

ITEM No ...3.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 13 MAY 2024

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

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 138-2024

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- a note the contents of this report;
- b 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; and
- c encourage services to maintain their efforts to listen to and respond to feedback, as demonstrated in Appendix 2, 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, people with disabilities);
- meetings with partners; and
- 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 fourteen 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. 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 themes, are set out in Appendix 1 and it is proposed that these continue to be 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, which in that case aim to learn from complaints and prevent the same issues 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 taken into account 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 and services should maintain their efforts to reach as many citizens as possible through consultation and other initiatives to capture the views of the public.

6. CONSULTATIONS

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

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GREGORY COLGAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

30 APRIL 2024

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEBSITE



Parents requested an increase in the amount of direct teaching support for children who cannot attend school due to illness. A staff transfer allowed us to employ a teacher 0.5 for this work, with children now receiving twice weekly support.

We continually engage with community food projects around the procurement of ambient food via the Council. Projects raised concerns about the high cost of branded items, impacting on the volume of procured goods. This led to the development of a new procurement and food delivery process in partnership with a local charity. We changed to a supplier who is able to offer better-priced goods, leading to a significantly increased volume of food being provided to over 15 community larders across the city.

Mental health and wellbeing developments have had significant contributions from people in Dundee, including the general public, patients, service users, carers, families and the workforce. This has led to a number of developments including introduction of a Mental Health Response Vehicle and the opening of Hope Point Community Wellbeing Centre.

Examples of streamlining services, both to improve the customer experience and make better use of Council resources through more efficient and co-ordinated processes, include improving the process for community growing groups to access Discovery Compost and a new online booking process for Weddings and Ceremonies.

The Benefit Delivery Team continue to actively listen to their customers and ensure they are supported to make their Council Tax payments by applying Council Tax Reduction, applicable discounts and exemptions, changing payment dates, encouraging direct debit take up and continuing to work with Corporate Debt and Advice Services to provide assistance with other financial support or help with debt. Recognising the cost of living crisis, the team have also reviewed their refund process in order to ensure refunds are issued at the earliest opportunity.

Changes were made to the latest Fuel Well Dundee support available, based on feedback from the 10,800 citizens canvassed in 2022/23. Customer feedback showed a 300% increase in those citizens off fuel supply or in danger of going off fuel supply since the original Fuel Well Dundee scheme.

Listening to citizen feedback has helped shape key messages used in awareness campaigns including the Dundee Low Emission Zone.

The Sustainable Transport and Roads Division launched a new online portal dedicated to improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. A form, email address and telephone number make it simpler for members of the public to request a variety of accessibility improvements such as dropped kerbs and the removal of restrictive barriers. The portal was opened in August 2023 and has already been used by several members of the public to report barriers to accessibility which are now being addressed. The team will continue to use the portal to gather and respond to these requests.

The Environment Waste Team commissioned and developed a mobile app to provide householders with information and help on a range of waste & recycling activities including setting collection reminders, identify what materials can go in each bin and access to a wide range of service-related guidance.

We now offer residents opportunities to enhance the external environment in the city's estates and neighbourhoods. Within the Environmental Improvements budget, projects have been initiated by Housing, Communities staff, Tenant Participation and Tenant's groups. This has delivered extensive repairs to fencing, gates and footpaths and in turn upgrading and enhancing our community's appearance and wellbeing. Working with tenants we have already identified and undertaken a wide range of projects across the city.

Engagement with the community in Linlathen identified the quality of local green spaces as a key priority for residents. A networking event allowed us to form a close partnership with the Environment team which led to the installation of three play areas within disused green spaces.

Mill O Mains Primary School community had major concerns and issues with parking around the school. We received communications on a weekly basis about this from parents and carers. Safer Streets was introduced, and double yellow lines were drawn around our turning circle which has had a hugely positive impact on the situation.

At the annual "How Your Rent is Spent" seminar, held in August at the Steeple Church, we explained how rents are set and gave tenants an opportunity to tell the council about their spending priorities for the Housing Service within the Housing Revenue Account budget. As part of the wider tenant engagement strategy, the next stage is an online survey asking tenants views on priorities outlined at the event, so that it is clear what is most important to them.

