Property Services Sickness/ Absence level as is reported through monthly management reports from HR Pay and Reward using the SPI percentage. It is used to review the effectiveness of sickness absence management.</p> <p>The monthly sickness absence figures are contained in PSg300_7b.3a.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	2.97%
		Current Target	2%

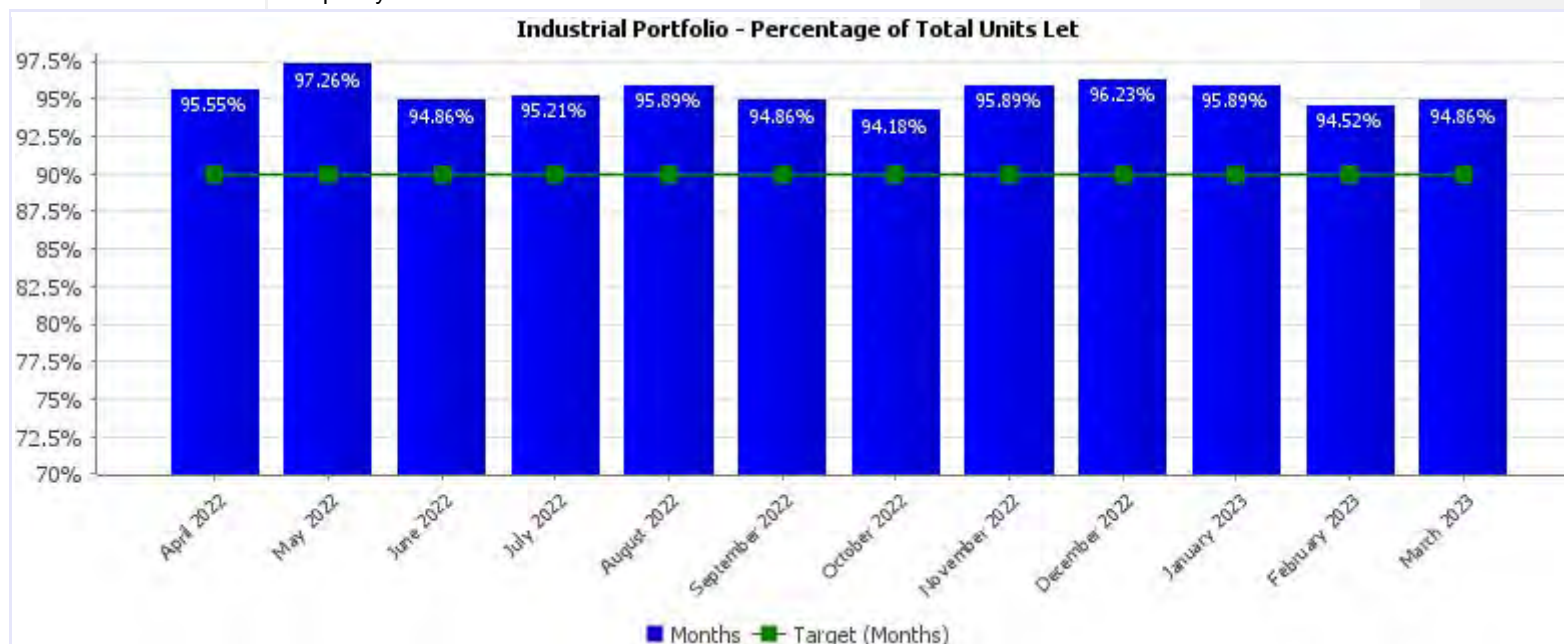


Trend Chart Commentary:

Sickness absence levels in Property Services increased slightly and is below corporate target of 3.6% but above the service target of 2% at the end of March 2023. All sickness absence is managed in line with Council policy.

The target is set at 3.6% corporately, and following review the Finance & Property Services service target for 2023/24 is 2%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PS301_9b.1a Industrial Portfolio - Percentage of Total Units Let	PI Owner	zPS_Admin - Property Services PS; David Metcalf
Description	<p>This performance indicator is part of the performance scorecard for the council's asset management strategy and will contribute to outcome 5 utilisation.</p> <p>This is one of three Performance Indicators (PI) that record the occupancy levels of the major parts of the council's Tenanted Non-Residential Property (TNRP) portfolio, i.e. those properties that the council owns but does not occupy itself, and which are leased to third parties. This PI is based on 300 industrial units. The calculation of the PI was reviewed in April 2010 to ensure its comparability with PI's produced by our benchmarking partners in other local authorities, and again in August 2015 to reflect changes in the portfolio. The base figure primarily consists of properties that are let on short term agreements, where occupancy levels are expected to be more volatile. Targets are reviewed annually in April and take account of the economic climate, the property market, and our rental income target, with the objective of maximising occupancy levels.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	94.86%
		Current Target	90%



Trend Chart Commentary:

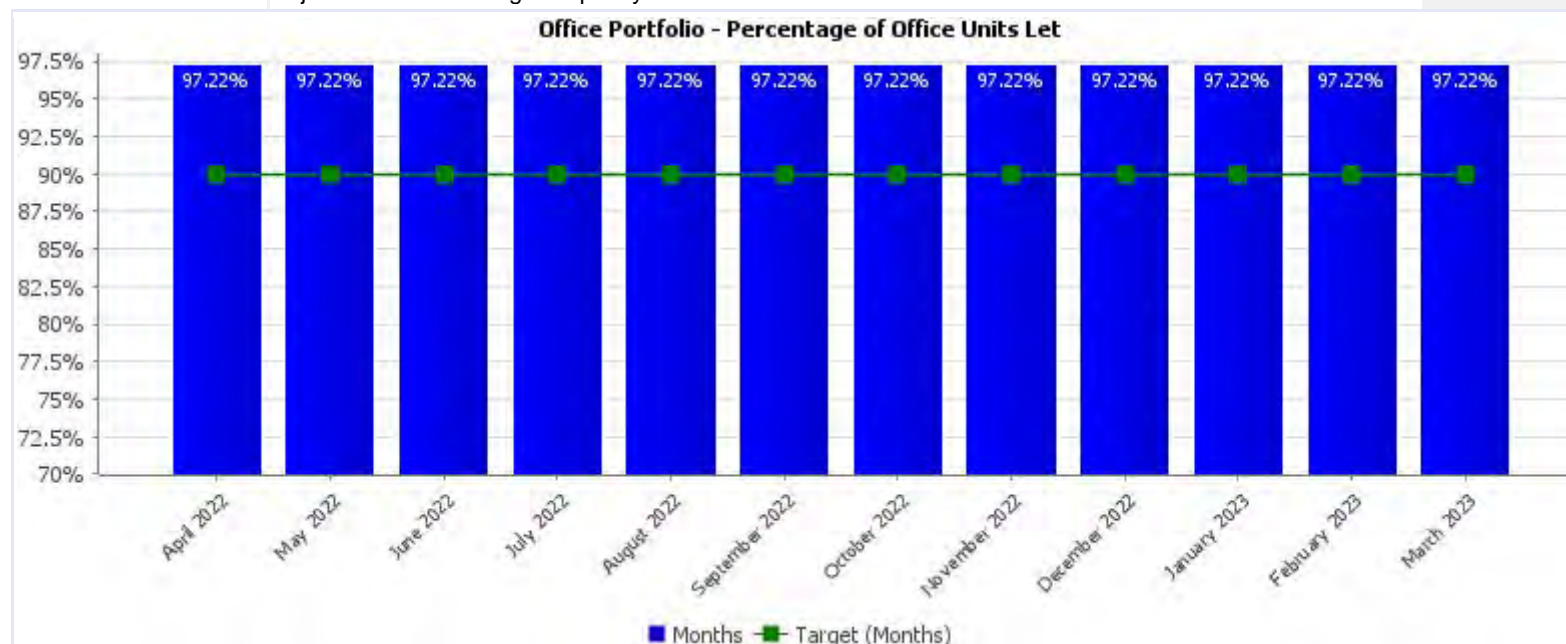
Occupancy for this month (March 2023) is 94.86% against a target of 90%.

WLC's portfolio are mainly less than 3,000 sq. ft units. Demand is healthy and occupancy is well above pre COVID level. The rents charged are also at pre – COVID level.

The nature of most of the lease agreements - easy-in, easy-out, month to month - means that the occupancy level is particularly volatile. Capital improvements have been undertaken over the past three years to preserve the income stream from the portfolio. We will continue to work on improving the appeal of our properties.

2022/23 target is set at 90% this allows us to maintain current levels whilst investigating areas for improvement.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PS303_9b.1a Office Portfolio - Percentage of Office Units Let	PI Owner	zPS_Admin - Property Services PS; David Metcalf
Description	<p>This performance indicator is part of the performance scorecard for the councils asset management strategy and will contribute to outcome 5 utilisation.</p> <p>This is one of three Performance Indicators that record the occupancy levels of the major parts of the council's Tenanted Non-Residential Property (TNRP) portfolio, i.e. those properties that the council owns but does not occupy itself, and which are leased to third parties. This PI is based on 42 self contained offices, or suites in multi-occupancy buildings. The calculation of the PI was reviewed in April 2010 to ensure it's comparability with PI's produced by our benchmarking partners in other local authorities. The total also reflects recent changes in the portfolio (reviewed August 2015). Targets are reviewed annually in April and take account of the economic climate, the property market, and our rental income target, with the objective of maximising occupancy levels.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	🟢
		Current Value	97.22%
		Current Target	90%



Trend Chart Commentary:


This month (March 2023) sees occupancy at 97.22%. This is above the target of 90% and is consistent with other periods in the 12 month range.

Occupancy has been fairly stable. Where units do become void they are taking longer to re let compared to the shop and industrial properties, which is indicative of the weak office market in West Lothian.

The Council hold 36 lettable units therefore a single vacancy or letting has disproportionate effect on occupancy rates.

The office market for larger suites in West Lothian continues to be challenging. An Edinburgh commercial agent is assisting the marketing of the council's largest office void this has been vacant for nearly two years.

The Target for 2022 is set at 90% this allows us to maintain current levels whilst investigating areas for improvement.

PI Code & Short Name	P:PS304_9b.1c Percentage of rent outstanding for commercial property (Current debt).	PI Owner	zPS_Admin - Property Services PS; David Metcalf
Description	<p>This Performance Indicator (PI) measures the amount of current debt from the council's Tenanted Non-Residential Property (i.e. commercial) portfolio. Current debt is considered to be rent due from an existing tenant that has been outstanding for over 30 days, expressed as a percentage of the total rental income billed. The portfolio comprises those properties that the council owns, but does not occupy for direct service delivery, and totals almost 700 properties, including shops, offices, and industrial units. The indicator measures the position on debt on the 1st of the previous month. Total income billed adopts the annual income as at the first of the month.</p> <p>Targets have been set in consultation with our benchmarking partners in other councils and reflect commercial levels. They are also considered against other council revenue income / debt levels.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	5.81%
		Current Target	4%

**Trend Chart Commentary:**

The debt level for March 2023 has decreased to 5.81% exceeding the target of 4%. It is in the lower quarter of the 12-month range of 5.63% - 7.37%.

Current debt level has increased due to increased billing amounts over the last month. Similar to previous period in 2021 level increased between months of July and August comprising Scottish quarter day billing periods. A combination of lease terminations has impacted upon income however demand is still high for purposes of re-letting.

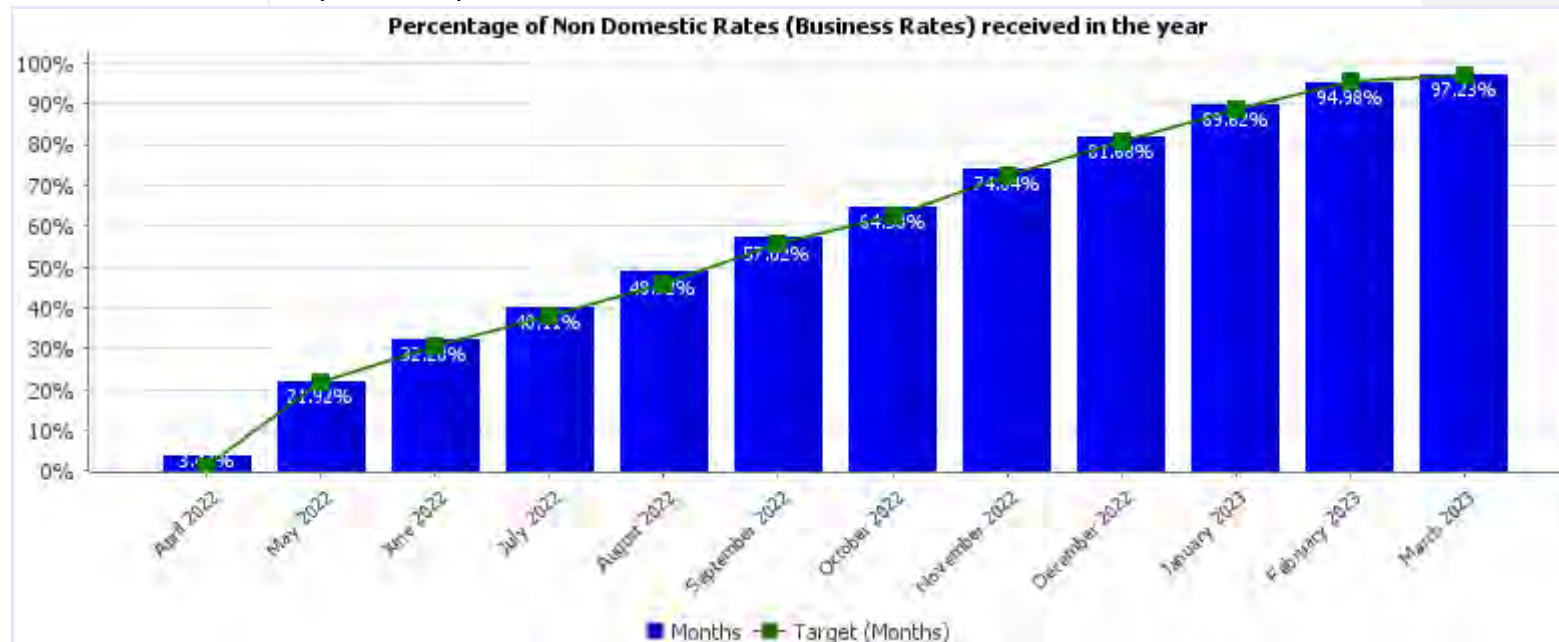
Debt level is below target set prior to Covid-19 pandemic and is still subject to payments plans created throughout this period. Officers shall continue recover outstanding rental demands timeously in line with standard processes and procedures to reduce debt levels

Although the majority of payments are monthly, regular variations are to be expected from both quarterly and six-monthly cycles, reflecting the timing and method of payment of rent by some tenants, i.e. where payments are for three or six month periods. This is particularly evident in older and longer leases where payments are not collected by Direct Debit, unlike the monthly

payments. As a result, we expect fluctuation after the annual, quarterly and six-monthly payments become due. Internal and partner agreements are also regularly late in payment due to the "soft nature" of debt collection on these

Target for 2022 is set at 4% and reflects the unit targeting to improve these results in the future.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV002_9b Percentage of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) received in the year	PI Owner	zREV_PIAAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the percentage of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) income received in the current year.</p> <p>This indicator records the progress on a cumulative monthly basis at the end of each month by calculating the total Business Rates payments received for the year as a percentage of the net charges due for the year. Income collection rates link in to the overall financial planning strategy. Monthly monitoring and analysis allow any risks and actions to be identified.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	97.23%
		Current Target	97%



Trend Chart Commentary:

This indicator shows the percentage of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) collected cumulatively on a monthly basis for the current year.

2022/23

March 2023: In year collection is up 0.54% on the same point last year. Targeted efforts to engage with large corporate debtors during the month of March was successful in assisting us to achieve in year collections above the set target.

February 2023: In year collection is down 0.70% from this time last year. There are a number of corporate debtors with significant balances due. Efforts will be made to engage with these debtors.

January 2023: In year collection is up 0.87% from this time last year. Work continues to maximise intervention income.

December 2022: In year collection is up 0.79% from this time last year. Work continues to maximise intervention income.

November 2022: In year collection is up 1.62% from this time last year. Work continues to maximise intervention income.

October 2022: In year collection is up 1.99% from this time last year. Work is ongoing to maximise intervention income.

September 2022: In year collection is up 1.47% from this time last year.

August 2022: In year collection is up 2.83% from this time last year. This increase can be attributed to the issuing of recovery notices.


July 2022: In year collection is up 2.14% from this time last year. This increase can be attributed to the issuing of reminder notices and summary warrants. Work is ongoing in relation to maximisation of intervention income.

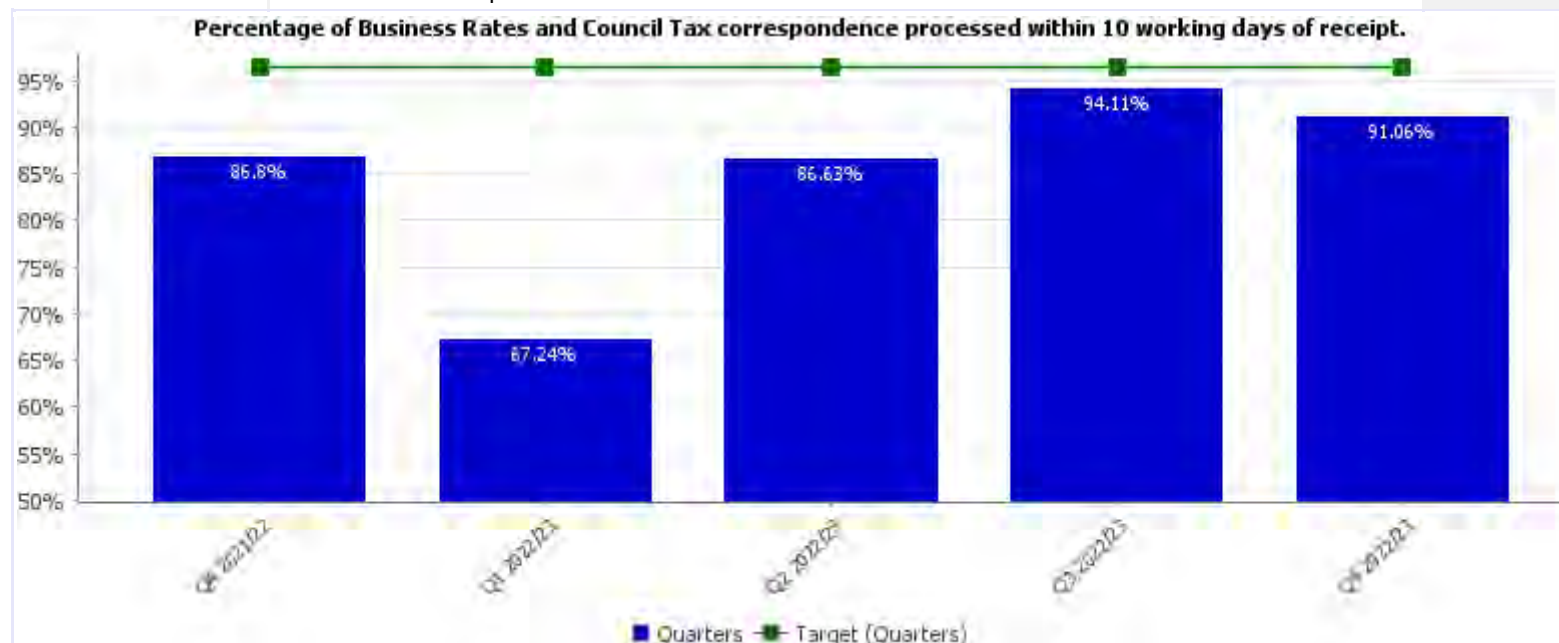
June 2022: In year collection is up 1.74% from this time last year. This increase can be attributed to the issuing of reminder notices and summary warrants. There has also been work on those cases at the intervention stage.

May 2022: In year collection is up 0.33% from this time last year. This increase can partly be attributed to the issuing of reminders at the beginning of the financial year.

April 2022: In year collection is up 2.03% from this time last year. Instalments for Business Rates are not due until May.

Target 2022/23: The cumulative collection target for 2022/23 has been reviewed and after taking in to account previous year performance, recovery from the impact of Covid 19, staffing levels and the statutory changes following the Barclay Review has been set at 97%. The cumulative monthly target will be based on the collection rate achieved in the same month in the previous year as this will give us a guide on monthly performance against the end of year target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV027_6b Percentage of Business Rates and Council Tax correspondence processed within 10 working days of receipt.	PI Owner	zREV_PIAAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the percentage of customer correspondence received in relation to Business Rates and Council Tax that is processed within 10 working days of receipt.</p> <p>The performance indicator is calculated using data from the Council Tax and Business Rates workflow system. The data provides the date the customer correspondence is received and the date it is processed to completion or pended whilst awaiting further information. This performance indicator provides an insight to the level of customer service provided with performance being monitored and analysed to identify any risks and actions required.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	91.06%
		Current Target	96.4%



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

Quarter 4: Performance in quarter 4 was below target due to the impact of staff absence in this quarter. There were 14,533 items of correspondence received with 13,234 processed within the target of 10 working days. The level of correspondence received increased by 1,792 from the same quarter in 2021/22 and increased by 2,655 from the previous quarter.

Quarter 3: Performance in quarter 3 remained below target. However, the deficit has been further reduced over the quarter. There were 11,878 items of correspondence received with 11,178 processed within the target of 10 working days. The level of correspondence received reduced by 2,188 from the previous quarter.

Quarter 2: Performance in quarter 2 was below target. However, the deficit has been reduced over the quarter. There were 14,066 items of correspondence received with 12,186 processed within the target of 10 working days. The level of correspondence received increased by 1,379 from the previous quarter.

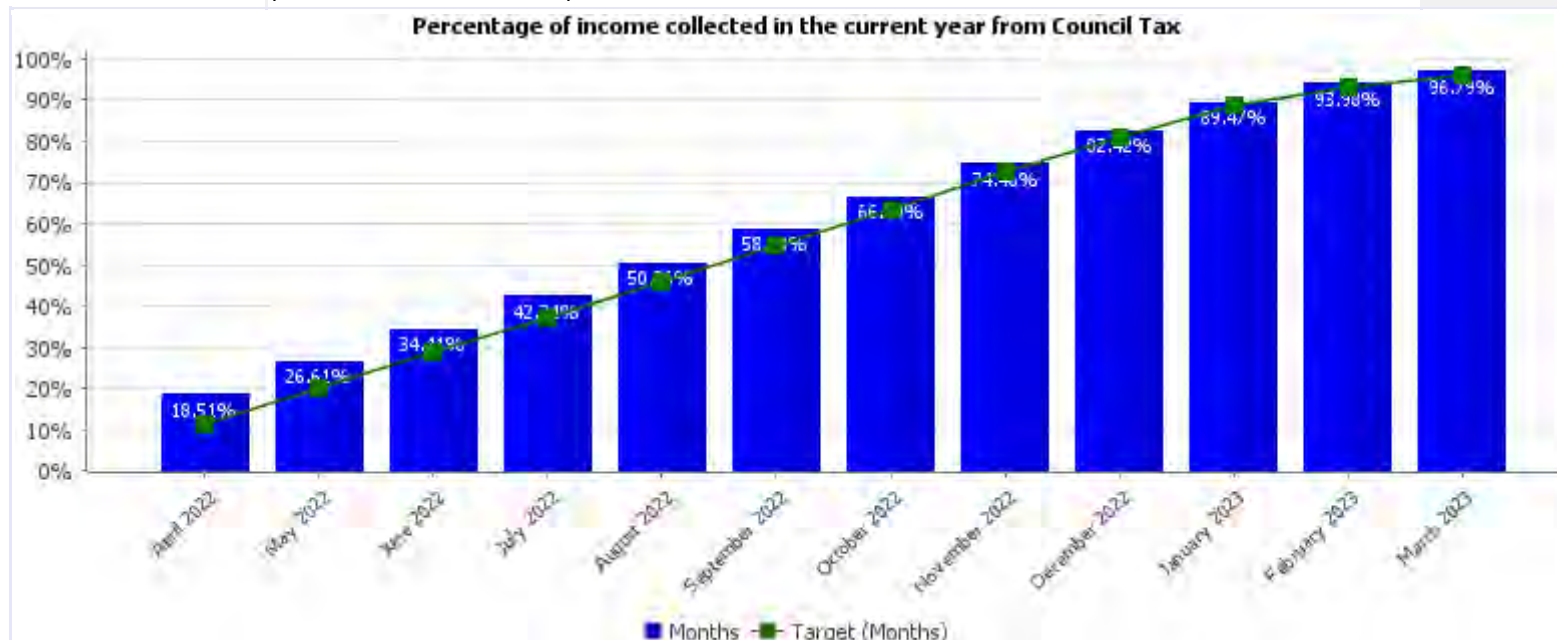
Quarter 1: Performance in quarter 1 was below target due to the impact of staff absence in this quarter with a total of 18.2% of staff hours being lost. There were 12,687 items of correspondence received with 8,531 processed within the target of 10 working days. The level of correspondence received reduced slightly from the previous quarter.

2021/22

Quarter 4: Performance in quarter 4 was below target. 12,741 items of correspondence were received with 11,059 processed within the target of 10 working days.

Target 2022/23: We have reviewed the target for 2022/23 and set it at 96.4%. This target has been set considering the increased number of properties, the level of customer correspondence being received for both Council Tax and Business Rates and the potential impact of the rise in the cost of living as well as staffing levels within the Collection's Team.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV047_9b.1a Percentage of income collected in the current year from Council Tax	PI Owner	zREV_PIAAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	<p>This performance indicator measures the percentage of Council Tax income received in the current year.</p> <p>This indicator records the progress on a cumulative monthly basis at the end of each month and is calculated using the statutory formula set out in the Water Order using the total Council Tax payments received for the year as a percentage of the net charges due for the year. Income collection rates link in to the overall financial planning strategy. Monthly monitoring and analysis allow any risks and actions to be identified. Whilst recovery action to collect all previous year debt continues, in year collection is a recognised benchmark standard. The benchmark data for the in-year collection is captured in the performance indicator SCorp 07.</p>	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	96.79%
		Current Target	96.2%



Trend Chart Commentary:

This indicator shows the percentage of Council Tax collected cumulatively on a monthly basis for the current year.

2022/23

March 2023: In year collection is 0.59% above the target set. The increase in Council Tax collection reduced further this month as forecast due to the impact of the Cost of Living Award payments made in April 2022. These payments have assisted in the increase in collection rates for 2022/23.

February 2023: In year collection is 0.76% above the target. This increase in Council Tax collection has reduced further this month as the Cost of Living Awards increase continues to incrementally reduce each month.

January 2023: In year collection is 0.88% above the target. This increase in Council Tax collection has reduced further this month as the Cost of Living Awards increase continues to incrementally reduce each month.

December 2022: In year collection is 1.39% above the target. This increase in Council Tax collection has reduced further this month as the Cost of Living Awards increase continues to incrementally reduce each month.

November 2022: In year collection is 1.95% above the target. The increase in Council Tax collection has reduced more this month due to the LIPP payments that were made to the Council Tax accounts in November 2021.

October 2022: In year collection is 3.14% above target. This increase is being attributed to the Cost of Living Awards applied in April 22. The level of increase continues to reduce each month.
September 2022: In year collection is 3.81% above target. This increase is due to £150 Cost of Living Awards applied in April 22. It is expected that the level of increase will continue to reduce each month.

August 2022: In year collection is 4.37% above target. This increase is due to the £150 Cost of Living Awards applied in April 22. It is expected that the level of increase will continue to reduce each month.


July 2022: In year collection is 4.95% above target. This increase is due to the £150 Cost of Living Awards applied in April 22. It is expected that the level of increase will continue to incrementally reduce each month.

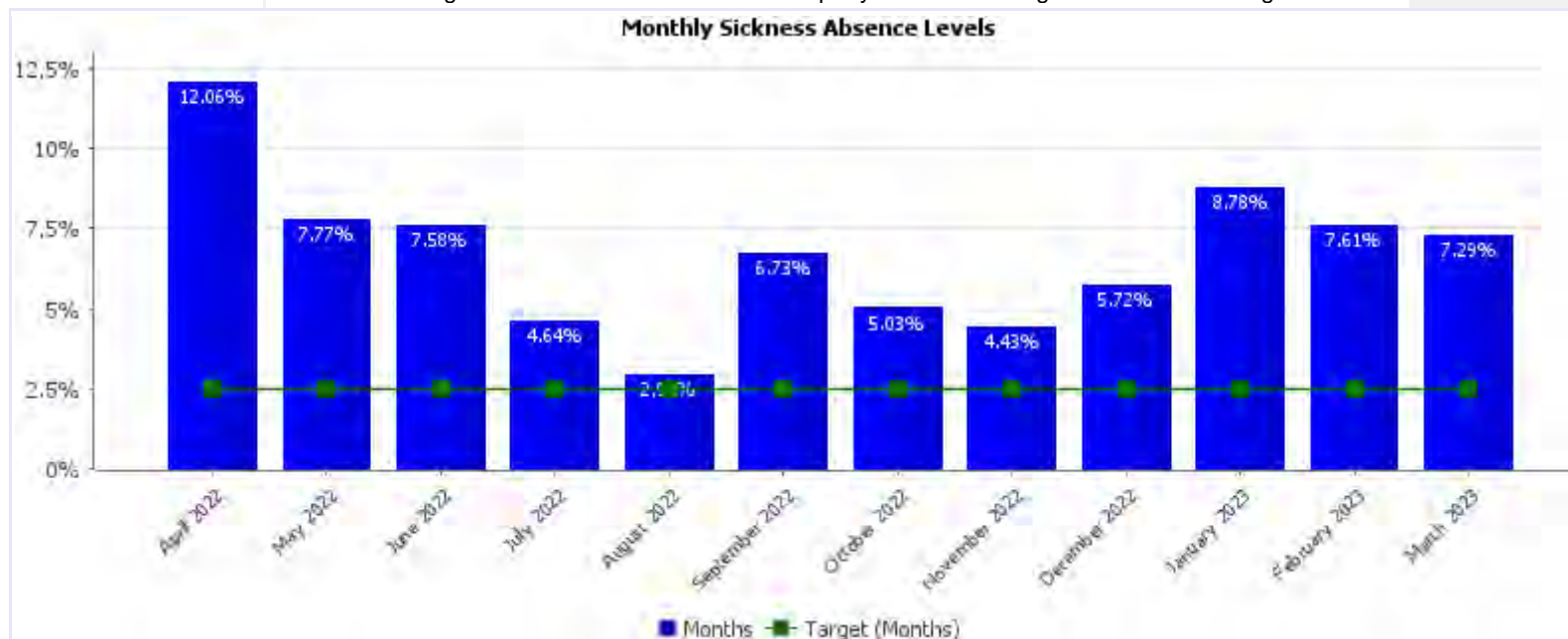
June 2022: In year collection is 5.58% above target. This increase is due to the £150 Cost of Living Awards applied in April 22. It is expected that the level of increase will incrementally reduce each month going forward.

May 2022: In year collection is 6.39% above target. This increase is due to the £150 Cost of Living Awards applied to 59,688 households in April 22.

April 2022: In year collection is 6.96% above target. This increase is due to the £150 Cost of Living Awards applied to 59,688 households in April 22. The total value of the awards in April were £8,953,200 which has positively impacted this year's collection.

Target 2022/23: The cumulative collection target for 2022/23 has been reviewed and after taking in to account previous year performance, the impact of Covid recovery and the rise in the cost of living as well as staffing levels has been set at 96.2%. The cumulative monthly target will be based on the collection rate achieved in the same month in the previous year as this will give us a guide on monthly performance against the end of year target.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV048a_7b.1 Monthly Sickness Absence Levels	PI Owner	zREV_PIAAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	This performance indicator measures the levels of monthly sickness absence in the Revenues Unit on a month by month basis. For each month we aim to have equal to or less than 2.5% sickness absence. The sickness absence statistics used for this performance indicator are recorded from data issued by Human Resources. Sickness absence is discussed as a standing item on the monthly agenda of both the Revenues Management Team and Finance and Property Services Management Team meetings.	Traffic Light Icon	
		Current Value	7.29%
		Current Target	2.5%



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

March 2023: Sickness absence levels for March 2023 have decreased. In March 2023 there were 70 sick days out of a possible 960 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for March 2023 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 2.96% (156 out of 5,272 days).

February 2023: Sickness absence levels for February 2023 have decreased. In February 2023 there were 66 sick days out of a possible 867 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for February 2023 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.3% (206 out of 4,789 days).

January 2023: Sickness absence levels for January 2023 have increased. In January 2023 there were 86 sick days out of a possible 979 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for January 2023 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.78% (255 out of 5,340 days).

December 2022: Sickness absence levels for December 2022 have increased. In December 2022 there were 56 sick days out of a possible 979 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for December 2022 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.12% (223 out of 5,417 days).

November 2022: Sickness absence levels for November 2022 have decreased. In November 2022 there were 42 sick days out of a possible 948 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for November 2022 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 3.96% (207 out of 5,232 days).

October 2022: Sickness absence levels for October 2022 have decreased. In October 2022 there were 50 sick days out of a possible 994 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for October 2022 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.52% (245 out of 5,417 days).

September 2022: Sickness absence levels for September 2022 have increased. In September 2022 there were 65 sick days out of a possible 966 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit for September 2022 is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 5.43% (289 out of 5,322 days).

August 2022: Sickness absence levels for August 2022 have reduced. In August 2022 there were 30 sick days out of a possible 1,013 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit is below that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.5% (247 out of 5,483 days) for August 2022.

July 2022: Sickness absence levels for July 2022 have fallen as staff continue to return from long term absence. In July 2022 there were 49 sick days out of a possible 1,055 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit is now below that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.97% (276 out of 5,552 days) for July 2022.

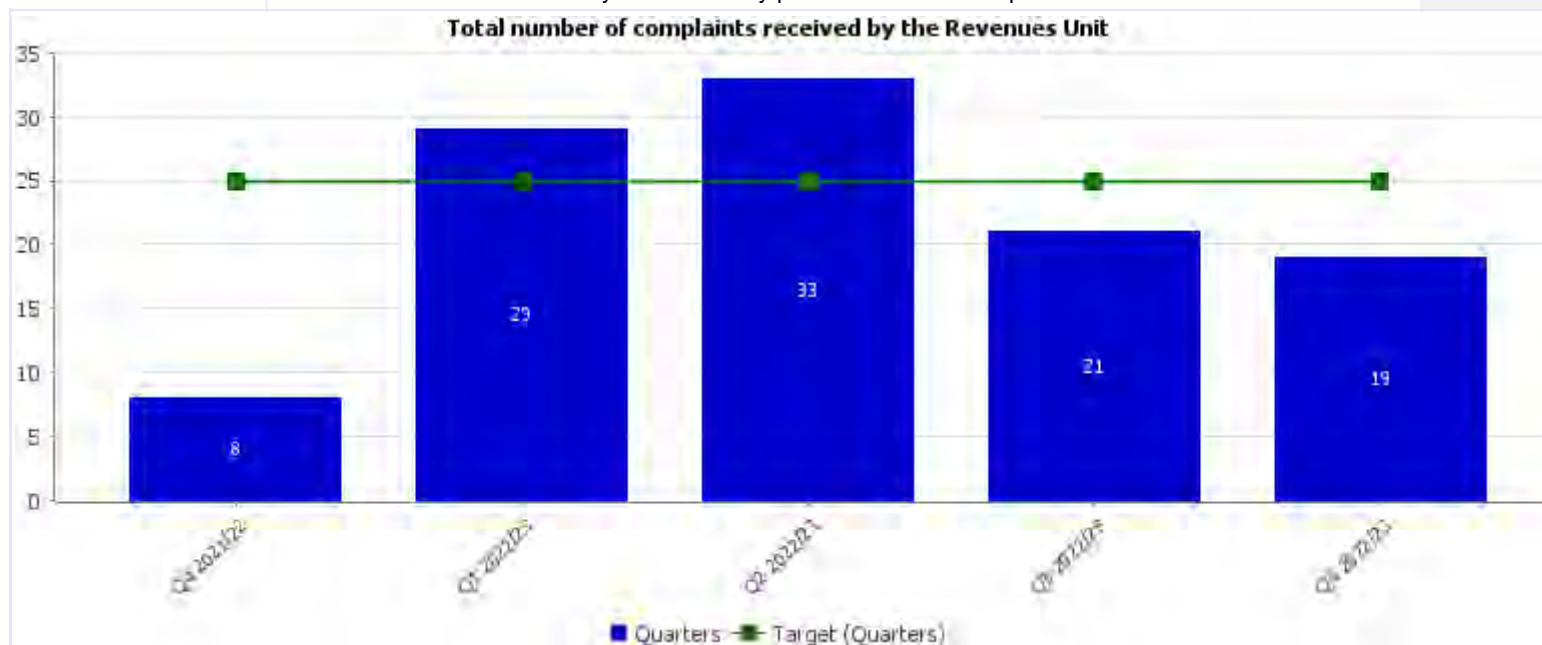
June 2022: Sickness absence levels for June 2022 have fallen as staff continue to return from long term absence. In June 2022 there were 80 sick days out of a possible 1,055 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 5.1% (285 out of 5,584 days) for June 2022.

