

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 15 MAY 2023

REPORT ON: IMPROVING SERVICES THROUGH LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND SERVICE USERS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 138-2023

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To highlight improvements which have been made to Council services as a result of a wide range of feedback over the past year including listening to the views of customers and service users.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) note the contents of this report and agree that similar reports should continue to be submitted annually.
- (ii) agree that highlights from the report, as set out in Appendix 1, are published on the 'we listened, we acted' page of the Council's website.
- (iii) encourage services to maintain their efforts to listen to and respond to feedback, and to identify any further customers who should be consulted with a view to ensuring that services continue to be improved in response to the views of users.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Each service makes provision for any costs of customer consultation within their existing revenue budgets.

4. LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND SERVICE USERS

4.1 The Council uses a wide range of methods to gather feedback from those who use its services, including:

- surveys and feedback forms
- focus groups
- public consultations
- involvement of users in planning new services and facilities
- meetings with representative groups e.g., tenants, carers, parents, and people with disabilities
- meetings with partners
- analysis of individual complaints, comments, and suggestions

This report gives examples of how this feedback has been used in the past year to improve services, demonstrating that the Council listens to, learns from and acts on feedback received from whatever source.

4.2 As in the past thirteen years, the Chief Executive's Service asked 'customer facing' services to identify any changes made in response to the views of customers and service users. Despite the challenges of the last few years, the detailed returns set out in Appendix 2 to this report continue to demonstrate a commitment to making improvements through listening.

- 4.3 The Council publicises examples of using customer feedback through a "we listened, we acted" page on its website. Highlights from this report, grouped into the priority strategic themes set out in the Council Plan, are outlined in Appendix 1 and it is proposed that these are published on the "we listened, we acted" page.
- 4.4 The improvements highlighted in Appendix 1, and the many more which are set out in detail in Appendix 2, illustrate the value of listening to the views of service users. It is recommended that services should maintain their efforts to do this with a view to achieving continuous improvement.
- 4.5 The regular reports on complaints which are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee give further evidence of how customer feedback is used to identify service improvements with the aim of preventing the same complaints recurring.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.
- 5.2 Equalities should be considered in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of all services, so customer satisfaction research should aim to capture the views of those from protected characteristic groups. Where possible, consultation should aim to capture the views of people who do not currently use services, as well as those who do.

6. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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4 MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY THEME



Reducing child poverty and inequalities in incomes, education, and health

Local Fairness Initiatives have been developed in Linlathen and Stobswell West to address financial inequalities as well as a variety of other outcomes associated with poverty, such as poor health and wellbeing and poor housing. Steering groups have been established in the two neighbourhoods, with representation from local organisations who continually gather feedback from residents and ensure that the initiatives respond to the needs of the communities.

The PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence) quality improvement programme project has been continued into its third year and has been extended to teenagers, with improvement work being undertaken in engagement with young people about their long-term and/or permanent planning, whether at home, in kinship care, long-term fostering or adoptive care. Various tests of change are underway where staff, children and parents/carers are consulted on the change to permanence planning processes. Feedback from these consultations is Informing future models of intervention.

Plans have been implemented to address pressures for families around the Cost of the School Day.



Delivering inclusive economic growth

In response to client feedback, the Adult Employability Service has rebranded and invested in its city centre base to make it more visible, accessible, and welcoming to service users, and has started delivering daily “STEPS to Employment” workshops to improve the range of work preparation activities which service users can access.

The Sustainable Transport and Roads team worked with the UNESCO City of Design team to establish the ‘*Our Street Studio*’ - an on-street community co-design centre in an empty shop unit on Union Street. This was used as a base to work closely with local traders and residents and to share ideas for the future of Union Street. The UNESCO team have now taken on the space as a semi-permanent home for co-design work and future community engagement.



Tackling climate change

The annual Scottish Housing Day, designed to raise awareness of challenges and successes in the housing sector, focused this year on engaging with tenants about the importance of sustainable housing and climate change. We shared our support by posting across all available social media portals (and Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations’ website and social media pages) the wide range of projects and initiatives demonstrating the Council’s commitment to sustainability, including recycling, energy efficiency, electric vehicle infrastructure and insulation of the housing stock.

The Environment Service continues to develop bio-diversity grasslands and naturalised grasslands in Dundee’s parks and greenspaces, working with local communities and Friends of Parks groups to develop and care for these areas, with opportunities to become involved in planting and maintenance events. The service also continues to support requests for growing in local communities. Working with Housing colleagues, the Community Allotment Officer assists and provides guidance to enable local people to grow their own fruit and vegetables.



Building resilient and empowered communities

Our Place Douglas Community Park is just one example of effective public consultation on local environmental projects. This begins at the design stage where the project officers arrange meetings to discuss ideas and residents' aspirations to gauge what is required at grass roots level, to allow the community to engage in the development of projects and in turn improve, promote, and increase respect for our public open spaces. In this case, Douglas Community Spaces Group was established to help develop and deliver a community park and extensive consultation was carried out over a number of years throughout the development and construction phases.

As part of the Housing Allocations Policy review, there was wide consultation with individuals, community groups, residents, tenant organisations, Registered Social Landlords, staff and other key stakeholders such as Women's Aid and Shelter Scotland. The aim was to ensure that the policy is open, transparent, fair, and easy to understand and shows the Council's commitment to fairness and equality within the allocation process.

Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership continued to develop ways to support involvement of people who use Health and Social Care services, their carers and the workforce, including a 'Call for Views' inviting people to share their views by phone or email and take part in focus groups and discussions as well as completing a survey, while also involving existing groups. People identified priorities such as reducing inequalities, early intervention and prevention, and said the following areas were important - accessibility of services, transparent service information, personalisation, self-care and empowerment. They raised concerns about the impacts of the cost of living crisis and limited workforce capacity, and fears about potential budget cuts. People also said communication and information is critical and said to use plain language and a variety of methods to share information about supports and services.