Almost 1300 young people responded to a survey about their use of the NEC for free bus travel. Results were very positive in terms of the financial and environmental benefits of free bus travel as well as the opportunities this provided to travel to education, leisure and to see friends/family, as well as greater independence.

Improvements were made to Scientific Services online quotation process as a result of customer feedback. We have also made amendments to our website which should make information clearer to potential customers.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE AS A RESULT OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICE

1.1 National Entitlement Card

Almost 1300 young people responded to a survey about their use of the NEC for free bus travel. Results were very positive in terms of the financial and environmental benefits of free bus travel as well as the opportunities this provided to travel to education, leisure and to see friends/family, as well as greater independence.

1.2 Communications

Feedback from citizens was taken into account in the redrafting of questions for the annual budget survey, particularly relating to Council Tax. User feedback has also been crucial in shaping this year's communications approach to the Cost-of-Living support. Data, responses to surveys and the continued input of the Fairness Commissioners identified a particular issue around those in work or not on benefits not realising that they could access help. New social media and a radio advert was created specifically to help address this. Listening to citizen feedback has also helped shape key messages used in awareness campaigns including the Dundee Low Emission Zone.

1.3 Performance

The recent Best Value report by Audit Scotland, endorsed by the Accounts Commission, welcomed the improvements which have been made to the content of performance reports and included positive feedback on the Council listening to the public through structured approaches like Engage Dundee.

1.4 Fairness Initiative – green spaces in Linlathen

Engagement with the community in Linlathen identified the quality of local green spaces as a key priority for residents. A networking event allowed us to form a close partnership with the Environment team which led to the installation of three play areas within disused green spaces.

1.5 Faith Covenant

Over the last year, in collaboration with Faith in Community Dundee, several co-ordinated Faith Leadership events were held, culminating in the signing of a Faith Covenant. Dundee City Council is the first and currently only local authority in Scotland to introduce this. The Covenant is about recognising that faith communities have a key role to play in help and support of communities. The official signing took place last November during Interfaith Week.

1.6 BSL Plan

Key representatives from the BSL community and relevant organisations and stakeholders have been at the centre of the planning and development of the Council's new BSL Plan.

1.7 Dundee Community Food Network

We continually engage with community food projects around the procurement of ambient food via the Council. Projects raised concerns about the high cost of branded items, impacting on the volume of procured goods. This led to the development of a new procurement and food delivery process in partnership with a local charity. We changed to a supplier who is able to offer better-priced goods, leading to a significantly increased volume of food being provided to over 15 community larders across the city.

1.8 **Free Period Products**

We continue to consult with residents on the provision in place to access free period products within schools and in communities across the city. Feedback helps to ensure that these remain as accessible as is possible in the most dignified manner. This year we have, in particular, added to the number of premises who supply to those who may have a barrier to being able to access in the usual ways.

1.9 **Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA)**

Improvements to our IIA processes were delivered through an upgraded / new IIA Tool (including a pre-assessment tool). This was accompanied by delivery of training to over 120 officers, with further sessions looking at making difficult decisions and ensuring the IIA is carried out in sufficient depth. Officers carrying out IIAs have been supported with both technical and narrative advice, enabling them to better complete IIAs on a number of Committee reports.

2. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

2.1 **Accessibility and Inclusion**

Foster parents/carers of teenage Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (15/16+) said there was a lack of ESOL provision to meet the particular needs of their foster children (low/no literacy in home language/no previous school experience/difficulty with placing into S5/6 in secondary schools) The service created a bespoke, entry level ESOL group provision for this cohort which runs at D&A College twice per week.

Traveller families said that ambiguity around Seemis recording in schools was adversely affecting outcomes for their children. The service liaised with colleagues from the Scottish Traveller Education Network to discuss this, and new guidance/flowchart has been created for schools.

Parents shared concerns about lack of subject choice in AIM. We trialled a Virtual Learning experience (joining 'live' classes at host school); secured subject specialist teachers 'on loan' from Rockwell Learning Centre; and liaised with subject specialist teachers in mainstream (Harris Academy) who provided bespoke, after school lessons to small groups.

Parents requested an increase in the amount of direct teaching support for children who cannot attend school due to illness. A staff transfer allowed us to employ a teacher 0.5 for this work, with children now receiving twice weekly support.