May 2022: Sickness absence levels for May 2022 have fallen as staff return from long term absence. In May 2022 there were 82 sick days out of a possible 1,055 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 4.64% (259 out of 5,576 days) for May 2022.

April 2022: Sickness absence levels for April 2022 continues to increase due to long and short term sickness absence. In April 2022 there were 121 sick days out of a possible 1,003 days. All actions required under the policy are being undertaken in relation to sickness absence monitoring. Monthly sickness absence in the unit is above that of Finance and Property Services which is 6.6% (353 out of 5,351 days) for April 2022.

Target 2022/23: For 2022/23 the target has been set by the Service Management Team for the Revenues Unit at 2.5%.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV122_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Revenues Unit	PI Owner	zREV_PIAAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Revenues Unit. It is the total number of complaints received by the Revenues Unit at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days). Complaints are recorded on the Customer Relationship Management system and addressed by Revenues Managers. The indicator is used to measure levels of satisfaction with service delivery and to identify particular areas for improvement.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	19
		Current Target	25



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

Quarter 4: 19 complaints were received during this quarter. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the recovery of debt. The number of complaints increased in this quarter compared to quarter 4 in the previous year. 84% of complaints were not upheld.

Quarter 3: 21 complaints were received during this quarter. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the standard of service. The number of complaints increased in this quarter compared to quarter 3 in the previous year. 76% of complaints were not upheld.

Quarter 2: 33 complaints were received during this quarter. There was an increase in the number of complaints in this quarter as a direct result of the strike action that affected domestic bin collections. Complaints were focussed on customers demanding a reduction in their Council Tax as a result of their bins not being emptied. 85% of complaints were not upheld.

Quarter 1: 29 complaints were received during this quarter. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the standard of service. The number of complaints were the same in this quarter compared to quarter 1 in the previous year. A larger number of complaints are received in quarter 1 due to the large scale annual billing cycle and the initial arrears recovery for the year. 97% of complaints were not upheld.

2021/22

Quarter 4: 8 complaints were received during this quarter. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the standard of service. The number of complaints remained the same in this quarter with 75% of complaints not upheld.

Target 2022/23: We have reviewed the target for 2022/23 and set it at 25 complaints received in the quarter. This target has been set taking into account previous years performance and the potential impact on the service of the cost of living crisis.

PI Code & Short Name	P:REV123_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Revenues Unit that were upheld or partially upheld	PI Owner	zREV_PAdmin; Scott Reid
Description	This performance indicator measures the number complaints received by the Revenues Unit which were upheld or partially upheld, as a percentage of all complaints received. This information is recorded via the Customer Relationship Management system and is used to measure overall satisfaction with the service, to implement service specific improvements and to monitor the effectiveness of the Revenues Unit complaint handling procedures.	Traffic Light Icon	✓
		Current Value	18%
		Current Target	25%



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/23

Quarter 4: 3 of the 19 (18%) complaints received this quarter were upheld with none part upheld. Although there was no recurring content of upheld complaints the largest volume were linked to the standard of service theme.

Quarter 3: 4 of the 21 (19%) complaints received this quarter were upheld with 1 (5%) part upheld. Although there was no recurring content of upheld/part upheld complaints the largest volume were linked to the standard of service theme.

Quarter 2: 4 of the 33 (12%) complaints received this quarter were upheld with 1 (3%) part upheld. Although there was no recurring content of upheld/part upheld complaints the largest volume were linked to the standard of service theme.

Quarter 1: 1 of the 29 (3%) complaints received this quarter was upheld with none part upheld. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the standard of service theme.

2021/22

Quarter 4: 1 of the 8 (12.5%) complaints received this quarter was part upheld and 1 (12.5%) upheld. Although there was no recurring content of complaints the largest volume received were linked to the standard of service theme.

Target 2022/23: We have reviewed the target for 2022/23 and set it at 25% of complaints received were upheld or partially upheld. This target has been set taking into account performance in the previous year and the potential impact on the service as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Data Label: Public



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

SICKNESS ABSENCE (1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023)

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on sickness absence rates during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and to provide an update on the ongoing application of the council's Policy & Procedure on Managing Supporting Attendance at Work.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes the content of the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| I Council Values | Focusing on our customers' needs

Being honest, open and accountable

Providing equality of opportunities

Developing employees

Making best use of our resources

Working in partnership |
| II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | Council policy seeks to strike a balance between effective management of sickness absence and the promotion of a healthy workforce, taking into account the council's obligations under Equality legislation. |
| III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators | The sickness absence SPI for 2022/23 commenced at higher rates compared to previous years and has continued to rise during this quarter. |
| V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | National Outcome 15: Our Public Services are high quality, continually improving and responsive to local people's needs. Reduced |

sickness absence levels increase the efficiency and productivity of the council.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Sickness absence is managed within service budgets.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII Other consultations	None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

The council's Policy and Procedure for Supporting Attendance at Work, which was approved by Council Executive on 26 June 2018, requires sickness absence levels to be reported to Council Executive on a quarterly basis.

This report relates to absence rates for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

D.2 SICKNESS ABSENCE RATES

Standard Performance Indicator – Council Wide

The sickness absence Standard Performance Indicator (SPI) for the cumulative period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is 6.42%. A total of 5,578 employees were absent from work for one or more days in this reporting period.

The SPI absence rate is higher than the same period in the previous year, 2021/22, which was 5.72%.

Appendix 1 of this report provides an overview of the SPI performance indicators for the full years 2017/18 to 2022/23.

Standard Performance Indicators – Services

The sickness absence SPI for each service area (figures for teaching and non-teaching staff shown separately) for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is set out at **Appendix 2**.

Of the seven council service areas, all reported sickness absence rates above the council target of 3.6%. Education Service is counted as one service although the chart reflects teaching and non-teaching figures separately.

Long –Term Absence (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Of the days lost due to sickness absence during this period, a significant proportion of those absences are attributable to long term absence, which is defined in the policy as a period of continuous absence 'in excess of 4 weeks.'

A further breakdown of days lost for all services with rates above the council sickness absence target indicates the following:

- Of the total number of 3,177 days lost in CEO, Finance & Property Services, 2,254 (70.95%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 38 employees.

- Of the total number of 2,228 days lost in Corporate Services, 1,739 (78.05%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 21 employees.
- Of the total number of 42,347 days lost in Education Services, 25,700 (60.69%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 416 employees.
- Of the total number of 16,627 days lost in Housing, Customer & Building Services, 12,848 (77.27%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 196 employees.
- Of the total number of 33,423 days lost in Operational Services, 26,420 (79.05%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 369 employees.
- Of the total number of 1,509 days lost in Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, 1,175 (77.87%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted for by 13 employees.
- Of the total number of 25,888 days lost in Social Policy, 21,141 (81.66%) of those days were due to long-term absence and were accounted by 297 employees.

The average percentage of days lost from long term absence across the full council is 72.91%.

The average length of long-term absence during the period was 68 days with the longest absence lasting 261 days.

Analysis of Categories of Absence (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Top four reported reasons for all absences across the council, split by long term are as follows:

Table 1

Level 1 Reasons	Days	Long Term %	All Absence%
Mental & Behavioural	38,922	37.15%	31.09%
Infectious	20,495	10.29%	16.37%
Musculoskeletal	16,083	14.98%	12.85%
Gastrointestinal	8,547	3.62%	6.83%
Total	84,047	66.04%	67.13%

Mental & Behavioural Level 2 Category

The main category for absences is Mental and Behavioural. A breakdown of all mental and behavioural absences recorded is set out below:

Table 2

Mental & Behavioural	Days	Long Term %	All M&B Absences%
Stress (Work & Personal)	10,494	24.61%	26.96%
Stress (Personal Only)	10,203	22.20%	26.21%
Anxiety	6,872	15.24%	17.66%
Depression	4,746	10.97%	12.19%
Not specified	3,462	7.48%	8.89%

Stress (Work only)	2,316	4.90%	5.95%
Panic attacks	425	0.94%	1.09%
Other psychiatric illnesses	227	0.50%	0.58%
Self-harm	71	0.14%	0.18%
Eating disorder	56	0.14%	0.14%
Alcoholism	24	0.00%	0.06%
Insomnia	16	0.00%	0.04%
Psychosis	10	0.00%	0.03%
Total	38,922	87.11%	100.00%

D.3 MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

i) Sickness Absence Case Management

The HR Services team continue to work closely with managers across the council, providing advice and guidance on the monitoring and management of sickness. Table 3 below shows the number of employees at each stage of the Policy & Procedure as at 31 March 2023, compared to the previously reported positions.

Table 3

	Informal Review Meeting	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Total at 31 March 2023	709	295	240	1244
Total at 31 March 2022	748	352	179	1279
Total at 31 March 2021	453	241	182	876

A breakdown of live cases as at 31 March 2023 is set out in Table 4.

Table 4

	Informal Review Meeting	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Cases on going from 31 December 2022	435	249	214	898
New cases since 31 December 2022	274	46	26	346
Total	709	295	240	1244

ii) Other Support Initiatives

HR Adviser Input

During 2022/23, the following functional areas were targeted for input and support from Human Resources Advisers;

- Education (Teaching & Non-Teaching)
- Care Homes
- Facilities & Support Services
- Recycling Waste & Fleet Services
- NETS, Lands & Countryside
- Roads & Transportation
- Building Services

Within the level of advisory resource available, Human Resources continue to provide as much ongoing support as possible to a number of Service Managers across those functional areas to develop action plans to address issues and to help line managers manage staff absences in line with policy.

In Quarter 4 Care Homes (14.39%) reported a decrease in absence rates by 0.39%, as did Recycling Waste and Fleet Services (10.69%) who reported a 0.14% decrease and Building Services (9.76%) who reported a 0.15% decrease.

NETS Lands & Countryside (6.68%) are the only service to report a decrease from April 2022 by 0.17%. They are also the only Service reporting a decrease of 0.55% from the same period in March 2022.

Employee Assistance Programme

Since 1 November 2018, a telephone-based counselling service (Help EAP) has been in operation provided by our occupational health provider, Optima Health.

Statistics from Quarter 4 (2022/23) show that 60 employees received mental health assessment during this period. Of the 60 assessed, 33 employees were referred for counselling services, 4 signposted to GP/NHS, 3 referred to voluntary sector support and 20 employees were provided onward referral and guidance.

Of the 33 employees who were referred for counselling, 23 received structured telephone counselling sessions, 4 provided with video counselling sessions and 6 provided with CBT.

Contact reasons indicate that 7.02% of calls in Quarter 4 were in relation to solely work-related issues, 59.65% in relation to personal issues and 33.33% due to a combination of work and personal related issues.

Further analysis of contact reasons identified the following categories:

Table 5

Personal Categories	Percentage
Addiction	2.70%
Bereavement	16.22%
Carer responsibilities	8.11%
Debt/Finance	5.41%
Domestic Violence	5.41%
Housing/Accommodation	2.70%
Legal	2.70%
Mental Health	2.70%
Relationships (personal)	37.84%
Physical Health	16.22%
Total	100.00%

Table 6

Work Categories	Percentage
Change	18.92%
Control	5.41%
Demands	37.84%
Relationships	8.11%
Role	21.62%
Support	8.11%
Total	100.00%

The work categories are the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards. They cover the six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

As this is a confidential service we are unable to canvas employees directly for specific feedback on their experiences, although anecdotally, services have reported a mainly positive response from staff who have accessed these services.

HR Advisers will continue to promote the use of this service and the trade unions have been asked to promote these services to their members.

D.4 APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT DISCRETION (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

The Policy and Procedure for Supporting Attendance at Work has the provision for the relevant manager, in consultation with Human Resources, to exercise discretion not to progress an employee through a stage of the procedure to take account of extenuating circumstances.

Since April 2022, Human Resources have been consulted in regard to 213 requests for management discretion to be considered. Of those 213 requests, 207 (97.18%) have resulted in discretion being applied to suspend the application of the trigger level for a limited period, considering the circumstances of the individual case.

A breakdown of the general categories in respect of which requests for discretion have been considered are as follows:

Table 7

Main Category	Discretion Applied	Discretion Not Applied
Bereavement	59	0
Carer Responsibilities	5	0
Industrial Injury	11	0
Medical Treatment	58	6
Personal Difficulties	20	0
Surgery	54	0
Trauma	0	0
Total	213	6

Where there is a management decision not to apply discretion, the Policy provides for the decision to be reviewed by a more senior manager, if requested by the employee concerned. Two requests for review were made during Quarter 4, one resulting in the original decision remaining and the other resulting in the application of discretion.

D.5 ABSENCE AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

Effective from 1 July 2022, absences in relation to COVID, including the need to self-isolate, are treated as sickness absence. Staff absence due to COVID symptoms and Long COVID accounts for 9.11% of all sickness absences since April 2022.

In Quarter 4, the council had 23 employees report as being absent due to Long COVID/extended COVID symptoms, of which 12 returned to work during the period.

D.6 ACTIONS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

During Quarter 4 the Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Steering Group distributed a short survey to gain an understanding of what staff wish to see in terms of wellbeing initiatives moving forward and how they would like those to be delivered. Analysis of the feedback is underway and will help to inform a wellbeing action plan for each service.

The HWL Steering Group has also agreed a calendar of national wellbeing campaigns for the coming year.

Benchmarking with other local authorities is underway and a number of focus groups/consultations will be undertaken to support a pending review of the Council's Supporting Attendance at Work Policy. Trade Union input will also be sought.

Since December 2022, 11 Wellbeing Workshops and 4 employee self-care sessions have been carried out through a specialist well-being coach; 130 managers attended the workshops and 51 employees attended the self-care sessions.

In the Anti-Poverty Service, a pilot of the HSE Management Competency Indicators tool and the HSE Management Standards Indicator tool is underway. The tools aim to preventing occupational stress. Upon conclusion of the pilot and a review of the outcomes, consideration will be given to the roll out to other service areas.

E. CONCLUSION

Absence rates for the Council in 2022/23 have seen an increase in comparison to 2021/22.

Stress continues to be the highest contributor to levels of sickness absence across the council and the focus will continue to be on targeting additional support at those service areas that are reporting high levels of stress related absence.

The council continues to have a focus on employee health and wellbeing and a range of actions are being progressed to raise the profile and importance of good employee wellbeing.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

- Policy & Procedure for Supporting Attendance at Work

Appendices/Attachments: 2

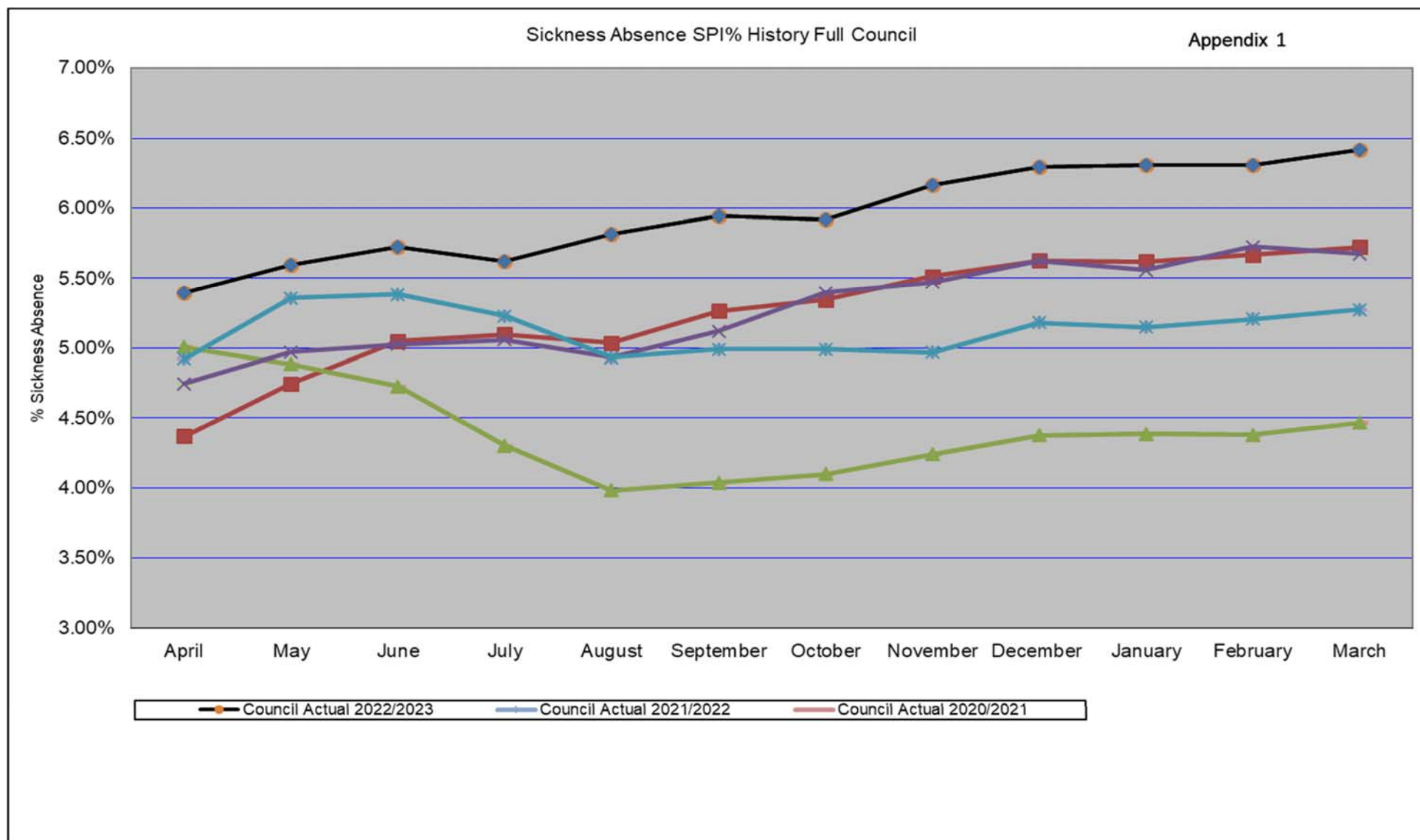
1. Sickness Absence SPI% History – Full Council
2. Sickness Absence SPI% all services – 2022/23

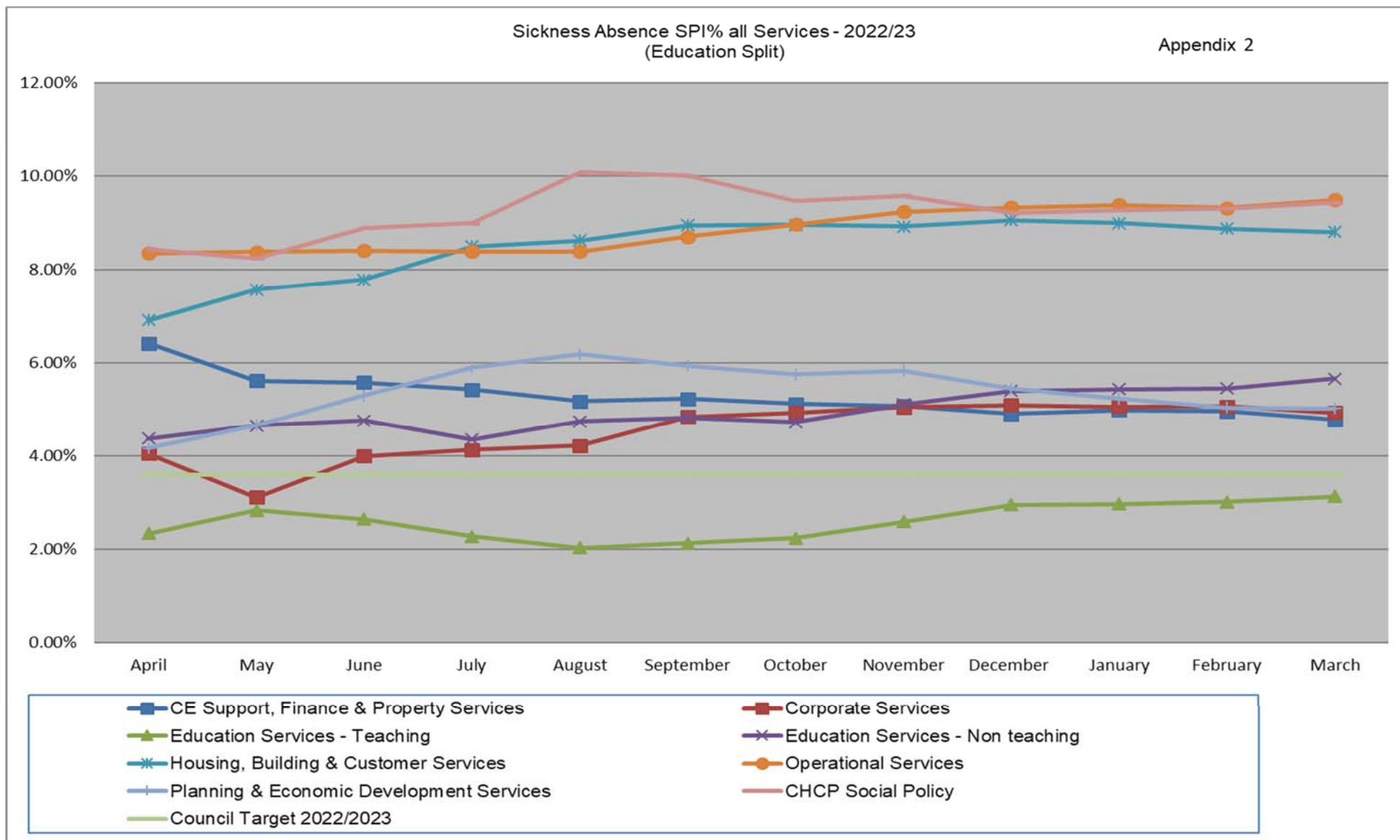
Contact Person: Claire Wallace, Interim HR Services Manager

Lesley Henderson

Interim Head of Corporate Services

07 June 2023





DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE – DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY 2018 - 2023

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP) with a review of the Digital Transformation Strategy 2018/23 including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the PDSP:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Comments on areas for improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| I. | Council Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs • Being honest, open and accountable • Developing employees • Making best use of our resources |
| II. | Policy and Legal | The strategy takes into consideration the Council's Best Values duties in the Local Government Scotland Act (2003). |
| III. | Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV. | Impact on performance and performance indicators | A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This is used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly. |
| V. | Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes. |
| VI. | Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property) | A saving of £0.6m has been delivered as part of the Transforming Your Council programme. |

Capital investment of £850,000 has been made during 2018-2023.

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| VII. | Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required | There has been consultation with the EMT and CMT at regular stages. |
| VIII. | Details of consultations | The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018. |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

The Digital Strategy was designed to support transformation and improvement in a council that is still striving for Excellence. It reaffirmed our commitment to building a culture of continuous improvement that is shared and demonstrated by every member of staff.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

In line with monitoring and reporting requirements for corporate strategies, this report provides an update for 2022/23 on the performance in strategy outcomes and progress in the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The Digital Transformation Strategy is an integral part of a suite of strategies (People Strategy, IT Strategy, Customer Services Strategy, Improvement Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, and Financial Strategy) that, in the round, ensure that the council has digital at the heart of service development. This is within the context of reducing resources and a need to move customers to more effective and efficient service delivery channels.

The Strategy was developed by the Digital Project Group, a cross-council officer group, who used a variety of data such as: the feedback from the TYC consultation, information from the Quality of Life survey, transactional data gathered as part of the former channel shift project, and national and international research. In addition, the Scottish and UK Government's Digital Strategies and the Scottish Digital Partnership priorities were considered.

The strategy was developed around four themes:

1. Digital customers - Our customers use digital channels to interact with the council
2. Digital skills - Enabling and supporting our customers and staff to thrive in a digital age
3. Digital service design - Ensuring our digital ambitions are embedded across the council
4. Digital workplace - Transforming how we work to deliver more effective and efficient services




D.3 Performance Scorecard

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.

The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.


The scorecard will report the last recorded performance in the event that any data for 2022/23 is not available for the period or reporting has been delayed (for example due to external validation processes).

A total of 19 performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	14
 Amber	0
 Red	5

A commentary on the performance and the actions that will be taken to address the performance indicators that were triggering as red or amber is outlined below:

Outcome 1: Digital customers – Our customers use digital channels to interact with the council


 DT003_9a.2 Increasing the number of people aged 75+ supported by technology to remain at home	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
-13.98%	10.00%

The number of people over 75 who are using technology to help them remain at home has decreased in 2022/23 to 2,387. This is a drop of 388 people since the start of the Digital Strategy recording. Reasons attributed to this decrease include: the increasing frailty in this age group – there has been an increase in frailty in this age group and in some instances previously where we would have been able to use technology to support these customers, care packages are now required; and the increasing range of products on the market which serve as competition to our own products.

The TEC team will continue to monitor the take up of the service and ensure that the equipment that we have on offer is meeting the needs of our customers. The Team continue to use a number of different technology solutions as part of the assessment process this includes Just Checking; GPS Safer Walking Devices; and medication prompts/reminders. All are continuing to see consistent, if slower, uptake due to service users still wishing to delay visits during the period of the pandemic.

The upgrade of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) software is complete, this upgrade will fully support the analogue to digital shift. A separate project (but also dependant on the ARC upgrade) is also underway to replace the analogue hub units to digitally capable units in the community and our Housing with Care developments. A project board is in place for this strand of work and is meeting regularly. We have completed service user acceptance testing with a group of 30 people in the community, with minimal issues identified. The equipment supply chain is proving to be challenging and availability of equipment will determine the next stages of the rollout of equipment. We will continue to work in partnership with the national Local Government Digital Office during this next phase of change to ensure we follow best practice and learn from other authorities.

Outcome 2: Digital Skills – Enabling and supporting our customers and staff to thrive in a digital age


 CuCS031a_9b.1c Library Service - Percentage of available public access computer sessions that are used in libraries.	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
11.00%	17.00%

During 2021 a phased approach was used to the reopening of public Access PCs. Although all Public Access PCs opened on the 17 May 2021 the number of PCs available to book were reduced by more than half to ensure the public remained safely socially distanced (2 meters). The target was reduced to 13% to reflect the reduced availability.

The target was increased to 17% in 2022/23 to reflect all Public Access PCs opening to the public.


The performance across libraries in 2022/23 was recorded at 11%. This reflects the slow uptake of public access computers after the COVID-19 pandemic and customers having sourced their own devices throughout lockdown.

The number of hours available in 2022/23 was 177,230, with 19,417 PC sessions allocated to customers.

 DT004 Percentage schools achieving Digital Schools status	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
38.60%	75.00%


Our schools have been making good progress in utilising digital technology to enhance and promote digital learning and teaching. The Digital Schools status is an externally accredited award which schools work towards and have to demonstrate that “digital” is embedded in everything that they do. During the 2020/21 Academic year assessments were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Assessments were reinstated in June 2021. At the end of April 2023, 39 schools/ nurseries have been through the assessment

process, and a further 40 have registered for the process and are gathering the required evidence prior to formal validation. Schools have continued to demonstrate their ability to maximise the use of technology to deliver and support learning and teaching.

 DT006 Percentage of relevant staff completing digital skills training	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
35.48%	90.00%

Following the 2020 digital skills audit further modules have been developed on the e-learning platform focusing on specific digital skills. During the 2022/23 period, a digital-focused training program or session was completed by a total of 1002 members of staff. Among them, 438 individuals finished modules from the council's e-learning platform, while an additional 564 employees completed Microsoft 365 sessions using our 365 platform, which aimed to enhance their knowledge of MS Teams and MS365. The number of modules completed throughout the year within the e-learning platform was 57,643, this is an increase of 9.6%. Currently, there are 135 active modules, marking an increase from the previous year's count of 118 (2021/22).

To cater to the needs of all staff members seeking extra assistance in their digital proficiency, digital skills training is readily available. This training encompasses a wide range of digital tasks applicable both in professional and personal contexts. Furthermore, the Digital Champions have been providing individualised support to aid staff members in accessing resources such as MyHR and the Four Pillars of Wellbeing, fostering their digital skills and overall success.






 P:EDALYS024 Adult Learning – Percentage of Adult Learning students resident in the 20% most disadvantaged areas	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
24%	30.00%

In 2022/23, 24% of the West Lothian residents accessing Adult Learning provision resided in the bottom 20% most deprived areas, as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

This is below the target of 30%. However, 44% of all adult learners reside in the bottom 30% SIMD. New classes are being established in specifically identified areas of multiple deprivation (Fauldhouse, Whitburn, Blackburn, Addiewell) and partnership work is developing with key community groups in these areas.

D.4 Strategy Actions

There are twenty actions to support the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy outcomes. At present, the status of those actions are as follows:

Summary of Action status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Complete	12
 On track	0
 Amber	0
 Red	8
 Unknown	0

The update for each action is included in Appendix 2. A commentary is provided below for any actions that have in 2022/23 significantly progressed, or where actions remain ongoing.

Action: DT 18003 Website refresh
Status: Complete
Objective: More people use the website to find information and transact with the council.

During 2019 the council refreshed and revamped its website based on data from its usage. The new focus was on helping people find easily the information they required as well as allowing customers to transact with the council. In 2022/23 there were 111,970 forms submitted on the website to ask for a service. This is an increase of 16% on the previous year. In March 2023 there were 137,071 users of the site which is an increase of 6,849 on the same time last year (annual total for 2022/23 1,349,627).

When questioned most people said they used the website to look for information. The most popular web pages were the Home page, followed by the school term dates. In March 2023 75.29% accessed the website from a mobile or tablet device, this is an increase of 7.29% from March 2022.

Action: DT 18004 Adopt myaccount as the single sign on
Status: Complete
Objective: Staff and customers find it easier to transact with the council

At the end of March 2022 West Lothian had 57,579 residents with myaccount login credentials, which is 36% of the West Lothian population. As of April 2023, this figure is now 68,370.

This is an increase of almost 11,000 over the last year. Some of this increase is due to the launch of the Parents Portal which is giving parents the ability to transact with schools online. Over 14,000 parents are now using this facility. In addition, the launch of the online bus pass applications has also boosted the number of people with an account. The creation of the customer portal "mywestlothian" has increased customers' ability of utilise online council services. On average 6,000 people use the customer portal every month, and 62% do so from a mobile device.

Action: DT 18008 – Staff skills audit
Status: Complete
Objective: Managers understand the Digital Skills of their staff

The second Digital Skills Audit took place in October 2022 to coincide with Getonline Week. We utilised the national question set developed by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to ensure we could benchmark with other organisations. The question set was built around the five main themes of SCVO's "Essential Digital Skills" and these are; Being Safe, Legal and Confident Online, Communicating, Handling Information and Content, Transacting, and finally Problem Solving. 600 staff participated in the online assessment which was issued.

The Council has continued to grow the number of online courses available to staff as well as investing in specific digital skills training for the MS365 platform. During the summer of 2022 MS365 training was delivered to 564 staff.

Action: DT18011 Mobile technology is deployed to staff working in the field
Status: Complete
Objective: Staff are more efficient

In April 2022 the council started to pilot a different way of working and categorised all posts into one of four categories: fixed, hybrid, mobile and home working. 1,224 staff have been classified as mobile workers. The pilot will be assessed during 2023 to establish what has worked and what may need to be reviewed.

Staff have been given a variety of devices to support these new ways of working and during 2022 the council rolled out the use of MS365 and Teams, following a successful pilot of this during 2021. The MS365 platform allows staff to access emails and other information from any registered device from any location. In addition, Social Policy have purchased a new back office system that will further support flexible and remote working by allowing staff to access the system from any device / location and allow for direct inputting of data during customer visits.

Staff within Operational Services are using mobile devices to log jobs, time spent on jobs and issues. New software has been deployed to waste vehicles to support better and real time management of bin collections.

Action: DT18007 Schools champion digital learning
Status: Active
Objective: Pupils have the necessary digital skills when they leave school

Over the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic the validation activities were delayed, however during the summer term of 2021 the Digital Schools Awards resumed the validation activities. During 2022 activities towards the awards were strengthened and to date 40 West Lothian schools have registered for the award and are gathering the required evidence prior to formal validation.

As at March 2023, 30 Primary Schools, 7 Secondary, 1 ASN and 1 Nursery have been awarded the Digital School status.

Action: DT18010 Paper processes will be reduced
Status: Active
Objective: The council reduces its printing costs

Following the instigation of the flexible working pilot most office-based staff continued to work from home for the majority of the time. This necessitated a change in the way staff undertake their work with many processes being digitised utilising CRM or Objective workflows. There are now 76 workflows built in Objective saving around 368 hours per quarter.

Staff have not had ready access to printers and so have adapted the way meetings have been run with many more online and shared reports. The new HR system launched in November 2020 reduced the need for paper forms, with further work being undertaken with HR to reduce the number of paper forms further. Housing Services have digitised all their paper records and have moved the housing application form online. This has seen a significant reduction in the use of paper within the service. Building Standards have also digitised their forms resulting in a more streamlined process for customers.

The CRM system has now been upgraded and over time should lead to a further reduction of paper forms etc.

Action: DT012 Internal end to end processes are automated and DT016 Systems are integrated

Status: Active

Objective: Transactions are seamless and Systems and data sources are joined up

During 2022/23 the council has consolidated its investment in automation by establishing an internal automation team to assess and develop internal processes via Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and customer facing processes through the Customer Service Centre via workflow and chatbots. The use of Objective workflows is also increasing with 76 workflows active, saving 386 hours per quarter.

To date the team have completed the automation of five processes which are all live with three processes directly involving customer interaction. Additionally, we are actively developing five more processes, which incorporate a mix of customer-facing and internal operations. Furthermore, we have a pipeline of 18 processes that are currently being analysed and reviewed to assess suitability for automation.

Our CRM system has recently undergone an upgrade and transitioned to the cloud. This upgrade enables improved integration with both internal and customer-facing systems, as well as provides enhanced self-service options.

The Revenues Unit have already been able to utilise existing software to automate 150 backend processes creating efficiencies and reducing the time taken to undertake these processes.

Action: DT18017 Customers will receive updates for service delivery

Status: Active

Objective: The council keeps customers informed about the status of their enquiry

Good progress has been made over the last year for this activity. Customers reporting issues to Operational Services receive updates on their request via the Confirm system.

Housing Services are now able to update tenants on their requests, and this process will be further enhanced once the new Housing system is implemented later in 2023.

In addition, Social Policy have purchased a new management information system that will allow customers to be kept up to date with their cases.

The Automation Project has now begun and this also brings functionality allowing customers to be updated.

We are able to use a variety of platforms to do the updates, including email, SMS text and via the customer portal. We have also taken advantage of the UK Governments platform Gov.Notify which simplifies correspondence between the council and the customer.

Action: DT18019 Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in people's homes will be expanded

Status: Active

Objective: Vulnerable people are protected in their homes

The TEC team is currently investigating the use of wearable devices with machine learning capabilities to identify changes in behaviour that may indicate an increased risk of falls. They are still in the early stages of testing. In addition, the team has been trialling video calling technology to provide remote care and support and reduce isolation. The TEC Board is regularly updated on both of these test projects.

As part of the analogue to digital telecare transition, 20% of service users have been equipped with digital telecare alarms in their homes, and more are being deployed daily. However, the supply chain for digital alarms remains a challenge, but the team is working with the Digital Office to improve this as the transition progresses. The team's success in the transition has resulted in the Bronze and Silver "Digital Telecare Implementation Awards" from the Digital Office, and they are working towards the Gold Level 1 award.

To further improve the telecare service, a TEC advisor role was introduced to the new Assessment and Review team, and a TEC presence has been established at the Integrated Discharge Hub at the Hospital to raise awareness and promote the service. Staff members are participating in the Community Connections program and attending two hubs each week to conduct demonstrations and awareness sessions for practice teams and engage with third-party organisations upon request.