Designing a Modern Council

Children and Families have commissioned the Mind Of My Own digital app that will allow all care experienced young people to provide their views in a fashion with which they are familiar.

The Communications team has developed a TikTok channel to improve our service to younger citizens.

Scientific Services now have an online client enquiry form available on the website. Clients can access the testing services provided and receive a quotation using the Firmstep system. With every test report sent to clients, a link to a questionnaire is provided for them to give feedback on the service.

The National Entitlement Card Programme Office is engaged with Social Security Scotland to facilitate local authority direct access to benefit awards information, enabling eligibility verification which will result in more efficient application and renewal processing.

An online repair tracker was introduced to save customers having to call Customer Services to ask about progress with repairs.

An online form was created to allow customers greater flexibility for Council Tax payment dates.

SUMMARY OF IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY SERVICES

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICE

1.1 National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO)

The NECPO team continue to chair a fortnightly Stakeholder Forum which brings all 32 local authorities together with the Improvement Service, Transport Scotland, Young Scot and SPT (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport). The forum is an opportunity to share updates, developments and gather feedback from stakeholders including customers, with discussions often result in improvement actions, for example:

- Migration of benefits administration from the Department for Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland continues with subsequent changes to letters required to prove eligibility. NECPO is engaged with Social Security Scotland to facilitate local authority direct access to awards information, enabling eligibility verification and resulting in more efficient application and renewal processing.
- The team is taking forward initiatives with stakeholders to increase the range of acceptable proofs that can be used in support of an application. An example of this includes working with Young Scot and other agencies to explore proof of identity alternatives for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Engagement is commencing with representatives of various disabled groups to establish what changes might make obtaining and retaining an NEC (National Entitlement Cards) more accessible.

1.2 Communications Team

The Cost-of-Living Campaign helped to ensure that all citizens were made aware of the range of supports available during the crisis. A multi-channel approach, informed through dialogue with the Fairness Commissioners, targeted those most in need across traditional and digital media. A webpage signposting citizens to supports - from food to heating, benefits advice to activities in warm locations, and more - was quickly put together and regularly updated, proving so effective that all key agencies agreed to signpost this in their own communications, rather than develop separate resources. A suite of materials was developed with a single visual identity used in posters, cards, animated video, bus stop adverts and more, and there was also use of radio advertising, bus stop and on-bus advertising, posters, and flyers to ensure inclusive communications.

A TikTok channel was developed to improve our service to younger citizens based on feedback and emerging trends.

1.3 Period Products

Following implementation of the Free Period Products Scotland Act in August 2022, we have continued to increase our provision in the community and via the home delivery service, which was highlighted during consultation as the most popular way to access products. New community premises added include via the food projects.

1.4 Local Fairness Initiatives (involves Chief Executive's, Corporate Services, Neighbourhood Services Community Empowerment Team, and Children and Families services working together)

The Local Fairness Initiatives aim to improve financial resilience for two communities - in Linlathen and Stobswell West - as well as address a variety of other outcomes associated with poverty, such as poor health and wellbeing and poor housing.

Steering groups have been established in the two neighbourhoods, with representation from local organisations who continually gather feedback from residents. The steering groups ensure that the initiative responds to the needs of the communities.

Over the last 12 months, members of the Community Empowerment Team took part in the Narrative Inquiry research project and have supported residents to be involved with taking photographs, film making, conducting interviews, and completing questionnaires. The purpose of this action research was to bring together residents, policy makers and practitioners to explore the key issues and identify themes for change. Through this process the participants expressed a desire to have greater control over their local space and to take an active part in making decisions that affect them. They are being supported and encouraged to form a community voices group to ensure that their involvement in decision making continues beyond the period of the Local Fairness Initiative.

In Linlathen, the Community Empowerment Team led a group of partners and local volunteers in delivering two “Community Fun days” at Rowantree Primary. This allowed engagement with a significant number of residents in relation to the narrative inquiry project. The Pathfinder Team led consultation in relation to employment barriers and the out of school care service led consultation around the childcare needs of local parents and carers.

A “Linlathen Works” drop-in service is now operating weekly from Brooksbank Centre, co-ordinated by the Pathfinder team which also includes the Department for Work and Pensions. As a result of the learning from initial engagement about the complexity of barriers people are facing, support is now being provided to allow for a more holistic support offer. Community Empowerment Team staff are also now supporting the drop-in service which will allow for residents to be linked in with community-based supports and opportunities for local community development. The Community Health Team are also now delivering a weekly “healthy me” programme at Brooksbank Centre.

During the summer, engagement events with parents in Linlathen indicated that lack of childcare was a barrier to employment along with challenges to sustain employment and consider increasing hours. The consultations around barriers to employment led to development of an Out of School Care facility based at Rowantree Primary School and a funding bid was completed to Scottish Government Early Adopting Communities Fund. The team successfully obtained funding and the facility was fully running in January 2023 providing free out of school care places for 50 children as a test of change.

2. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2.1 Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE)

PACE is a quality improvement programme in partnership with CELCIS (the Centre for Excellence in Children’s Care and Protection) which was first implemented in Dundee in May 2019. PACE has a focus on improving outcomes in terms of achieving timely permanence plans for children whether at home, in kinship care, long-term fostering or adoptive care. The key aims are to reduce drift and delay in the planning processes.

The PACE project continued into its third year and has been extended to teenagers, with improvement work being undertaken in engagement with young people about their long-term and/or permanent planning. Various tests of change are underway where staff, children and parents/carers are consulted on the change to permanence planning processes. Feedback from these consultations is informing future models of intervention.

2.2 Inspection Feedback

The Care Inspectorate’s joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm concluded that the impact of support is ‘Good’ and identified overwhelmingly positive relationships between young people and staff, involving consistent and continuous trust, respect, and support. In accordance with a self-evaluation. It also recommended that we need to improve approaches towards how children, young people and families visibly inform both day-to-day decisions about their lives and wider strategic developments and noted that fathers were not always included. This is informing future developments, which will align approaches towards children and young people at risk of harm with wider approaches, such as Your Voice Our Promise.

2.3 Multi-Agency Screening Hub (MASH)

MASH is Dundee's single point of contact for child protection referrals. The team surveyed the main users of the service i.e., staff from the various agencies that work directly with children and young people. 95% of respondents felt that the advice and support they had from MASH was clear, with a wide range of positive feedback given, which helped provide assurance about the high quality of the service provided.

2.4 Pause Dundee

In partnership with Tayside Council on Alcohol, the Robertson Trust, and Pause UK, the "Pause Dundee" service was commissioned to work with women who had had two or more children removed from their care for reasons relating to the presence of significant risks to the child. An "Impact Report" noted that 21 women had successfully completed the programme, and that for these women participation in Pause has led to improvements in their lives. One woman said "Everyone needs a [Pause Practitioner] in their life. I would not change anything about Pause. I have learnt so much and now feel like I can do more by myself because of the help I've been given". Based on this evaluation and related feedback, the service committed to providing the same continued support, with approval from elected members.

2.6 Children's and Community Justice Social Work Teams

Throughout the pandemic, there was significant engagement with service users about how the service could adapt to meet their needs. Financial and practical help and support was a key request for many, and links were made with a wide range of agencies to secure specific financial, practical, food or technical supports to reduce some of the adverse impacts. The need to adapt "supervised contact" arrangements was also highlighted. The restrictions on household mixing limited the number of contacts that were able to take place at indoor venues across the city so, in consultation with parents, an outdoor space at Linlathen was cleared and adapted to provide a generous space incorporating a screened outdoor play area. Feedback about the new arrangements has been very favourable.

2.7 Dundee Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service/Locality Nurse Pilot

The service undertook a survey of staff regarding their knowledge of, and views about, this service whereby specialist DDARS (Dundee Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service) nurses are co-located, and work jointly with, social work teams. The Substance Use Locality Specialist Nurses pilot has been received extremely well by both social work and health staff, with the majority wishing this service to continue. The service is improving joint working across the partnership, with work now to progress on quantifying how it improves outcomes. In response to requests to widen the criteria, we have extended the pilot with the addition of support staff and are continuously reviewing its role and remit.

2.8 Schools and Nurseries

Listening and responding to children, young people and their families is a core feature of what schools and nurseries do. Examples include:

- Implementing fairness plans to address pressures for families in the cost of the school day.
- During and beyond the pandemic/lockdown periods, closer engagement with young people and their families has provided a deeper understanding of children's individual contexts allowing schools to provide more dedicated and focused support to meet their needs. Parents say they have had more information on their child, for example through SEESAW and virtual information evenings. Schools and nurseries have connected with children and families through both in-person and virtual contact, with a high level of attendance of vulnerable children and young people at schools and nurseries throughout this time. This served as a protective factor for many children and families in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
- Care-experienced young people in secondary schools were asked about support offered to them in school, resulting in some becoming involved in the city-wide Young Person's Participation Group (YPPG). The collated results will be shared with the Your Voice Our Promise Team and secondary school Pupil Support Coordinators. They will invite those who would like to join a school-based group to do so, and those young people who indicated they would like to join the city-wide YPPG will be supported to do so.

- Staff from the Accessibility and Inclusion Service provided colleagues across mainstream settings with resources to make sure that those children and young people with English as an Additional Language, and those with sight and hearing loss, were able to access their learning online.
- Remote learning for children with additional support needs who did not attend school or nursery during lockdown periods was, as far as possible, matched to their needs as evidenced in the examples gathered in Education Scotland's thematic review of practice in remote learning for complex needs (education.gov.scot).

Implementation of Counselling in Schools services for children aged 10 years+ has been in place for the last year and indicates that the predominant presenting issues have been: anxiety/stress; interpersonal relationships; family issues; and self-esteem. These are the issues that counsellors would expect to be prevalent amongst children and young people at the ages and stages of those engaging, regardless of pandemic impact. The most significant pandemic-related issues identified were increased anxiety; worry about schoolwork/exams; sense of removal of support networks; and loneliness. A range of individual outcomes have been formulated through children and young people working with counsellors to identify what may help such as:

- being more aware of feelings/behaviour; being able to cope better; being more positive; and being better able to solve problems.
- Education Support/Officers have participated in and recorded sessions answering questions raised by Young Carers and their families especially relating to autism spectrum disorder, transition and return to school which has fed this into the strategic approach to transitions.
- Consultation on the new East End Community Campus - parents, children and the wider school community have told us what they would like the new school to be like and their ideas have been considered within the design process.

2.9 Dundee Champions Board

Considerable progress has been made by the Champions Board with reference to Care Experienced Young People (CEYP). Actions include the development of an overarching engagement strategy for all care experienced children and young people and further development of the Champions Board model. Over the last 3 years, progress has included:

- Quarterly Champions Board Meetings led by the Chief Executive of Dundee City Council, with widening representation and a growing sense of collaboration and accountability between partners and to care experienced children and young people.
- Support for a Young Person's Participation Group (YPPG) consisting of young people who help to coordinate, deliver presentations, and facilitate discussions at Champions Board Meetings. In the last 12 months, 60 young people have participated.
- The previous CEYP Coordinator and Assistant engaged with the Independent Care Review, contributing key messages on the importance of family support and effective relationships which has influenced The Promise.
- The YPPG have consulted and liaised with the Care Inspectorate on effective care planning, including the development of rich, rewarding, and meaningful care plans that are personal to them.
- In response to views expressed in the Champions Board, we have ensured consistent approaches to our looked after and accommodated young people by ensuring that children in Residential Houses receive the same birthday and Christmas monies as others.
- As a direct result of Champions Board work, Dundee City Council now has a guaranteed interview scheme for CEYPs who meet the essential criteria which supports care leavers into employment.

- Working with 'The Corner' to introduce the prioritisation of counselling services for CEYPs given the prevalence of poor mental health for carer leavers, alongside counselling and psychotherapy from the Throughcare and Aftercare Team.
- Supporting Care Leavers to meet with the First Minister during a visit to Dundee which strengthened the campaign for Council Tax exemption for Care Leavers which was announced as a policy shortly afterwards.
- Leisure and Culture Dundee are now active partners in the Champions Board. Care Experienced Young People are a priority focus for their future interventions, and they now have concession rate gym memberships.
- Media projects such as the films 'Experiences of Care' and 'GRIT' have highlighted issues, sparked discussion, raised awareness, and reduced the stigma for CEYPs. These are used across our secondary schools to raise awareness.
- CEYPs now play an active role in the recruitment of Dundee City Council staff working with care experienced young people, with the key concept of "compassionate care" embedded within the recruitment and interview process.
- Partnership work with Children's Hearing Scotland and CEYPs has led to young people becoming actively involved in the selection of Children's Panel members. This work has been recognised nationally.
- Work in partnership with Pupil Support Workers to help schools develop Champions Boards and to raise awareness of the additional needs of CEYPs within education settings.
- Three secondary schools have now established their own Champions Board groups, with the aim for all secondary schools to offer this opportunity to their pupils if they wish to do so.
- We have established a strong social media presence for all Care Experienced Young People to engage with us, using social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, allowing us to hear their views across a variety of different forums.
- We have commissioned the Mind of My Own digital app that will allow all care experienced young people to provide their views in a fashion with which they are familiar.

2.10 Community Justice Service

Unpaid Work - Dundee CJS collects end of placement feedback from individuals who have completed unpaid work and collects feedback from recipients of unpaid work. Responses received included: 'I couldn't fault the placement I was given. Completing my hours gave a feeling of reward, you get a real sense of helping the community ... you're given the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people ... it was a good experience, it taught me a lot and added a personal journey.' 'Thankful I got the opportunity to meet you and thank you for the time you gave me to ask everything I needed ... staff are really welcoming there and really encouraging me. You had loads of knowledge of things I needed including the recovery road map. I would really recommend anyone take the time to meet you. I'm glad I did.'

Service User Self-Evaluation - staff help service users complete a "Support Needs Questionnaire" at the start and end of every Order to provide a tool to examine progress across the domains on finance, attitude to offending, mental health, general health, housing, relationships, employment/education, substance use. The scores and comments collected provide a discussion tool for workers to agree the intervention plan with each individual service user. Self-report of poor mental health emerges as a common theme from the completed questionnaires, adding extra evidence to the need to strengthen links to mental health supports.

2.11 What Matters To You (WM2u)

WM2u is a community-based, systems change initiative working alongside families, practitioners, and senior leaders in two localities including Dundee. WM2u is interested in the views of the front-line staff and practitioners. There are two groups of staff who are called Change Makers and they bring their ideas and suggested tests of change to improve outcomes for the children and families they serve to a

forum called Communities of Practice or Learning Communities. The WM2u Learning Communities are an important part of the approach to action and learning that help us to 'Grow as We Go'.

Comments from parents' involvement so far include: 'There are people actually listening to me and respecting what I say. It took away the fear of interacting in a group;' 'I felt safe; 'I am less isolated now.' 'Group members are really supportive;' 'I was isolated, but this group has been part of the change and my overcoming my isolation.'

3. CITY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction of MultiPark

With the introduction of new working practices, including more employees only coming to their workplace for part of the week, it became clear that the traditional monthly season tickets that had been available for use in the city's car parks no longer offered good value for part-time workers and hybrid workers. In 2022, the MultiPark ticket was launched, allowing commuters to get better value for money when they use the Council's multi-storey car parks.

MultiPark has been a great success, with over 800 commuters applying for MultiPark membership in the first few months. MultiPark was developed as a direct response to customer feedback and gives users the re-assurance that they will only pay for parking on the days that they come into the city centre and use the car parks.

3.2 Union Street Co-design

The Sustainable Transport and Roads Division worked with the UNESCO City of Design Dundee team to establish the '*Our Street Studio*' - an on-street community co-design centre in an empty shop unit on Union Street. This was used as a base to work closely with residents and traders and to provide a display space for the team to share their ideas for the future of Union Street with each other and the wider community.

'Our Street Studio' has been a great success and the UNESCO City of Design Dundee team have now taken on the space as a semi-permanent home for co-design work and future community engagement.

3.3 Employability

In response to client feedback, the Adult Employability Service has rebranded and invested in The Shore (the city centre base from it operates) to make it more visible, accessible, and welcoming to service users. Building on the re-brand, full-size window stickers are now wrapped around the first floor of the building, "Adult Employability Service" flags have been installed on pre-existing flag poles at the main entrance, and pop-up banners have been placed at the main entrance along with an "A frame" advertising the service.

A major refurbishment of the public areas of The Shore is underway. This is increasing the private interview areas available and is transforming the building into a bright, fresh, welcoming, and contemporary space for service users.

During 2022/2023, the service started delivering daily "STEPS To Employment" workshops to improve the range of work preparation activities which service users could access. Service users are encouraged at every session to provide feedback on the workshops, and assured users that feedback is very welcome and, if relevant to the topic information or workshop format. will be used to update the workshops. For example:

- The trainer was facilitating the 'budgeting on a low-income' workshop where there is a discussion on hints and tips of where money can be saved. A client suggested a few money-saving email links that people could use. The workshop was adapted to have these useful links on screen and included in the hand-outs given to each service user at the end of the workshop.
- The trainer used to do the workshops in the afternoon, but workshop times were changed to mornings following clients' requests.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES

4.1 Tayside Scientific Services

An online client enquiry form is now available on our website. Clients can access the testing services which are provided and receive a quotation using the Firmstep system. With every test report sent to clients a link to a questionnaire is provided for them to give feedback on the service.

4.2 Dundee Child Poverty Pathfinder - Community Outreach and Engagement

Last summer, Dundee's Child Poverty Pathfinder moved towards a place-based approach, focusing on Linlathen, given its demographics and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation status. To introduce themselves to the community, and to better understand the needs of families, the pathfinder team attended the two Linlathen Summer Fun Days in Rowantree Primary School. This involved staff from the Council, Department for Work and Pensions and Social Security Scotland. A "Floating Artist" was commissioned to support this community engagement in a more interactive way and to provide a graphic record of what families felt was important to them. To entice the families over to the pathfinder stall, the team distributed free fancy dress costumes to the children and provided arts and crafts activities. The pathfinder stall was very busy at both events with lots of discussion with families about what they were looking for support with and what the team could potentially help them with. This initial consultation piece was then used as the basis for the development of the Linlathen Door Knocking and Outreach programme and the newly developed Tuesday Drop-In which has seen more than £90,000 worth of gains for local families.

4.3 Customer Services and Benefit Delivery

Enhanced appointment system to allow customers to book online.

Online repair tracker introduced to give customers information on the progress of repairs to save them having to call to check progress.

Online form created to allow customers greater flexibility for Council Tax payment dates.

4.4 Council Advice Services

Changes were made to the latest Fuel Well Dundee assessment form following discussions and collaboration with Dundee Fighting for Fairness Commissioners. This is the third year in a row that Council Advice Services have amended the scheme to reflect the views of those with lived experience.

Commissioners' concerns over the extent of the issues facing citizens because of the cost-of-living crisis prompted moves to expand the reach of the Fuel Well Dundee support, resulting in over 10,000 households in Dundee receiving grant support from the scheme in 2022/2023.

The digital divide, again highlighted by the Fighting for Fairness Commissioners and especially experienced by older customers, led to targeted fuel cash payments to older people in receipt of Council Tax reduction.

Concerns raised by the Fighting for Fairness Commissioners around the levels of public debt experienced by those in poverty across the city led to Council Advice Services linking with Aberlour in Dundee. In conjunction with the Robertson Trust, they have commissioned research with Heriot Watt University to explore the impact of public debt and the ways in which public bodies can use debt as an indicator to identify residents who need support from advice services.

5. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

5.1 The Corner

The Corner has introduced a wide range of initiatives in response to feedback from users. These aim to reduce health inequalities among young people, address substance use and support unpaid carers:

The Housing Education for Youth (HEY) project delivers training and housing support information to all S4 pupils, in partnership with stakeholders from housing, homeless and young people's services (Action for Children, Angus Housing, HELM).

The Decider Skills sessions help young people recognise, understand, and manage their own emotions and mental health. The sessions are delivered in partnership in a variety of settings and are engaging, fun and effective in helping young people cope more effectively with their emotions.

All S2 pupils across Dundee watched the live performance of the Dance tour, developed by the Early Years and Young People Team at NHS Tayside, while the Drama Tour was delivered by the team to all S3 pupils, with the aim of identifying some of the main health issues facing young people, such as substances, mental wellbeing, and sexual health. The Corner and other health and wellbeing services were involved in a Q&A panel after both to answer any questions the young people had regarding their health and wellbeing, enabling them to be more informed to access services as and when they are required.

Detached Outreach is delivered in partnership with Hot Chocolate and the Council's Community Learning and Development Workers. The aim is to engage with young people who attend and develop positive relationships, providing them with information about services which are offered and assisting with other forms of support where required.

Groups at Dundee and Angus College provide information and workshops on health-related topics (sexual health, emotional health, Decider skills, Drugs and Alcohol).

The Corner maintains a responsive generic outreach service which can offer bespoke and tailored inputs. They work closely with partners to provide the highest quality information and education sessions they can, which can be requested via their website. The Corner also holds an online information session once every two months. This is an opportunity for anyone to find out more about the range of services offered and how we can work together to improve outcomes for young people. These sessions are delivered via Teams, they last one hour and can be booked via the website link to Eventbrite. Corner staff also use these as an opportunity to network and learn from those who have come along.

The counselling service at The Corner continues to provide one-to-one counselling to young people, offering counselling sessions in a flexible and accessible way dependent on their preferences, including in-person, online, via telephone and more recently implementing an outdoor/ 'walk and talk' arm which has received positive feedback. Counselling, along with other service provision at the Corner, also intends to implement digital technologies including virtual reality programmes to make counselling and emotional support more accessible and engaging to young people requiring support.

The Substance Use Outreach Team is a new service which supports young people aged 16-21 who are affected by substances. This is a partnership between The Corner and Hillcrest Futures and consists of a health check co-ordinator, a young person project worker and family project worker. The service carries out holistic health checks, 1:1 emotional support and supports young people to access and connect with other relevant services.

The Corner has successfully worked in partnership with Dundee Carers Centre as well as a variety of other partners to ensure Young Carers aged 12-25 were identified and given the opportunity to have a health check. This innovative and collaborative approach ensured over 125 Young Carer health checks were completed with another 70 health checks planned during February/March 2023 to address unmet need and provide the necessary support and resources to identified Young Carers. Partnerships were also developed with the learning engagement team at Dundee and Angus College to offer Young Carers the opportunity to participate in the health assessment and worked closely with the learning engagement team to enhance the current support offered to the Young Carers within the College. The Corner's Carers health outreach team developed strong working relationships with the local CLD (Community Learning and Development) Youth work teams and Dundee Carers Centre to support the teams with P7-S1 transition.

5.2 Listening to Customers - Strategic Planning in Health and Social Care

Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership (on behalf of the Integration Joint Board) continue to develop the best ways to support involvement of people who use health and social care services, their carers and the workforce. Dundee Integration Joint Board have developed their Strategic

Commissioning Framework 2023-2033 (the plan for excellence in health and social care in Dundee) through listening to what matters most to people.

In late October 2022 a 'Call for Views' was promoted. People were invited to share their views by phone or email and take part Focus Groups and discussions as well as completing a survey, while arrangements were also made to go out to existing groups and meetings. The engagement included retired citizens, British Sign Language Users, wide variety of colleagues, care home residents, unpaid carers, specialist Community Health (Inequalities) group, mental health groups and learning disability group.

The views shared were instrumental in shaping the Plan. People identified priorities such as reducing inequalities and Early Intervention and Prevention and said the following areas were important - accessibility of services, transparent service information, personalisation, self-care and empowerment. They raised concerns about the impacts of the cost of living crisis and limited workforce capacity, and fears about potential budget cuts. People also said Communication and Information is critical and said: use plain language, use a variety of methods to share information about supports and services.

Many of the groups visited with were keen for regular, ongoing dialogue with people involved in planning in Health and Social Care.

As a result of listening, the H&SCP has worked on finding additional ways to engage with people. This includes engaging with people where they are meeting already, as well as continuing to offer traditional ways of hearing from them like focus groups and surveys. In relation to needs, H&SCP have sourced and shared links to BSL (British Sign Language) information with colleagues and contacts in BSL communities and have produced a suite of information in different formats about the plan to support people with a Learning Disability and Learning Disability and Autism.

5.3 Home-based Care Services

We have reviewed models of care home-based services, including respite care and intermediate care. This has involved gathering information from service users and carers.

A new unit is now operational within Turriff House Care Home which provides assessment and rehabilitation for older people affected by poor mental health in a homelier setting whilst improving the long-term outcomes for individuals and ensuring the correct level of care is provided in an appropriate environment and at the right time.

Successful outcomes have included a significant number of people being supported to return home, and a significant reduction in the number of nights people are admitted to hospital due to their mental health.

5.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing

After hearing from patients, service users, carers and family members, the H&SCP has continued to make progress in delivering range of services and supports for people with mental health and wellbeing challenges. This includes working with stakeholders, including people with lived experience on mental health challenges, to develop the city centre Community Wellbeing Centre. Workstreams were established with considerable energy expended on co-production and involvement and emphasis placed on making sure the service gets it right from the outset.

5.5 Community Independent Living Service

This service, which provides community living and equipment to support people at home with physical disability and illness, regularly evaluate their performance and provide opportunities to service users to give their views about the service.

5.6 Carers' Winter Fund

In 2022, Dundee Carers Centre successfully applied for Scottish Government money (non-recurring) for a Winter Fund to support carers most in need, recognising that carers are more likely to be affected by financial hardship and subject to health inequalities. The fund delivered financial support to 203 carers and their households.

In 2023, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership allocated Carers Partnership money to Dundee Carers Centre for the same purpose, on a one-off basis. A local fund was set up for carers to alleviate some of the increasing financial pressures being experienced over the winter period (e.g., increased costs of food and fuel). It also aimed to enable people to continue their caring roles with less anxiety regarding their health, well-being, and financial security during the cost-of-living crisis.

Whilst Dundee Carers Centre administered the fund, they ensured it was publicised widely across the local support agencies to ensure that carers who did not currently receive support from the Centre were also encouraged to apply for funding. Similarly, the funding panel which reviewed applications and made decisions comprised of representatives across the sector, including money advice services. The external support was invaluable in ensuring that applicants were directed to additional or alternative sources of funding where this was more applicable to ensure best value from the available funds, and support income maximisation.

The 2023 Fund was released in February 2023. Over 500 applications were received, and 11 panel meetings were held. There have been 468 awards this year so far with spend to date approaching £140,000. The average award was £290. This year applicants identified having to make choices between heating and eating, and there was a subsequent increase in the percentage of awards for fuel and food.

5.7 Violence Against Women

A new service was introduced in 2022 which sees Deaf Links working in partnership with Women's Aid to support deaf women experiencing any form of violence, abuse, or coercive control.

Through advocacy workers who are fluent in British Sign Language they offer crisis intervention, information, advocacy services and support to enable equal access to mainstream support services. The Violence Against Deaf Women Advocacy Worker also provides information sessions to Deaf women and raises awareness of BSL and Deaf Culture with mainstream service providers.

5.8 Learning Disabilities

Learning Disability Services have been working in partnership with Arc Scotland through the Dundee Involvement Network which continued to meet online throughout the pandemic and resumed face to face meetings in 2022.

The Dundee Involvement Network (DIN) is one of 7 local Involvement Networks in Scotland bringing together local people who need support to promote involvement in their services. These local networks link with the National Involvement Network (NIN) - a network of people with additional support needs. NIN wrote the Charter for Involvement and promote it across Scotland. The Charter sets out how supported people want to be involved in the support that they get, both in the organisations that provide their services and in the wider community.

Recent Dundee Involvement Network meetings have considered the Charter for Involvement and what the statements mean. In March 2023, the group considered Charter Statement Number 1 'We must be at the heart of any plans about our lives.'

Dundee Learning Disability Strategic Planning Group receive regular updates from the DIN meeting and a representative from the SPG has been arranged to keep in touch with the group.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

6.1 Housing and Construction

Rent Consultation

The Rent Consultation was conducted between 1 November and 23 December 2023, with the following strategies employed to support and encourage customer feedback:

- Construction of website landing page where all information pertaining to the consultation, Housing Revenue Account, contact details, survey and frequently asked questions are published.

- Use of dedicated Council social media accounts used to promote participation opportunities and advertise the consultation process as widely as possible.
- Promotion of the survey using posters in key areas, including Local Offices, Sheltered Complexes and Multi-Storey Developments.
- Sheltered Wardens offered participation to all the 1,700 properties within the service. This was achieved with a dedicated strategy designed to allow staff to use all means at their disposal to achieve a return response. Over 70% of residents took part this year.
- Repairs Contact Centre and Customer Service advisers offered the survey questionnaire when contacting or being contacted by tenants over the phone or in person at a local office.
- Adopted councillor's idea to link all social media portals (Councillors and Council) used in promotion, participation, and advertising of the consultation. This provided a uniform presentation of what is required for customers and constituents to get involved and have their say.
- Use of the monthly staff bulletin to encourage staff who are also Council tenants to participate, whilst also encouraging them to raise awareness of the survey with customers via their day-to-day duties.
- Tenants canvassed by phone who would ordinarily have received a visit from their Tenancy Officer/Assistant, to offer participation opportunities, whilst at the same time carrying out a wellbeing check.
- Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations (DFTA) contacted all its members encouraging participation. In addition, Registered Tenant Organisations were also invited to formally submit their preference on the proposed options. The recovery from Covid-19 was still influencing regularity of meetings, but a number of responses were received and added to the survey results from individuals representing organisations.

The total number of tenants who participated in the process this year was 2,143, equating to a return of just over 17% of the current housing stock - an extremely positive result as it provides consistency in participation, as last year was also 17%, especially considering the challenges over the last few years. The continued high participation rate reflects the effective teamwork across Neighbourhood Services, other Council Service areas and from both the DFTA and other Registered Tenant Organisations.

How Your Rent is Spent Seminar

As part of the wider tenant engagement strategy, a seminar called "How Your Rent is Spent" was held in the summer for the first time in person since returning from restrictions. Providing tenants with information about what their rent pays for and raising awareness of how rent levels are set, the event also provided an opportunity for tenants to learn what the Council's housing priorities are and to let the Council know what is important to them.

Information from this event also informed the rent consultation options. Invitations to customers who had previously expressed an interest in being contacted regarding such events, along with a comprehensive social media campaign inviting participation, resulted in 143 participants engaging in person and online, compared to 74 previously.

Housing Allocations Policy Review

Since the Housing Allocations Policy was last reviewed in 2016 there have been several significant changes in legislation and guidance in relation to how social rented housing is allocated. As a result of this, Dundee City Council, and its Common Housing Register (CHR) partners, sought a review of the current policy. The main aim of the Allocations policy is to accurately assess housing need so that we can then let vacant properties to those with the greatest assessed need, in line with current legislation and guidance.

As part of the review, we consulted widely with individuals, community groups, residents, tenant organisations, Registered Social Landlords, our staff, and other key stakeholders such as Women's Aid and Shelter Scotland. The aim was to ensure that the policy is open, transparent, fair, and easy to

understand. The consensus is one of agreement to the proposed changes - a positive endorsement of Dundee City Council, its partners and stakeholders' commitment to fairness and equality within the allocation process.

The consultation concluded on 23 December 2022, following two separate comprehensive occasions of consultation, with a total of 130 participants across all sectors. CHR responses were adopted as a reflection of their staff and client base opinion. The completed data has been analysed, fed back, and moved to the next stage of presenting for Committee approval in 2023.

Scottish Housing Day

The 7th annual Scottish Housing Day took place on 21 September 2022. Each year it is designed to raise awareness of challenges and successes in the housing sector and raise people's awareness of their housing options. The focus this year was on the importance of sustainable housing and building on 2021's climate change theme.

We shared our support for Scottish Housing Day by posting simultaneously across all available social media portals (and Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations' website and social media pages) a list of projects and initiatives demonstrating the Council's core components of sustainability, such as:

- Recycling - Reducing carbon emissions by effective recycling of household waste is a vital component in mitigating the effects of climate change.
- Partnership between Dundee City Council and Hillcrest to provide sustainable and affordable social housing across the city.
- Scottish Climate Week - The Dundee Climate Action Plan outlines 64 actions to help tackle climate change across the themes of energy, transport, waste, and resilience.
- Dundee Energy Efficiency Programme continues to re-negotiate heating bills for residents. Winter fuel applications. Raising awareness of options as we face significant rises in energy costs. Ensuring households are benefiting from lower fuel bills through social tariffs.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charge Points - Dundee City Council continue to install EV charging points across the city.
- Progress made in recent years to upgrade, insulate, and modernise current housing stock has been a great success. We continue to innovate, striving to improve quality of living through sustainable measures.

Sheltered Housing

During August 2022, the Sheltered Wardens Service conducted an extensive and comprehensive consultation with sheltered housing tenants, with the aim of establishing:

- how our tenants are feeling about the general easing of restrictions
- if tenants intended to continue or return to use the complex and/or facilities.
- if tenants used the extended access arrangements
- if tenants have any concerns about the general easing of restrictions

The service invited participation from all tenants, with 71% getting involved (1,278 respondents). Over 90% indicated they are comfortable with the restrictions easing and would be happy to use their local complex. This is encouraging and demonstrates tenants are happy to move towards a pre-pandemic type service. 19% of respondents advised they use the complex when the warden is off duty. This represents almost 250 tenants, so is still significant. The main reason is to access the laundry facilities in the evenings.

89% are looking forward to Welfare Visits and the opportunity to update the latest version of the Support Agreement. This Agreement tailors the support tenants get from the wardens and their tenancy. The aim is to help create and maintain independent, sustainable tenancies.

Carrying out this type of consultation provided an ideal opportunity to gather views on what tenants liked about the service, as well as enquiring on their overall wellbeing. Below are some of the positive aspects of the service noted by tenants:

- Feeling safe and secure
- Support available when required
- Reassurance and peace of mind
- The 24-hour service
- Wardens look after me very well
- Activities and socialising

The consultation also invited opinion and suggestions on what could be done to improve the service. Below are a few examples of the feedback received:

- Things back to normal. All restrictions lifted for lounge so that we can have more tenants in for activities. The Sheltered Service has an Activities Co-ordinator, their role is to increase the number and types of activities held in the complexes.
- Gardens overgrowing.
- Paths being more level to be able to hang out clothes, rather than struggle with climbing back upstairs.

The aim of this consultation was to address issues like those highlighted above by developing a multi-team working environment to provide best value. The Sheltered Housing Service works with internal partners and colleagues, such as Lettings and Asset Management, to achieve a balanced approach when addressing feedback like this. Overall, this campaign is an excellent example of teamwork and commitment to improving service provision with tenants at the heart of the decision-making process.

6.2 Environment

Waste Management

As part of the Take Pride in Your City initiative, community clean ups were arranged during August and November 2022 in Linlathen and Stobswell, which allowed residents to dispose of household items in skips that were provided.

The team created an online A-Z Recycling Guide to provide advice to residents on what to recycle and which bin to use.

A "What Happens to your Waste" page was developed on the website which explains to residents what happens to their waste after collection from the kerbside, a local recycling point or a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Environmental Management

Working with Environment/Horticultural Groups

Dundee's environmental/horticultural groups find it beneficial to share best practice, highlight their work, and be made aware of initiatives and funding opportunities. The Take Pride in Your City monthly bulletin continues to highlight Dundee's projects and encourage participation. In addition, it features relevant articles and links which may benefit developing community environmental projects. Groups have also been encouraged to attend national networking events.

Feedback from groups indicates that opportunities to gather with like-minded groups are beneficial, both for group networking and the social element. In partnership with the Bonnie Dundee group, Victoria Gardens Yusuf Youth Initiative and Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Council organised a small celebration event in December 2022 for the city's Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood groups to gather and receive their certificates. This was the first time such an event had been held since before the pandemic.

Community and Friends of Parks are included in the Green Flag Award and Internal Quality Audit process where relevant. This provides opportunities for the Council and these groups to identify improvements, consider how working relationships can be developed and fostered and acts as a vehicle for each party to provide feedback.

The Countryside Rangers continue to enable practical volunteer work in Dundee's parks and greenspaces by supporting existing volunteer groups, such as Friends of Parks, and responding to requests for volunteering opportunities, for instance from organisations implementing their Corporate and Social Responsibility policies. Bespoke outdoor learning opportunities are also developed in response from schools.

The Environment Service continues to support requests for growing in local communities. More residents are now keen to establish growing opportunities in areas of communal greenspace. Working with Housing colleagues, the Community Allotment Officer assists and provides guidance to enable local people to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Biodiversity

The Environment Service continues to develop biodiversity grasslands and naturalised grasslands in Dundee's parks and greenspaces alongside local people. The service is working with local communities and Friends of Parks groups to develop and care for these areas, with opportunities to become involved in planting and maintenance events in their local greenspaces.

Project Consultation

For all projects of a certain scale and budget, public consultation is carried out as thoroughly as possible. This begins at the design stage where the project officer(s) arrange meetings at a community centre to discuss ideas and residents' aspirations. Consultation is crucial for certain projects to help the department gauge what is required at grass roots level, to allow the community to engage in the development of projects and in turn improve, promote, and increase respect for our public open spaces.

Councillors and Community Officers are all made aware of projects at design stage or before tender with enough time for comment and sharing of information as well as final approval at Committee. Other projects may only need one round of consultation whereby small discussions are carried out with the local group and concept designs altered to suit residents' needs and desires as much as possible.

Recent examples include:

- **Our Place Douglas Community Park:** The vision for this project was drawn up in August 2015 and the Douglas Community Spaces Group (DCSG) established to help develop and deliver a community park. Extensive consultation was carried out over a number of years, including attendance at AGMs and DCSG meetings where officers used a variety of methods to help visualise proposals. Meetings throughout the development and construction phases were well attended and the resident group kept updated, local children were also invited to help plant bulbs near completion of the project. In the post-completion phase, further queries and issues can arise, such as dealing with vandalism, and these will be addressed in partnership between the community and Environment department to remedy these as soon as possible.
- **Seabraes Viewpoint Renewal:** Consultation for this project consisted of a large on-site notice board for public viewing which showed the 3D designs and plan, plus information on how to provide feedback online. An online consultation on the Council website, which was live for a few weeks, allowed the public to comment. Public feedback was taken into consideration and, where suitable, accommodated into the design proposal.
- **Finlathen Play Area:** Consultation sessions were carried out by the Landscape Designer with children from the local school, this proved fun and engaging for the children, who were both genuinely interested and provided useful ideas. Other groups such as disability and access groups were also consulted for their views.
- **Pitkerro Pirate Park:** The Pitkerro Pirate Park is Dundee's first dual-use purpose-built school and community play space. The project evolved from a Child Healthy Weight (CHW) multi-agency approach in the East End community, aimed at encouraging children and their families to "Eat Well, Play Well and Learn Well." The multi-agency approach developed through a partnership of DCC Children and Families and NHS, then included DCC Environment to deliver the project. Rowantree Primary School and the wider community were fully involved, in the project from concept to completion, engagement included local events, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, and child-led design. Once data was analysed, a final voting event took place.