2.2 **Early Years Family Projects at Coldside Library**

In the 2023 summer holidays, a six-week block of play sessions was planned and facilitated by Early Years Education, Leisure and Culture Dundee's Library Service and NHS Health Visiting. Families who found it challenging to access other play sessions and services were encouraged and supported to attend. The aim was to provide a supported play opportunity for very young children and a safe environment for parents to connect with other parents and practitioners. Families saw that attending the group led to significant benefits for themselves and their children and requested that the sessions continue after the summer holidays. As a result of listening to families, we now offer a continuous service which operates year-round.

Parents and staff felt that some of the children attending Come and Play sessions would benefit from attending Bookbug sessions. However, families felt very anxious about going along to mainstream sessions, largely because of concerns about how their child would respond. We plan to test supported Bookbug sessions early in 2024 in Coldside Library. The sessions will be facilitated by staff the children and parents know and will have a small number of families in each session. The aim is to build parent and child confidence to attend mainstream Bookbug sessions.

In response to observed high levels of parental anxiety, depression and isolation, the same partnership group consulted with parents then planned and tested Postnatal Peep sessions for families between October and December 2023. The feedback was very positive. We discussed with families the ways we could improve the sessions and Cycle 2 of this project continues with some adaptations to reflect their feedback e.g., we have doubled the length of the programme, spread out the material, invited more visitors, and built in more time for discussion and individual support.

2.3 Champions Board

In response to requests from care experienced young people that they would like individual Champions Boards in each Secondary School, the service has supported them to establish active boards in each school cluster area.

As a result of a request to the Chief Executive at a Champions Board meeting, 12 care-experienced young people were able to participate in a Columba 1400 Young Person's Leadership Academy culminating in a 5-day residential on Skye. From this experience 'The 12 Champs' were formed and, supported by the team of Pupil Support Workers, are working alongside another 12 pupils who will be able to participate in another YPLA this session. The 12 Champs are also planning to introduce themselves to P7 care-experienced pupils and work with them as they transition to secondary school.

Champions Boards also contributed towards the development of a Child Protection Charter, which outlines expectations on professionals which are consistent with the 5 foundations of Trauma Informed Practice.

2.4 Mill of Mains Primary School

The school community had major concerns and issues with parking around the school. We received communications on a weekly basis about this from parents and carers. Safer Streets was introduced and double yellow lines were drawn around our turning circle which has had a hugely positive impact on the situation.

During Covid we did a weekly communication update – parents asked us to continue with this which we have successfully done.

Parent/ teacher interviews used to be all in person but, after a survey, we now offer telephone calls or in person meetings.

Parent Council meetings are now held on Zoom as parents felt it was easier for single parents to attend.

After a survey, evening parental meetings e.g. meetings re residential trip, take place on Zoom.

2.5 Removal of Primary 1 half days

Through various streams of feedback, we consulted with the parent body (Primary 1 and Nursery) across the city using Microsoft Teams survey in response to requests to remove the half days from the start of Primary 1 in August. Parents/carers were feeding back that childcare and having to use annual leave to support these half days were a major issue and barrier. We received 961 responses with 745 in favour of the removal which was implemented in August 2023.

2.6 Teacher Booker Supply Booking System

As an authority, we did not have a robust process for holding a current up-to-date supply list for teaching staff or a consistent booking system. This led to issues with timesheets, contact details and holding historical data to inform practice going forward. We began a tender process through procurement which led to the purchase and launch of our current web-based system, Teacher

Booker. This has streamlined recruitment, data, digital timesheets, one point for payroll to run a single report which has reduced workload and given more capacity for other priorities.

2.7 Adolescent Services

In response to the findings of the Joint Inspection of Services to Children and Young People at Risk of Harm published in January 2022, the service has led a review of approaches to vulnerable young people. This included consultation with the workforce and young people, who said a co-located multi-disciplinary team would help to promote consistent support from a convenient one-stop-shop. The service was successful in an application for Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to support the renovation and maintenance of an identified building and is currently carrying out joint workforce development sessions with partners in preparation for a scheduled move in March 2025.