E. CONCLUSION

The Digital Transformation Strategy 2018-2023 set out an ambitious programme of change utilising technology to reshape how council services will be delivered.

During 2022/23 we have made further progress in building up our digital services, and our customers are benefitting from this. Other activity that is underway will take longer to realise the benefits to both the council and our customers.

The actions that have not been completed within the strategy timeframe will be progressed over the next year as new digital outcomes are developed.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23](#)

[Digital-Transformation-Strategy-2018-23](#)

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1: Digital Transformation Strategy Scorecard

Appendix 2: Digital Transformation Strategy Action Plan Update

Contact Person: David Maule, Corporate Transformation Manager
E mail: david.maule@westlothian.gov.uk Phone 01506 28108

Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive






7 June 2023

Appendix 1






Digital Transformation Strategy 2018-23

06. Corporate Strategy - Digital Transformation Strategy 2018-23





(a) Outcome 1 - Digital Customers – Our customers use digital channels to interact with the council.

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:CC089_6a.7 Percentage of web users who rated their experience of the web as good or excellent	2022/23	61%	65%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT001_9b.2 Number of customer website transactions as a percentage of total customer transactions	2022/23	51.24%	50%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT002_9b.2 Percentage of West Lothian population with a Myaccount log-in	2022/23	36.22%	20%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT003_9a.2 Increasing the number of people aged 75+ supported by technology to remain at home	2022/23	-13.98%	10%	Head of Social Policy (Jo MacPherson)
	P:REV125_9b Percentage of self-service payment transactions (excluding direct debit) received through the income management system	2022/23	46.87%	40%	Head of Finance and Property Services (D Forrest)






(b) Outcome 2 - Digital Skills – Enabling and supporting our customers and staff to thrive in a digital age

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	CuCS031a_9b.1c Library Service - Percentage of available public access computer sessions that are used in libraries.	2022/23	11%	17%	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	DT004_9a Percentage of schools achieving digital status	2022/23	38.6%	75%	DCE Dr Elaine Cook
	DT005_9a Percentage of staff assessing they have basic digital skills	2022/23	96%	90%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT006_9a Percentage of relevant staff completing digital skills training	2022/23	35.48%	90%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:EDALYS 024_9b Adult Learning - Percentage of Adult Learning students resident in the 20% most disadvantaged areas	2022/23	24%	30%	Head of Education (Secondary - Siobhan McGarty)

(c) Outcome 3 - Digital service design – Ensuring our digital ambitions are embedded across the council Description




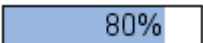




Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	DT007_9a Percentage of core business processes mapped	2022/23	89.02%	90%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT008_9b.2 Cumulative percentage reduction in print volumes	2022/23	84.09%	60%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT010_9a Percentage reduction in the number of manual processes	2022/23	82%	50%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT011_9b.2 Percentage of system interfaces implemented to support Digital Transformation	2022/23	80%	50%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)





(d) Outcome 4 - Digital workplace –Transforming how we work to deliver more effective and efficient services









Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	DT012_9a Percentage of relevant staff using mobile devices/technology to undertake their job	2022/23	69.72%	50%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT013_9a Percentage of staff with access to the council's intranet and related online support services	2022/23	100%	100%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT014_9b.2 Number of residents using public access Wi-Fi as a percentage of West Lothian population	2022/23	16.24%	10%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT015_6a.2 Percentage of customer satisfaction with public access Wi-Fi	2022/23	93.3%	75%	Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT016_9b.2 Council participation in the Digital Office programme	2022/23	88.89%	70%	DCE Graeme Struthers







Appendix 2


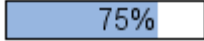

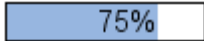


Action Plan




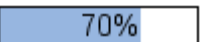
Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Business process mapping activity	DT18001_A	Karen Cawte; Rebecca Kelly		<p>20-Mar-2023 The Council continued its investment in the Engage Process Modeller to support services to map and cost a whole range of processes. There are now 18 staff trained to use the tool, and 116 processes have been mapped using the software. The software is also being used to review processes that could be potentially automated.</p> <p>In addition, the software is being utilised to support process change and optimisation. Four cohorts of staff, 82 in total, have been trained in Service Design techniques which have focused on employing user research and customer journey mapping as well as ideation and prototyping. This has led to a number of services being redesigned with customers at the heart of the delivery; for example, school transport, Social Policy cash payments and the Community Equipment Store.</p>
	Create digital foundations on which all systems are based	DT18002_A	Karen Cawte		<p>20-Mar-2023 Further work has been undertaken within services to remove the need for signatures on internal processes and use Objective workflows instead. There are now 76 active workflows. Attention is now focusing on where we currently collect wet signatures for customers, to input a digital solution to this where that is legally possible.</p> <p>Guidance has been issued to services about the use of the One Scotland Gazetteer for addresses when upgrading or purchasing new systems and is included in the new contract strategy documentation.</p> <p>Applications for Young Scot cards and Under 22 bus passes can now also been made online. Services are increasing the use of the national "myaccount" as the authentication method for customers to access a range of services. There are now 67222 residents with a myaccount log in. The latest service is the ability to vote on proposals through the Community Choices programme.</p>
	Website refresh	DT18003_A	Karen Cawte; Garry Heron		<p>05-May-2023 The redesigned website was launched in November 2019. As part of the redesign a new room booking functions has been included. In November 2019 there were 166866 visits to the site, with the pages relating to the general election seeing the biggest increases. 61% of customers surveyed rated their experience as excellent or good. There were 4270 online forms submitted during November with the largest amount of these relating to applications for primary and secondary school places.</p>
	Adopt myaccount as the single logon	DT18004_A	Karen Cawte; Garry Heron		<p>05-May-2023 There has been a further increase in the number of residents that have signed up for a myaccount login. There are currently 67,222 residents using the account. The increase is due to a number of factors, including the number of parents using the parenstportal. scot for school payments etc, now at 14,040 linked to 20251 children; the number of people using the National Entitlement Card (NEC) for bus passes etc and residents accessing the Community Choices portal which allows residents to have a say about a range of council services and also help to determine where council money is spent.</p>

	Corporate approach to public wifi	DT18005_A	Jennifer Ballantyne; Karen Cawte	<div><div>100%</div></div>	<p>20-Apr-2022 The Council has implemented Public access Wi-Fi in all its Partnership Centres as well as a number of libraries and community centres. There are 44 sites in total. In addition, public access Wi-Fi has been installed in care homes and residential settings to support residents to interact with family and friends, as well as being able to carry out online transactions.</p> <p>Because many of the public buildings are only just coming back into full use following the Covid 19 Pandemic, overall usage levels are being slow to pick up. This will be monitored closely and steps taken to encourage further use to support customers on low incomes etc.</p>
	Work with the Digital Partnership	DT18006_A	Karen Cawte	<div><div>100%</div></div>	<p>20-Mar-2023 During 2022/23 the Digital Office has gone through further change and staffing arrangements. It has refocused its work into nine portfolios which include Common Platforms, Cyber Security, Data, Digital Leadership and skills, Digital Assurance, Digital Telecare, Internet of Things, Robotic Process Automation, and Service Design. Council Officers are involved in eight of these portfolios, the only one we are missing is Digital Assurance which is being taken forward by a small Team of IT professionals.</p> <p>Following a visit from the Chief Digital Officer in December 2022 the Council will be progressing the Digital Maturity Assessment during 2023. A re-focused partnership will be established once the council has agreed its strategic digital priorities.</p>
	Schools champion digital learning	DT18007_A	Karen Cawte; Laura Compton	<div><div>60%</div></div>	<p>20-Mar-2023 Over the period of the Covid 19 Pandemic the validation activities were delayed, however during the summer term of 2021 the Digital Schools Awards resumed the validation activities. During 2022 activities towards the awards were strengthened and to date another 40 West Lothian schools have registered for the award and are gathering the required evidence prior to formal validation.</p> <p>In March 2023, 30 Primary Schools, 7 Secondary, 1 ASN and 1 Nursery have been awarded the Digital School status.</p>
	Staff skills audit	DT18008_A	Karen Cawte	<div><div>100%</div></div>	<p>04-May-2023 The second Digital Skills Audit took place in October 2020 to coincide with Get Online Week. We utilised the national question set developed by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to ensure we could benchmark with other organisations. The question set was built around the five main themes of SCVO's "Essential Digital Skills" and these are; Being Safe, Legal and Confident Online, Communicating, Handling Information and Content, Transacting, and finally Problem Solving.</p> <p>Staff were asked to complete an online assessment, and all staff had access to this via their work or personal emails. 600 staff responded, which was significantly reduced from the 2018 survey. This was due in part to the use of a "global email" from IT Services that did not highlight the subject matter.</p> <p>Across all skillsets there was an increase in the reporting of digital skills. Of the results from the 28 questions, only one question saw a reduction (of 1%) in positive answers.</p> <p>The Customer and Digital Board considered a report on the skills audit in December 2020 and the 55 Digital Champions have put together a programme of learning events to support colleagues in the areas where skillsets were judged to be lower. In addition, online learning modules have been created that all staff have access to</p>

	Digital skills training created to meet demand	DT18009_A	Karen Cawte; Lesley Henderson		<p>20-Mar-2023 The council has continued to invest in its e-learning platform, and has employed a Graduate to support progress and further development. There are now 135 courses available on the e-learning platform. The specific "digital" courses range from overviews on the councils' core systems to modules focusing on being safe online. Modules to support the rollout of the MS365 platform were a major feature during 2022/23. In addition, training around the use and features of Microsoft Teams has been ongoing. This training is accessible via the MS Teams site and we ran specific sessions with the Microsoft trainers to support staff in the use of the platform 564 staff attended the sessions</p> <p>In addition, the Digital Champions have access to other online learning resources to support their colleagues. We have engaged with the Champions to assess their capabilities and created a skills matrix to understand who has particular skills in what areas. We are working with the Champions to create a marketing campaign to alert colleagues to the support that is available.</p>
	Paper processes will be reduced	DT18010_A	Karen Cawte; Rebecca Kelly		<p>20-Mar-2023 Following the instigation of the flexible working pilot most office-based staff continued to work from home for the majority of the time. This necessitated a change in the way staff undertake their work with many processes being digitised utilising CRM or Objective workflows. There are now 76 workflows built in Objective saving around 368 hours per quarter.</p> <p>Staff have not had ready access to printers and so have adapted the way meetings have been run with many more online and shared reports. The new HR system launched in November 2020 and this again reduced the need for paper forms, with further work being undertaken with HR to reduce the number of paper forms again. Housing Services have digitised all their paper records and have moved the housing application form online. This has seen a significant reduction in the use of paper within the service. Building Standards have also digitised their forms resulting in a more streamlined process for customers.</p> <p>The CRM system has now been upgraded and over time should lead to a further reduction of paper forms etc,</p>
	Mobile technology is deployed to staff working in the field	DT18011_A	Karen Cawte; Isobel Meek		<p>20-Mar-2023 In April 2022 the council started to pilot a different way of working and categorised all posts into one of four categories: fixed, hybrid, mobile and home working. 1224 staff have been classified as mobile workers. The pilot will be assessed during 2023 to establish what has worked and what needs to be changed</p> <p>Staff have been given a variety of devices to support these new ways of working and during 2022 the council rolled out the use of MS365 and Teams, following a successful pilot of this during 2021. The MS365 platform allows staff to access emails and other information from any registered device from any location. In addition, Social Policy have purchased a new back office system that will further support flexible and remote working by allowing staff to access the system from any device / location and allow for direct inputting of data during customer visits.</p> <p>Staff within Operational Services are using mobile devices to log jobs, time spent on jobs and issues. New software has been deployed to waste vehicles to support better and real time management of bin collections.</p>
	Internal end to end transactions are automated	DT18012_A	Karen Cawte; Rebecca Kelly		<p>20-Mar-2023 During 2022/23 the council has consolidated its investment in automation by establishing an internal automation team to assess and develop internal processes via Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and customer facing processes through the Customer Service</p>

					<p>Centre via workflow and chatbots. The use of Objective workflows is also increasing with 76 workflows active, saving 386 hours per quarter.</p> <p>We have ongoing development of eight mostly internal processes and a pipeline of a further 26 are being analysed and planned. The CRM system has been upgraded and moved to the cloud. This will support better integration with other internal and customer facing systems and support more self-service options.</p> <p>Revenues Services has already been able to utilise its existing software to automate 150 of its backend processes creating efficiencies and reducing the time taken to undertake these processes.</p>
	The number of systems used is reduced	DT18013_A	Karen Cawte; Alastair Marshall		<p>20-Mar-2023 The first systems review programme has completed and it achieved savings of £120,000 and reduced the number of systems by 25. As we learn more about the functionality available to us in the MS365 platform and change our operating models, a new programme of systems reviews will begin to support the WL028 budget measures.</p>
	Digital skills training will focus on those most in need	DT18014_A	Karen Cawte; Laura Wilson		<p>20-Mar-2023 The Digital Inclusion Group, a Community Planning Partnership led initiative, agreed and updated a detailed action plan to support customers who are digitally excluded. Over the year the group has widened its membership and has continued to support vulnerable individuals, particularly on the back of the successful Scottish Governments Connecting Scotland programme. West Lothian has received over 1800 devices from the programme to distribute initially to those people who were shielding but need support to get online. The second wave of the programme saw a particular focus on care experienced young people, and families where there is unemployment and the third wave of the programme concentrated on older people.</p> <p>The councils Adult Learning and Access2Employment services worked together to support individuals with their digital skills. Both services have adapted their digital programme to be able to deliver this online rather than face to face. To supplement this learning new printed resources have been created to help people get started in their digital journeys.</p>
	Further develop web-based learning and development	DT18015_A	Karen Cawte; Lesley Henderson		<p>20-Mar-2023 The council has continued to invest in its e-learning platform, and has employed a Graduate to support progress and further development. There are now 135 courses available on the e-learning platform. The specific "digital" courses range from overviews on the councils' core systems to modules focusing on being safe online. Modules to support the rollout of the MS365 platform were a major feature during 2022/23. In addition, training around the use and features of Microsoft Teams has been ongoing. This training is accessible via the MS Teams site and we ran specific sessions with the Microsoft trainers to support staff in the use of the platform 564 staff attended the sessions</p>

	Systems are integrated	DT18016_A	Karen Cawte		<p>20-Mar-2023</p> <p>During 2022/23 the council has consolidated its investment in automation by establishing an internal automation team to assess and develop internal processes via Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and customer facing processes through the Customer Service Centre via workflow and chatbots. The use of Objective workflows is also increasing with 76 workflows active, saving 386 hours per quarter.</p> <p>We have ongoing development of eight mostly internal processes and a pipeline of a further 26 are being analysed and planned. The CRM system has been upgraded and moved to the cloud. This will support better integration with other internal and customer facing systems and support more self-service options.</p> <p>Revenues Services has already been able to utilise its existing software to automate 150 of its backend processes creating efficiencies and reducing the time taken to undertake these processes.</p>
	Customers will receive updates for service delivery	DT18017_A	Karen Cawte		<p>20-Mar-2023 Good progress has been made over the last year for this activity. Customers reporting issues to Operational Services receive updates on their request via the Confirm system. Housing Services are now able to update tenants on their requests, and this process will be further enhanced once the new Housing system is implemented later in 2023. In addition, Social Policy have purchased a new management system that will allow customers to be kept up to date with their cases. The Automation Project has now begun and this also brings functionality allowing customers to be updated.</p> <p>We are able to use a variety of platforms to do the updates, including email, SMS text and via the customer portal. We have also taken advantage of the UK Governments platform Gov.Notify which simplifies correspondence between the council and the customer.</p>
	Self-service is implemented across the council	DT18018_A	Karen Cawte		<p>20-Mar-2023 Greater use is now being made of the mywestlothian customer portal with 67222 customers registered. That equates to 36% of the population. Particularly popular is the ParentsPortal with over 14,000, parents registered. On a monthly basis around 7,800 forms are submitted. The "top 20" requests account for 82% of all forms submitted, with Operational Services accounting for almost a third e.g. missed bins, reporting potholes, ordering new bins etc. During 2022/23 overall, ??? forms were submitted using the customer portal. This is an increase of ??? on the previous year.</p> <p>The staff self-service through the new MyHR was launched in autumn 2020 and now all staff have access to this portal to update their records, access their payslips and request holidays. Managers are also able to manage all HR related matters using this software.</p>

	Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in people's homes will be expanded	DT18019_A	Karen Cawte; Isobel Meek		<p>05-May-2023 The TEC team is currently investigating the use of wearable devices with machine learning capabilities to identify changes in behaviour that may indicate an increased risk of falls. They are still in the early stages of testing. In addition, the team has been trialling video calling technology to provide remote care and support and reduce isolation. The TEC Board is regularly updated on both of these test projects.</p> <p>As part of the analogue to digital telecare transition, 20% of service users have been equipped with digital telecare alarms in their homes, and more are being deployed daily. However, the supply chain for digital alarms remains a challenge, but the team is working with the Digital Office to improve this as the transition progresses. The team's success in the transition has resulted in the Bronze and Silver "Digital Telecare Implementation Awards" from the Digital Office, and they are working towards the Gold Level 1 award.</p> <p>To further improve the telecare service, a TEC advisor role was introduced to the new Assessment and Review team, and a TEC presence has been established at the Integrated Discharge Hub at the Hospital to raise awareness and promote the service. Staff members are participating in the Community Connections program and attending two hubs each week to conduct demonstrations and awareness sessions for practice teams and engage with third-party organizations upon request.</p>
	Share and use data across the council	DT18020_A	Karen Cawte; Rebecca Kelly		<p>20-Mar-2023 The council has continued to support the national Driven by Data project which is being led by the Digital Office for Local Government. In response to the Audit Scotland Report "Digital Progress in Local Government", the council has undertaken a Data Maturity Assessment supported by officers from Scottish Government. The Assessment has highlighted areas where the Council has a strong approach to the use of data. This includes culture, specific data and the use of that data. Areas that have been indicated as requiring some improvement include tools, analysis and skills.</p> <p>The Customer and Digital Transformation Board considered the Data Maturity Assessment at its meeting in June 2022 and agreed that there will be a focus on data in the revised suite of strategies that the council will approve during 2023.</p>

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CORPORATE STRATEGY – INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY 2018/23 END OF STRATEGY REVIEW

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides an end of strategy review of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| I. | Council Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs • Being honest, open and accountable • Developing employees • Making best use of our resources |
| II. | Policy and Legal | None |
| III. | Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV. | Impact on performance and performance indicators | A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This will be used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly. |
| V. | Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes. |

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| VI. | Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property) | None. |
| VII. | Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required | There has been consultation with the EMT and CMT at regular stages. |
| VIII. | Details of consultations | The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018. |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

The council is committed to maximising the use of technology to support the delivery of efficient services for our customers. The strategy focused on ICT as an enabler for improving efficiency across the council, achieving compliance with legislation and regulatory factors to ensure the council continued to securely provide transformed services.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

Each year an annual update on the strategy has been reported to this PDSP to support scrutiny and assure members of progress in the agreed actions. In line with reporting arrangements, and as 2022/23 is the last year of the strategy period, this report will provide both the annual update on performance (against the target) in 2022/23 in each of the strategy outcomes and provide a final update on the status of the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The ICT Strategy is designed to provide a framework for the council to make best use of its ICT infrastructure and maximise efficiencies through the use of technology whilst securing the councils network from cyber threats and supporting business transformation.

The strategy outcomes are:

1. The council will make best use of technology solutions

2. The council recognises council systems have to be protected from cyber-attack
3. Supporting business systems and transformation

D.3 COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the most significant public health emergency that the UK has faced in generations. The lockdown restrictions first put in place by the UK and Scottish Government on 23 March 2020 placed significant restrictions on the ability of people to meet, travel and attend work and has had a huge impact nationally and locally on businesses, communities and residents.

The restrictions put in place meant that many council staff were required to work from home. The restrictions remained in place over both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years and were removed in full at the start of the 2022/23 financial year. The introduction of the flexible working pilot demonstrated the benefits of investment made in technology pre and post the pandemic with an ongoing requirement to facilitate mobile and remote working throughout the council.





Despite restrictions imposed by the pandemic, IT Services have continued to deliver projects in support of Transforming Your Council, the Capital Programme and service led demands.

D.4 Performance Scorecard

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.


The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.

A total of fourteen performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	12
 Amber	2
 Red	0
 Unknown	0


A commentary on the performance and the corrective action that will be taken to address the performance indicators that were triggering as amber is outlined:

Outcome 2: Securing the council's infrastructure, system and data

 Indicator: P:ITS065_9b.1c Annual Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance certification	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
99%	100%

During 2022/23, the council's PSN/Cyber approved project progressed various security and software compliance activities over the course of the year, which also included an external health check audit of the council's ICT estate. The council's PSN submission to the Cabinet Office was made in March 2023, with ongoing work in relation to the council's remediation plan, following correspondence, continuing with the cabinet office awaiting certification.






Outcome 3: Supporting business systems and transformation

 Indicator: P:ITS73_9b.2 Percentage of Customers who Rated the Overall Performance in Project Management as Good or Excellent	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
88%	100%

Performance during 2022/23 was below the overall trend during the lifetime of the current strategy, with performance consistently at 100%. 2 of the completed survey returns for all projects, rated the overall performance as adequate. Additional feedback on key themes were also identified and will be progressed with the Service, Programme and Portfolio Manager to progress moving forward during 2023/24.

D.5 Strategy Actions

There are sixteen actions to support the delivery of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy outcomes. At present, the status of those actions are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	
 Completed	15
 Not Started; In Progress; Assigned	0
 Unassigned; Check Progress	0
 Overdue; Neglected	1
 Cancelled	0

The update for each action is included in Appendix 2.

Fifteen of the actions have been completed and one has been delayed. A commentary is provided below for the one action delayed.

Action: Connect Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Digital Services to the Council Network

Status: Delayed

Objective: Provide advice and guidance on the interfaces and security required by the TEC programme for connecting to the council's network.

Delays in suppliers bringing to market devices suitable for use on digital telephone networks has impacted this indicator significantly to date. In addition, due to the pandemic, a global shortage of electronic components has severely restricted the supply of digital devices that are required to replace existing analogue hubs in the home. Currently only 745 units out of a required 3700 have been received to date. However, as a result of product development, a newly released digital hub, which ensures a full end to end digital solution, is currently under trial to move forward and fulfil the outstanding devices that required to be replaced, Tunstall the council's digital telecare partner has advised that current stock levels will allow the council to procure the outstanding 2955 units. It is anticipated that training and user accepting testing of the new devices will be completed by August to allow for the roll out of devices to commence.

E. CONCLUSION

The ICT Strategy 2018/23 set out how the council would seek to make best use of its ICT infrastructure and maximise efficiencies through the use of technology whilst securing the council's network from cyber threats and supporting business transformation.

The ICT Strategy 2018/23 and three outcomes have remained relevant to the Council and aligned to make best use of its ICT infrastructure and maximise efficiencies through the use of technology whilst securing the council's network from cyber threats and supporting business transformation.

Progress and performance during the strategy has produced positive results in the development of technology to support service delivery, increased performance and improved customer experience. The ICT Programme Board has also contributed to the successful governance and delivery of the ICT strategy.

The council will also continue to use its response to the Covid-19 pandemic to positively challenge service delivery, in order that the council can maximise opportunities to make West Lothian a smarter, healthier, wealthier, fairer and greener place to live and work in.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23](#)

[West Lothian Council Information Communication Technology \(ICT\) Strategy 2018/23](#)

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1: Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2018-23 Scorecard

Appendix 2: Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2018-23 Action Plan Update

Contact Person: Ian Forrest

E mail: ian.forrest@westlothian.gov.uk Phone 01506 281081

Lesley Henderson
Interim Head of Corporate Services

07 June 2023





APPENDIX 1

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2018-23

(a) Outcome 1 - Ongoing sustainability of the ICT infrastructure and systems to support the use of technology solutions which improve efficiency and effectiveness







Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:ITS032_9b.1c Annual Percentage availability of the IT Data Network.	2022/23	99.85%	99.9%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS071_9b.2 Maintain Optimum Server Processing Capacity	2022/23	26%	75%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS072_9b.2 Percentage of Annual Service Continuity Test that Supports WLC1 Business Continuity Plans	2022/23	100%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

(b) Outcome 2 - Securing the council's infrastructure, systems and data

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:ITS054_7b.3 Percentage of staff with an email account who have completed the council's mandatory training courses	2022/23	98.8%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS063_9b.2 Percentage of Cyber Risk Assessments	2022/23	100%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS064_9b.2 Annual Cyber Essential Plus Accreditation	2022/23	100%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS065_9b.1c Annual Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance certification	2022/23	99%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)













	P:ITS080_9b.2 Percentage of Cyber Protection Software on Microsoft Windows Devices	2022/23	100%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
---	--	---------	------	------	--











(c) Outcome 3 - Supporting business systems and transformation




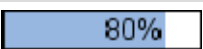





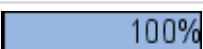
Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:ITS066_9b.2 Percentage of systems interfaces implemented to support Digital Transformation	2022/23	81%	50%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS067_9b.2 Percentage of Analogue to Digital Conversations for Technology Enabled Care Connections within Social Care	2022/23	80%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS068_9b.2 Percentage of projects contributing to Digital Transformation	2022/23	100%	80%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS069_9b.2 Percentage of open Application Programme Interfaces (APIs) in use	2022/23	75%	50%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS070_9b.2 Percentage reduction in Storage Area Network (SAN) usage	2022/23	66.5%	50%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:ITS073_9b.2 Percentage of Customers who Rated the Overall Performance in Project Management as Good or Excellent	2022/23	88%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

APPENDIX 2

Action Plan

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Infrastructure Investment	ITS18001_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 Work completed during 2022/23 ensured all planned infrastructure projects incorporated with the capital programme, were delivered successfully. This included desktops, laptops, corporate servers, education and public access devices, work on progressing upgrades to Objective, Windows 10, IT Management systems and continued progression of IPT and softphone use. Migration and delivery to all secondary schools new and improved wireless coverage, providing coverage in every teaching space.
	Upgrade Microsoft Product Suite	ITS18002_A	Ian Forrest		20-May-2022 Work to address the outstanding issues have now been completed.
	Upgrade the Corporate Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system	ITS18003_A	Ian Forrest		19-May-2021 The Upgrade of ECM was performed during 2019/20 with no requirement for enhancement during 20/21, further upgrades may be required during the lifetime of the strategy and communication with the supplier is ongoing to understand when this may be required.
	Mobile applications and devices can access council systems	ITS18004_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 The introduction of M365 allowed the migration from Blackberry device management platform to Intune, Microsoft's management platform. This enabled the use of multi factor authentication incorporating the councils active directory, further protecting the applications and devices ensuring the council meets cyber essentials accreditation.
	Implement IT Service Continuity Management (ITSCM)	ITS18005_A	Ian Forrest		19-May-2021 The required changes to the IT Project Management methodology was approved May 2019 by the ICTPB, this will be reviewed annually during the lifetime of the strategy.
	Securing the council's infrastructure, systems and data	ITS18006_A	Ian Forrest		14-May-2021 Capital spend from the 10 year capital plan ensures that relevant security controls and systems remain in place, up to date and effective. Additional engagement with the wider public sector security

					community has provided benefits form early intervention and insight into techniques and information useful in securing the councils networks and systems.
	Achieve PSN Compliance	ITS18007_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 During 2022/23. the PSN/Cyber approved project, progressed activities over the course of the year, which also included an external health check audit of the councils IT estate. The councils PSN submission to the Cabinet Office was made in March 2023, with ongoing work in relation to the councils remediation plan, following correspondence, continuing with the cabinet office and outstanding work assessment updates. The council remains connected to the PSN network awaiting accreditation, which is expected by June 2023. -
	Achieve Cyber Essential Plus accreditation	ITS18008_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 Work to progress Cyber Essentials was completed, with certification being achieved. However, as a result of changes within the Plus programme and the requirement for all externally hosted system to have 2 factor user account authentication, further work is ongoing with suppliers to asses the impact and cost to achieving this accreditation. This will require a review of the associated risks and benefits of the plus accreditation moving forward and will be reported to the ICTPB following the project closure, with any actions taken forward and progressed as appropriate.
	Implement cyber incident reporting	ITS18009_A	Ian Forrest		14-May-2021 The council has completed its internal review of cyber reporting. Staff within IT Services are part of and are subscribed to groups including CiSP (Cyber intelligence sharing platform) CREW (cyber resilience emergency warnings), Scottish Local Government Security Group and the protective DNS programme (pDNS) to enable the receipt and sharing of cyber threat intelligence, warnings and mitigations and reporting within a managed network of related security professionals across government and trusted commercial partners.
	Improve cyber security awareness across the council	ITS18010_A	Ian Forrest		13-May-2021 Cyber Security/Malware training module for all staff is a mandatory on Moodle, this will be reviewed annually to evolve with new threats.
	Reduce the number of systems that provide similar functionality	ITS18011_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 Further reviews of systems continued during 2022/23 with updates provided to the Customer and Digital Programme Board on progress made or under development. This process is now mature and further discussions on management of new IT procurements by services, to ensure a consistent approach, including review gateway, can be introduced in due course.

	Employ appropriate project management methodology	ITS18012_A	Ian Forrest		14-May-2021 The action plan created following a review of the Audit Scotland (Principles for a digital future - lessons learned from public sector projects) GAP Analysis, was progressed during 2020 following a detailed plan and appropriate owners across the council. The IT Project and Management Framework was then updated and approved at the August 2020 Information Communication Technology Programme Board.
	Connect Technology Enabled Care (TEC) digital services to the Council's network	ITS18013_A	Ian Forrest		10-May-2023 During 2022/23 a further 545 (745 cumulatively during the strategy) digital hubs were installed in homes which continued to be impacted by component shortages. However, as a result of product development, a newly released digital hub, which ensures a full end to end digital solution, is currently under trial to move forward and fulfil the outstanding devices that required to be replaced, Tunstall the councils digital telecare partner has advise that current stock levels will allow the council to procure the outstanding 2955 units. It is anticipated that training and user accepting testing of the new devices will be completed by August to allow for the roll out of devices to commence.
	Business Intelligence	ITS18014_A	Ian Forrest		11-May-2023 Continued work from robotics and automation has seen many additional new automated processes and integration between system during 2022/23. In addition, increased use of M365 has seen work to introduce digital forms and processes enabling the use of mobile technologies to increase performance and intelligence, the M365 project is also exploring the use of Sharepoint and Power BI as platform to further enhance the use of data within the council by means of a centralised data lake and use of real time dash boards. These activities will continue to be explored and progressed following testing and development with associated services.
	Artificial Intelligence	ITS18015_A	Ian Forrest		14-May-2021 The robotics and automation project is currently in Stage 2 - Define and is identifying processes which are likely to benefit from a robotic automation approach.
	Software as a Services (SaaS)	ITS18016_A	Ian Forrest		14-May-2021 The software used to manage the Smartphone estate is being provided as Software as a Service following a change of supplier in late February / March 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

END OF CORPORATE STRATEGY UPDATE – IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2018/23

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a review of the Improvement Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress in the planned actions and an overview of the performance during the period. The Strategy covers the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes;
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This will be used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT**D.1 Background**

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

The Improvement Strategy was designed to support transformation and improvement in a council that is still striving for Excellence. It reaffirmed our commitment to building a culture of continuous improvement that is shared and demonstrated by every member of staff.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

Each year an annual update on the strategy has been reported to this PDSP to support scrutiny and assure members of progress in the agreed actions. In line with reporting arrangements, and as 2022/23 is the last year of the strategy period, this report will provide both the annual update on performance (against the target) in 2022/23 in each of the strategy outcomes and provide a final update on the status of the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The Improvement Strategy 2018/23 is designed to support effective governance, the efficient management of resources and development of a resilient culture that will help deliver effective, valued services to the local community.

The council has a strong record of providing high performing services and the strategy sets out the ways and means that the council will drive continuous improvement in services and ensure delivery of key priorities and outcomes.

The strategy outcomes are:

1. West Lothian Council is high performing and achieving
2. The council effectively controls and utilises data assets
3. Services are self aware and improving

D.3 Strategy Overview

The council is recognised as one of the top performing local authorities in Scotland and has an unwavering commitment to delivering the highest quality services to local people in West Lothian.

The Improvement Strategy in the last five years has sought to build on that strong foundation and support the continuous improvement culture in the council. During the period, the strategy has provided a focus for some key workstreams and improvements, including:

- Developing a priority-based corporate and service planning approach in the council, with a particular focus on engaging customers, staff and partners in the development and review of strategic plans.
- Maintaining robust performance management arrangements that provide an in-depth view of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the wider impact of the council on the community.
- Enhancing internal improvement and scrutiny approaches with the development of a new self-assessment process – based on a globally recognised improvement model (EFQM).
- Enhancing the quality of performance data and information, with a particular focus on improving the quality of information that is provided to elected members and the public.
- Undertaken a range of improvement activities that are intended to improve the customer experience and/or efficiency of council services and processes.

In the last five years, the council has maintained strong performance in the key outcomes and was consistently ranked in the top three performing authorities in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

The council has also maintained accreditation in the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard. This was reviewed annually and provides external validation of the quality of service provision and performance of the council and evidences the strong corporate commitment to putting customers at the heart of everything that we do.





D.4 Red Performance Indicators

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.

The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.

The scorecard will report the last recorded performance in the event that any data for 2022/23 are not available for the period or reporting has been delayed (for example due to external validation processes).

A total of 13 performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	6
 Amber	2
 Red	3
 Unknown	2

**Note: Unknown status occurs when a service does not record performance during the period, for example, if the service did not receive any requests to process*

It should be noted that during the period of the strategy a number of scrutiny activities were suspended in 2020/21 and part of 2021/22, as the council shifted resources from internal process to support frontline, priority activities. For example, this included the self-evaluation processes in council services and schools being suspended and a reduction in corporate review of public performance reporting. It also resulted in the council pausing progress on some the strategy actions, though this was recovered during the final 18 months of the strategy.

In evidence of the positive performance in the strategy, the council has:

- Maintained strong performance in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, with the majority of indicators placing in quartiles 1 and 2 and the council achieved an average ranking in the top 3 performing authorities throughout the period.
- The average service score in the WLAM (self-assessment) process increased from a baseline of 528 (out of 1,000) in 2018/19 to 623 in 2022/23. This is a global improvement tool and the current average score would compare well when benchmarked with organisations in other sectors.
- The council is working to improve compliance in Information Governance and has undertaken a range of activities to improve arrangements and council-wide performance in information handling, including a review of the policy, procedures and supports. There have had no referrals to Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the last three years.

A commentary on the performance and the corrective actions that will be taken to address the performance indicators that were triggering as red is outlined below:

Outcome 1: The Council is high performing and achieving

Percentage of Corporate Plan priority indicators achieving target performance		
Performance 2021/22	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
42.9%	75%	80%

There is habitually a lag in the reporting for key indicators in the Corporate Plan. This is due to external validation processes (e.g. Scottish Qualification Authority, Local Government Benchmarking Framework and other external regulators), which is why the current performance shown is for 2021/22.


Throughout the period the council has fell below the annual stretch targets ranging between 70 to 80%. Following analysis of the 48 indicators in the scorecard, there were a high number of indicators that were consistently within a tolerable range of the ambitious targets that were set in 2018/19, many indicators missing the target value by a few percentage points.

The council has demonstrated strong performance across the eight priorities during the period, achieving positive outcomes for West Lothian in critical areas of service provision, including school attainment, support for lower income households, housing support, support for business during the pandemic, social care services and a range of regulatory and environmental services.

The impact of the pandemic in two out of the five years of the strategy and Corporate Plan can be viewed in some parts of the council that saw either increased levels of demand or

had aspects of service provision limited by Government restrictions. The recovery and remobilisation in 2021/22 onwards did see performance in most impacted services increase to pre-pandemic levels.

There is focused improvement required in some key outcomes and this will continue to be managed carefully by officers, with updates reported via the public performance reporting and committee arrangements.

 Percentage of council services on the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) Review Panel annual cycle	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
56%	5%


The council aims to manage high risk and performance issues effectively and takes action to ensure that services in those categories receive additional support and/or additional scrutiny to help them improve.

The strategy covers two separate WLAM programmes, with the new process introduced in 2022/23. The programme was suspended for two years (2020/21 and 2021/22) during which there was a full review of the self-assessment approach and adoption of a new, more challenging quality model – EFQM 2020.

Thereafter, the council management team elected to put all services previously assessed as carrying a higher level of risk (due to; operational impact, performance issues or undertaking transformational change) in the first year of the new WLAM programme. This started in 2022/23 and has resulted in a higher than expected (at the start of the strategy) number of services on the annual cycle in this year.

In 2022/23, a total of 9 services undertook an assessment with 5 being placed on an annual cycle. Additional support will be provided to those services on the annual cycle to progress the agreed improvement actions from the process. It should be noted that not all services on the annual cycle are experiencing performance issues. Some services are undertaking significant change processes and the Panel has elected to bring them back within 12 months to assess progress and impact of that change process.

Outcome 2: The Council effectively controls and utilises data assets

 Percentage of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
80%	92%






During 2022/23 the council received a total of 1,063 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. A total of 853 were responded to within the target timescale of 20 days but there was a decline in this indicator from previous years, with 210 responded to outwith the timescale.

The rate of FOIs received in this year increased from 1,022 and throughout the period services have responded to a consistently high rate of requests.

Handling performance of FOIs is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the council's Information Management Working Group (IMWG), chaired by the Head of Corporate Services. A return to an improved position is targeted for 2023/24 and this will be carefully monitored by this group in the year ahead.

D.5 Strategy Actions

There are eight actions to support the delivery of the Improvement Strategy outcomes. Actions 1 and 2 were combined as they both relate to improvements to performance reporting. The status of those actions are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Completed	5
 Not Started; In Progress, Assigned	0
 Unassigned; Check Progress	0
 Overdue	0
 Cancelled	2

In evidence of the positive progress made in the strategy, the council has undertaken the following actions:

- **Performance reporting:** throughout the period the council has worked to increase the relevance and sufficiency of performance arrangements and enhance the quality of information that is reported through the performance management system. This has resulted in chief officers, management teams, elected members and the public receiving better information about council and service performance and has aided scrutiny activities and governance and transparency.
- **Customer Service Excellence:** improved compliance in the Customer Service Excellence Standard, with strong practice evidenced in a number of key areas relating to high quality customer services.
- **Performance information:** undertaken a significant cleanse of the council's performance management system to improve the relevance of information contained in the corporate system and improve operating performance.
- **EFQM / Self-assessment:** developed and introduced a new corporate self-assessment approach, that was implemented in 2022/23, with positive feedback from participating services on the quality of the output and engagement and staff participation.
- **Information policies and procedures:** introduction of a new Information Governance policy and review of procedures and supports in order to improve the management and security of the council's data.

The update for each action is included in Appendix 2.

E. CONCLUSION

The Improvement Strategy 2018/23 sets out how the council will raise the quality and value of service provision and achieve outcomes efficiently.

Throughout the period, the council maintained progress in the outcomes and actions and has worked to enhance the corporate approaches to planning, improvement, performance management and information governance.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23
West Lothian Council Improvement Strategy 2018/23

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1 – Improvement Strategy Scorecard Report

Appendix 2 – Improvement Strategy Action Plan

Contact Person: Rebecca.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk

Lesley Henderson
(Interim) Head of Corporate Services
7 June 2023



APPENDIX 1

Data Label : OFFICIAL






Improvement Strategy 2018-23

Improvement Strategy Scorecard

(a) Outcome 1 - The Council is high performing and achieving





Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:PIS101_9b.1a Percentage of Corporate Plan priority indicators achieving target performance	2021/22	42.9%	75%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS201_9b.2a Percentage of council services on the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) Review Panel annual cycle	2022/23	56%	5%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS212_9b.1c Percentage of performance reporting meeting the corporate standards	2022/23	93%	94%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS223_9b.1a Average ranking of West Lothian Council in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)	2020/21 ¹	2	1	Head of Corporate Services

(b) Outcome 2 - The council effectively controls and utilises data assets

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:corw014_8b.4 Percentage of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	2022/23	80%	92%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:corw015_6b.6 Percentage of referrals to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) that are upheld/part upheld	2022/23	N/A	54%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:corw016_8b.5 Percentage of Subject Access requests responded to within Timescale	2022/23	100%	85%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:ITS054_7b.3 Percentage of staff with an email account who have completed the council's mandatory training courses	2022/23	98.8%	100%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS560_9b.1c Percentage of corporate staff actively using the Electronic Content Management (ECM) system by year.	2022/23	83.55%	90%	Head of Corporate Services

¹ Performance data for 2021/22 will be available in June 2023.




(c) Outcome 3 - Council services are self-aware and improving





Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:EDQIT025_9b.1c Percentage of Primary, Secondary, and Additional Support Needs establishments evaluated as good or better for Leadership of change	2021/22 ²	N/A	85%	Head of Education (Primary)
	P:PIS111_9b.1c Percentage of business improvement recommendations completed	2022/23	81.82%	90%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS202_9b.1a Average West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) score of Council services	2022/23	623	550	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS205_9b.1c Percentage of council services scoring 500 or more in the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM)	2022/23	100%	100%	Head of Corporate Services

² Performance data for 2022/23 will be available in June 2023.

APPENDIX 2

Improvement Strategy Action Plan

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Performance information to committees and PDSPs	IMP18001/2	Rebecca Kelly	<div><div>100%</div></div>	12-May-2023 Following approval of the Corporate Plan 2023/28, the corporate strategies for the period and service plans, the council will undertake a review of performance in summer 2023. This will assess the ongoing relevance and sufficiency of performance data, considering any new priorities, outcomes and targets.
	Corporate performance reporting	IMP18003	Rebecca Kelly	<div><div>100%</div></div>	<p>12-May-2023 The council has maintained effective performance reporting to customers, partners and key stakeholders throughout the period of this strategy. Continually reviewing the relevance and sufficiency of published information and making improvements to increase understanding and transparency.</p> <p>Moving forward, the Council will review performance arrangements as part of the Corporate Planning approach for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.</p> <p>This review will consider the sufficiency of the overall approach, in line with the purpose and strategy of the council and within a context of transformative change in services. This planned for July to December 2023 and will follow approval of the corporate plans and strategies for the next five year.</p> <p>Internally, the Council has continued to review and update performance reporting to Chief Officers (EMT) and continues to work on reviewing the public performance information that is available on the website. The aim is to establish a performance reporting regime with high value indicators regularly reported to the key stakeholders - customers, members and management teams.</p>
	EFQM assessment	IMP18004	Rebecca Kelly	<div><div>100%</div></div>	<p>12-May-2023 The council has adopted the new EFQM 2020 Model for self-assessment and this rigorous quality framework is helping support improvement and transformation of council services.</p> <p>It was determined that the council would not undertake an external assessment in this period. This was due to the introduction of a new Model by EFQM, with officers electing to focus on embedding the principles of the new Model in council services through the self-assessment programme instead of preparing for external assessment. It was decided that this would generate the greatest return in performance improvement and was a better use of resources.</p>

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Customer Service Excellence assessment	IMP18007	Rebecca Kelly		<p>12-May-2023 The council has retained the CSE standard following inspection activity in 2023 and improved our overall compliance with the standard.</p> <p>A new programme of assessment is in progress, likely to commence in November 2023. This takes the form of a three-year rolling programme of assessment and will cover all council services. This will be year 3 of the 3 year programme.</p> <p>The council continues to work on improvement recommendations highlighted in the last assessment in relation to; staff training and support and customer engagement.</p>
	Review of information policies and procedures.	IMP18008	Joe Murray		<p>13-May-2021 The Information Governance Policy is now in place and replaced five policies relating to information and data management. The revised policy ensures that the council is creating, managing, using and disposing of information efficiently, appropriately and lawfully.</p> <p>It standardised accountability and responsibilities and brings harmony to the council's approach to information governance based on recent Legislative requirements and good practice. New guidance has been developed to facilitate compliance and consistency of approach across council services. All council Services participated in the development of the new policy.</p> <p>Key indicators have also been developed to monitor performance against policy objectives.</p>

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE – PEOPLE STRATEGY 2018/23

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a review of the People Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I.	Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs • Being honest, open and accountable • Providing equality of opportunity • Developing employees • Making best use of our resources
II.	Policy and Legal	None.
III.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This will be used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly.
V.	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Supporting the delivery of outcomes at a local, council wide and partnership level.

VI.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII.	Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required	There has been consultation with the EMT and CMT at regular stages.
VIII.	Details of consultations	The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

The People Strategy has been designed to support delivery of the priorities that are contained in the council's Corporate Plan 2018/23. The Strategy recognises the importance of building capacity at all levels and effectively engaging with our employees and implementing programmes of activity that will develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours required in the future.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

Each year an annual update on the strategy has been reported to this PDSP to support scrutiny and assure members of progress in the agreed actions. In line with reporting arrangements, and as 2022/23 is the last year of the strategy period, this report will provide both the annual update on performance (against the target) in 2022/23 in each of the strategy outcomes and provide a final update on the status of the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The People Strategy 2018/23 has been designed to support delivery of the priorities that are contained in the council's Corporate Plan 2018/23. The Strategy recognises the importance of building capacity at all levels and effectively engaging with our employees and implementing programmes of activity that will develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours required in the future.

The People Strategy builds on previous strategies with an increased focus on how we will develop and support our employees in this time of change. There are four outcomes in the People Strategy as set out below:

The strategy outcomes are:

1. Effective People Management and Engagement
2. Developing Workforce Skills and Capacity
3. Being an Employer of Choice
4. Developing Leadership Skills and Capacity

D.3 COVID-19 Pandemic Implications

The restrictions put in place during the pandemic affected the ability of many people to attend the workplace and deliver council services as they had pre-pandemic therefore operational processes and workplans had to be adapted.

In response to restrictions being removed, the council underwent office remobilisation in May 2022, supporting people back to the workplace. However, in parallel, the council put in place a 12 month flexible working pilot to continue to facilitate mobile, home or hybrid working where a job role allows for it.

An evaluation of performance and customer and employee experience recently commenced as part of the pilot review process. Any formal changes to council policy that may be recommended as a result of the pilot will require to be reported to PDSP and Council Executive.




D.4 Performance Scorecard

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.

The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.

The scorecard will report the last recorded performance in the event that any data for 2022/23 are not available for the period or reporting has been delayed (for example due to external validation processes).


A total of 14 performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	3
 Amber	3
 Red	8

A commentary on the performance and the corrective action that will be taken to address the performance indicators where this is required is outlined below.

Indicators that are Triggering as Red


Outcome 1 – Effective People Management and Engagement

 P:corw007_7b.2 Percentage of respondents to annual employee survey	
Last Update 2022/23	Target 2022/23
26%	75%

The Employee Survey was conducted in September 2022 with a response rate of 26%, which is lower than the 50% achieved for the 2018 survey and the target set. This is reflective of anecdotal feedback of staff survey fatigue following regular 'pulse surveys' throughout the pandemic.

Services are expected to follow up results with focus groups to gain a better understanding of the feedback provided and improvement plans developed. This is a necessity for services with low results. The amber and red thresholds, which have been agreed as benchmarks of good performance across areas of the council, trigger any necessary action.

Harder to reach groups of frontline workers were able to participate in the survey through the use of home email addresses or paper surveys. Future focus will be on activity to improve participation rates.

 P:HRS800_7a.4 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they are regularly allowed to make decisions in the scope of their role.	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
73%	85%

The result 73% for the 2022 employee survey is similar to previous years, 75% in 2018 but below the target. The target of 85% was set with a view to actions being taken forward from the planned review of employee engagement, which was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services are now conducting focus groups with their employees to gain a better understanding of how they can increase empowerment within service delivery.

● P:HRS802_7a.6 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they get the training, learning and development they need to do their job effectively	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
69%	85%

The result 69% for the 2022 employee survey is similar to previous years, 72% in 2018 but below the target. The target of 85% was set with a view to developing new strategies for employee development using digital tools and approaches to provide more flexible methods of delivering learning and knowledge.

The necessary abrupt cancellation of in-person events for a lengthy period, for infection control purposes, created a gap for employees as some skills training was not possible and digital options had still to be implemented. Further progress in implementing digital learning and development will help enhance the availability and opportunities for employees.

Outcome 2: Developing Workforce Skills and Capacity

● DT006 Percentage of relevant staff completing digital skills training	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
36%	90%

Following the 2020 digital skills audit, further modules have been developed on the e-learning platform focusing on specific digital skills. There are now 135 modules that are live, increasing from 118 in 2021/22. In 2022/23 a total of 1002 staff completed training with a digital focus; 438 staff completed modules within the council e-learning platform with a further 564 completing Microsoft 365 sessions through our 365 platform to support ongoing learning around MS Teams and MS365. However, during the year, a total of 57,643 modules were completed on the e-learning platform.

The Digital Champions have also been delivering one to one support around digital skills, to support staff to access online resources.

● P:HRS803_7a.3 Percentage of employee who strongly agree or agree that they are encouraged by their line manager to improve their own performance	
Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
66%	85%

The result of 66% for the 2022 employee survey is similar to previous years, 69% in 2018 but below the target. The target of 85% was set with a view to actions to be taken forward from the planned review of employee engagement, which was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services have also had to look at performance against the wider context of a period of significant change and uncertainty for the workforce. As previously noted, services are now conducting focus groups with their employees to gain a better understanding of their responses to this question.

Outcome 3 – Being an Employer of Choice

● corw006_7a.2 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they receive recognition for the work that they do.

Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
56%	75%

The result of 56% for the 2022 employee survey is similar to previous years, 58% for 2018 but below the target. The target of 75% was set with a view to actions to be taken forward from the planned review of employee engagement and recognition, which was delayed by the COVID pandemic.

Services are now conducting focus groups with their employees to gain a better understanding of their responses to this question. Electronic exit interviews have also been implemented to support the council with further enhancing its approach to reward and recognition.

● P:HRS806_7a.7 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they have not experienced discrimination at work in relation to sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, race, pregnancy or maternity

Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
88%	100%

The result of 88% from the 2022 employee survey is the same as 2018 but below the target. The target of 100% was set with a view to understanding employee issues and seeking to address them through an ambitious plan of equalities actions.

There were indications through the pandemic that the necessity for different working circumstances across services, albeit for infection control reasons, had a divisive impact, with some employee groups feeling treated differently.

Work continues to be progressed through manager development and the Corporate Working Group for Equalities to ensure a that the workplace offers equal opportunities for all employees, as well as welcomes and supports diversity.

Outcome 4 – Developing Leadership Skills and Capacity

● corw010_9b.1c Percentage of managers who participated in mandatory corporate development programmes and activities





Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
74%	100%

The formal management development programme was concluded just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The result from 2022/23 reflects the completion of 4 mandatory e-learning modules for managers that cover HR Policy areas and employee mental wellbeing.

Although the deadline has lapsed, with 74% of managers completing the mandatory e-learning to date, the Heads of Service have received lists of managers in their service still to undertake the modules to ensure they are completed by all.

Strategy Actions

There are 11 actions to support the delivery of the People Strategy outcomes. At present, the status of those actions are as follows

Status (against target)	Number of Actions
 Completed	8
 Not Started; In Progress; Assigned	3
 Overdue; Neglected	0
 Cancelled	0

The update for each action is also included in Appendix 2. A commentary is provided below for any actions that have in 2022/23 significantly progressed, been completed or been delayed

Action: HRS18017 - A Develop and Implement a new Recognition

Framework

Status: In progress

Objective: Employee contribution and achievement is recognised.

Although a significant review of employee recognition was undertaken just prior to COVID-19 pandemic in 2019/20, the proposals drafted at that time are less relevant due to the changes to support flexible working. A further review will be undertaken with consideration given to the outcome of the review of the flexible working pilot. This review action will be included in the new People Strategy.

There is still work being progressed to recognise long service for employees with more than 25 years service.

Action: HRS18019 - Develop and implement a succession planning framework

Status: In progress

Objective: To ensure effective service continuity when people leave who occupy key posts.

A draft framework was prepared and reported to EMT in February 2020. A report on agreed pilot arrangements was prepared for CMT but presentation of this was delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report was updated and resubmitted to EMT and the CMT in February 2023. The proposal was agreed and work is underway in services to progress actions.

Action: HS19001 - Review employee health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and produce an annual plan.

Status: In progress

Objective: Plans are established to progress health, safety and wellbeing.

Services have been drafting Health and Safety plans for 2023/2024 and consulting with their service advisers on content. These will be reviewed on a quarterly basis

with service management teams.

Planned reviews of health and safety procedural reviews were to ensure services were receiving appropriate guidance and support. The planned work that was not completed during this time has been reviewed and a revised schedule is in place to complete this 2023/2024. This is currently being reviewed due to ongoing resource pressures within Health and Safety.

E CONCLUSION

The People Strategy 2018/23 has been designed to support delivery of the priorities that are contained in the council's Corporate Plan 2018/23. The Strategy builds on previous strategies with an increased focus on how we will develop and support our employees during a time of change. Good progress has been made with eight out of 11 actions complete.

The intensity of the work required to ensure the safety of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the council's ability to conclude all actions in the strategy in accordance with the timescales set in 2018. However, effective remobilisation of services following the easing of restrictions has seen work commence for all actions within the period of the strategy.

Through its workforce, the council will continue to build on new ways of working and positively challenge service delivery in order to maximise opportunities to make West Lothian a smarter, healthier, wealthier, fairer and greener place to live and work in.

F BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23
West Lothian Council People Strategy 2018/23




Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 – People Strategy Scorecard
 Appendix 2 – People Strategy Scorecard Action Plan

Contact Person: Claire Wallace, Interim HR and Support Services Manager
 Email: Claire.Wallace2@westlothian.gov.uk





Lesley Henderson
Interim Head of Corporate Services
07 June 2023

Corporate Strategy – People Strategy Scorecard 2018-23


(a) Outcome 1 - Effective People Management and Engagement




Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:corw007_7b.2 Percentage of respondents to employee survey	2022/23	26%	75%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS800_7a.4 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they are regularly allowed to make decisions in the scope of their role.	2022/23	73%	85%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS802_7a.6 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they get the training, learning and development they need to do their job effectively	2022/23	69%	85%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

(b) Outcome 2 - Developing Workforce Skills and Capacity

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	corw012_9b.1c Percentage of human resources policies and related guidance notes reviewed within a 5 year period.	2022/23	76%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	DT006_9a Percentage of relevant staff completing digital skills training	2022/23	36%	90%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS803_7a.3 Percentage of employee who strongly agree or agree that they are encouraged by their line manager to improve their own performance	2022/23	66%	85%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS804_7a.1 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they know what is expected of them at work	2022/23	91%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

(c) Outcome 3 - Being an Employer of Choice

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	corw006_7a.2 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they receive recognition for the work that they do.	2022/23	56%	75%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)


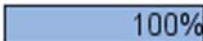

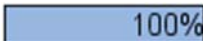

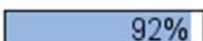



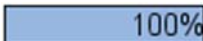
Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:HRS105_9b.2 Percentage of incidents not reportable to the Health and Safety Executive.	2022/23	99%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS305_9b.1c Percentage of employees returning to normal monitoring under the Policy & Procedure on Managing Sickness Absence.	Q4 2022/23	79%	85%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS806_7a.7 Percentage of employees who strongly agree or agree that they have not experienced discrimination at work in relation to sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, race, pregnancy or maternity	2022/23	88%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)




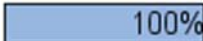





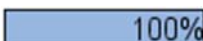
(d) Outcome 4 - Developing Leadership Skills and Capacity


Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	corw010_9b.1c Percentage of managers who participated in mandatory corporate development programmes and activities	2022/23	74%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:HRS807_7b.5 Percentage of managers who have accessed strategic engagement activities.	2022/23	100%	100%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:PIS223_9b.1a Average ranking of West Lothian Council in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)	2019/20	3	1	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

Corporate Strategy – People Strategy Scorecard 2018-23

Action Plan:

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Develop and deliver a Leadership and Management Development Programme.	HRS17004_A	Chris Keenan		10-May-2023 Programme delivered. Three mop up events agreed but social distancing arrangements precluded these events. The timescale for when these events is likely to be a considerable time after the other events took place so there is no merit in keeping this action open.
	Develop a Capability Framework to Support the Management of Employee Performance.	HRS18007_A	Sophie McKinney		19-Jan-2021 Complete. Policy was implemented on 1 January 2021.
	Develop and Implement and new Recognition Framework	HRS18017_A	Chris Keenan		24-Apr-2023 Corporate Communications are continuing to work on a format for recognising long service.
	Develop and implement a succession planning framework	HRS18019_A	Lesley Henderson		24-Apr-2023 Meeting are being held with service management teams to outline the actions and timescales for completing Stage 1 and 2 of the process.
	Produce an updated workforce plan each financial year as baseline for managing resource issues.	HRS18020_A	Lesley Henderson		<p>30-Apr-2020 All council services are required to update their own workforce management plans annually. Service workforce management plans are prepared in a standard format and include details of the current staffing profile, future service challenges, expected workforce changes over a five year period, and action plans.</p> <p>The council also has an overall strategic workforce management plan, which is based on the individual service workforce management plans, and outlines the various mechanisms the council will use to develop its desired workforce.</p> <p>The Corporate Management Team has reviewed the 2019/20 service workforce management plans and the strategic workforce management plan.</p>

	Develop an annual communication and engagement plan	HRS18022_A	Lesley Henderson	 100%	<p>30-Apr-2020 Following the annual employee survey, all council services are required to review the effectiveness of communication and develop an improvement plan. Well established arrangements are in place to conduct annual focus groups and develop improvement plans.</p> <p>As the survey is now conducted on a biennial basis, the results for the 2019/20 survey will not be available until August 2020. The move to biennial was to provide service areas with more time to implement and review effectiveness of annual communication and engagement plans.</p>
	All employees have an annual appraisal and development review and learning and development activities are identified to address competency gaps.	HRS18023_A	Lesley Henderson	 100%	<p>30-Apr-2020 Appraisal and Development Review (ADR) is a core framework to complement good day-to-day leadership and management practice and is a focal point for drawing together any performance and development issues discussed during the year. Well established arrangements are in place across council services to ensure all employees are involved in the annual review process.</p>
	Develop further learning and awareness training on equality and diversity	HRS18024_A	Pamela Roccio	 100%	<p>23-Aug-2022 After a meeting with HOS it has been decided to take a different approach. This decision was due to limitations of available resources to support this rollout and the risks of exposing under informed line managers to employee discussion on equality and diversity. This action is being closed and replaced by a new one to progress learning and development of equality and diversity issues.</p>
	Review and update equality monitoring data question set	HRS18025_A	Pamela Roccio	 100%	<p>11-May-2021 Work has been completed to update the equality monitoring form which is used as part of the recruitment and selection process. In January 2021 the council introduced the new HR and Payroll system (MyHR) which includes an employee self-service function allowing employees to provide and update their equality monitoring information at any time. The equality monitoring data question set has been updated on MyHR to reflect current best practice and use of recognised acceptable terminology. The council will continue to promote the benefits of having an accurate picture of the diverse make-up of its workforce and regularly remind staff to complete their monitoring information.</p>
	Undertake an equality monitoring survey	HRS18026_A	Pamela Roccio	 100%	<p>01-Apr-2021 Monitoring information request was included in the promotion of the new MYHR system. However, not all staff completed equality information. We will need to raise awareness on the importance of completing monitoring data again.</p>

	Review employee health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and produce an annual plan.	HS19001_A	Kim Hardie	<div><div>45%</div></div>	<p>10-May-2023</p> <p>Services have been drafting Health and Safety plans for 2023/2024 and consulting with their service advisers on content. These will be reviewed on a quarterly basis with service management teams.</p> <p>Planned reviews of health and safety procedural reviews were prioritised to ensure services were receiving appropriate guidance and support. The planned work that was not completed during this time has been reviewed and a revised schedule is in place to complete this 2023/2024. This is currently being reviewed due to ongoing resource pressures within Health and Safety.</p>
---	--	-----------	------------	---------------------------	--

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE – ASSESSMENT REPORT

REPORT BY (INTERIM) HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The council uses external standards to assess the quality of our services and ensure that we benchmark performance with good and leading practice of other organisations.

This report provides information to the Panel on the key strengths and areas for improvement that were identified through the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard assessment that was undertaken in council services in 2022/23.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Note that the council has retained the CSE Standard;
2. Note the findings from the CSE Assessment in 2022/23
3. Note the opportunities for improvement that were identified in the CSE Assessment.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I.	Policy and Legal	None
II.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
III.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	Corporate compliance in the CSE Standard is a key indicator in the Customer Service Strategy 2018/23.
IV.	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
V.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The cost of the external assessment is met from existing budget for performance and improvement activities.
VI.	Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required	The findings from the CSE Assessment are reported annually to the Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP and the Performance Committee.

VII. Details of consultations

The commitment to council-wide assessment using the CSE Standard is considered by EMT on an annual basis.

D. TERMS OF REPORT**D.1 BACKGROUND**

The Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard aims to make a tangible difference to service users by encouraging organisations to focus on their individual needs and preferences.

The council uses the CSE Standard as part of our improvement approach, undertaking external assessment on a scheduled basis in order to assess the quality of customer services across all of our services.

The council has held the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard corporately since 2008 and maintains our accreditation through three-year programmes of rolling assessment, with every council service reviewed during that programme.

This report provides the findings and recommendations for improvement from the assessment process that was undertaken in 2022/23 (year two of the programme) and the improvements that the council will progress.

D.2 Customer Service Excellence Standard

In order for an organisation to be recognised as achieving Customer Service Excellence it must be successfully assessed against the criteria of the standard by a licensed certification body. The five criteria of Customer Service Excellence are outlined below:

1. Customer Insight

Effectively identifying your customers, consulting them in a meaningful way and efficiently measuring the outcomes of your service are a vital part of this approach. It's not just about being able to collect information; it's about having the ability to use that information.

2. The Culture of the Organisation

It is challenging for an organisation to build and foster a truly customer focused culture. To cultivate and embed this there must be a commitment to it throughout an organisation, from the strategic leader to the front-line staff.

3. Information and Access

Customers value accurate and comprehensive information that is delivered or available through the most appropriate channel for them. Putting your customer first can be an important step towards providing effective communications.

4. Delivery

How you achieve your business aims, the outcomes for your customers and how problems are managed can determine your organisation's success. Listening to your customers' views about the service provided can be just as important as achieving key performance targets. Comments, complaints and other feedback from customers can help you to make vital adjustments to the way your organisation operates which in turn can support better delivery.

5. Timeliness and Quality of Service

The promptness of initial contact and keeping to agreed timescales is crucial to your customers satisfaction. However, speed can be achieved at the expense of quality, therefore the issue of timeliness has to be combined with quality of service to ensure the best possible result for customers.

D.3 Council-Wide CSE Assessment Programme

The retention programme is scheduled over three years, with annual activity planned to provide regular, managed assessment of compliance against the standard across the full scope of council services.

The annual CSE assessment activity in 2022/23 was carried out over eight days, in two distinct stages:

1. Corporate Level Review

This review involved assessing the corporate CSE application across the 19 elements of the CSE standard which make up Year Two of the council's three-year rolling programme of assessment.

The corporate review took place on the 30 November 2022 and helped inform which services would be reviewed in the second stage of the assessment.

Some of the key areas under review at the corporate assessment:

- An update on strategic planning, budget setting and the consultation process in 2022
- Community Wealth Building approach
- The new WLAM process
- HR employee support and wellbeing approach
- Corporate complaint process and analysis

2. Service Level Review

Targeted service level reviews were carried out across seven assessment days to review compliance against the standard and also, consistency with the corporate application in particular parts of the council.

Assessment days were carried out between 21 and 29 March 2023 in the following WLAM service units:

- Customer and Communities Services
- Revenues
- Housing Strategy
- Housing Operations
- Planning Services
- Quality Improvement Team – Education
- ASN Service
- Passenger Transport
- Customer Service Centre
- Children and Families
- Recycling and Waste Services
- Roads and Transportation
- Facilities Management

During a CSE assessment site visit, the assessor:

- Reviewed one or two service areas over the course of a day
- Assessed services against the CSE standard
- Held discussions with customers, staff, partners and service managers
- Visited a number of council buildings and schools

D.2 CSE ASSESSMENT 2022/23

The CSE assessment confirmed that the council had retained the standard and the assessor identified 15 Compliance Plus elements, where the council demonstrated strong and best practice. This was an increase of one from the previous year – the additional element being 1.3.5.

The full list of elements awarded compliance plus were:

- 1.1.1 We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.
- 1.1.2 We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.
- 1.1.3 We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.
- 1.2.1 We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate of the needs of identified customer groups.
- 1.2.2 We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.
- 1.3.5 We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.
- 2.1.1 There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.
- 2.1.2 We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.
- 2.2.2 Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.
- 3.4.1 We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.
- 3.4.2 We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.
- 4.1.1 We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.
- 4.1.2 We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.
- 4.2.3 We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.
- 5.2.3 We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.

Element 2.2.5 was the one area of Partial Compliance identified during the corporate assessment, status quo from the previous assessments.

The partial reflected the Assessor's continued belief that the council needs to continue to develop approaches that would improve staff feelings in relation to how they are valued and recognised for the work they do. This is required across all council services and schools, but with emphasis on some identified service areas with poorer survey results.

A summary of the assessment report findings is contained within Appendix 1, with a comparison of compliance across the last two assessments contained within Appendix 2.

D.4 CSE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The Assessment summary report confirmed that the council continues to perform well against the standard and some of the highlights of the CSE Assessor's feedback include:

1. Once again, the evidence was well presented and very sound. Staff engaged positively with the process, demonstrating high levels of professionalism. There is a wide and impressive range of Charter Mark and CSE experience across the various parts of the organisation.
2. All staff demonstrated a commitment to the delivery of customer focused services and this is reflected in the high number of elements rated as Compliance Plus, which has increased by one this year to a total of fifteen, which is an excellent achievement.
3. The outstanding work of the new Customer Experience (CX) Team (Housing), which has been set up to use customers' views on services to shape improvements for the future, merits Compliance Plus.
4. Covid-19 has resulted in changes in ways of working across the Council, including the introduction of hybrid working and significant digital transformation.
5. Following exemplary engagement with customers, the Council has agreed a financial plan for the next five years and is well into consultation on the new Corporate Strategy 'West Lothian 2028'.
6. Despite the challenges of continuing severe budget cuts, the Council continues to perform at a high level. Management is strong and robust. Staff have risen to the challenges admirably – working tirelessly to deliver the best service possible in very difficult circumstances.

E. CONCLUSION

The CSE assessment has identified areas of strength across the council which recognise the ongoing activity to engage and include customers in helping to set organisational priorities and inform local service redesign. It has also helped identify organisational improvements in relation to customer service excellence.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[Customer Service Excellence Standard](#)

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: CSE Organisational Strength and Improvement Actions

Appendix 2: Compliance Comparison 2022/23

Contact Person: rebecca.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk

Phone 01506 281891

Lesley Henderson
(Interim) Head of Corporate Services
7 June 2023

Data label: OFFICIAL

APPENDIX 1**CSE ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHS AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS**

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
1.1.1	We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.	(Compliance Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of current customer groups. Each service has clearly segmented its customers into well-defined groups. The Council has built up a sound understanding of the characteristics of potential and future customer groups in the area that it serves. The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2013-2023 includes key data and information which provides a profile of West Lothian, including data on deprivation, population, economic, health and wellbeing and community safety issues. At corporate level, this highly detailed demographic and socio-economic data is used to develop information for service improvement and transformation activities. The customer segments are based on recent and reliable information built up through the use of various information sources and engagement activities with a number of customer representative groups. Customer Profiling data is kept up-to-date on the various CRM systems that are in use within the Council.
1.1.2	We have developed customer insight about customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.	(Compliance Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has developed insight about its customers through a wide range of mechanisms. WLC has an integrated set of nine strategies that are designed to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. These currently run from 2018 to 2023 and include the Improvement Strategy, supporting transformation and growth, and the Customer Service Strategy, which includes key performance measures that all services are recording and analysing regarding how they interact with customers. The new Corporate Strategy 'West Lothian 2028' is nearing completion, but not yet published.

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)

Element	Assessor Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every service carries out satisfaction surveys as part of the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) process, as well as more localised surveys appropriate to the nature of the particular service. In addition, consultations range in scale from large scale consultation meetings on issues such as budget proposals through to meetings such as those of the Tenants Panel, and down to many one-to-one meetings. • WLC has improved its services and developed appropriate action plans as a result of the understanding gained about customers' needs. A massive and exemplary consultation process (Your Council Your Say) has been carried out to develop the Budget Strategy and Corporate Plan for 2023 to 2028, to find out about customers' priorities and what they thought about potential budget measures to meet an originally estimated £38.4 million budget gap (which is now estimated to be £57.7 million). A total of 5,045 people responded during Phase 1 of a three-stage consultation period in the six-week period in the summer of 2022, and 14,004 individual comments were received. Phase 2 of the public consultation on savings proposals and Council Tax, held in the autumn of 2022 produced 2,560 responses and 22,800 comments. The evidence merits continued Compliance Plus.
1.1.3	<p>We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.</p> <p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has robust policies in place to help identify hard to reach groups and individuals, including the homebound, those experiencing communication barriers, those in rent arrears, those displaying anti-social behaviour and the homeless. • The Council has robust policies in place to help identify disadvantaged groups and individuals, including those with mental health issues and those with learning difficulties. • The Council is proactive in developing services in response to specific needs. The Advice Shop is particularly impressive, tackling poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage by helping people through income maximisation, debt counselling, employment advice and assisting with housing and fuel poverty. Community Care comprises a wide range of services for adults and older people with care needs, well exemplified on the visit at Pathways (centre for those with learning disabilities) and Rosemount Court (sheltered housing accommodation). Of particular note is the Supported Employment Service, which provides one-to-one support for those with disabilities who are looking for a job.

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)

Element	Assessor Feedback
<p>1.2.1 We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.</p>	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council provides strong corporate guidance on the appropriate use of various customer engagement techniques, comprehensively laid out in documents such as the Improvement Strategy 2018-2023 and the Customer Service Strategy 2018-2023. Each Service has an annual Management Plan, which, along with the Council's Corporate Plan, outlines the ongoing commitment to customers. Each year, customer satisfaction is measured by Services and published within the Plans, which also include each Service's improvement actions for the year. • The consultation techniques range from simple exit surveys through to complex engagements such as those demonstrated in the Community Planning and Regeneration process and the Citizens' Panel (although currently on hold). The current Corporate Strategy 2018-2023 was produced following a major consultation on the Council's priorities. Following the local elections in May 2022, this massive engagement process will be repeated to draw up the plan for the next five years. This comprehensive exercise continues to merit Compliance Plus. • Council services use methods of consultation appropriate to the needs of the identified customer group. Guidance is given to Services on the appropriate use and deployment of the various techniques to ensure that they meet the needs of the customer. The range of engagement practices is impressive, varying from large scale engagements on issues such as the budget proposals through to individual support and care plans. The West Lothian Citizens' Panel was set up to help identify people's views on various aspects relating to living in West Lothian (although currently on hold). The Council is making increased use of social media to encourage dialogue with customers.
<p>1.2.2 We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.</p>	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council makes extensive use of customer consultation as part of the ongoing service development programme. A broad range of consultation is undertaken on projects ranging from simple questionnaires through to complex consultation with focus groups as is appropriate to the project in question. The WLAM (West Lothian Assessment Model) requires all services to carry out satisfaction surveys and consultation exercises. Compliance Plus is retained. • The Council tells customers about the results of consultation and action taken using a wide range of methods, including the Council web site, the Bulletin customer newsletter and meetings with a range of Committees and Scrutiny Panels. Customer conversations are used to feedback on an individual level, often daily in the case of care and support services.

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
1.3.5	We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.	<p>(Compliance Plus) NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLC has made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience. A new Compliance Plus this year is awarded for the exciting work of the new Customer Experience (CX) Team (Housing) which is using customers' views on services to shape improvements for the future. Various forms of engagement are used, encouraging tenants to have a voice and make a difference. The web site has an excellent 'Guide to Tenant Participation' to encourage tenants to get involved. Rent Affordability surveys are carried out every month. Support Services are re-designed using rich data. Documents and process management are scrutinised to make them readable and accessible. Automation is introduced, where practical. WLC demonstrates a clear commitment to making things easier for customers through customer journey mapping. The programme of Citizen Led Inspections (currently still suspended because of the pandemic) enables members of the public to visit, experience and learn more about a service, tracking customer journeys, and then providing recommendations for improvement. The Customer Experience (CX) Team is using customer journey mapping in Housing to map journeys and identify touch points and pain points.
2.1.1	There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an outstanding corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery, well recognised and appreciated by staff, which merits continued Compliance Plus. This is well exemplified in the 'Transforming your Council' Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23, which is supported by a set of nine strategies, including the Customer Service Strategy. Each Service has a Management Plan, approved by senior managers, which, along with the Council's Corporate Plan, outlines the Council's ongoing commitment to customers. There is very strong corporate leadership. Across the organisation, from leaders, managers and front-line staff, the commitment to the delivery of customer focussed services was clear and consistently well explained.