2.8 Infant Pledge

The service was conscious of a disproportionate representation of unborn babies, babies and infants on the Child Protection Register and Looked After. In response, several initiatives are being progressed, including a collaborative initiative with the University of Dundee and NHS Tayside to implement Infant Pledge. This is a tool with accompanying standards designed to enhance active listening and promote parental bonding with babies from pre-birth to early childhood. The approach will be piloted in teams, including the New Beginnings Team, and feedback from parents will inform further developments.

2.9 What Matters 2 U

The service has worked jointly with Neighbourhood Services, BBC Children in Need and the Hunter Foundation to implement WM2U initially in two locality areas. Groups consisting of parents and carers have been established, have participated in Columba 1400 academies and report a positive impact on their self-efficacy and confidence.

Families have also highlighted key personal or community concerns which have prompted a flexible response, such as repairing a fence so children and young people can play outside.

2.10 Addressing Neglect and Enhancing Wellbeing

In response to 75% of parents/carers saying they felt listened to and valued as part of a process to enhance supporting before, during and after Team Around the Child, the service has devoted a dedicated Head Teacher to help scale the approach across the city. Instead of receiving formal letters, minutes and plans which are developed for families instead of with them, the process ensures that families are at the centre of decision-making and are fully involved.

3. CITY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Secure Residential Cycle Parking

The Walking and Cycling Index Dundee (formerly Bike Life) provided data showing that cycle storage at residences is an issue for people who wish to cycle more. The Sustainable Transport and Roads Division therefore applied for funding to purchase and subsidise a trial project of 40 Bike hangars to provide secure, affordable residential cycle storage. The scheme was launched in May 2023, providing a total of 240 storage spaces city-wide, and is proving a success. Membership is growing month on month, with almost 50% of spaces now occupied. An online form and email address allow residents to either put themselves on a waiting list for an existing unit, or request that a new unit is installed in their area. This has already allowed units to be located according to demand, and will be used to inform future locations, ensuring that units are installed where needed the most.

3.2 Accessibility for Pedestrians and Cyclists

The Sustainable Transport and Roads Division launched a new online portal dedicated to improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. A form, email address and telephone number makes it simpler for members of the public to request a variety of accessibility improvements such as dropped kerbs and the removal of restrictive barriers. The portal was opened in August 2023 and has already been used by several members of the public to report barriers to accessibility which are now being addressed. The team will continue to use the portal to gather and respond to these requests.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES

4.1 Customer Services

The website message advising of average wait time was removed as this was not an accurate reflection of length of time customers were waiting.

A new facility to book and pay on-line for Weddings at Baxter Park Pavilion and Magdalen Green as well as squash courts/badminton courts at various locations has been created to allow ease of use for customers and better communication with the team/between departments.

A drop off facility has been introduced to allow customers who are only needing to hand in evidence for bus passes/blue badges to drop off on a Tuesday afternoon without the need to make an appointment.

Telephones have been installed at the Central Library, The Hub in Pitkerro and Lochee Library situated in Lochee High Street. These telephones allow customers to contact Dundee City Council. This has reduced the need to travel into the town to speak to an adviser. This provision will be rolled out to other locations within the City to allow ease of access for customers.

4.2 Corporate Debt

The Collection Teams are actively listening to their customers to support their individual circumstances through the current cost of living crisis. Engagement with Faith in the Community and regular meetings with Dundee Fighting for Fairness take place to encourage more uptake from customers who require the support.

4.3 Benefit Delivery Team

The Benefit Delivery Team also continue to actively listen to their customers and ensure they are supported to make their Council Tax payments by applying Council Tax Reduction, applicable discounts and exemptions, changing payment dates, encouraging direct debit take up and continuing to work with Corporate Debt and Advice Services to provide assistance with other financial support or help with debt. Recognising the challenges customers are facing during the cost of living crisis, the team have also reviewed their refund process in order to ensure refunds are issued at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 Council Advice Services

Changes were made to the latest Fuel Well Dundee support available, based on feedback from the 10,800 citizens canvassed in 2022/23. Customer feedback showed a 300% increase in those citizens off fuel supply or in danger of going off fuel supply since the original Fuel Well Dundee scheme.

Discussions and collaboration with Dundee Fighting for Fairness Commissioners has led to a fuel support scheme this year aimed at tackling stubborn fuel debt preventing these customers being able to heat their homes. Public Debt and how it affects households was also an issue raised by the Fighting for Fairness Commissioners via a meeting with the Corporate Debt team and Council Advice Services.