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
2.1.2	We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer insight is used extensively to inform policy and strategy, as shown in the extensive work that has been done around consulting customers about their priorities in relation to budget cuts and possible impacts on Council Services. Customer insight is used extensively to prioritise service improvement activity. Customers and communities are genuinely engaged in decisions on public services, Community Regeneration schemes and Local Outcome Improvement Plan Priorities for the Community Learning and Development Plan. The extensive 'Your Council, Your Say' consultation has provided insight into the ranking of services that customers want to protect from budget cuts. Compliance Plus is retained.
2.2.2	Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are polite, friendly and professional, demonstrating great commitment, which is very much appreciated by customers. This desire to 'go the extra mile' for customers was once again well demonstrated on the visit and merits continued Compliance Plus. It was very well demonstrated on the service and Partnership Centre visits, and on the home and school visits, that staff have an impressive understanding of customer needs, which is very much appreciated by service users. This again merits continued Compliance Plus.
2.2.5	We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.	<p>(Partial Compliance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has put significant effort into the production of Health and Well Being resources, and awareness of these resources amongst staff has improved. However, one area for development continues to relate to responses to the Employee Survey questions on whether staff feel valued and recognised for the work they do, which continue to be rather mixed in 2022. Response rates in relation to completion of the survey are low across all Operational Services (ranging from only 14% for Facilities Management to 41% for Roads and Transportation). Also, although there has been a generally positive and improved score across Operational Services, Recycling, Waste and Fleet continues to be a service area where results are disappointing, with only 41% agreeing, and would benefit from further investigation. Similarly, Housing Operations is also disappointing with only 49%

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
		<p>agreeing they are valued and recognised for the work they do. There remains a need for further evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council leaders do, however, demonstrate that they value the contribution staff make to delivering customer focused services. 'Celebrating Success' is a corporate initiative to encourage staff participation in service improvement through an employee award scheme, with awards made to teams. The Health and Well Being programme and resources were developed to support staff during the pandemic and continue to be available. Also, throughout the pandemic, as remobilisation occurred, the Executive Management Team created Blogs for staff and met with staff groups to thank them for their support and flexibility. Staff were given one extra day's leave in recognition of the outcome of the LGBF (Local Government Benchmarking Framework) Ranking and CSE retention, demonstrating significant achievement for the Council and recognising the talent, effort and dedication of its workforce in 2020/21. Executive Management's appreciation of staff efforts continues to be strong.
3.4.1	We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership arrangements are outstanding and merit Compliance Plus. The Council has extensive partnership arrangements across almost every area of its service provision. The Council adopts a very open and flexible approach with its partners, which is based upon a very clear view of the customer outcomes to be achieved by the partnership arrangements. Numerous examples of this approach to partnership working were discussed during the assessment. The Council has very strong partnership arrangements with other providers particularly organisations like NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, the Scottish Courts, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, West Lothian College and the Voluntary Sector. Partners spoke very positively to the Assessor about working relationships and the benefits for customers. It was confirmed strongly on the visit that customers benefit from joint working arrangements. The Council works in partnership with the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise to develop the West Lothian Economic Growth Plan, and maximise economic potential. The Economic Partnership Forum has launched its Economic Strategy and Action Plan, helping to create new jobs locally. The West Lothian Community Planning Partnership was established, now with 21 partner organisations, to deliver improved outcomes through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2013-2023. The West

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
		Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership is a partnership between West Lothian Council and NHS Lothian, which benefits the customer by bringing health and social care together.
3.4.2	We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.	(Compliance Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of formal and informal arrangements ensure effective consultation and information exchange, including contractual agreements, joint working protocols and regular meetings. These protocols range from the simple structured regular meetings to ensure that some of the more straightforward partnerships are adequately monitored, to fully structured steering committees and even fully integrated shared personnel in the more complex partnership arrangements. Once again, the quality of these partnership arrangements warrants a rating of Compliance Plus.
4.1.1	We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.	(Compliance Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has comprehensive and rigorously challenging standards and performance indicators, which continue to merit Compliance Plus. The Council's many standards and performance indicators include financial, technical, operational, service and administrative standards. The Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 sets out the priorities and activities of the Council and the standard to which these will be delivered. Rigorous targets and measures are in place to monitor how these are delivered and these are measured using Pentana, the Corporate Plan Performance Scorecard. The Council uses a comprehensive range of national and statutory standards and performance indicators to provide a basis for service measurement. These targets align with the SPIs (Specified Performance Indicators) required by the Scottish Government.
4.1.2	We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.	(Compliance Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigorous and comprehensive quality assurance systems are well established. The targets deriving from the high-level standards are monitored using the Corporate Performance Management system and measured both at service and corporate level. This comprehensive performance monitoring system allows the Chief Executive to see 'at a glance', on a single side of data, the performance across all Directorates. This rigorous monitoring and the allied impressive WLAM (West Lothian Assessment Model) review process is a very structured approach to achieving performance targets. The WLAM review process, applied to the full range of services, was suspended during the

Organisational Strengths – (Compliance Plus)		
Element		Assessor Feedback
		<p>pandemic, but has now resumed, with a more streamlined and customer focused approach, and more emphasis on discussing development activity. This has been well received by staff. The evidence shows that the Council is generally meeting its targets across a wide range of measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance management system and reporting to the public undertaken by the Council is done to a very high standard with a very open public reporting framework. The Council makes its customers aware of its performance using an impressively wide range of paper and electronic media. Performance information on the web site is particularly detailed, including the Annual Report (Factfile) and a range of performance information on all service areas. Compliance Plus is retained.
4.2.3	We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLC's benchmarking of performance, both internally, and externally against similar organisations, is outstanding and merits Compliance Plus. The Council is an active participant in a broad range of benchmarking forums. Internally, the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) review process provides a structured self-assessment framework against which all services are measured, allowing comparison of service performance across the whole Council. WLC also participates in several family groups in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) which allows comparison of performance with all Scottish Councils. Benchmarking information is used to monitor and improve the services. Internally, the robust WLAM review process highlights areas of high service performance in the whole Council, which can then be shared with others and used to help other service areas improve. Similarly, benchmarking across Scotland, using the LGBF framework, facilitates identification of high performing services within other Scottish Councils, and encourages sharing of best practice.
5.2.3	We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.	<p>(Compliance Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council promptly shares customer information with colleagues and partners across the organisation whenever appropriate, by means of the CRM IT system that holds information on every property and resident, and through a wide range of meetings and liaison activities. The Council makes efforts to reduce unnecessary contact for customers. The CRM system has demonstrably improved first time resolutions and reduced unnecessary contact for customers. Compliance Plus is maintained.

Data label: OFFICIAL

APPENDIX 2

COMPLIANCE COMPARISON 2022/23 (NEW)

1: Customer Insight			1	2	3	4	5		Compliance Plus: 6
	1	1	C+	C+	C+				Compliant: 5
		2	C+	C+	C				Partial: -
		3	C	C	C	C	C+		Non: -
2: The Culture of the Organisation			1	2	3	4	5	6	Compliance Plus: 3
	2	1	C+	C+	C	C	C	C	Compliant: 7
		2	C	C+	C	C	P		Partial: 1
									Non: -
3: Information and Access			1	2	3	4			Compliance Plus: 2
	3	1	C	C					Compliant: 10
		2	C	C	C	C			Partial: -
		3	C	C	C				Non: -
		4	C+	C+	C				
4: Delivery			1	2	3	4	5	6	Compliance Plus: 3
	4	1	C+	C+	C				Compliant: 10
		2	C	C	C+	C			Partial: -
		3	C	C	C	C	C	C	Non: -
5: Timeliness and Quality of Service			1	2	3	4	5		Compliance Plus: 1
	5	1	C	C					Compliant: 9
		2	C	C	C+	C	C		Partial: -
		3	C	C	C				Non: -

Compliance Plus:	15
Compliant:	41
Partial:	1
Non:	-



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE – CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2018/23

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER & BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a review of the Customer Service Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I.	Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs • Being honest, open and accountable • Developing employees • Making best use of our resources
II.	Policy and Legal	The strategy takes into consideration the Council's Best Values duties in the Local Government Scotland Act (2003).
III.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This will be used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly.
V.	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes.
VI.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None

VII.	Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required	None
VIII.	Details of consultations	The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

The Customer Service Strategy was designed to meet local needs and that services improvements were customer led and customer focussed. Along with guiding our customer service to be the best it can for all our customers the strategy links and complements our Digital Transformation strategy that likewise will allow and continue to inform our work in delivering the best customer service.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

Each year an annual update on the strategy has been reported to this PDSP to support scrutiny and assure members of progress in the agreed actions. In line with reporting arrangements, and as 2022/23 is the last year of the strategy period, this report will provide both the annual update on performance (against the target) in 2022/23 in each of the strategy outcomes and provide a final update on the status of the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The Customer Service Strategy 2018/23 is designed to ensure that while meeting the needs of our customers the customer service received is exemplary and service improvement will be customer led and outcome focussed.

The strategy outcomes are:

1. Services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers.
2. All staff work within a customer focused culture.
3. A range of service delivery channels will be available with an emphasis on digital by design (digital first)
4. We will manage our relationships with customers in a proactive way.





D.3 Performance Scorecard

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.

The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.


The scorecard will report the last recorded performance in the event that any data for 2022/23 are not available for the period or reporting has been delayed (for example due to external validation processes). This will include the performance updates for any council activities that were ceased/suspended during the restrictions imposed due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent impact as we exited lockdown, including the phased remobilisation of certain activities following the Scottish government route map.

A total of 19 performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	13
 Amber	0
 Red	4
 Unknown	2

A commentary on the performance and the corrective action that will be taken to address the performance indicators that were triggering as red is outlined:

Outcome 1: Services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers.


 Indicator: Total number of complaints received by the council per thousand population		
Performance 2021/22	Performance 2022/23	Target 2021/22
15	22.27	15

The number of complaints received by the council over the period increased from 2,750 complaints during 2021/22 to 4,134 in 2022/23.


The current service level complaint performance varies across the council and is linked to the complexity and quantity of complaints received. Housing, Customer and Building Services (HCBS) and Operational Services are the main complaint generators by service, accounting for 83.9% (3,417) of all recorded complaints during 2022/23.

A working group has been introduced within HCBS to examine and analyse the improvement themes and the effectiveness of the action. The outcome anticipated is that stronger and more robust improvement actions, in training, communication and support will improve on complaints performance as well as improve both the customer experience and expectation.

Outcome 2 : All staff work within a customer focused culture


 Indicator: The number of complaints upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage 1.		
Performance 2021/22	Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
21.2%	25.8%	20%

The number of complaints upheld at Stage 1 increased by 4.6% over the period from a total of 485 complaints upheld at stage 1 (2,291 closed at stage 1) in 2021/22 to 905 complaints upheld at stage 1 (3,509 closed at stage 1) during 2022/23. Communication, missed appointments and standard of service contribute to the majority of the complaints received. A review of complaints is being undertaken that examines the method in which complaints are handled, from receipt to conclusion, focussing on categorisation and consistency of recording including analysis and application of improvement actions.

 Indicator: Percentage of new staff completing customer service training.		
Performance 2021/22	Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
48%	44%	100%

44% of new staff completed the customer service training during 2022/23. There was a total of 495 completions. These figures are taken from the My learning platform. Note, some service areas provide toolbox talks to cover this module (46 of those completed). It has been agreed that the module will now be mandatory for 2023/24 as part of the annual e-learning suite, which will provide the platform for 100% attainment. The e-module has been peer reviewed prior to this.

Outcome 3: A range of service delivery channels will be available with an emphasis on digital by design (digital first)


 Indicator: Percentage of voice mails responded to within 2 hours		
Performance 2021/22	Performance 2022/23	Target 2022/23
89%	69.6%	95%

The number of voice mails responded to within 2 hours reduced over the year. This was mainly down to resourcing issues experienced in the contact centre with high levels of vacancies throughout the year and an overall increase in voicemails received. 15,102 voicemails were received during the period, which is an increase from 9,666 received in 2021/22. The service seeks to fill any vacancies as quickly as possible and additional support via other service areas within Customer & Community Services is provided where possible. The target is expected to be achieved during 2023/24.


Unknown

Two indicators that have triggered “unknown” in Outcome 1, were the Citizen led inspection and Tenant led inspection. They could not be completed due to the pandemic and were suspended over the 2-year period, 2020/21 and 2021/22. Both of these activities will be superseded by new engagement/inspection models which will support the councils 2023/28 suite of strategies.

Outcome 1: Services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers.

 Indicator: Number of Tenant led inspections.		
Performance 2019/20	Target 2022/23	Target 2022/23
4	0	0






A number of activities were suspended during 2020/21 & 2021/22. This included external scrutiny activities, Tenant led inspections were in this category and no inspections were conducted. The performance target was exceeded in 2019/20. This will recommence during 2023/24, based on the strategic customer engagement approach determined by the Customer Service Strategy 2023/28

 Indicator: Total Number of Citizen led inspections completed.		
Performance 2019/20	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
2	0	0

A number of activities were suspended during 2020/21 & 2021/22. This included external scrutiny activities. Citizen led inspections were in this category and no inspections were conducted. The performance target was reached in 2019/20. This is anticipated to resume during 2023/24 based on the strategic customer engagement approach determined by the Customer Service Strategy 2023/28

D.4 Strategy Actions

There are sixteen actions to support the delivery of the Customer Service Strategy outcomes. At present, the status of those actions are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	
 Completed	14
 In Progress;	1
 Unassigned; Check Progress	0
 Overdue; Neglected	0
 Cancelled/Superseded	1

The update for each action is included in Appendix 2. A commentary is provided below for any actions that have in 2022/23 significantly progressed, closed or been delayed.

Action: Increase the number of Partnership Centres and develop services within

Status: Complete

Objective: The customer receives a holistic service meeting their needs at first point of contact.

Whitburn Partnership Centre was opened during the 2nd quarter of 2022/23 and this brought the total number of Partnership Centres to nine. At the onset of the strategy the target was to complete eight Partnership Centres. During the life of the strategy an additional Partnership Centre was added to the portfolio when it was agreed to establish a Partnership Centre in Livingston North, thus exceeding the original target.

Action: Tenant led inspections will take place supporting our work with tenants

Status: Ongoing

Objective: Inspections led by service customers will inform and recommend current process improvement.

The service runs an annual programme of Tenant Led Inspections. This results in a number of recommendations, which, when agreed by lead officers, translate into actions to be taken forward over the year.

A number of activities were suspended during 2020/21 & 2021/22. This included external scrutiny activities. Citizen led inspections were in this category and no inspections were conducted. There were no Tenant Led Inspections during 2022/23 due to reduced resource with the Service to support this. This is planned to be recommence in 2023/24. The council is in the process of developing the new corporate plan and a suite of supporting strategies, one of which will be the new Customer Strategy for 2023/28, which will address the council-wide approach to consultation and engagement with customers as part of activities to review and improve and council services.

Action: Citizen led inspections

Status: Superseded

Objective: An improvement in customer and employee understanding of Council standards

The council is in the process of developing the new corporate plan and a suite of supporting strategies. One of which will be the new Customer Strategy for 2023/28, which will address the council-wide approach to consultation and engagement with customers as part of activities to review and improve and council services.

The Customer Led Inspection approach will be considered as part of the development of that emergent strategy, alongside the other approaches to engagement. A determination on the best and most representative way to engage customers will be established through the strategy and implemented following consultation and approval via the committee process.

There are a number of strengths around the quality of quality of engagement that can be achieved via lay inspection, however it has been a challenging process to maintain with difficulties retaining inspectors who can devote the time and expertise required to rigorously inspect council services. Aspects of the process will be considered as part of the new strategy.

E. CONCLUSION

The Customer Service Strategy 2018/23 was developed to ensure that whilst meeting the needs of our customers that the service they receive from the council is exemplary.

Over the period of the strategy and as a direct result of the Covid Pandemic, some service provision was interrupted and new processes introduced. Face to face inspections, construction works, repairs activities, etc were all at some point disrupted during this period, however the majority of the strategic outcomes projected in the Customer Service Strategy were achieved.

In 2022/23 the council maintained progress in the outcomes and actions and performance was maintained and improved in many of the Strategy related indicators.

The council will continue to positively challenge service delivery, in order that the council can maximise opportunities to make West Lothian a smarter, healthier, wealthier, fairer and greener place to live and work in.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23

West Lothian Council Customer Service Strategy 2018/23

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1: Customer Service Strategy Scorecard

Appendix 2: Customer Service Strategy Action Plan Update

Contact Person: Ralph Bell

E mail: ralph.bell@westlothian.gov.uk Phone 01506 282774

Julie Whitelaw






Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

7 June 2023



Customer Service Strategy 2018-23

APPENDIX 1
Data Label : OFFICIAL

(a) Outcome 1 - Services are designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers.






Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:COM001_6b.3 The total number of complaints received by the council per thousand population.	2022/23	22.27	15	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CuCS007q_6a.7 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service as good or excellent	Q4 2022/23	98.1%	99.0%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:EDR034_9b.1a Number of residents engaged in the development of projects and participate in decision making process	2022/23	1,133	450	.Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (C McCorriston)
	P:HQS100_9b.1a Number of Tenant Led Inspections	2022/23	N/A	0	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:PIS108_9b.1c Total Number of Citizen Led Inspections completed	2022/23	N/A	0	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

(b) Outcome 2 - All staff work within a customer focused culture.

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	COM005_6b.4 The number of complaints upheld at stage one as percentage of all complaints closed at stage one.	2022/23	25.8%	20%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CSC105a_9b.1a Percentage of Customer Service Centre enquiries resolved at first point of contact.	2022/23	92.9%	90%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CuCS600_7b.3 Percentage of new staff completing customer service training	2022/23	44%	100%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:PIS217_9b.1c Percentage of Partial Compliance in the West Lothian Council Corporate Customer Service Excellence (CSE) application	2022/23	1.8%	5%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)

(c) Outcome 3 - A range of service delivery channels will be available with an emphasis on digital by design (digital first)

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
--------	-----------------------	-------------	---------------	----------------	-----------------

	P:CC085_6b.5 Percentage of customers accessing the website as a percentage of West Lothian population.	2022/23	60%	50%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:CSC066a_6b.5 Customer Service Centre - Percentage of emails responded to within 24 hours	2022/23	77%	70%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CSC067a_6b.5 Customer Service Centre - Percentage of voicemail messages responded to within 2 hours	2022/23	69.57%	95%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CuCS601_9b.2 Number of Partnership Centres in operation	2022/23	9	9	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:REV125_9b Percentage of self service payment transactions (excluding direct debit) received through the income management system	2022/23	46.87%	40%	.Head of Finance and Property Services (D Forrest)



(d) Outcome 4 - We will manage our relationships with customers in a proactive way.







Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:CC089_6a.7 Percentage of web users who rated their experience of the web as good or excellent	2022/23	61%	65%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:CC092_9b.1a Percentage of new social media followers on the West Lothian Council sites.	2022/23	5.7%	5%	.Head of Corporate Services (Lesley Henderson)
	P:CuCS001a_6a.1 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated the timeliness of the service as good or excellent.	2022/23	97.11%	98%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CuCS002a_6a.2 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated service delivered as good or excellent.	2022/23	97.44%	98%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)
	P:CuCs003a_6a.3 Customer and Communities - Percentage of customers who rated being kept informed as good or excellent.	2022/23	97.21%	98%	.Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (Julie Whitelaw)























Customer Service Strategy 2023-28

APPENDIX 2 DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL

Action Plan

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Inspections led by Tenants will review and recommend current processes.	CuSS18001_A	Ryan Taylor; Kirsty Weir	<div><div>40%</div></div>	<p>17-May-2023 It has not been possible to re-start the Citizen Led Inspection programme in 2022/23 due to other priority work in the council.</p> <p>The council is in the process of developing the new Corporate Plan and a suite of supporting strategies. One of which will be the new Customer Strategy for 2023/28, which will address the council-wide approach to consultation and engagement with customers as part of activities to review and improve and council services.</p> <p>The CLI approach will be considered as part of the development of that emergent strategy, alongside the other approaches to engagement. A determination on the best and most representative way to engage customers will be established through the strategy and implemented following consultation and approval via the committee process.</p>
	Citizens Led Inspections will be supported and enable well informed service developments and inform change.	CuSS18002_A	Rebecca Kelly	<div><div>35%</div></div>	<p>09-May-2023 The council is in the process of developing the new corporate plan and a suite of supporting strategies. One of which will be the new Customer Strategy for 2023/28, which will address the council-wide approach to consultation and engagement with customers as part of activities to review and improve and council services.</p> <p>The CLI approach will be considered as part of the development of that emergent strategy, alongside the other approaches to engagement. A determination on the best and most representative way to engage customers will be established through the strategy and implemented following consultation and approval via the committee process.</p> <p>There are a number of strengths around the quality of quality of engagement that can be achieved via lay inspection, however it has been a challenging process to maintain with difficulties retaining inspectors who can devote the time and expertise required to rigorously inspect council services. Aspects of the process will be considered as part of the new strategy.</p>

	Following the National Standards for Community Engagement people and communities will participate in planning and evaluation	CuSS18003_A	Douglas Grierson		09-May-2023 There were 1,133 participants engaged in the development of projects and participated in the decision making process.
	Project boards will govern development activities and public involvement is integral to the process	CuSS18004_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		10-Feb-2023 Whitburn Partnership Centre now complete. From initial stages to opening, there was public involvement in decision making and communication throughout.
	Multiple channels allow for timely communication and customer comments	CuSS18005_A	Lomai Rodden		<p>05-May-2023 2022/23</p> <p>Throughout 2022/23, the council has been actively refining its customer service approach to better serve residents. There has been a notable increase in the number of registered users of the MyWestLothian portal. Presently, 67,222 residents have created an account. Additionally, there has been a 14.66% rise in the number of parents utilising the portal to communicate with schools, bringing the total to 14,040. The council website remains a popular option for customers to interact with services, while social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are frequently used for accessing information and providing feedback. To improve accessibility, Microsoft Teams and the Near Me platform have been introduced, enabling customers to engage in face-to-face meetings without the need to travel to a council site. The council has also implemented individual and group text messaging as a means of communicating service updates, equipment deliveries, and appointment details.</p> <p>2021/22</p> <p>During 2021/22 the council has continued to adapt its approach to dealing with customer enquiries due to the changing requirements from customers and as a response to the Covid pandemic. Face to face customer service points began to reopen during 2021 on an appointment basis for members of the public and enquiries continued online and via the telephone. There was a significant increase in the number of online transactions - up to 96,516 . There was also an increase in the number of residents using the mywestlothian customer portal, with 57,579 having an account. The number of parents using the portal to interact with schools continues to increase, and now stands at 12,244.</p> <p>The councils website was heavily used over the year with around 120,000 people accessing it each month to look for information and request services, with 62% doing so from a mobile phone. Social Media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are also regularly used by customers to receive information or make comments on council services.</p> <p>Whilst online services are growing, there is still a requirement to offer 24/7 access to services via the phone. During 2021/22 the council handled ??? customer enquiries via the telephone.</p>

	Customer Services training is part of induction	CuSS18006_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 Customer service training module is included as part of induction for all new employees. This will now be included in the mandatory annual e-learning suite.
	Improvement activity based on complaints	CuSS18007_A	Joe Murray		04-May-2023 All complaints are reviewed and service improvement actions are captured on CRM where appropriate. Service improvement actions are reported to CMT and the Corporate Complaint Steering Board each quarter. Services continue to review and improve processes when failure is identified through detailed complaint analysis. Complaint led service improvement actions will continue to be reported on a regular basis.
	Corporate approach taken to measuring Customer Satisfaction	CuSS18008_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 Complete - The current practice has been examined and it is agreed that this is fit for purpose. The current question set include essential themes related to Customer Service Excellence. Practice around modifying the question set including additions to meet the needs of service areas is to be highlighted ensuring a common understanding. Digital format utilising QR codes has been introduced in Customer & Community facilities
	Generic standards developed and implemented council wide	CuSS18009_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 All service areas have completed the question sets on customer skills. A competency framework has been developed and individual services areas will monitor improvement via their Customer Champion representative.
	Increase the number of Partnership Centres and develop services within	CuSS18010_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 Whitburn Partnership Centre - completed October 2022
	Introduction of multimedia based systems to contact centre	CuSS18011_A	Ralph Bell		04-May-2023 Further development of social media platforms will form part of the new Verint/Avaya platforms
	Development of online payment system	CuSS18012_A	Scott Reid		26-May-2022 Action Complete:
	New mobile application will allow increased customer autonomy with library provision	CuSS18013_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 Complete -Bookmyne App introduced in 2019. An additional app that allows the issue and return status via mobile devices has been introduced from January 2022
	Review of the West Lothian Way to revise guidelines	CuSS18014_A	Garry Heron		25-May-2022 A review is complete and available on the intranet. This will continue to be amended to reflect good working practices.
	Introduction of information system specifically aimed at customer waiting times	CuSS18015_A	Ralph Bell; George Scott		04-May-2023 Complete Following the plan being implemented, a subsequent Customer Service Excellence review awarded full compliance with positive comment on the approach taken to achieve this.
	Continue to improve website to allow more transactional activity to take place	CuSS18016_A	Colin Baxter		09-May-2023 Following on from the COVID pandemic the website has proved to be an invaluable communication tool for customers as we entered into a cost of living/energy crisis which in turn, a range of information and applications for support have been made available online. The cost of living crisis has also sparked waves of industrial action which again the website provided the hub for

					<p>information in relation to any disruption caused.</p> <p>More generally speaking, there has been an ongoing increase in transactional activity across services, whilst web traffic overall broke the 3 million visit mark for the first time during 2022/23.</p> <p>A range of further developments are currently ongoing in relation to online booking capabilities and other forms of online self service opportunities for customers.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	---



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

HORIZON SCAN

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES AND HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with a summary of the latest economic indicators and announcements for the UK, Scotland and West Lothian and the potential impact on the council.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Panel notes:

1. The results of the horizon scan for the UK, Scotland, West Lothian and West Lothian Council;
2. The risks and uncertainties in relation to the council's budget model.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. Council Values | Being honest, open and accountable, focusing on our customers' needs, making the best use of our resources, working in partnership |
| II. Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | <p>The council is required to approve a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. Audit Scotland and CIPFA best practice guidance recommends medium term financial plans are prepared a five-year period, with detailed revenue budget for three years.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the UK exit from the EU have significant implications for West Lothian, the local economy, communities and the council.</p> |
| III. Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | No implications at this stage. |
| IV. Impact on performance and performance indicators | Various programmes support business development, community regeneration and employment projects. Ongoing government restraint has implications for the council's budget and performance. |
| V. Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | The revenue budget provides the resources necessary to help deliver the Single Outcome Agreement. Effective prioritisation of resources is essential to achieving key outcomes. |

VI. Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Scottish Government grant funding is not sufficient to meet increasing costs and demand for services, meaning savings have to be found on an ongoing basis.
VII. Consideration at PDSP	This report is part of the regular horizon scan updates to the Panel.
VIII. Other consultations	Heads of Service and Depute Chief Executives.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

Horizon scan and budget model updates are provided on a quarterly basis and set out latest information on the UK, Scottish, West Lothian and council economic position, and the potential impact on the council's medium-term financial strategy.

This report provides an update on the latest UK economic indicators and announcements, including the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, that could influence the council's financial strategy.

D.2 HORIZON SCAN – UK

The War in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine which started in February 2022, continues to powerfully destabilise the global economy. It has led to a severe energy crisis in Europe that is sharply increasing costs of living and hampering economic activity. Gas prices in Europe have increased more than four-fold since 2021, with Russia cutting deliveries to less than 20 percent of their 2021 levels. The conflict has also pushed up food prices on world markets, causing serious hardship for low-income households worldwide. The IMF has cut its global forecast and also downgraded its outlook for the UK. The UK will no longer be the fastest growing economy in the G7 group of leading Western nations, and will be the slowest in 2023.

Food and energy prices were already being hiked by the supply bottlenecks after the Covid-19 pandemic, before one of the world's biggest energy suppliers invaded one of the world's biggest food exporters. With Russia being a major energy producer and key supplier of staples such as wheat and corn alongside Ukraine, the consequences will ripple far beyond their borders, the IMF warned. There have been two acute shocks to the world economy in quick succession, the pandemic and the Ukraine war. The latter is building on the problems created by the former, adversely impacting on what had been a healthy recovery, and sending prices rising at an even faster rate. Rising raw material costs and the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are projected to keep UK inflation higher for longer.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The pandemic was the largest shock to the UK economy in a century. Successful vaccines enabled much of the UK economy to return to normal, but the aftermath of the pandemic is still impacting on the economy.

The UK Exit from the EU

Since the UK left the EU in January 2021, there has been an impact on people and businesses, although it has sometimes been challenging to distinguish the effect of the EU exit from the overwhelming impact of Covid-19. The UK economy is currently around the same size as it was in early 2015. The main effects of leaving the EU include:

- British imports from and exports to the EU have been impacted by new border formalities.
- British manufacturers reported a near-record increase in supply chain disruption which appears to be continuing, and rising costs, attributed to the exit from the EU and Covid-19.
- The deal on EU exit contained vague commitments on services and left financial services to a separate process. The UK and the EU have now reached a “memorandum of understanding on future cooperation for financial services. It is thought it could help City of London firms regain some access to the EU that was lost when the UK left the EU’s single market.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol with the UK and EU identifying the Windsor Framework. It has been approved by the UK Parliament and formally adopted by both the UK and EU.

UK Economic Update

Debt and Borrowing

The most recent forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) on 15 March 2023 provided updated UK borrowing figures. The OBR forecast public sector net borrowing increases from £122.4 billion in 2021/22 to £152.4 billion in 2022/23, £131.6 billion in 2023/24, £85.4 billion in 2024/25, £76.7 billion in 2025/26, £63.5 billion in 2026/27 and then reduces to £49.3 billion in 2027/28.

The public sector net debt is to rise to 88.9% of GDP in 2022/23. Public Sector Net Debt is expected to increase further to 92.4% in 2023/24, 93.7% in 2024/25, 94.6% in 2025/26, 94.8% 2026/27 and then increase slightly to 94.6% in 2027/28.

Economic Growth

The most recent update from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April 2023 was the World Economic Outlook. Growth estimates have been revised downwards for the UK, with the IMF expecting growth to decrease from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.8% in 2023 and then rise to 3.0% in 2024.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released economic growth figures on 13 April 2023. UK gross domestic product (GDP) estimated to have shown no growth in February 2023, following a growth of 0.4% in January 2023. UK GDP grew by 0.1% in the three months to February 2023, when compared with the three months to November 2022. Monthly GDP is now estimated to be 0.3% above its pre-coronavirus levels (February 2020).

In February 2023, production output fell by 0.2%, following a fall of 0.5% in January 2023. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning was the main driver of negative production growth in February 2023, falling by 2.2%. The services sector fell by 0.1% in February 2023, following growth of 0.7% in January 2023. The largest contributor to negative growth in services in February 2023 was education, which fell by 1.7% in a month where teacher strikes took place. Output in consumer-facing services grew by 0.4% in February 2023, following a growth of 0.3% in January 2023.

In the Bank of England’s quarterly monetary policy report published on 2 February 2023, falling by 0.3% in 2022 Q3, UK GDP is expected to have grown by 0.1% in Q4. The stagnation in GDP around the turn of the year in part reflects the squeeze on real incomes, and hence household and business spending, from past increases in global energy,

tradable goods and food prices. The path of energy prices is still historically high, nevertheless, and continues to put some downward pressure on growth over the first half of the forecast period relative to what it would have been in the absence of an energy price shock.

GDP is projected to fall slightly throughout 2023 and 2024 Q1 as high energy prices and the path of market interest rates weigh on output. In the Committee's central projection, calendar-year GDP growth is expected to be $-\frac{1}{2}\%$ in 2023 and $-\frac{1}{4}\%$ in 2024 Four-quarter. GDP growth picks up to almost 1% by the end of the projection, although growth is expected to remain well below pre-pandemic rates.

The British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) published its latest Quarterly Economic Forecast for 2023 in March 2023. The BCC's quarter one 2023 economic forecast now expects the UK economy to avoid a technical quarterly recession as it upgrades its quarterly GDP forecast. One quarter of decline is expected in Q1 2023 followed by three quarters of near flat growth. The BCC is now expecting the first quarter of 2023 to see GDP fall, before three quarters of flat or weak growth - leading to an overall contraction of 0.3% for 2023. The expectation for 2023 has been revised upwards from -1.3% in the BCC's last forecast, due to a more resilient economic performance at the end of 2022. Household spending held up well, despite a fall in real disposable income due to rising energy costs, inflation outstripping wages, frozen income tax allowances and higher mortgage payments. Exports were also stronger than expected in the second half of 2022, in part due to fuel and machinery demand, and also trade in precious metals. However, this trend is not expected to continue with a 4.5% decline in exports predicted across 2023.

Exports and Inward Investment

In the immediate wake of the EU referendum, sterling fell sharply making the goods the UK buys from abroad more expensive, affecting the cost of living, but also potentially helping to support UK exports. The pound has been making a very slow recovery against the dollar and, on 9 May 2023, the pound was \$1.26 against the dollar and €1.15 against the euro.

The Quarterly Economic Survey for quarter four 2022 provides further confirmation that business conditions deteriorated significantly in the second half of 2022. The situation remains critical for the majority of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who find themselves facing monumental inflationary pressures, often driving triple-digit percentage cost increases, particularly on energy. Business confidence remains low, with only a third of firms reporting improvements to sales, and less than a quarter reporting increased investment.

Inflation

Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rose by 8.9% in the 12 months to March 2023, down from 9.2% in February. On a monthly basis, CPI rose by 0.7% in March 2023, compared with a rise of 0.9% in March 2022.

The Bank of England May 2023 Monetary Policy Report stated that CPI inflation was 10.1% in March 2023, down from the 11.1% reached in October 2022. In the near term, CPI inflation is expected to fall sharply but remain well above the 2% target. It is expected to fall to 8.4% in April before declining further to around 7% in July 2023. This is driven by three key factors: large price rises one year ago dropping out of the annual comparison, domestic energy prices falling, particularly from July, and a wider decline in input cost pressures.

Interest Rates

The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted by a majority of seven to two to increase the Bank Rate by 0.25% to 4.5% on 10 May 2023. At this meeting the MPC sets monetary policy to meet the 2% inflation target, which is intended to assist in sustaining growth and employment. The extent to which domestic inflationary pressures ease will depend on the evolution of the economy, including the impact of the significant increases in Bank Rate so far. There are considerable uncertainties around the outlook. The MPC will continue to monitor closely indications of persistent inflationary pressures, including the tightness of labour market conditions and the behaviour of wage growth and services

inflation. If there were to be evidence of more persistent pressures, then further tightening in monetary policy would be required.

Unemployment

The latest figures published in April 2023 show the UK unemployment rate was estimated at 3.8% over the period December 2022 to February 2023. There were an estimated 32.950 million people in employment from December 2022 to February 2023, 169,000 more than last quarter.

House Prices

The latest ONS House Price Index published on 19 April 2023 showed that, over the year to February 2023, average house prices in the UK increased by 5.5%, down from 6.5% in January 2023. The average UK house price was £288,000 in February 2023, which is £16,000 higher than this time last year.

D.3 HORIZON SCAN – SCOTLAND

The War in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has increased the level of uncertainty in the economic outlook and presented a new downside risk to growth at a time when the economy is still in recovery from the economic shock of the pandemic. Scotland's direct trade links with Russia and Ukraine are small and, as such, the direct impacts of the situation are expected to be limited. However, the recent surge and volatility in the price of global commodities such as oil and gas, grains and metals in which Russia and Ukraine are key global producers, means the indirect impacts of higher inflationary pressures is something that all importing economies, including Scotland, will be exposed to.

Covid-19 Pandemic

Scotland's economy experienced a significant shock due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. GDP in Scotland fell by record amounts and although GDP is gradually recovering, and is now above pre-pandemic levels after two years. At its peak, around one in three jobs in Scotland was supported by a combination of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and business grants. The extent of impact and pace of recovery has varied. Customer facing businesses, such as retail, hospitality, tourism and the culture sector, have been most affected for longest by restrictions.

EU Implications

The Scottish economy is being affected by the UK's exit from the EU, in a similar way to that of the UK in general terms, however changes to the tax system now means that Scotland's own economic performance will have a more direct impact on the Scottish Budget.

Scottish Economic Update

Economic Growth

The latest update from 26 April 2023 stated that Scotland's GDP grew by 0.2% in real terms during the fourth quarter of 2022 (October to December) compared to the previous quarter, revised up from the first estimate of 0.1% in March. Compared to the same quarter last year, Scotland's GDP has grown by 0.6%. In 2022 quarter four, output in the construction sector increased by 1.0%, output in the production sector increased by 0.1% and Services sector output increased by 0.2%. The largest positive contribution to growth in Quarter 4 2022 was from administrative and support service activities.

Unemployment

The Scottish Government's latest Labour Market Briefing was published in April 2023. This showed that between November 2022 to January 2023, the unemployment rate was 3.0%, with 84,000 people unemployed. There were 2.707 million people employed, meaning the rate of employment is 75.7%.

House Prices

The ONS publication for House Price Index showed that the average house price in Scotland increased by 1.0% over the year to February 2023 to stand at £180,000.

D.4 West Lothian Economic UpdateHouse Completions

House Completions for January to March 2023 (quarter four) were 289 compared to 203 for the same period in 2022. Compared to the comparative period in 2021/22, the 2022/23 quarter four figures are significantly higher, as coming out of 2021 and entering into 2022 we were still seeing the construction industry are still recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Unemployment

Unemployment at local authority level is measured by the proportion of working age people not in work. In West Lothian this is 2.6% for February 2023, which is lower than the Scottish rate (3.2%) and the UK rate (3.7%).

The data in the table was published on 14 March 2023 by Office for National Statistics. It looks at the position across Scotland based on the claimant count across the region. The table is provided in Appendix 1.

D.5 HORIZON SCAN – WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

The council has an approved detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26, and proactive financial planning has provided as strong as possible a position in the current climate to address ongoing challenges in public sector funding. Economic and budget announcements will continue to be reviewed and taken into consideration to ensure that financial planning assumptions remain reflective of the current position. In particular officers will continue to monitor key announcements in relation to public spending, interest rates, inflation and economic risks, in order to assess the likely impact on the council's future budget position.

D.6 BUDGET PLANNING SCENARIO, CHANGES TO THE BUDGET MODEL AND RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The 2023/24 to 2027/28 revenue budget strategy and three-year detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26 was approved by Council on 21 February 2023. Officers continue to monitor announcements and other information to review and refine budget assumptions. The main risk areas currently being reviewed are:

- Pay Award
- Energy / fuel prices
- War on Ukraine related pressures
- Covid-19 related pressures
- Inflation and indexation
- School demographics
- Delivery of savings
- Service budget pressures

Key decisions in relation to the budget include the following:

- Agreed detailed revenue budgets for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- Agreed budget savings for the first three years, including full year effect of those savings in the latter two years, with some savings removed following approval of the budget motion.
- Agreed that officers should carry out a comprehensive review of all council funded transport services including subsidised bus transport, demand responsive transport and mainstream school transport to be reported to PDSP and Council Executive.
- Agreed that the impact of removing budget savings included in the officers' budget report is funded over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26 by increasing council tax by 5.8% in 2023/24 and assuming council tax increases of 5.8% in 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- Agreed officers will continue to consider options, including ideas and suggestions from the Phase 2 consultation, to address the remaining balance of savings to be identified.
- Agreed a schedule of charges for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- Agreed that, should additional recurring resources be forthcoming at a later date, that these resources should, in the first instance, be used to balance the five year revenue budget on a recurring basis.
- Agreed that assumed council tax increases in the four years 2024/25 to 2027/28 should be kept under review taking account of fiscal and economic circumstances, including future grant funding.
- Agreed use of one-off resources to balance the three year budget, including the additional amount required following the removal of some budget savings, with the balance held in contingency to support the ongoing financial sustainability of the council.

Reflecting on decisions by Council in relation to the revenue financial strategy, below is a summary of key actions and timescales.

Action	Officer	Timescale
Implementation of agreed actions to manage recurring budget pressures	Heads of Service	Ongoing
Implementation of exit strategies for activities where time limited funding will cease	Heads of Service	Ongoing
Review of budget model assumptions	FMU & Services	Ongoing
Heads of Service to review good ideas	Heads of Service	Autumn 2023
Comprehensive review of public transport	Head of Operational Services	2023/24
Review of fleet management pressure	Head of Operational Services	2023/24
Update on timescales for Phase 3 consultation to be included in 2024/25 budget report	Head of Finance & Property Services	February 2024
Review of fees and charges	Depute Chief Executive	2024/25
Potential Phase 3 public consultation	Depute Chief Executive	2024/25
New three year detailed revenue budget (2025/26 to 2027/28) to Council	Head of Finance & Property Services	February 2025

The council currently only has Scottish Government funding confirmed for one year, 2023/24, however it is becoming apparent that the war in Ukraine and the recovery from the pandemic will continue to have implications for the council beyond the current financial year. Commentators are attempting to analyse the impact on public sector funding, however given the unprecedented nature of the war, and its impact on government spending and the economy more widely, the outlook for non-protected areas of the Scottish budget remains uncertain.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented his Spring Budget 2023 to Parliament on 15 March 2023, accompanied by a full fiscal statement from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The Spring Statement is not a budget update, but provides a more general statement on the UK economy and includes an assessment and forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) on borrowing, growth and employment. The statement also sets out details on other forthcoming government policies. A report on the Scottish Government Medium Term Financial Strategy will be presented to Council Executive on 20 June 2023.

Officers are continuing to analyse announcements and economic analysis. At this stage, no clear or definitive information is available to help refine and identify future funding levels.

E. CONCLUSION

The report provides a high-level overview of the latest economic indicators and other announcements likely to have a financial impact on the council, predominantly as a result of the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis. Economic implications resulting from the war in Ukraine and covid-19 remain uncertain and the UK, Scottish, West Lothian and council position will continue to be reported on a quarterly basis as part of the horizon scanning of factors that could have an impact on the council's medium-term financial strategy. The deterioration in the financial position facing the council means that action is necessary to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the council. A report on the Spring Statement was reported to Council Executive on 25 April 2023 and a report on the Scottish Government Medium Term Financial Strategy will be presented to Council Executive on 20 June 2023.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Revenue Budget 2023/24 to 2027/28 - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council on 21 February 2023.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 - Claimant Count Across the Region

Contact Persons:

Karen Park, Accountant (karen.park@westlothian.gov.uk)

Alice Mitchell, Economic Development Manager (alice.mitchell@westlothian.gov.uk)

Donald Forrest

Head of Finance and Property Services

Craig McCorriston

Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date of Meeting: 7 June 2023

Appendix 1 - Claimant Count Across the Region

Councils		Working Age People Not in Work				% Change	
		Pre-Covid baseline (Feb-20)	Feb-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Year Change (Feb 22 - Feb 23)	Month change (Jan 23 - Feb 23)
Edinburgh	Count	7,105	10,320	8,505	8,635	-16.3%	1.5%
	Rate	1.9%	2.8%	2.3%	2.4%		
East Lothian	Count	1,765	2,040	1,470	1,505	-26.2%	2.4%
	Rate	2.7%	3.0%	2.2%	2.2%		
Fife	Count	8,765	9,785	7,910	8,150	-16.7%	3.0%
	Rate	3.8%	4.2%	3.4%	3.5%		
Midlothian	Count	1,470	1,675	1,330	1,350	-19.4%	1.5%
	Rate	2.6%	2.9%	2.3%	2.3%		
Scottish Borders	Count	1,860	2,320	2,050	2,050	-11.6%	0.0%
	Rate	2.8%	3.4%	3.0%	3.0%		
West Lothian	Count	3,425	3,715	3,060	3,080	-17.1%	0.7%
	Rate	2.9%	3.1%	2.7%	2.6%		
South East	Count	24,385	29,860	24,320	24,765	-17.1%	1.8%
	Rate	2.7%	3.3%	2.7%	2.7%		

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND REVIEW

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Panel of the findings of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) Independent Review which was undertaken in January 2022 by Ipsos on behalf of the Scottish Government and for the Panel to note that the review was initiated in January 2022 and concluded in March 2023.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the key findings from the SWF's Independent Review and
2. Notes the next steps to be taken from the findings of the Independent Review

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Reducing inequalities and poverty are key priorities set out in both the Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 and in the Community Planning Partnership Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018 to 2023. The Scotland Act 2016 devolved certain aspects of welfare in Scotland to the Holyrood Parliament. The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 sets out an over-arching legislative framework for the administration of social security in Scotland.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The support for vulnerable households will assist in meeting targets in the Community Planning Partnership anti-poverty strategy. The Corporate and service performance indicators will be closely monitored.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live longer, healthier lives; We have tackled significant inequalities in West Lothian society;

We have improved the life chances for people at risk; We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

Officers will continue to assess the ongoing financial and staffing implications for the council.

VII Consideration at PDSP

For noting.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Overview

Since April 2013, local authorities have had a statutory duty to administer the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) on behalf of the Scottish Government. The fund consists of two grants: Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. Crisis Grants (CG) meet short term financial emergencies and Community Care Grants (CCG) provide furniture to help applicants set up or maintain their home.

The Scottish Government is responsible for distributing funds on an annual basis to local authorities for both the Programme funding and Administration funding. Programme funding is the amount of funds the local authority receives to make awards to successful applicants and Administration funding is the funds provided to administer the SWF scheme.

The Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos to undertake a review of the SWF. The review started in January 2022 with all 32 local authorities involved in interviews with Ipsos on the delivery of the current scheme. The review consisted of research and data analysis undertaken independently by Ipsos and included examination of levels of funding and take-up as well as gathering some insight into how the SWF is currently administered across all 32 local authorities.

D.2 SWF Independent Review Key Findings

The Scottish Welfare Fund Independent Review was published on the 24 March 2023. The overarching aim of the review was to provide as clear and robust a picture as possible of the effectiveness of the SWF in meeting its aim of supporting people on low incomes who require help due to crisis or to live independently, and to identify issues which either improve or hinder the Fund in meeting this purpose.

Set out below are the key themes emerging from the review and key questions arising from these themes that will need to be addressed in order to ensure the Fund is able to meet need effectively and sustainably in the future.

Purpose of the Fund

The stated purpose of the SWF is to address one-off need; it is not intended to assist with ongoing need or increasing household debt. However, recent years have seen substantial increases in repeat applications and awards for Crisis Grants in particular. A key question the independent review identified was in light of recent economic circumstances whether there is a need for the Scottish Government to consider revisiting or re-stating the purpose of the Fund.

Matching Up Future Need, Demand and Funding

Local authorities were very concerned about future funding for the SWF. To date, local authorities had been able to manage with a combination of previous years under-spends, top-up funding from councils themselves, and, more recently, additional Covid-related top-up funding. However, finances are now severely strained. Those authorities that did top up their SWF fund locally, raised concerns about whether their councils would be able to continue to do so in the light of significant pressures on council budgets. Further questions raised by the review were whether consideration needs to be given to the increasing need and demand, and what level of Funding (including administrative funding) is required for long-term sustainable delivery for the SWF.

Achieving consistency with discretion

The guidance on delivery allows for "extensive discretion" over how the scheme is delivered across local authorities. The evidence collected during the review shows that different areas do take varying approaches to the operation of the Fund with respect to: promotion of the fund, applications options and support, communicating decisions and further support offered. Neither the existing evidence nor interviews with local authority managers and external stakeholders indicated the need for a centralised model of delivery to ensure greater consistency. Centralisation was viewed as risking losing the benefits of local links and partnerships, both in tailoring promotion and delivery to local needs and in linking people to appropriate wider support. Further consideration may be required as to what actions are needed to enhance the delivery of the Fund to improve consistency between and within local authorities, without losing the benefits of local delivery.

Improving applicants' experiences

During the review interviews, with applicants and external stakeholders provided many examples of good practice by local authority SWF teams in terms of communication with and support for applicants. However, they also identified more negative views, and highlighted the need for improvements to ensure that all applicants to the Fund have a consistently more positive experience. Particular issues that may need to be addressed include: promotion to potential clients, communications with applicants, application forms, accessibility of application routes and timescales for decision making. The review noted that consideration could be given to how applicants experiences can be improved throughout the application process (and beyond).

Data collection, audit and review

A key challenge for the review has been how to interpret the implications of variations in data between local authorities for consistency of practice. The researchers suggested that the next steps of the review could consider whether the operation of the Fund can be strengthened on an ongoing basis by improvements to routine data collection, audit and review.

D.3 Next Steps

Taking forward the findings from the SWF's independent review and to ensure effective administration of the fund going forward, the Scottish Government will establish a Policy Advisory Group and deliver an Action Plan by the end of Spring 2023.

The Scottish Governments approach to the Action Plan will be guided by four key objectives:

1. Assessing the evidence base from the Review and develop policy improvements in collaboration with stakeholders through a Policy Advisory Group;
2. Strengthening the relationships with delivery partners in Local Authorities, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and the Scottish Prison Service, ensuring that policy improvements are implemented;
3. Implementing Policy Improvements in a sustainable way and establish outcomes driven by the process to measure ongoing effectiveness; and,
4. Supporting the sharing of best practice and communicate positive outcomes driven by the Scottish Welfare Fund in the longer -term.

E. CONCLUSION

The Scottish Government has commissioned an independent review of the Scottish Welfare Fund to determine if it is effective in meeting its overarching aim of supporting people on low incomes who require help due to crisis or to live independently, and to identify issues which either improve or hinder the Fund in meeting this purpose.

As a result of the independent review, the Scottish Government will establish a Policy Advisory Group and deliver an Action Plan by the end of Spring 2023. A further report will be brought to the Panel in due course.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Scottish Welfare Fund review: final report
www.gov.scot/publications/review-scottish-welfare-fund-final-report

Contact Person: Nahid Hanif, Anti-Poverty Manager, Tel: 01506 283022
 Nahid.Hanif@westlothian.gov.uk

Donald Forrest
Head of Finance and Property Services
7 June 2023

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL TAX FOR SECOND AND EMPTY HOMES, AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES THRESHOLDS

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the proposed response to the consultation by the Scottish Government in relation to Council Tax for Second and Empty Homes and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds for self-catering accommodation which is intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval and submission.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the consultation on the Council Tax for Second and Empty Homes and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds
2. Considers and provides comment on the attached consultation response which is intended to be presented to Council Executive for approval.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Council Tax (Variation of Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	There would be no impact on staffing resources. Changes to system parameters will

incur additional costs which are currently unknown. If new legislation is passed and the council decide to use their additional discretionary powers to increase Council Tax charges for second homes and/or long-term empty properties additional income would be generated.

VII Consideration at PDSP

It is intended that the proposed response will be considered at Council Executive on 20 June 2023.

VIII Other consultations

Relevant council officer stakeholders have been consulted on the council's draft response.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Scottish Government launched a consultation on Council Tax second and empty homes on 17 April 2023 with responses due by 11 July 2023. The availability of affordable housing and its interaction with levels of second and long-term empty homes and short term lets has been a much-debated topic. The consultation is exploring greater fiscal empowerment for councils in Council Tax with the shared aim of creating the right incentives to increase the availability of housing.

The consultation is also seeking views on whether the Non-Domestic Rates thresholds for self-catering accommodation are appropriate or should be amended.

The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulation 2013 currently defines second homes and empty homes (unoccupied dwellings) as follows:

- a “second home” is a dwelling which is no one’s sole or main residence but which is furnished and lived in for at least 25 days during the chargeable 12 months period.
- an “unoccupied dwelling” is a dwelling, which is no one’s sole or main residence but which is not used as a second home.

In terms of the consultation, short term lets is a wide term used to refer to the whole or part of accommodation provided to one or more guests on a commercial basis that does not become the main residence of the guest/s as defined by the Civic Government (Scotland) Act (Licensing of Short-term lets) Order 2022. The type of local taxation the short term let is liable for will vary depending on the type of short term let and applicable taxation rules.

For example, if a second home is used as self-catering accommodation it will be liable for Non-Domestic Rates if the premises is being made available for letting on a commercial basis and with a view to the making a profit for 140 days or more in the financial year and has, in practice, been let in the financial year for a total of 70 days as defined by the Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021.

D.2 Second Homes

The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulation 2013 (as amended in 2016) set a 50% council tax discount as the charge for accommodation that is not someone’s sole or main residence and gives councils the

power to change that discount. This means that councils can alter the level of discount to provide a discount of between 50% and 10% or to offer no discount.

Under the council's Council Tax Second Homes/Long Term Empty Properties Discretionary Charging Policy owners of second homes are liable to pay the full Council Tax charge for the property.

There are currently 86 second homes liable for full Council Tax in West Lothian.

However, under the regulations certain categories of second homes are entitled to a 50% discount. These are 'purpose-built holiday accommodation' and 'job related dwellings'.

Purpose built holiday accommodation is defined as a dwelling that is used for holiday purposes and has a licence or planning permission limiting its use for human habitation throughout the year.

Job related dwellings are defined as homes owned by someone who has to live elsewhere for most or all of the time as part of their job, or the home the person occupies to undertake their job if the person has another home that is their main residence.

D.3 Long Term Empty Homes

The Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (as amended in 2016) defines a long-term empty home as one that has been unoccupied for a continuous period of more than 12 months.

The regulations give councils the power to offer no discount or charge a Council Tax increase on long term empty homes subject to certain statutory restrictions.

Under the council's Council Tax Second Homes/Long Term Empty Properties Discretionary Charging Policy long-term empty homes are liable to pay twice the full Council Tax charge for the property.

There are currently 322 long term empty homes liable for Council Tax in West Lothian.

D.4 Non-Domestic Self-Catering Accommodation Thresholds

The owners, tenants or occupiers of self-catering accommodation may be liable for either Council Tax or Non-Domestic Rates. This includes owners of second homes who use them for self-catering accommodation. The tax paid is determined by the amount of time the accommodation is used and available for use for self-catering accommodation purposes.

Where a dwelling is available for let for 140 days and actually let for 70 days or more in the financial year, it is classed as 'self-catering holiday accommodation' and would no longer be liable for Council Tax but would become liable for Non-Domestic Rates. If these thresholds are not reached, the accommodation will be treated as domestic and liable for Council Tax.

Councils have discretionary powers that enable them to treat properties as self-catering accommodation in exceptional circumstances where the accommodation has failed to meet the 70 days actual letting threshold. Examples of exceptional circumstances might include environmental or seasonal conditions.

There are currently 59 self-catering accommodation properties in West Lothian.

D.5 The Consultation

Responses to this consultation are invited by 11 July 2023.

The consultation is seeking views on how local taxation can be used to encourage owners of second homes and long-term empty homes to use their properties as homes for living in and for them to be occupied for more of the time.

As such the consultation seeks views on granting councils more discretionary powers over the rate of Council Tax charged on second homes and long-term empty properties and the factors that should be considered locally before reaching a decision to charge more.

The discretionary nature of these additional powers would mean that councils could decide whether and how to utilise them based on local circumstances including balancing the needs and concerns of their communities with wider economic interests.

The consultation is also seeking views on whether the current Non-Domestic Rates thresholds for self-catering accommodation remain appropriate.

D.6 Proposed Response to the Consultation

The proposed response to the consultation is attached at Appendix 1.

Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties

The consultation response recommends that councils should be given additional discretionary powers to allow them to charge a premium of up to 300% for second homes and long-term empty properties and for councils to determine how best to use these powers for the benefit of their communities.

Non-Domestic Rates Self-Catering Accommodation Thresholds

The consultation response recommends that the thresholds for Non-Domestic Rates self-catering accommodation should be increased in relation to the number of days available for let (increasing to 250 days) as well as the actual number of days let (increasing to 180 days).

Also, it is recommended that councils should be given the discretionary powers and flexibility to change the days available for let and actually let to enable them to deal with local situations appropriately and effectively as and when they arise.

E. CONCLUSION

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation on Council Tax for Second Home and Empty Home and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds. A proposed response is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration by the panel. It is intended to report this response to Council Executive on 20 June 2023.

The proposals to grant councils more discretion to increase charges should be welcomed.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1 – Non-domestic rates/ council tax on second and empty homes: consultation response

Contact Person: Mhairi Welsh, Collection Team Leader – Mhairi.Welsh@westlothian.gov.uk

Donald Forrest

Head of Finance and Property Services

7 June 2023

Non-domestic rates/ council tax on second and empty homes: Consultation



Respondent Information Form

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- ☐ Individual
- ☒ Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

West Lothian Council

Phone number

01506 281294

Address

West Lothian Council Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian,

Postcode

EH54 6FF

Email Address

Donald.Forrest@westlothian.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- ☒ Publish response with name
- ☐ Publish response only (without name)
- ☐ Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Questionnaire

Question 1

Do you think the current definition of a second home should continue to apply?

More information:

For council tax purposes, the current definition of a second home is, 'a dwelling which is no one's sole or main residence and that is lived in for at least 25 days during the 12-month period of the council tax charge'.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

Believe 25 days strikes a reasonable balance between a second home and an empty home.

Question 2

Do you think the discount eligibility for job related dwellings and purpose built holiday accommodation is appropriate?:

More information:

Eligible job related dwellings and purpose built holiday accommodation are entitled to a council tax discount of 50%.

Purpose built holiday accommodation is defined as a dwelling that is used for holiday purposes and has a licence or planning permission limiting its use for human habitation throughout the whole year. An example might be chalets or other types of holiday accommodation that are either unsuitable to be occupied all year round (their construction may mean they are only suitable to be lived in during the warmer months) or are not allowed to be lived in all year due to planning, licensing or other restrictions.

Job-related dwellings are defined as homes owned by someone who has to live elsewhere for most or all of the time as part of their job, or the home the person occupies to undertake their job if the person has another home that is their main residence.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

There remains a requirement to continue to have these types of classification.

Question 3

Do you think councils should be able to charge a council tax premium on top of regular council tax rates for second homes?

More information:

A premium is charging more than the full rate of council tax.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

The charging of a premium will assist in encouraging second home owners to use their property differently for the benefit of local communities and could help increase the supply of homes for living in the private rented sector.

Question 4

If you have answered yes to question 3, what do you think the maximum premium councils could charge should be?

More information:

50% premium is the same as one and a half times the normal rate of council tax.

100% premium is double the normal rate of council tax

150% premium is two and a half times the normal rate of council tax

200% premium is three times the normal rate of council tax

250% premium is three and a half times the normal rate of council tax

300% premium is four times the normal rate of council tax

Answer:

- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 100%
- ☐ 150%
- ☐ 200%
- ☐ 250%
- ☒ 300%
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

Allowing council's the discretionary power to apply a Council Tax premium of up to 300% for second homes will encourage second home owners to consider a different use of their property and also generate additional income that could be used to benefit the local community.

Question 5

What factors should be taken into account by councils when deciding whether to introduce a premium on council tax for second homes?

More information:

A non-exhaustive list of potential factors is set out below:

- numbers and percentages of second homes in the local area
- distribution of second homes and other housing throughout the council area and an assessment of their impact on residential accommodation values in particular areas
- potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry
- patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes
- potential impact on local public services and the local community
- other existing measures or policies that are aimed at increasing housing supply and the availability of affordable housing

Councils may also decide not to use the powers or to disapply a premium for a specific period of time.

A non-exhaustive list of examples of where a council might consider doing this include:

- where there are reasons why the home could not be lived in as a permanent residence
- where there are reasons why a home could not be sold or let
- where the owner's use of their accommodation is restricted by circumstances not covered by an exception from the premium
- where charging a premium might cause hardship

Answer:

Please list the factors and provide reasons for your answer:

The Council should consider:

- distribution of second homes and other housing throughout the council area and an assessment of their impact on residential accommodation values in particular areas
- patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes
- other existing measures or policies that are aimed at increasing housing supply and the availability of affordable housing

Question 6

If you do, or were to, own a second home please tell us what you would do if the applicable rate of council tax were to increase, and the 'thresholds' to be classed as self-catering holiday accommodation for non-domestic rates purposes stayed the same?

More information:

The current threshold for defining premises as self-catering holiday accommodation liable for non-domestic rates is it must be available to let for 140 days or more and actually let for 70 days or more in the same financial year.

A private residential tenancy is when a registered landlord lets accommodation to an individual/s and it will be their sole or main residence. All tenancies created on or after 1 December 2017 are open-ended, which means a landlord will no longer be able to ask a tenant to leave simply because the fixed term has ended.

Answer:

This question is not applicable to West Lothian Council

- ☐ The home is (or would be) already used as self-catering accommodation and liable for non-domestic rates
- ☐ The home is (or would be) already used as a private residential tenancy and the tenant is liable for council tax
- ☐ I would continue to use it purely for personal use and pay the higher rate of council tax
- ☐ I would continue with split use between self-catering accommodation (below the non-domestic rates threshold) and personal use, and pay council tax
- ☐ My second home already has/would have split use between self-catering accommodation (below the non-domestic rates threshold) and personal use. Rather than pay the higher rate of council tax, I would increase the number of days the accommodation is available to let and actually let in order to meet the non-domestic rates thresholds
- ☐ My second home is purely for personal use. However, in order to stop paying council tax, I would make it available as self-catering accommodation for 140 days or more and actually let it for 70 days or more in order to be liable for non-domestic rates
- ☐ I use my second home purely for personal use but I would change its use to a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I use my second home as self-catering accommodation (below the non-domestic rates threshold) but I would change its use to a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I will seek reclassification as an empty home and pay council tax
- ☐ I will sell the second home

Question 7

Do you think councils should be able to charge a higher premium than the current 100% (double the full rate) of council tax on homes empty for longer than 12 months?

More information:

Councils currently have the discretion to charge up to 100% premium on council tax on homes empty for longer than 12 months.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

Yes, local authorities should be able to vary the premium based on circumstances and priorities within their communities.
 45% of empty properties in West Lothian are long term empty. Therefore, increasing the premium will provide a further incentive for owners of long term empty properties to consider bringing them back into occupation.

Question 8

If you have answered yes to question 7, what do you think the maximum premium councils could charge should be?

More information:

This question is asking what the maximum premium should be for homes that have been empty for longer than 12 months.

The current maximum is 100% premium, which is double the normal rate of council tax.

Answer:

- ☐ 150%
- ☐ 200%
- ☐ 250%
- ☒ 300%
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

Allowing council's the discretionary power to apply a premium of up to 300% on Council Tax for long term empty homes will encourage owners to consider a different use of their property and also generate additional income that could be used to benefit the local community.

Question 9

Do you think there should be a stepped approach to charging higher rates of council tax on long-term empty homes?

More information:

By 'stepped approach' we mean only giving councils powers to charge higher rates of council tax the longer the home is empty. For example, 100% premium at 12 months, 200% premium at 2 years, 300% premium at 5 years.

100% premium is the same as double the normal amount of council tax.

200% premium is the same as three times the normal amount of council tax

300% premium is the same as four times the normal amount of council tax.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

This would give the Council Tax payer a clear understanding and timeline of the charges. This would allow home owners to take appropriate steps to bring their property back into occupation.

Question 10

Are there any exceptions that are not already taken into account, that should be, when charging a premium of council tax on homes empty for longer than 12 months?

More information:**Current discretionary powers for councils to change council tax liability for empty homes**

Status of empty home	Up to 6 months	6-12 months	12 months +	2 years +
No work underway and not for sale or let	Owner may apply for an unoccupied and unfurnished exemption	Discount can be varied between 50 and 10%	Discount can be varied between 50 and 10% or discount can be removed or premium of up to 100% can be applied	Discount can be varied between 50 and 10% or discount can be removed or premium of up to 100% can be applied
If undergoing repair work to make them habitable	50% discount cannot be changed	Owner may apply for a major repairs or structural alterations exemption. Discount can be varied between 50 and 10%.	Discount can be varied between 50 and 10% or discount can be removed or premium of up to 100% can be applied.	Discount can be varied between 50 and 10% or discount can be removed or premium of up to 100% can be applied.
If being actively marketed for sale or let	50% discount cannot be changed	50% discount cannot be changed	50% discount cannot be changed	a premium of up to 100% can be charged

The current list of exemptions to council tax are:

Exemption	Period of Exemption
-----------	---------------------

Dwellings last occupied by charitable bodies	Up to 6 months
Dwellings last occupied by persons living or detained elsewhere	Unlimited
Deceased owners	Unlimited up to grant of confirmation
	6 months after grant of confirmation
Dwellings empty under statute	Unlimited
Dwellings awaiting demolition	Unlimited
Dwellings for occupation by ministers	Unlimited
Dwellings occupied by students, etc.	Unlimited
Reposessed dwellings	Unlimited
Agricultural dwellings	Unlimited
Dwellings for old or disabled persons	Unlimited
Halls of residence	Unlimited
Barracks, etc.	Unlimited
Dwellings occupied by young people	Unlimited
Difficult to let dwellings	Unlimited
Garages and storage premises	Unlimited
Dwellings of persons made bankrupt	Unlimited
Visiting forces	Unlimited
Dwellings occupied by severely mentally impaired persons	Unlimited
Prisons	Unlimited
Prescribed housing support services accommodation	Unlimited

Answer:

Please tell us about exemptions that you feel should apply and give reasons for your answer. Do not include exemptions that are already provided for.

No, there are no other exemptions that should be taken into account.

Question 11

What factors should be taken into account by councils when deciding whether to introduce a premium on council tax for homes empty for longer than 12 months?

More information:

A non-exhaustive list of potential factors might be:

- numbers, percentages and distribution of long-term empty homes throughout a local area
- potential impact on local economies and the community
- patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes
- potential impact on local public services
- impact on neighbours and local residents

Councils may also decide not to use the powers or to disapply a premium for a specific period of time. A non-exhaustive list of examples of where a council might do this include:

- where there are reasons why a home could not be sold or let
- where an offer has been accepted on a home but the sale has not yet been completed and the exception period has run out
- if the home has been empty for longer than 12 months but has been recently purchased by a new owner that is actively taking steps to bring the home back into use
- if an owner has submitted a timely planning application or is undergoing a planning appeal that is under consideration by the council or Scottish Government. This means they cannot undertake work to bring the home back into use until that process is concluded
- where charging a premium might cause hardship or act as a disincentive to bringing the home back into use e.g. where extensive repairs are actively being carried out

Answer:

Please list factors and give reasons for your answer.

Factors that should be considered are

- potential impact on local economies and the community
- patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes
- potential impact on local public services
- impact on neighbours and local residents

Question 12

If you do, or were to, own a home that has been empty for longer than 12 months, please tell us what you would do if your council decided to increase the maximum council tax charge above 100% premium?

More information:

Council tax premium:

- 100% premium is the same as double the normal rate of council tax. This is the current maximum councils can decide to charge. This question asks what you would do if councils are given powers to charge more than this e.g. up to 300% premium/ four times the normal rate and the council where your empty home is located decided to apply an increase.
- You may find it helpful to view what we mean by some of the options given e.g. short-term lets and private residential tenancies.

Short-term lets:

- In this consultation, short-term lets is a term used to refer to the whole or part of accommodation provided to one or more guests on a commercial basis that does not become the main residence of the guest/s. Self-catering accommodation is a type of short-term let and may be liable for council tax or non-domestic rates depending on the number of days they are available to let and actually let in the financial year.
- Self-catering accommodation must be available for let for 140 days or more and actually let for 70 days or more in the financial year, to be exempt from council tax and liable for non-domestic rates

Private residential tenancies:

- A [private residential tenancy](#) is when a registered landlord lets accommodation to an individual/s and it will be their sole or main residence. All tenancies created on or after 1 December 2017 are open-ended, which means a landlord will no longer be able to ask a tenant to leave simply because the fixed term has ended.

Answer:

- ☐ Leave the home empty and pay the higher council tax
- ☐ Sell the empty home
- ☐ Use the home as a private residential tenancy
- ☐ Use the home as a short-Term Let
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

This question is not applicable to West Lothian Council

Question 13

Do you think that the letting thresholds for self-catering accommodation for non-domestic rates should be changed?

More information:

The owners, tenants or occupiers of self-catering accommodation (who may be businesses, the public or the third sectors) may be liable for either council tax or non-domestic rates. This includes owners of second homes who use them for self-catering accommodation.

The current threshold for defining premises as self-catering holiday accommodation liable for non-domestic rates is it must be available to let for 140 days or more and actually let for 70 days or more in the same financial year.

Answer:

- ☒ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

The threshold should be increased as the number of days available to let and actually let creates too low a qualifying bar. The likelihood for self-catering properties at the moment under Non-Domestic Rates is they will receive 100% Small Business Bonus Scheme and therefore will not be paying any local taxation contribution.

Question 14

If you have answered yes to question 13, what do you think the threshold for the number of days self-catering accommodation must actually be let for should be?

More information:

The current threshold is self-catering accommodation must actually be let for 70 days in the financial year.

Answer:

- ☐ 50 days
- ☐ 100 days
- ☐ 140 days
- ☒ 180 days
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

This level would set a reasonable period of days let in order to be classed as commercial rather than domestic.

Question 15

If you have answered yes to question 13, what do you think the threshold for the number of days self-catering accommodation must be available to let should be?

More information:

The current threshold is self-catering accommodation must available to let for 140 days in the financial year.

Answer:

- ☐ 120 days
- ☐ 160 days
- ☐ 200 days
- ☒ 250 days

☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

This level would set a reasonable period of days let in order to be classed as commercial rather than domestic.

Question 16

Do you think councils should have discretion to change the self-catering accommodation 'days actually let' threshold, for their local area?

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

There may be circumstances out with the control of the owner such as environmental/seasonal issues which councils should have the discretion and flexibility to deal with appropriately at a local level.

Question 17

If you answered yes to question 16 do you think that councils should have discretion to:

Answer:

- ☐ Increase the number of days actually let only
- ☐ Decrease the number of days actually let only
- ☒ Increase or decrease the number of days actually let

Please specify if you think councils should have discretion to do something else

Please give reasons for your answer

This would allow councils the discretion and flexibility to deal local situations appropriately and effectively as and when the arise.

Question 18

Do you have any other comments on the non-domestic rates system in respect of self-catering accommodation?

Answer:

Please provide your views

The likelihood for self-catering properties, given their typical size, is their rateable value when entered into the Valuation Roll would bring them into the eligibility criteria for 100% Small Business Bonus Scheme and therefore will not be paying any local taxation contribution. Consideration should be given as to whether these types of properties should be excluded from the Small Business Bonus Scheme.

Question 19

If you do, or were to, own a second home please tell us what you would do in the event that the applicable rate of council tax and non-domestic rate thresholds both increased?

More information:

The current threshold for defining premises as self-catering holiday accommodation liable for [non-domestic rates](#) is it must be available to let for 140 days or more and actually let for 70 days or more in the same financial year.

A [private residential tenancy](#) is when a registered landlord lets accommodation to an individual/s and it will be their sole or main residence. All tenancies created on or after 1 December 2017 are open-ended, which means a landlord will no longer be able to ask a tenant to leave simply because the fixed term has ended.

Answer:

This question is not applicable to West Lothian Council.

- ☐ The home is already used as a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I would continue to use it purely for personal use and pay the higher rate of council tax
- ☐ I would continue with split use between self-catering accommodation (below the thresholds to be liable for non-domestic rates) and personal use, and pay council tax
- ☐ My second home already has/would have split use between self-catering accommodation (below the non-domestic rates threshold) and personal use. Rather than pay the higher rate of council tax, I would increase the number of days the accommodation is available to let and actually let in order to meet the non-domestic rates thresholds
- ☐ My second home already has/would have split use between self-catering accommodation (above the non-domestic rates threshold) and personal use. Rather than revert to paying council tax, I would increase the number of days the accommodation is available to let and actually let in order to meet the higher non-domestic rates thresholds
- ☐ My second home is purely for personal use. However, in order to stop paying council tax, I would make it available as self-catering accommodation and let it for the number of days I needed to in order to be liable for non-domestic rates

- ☐ I use my second home purely for personal use but I would change its use to a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I use my second home as self-catering accommodation (below the non-domestic rates threshold) but I would change its use to a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I would seek reclassification as an empty home and pay council tax
- ☐ I would sell the second home
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 20

If you do, or were to, own a second home please tell us what you would do in the event that:

- a) council tax powers remained as they are for second homes (i.e. no provision for councils to charge a premium), but
- b) the 'thresholds' to be classed as self-catering holiday accommodation for Non-domestic rates purposes increased?