Aberlour, in conjunction with the Robertson Trust, 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.

As a result, Aberlour have been invited in as advice strategy partners this year and are working with Council Advice Services on a discussion document which will be co-produced with Dundee Fighting for Fairness Commissioners and Aberlour customers before options to reduce households' public debt are proposed to the Corporate Debt Team.

4.5 IT

A team was set up in November 2022 with colleagues within other service areas to ensure web pages and online forms are up to date and easy to find. A major objective was to improve on-line access for customers and the majority of this work was completed during 2023, some examples are:

Statistics/Data

- govService platform stats providing total online form submissions and number of calls to customer service;
- Google Analytics to review common web pages on council website; and
- Search Engines:
 - Google Search
 - Web Search on built-in search engine on Council website

Customer contact via

- online contact us submissions
- customer comments submitted via govService online form, this permits a star rating (1 - 5) and free text comment after submission of all forms.

Numerous changes were made to webpages to make things easier for customers to find and also better promotion of seasonal services to encourage on-line uptake. This has resulted in an increase in various on-line forms being completed and submitted.

4.6 Scientific Services

Improvements were made to our online quotation process as a result of customer feedback. We have also made amendments to our website which should make information clearer to potential customers.

5. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

5.1 Strategic Planning

In 2023, Dundee Integration Joint Board introduced the Plan for Excellence in Health and Social Care 2023-2033. This followed a significant focus on stakeholder engagement, with priority given to engagement with people who use health and social care services, unpaid carers and the health and social care workforce. Building on learning from previous engagement work, this took a flexible and tailored approach with a range of tools and opportunities being developed and Partnership staff engaging people in places and ways that best suited them as individuals and groups.

Opportunities were also taken to reflect back to stakeholders the contributions that had been made in early engagement activities and to further refine thinking, particularly in relation to the IJB's vision and wording of strategic priorities. Contributions also highlighted a need to consider a clear statement of the values and principles that underpin the work of the IJB.

The involvement opportunities for this Plan included gathering views regarding the IJB's Equality Outcomes and contributed to developing the outcomes for the next 4 years.

5.2 **Hope Point**

Mental health and wellbeing developments have had significant contributions from people in Dundee, including the general public, patients, service users, carers, families and the workforce.

This has led to a number of developments including introduction of a Mental Health Response Vehicle and the opening of Hope Point Community Wellbeing Centre.

5.3 **Learning Disability Services**

Learning Disability Services have hosted a number of events aimed at sharing information and hearing from people in their local communities. In 2023, information events were held in the North East, Broughty Ferry and the West End, and 5 more events will be held during 2024 and 2025.

These are part of an ongoing dialogue between the H&SCP and people with a Learning Disability as well as the workforce and family members/carers and help the Multi-Agency Strategic Planning Group shape plans for the future. Partner agencies and community groups also have an opportunity to listen to their potential customers and develop services that meet their needs.

Unpaid carers and family members of this group of people expressed an interest in having a formal mechanism to learn about developments and share their views. An initial discussion meeting took place with carers in December 2023 to explore and make plans for how this might best be achieved.

5.4 **Women's Hub**

Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership have worked alongside a wide range of partners to develop Dundee Women's Hub, which opened in 2023. Practitioners working and engaging with local women recognised the need and desire for a women's only space for 1:1 support appointments, drop-in support, groups and activities.

The Hub is a multi-agency support hub for women impacted by substance use and other disadvantage such as gender-based violence, homelessness, poor mental health, isolation and trauma. It provides gender-specific, trauma-informed support for women to make informed decisions regarding their support options, reduces barriers to accessing support and helps to improve their overall health and wellbeing. The Hub will continue to evolve and adapt their support based on listening to the voices of women.

5.5 **The Corner**

The aim of the Corner is to enable and empower young people to look after and improve their health and wellbeing. The service continues to offer a wide range of initiatives in response to feedback from users, for example:

- Young People's Involvement Group - service users and interested young people get involved in supporting the work of the Corner and contribute to service improvement.
- The substance use support service STRIVE, in partnership with Hillcrest Futures, has expanded to support people aged 12-21 who are affected directly or indirectly by substance use and are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or struggling with school, family or friends. The service offers holistic health and well-being checks, and provides 1:1 emotional support alongside harm reduction education. The service provides a whole family approach and has a dedicated family project worker.

- The Housing Education for Youth (HEY) project continues to deliver awareness 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 Corner continues to support the Early Years & Young People Team within NHS Tayside with their annual drama tour addressing young people's emotional wellbeing. All S3 pupils across Dundee watch a live performance of the Drama tour identifying health issues facing young people, such as substances, mental wellbeing, and sexual health. The Corner and other services are involved in a Q&A panel afterwards to answer any questions regarding health and wellbeing.
- The Corner delivers targeted outreach services to improve awareness of Corner services, and offer tailored sessions on a range of issues faced by young people. Joint programmes with DCC Community Learning and Development teams are being developed to co-deliver certain aspects of health interventions to identified groups. Detached Outreach continues to be delivered in partnership with Hot Chocolate and DCC Community Learning and Development team.
- The counselling service continues to provide one-to-one counselling to young people with mild to moderate emotional wellbeing issues. The counselling service offers up to eight sessions in a flexible and accessible way. Options include receiving support in-person, online, telephone and walk and talk.
- The Corner continues to work in partnership with Dundee Carers Centre, secondary schools and wider partners across the city to offer and deliver Health and Wellbeing checks to identified Young Carers aged 12-25. The checks also identify and address any unmet need by offering one to one support for identified Young Carers, or linking them in with the Carers centre or identified services.
- Monthly attendance at local LGBT Young People's group with agreed session plans based on young people's feedback.
- The Corner drop in continues to provide health and wellbeing support to young people across the city. Open Monday to Friday 1-6pm, the drop in offers a range of service to young people. Every young person is offered a holistic health and wellbeing assessment, which identifies and addresses any unmet needs. Sexual health provision offers contraception (pill, patch, injection, implant insertion and removal), emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted infection screening, free condoms, condom demonstrations, free sanitary products and support for termination of pregnancy.

5.6 Care Services

H&SCP staff employed by Dundee City Council and through Contracted Care Providers work together to learn from each other and have over the last year used a variety of ways to learn what matters most to service users, carers and their workforce. Below are examples of improvements developed through working in partnership and listening to feedback from residents/families/staff as this is normal practice for care homes, care at home and day services:

- The Big Tartan Day Out for Care Homes - Due to Covid-19, colleagues, family members and residents of care homes over the past few years have felt and been isolated from their local communities. Acting on feedback from care homes, we wanted to find a way to remind everyone that care homes are still part of the community and for anyone who lives in a care home, that this should never impact on them being able to connect and have connections with their wider communities. In conjunction with DVVA and V&A Dundee we held the Big Tartan Day Out which saw staff and residents come together to socialise and make connections with each other as well as services that are looking to contact care homes. Activity Co-ordinators, other colleagues and managers used this day as a springboard to setting up a new Dundee Activity Network which will be inclusive of care home and day care services.

- Turriff House Photography Project - Staff at Turriff House involved the residents in providing a personal touch to decorating the main corridor in the care home. Following discussions, residents were encouraged and supported to take photographs of places that held significant memories for them during summer outings in 2022/3. These were then produced in canvas form and provide a stunning display at Turriff House.
- Benvie Care Home Project Smile - In 2023, staff in Benvie Care Home made it their mission to investigate new ways of stimulating the minds of their residents. One of the ideas was a visit from Annie the Alpaca, which was thoroughly enjoyed by many residents, family members and colleagues. In addition, there has been continuing work to find out the hopes, wishes and dreams of each resident. Among other things this has resulted in one resident revisiting his former golf club with family and friends. For other residents their lives have been enhanced by activity and stimulation closer to home, using sensory boards, blankets and cushions.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

6.1 Housing and Construction

6.1.1 Scottish Housing Day

We advertised, supported, engaged with and promoted Scottish Housing Day for the 8th consecutive year, which was delivered in association with the Chartered Institute of Housing on 13 September 2023. We communicated the value of a career in housing, raised awareness of roles and routes into the sector and celebrated the work of everyone who has made housing their career. We are, of course, only one of many participants in the event, so we encouraged visitors to check out what our partners and colleagues across the sector are also achieving. The event was highlighted across all social media portals, promoted via DFTA and Registered Tenant Organisations, web links, hashtags and QR codes for customers to connect and interact with the event, via whichever medium they had access to. Included were a series of articles outlining the Council's commitment to a sustainable workforce (including our commitment to apprenticeships, work experience and the employment recruitment initiative) and on 'Looking forward - Housing 2040 expectations and Actions' - the Housing to 2040 Vision describes what we want our homes and communities to look and feel like in the future and is informed and shaped by people and organisations across Scotland.

6.1.2 Rent Consultation 2022

This annual event aims to ensure that the highest quality of housing is provided for the people of Dundee in a safe and healthy environment. This can only be achieved through partnership working across all sectors. The Rent Consultation is critically important to tenants as it determines the level of rent to be charged in the coming year. The consultation was conducted between 1 November and 22 December 2023.

The following strategies were employed to support and encourage customer feedback:

- Use of DCC website landing page where all information about the consultation, Housing Revenue Account, contact details, survey link and frequently asked questions are published.
- Dedicated Council social media accounts used to promote participation opportunities and advertise the consultation directly to customers.
- Promotion of the survey using posters in key areas across the city, including Libraries, Sheltered Complexes and Multi Storey Developments and Dundee House.
- Sheltered Wardens engaged with approx. 1600 tenancies within the service.
- 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 Dundee House.
- Invited Community Officers to use their local knowledge to secure responses.

- Monthly staff bulletin used to encourage staff, who may also be Council tenants, to participate, whilst also being encouraged 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.
- DFTA contacted all its members encouraging participation in the Rent Consultation. In addition, Registered Tenant Organisations were also invited to formally submit their preference on the proposed options.

Help and advice was also provided for those impacted by the rising cost of living. This was made available on our website with links on advertising and publications.

The total number of tenants who participated in the consultation this year was 2,330. This equates to a return of 18.6% of the current housing stock.

6.1.3 Environmental Improvement Consultations

We now offer residents opportunities to enhance the external environment in the city's estates and neighbourhoods. Within the Environmental Improvements budget, projects have been initiated by Housing, Communities staff, Tenant Participation and Tenant's groups. This has delivered extensive repairs to fencing, gates and footpaths and in turn upgrading and enhancing our community's appearance and wellbeing. Working with tenants we have already identified and undertaken a wide range of projects across the city.

We now want to develop even more projects for the future, so with the help of local, targeted consultations we can offer consultation opportunities to neighbourhoods so we can identify improvement ideas for consideration. Recent consultations include:

- Happyhillock Parking Proposal - Online survey proposing plans to increase parking facilities and access within the local area.
- Fleming Gardens Environmental Improvements Survey - Offering opportunity for residents to engage in plans to upgrade the local areas green spaces, parking and sheltered lounge.

All responses and comments are then analysed by Tenancy & Estates for consideration and fed back to residents, ahead of any commitment to development.

6.1.4 How Your Rent is Spent Seminar

This process started with the annual "How Your Rent is Spent" seminar, held in August at the Steeple Church, where we explained how rents are set and gave tenants an opportunity to tell the council about their spending priorities for the Housing Service within the Housing Revenue Account budget. As part of the wider tenant engagement strategy, the next stage is an online survey asking tenants views on priorities outlined at the event, so that it is clear what is most important to them.

At the Steeple Church in August 2023, we:

- Provided tenants with information about what their rent pays for
- Raised awareness of how rent levels are set.
- Heard from Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations and their priorities.
- Saw presentations from Tenancy & Estates and Housing Asset Management on what they do and future plans.
- Heard from attendees what their priorities are.

These priorities were, Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses, Helping Tenants Keep Their Tenancies, Building More New Houses and Environmental Improvements. Other considerations proposed by participants included:

- Cleaning pathways and streets. Trees and shrubs overgrown all the time. the area is going downhill as not enough done to manage and maintain this anymore.
- Instead of building new properties, consider renovating old, run-down houses. Regeneration of derelict properties in destitute areas.
- New windows in houses that have not had new ones in a very, very long time.
- New build houses have driveways so give tenants with gardens the option to have a driveway installed and add it onto the rent.

In addition to the 36 attendees to the event, a total of 753 participants took part in the online survey. This was achieved by emailing 5,500 tenants, direct calling, promotion across Social Media platforms and encouraging sheltered residents encouraged to participate.

The outcome of this survey and the rent consultation were reported to Elected Members in January 2024, where the final decision on the rent level for next year was agreed.

6.1.5 Sheltered Housing

Sheltered tenants and Wardens have regular meetings in the complexes. This is an opportunity for Wardens to disseminate service information to tenants and also for tenants to discuss things they would like to happen in their complexes.

Tenants from Alpin Glenesk complex said they wanted to form a social committee so they could apply for funding to buy things for their complex and organise different events and activities. The service Activities Co-ordinator has assisted the tenants in the development of the social committee and to apply for funding. Some of the money was used to buy new kitchen appliances so that a lunch club could be started, which now runs every Sunday in the complex. Tenants asked for the existing cooker in the complex to be upgraded so Housing Asset Management Unit provided a brand-new cooker which was installed last year.

The social committee has also taken over the administration of the Comfort Fund at the complex. The committee sits in on the regular tenant / Warden meetings at the complex to discuss which activities and events tenants would like to see organised using the money from the Comfort Fund. The committee asked if they could have an outside noticeboard so that flyers and publications could be pinned on the board so that people from the wider area could check the noticeboard to keep up to date with things happening in the complex. Housing paid for a weather-proof noticeboard and Construction Services have installed the board outside the complex.

Listening to tenants in this way has empowered the tenants at Alpin Glenesk to take ownership of the running of the complex to organise activities and events that they enjoy running themselves. This has encouraged tenants and other guests to attend the complex and there is now a busy schedule of activities that takes place on most days each week. These include a weekly lunch club, a blether buddies group, keep fit, aromatherapy, bingo twice weekly, and bacon rolls every Tuesday lunchtime.

6.2 Environment

6.2.1 Mobile Waste and Recycling App

The Environment Waste Team commissioned and developed a mobile app to provide householders with information and help on a range of waste & recycling activities including setting collection reminders, identify what materials can go in each bin and access to a wide range of service-related guidance.

Streamlining Services

Examples of streamlining services, both to improve the customer experience and make better use of Council resources through more efficient and co-ordinated processes, include improving the process for community growing groups to access Discovery Compost and a new online booking process for Weddings and Ceremonies.

6.2.3 **Take Pride in Your City**

As part of the Take Pride in Your City initiative, community clean ups were arranged throughout 2023, allowing residents to dispose of household items in skips that were provided. Following engagement with the Take Pride City Centre Private Sector subgroup, Environment, Waste and City Development colleagues are working with City Centre businesses and residents to carry out additional works to improve the aesthetics of the City Centre as part of a focused clean-up effort in February 2024.

6.2.4 **Involvement in Biodiversity Initiatives**

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.

6.2.5 **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.

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. For example, working with Friends group to deliver Riverside Nature Park signage project and tree planting at Magdalen Green following a request from the Friends group.

The Countryside Rangers continue to enable practical volunteer work in Dundee's parks and greenspaces by supporting existing volunteer groups. Bespoke outdoor learning opportunities are also developed in response from schools.

The Environment Service continues to support requests for food growing in local communities.

Supporting groups to improve access in communities, e.g., guiding Western Gateway Community Group to improve cycling links from their community to local facilities.

6.2.6 **Project Consultation**

For all projects of a certain scale and budget, public consultation is carried out as thoroughly as possible, 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. A recent example is Linlathen Play Trails; after in depth consultation sessions were held between the Landscape Designer and local children, the project has now been constructed. It was noted by the local Communities Officer that there is a strong sense of community ownership of the new play trails and a pride from local children that they were involved in developing the proposals.

6.2.7 **Acting on day-to-day feedback**

Public facing staff often receive direct feedback from members of the public whilst carrying out their daily duties, this feedback can be of an urgent nature and require a quick response. For example, a member of the public exited a shop in Reform Street to find that someone had recently dropped a glass bottle onto the pavement and the glass shards posed a hazard to both people and animals passing by. They raised this with one of the Street Cleaning operatives elsewhere in the city centre who immediately dealt with the issue and cleared the spillage within half an hour.

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