More information:

The current threshold for defining premises as self-catering holiday accommodation liable for [non-domestic rates](#) is it must be available to let for 140 days or more and actually let for 70 days or more in the same financial year.

A [private residential tenancy](#) is when a registered landlord lets accommodation to an individual/s and it will be their sole or main residence. All tenancies created on or after 1 December 2017 are open-ended, which means a landlord will no longer be able to ask a tenant to leave simply because the fixed term has ended.

Answer:

This question is not applicable to West Lothian Council.

- ☐ The home is already used as a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I would continue to use it purely for personal use and pay council tax
- ☐ I would continue with split use between self-catering accommodation (below the thresholds to be liable for non-domestic rates) and personal use, and pay council tax
- ☐ My second home already has/would have split use between self-catering accommodation (above the non-domestic rates threshold) and personal use. I would increase the number of days the accommodation is available to let and actually let in order to meet the higher non-domestic rates thresholds

- ☐ I use my second home as self-catering accommodation (above the current non-domestic rates threshold). If I was not able to meet the new thresholds, I would change its use to a private residential tenancy
- ☐ I would seek reclassification as an empty home and pay council tax
- ☐ I would sell the second home
- ☐ Other (specify)

Please give reasons for your answer:

Question 21

Please tell us how you think changes to council tax and/or non-domestic rates thresholds for self-catering accommodation might affect businesses in your area.

Answer:

Please provide your views

By increasing the self-catering accommodation thresholds for days available and actual days let we would anticipate a reduction in the number of self-catering units. As a consequence, properties would move back to Council Tax and whether this would be as a second home or empty home brought back into occupation would be for the owner to determine. However, by allowing councils the discretionary powers to raise a premium for second homes it is anticipated that the overall number of second homes would reduce in favour of properties being brought back into longer term occupation.

Question 22

Please tell us how you think changes to the maximum council tax rate for second and/or empty homes and non-domestic rates thresholds might affect your local area or Scotland as a whole (social, economic, environment, community, cultural, enterprise).

More information:

We have prepared a partial Business Regulatory Impact Assessment and undertaken screenings to initially consider other impacts. We would welcome your views and comments to help us expand on these assessments.

Answer:

Please provide your views

In relation to West Lothian, given the relatively low numbers of these types of properties, we would not anticipate a significant impact in any of these areas. However, we would anticipate that a number of second homes and long-term empty properties would come back into longer term occupation.

In terms of the impact across Scotland as a whole, providing councils with the discretionary powers and flexibility as set out in the consultation will allow them to effectively assess and manage the various factors and impacts at a local level.

Question 23

Please tell us how you think the changes identified might affect island communities.

More information:

We have prepared a partial Island Communities Impact Assessment and undertaken screenings to initially consider other impacts. We would welcome your views and comments to help us expand on these assessments.

Answer:

Please provide your views

This question is not applicable to West Lothian Council.

Question 24

Do you think there are any equality, human rights, or wellbeing impacts in relation to the changes set out in the consultation?

Answer:

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please give reasons for your answer.

There may be increased financial commitments placed on owners of second and empty homes especially for those individuals who may have inherited properties or those who are unable to sell the property. However, councils should be able to deal effectively with these situations within their charging policies given the flexibility provided within the additional discretionary powers.

Question 25

Is there anything else you would like to tell us in relation to this consultation?

Answer:

Please provide any further comments on the proposals set out in this consultation in the box below.

Nothing else to add.

About you

Please tell us which of the following categories best describe you (select all that apply):

- Owner of a Second Home
- Owner of a Long-term Empty Home
- Short-Term Let/Self-Catering accommodation operator
- Council or Assessor
- Organisation e.g. third sector or industry body
- Member of the Public
- Other, please specify

A Council

Please tick whichever council areas apply to you (or select all of Scotland)?:

- Aberdeen City
- Aberdeenshire Council
- All of Scotland
- Angus Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Dundee City Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council

- East Lothian Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Highland Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Midlothian Council
- Moray Council
- Na h-Eileanan Siar Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Orkney Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- Shetland Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- West Lothian Council

West Lothian Council

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on Library and Museum services performance and activities from October 2022 to March 2023.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to note the performance and activities of the Library and Museum Service for the period October 2022 to March 2023 contained in Appendix 1

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Public library services are a statutory service.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	An update on performance against a range of key indicators is included in appendix 1.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Within existing resources.
VII Consideration at PDSP	A performance report for the service is presented to the PDSP twice each year.
VIII Other consultations	Not applicable.

D. Terms of Report

The Library and Museum Service performance report, attached as Appendix 1, includes a summary of the latest performance figures and key achievements over the period October 2022 to March 2023 across the main service activities of Library and Museum services. The performance across this period reflects a continued growth since restrictions were lifted. Footfall is increasing although customers have started to return to the libraries, footfall has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

In the new year Anne-Marie Vance left the service and Kay Ali took over as Neighbourhood manager in January. A new Service Development Officer has recruited and a team manager will be starting soon so the new team will be in place and can look at further developing the service. As always the Book Week Scotland programme was a great success with all the participants enjoying the activities on offer. With four author visits over the week and lots of events with children and schools. The whole week was a great celebration of books and shared reading experiences.

The 'Libraries can do it' team have worked at building a legacy from the project with the Youth Action project continuing on the Tiny desk studio project. The 'Crafting for cleaner communities' recycling crafts group is now self-supporting and gathering new members every week and we are continuing to work with Heriot-Watt University in delivering innovative technology workshops with our fun Friday events, these includes Sphero bolt robots and sonic screwdrivers.

E. Conclusion

The service delivers on key outcomes of access to reading, learning, information and heritage and continues to work in an integrated way to deliver customer information services in all our communities. The service operates in a customer focussed way and continues to take advantage of opportunities which will improve delivery.

F. Background References

None.

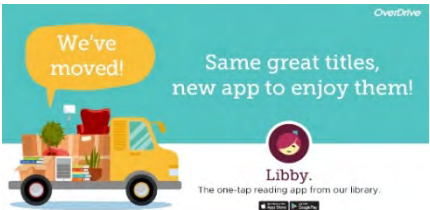
Appendices/Attachments: 1

Appendix 1 Library and Museum Services performance report

Contact person: Kay Ali, Neighbourhood Manager,
Tel 0106 283255, e-mail kay.ali@westlothian.gov.uk

Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

Library and Museum Services Performance Report (October 2022 to March 2023)



Contents

1 Overview	3
2 Performance	4
3 Key Activities	5
3.1 Public Library Services – Branch Libraries	5
3.2 e-Services	8
3.3 Local History Library	9
3.4 Museums	9
4 Key Performance Indicators	11

1. OVERVIEW

Library and Museum Services

West Lothian Council Library and Museum Services is part of Customer and Community Services which facilitates integrated working with colleagues in Customer Information Services, Community Centres, Partnership Centres, and Registration Services. Library and Museums are key teams within the service, and we are focussed and driven by our customer's needs, aspirations and delivering an excellent library and museum experience.

There is a statutory obligation on Scottish councils to provide a public library service, which makes books and information freely available to our customers. There is a similar obligation to make adequate provision for the storage and protection of records under our care. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires that "a local authority shall have a duty to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all person's resident in their area". As well as working towards delivering the priorities and legislation we also work to align what we deliver to the national strategy for Public Libraries Ambition & Opportunity.

The main services provided by Library and Museum Services are:

- ⊙ Public Library Services
- ⊙ Local History Library
- ⊙ Museum Services

⊙ Public Libraries Services – 14 Branch Libraries

Libraries have an important role in society as providers of a range of services from book-lending and computer access to children's activities, providing access to training courses and meeting space. They are portals to all of the world's knowledge and are spaces where people of all ages can practice lifelong learning.

Public Libraries are in the frontline of delivery of information in communities by providing:

- access to reading and information both physical and digital.
- a stimulating and motivating learning environment
- a sense of identity and pride in civic space in turn enhancing individual and community wellbeing
- digital inclusion through the provision of supported access to PCs and the internet;
- opportunities to improve literacy skills
- early years intervention through delivery of Bookbug sessions.
- widest possible access to a variety of cultural activities. They can foster an environment where diverse cultural expressions are encouraged, valued, shared, and protected.
- an environment in which a strong creative economy can thrive.
- an environment where we can support to tackle inequality, poverty, cultural regeneration, reduce data and digital poverty and can support the health and wellbeing agenda.

⊙ Local History Library

The local history library holds a large range of books, maps and images about West Lothian's people and places. It offers help and assistance in accessing resources to allow customers to discover their local and family history using census and old parish records as well as photographs, maps, plans and book stock. The library works closely with the registration service and a family history centre operates from that location, assisted by volunteers who come from the West Lothian Family History Society.

☉ **Museum Services**

Independent and council museums in West Lothian make a major contribution to local culture, heritage, education and tourism. The service manages three accredited Community Museums in Blackridge, Broxburn and Whitburn Libraries and provides financial and curatorial support to the following independent museums: Almond Valley Heritage Centre, Linlithgow Heritage Trust, and Bennie Museum and curatorial support to Linlithgow Union Canal Museum. We support an active education programme with free museum handling sessions in West Lothian schools and a reminiscence box lending service.

2. PERFORMANCE OCTOBER 2022 TO MARCH 2023

The main purpose of this report is to update panel members on Library and Museum Services' activities and performance since the last report in October 2022 and to highlight notable achievements and developments. Key Performance Indicator results can be found at the end of this document.

Benchmarking

To ensure West Lothian is performing at an optimal level the service benchmarks activities for adults and children against a family of local authorities including: East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross and Stirling. The benchmarking group meet twice a year to discuss best practice and benchmark around the annual CIPFA returns. West Lothian are also part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) available for benchmarking. West Lothian is part of Family Group three within LGBF.

3. KEY ACTIVITIES

3.1 Public Libraries Services – Branch Libraries

- Book Week Scotland Book Week 14th-20th November** Book Week Scotland is an annual celebration of books and reading that takes place across Scotland. During Book Week, people of all ages and walks of life come together in libraries, schools, community venues and workplaces to share and enjoy books and reading. They are joined in this celebration by Scotland's authors, poets, playwrights, storytellers and illustrators to bring a packed programme of events and projects to life. With funding support from The Scottish Book trust, West Lothian invited three top authors, storytellers and illustrators to come along and inspire readers, young and old. People were invited to share their reading experiences and find out more about the writing and publishing process. Jenny Colgan came to Simpsons library in Bathgate, Morag Hood visited Linlithgow and professional storyteller Bea Ferguson spent a morning in West Calder Library, in addition local author Steven Cranston gave a talk at Blackburn Library.

Libraries delivered Scottish themed Bookbug sessions throughout the week for the youngest library members and their families, these sessions were enhanced with visits from Bookbug, as we have the costume for several months of the year. Bookbug encourages all parents and carers to enjoy books with their children from as young an age as possible, developing a lifelong love of books. Bookbug sessions are fun, free and friendly events, available in m libraries. Each session lasts around 30 minutes and includes songs, stories and rhymes.

Schools were invited to visit the library during Book Week Scotland to hear Scottish stories, take part in crafts, treasure hunts and many fun filled sessions with library staff, 652 school children participated in library activities throughout the week.

With 55 events taking place over the week, reaching 1,213 library users, this year's programme has been very successful. For more detail and images click on the link.

<https://sway.office.com/HF2tYNVWmOdQ1GyK?ref=Link>

- Bookbug picture book prize September – December 2022.** Children across Scotland were invited to vote for their favourite picture book from a shortlist of three titles. West Lothian Libraries took part, working with nursery schools, primary one classes and Bookbug groups, hosting 24 reading sessions, 441 children voted for their favourite book. In West Lothian the winner was 'My First book of woodland sea creatures'. The overall Scottish winner was, 'Scaredy bat', by Johnathan meres
- Whitburn Library- October 2022.** Whitburn Library moved from its old site in the main street to the new partnership centre. Opened as the Ian Tennent Library it now occupies a bright and inviting space on the ground floor. Staff have worked very hard to move all the books and configure the new layout which is welcoming and spacious. All the regular clubs have moved along with the library, including the jigsaw club, craft and natter, book group and many more. 323 new members have joined the library since the move.
- Dyslexia Friendly-** While libraries have lots of choices for junior readers with dyslexia, there has not been a lot of choice for adult readers. A new imprint from publisher Clarity books has filled that gap with a selection of top adult fiction writers adapted to be dyslexia friendly. Linlithgow Library currently has a collection of these titles on display and are available to anyone in West Lothian on request.
- E.C.A.L.M.-** Every Child a Library Member was relaunched in February due to the pandemic, this Scotland wide initiative aims to ensure every child has a library membership and access to their local library. West Lothian Libraries are working in partnership with registration services to offer families membership during the birth registration process. 157 new members have been signed up in the last six months. <https://www.everychild.scot/>

- **Bookbug.** Libraries continue to develop the Bookbug programme with regular themed sessions for parents, babies and toddlers. Over the last five months there have been 205 sessions delivered throughout West Lothian, with 4,105 people attending, parents and children have enjoyed taking part in the song and rhyme sessions which helps to develop language skills and confidence.
- **Warm hubs.** West Lothian Libraries became warm hubs for their communities, staff ensured there were plenty of activities to keep visitors entertained, supporting Craft clubs, Jigsaw clubs, knit and natter groups, book groups and creative writing sessions. Also for the young ones a programme of story time sessions, craft activities, board game clubs and fun activities such as treasure hunts and themed fun days.
- **Educational Work.** Libraries began to restart their programmes of nurse visits and class visits with 174 classes attending over the last six months, children take part in information handling sessions, story times, author visits and craft sessions. Staff deliver outreach to local schools and nurseries promoting reading and library membership.
- **Libraries Can Do It** – An external project funded by the Scottish Library Information Council's Covid Relief fund. The project ran for a period of one year until 20 February 2023 and had 2 dedicated part-time service development officers working to deliver on its outcomes. The project aims were to help reduce social isolation, nurture creativity, promote positive mental wellbeing and reduce the attainment gap in Armadale, Blackburn, Craigshill and Whitburn communities by developing and delivering a series of new fun, focussed and meaningful activity programmes in their local libraries.

These areas are being targeted as they represent the 5% most disadvantaged areas of West Lothian (data extracted from the SIMD).

The development officers carried out extensive activity mapping in the 4 areas and met with key activity providers, committees and voluntary organisations, community consultations were carried out to ensure we provide activities the communities want and need, whilst avoiding duplicating existing activities to enhance and improve the overall offer in these communities. The results of this research was used to help develop the following library activities which began in June 2022:

- 'Put the Flags Out!' – Working with local Gala Day committees and non-profit organisations we held bunting making workshops in the 4 libraries and provided bunting making kits for customers to take home and make and display, to celebrate local events.
- Local Artist talks & live music – Aidan Martin. Aidan, author of Euphoric Recall, visited Armadale Library on Thursday 8th September to share his lived experience about his journey from addiction into recovery, activism and the creative industries. The event was an opportunity for an open discussion about mental health, drug addiction, trauma and social deprivation. Aidan was joined by Martin Livingstone who played some of his original songs for us and shared his experience of engaging with youth projects, the importance of community centres and his journey into the creative industries. The event was attended by community members, organisations and charities sparking conversations about local communities, people and stories.
- Crafts – Working with WLC Recycling & Waste Services we began a series of craft sessions in the 4 libraries named 'Crafting for Cleaner Communities' – Crafts were created using used or discarded materials e.g. Halloween sock pumpkins and decorative wreaths made from old magazines. The craft group at Armadale library grew in numbers and with the help of WLC Regeneration Team have now set up their own constitution, committee and bank account with

will allow them to generate an income and apply for funding and continue to run the group at no cost to participants.

- 'Wee Desk Studios' – Working with West Lothian Youth Action Project (WLYAP) Wee Desk Studio Music sessions offered weekly music tuition for young people aged 10 – 21 years (25 years if care experienced) at Blackburn library. 8 young people have regularly attended the sessions. WLYAP will continue to provide the sessions in Blackburn and Armadale moving forward.

Many successful internal and external partnerships were forged throughout the project and we will continue to work with these to continue to provide activities, events and initiatives in all West Lothian Libraries.

- **Lothian Lugs and Borrow a Researcher (BaR)** - The 'Lothian Lugs' and 'BaR' initiative continued to allow us to provide ongoing workshops and events in our libraries. During March 2023 Heriot-Watt University researchers and graduate students hosted BaR events for families named 'Family Friday' events which included:
 - Sphero Bolt Robots at Carmondean Library – 39 children and 32 adults attended.
 - Sonic Screwdriver Science at Linlithgow Library - 6 children & 8 adults attended.
 - Microscopy Photography at East Calder Library – 12 children & 8 adults attended
 - Robot Stamping at The Lex Davidson Library – 12 children & 7 adults attended

The Family Friday events were very well received by the 69 children and 55 adults who attended and will be continued throughout 2023/24.

ACTIVITIES

A wide range of activities take place every day in branch libraries and the table below gives the volume and variety of activities taking place between October 2022 and February 2023.

Activities	Sessions Held	Attendees		
		Adult	Junior	Total
Bookbug sessions	205	1,753	2,352	4,105
Class/nursey visits	174	574	3,477	4,051
Story telling	12	35	143	178
Book groups	29	167	74	241
Lego clubs	124	361	728	1,089
Craft sessions	116	413	374	787
Other	275	1,650	926	2,576
Author /storyteller visits	3	32	91	123
Total	938	4,985	8,165	13,150

3.2 e-Services

- BorrowBox.** Downloading of e-Books & e-Talking books has remained steady from October 2022. This has shown that whilst customers have resumed borrowing physical stock since the libraries have fully reopened, the majority of those who made the digital shift during lockdown continue to borrow digital stock too. Since the beginning of October 2022, 7,012 e-Books and 8,488 e-Talking books have been downloaded by our customers. BorrowBox membership has increased by 32.52% over the same period. We continue to promote the service on the WLC website, social media, WLC plasma screens, at events and sharing information with colleagues and partners and library staff will demonstrate using the BorrowBox app to customers.
- Libby from OverDrive.** e-Magazine downloads are gradually increasing with an increase of 19.41% since October 2022. Overdrive monthly membership uptake has decreased slightly, from 139 new members in October 2022 to 109 in March 2023. We will increase the marketing of the digital magazines across all platforms.

e-Books

Months	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Oct 22	1,558	56
Nov 22	1,392	60
Dec 22	1,301	33
Jan 23	1,458	87
Feb 23	1,303	75
Mar 23	1,486	65

e-Talking books

Month	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Oct 22	1,772	Same figures as above. e-Books and e-Talking books are offered on same platform with customers registering once to access both.
Nov 22	1,575	
Dec 22	1,624	
Jan 23	1,871	
Feb 23	1,646	
Mar 23	1,692	

Digital Magazines

Month	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Oct 22	1,551	21
Nov 22	1,699	21
Dec 22	1,686	7
Jan 23	1,862	20
Feb 23	1,668	40
Mar 23	1,733	17

3.3 Local History Library

The Local History library is a reference library. Customers are welcome to come and carry out research and browse the collection and carry out their own research. The collection includes valuation rolls, family history resources and local photographs and maps.

3.4 Museums

- **Whitburn Community Museum**

The redeveloped Whitburn Community Museum opened to the public in October 2022. The new space has been co-curated by the local community and includes two new display cases, a digital interactive and temporary exhibition space. The objects on display have been professionally mounted and include key collection items including the Whitburn Weavers banner which was carried in the campaigns leading up to the 1832 Reform Act.

- **Visit to Whitburn Community Museum by Andy Mooney, CEO of Fender International**

Andy Mooney, CEO of Fender International visited Whitburn Community Museum on the 4th March to sign a Fender guitar which he had deposited in the museum. The Fender CEO grew up in a council house in Whitburn and it is hoped that the guitar will be an inspiration to young people growing up in the town today.

Andy also deposited a collection of Disney Princesses and a pair of Nike Air trainers reflecting his time as chair of Disney Consumer Products and as Chief Marketing Officer for Nike respectively.

- **Scottish Co-operative Discovery and Activity Centre**

The Museums Service has been supporting West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust (WCHCDT) with their project to create a Scottish Co-op Discovery and Activity Centre in the old Co-op bakery building in West Calder. This has included assisting with consultation and development of documents required for a Stage 2 National Lottery Heritage Fund, including the contribution of professional expertise around collections development and management.

- **Travelling exhibitions**

(i) The Museum Service supported the Blackridge Model Train Club to install a new exhibition incorporating two model rail layouts at Blackridge Community Museum. The display includes new railway-based content on the museum interactive.

(ii) "A Century of Council Housing" is currently on display in the Community Space at Linlithgow Museum.

(iii) The "Calder Witch Hunt" exhibition was on display in the Community Space at Linlithgow Museum from November to January.

- **Time Capsule**

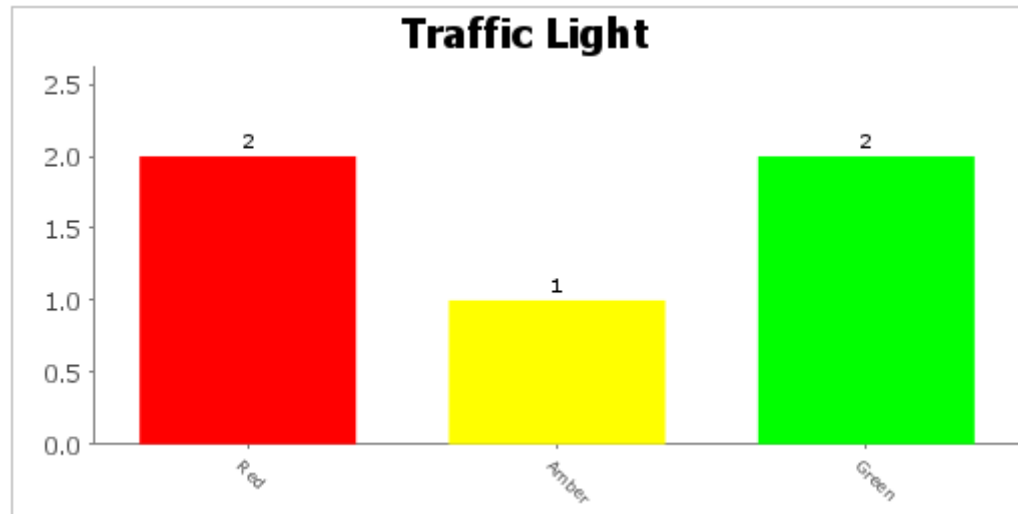
The Museums Service has received an interesting new addition to its collection – a time capsule for Linlithgow's old Victoria Halls. This was uncovered during demolition works.

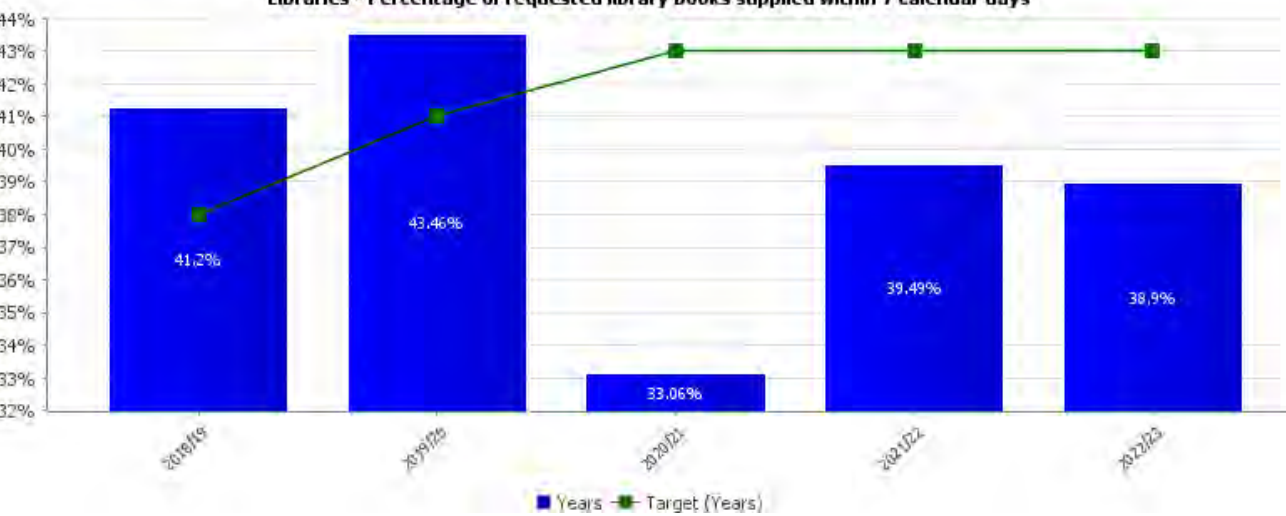




The time capsule had been laid under the cavity of the building's foundation stone at a ceremony in January 1888 with the stone being laid by local MP Peter McLagan who was Scotland's first mixed race MP. The capsule contained coins, newspapers and archival material including a list of subscribers who had helped pay for Linlithgow's new town hall.

Library 6 Monthly PDSP Report New

Data Label : OFFICIAL

Report Author: Kay Ali



PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS012_6b.5 Libraries - Percentage of requested library books supplied within 7 calendar days																											
Description	Library Services offer customers the ability to request books not immediately available. Requests can be made to the library staff or online via the library catalogue. Where possible the book will be sourced from another West Lothian library . We aim to fulfil the majority of customer requests within 7 days.	PI Owner(s): zCuCS_Admin; Kay Ali																										
<div>Libraries - Percentage of requested library books supplied within 7 calendar days</div>  <table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>41.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>43.46%</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>33.06%</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>39.49%</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>38.9%</td></tr></tbody></table>		Year	Percentage	2018/19	41.2%	2019/20	43.46%	2020/21	33.06%	2021/22	39.49%	2022/23	38.9%	<div>2022/23 result</div>  <table><tbody><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>38.9%</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>43%</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>38.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>40.85%</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting</td></tr></tbody></table>	Last Updated:	2022/23	Status:		Current Value:	38.9%	Current Target:	43%	Red Threshold:	38.7%	Amber Threshold:	40.85%	Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting
Year	Percentage																											
2018/19	41.2%																											
2019/20	43.46%																											
2020/21	33.06%																											
2021/22	39.49%																											
2022/23	38.9%																											
Last Updated:	2022/23																											
Status:																												
Current Value:	38.9%																											
Current Target:	43%																											
Red Threshold:	38.7%																											
Amber Threshold:	40.85%																											
Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting																											

Trend Chart Commentary:


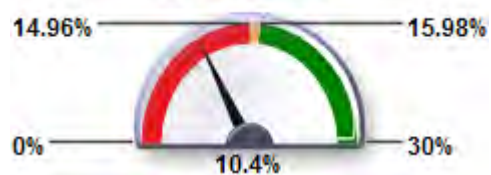
2022/2023 Target is set at 43%. Performance is recorded at 38.9 %, this figure is slightly lower than last year. This year we harvested the figure from our Library management system rather than gathering manually, this is a more accurate figure and reflects the increase in book prices that has reduced the number of copies that can be purchased to fill waiting lists.

2021/2022 Target set at 43%. Performance is recorded at 39.49%, this is an increase on last year as customers are now able to return their books to libraries. Some customers are still reluctant but this is gradually improving as confidence grows post pandemic.

2020/2021 Target was set at 43% to reflect last year performance and to monitor the impact of the reduction in the book fund and the increased cost to purchase books. Performance is recorded at 33.06%, this is due to customers not being able to return books to the library at all between April to July 2020. Six libraries opened for returns at the end of July and in September all 14 libraries opened but customers were still reluctant to return during COVID 19. This reduces the stock we have to meet the request requested.

2019/20 Performance was recorded as 43.46% this is above the target of 41% and is an increase of 2.26% on the previous year. This is the results of a reduction in the book fund. We are unable to purchase the same number of copies of bestsellers so borrowers have to wait in the reading queue for longer. Also in March the libraries closed as a result of COVID 19 which pushed many customers online to use the eresources. This increased the waiting items for customers.

2018/19 Performance was recorded as 41.20% this is above the target of 38% and is a very small decrease of 0.2% on the previous year. This is the results of a reduction in the book fund. We are unable to purchase the same number of copies of bestsellers so borrowers have to wait in the reading queue for longer. We expected performance to decrease in 2018/2019 and worked to try and combat the impact of the drop. Most recently we reviewed allocation of the book fund and have made significant changes to what is being purchased. We have also increased the use of our "Collection HQ" system to increase the move of stock around the libraries creating the illusion of new stock within the library. We will continue to monitor performance going forward.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS027_9b.2a Active Library Members as a percentage of the West Lothian resident population.																												
Description	This performance indicator measures the total number of active members who have either borrowed an item either physically or through the eresource service, or who have used a computer in a library over the previous twelve months. An active borrower is a customer who has borrowed a book, downloaded an eresource or used a public access library PC in the previous 12 years. This indicator does not count the people utilising libraries for learning and information purposes and using stock within the libraries. The calculation is an average percentage of the 12 monthly percentages. This includes active high schools and college members.		PI Owner(s): zCuCS_Admin; Kay Ali																										
<div>Active Library Members as a percentage of the West Lothian resident population.</div>  <table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Value (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>18.2%</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>17.7%</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>12.42%</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>3.98%</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>10.4%</td></tr></tbody></table>			Year	Value (%)	2018/19	18.2%	2019/20	17.7%	2020/21	12.42%	2021/22	3.98%	2022/23	10.4%	<div>2022/23 result</div>  <table><tbody><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td><div></div></td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>10.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>14.96%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>15.98%</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting</td></tr></tbody></table>	Last Updated:	2022/23	Status:	<div></div>	Current Value:	10.4%	Current Target:	17%	Red Threshold:	14.96%	Amber Threshold:	15.98%	Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting
Year	Value (%)																												
2018/19	18.2%																												
2019/20	17.7%																												
2020/21	12.42%																												
2021/22	3.98%																												
2022/23	10.4%																												
Last Updated:	2022/23																												
Status:	<div></div>																												
Current Value:	10.4%																												
Current Target:	17%																												
Red Threshold:	14.96%																												
Amber Threshold:	15.98%																												
Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting																												

Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/2023 Performance is recorded at 10.4%, this is an increase, however reflects the slow return at the beginning of the year. Growing from 5.8% in quarter 1 to 16.13% in quarter 4.

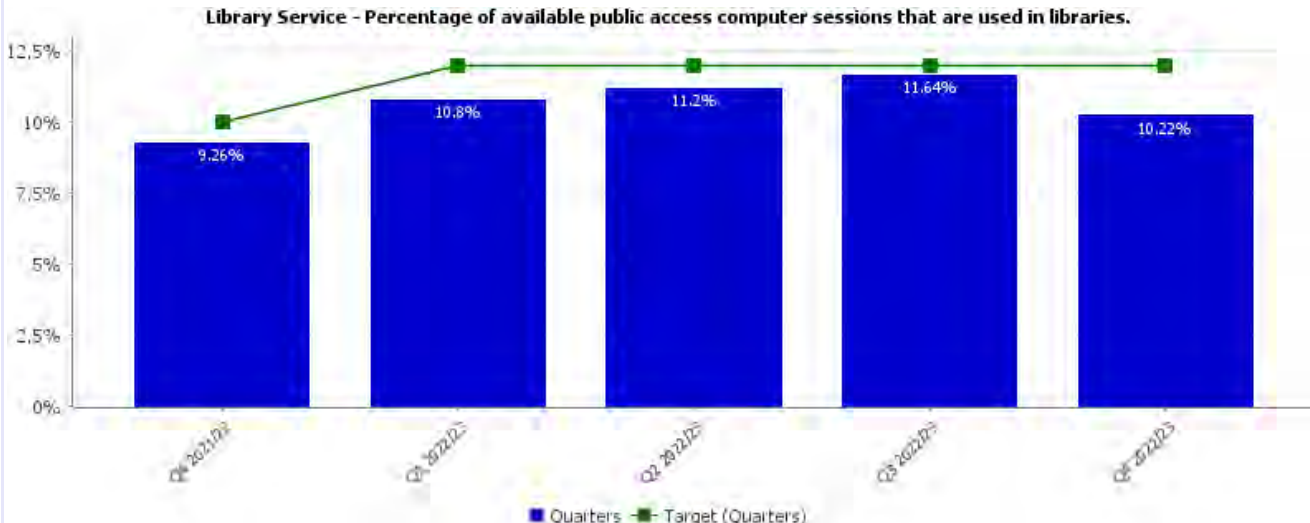

2021/2022- Performance is recorded at 3.98%, the decrease is due to the slow return of customers after the lifting of restrictions. It is also a result of the library management system not being reset due to Covid. If we reset the system too early we will loss customer information.

2020/2021 - Target is set at 18% for 2020/21 to reflect the increase in population. Performance is recorded at 12.42%, this is due to reduced customer use as libraries closed for a period of time during COVID 19. 6 Libraries opened in July 2020 for a click and collect service bringing many customers back but some were still reluctant to attend the library or go out in public.

2019/20- Performance is recorded as 17.70% which is below the target of 20%. This is a result of the population of West Lothian increasing to 182,410 and the loss of the last week of business in March from COVID 19.

2018/19- Performance is recorded as 18.20% which is 1.8% below target. This is the result of Blackburn library being closed for relocation into the new partnership centre in June reducing both physical issues and public access PC usage. It is also the result of public access PCs reducing in certain areas of the service. Whitburn Library changed from 8 pc's to 5 due to CIS move. Linlithgow Partnership Centre reduced from 10 to 7 pc'.

Population is recorded as being 181,310.

PI Code & Short Name	P:CuCS031q_9b.1c Library Service - Percentage of available public access computer sessions that are used in libraries.																												
Description	<p>This Performance Indicator describes how much the computers in libraries are used against the total availability. A key indicator for public libraries is how much engagement is provided in terms of digital literacy for the West Lothian wide population. This performance indicator covers all libraries and includes libraries located within partnership centres. The indicator gathers the number of available hours of 104 PCs and the number of issues of PCs in libraries and a percentage is calculated from this. There are a number of reasons for this which include the requirement for jobseekers to prove their online job hunting activities and the requirement to find house swap opportunities because of the changes in the welfare system.</p>	PI Owner(s): zCuCS_Admin; Kay Ali																											
<div><p>Library Service - Percentage of available public access computer sessions that are used in libraries.</p><table><thead><tr><th>Quarter</th><th>Value (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Q4 2021/22</td><td>9.26%</td></tr><tr><td>Q1 2022/23</td><td>10.8%</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2022/23</td><td>11.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Q3 2022/23</td><td>11.64%</td></tr><tr><td>Q4 2022/23</td><td>10.22%</td></tr></tbody></table><p>■ Quarters ■ Target (Quarters)</p></div>		Quarter	Value (%)	Q4 2021/22	9.26%	Q1 2022/23	10.8%	Q2 2022/23	11.2%	Q3 2022/23	11.64%	Q4 2022/23	10.22%	<div><p>Q4 2022/23 result</p></div> <table><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>Q4 2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>10.22%</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>11.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>11.76%</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting</td></tr></table>		Last Updated:	Q4 2022/23	Status:		Current Value:	10.22%	Current Target:	12%	Red Threshold:	11.4%	Amber Threshold:	11.76%	Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting
Quarter	Value (%)																												
Q4 2021/22	9.26%																												
Q1 2022/23	10.8%																												
Q2 2022/23	11.2%																												
Q3 2022/23	11.64%																												
Q4 2022/23	10.22%																												
Last Updated:	Q4 2022/23																												
Status:																													
Current Value:	10.22%																												
Current Target:	12%																												
Red Threshold:	11.4%																												
Amber Threshold:	11.76%																												
Categories:	PDSP_Culture & Leisure; PPR Public Performance Reporting																												

Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/2023 Target set at 17%

Quarter 4- Performance is recorded at 10.22 %, this is below target due to the slow return of PC users after lockdown.

Quarter 3- Performance is recorded at 11.64%, this is below target due to the holiday season.

Quarter 2- Performance is recorded at 11.2% which is below the target of 12%. This increase continues to represent customers slowly returning to use the computer facilities in libraries.

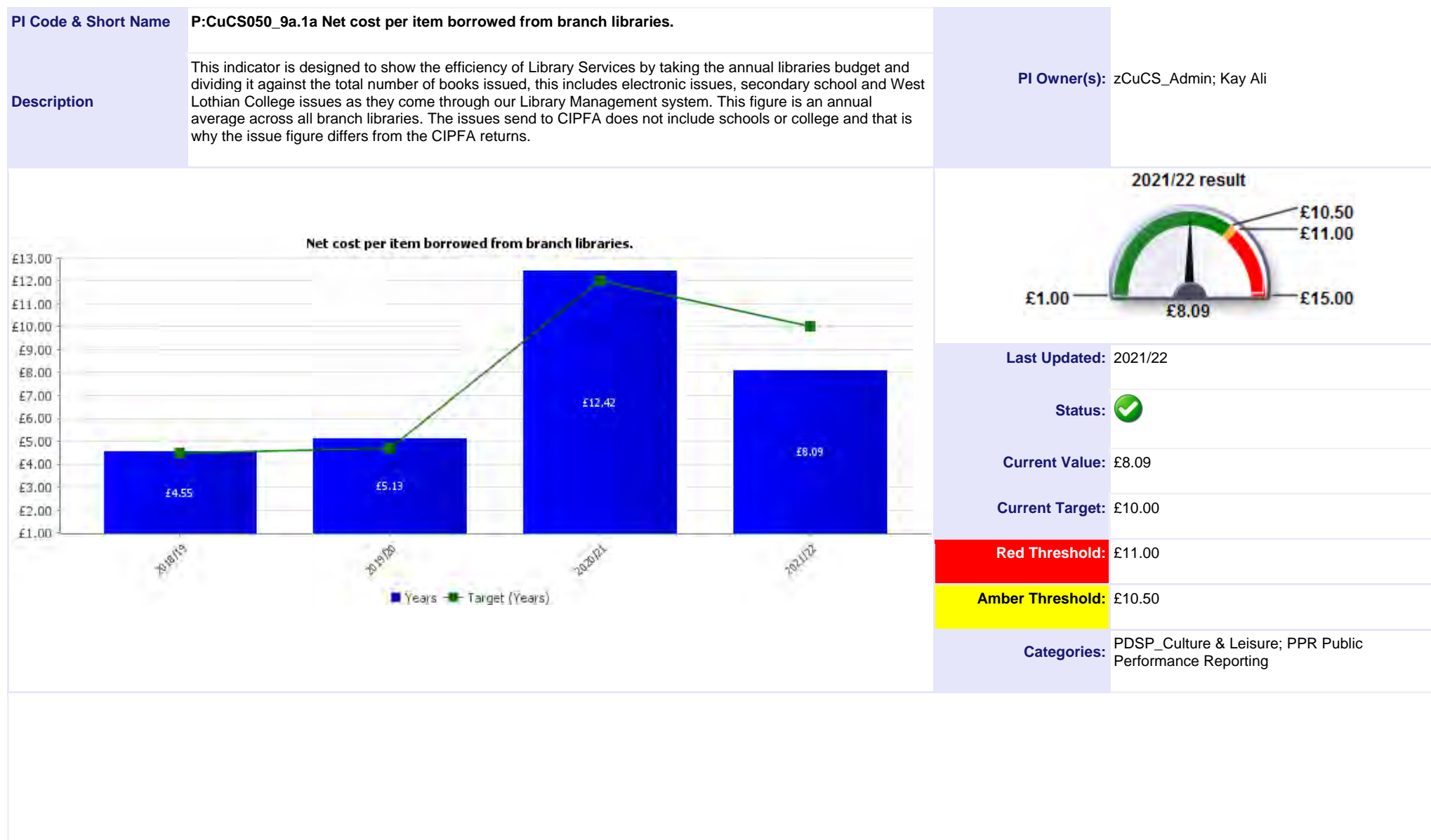
Quarter 1- Performance is recorded at 10.8% , this increase represents customers slowly returning to use the computer facilities in libraries.

2021/2022 Target set at 10%. This has been reduced to reflect the pandemic. Only 5 libraries piloted the return of Public Assess PCs on the 26th April 2022. On the 17th May 2022 all other libraries opened the Public Assess PCs but they were reduced by more than half to support safely Socially Distanced.

2021-22

Quarter 4- Performance is recorded at 9.26%. This increase represents customers slowly returning to use the computer facilities in libraries.

2020-21 There was no date recorded in 2020-21 as the Public Access PCs were closed to the public due to COVID 19.



Trend Chart Commentary:

Target rational is set around changes in service delivery and previous performance. Target is set at £10 as we expect more books to be issues as we remobilise from Covid 19.

2022-2023- Benchmarking is carried out with other local authorities of similar size in November, figures will be published once CIPFA results have been released at the end of the year.

2021/2022 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £8.09

Net Expenditure in 2021/22 was £1,460,000 + £95,000 book fund. This compares to £1,338 in 2020/21. Main Factors for this were the pay award and an increase in library activity as covid restrictions were eased. There were 192,107 books issued. 133,807 physical books issued and 58,300 digital books issue. Net cost per book is starting to decrease as more books are issued as a result of Covid restrictions being lifted. physical books are increasing and digital books decreasing which is returning to a more normal position.

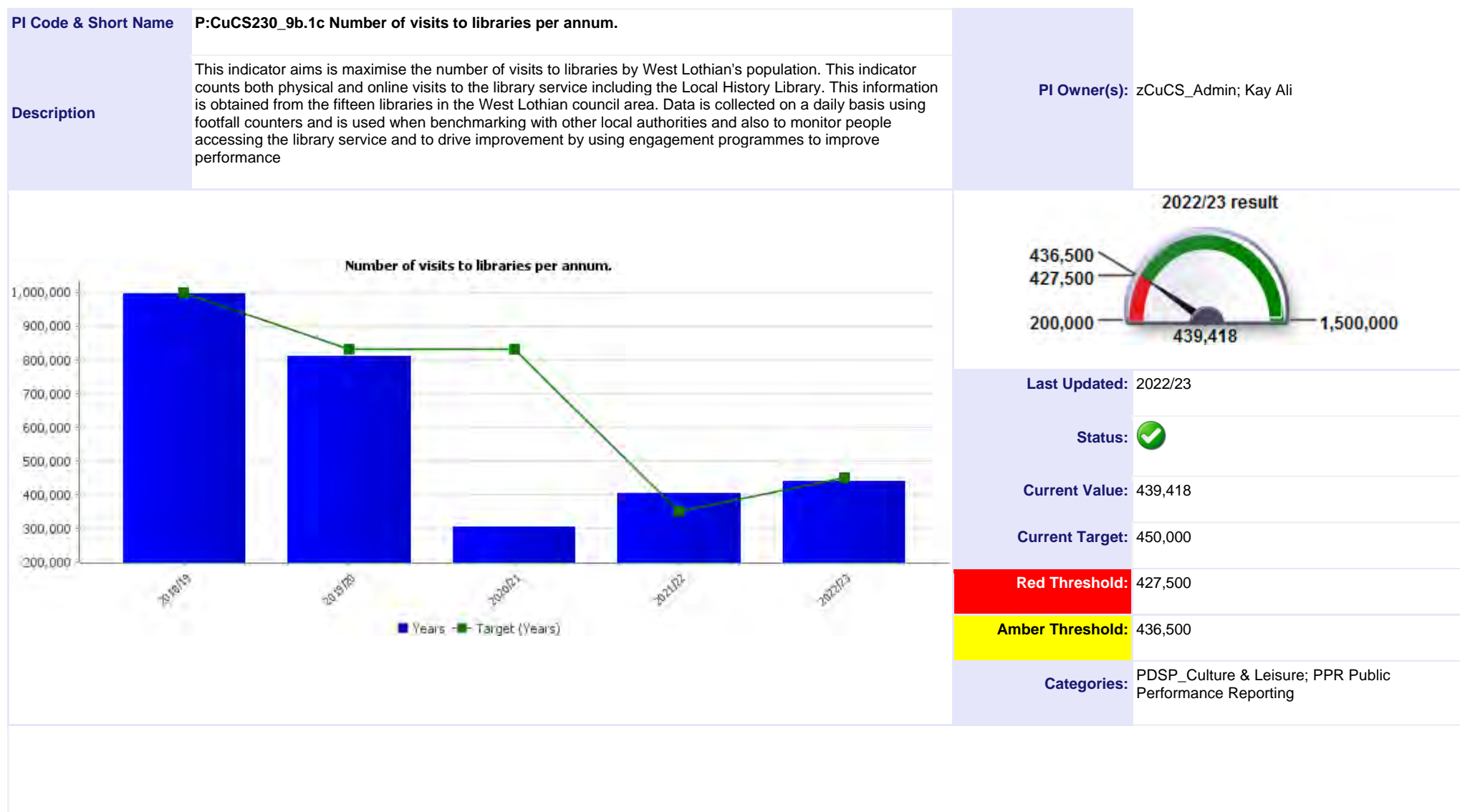
2020/2021 - The net cost per item borrowed is recorded as £12.42. In 2020/2021 115,295

books were issued and it cost £1,338,000. to run the service + £95,000 book fund. There was 33,414 physical books issued and 81,881 digital books issue. Due to Covid 19 the libraries were closed for a period of time resulting in less books being issues throughout the year. Other main factors for the movement were the pay award and a drop in income as libraries were closed and activities funded by grant couldn't take place as planned resulting in the grant carrying forward.

Benchmarking is carried out with other local authorities of similar size in November once the cipfa results have been released. West Lothian libraries also engage with other local authorities to look for service improvements where possible around all library issues. This is done by using a basecamp address that all local authorities ask questions on and respond to allowing us to compare information. We also attend quarterly Association of Public Library meetings to discussion performance.

2019/2020 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £5.13. In 2019/2020. 392,316 books were issued and it cost £1,915,717 to run the service + £96,878 book fund. There was 336,475 physical books issued and 55,841 digital issues. This is an increase of 0.58p on last year . Book issues decreased by 34,882 as the result of libraries being closed at the end of the year due to Covid and the result of the number of books the service can purchased being reduced as the book fund decreased in 2018/2019. The cost to run the service also increased due to an increase in support costs. This comes in at year end. Finance provide the cost to run the service and this figure reflects the cipfa returns.

2018/19 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £4.55. In 2018/2019 427,198 books were issued and it cost £1,852,283 to run the service + £95,000 book fund. This is an increase of 0.27p on last year . Book issues decreased by 4,438 as the result of Blackburn libraries being closed for relocation and the result of the number of books the service can purchased being reduced as the book fund decreased by 50.5%. The cost to run the service also increased due to an increase in support costs. The cost to run the actual service has actually gone down but the support cost allocation has gone up. This comes in at year end. Finance provide the cost to run the service and this figure reflects the cipfa returns.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2022/2023 - Target has been set at 450,000 to support a gradual return of customers to the service. Performance was recorded at 439,418. 293,379 physical visits and 146,039 virtual.

2021/2022 - Target has been set at 350,000 as visits to libraries where by appointment only at the beginning of this period and had been very limited in numbers during this period to ensure the safety of customers. Performance was recorded at 405,411. 141,090 physical visits and 264,321 virtual.

2020/21- Target was set to 830,000 in line with previous performance. Performance is recorded at 305,072, this is virtual visits only as all libraries were closed 2020-21 due to COVID 19. Virtual visits have increased by 72,106 from the same period last year.

2019/20 - Performance is recorded at 809,534. There was 576,568 physical visits and 232,966 virtual visits. Physical visits are down as a result of the libraries being closed at the end of March due to COVID 19 and in July 2019 the service also modified some of the visitor percentages to libraries as they were too high this new way of counting gives a more accurate gathering of the visits per year. Virtual visits are also down as we are now only recording unique visits . This means that only one visit to the website is recorded per person per visit, whereas before every page customers clicked on, even when just navigating the webpages were recorded as separate visits. There was a National agreement with all Scottish libraries that this is how we would start to count virtual visits so that when we were benchmarked we were counting like for like.

2018/19 - Performance is recorded at 994,136 which is 5,864 below target. There were 651,514 physical visits and 342,622 virtual visits. This is the result of no longer subscribing to the Driving Test Theory Test and Ancestry. The community can still access Ancestry via the Family History Society and the Driving Test Theory online for free. Blackburn library was also closed for relocation in June which reduced number of physical visits to the Library. Benchmarking data will be available in November at the Chartered Institute of Public finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) returns come out.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

COLLECTIONS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL AND WEST CALDER AND HARBURN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST
REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Collections Partnership Agreement between the Council and West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel considers and provides comment on the draft Collections Partnership Agreement, which will be presented to Council Executive for approval.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Collections Partnership Agreement considers the council's current Collection Development Policy and all current legislation, plans and strategies relating to the ownership and provenance of museum collections and to the delivery of a local authority museums service.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The policy will be delivered within existing revenue budgets and grant aid for which accredited museums are eligible. Objects whose collection might incur higher costs would be referred to the Council Executive.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None

VIII Other consultations

Not applicable

D. Terms of Report**D.1 Background**

The mission of the council's Museums Service is to enhance the quality of life by providing a museums service that serves the educational, cultural and leisure needs of the community now and in the future. The support of independent museums and other heritage organisations operating within West Lothian forms a key part of the remit of the service.

The council's existing Collections Development Policy identifies the council's collecting priorities and defines the geographic scope of its collecting activities.

West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust (WCHCDT) is currently working on a project to create a national heritage attraction in West Calder; the Scottish Co-operative Discovery and Activity Centre (the SCDAC). This project has received a Stage 1 pass from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and earlier this year received a £1.4m Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) funding award. The Stage 2 RCGF funding application was approved by the Council Executive on 4th October 2022.

The galleries will incorporate object-based displays based around the heritage of the Co-operative movement and will include objects borrowed from other heritage institutions across the UK.

WCHDT does not currently have the policies, procedures and professional expertise in place to undertake collecting activity whilst the majority of institutions will only lend to other operators of accredited museums. The centre will not be eligible for accreditation until after opening. In order to facilitate the development of the attraction it is proposed that West Lothian Council Museums and Archives Services undertake collecting activity on behalf of WCHCDT during the development phase.

D.2 Collections Partnership Agreement

The draft Collections Partnership Agreement would enable the council to undertake collecting activity outwith the parameters of the aforementioned Collections Policy, specifically in relation to objects and images connected to Co-operative movement with a non-West Lothian provenance. This will include borrowing items from other institutions including the Rochdale Pioneers Museum, which has a remit for the preservation of heritage associated with the Co-operative movement in the UK.

Any items collected under the terms of the Collections Partnership Agreement will become part of the collections of the SCDAC once accreditation status has been awarded whilst new loan agreements will be signed with lender institutions.

All items collected will be managed in accordance with the council's collections care and documentation policies.

E. Conclusion

The draft Collecting Partnership Agreement will contribute significantly to the development of the SCDAC and will ensure that collections are effectively managed prior to the achievement of accreditation status.

F. Background References

West Lothian Council Museums Service Collections Development Policy 2022 - 2027

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1 Collections Partnership Agreement between West Lothian Council and West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust

Contact person: Emma Peattie, Heritage Manager

Tel 01506 283652, e-mail emma.peattie@westlothian.gov.uk

Julie Whitelaw

Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

2 June 2023

APPENDIX 1

Draft Collecting Agreement

between

West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust (WCHCDT)

and

West Lothian Council

1. The Scottish Co-operative Discovery and Activity Centre (SCDAC) is a project which has been led by WCHCDT with support from a number of organisations, including West Lothian Council. The SCDAC will incorporate a heritage display space. An Accreditation Action Plan is under development, and WCHCDT hopes to achieve accredited museum status within two years of opening.
2. In order to proceed with acquiring items for display by gift, loan or purchase, as well as starting to build a museum collection, it is proposed that West Lothian Council Museums and Archives Service collect on behalf of WCHCDT. Once the Trust has achieved Accreditation Status, these items will be transferred to the Trust and housed in the SCDAC.
3. This Agreement will be ratified by the Board of Trustees of West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust and the Council Executive of West Lothian Council.
4. West Lothian Council Museums and Archives Service (hereafter WLCMAS), having achieved Museums Accreditation status for its community museums, will act on behalf of West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust (hereafter WCHCDT) to collect items from the public and other institutions which are gifted for the purpose of display, research and preservation in the SCDAC.
5. WLCMAS will act on behalf of WCHCDT as an appropriate institution to arrange loans from other institutions and organisations of items for display or preservation in the SCDAC. Such loans will be for a maximum period of 60 months, renewable by mutual agreement.

6. WLCMS will act on behalf of WCHCDT as an appropriate institution to receive loans from members of the public of items for display or preservation in the SCDAC. Such loans will be for a maximum period of 36 months, renewable by mutual agreement.
7. All items received by WLCMAS on behalf of WCHCDT will be recorded using a unique series of identifiers to avoid confusion with the WLCMAS collection, and will be documented and stored to the same standards as the WLCMAS collection, in accordance with SPECTRUM 5.1.
8. All items acquired as gifts will be transferred, by documentation and physically, by WLCMAS to WCHCDT once the latter organisations has achieved Museums Accreditation Status. Before that time, the display of items in the SCDAC will be managed by WLCMAS in accordance with their collections care and documentation policies.
9. Items received from the public or from other institutions or organisations by WLCMAS as loans will have new loan agreements with the owner(s) put in place by WCHCDT once Museum Accreditation status has been achieved. The items can then be physically transferred by WLCMAS to the SCDAC.
10. Items acquired by WCHCDT through purchase prior to that organisation achieving Museums Accreditation status will be housed by WLCMAS where requested and where space in the council stores allows. These will be documented as loans in to WLCMAS from WCHCDT.
11. In the event of WCHCDT ceasing to exist in its current form, all items received as gifts by WLCMAS on behalf of WCHCDT will be deemed to be the property of WLCMAS and will not form part of the assets of WCHCDT. WLCMAS reserves the right to accession some or all of such items into its own collection, and to dispose of some or all of such items according to the Museums Association guidelines for Accredited Museums.
12. In the event of WCHCDT ceasing to exist in its current form, all items received as loans in from the public or other institutions by WLCMAS on behalf of WCHCDT will be returned to their owner(s) as soon as practicable, unless WLCMAS wishes to continue

the loan and the owner(s) agree to this action.

13. The remit of WCHCDT covers items pertaining to the Co-operative movement throughout Scotland, and relevant items will be collected from the national area and elsewhere if they have Scottish significance. Due attention will always be paid to the collecting priorities and policies of other institutions.
14. While the aim of WCHCDT is to acquire a comprehensive collection to represent the heritage of the Co-operative movement in Scotland, priority will be given to collecting items which have provenance and history, to ensure as far as possible the preservation of memories and heritage associated with the Movement.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

LEAVE SCHEME FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider extending the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include provisions for periods of sickness absence.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note and consider the following recommendation(s) which are intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

1. Note the terms of The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 in relation to 'leave of absence';
2. Consider the proposed extension to the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include provisions for periods of sickness absence as outlined in the draft Leave Scheme for Elected Members;
3. Amend the existing Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include sickness absence and to re-name the Scheme as the Leave Scheme for Elected Members.

C SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable, providing equality of opportunities, making best use of our resources
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>Although regulations make provision for additional senior councillor payments for councillors acting-up to positions of additional responsibility, no legal right to leave of absence currently exists for people in elected office.</p> <p>Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004; Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	The Scheme of Delegations includes Head of Corporate Services responsibility for

administering the Family Leave Scheme which would be extended to include sickness absence.

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Costs arising will be absorbed into existing budgets
VII	PDSP consideration	Ongoing
VIII	Other Consultations	Limited local authority benchmarking

D TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

On 6 October 2020, Council Executive approved the adoption of the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members which forms part of the Scheme of Elected Member Remuneration, Allowances and Reimbursement of Expenses.

Adoption of this scheme followed endorsement by Council Leaders of Family Leave Guidance prepared by COSLA with a view to increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of councillors by removing barriers in local government and public office. The adoption of provisions for family leave was for councils to determine locally on a voluntary basis under the terms of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 which states the remuneration arrangements outlined apply:

‘where a local authority has agreed that any of its councillors can take leave of absence, being a period during which the councillor is not expected by the authority to undertake official duties’.

While the leave scheme adopted in October 2020 was limited to leave for family care purposes, the terms of the regulations do not limit a period of leave of absence to the purpose of family care.

Therefore, in order to ensure that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio holders and others in receipt of Senior Councillor payments it is proposed that the provisions of the current Elected Members leave scheme be extended to include provisions for sickness absence. The Scheme would be re-named as Leave Scheme for Elected Members.

D.2 Sickness Absence Provisions

The provisions of the proposed Elected Member Leave Scheme confer no contractual or worker/employment status and can be amended or withdrawn at any time. Councillors continue to retain their status as office holders.

As with the leave for family care purposes, it is proposed that leave for sickness absence is limited to 6 months with the requirement in mind that elected members have a legal duty to attend at least one qualifying meeting in a period of six months.

The proposed provisions as contained in section 3 of the draft Elected Members Leave Scheme attached are as follows:

3. Sickness Absence

- 3.1 The provisions of this scheme extend to Elected Members who are unable to undertake their official duties as a result of ill health. The sickness absence provisions will apply where the Member has been unable or is expected to be unable to undertake their official duties for a period of at least 4 weeks.
- 3.2 The Member intending to take a period of sickness absence should contact the Head of Corporate Services as soon as possible. A fit note from the Member's GP giving an indication of the expected length of absence will be required to assist the council in determining the likely impact of the absence and whether it is appropriate to apply a period of sickness absence and make necessary arrangements for cover and/or senior councillor substitution. The Head of Corporate Services may decide that an indication of a return to duties within a reasonable timescale would negate the need to apply the provisions of this scheme.
- 3.3 Any period of sickness absence will be limited to a maximum of 6 months at which point the position will be reviewed and may be extended for up to a further six months. The Head of Corporate Services may also request that the Member meet with them at intervals agreed or at any time during the 6 month period to assess the ongoing need for the leave of absence. Occupational Health may be able to suggest reasonable adjustments which would facilitate an Elected Members return to duties.

D.3 Pay Provisions

The pay provisions for a period of leave for sickness absence would be the same as those currently in place for a period of leave for family care purposes.

The basic councillor remuneration is guaranteed by legislation and all members will continue to receive their basic allowance in full while on leave of absence.

Elected Members entitled to a Senior Councillor Payment, and Provosts and Council Leaders, will continue to receive their additional pay during leave of absence, until the council decides otherwise or until the date when the member taking the leave resigns as a councillor.

An Elected Member appointed to replace the Senior Councillor on leave of absence will also receive the relevant senior councillor payment until the return of the Member on leave or until that Member resigns, whichever date is sooner.

Should a Member appointed to replace the Member on leave of absence already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one senior councillor payment shall apply (i.e., only one such payment can be made).

D.4 Member Responsibilities During Leave

The arrangements for member responsibilities during a period of leave for sickness absence would be the same as those currently in place for a period of leave for family care purposes.

Any member taking leave of absence retains their legal duty under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to attend a qualifying meeting within a six-month period unless the reason for the failure to attend is accepted by the council. Attendance at outside bodies to which members have been appointed by the council count as qualifying meetings. It is therefore not felt to be an onerous task for most members on leave to avoid such a period of absence from meetings.

Arrangements should be made prior to a period of leave for other duties to ensure there is minimal impact on the relevant ward. This may include arranging for another councillor to attend surgeries to represent and pursue constituents' interests, or arranging substitutes for committee meetings as permitted by council standing orders. In making such arrangements consideration must be taken of data sharing legislation in relation to constituents' personal information.

In relation to committee and PDSP meetings, Standing Orders permit the attendance of substitutes for almost all meetings. For those, a member on leave can ask for another councillor to attend. The bodies where substitutes are not allowed are Development Management Committee, Local Review Body, Asset Transfer Committee, Asset Transfer Review Committee, and Local Area Committees.

Substitutes are not possible at meetings of full council and only members present (physically or, subject to conditions, remotely) may vote. Councils are generally finely balanced in political terms and the absence of a member on leave may have a significant impact on decisions taken in their absence. However, even if a councillor has taken a period of leave there is nothing to prevent them from carrying out some of their duties such as attending and voting at full council meetings. Proxy voting is not lawful at council or committee meetings.

Attending council meetings or undertaking other duties whilst on leave will not affect the period of leave which has been agreed or bring it to an end prematurely. Similarly, any time spent on duties during the period of leave will not extend the period of leave beyond the maximum period.

D.5 Additional provisions for the benefit of members

In support of employees unable to undertake official duties as a result of ill health and as agreed at Council Executive on 6 October 2020, Elected Members have access to the council's Employee Assistance Programme and Physiotherapy Services.

Members can self-refer for employee assistance services which are free and available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and are highly confidential. No report is provided to the council.

Physiotherapy services must be accessed via the Human Resources Manager who will complete the necessary paperwork.

Further information on the Employee Assistance Programme and Physiotherapy Services can be found on the [Elected Member Development](#) site.

D.6 Changes to Standing Orders

The Governance Manager will be consulted on any necessary changes to Standing Orders which can only be made by full council. They will be outlined in the planned report to Council Executive for information. The proposals to extend the scheme to include provisions for sickness absence can competently be done by Council Executive.

E. CONCLUSION

In addition to removing barriers to elected office, the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members ensures that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio holders and others in receipt of Senior Councillor payments. It is reasonable that such cover arrangements and substitute arrangements for Senior Councillor responsibilities would also be required where an Elected Member is unable to undertake their official duties due to ill health.

The draft Leave Scheme for Elected Members would provide a mechanism for such arrangements where the ill health of a Member has lasted or is expected to last at least 4 weeks. Application of the scheme would be determined by the council or committee on the basis of the impact of the absence and likely timescales for a return to duties.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007
Family Leave Guidance for Councils – COSLA

Appendices/Attachments: Draft Leave Scheme for Elected Members

Contact Person: Sophie McKinney, Senior HR Adviser – 01506 284132
Sophie.mckinney@westlothian.gov.uk

Lesley Henderson
Interim Head of Corporate Services
7 June 2023



LEAVE SCHEME FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 While there is no legal right to leave of any kind for people in elected public office, the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 allow the council to agree that any of its councillors can take leave of absence, during which period the councillor is not expected by the authority to undertake official duties.
- 1.2 This scheme sets out the circumstances under which the council has agreed that Elected Members may take a leave of absence, and ensures that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio holders and others in receipt of Senior Councillor payments during any period of leave taken.
- 1.3 The provisions of this guidance confer no contractual or worker/employment status and can be amended or withdrawn at any time. Councillors continue to retain their status as office holders.

2. Family Leave

- 2.1 The provisions of this part of the scheme extend to Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental, Adoption and Surrogacy Leave to ensure that as far as possible, barriers to elected office are minimised for those with family care responsibilities.

Leave Provisions

Type of Leave	Provision
Maternity Leave	<p>Up to 6 months (26 weeks) leave from 28 days before the expected due date.</p> <p>In the event of premature birth (before the 37th week of pregnancy), maternity leave may be extended by a period equivalent to the period between the date of birth and the expected due date.</p> <p>In the event of a stillbirth or death of a child after 24 weeks of pregnancy, the Elected Member will retain the entitlement to Maternity Leave.</p>
Paternity Leave	Up to 2 weeks leave for the father or nominated carer of the mother.
Shared Parental Leave	Up to 6 months (26 weeks) shared parental leave where maternity leave is appropriately curtailed. Only any unused statutory maternity leave will be available to be taken as shared parental leave up to a maximum of 6 months (26 weeks). Leave is limited to 6 months (26 weeks) in total even where both parents are elected members.

Adoption Leave	Up to 6 months (26 weeks) leave from the date of placement. Where a couple jointly adopt a child or children, they must decide which partner will take leave as the main carer. The Elected Member will only be granted adoption leave under these provisions if their partner is not also taking a period of adoption leave.
Surrogacy Leave	Up to 6 months (26 weeks) leave from the date of placement or from a fixed date up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

Notice Requirements

- 2.2 A minimum of 4 weeks notice is required prior to a Member taking maternity, paternity, shared parental, adoption or surrogacy leave. The Elected Member Family Leave Notification form can be used for this purpose.
- 2.3 Notification must be accompanied by the following certification as appropriate:

Type of Leave	Certification Required
Maternity Leave	Maternity Certificate (MATB1)
Adoption Leave	Matching Certificate
Shared Parental Leave	Confirmation of the curtailment of maternity leave.
Surrogacy Leave	Parental Order and copy of the Maternity Certificate (MATB1)

3. Sickness Absence

- 3.1 The provisions of this scheme extend to Elected Members who are unable to undertake their official duties as a result of ill health. The sickness absence provisions will apply where the Member has been unable or is expected to be unable to undertake their official duties for a period of at least 4 weeks.
- 3.2 The Member intending to take a period of sickness absence should contact the Head of Corporate Services as soon as possible. A fit note from the Member's GP giving an indication of the expected length of absence will be required to assist the council in determining the likely impact of the absence and whether it is appropriate to apply a period of sickness absence and make necessary arrangements for cover and/or senior councillor substitution. The Head of Corporate Services may decide that an indication of a return to duties within a reasonable timescale would negate the need to apply the provisions of this scheme.
- 3.3 Any period of sickness absence will be limited to a maximum of 6 months at which point the position will be reviewed and may be extended for up to a further six months. The Head of Corporate Services may also request that the Member meet with them at intervals agreed or at any time during the 6 month period to assess the ongoing need for the leave of absence. Occupational Health may be able to suggest reasonable adjustments which would facilitate an Elected Members return to duties.

4. Pay Provisions

- 4.1 All members will continue to receive their basic remuneration in full while on leave of absence.
- 4.2 Members entitled to a Senior Councillor Payment and the Provost and Council Leader will continue to receive their additional remuneration during a period of leave of absence, until the council decides otherwise or until the date when the member taking the leave resigns, whichever date is sooner.

5. Member Responsibilities during Leave

- 5.1 Any member taking a period of leave of absence retains their legal duty under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to attend a qualifying meeting of the Council or an outside body within a six-month period unless the reason for non-attendance is accepted by the council. Absence whilst on leave taken under this Scheme will be deemed to be an acceptable reason for non-attendance.
- 5.2 Arrangements should be made prior to a period of leave for other duties to ensure there is minimal impact on the relevant ward. This may include arranging for another councillor to attend surgeries to represent and pursue constituents' interests, or arranging substitutes for committee meetings as permitted by council standing orders. In making such arrangements consideration must be taken of data sharing legislation in relation to constituents' personal information.
- 5.3 Members on a leave of absence may choose to attend council meetings or undertake other duties during their period of leave. Doing so will not affect the period of leave which has been agreed or bring it to an end prematurely. Similarly, any time spent on duties during the period of leave will not extend the period of leave beyond the maximum period.

6. Senior Councillor Substitution

- 6.1 The statutory rules limiting the number of and total spend on senior councillor payments were changed in April 2020 where members are utilising council-approved schemes for leave purposes. The changes make it possible for a member in receipt of a senior councillor payment to continue to receive that payment while on leave and at the same time a payment is made to another member acting up in their absence. The same provisions apply to the positions of Provost and Council Leader and the separate payments to those who hold those positions.
- 6.2 Elected Members taking a leave of absence under this scheme are required to notify the Head of Corporate Services of their intention to take leave and identify where they are in receipt of Senior Councillor payments. The Head of Corporate Services will notify the Chief Executive who will report the matter to council for consideration of an acting appointment.
- 6.3 The additional payments permitted will become effective on the date the council makes the acting appointments and will continue until the return of the Member on leave or until that Member resigns, whichever date is sooner.

- 6.4 Should a Member appointed to replace the Member on leave of absence already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one senior councillor payment shall apply.

7. Return from Leave

- 7.1 Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post whilst on leave they will return at the end of their leave period to the same post, and the acting-up position will end
- 7.2 If a Member decides not to return at the end of their leave and so to resign as a councillor All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.

8. Administration and Review

- 8.1 The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for the administration of the Scheme.
- 8.2 The Scheme shall be reported to the statutory first meeting of full council after each local government election for re-adoption as part of the approval of the Scheme of elected Member Remuneration, Allowances and Reimbursement of Expenses, and annually thereafter.
- 8.3 The Scheme will be reviewed once in each administrative term.

Human Resources
May 2023



ELECTED MEMBER FAMILY LEAVE NOTIFICATION
(Please complete the relevant section in BLOCK capitals)

Name:
Ward:
MATERNITY LEAVE
<p>I wish to inform you that I am pregnant and that I intend taking a period of maternity leave. Leave entitlement is up to 6 months (26 weeks) from 28 days before the expected due date.</p> <p>Expected due date: _____</p> <p>Date Maternity Leave to start: _____</p> <p>Duration of Maternity Leave: _____ (weeks)</p> <p>Expected Return date: _____</p> <p>I have enclosed a copy of my MATB1 certificate.</p>
PATERNITY LEAVE
<p>I am the father or nominated carer of the mother and wish to take 2 weeks paternity leave</p> <p>Date Paternity Leave to start: _____</p>
SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE
<p>I wish to take a period of shared parental leave (ShPL). I confirm that my partner ended (or will end) their maternity leave on _____ and that there are ____ weeks statutory maternity leave that remain available to be taken as shared parental leave.</p> <p>Date Shared Parental Leave to start: _____</p> <p>Duration of Shared Parental Leave: _____ (weeks)</p> <p>Expected Return date: _____</p>
ADOPTION LEAVE
<p>I wish to take a period of adoption leave. Leave entitlement is up to 6 months from the date of placement.</p> <p>Date of placement: _____</p> <p>Date Adoption Leave to start: _____</p> <p>Duration of Adoption Leave: _____ (weeks)</p> <p>Expected Return date: _____</p> <p>I have enclosed a copy of the Matching Certificate.</p>

(See over for Surrogacy Leave, Senior Councillor Payments and Submission Process)

SURROGACY LEAVE

I wish to take period of surrogacy leave. Leave entitlement is up to 6 months from the date of placement or from a fixed date up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

Date of Placement or expected date of placement: _____

Date Surrogacy Leave to start: _____

Duration of Surrogacy Leave: _____ (weeks)

Expected Return date: _____

I have enclosed a copy of the MATB1 certificate and will provide the Parental Order when available.

SENIOR COUNCILLOR PAYMENTS

I am in receipt of a senior councillor payment: YES / NO (*delete as appropriate*)

I am in receipt of additional remuneration as
Provost or Council Leader: YES / NO (*delete as appropriate*)

Signed:

Date:

Completed form and relevant certification as required should be returned to:

Head of Corporate Services
West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
EH54 6FF

**Head of Corporate Services to notify the Chief Executive
who will in turn report to Council.**

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**WORKPLAN TO 18 AUGUST 2023**

	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	P&R PDSP Date / Month
1.	Code of Conduct Annual Report	Chief Executive	Annually 1 December 2023
2.	Annual SPSO Report	Chief Executive	Annually 1 December 2023
3.	Property Asset Management – Performance Update	Head of Finance and Property Services	Annually 1 December 2023
4.	ICT Asset Management Plan – Annual Review	Head of Finance and Property Services	Annually 1 December 2023
5.	Corporate Asset Management Strategy – Annual Update	Head of Finance and Property Services	Annually 1 December 2023
6.	Lothian Valuation Joint Board Annual Report	Chief Executive	Annually 1 December 2023
7.	Annual Complaints Report	Depute Chief Executive, Corporate, Operational and Housing Services	Annually 18 August 2023
8.	Managements Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance & Property • Corporate Services • Customer Service (HCBS) 	Heads of Service	Annually 18 August 2023
9.	Corporate Debt Update	Head of Finance and Property Services	Annually 1 December 2023
10.	Social Security Benefits and Welfare Reform	Head of Finance and Property Services	Biannually 18 August 2023 19 April 2024
11.	Financial Performance Report	Head of Finance and Property Services	Biannually 18 August 2023 1 December 2023

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	P&R PDSP Date / Month
12.	Library and Museum 6 Monthly Performance Report	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	Biannually 1 December 2023 7 June 2024
13.	Quarterly Performance Report	Depute Chief Executive, Corporate, Operational and Housing Services	Quarterly 18 August 2023 1 December 2023 19 April 2024 7 June 2024
14.	Horizon Scan Report	Head of Finance and Property Services	Quarterly 18 August 2023 1 December 2023 19 April 2024 7 June 2024
15.	Quarterly Sickness Absence Update	Head of Corporate Services	Quarterly 18 August 2023 1 December 2023 19 April 2024 7 June 2024
16.	Museum Learning and Access Policy	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	Every 3 years December 2025
17.	The Museum Forward Plan	Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services	Every 3 years December 2025
18.	Market Supplements	Head of Corporate Services	18 August 2023
19.	Corporate Strategies 2023-28	Depute Chief Executive, Corporate, Operational and Housing Services	22 September 2023
20.	Lothian Valuation Joint Board minutes	Chief Executive	As available

Graham Hope
Chief Executive

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC