



**Communities Directorate**

# **Customer & Online Services Annual Service Review Report 2025**

# Introduction

This report reflects the performance of Customer and Online Services for 2024/25. It covers the period April 2024 to March 2025, highlighting our delivery, progress, change and improvement plans for 2025/26.

We have considered our performance in relation to the council's policy priorities set out in the Plan for Fife; key indicators; financial and workforce pressures and how we compare in relation to other similar services in other Scottish councils, through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Individual service indicators and results are published online in advance of this annual review to facilitate scrutiny and feedback.

These are available at [www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance](http://www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance)

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Please note, performance data can run behind the period of this report. This is due to data gathering requirements including national benchmarking. The most up-to-date information available has been used to inform this report.

# Service overview

Customer and Online Services (COS) deliver a significant part of the Council's customer strategy bringing together areas of customer contact, scheduling and assessment of benefits. It comprises of the following areas: Contact Centre, Customer Service Centres, Registration, Escalation & Resolution, Information Management & Requests, Online Services and Financial Wellbeing and Revenues. Operationally the service manages 15 customer service centres/points, a 24/7 Contact Centre and Fife Council's website [fife.gov.uk](https://www.fife.gov.uk).

The service also supports the most vulnerable communities in Fife through the administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund, assessment of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Education Benefits (including Education Maintenance Allowance).

The service also bills, collects, and recovers Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debt. Other statutory functions under its remit include managing corporately the Council's obligation to meet requests being made to Fife Council under Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation, customer complaints and the registration of births, deaths, and marriages.

The service support vulnerable residents via Community Alarm to promote dependant living and connection to social works services.

## Service areas

### Customer Service Centres

- Registration (births, deaths and marriages)
- Contact Centre
- Financial Wellbeing & Revenues
- Information Management
- Escalations (customer complaints)
- Online Services

## Service Vision

The vision of Customer and Online Services is:

- To drive a completely integrated approach to managing customer contact across the Council with significantly improved access to services, assessment and signposting across all channels while placing an emphasis on digital.
- To maintain a focus on maximising the collection of Council Tax, Rent and Business Rates and Sundry Debt while being aware of our key role in identifying and supporting the most vulnerable.

# Demand and Delivery overview

## COS service delivery KPIs

The following table shows the last 4 years Customer and Online services key performance indicators (KPIs).

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target
In year collection of Non-Domestic Rates (%)	99%	97.6%	96.6%	97.5%	97%
Council Tax Collection	95.3	95.8%	95.2%	95.5%	95.5%
Rent Collection	98.1%	98.7%	100.1%	100.9%	99.6%
Average Time to process new HB claims (in days)	37.7	19.8	18	36.2	22
Average Time to process notification of changes (days)	5.6	3	4	13.2	7
Average Time to Process New CTR Claims (days)	31	19.3	16.7	33.7	22
Average Time to Process CTR Changes (days)	11.1	4.7	3.8	11.1	7
Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered in the year	28%	29%	38%	36%	35%
% of Sundry Debt collected in year	87.6%	89%	89.1%	89.2%	89.5%
% of Contacts Answered - Contact Centre	86.4%	88.3%	91.1%	91.7%	90%
Registration input accurately %	98.4%	98.4%	97.7%	97%	95%
Average processing time - Crisis Grants (days)	3	2	1	2	1
Average processing time - Community Care Grants (days)	37	10	20	16	15
Number of welfare fund applications made	33,855	37,073	30,693	25,012	N/A
% FOI requests completed on time	88.5%	84.5%	88.2%	86.7%	90%
% of EIR requests completed on time	89.6%	91.9%	89.5%	89.9%	90%
No. of Fife.gov.uk Sessions		10,200,000	7,043,300*	7,714,300	N/A
% of SAR requests complete on time	83.9%	81.6%	82.4%	84.1%	80%
Number of Transactions by Customer Service Centres	145,068	187,240	207,528	194,962	N/A
Number of online transactions	175,506	179,468	236,120	244,110	N/A
Number of online accounts	142,025	175,875	205,246	230,767	N/A

\*Reduction due to a change in the way sessions are measured

## KPIs relating to service change plan deliverables:

### Registration Services

Registration in Fife maintains high standards, with an accuracy of 97%, exceeding the national average of 95%. Nearly 9,000 events are registered annually, making Fife the third largest registration district in Scotland. Online bookings for births and deaths have been successfully introduced and widely welcomed by customers, reducing the need for phone and in-person enquiries. With the launch of the new booking system later this year, Teams appointments will further enhance accessibility and customer choice, supporting a move towards virtual-first, streamlined registration services. Integration with digital workflows and standardisation of processes will also reduce duplication, optimise resources, and improve efficiency across locations.

### Council Tax and Revenue Collections

Customer & Online Services continues to maximise the collection of Council Tax, rent, and other council income, achieving strong collection rates despite external pressures. In 2024/25, Council Tax collection reached the target of 95.5% and Non-Domestic Rates collection reached 97.5%, exceeding the target of 97%. Effective billing, recovery, and proactive debt management ensure critical income streams are maintained, enabling the Council to fund frontline services and support vulnerable residents.

Digital self-service options, including online payments and account management, have further improved customer convenience and efficiency, reducing the need for telephone or in-person contact and allowing staff to focus on complex enquiries or high-priority cases.

### Benefits

The Benefits team administers Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and Education-related benefits, providing vital financial support to vulnerable residents. Average processing times for new claims and changes remain a focus: although some timescales increased in 2024/25 due to staff turnover, DWP workload, and operational pressures, the team continues to actively engage with residents through benefit take-up campaigns and support for those transitioning to Universal Credit.

Efforts to streamline processing and improve accuracy are ongoing, ensuring residents receive support quickly, reducing delays, and minimising the risk of financial hardship.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Requests (EIR)

The service maintains robust governance to manage information requests, with 86.7% of FOIs and 90% of EIRs completed on time in 2024/25. Ongoing improvements to internal processes and digital request management ensure timely, compliant responses while reducing administrative burden. A modular training approach for staff in information governance supports consistency and accuracy across all requests.

## Complaints

### ● Customer & Online Services (COS)

- Stage 1 Complaints (<5 days): COS consistently achieved high performance, with 2024/25 closing at 90% of complaints actioned within five days.
- Stage 2 Complaints (<20 days): Performance reached 85% in 2024/25. The service continues to focus on reducing resolution times for more complex cases, ensuring effective escalation and timely response.

### ● Council-Wide Performance

- Stage 1 Complaints (<5 days): Across Fife Council, 90% of Stage 1 complaints were actioned within the target five days.
- Stage 2 Complaints (<20 days): Stage 2 complaints achieved 85% compliance within 20 days, showing improvement over some previous years but highlighting the ongoing need for efficient handling of escalated or complex complaints.

## Customer Service Centres

The total number of transactions handled by Customer Service Centres has begun to decline after reaching a recent peak. In 2024/25, CSCs managed 194,962 transactions, down from 207,528 in the previous year. This reduction marks a shift in service demand, highlighting the need to monitor trends and adapt service delivery to ensure efficiency and continued customer support.

## Repairs Centre

The Repairs Centre delivered strong operational performance in 2024/25, with call answering reaching 85.84%, slightly below the 90% target. This figure does not reflect the full volume of work, which includes call handling, emails, and complex scheduling for tradespersons. While some repair scheduling is automated, a substantial proportion still requires manual intervention due to reactive or non-standard work. The Centre works closely with Building Services to ensure KPI targets are met.

## Digital Transformation and Efficiency Gains

Digital initiatives have significantly reduced reliance on manual input. 80% of online repair requests are now successfully integrated directly into the housing system, ensuring swift and seamless reporting. The remaining 20% of submissions, which fail due to incomplete or incorrect details, are quickly rectified by the team. This transition has freed resources to improve call handling, reduce avoidable contact, and focus on complex or urgent tasks.

Key priorities moving forward include enhancing self-service reporting, expanding automated workflows, and streamlining or eliminating manual scheduling for tradespersons. The current scheduling system, in operation for over 11 years, is due for replacement. The new system is expected to increase automation from 20% to 60%, reducing manual intervention, improving efficiency, and freeing staff to focus on higher-value tasks.

## Web Team - Integration with Digital Customer Experience

Both Registration and Repairs services are being closely aligned with broader digital transformation objectives, including the upcoming content management system DXP (Digital Experience Platform) and the AI-powered chatbot, FIONA. Accurate, cleansed content and close collaboration between service teams and the web team ensure FIONA can respond to customer queries effectively, helping to divert routine enquiries away from phone and in-person channels. Future service-specific chatbots, such as the Planning Expert bot, will further support self-service and reduce pressure on frontline staff.

# Our people



## Headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) by service in 2024/2025:

- 434 Headcount, 384.4 FTE.

## Workforce profile

- 66% of the workforce works full time and 95.6% are permanent.

## Workforce age

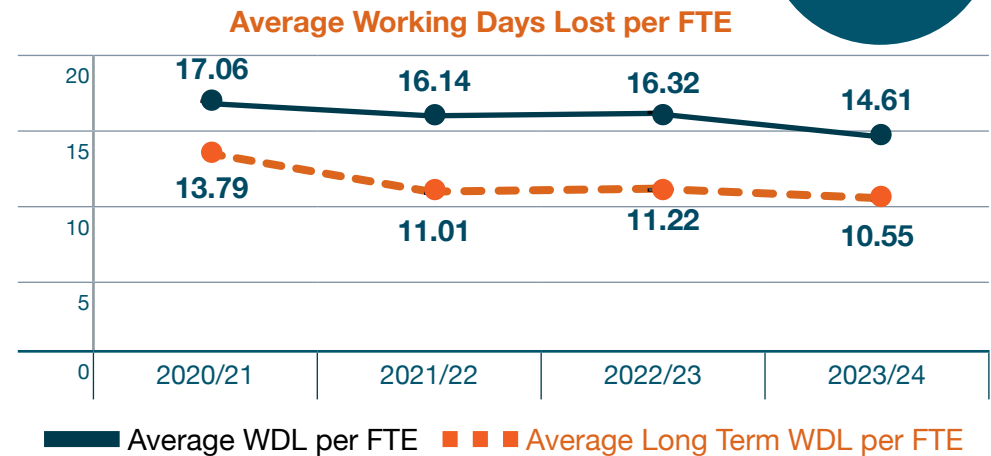
The average workforce age for Fife Council is 44.8 years in 2024/2025. Service comparisons are confirmed below:

- Average workforce age is 46.5 which is above the council average.
- Average age of leavers is 50.7 and new starts is 37.1. This has contributed to a slight reduction in the workforce age profile.
- 4.84% of the workforce is aged 24 and under.

## Workforce Turnover

Fife Council turnover rate is 10.8% overall. In 2024/2025:

- Turnover rate is 6.2%. This is below the council average.
- 51.9% of leavers were aged 55 and over. The top reported leaver reason was resigned.





# Our people

## Key Points

Average working days lost per FTE (WDL) to sickness absence in Fife Council during 2024/2025 was 14.75, short term absences (under 28 calendar days) account for 4.02 days.

Average WDL in 2024/2025 is 14.61 days, long-term absences account for 10.55 days, and short-term absences account for 4.06 days.

Focus is given on supporting employees through periods of ill health and mental health. The service has also seen the benefits of early referrals Occupational Health, this has given guidance and assurance to management of the support they are providing.

The formation of a Well Being group ensures that all aspects of support is in place and that the workforce feels supported. Across the service there is a consist approach to performance management with all teams using Talking Points and Personal Development Plans.

Managers and supervisors across the service have been upskilled, with 8 completing ILM courses, 2 completing First Line Managers Leadership Matters programme, and 4 undertaking the Institute of Revenues, Rates & Valuation (IRRV) training. The service will continue to prioritise workforce development, ensuring upskilling takes place consistently across all teams and service areas.

Recruitment has also been done in a more holistic way. Whilst conventional ways are still be used, the service is engaged with outside agencies like Kick Start, Fife Gingerbread, Disability Employment to bring in individuals for work experience and guidance in getting back into the workplace.

# Our Budget



Business Area	Budget 24/25 £m	Provisional Outturn 24/25 £m	Variance 24/25 £m
Customer Service Improvement	16.619	15.805	(0.814)
Net Expenditure	16.619	15.805	(0.814)

	Budget 24/25 £m	Provisional Expenditure / (Income) 24/25 £m	Variance Overspend/ (Underspend) 24/25 £m
Staff Costs	15.307	15.329	0.022
Property Costs	0.203	0.180	(0.023)
Transport Costs	0.039	0.039	0.000
Supplies and Services	3.592	3.475	(0.117)
Third Party Payments	2.143	2.414	0.271
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21.284</b>	<b>21.437</b>	<b>0.153</b>
Internal Income	(3.920)	(4.757)	(0.837)
External Income	(0.745)	(0.875)	(0.130)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(4.665)</b>	<b>(5.632)</b>	<b>(0.967)</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>16.619</b>	<b>15.805</b>	<b>(0.814)</b>

## Key points

The Customer & Online Services budget for 2024/25 was set at £16.619m, with a provisional outturn of £15.805m, resulting in an underspend of £0.814m. The variance reflects effective financial management and operational efficiency, despite the ongoing demands of service delivery and digital transformation projects.

## Expenditure Breakdown:

- Staff Costs (£15.329m, variance +£0.022m): Slight overspend due to recruitment and retention measures, offset by other efficiency savings.
- Property Costs (£0.180m, variance -£0.023m) and Supplies & Services (£3.475m, variance -£0.117m) came in under budget.
- Third-Party Payments (£2.414m, variance +£0.271m) were slightly above budget, reflecting necessary investment in outsourced services to maintain service levels.

## Income:

- Internal income exceeded budget by £0.837m, primarily due to higher than anticipated Central Support Service recharges to the HRA.
- External income also exceeded budget by £0.130m, supporting service delivery and offsetting some expenditure.

## Net Expenditure:

The overall net expenditure of £15.805m represents a positive variance against budget.

# Our risks

We identify, track and manage a number of risks that would have an impact on service delivery. These tend to be ongoing risks with a range of control measures in place. We have also identified specific mitigating actions and will report on progress against these next year.

Risk	Mitigating action
Workforce challenges - not having the right people in the right place at the right time	Alongside ongoing recruitment work we will update our business continuity plan
Critical technology failure	Develop Community Alarm contingency with Falkirk Council
Legal and Regulatory Compliance Failure	Develop an intervention policy to support regulatory compliance
Improper Data and information handling	New modular approach to mandatory training for information governance to be developed Issue a quick check guide to staff listing relevant procedures and processes
Lack of public information through loss of website	Develop basic temporary site in case of outage

Risks are formally recorded in the strategic risk register and reported on annually. Robust processes are in place to review and assess risks regularly and action is in place to manage them including escalation procedures if required.

# Performance assessment - Priorities & progress

## Introduction - service delivery context and challenges

Much of our work concerns welfare and welfare benefits and demand for our support is increasing. Local evidence tells us inequality is widening. Changes to welfare benefits are being implemented and public sector resources are decreasing. In response we are working with other services to develop an integrated community support model of early help that prevents, or moves people out of, crisis and sustains a better quality of life within our communities (our No Wrong Door approach).

We are also exploiting new technologies to modernise self-service and routine transactions to free up staff to provide that enhanced support.

We have identified change and improvement priorities in this context and assess our progress against these in the first part of this section.

Meanwhile we continue to deliver a wide range of services day to day and look at how well core services are performing in the second part of this section.

This assessment combines a selection of the performance indicators we use to measure progress with relevant benchmarking information available. A full list of all our performance metrics is available at the end of this document and online.

## Priorities & progress

Last year we set two priorities for change and improvement:

- Lead and Design No Wrong Door Customer Service Reforms
- Make Better Use of Digital Solutions to Enhance Service Delivery and Customer Experience

Progress over the past year and next-stage improvements are outlined in the following section.

# Performance assessment - Priorities and progress

## Priority 1

### Lead and Design No Wrong Door Customer Service Reforms

Deliver a more holistic and targeted approach to customer service by addressing the diverse and complex needs of residents through earlier intervention and more joined-up support. The No Wrong Door model ensures people can access the right help at the right time—regardless of their first point of contact.

By integrating services across welfare support, housing, the Scottish Welfare Fund, and benefits delivery, we reduce duplication, support prevention, and help residents move from crisis to stability.

## Progress

- Crisis Grants – applications fell from 32,349 in 2020/21 to 21,738 in 2024/25, suggesting earlier support is reducing reliance on crisis funding.
- Community Care Grants – spend rose from £822k in 2020/21 to £2.5m in 2024/25, reflecting greater investment in stabilising households before crisis point.
- Repeat crisis grant applicants – targeted outreach introduced for applicants with 3+ grants; early results show 60% of third repeat applicants engaged with additional council support (benefits checks, energy advice, debt support).
- Debt relief measures – “Fair collection” policy applied to vulnerable households; council tax and school meal arrears written off where hardship is identified.
- Free School Meals – automatic linkage with CTR/HB claims improved take-up and debt write-off for eligible families. Over £98k of meal debt was written off in 2024 with the support of grant funding.
- Income maximisation – Investment in Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software supports proactive benefit take-up campaigns.
- Service Redesign / Data-Driven Highlights
- Customer journey mapping across Welfare Support, SWF, Housing and Community Assistance identified duplication and streamlined referrals.
- Outreach for repeat crisis grant applicants is reducing long-term reliance on emergency funds.
- Benefits team audit with Audit Scotland driving improved speed and accuracy in Housing Benefit and CTR claims.

# Performance assessment - Priorities and progress

## Areas for Improvement

- Strengthen coordination across council services to reduce duplication and ensure seamless transitions.
- Expand early intervention to reduce repeat crisis grant applications.
- Improve benefits processing speed and accuracy to manage rising workloads and Universal Credit transitions, addressing the additional 33,000 processes in 2024/25 that created backlogs.
- Develop community-specific support for fourth repeat applicants who need deeper engagement.

## Priority 1 – Key Performance Indicators

KPI / Metric	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Progress / Insight
Crisis Grants issued	32,349	29,770	32,597	26,309	21,738		Falling demand reflects stronger early intervention and targeted outreach.
Community Care Grant spend (£)	822,416	1,156,009	1,563,144	2,292,709	2,511,000		Rising investment stabilises households earlier, reducing crisis reliance.
Crisis Grant spend (£)	2,540,079	2,543,949	2,791,807	2,357,190	2,441,000		Spend steady despite fewer applicants, reflecting higher average award per case.
Total SWF spend (£)	3,362,495	3,699,958	4,354,951	4,649,900	4,952,000		Overall spend increasing to support cost of living and prevention strategies.
Average Time to process new HB claims (in days)	22.4	37.7	19.8	18	36.2	≤22	Processing times rose in 2024/25 due to higher workloads and staffing changes, but recovery plans are in place to reduce backlogs and bring performance back within the 22-day target.

# Performance assessment - Priorities and progress

## Priority 2

### Make Better Use of Digital Solutions to Enhance Service Delivery and Customer Experience

We are leading a shift towards an integrated, digital-first model of customer service that makes it easier for people to self-serve while ensuring support remains available across phone, chat, and face-to-face channels when needed. By simplifying processes and joining up channels, customers can move between them without losing context, reducing avoidable contact and freeing staff to focus on complex cases.

Key to this transformation are service redesigns such as repairs, where digital scheduling is improving responsiveness and freeing up staff time, and registration, where online booking and upcoming virtual appointments are making services more accessible and efficient. Alongside this, the introduction of FIONA, our AI-powered chatbot, and the approved upgrade to a new Digital Experience Platform (DXP) will strengthen our ability to provide seamless, user-focused, and cost-effective services.

## Progress in past year

- Digital Experience Platform (DXP): Business case approved November 2024, website procured March 2025, go-live November 2025. Will deliver personalised content, better analytics, and improved integration.
- FIONA chatbot: Launched June 2024, handling an average of 3,952 monthly interactions (up from an average of 156 last year using previous technology). Satisfaction on chat up nearly 30%, volumes up 20x.
- Online transactions: Increased from 135,427 (2020/21) to 244,110 (2024/25) (+80%).
- Online accounts: Grew from 81,245 in 2020 to 230,767 in 2024/25 (+184%).
- Website improvements: Scottish Welfare Fund and Council Tax Reduction pages redesigned; average time on page fell from 43s to 13s, showing faster information access.
- Repairs: Routine online repairs reporting integrated with Housing System, achieving 80% first-time success. Contact performance improved from 80.83% (2020/21) to 85.84% (2024/25).
- Registration: 57.3% of birth registrations and 23.7% of death registrations booked online in 2024, with 25% fewer calls to Contact Centre. Moving towards virtual appointments and reduced reliance on buildings.
- Web accessibility: Consistently above 87% AA/AAA compliance, reaching 91% in 2024/25.



# Performance assessment - Priorities and progress

## Areas for Improvement

- Ensure successful delivery and adoption of DXP (launch November 2025).
- Expand chatbot into service-specific bots (Planning Expert Bot first).
- Improve online death registration appointment uptake (currently 24%).
- Develop self-service portal + upgraded scheduling for repairs.
- Advance omnichannel integration to remove the need for customers to repeat information, creating a seamless journey that gets residents to the right support quickly.
- Strengthen collaboration with services to maintain relevance of online content.
- Expand website improvements across all areas, using customer feedback, data insights, and new DXP functionality to enhance the overall customer journey.

## Relevant KPI details

KPI / Metric	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Progress / Insight
Online transactions	135,427	175,506	179,468	236,120	244,110		80% growth since 2020/21; highlights shift to digital-first.
Online accounts	81,245	142,025	175,875	205,246	230,767		Accounts up 184% since 2020/21; residents increasingly choosing online access.
Chatbot (FIONA) interactions (Average Monthly)	N/A	N/A	N/A	156	3,952		Rapid adoption: FIONA launched June 2024, now averaging nearly 4,000 monthly uses.
Registration – births booked online (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	37.96%	57.30%		Birth registrations booked online, now the preferred contact channel.
Registration – deaths booked online (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15.93%	23.70%		Uptake remains lower than the number of births, likely due to the demographics of this age group, but it continues to follow an upward trajectory.
Repairs contact performance (%)	80.83%	76.27%	78.48%	84.41%	85.84%	90%	Rising steadily; digital scheduling and automation improving responsiveness.
Accessibility compliance (AA/AAA)	87%	89%	90%	91%	91%	87%	Accessibility consistently high.



# Performance assessment - Operational delivery

## Overview of progress



All results against key indicators can be found in Appendix 1 and online at [www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance](http://www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance) to facilitate feedback and scrutiny.

## Progress

We are responsible for 2 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators, the latest set of LGBF data published covers 2023/24. More detail can be found at [Explore the data | Benchmarking](#)

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (£)	£1.68	£1.53	£2.58	£-0.14	-£1.64
Income from council tax received by year end (%)	93.6%	95.3%	95.8%	95.2%	95.5%

Increase in council tax recovery from 95.2% in 23/24 to achieving target of 95.5% in 24/25 contributing to the council's budget to spend on services. Across all 32 local authorities' collection rates range from 89.5% to 98.2% with the average being 95.5%. The cost of collecting council tax continues to reduce with improved performance.

In 24/25 we increased the council tax charge on second homes to 200% bringing in an additional £3,458,603 in revenue achieving a 97.7% collection rate in this area. We also raised additional revenue of £470,306 by reviewing and removing 47,076 sole occupancy discounts through data matching.

## Challenges

### Revenue Collection

Balancing the need to take a holistic view of a customer's situation with the need to maximise revenue collection in difficult economic times will remain a challenge.

### Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)

Despite a slight decrease in the number of SWF applications during 2024/25, the budget was almost fully utilised. This includes the additional £2 million top-up from Fife Council, which was necessary due to rising costs of goods and the provision of higher-quality carpets. Expected ongoing pressure even though mitigation in place.

# Performance assessment - Operational delivery

## Information Management

Overall, the volume of information requests has slightly declined due to a reduction in DPA exemption submissions. FOI and SAR requests continue to rise, with SAR volumes increasing by 14% in 2024/25, indicating greater public engagement and transparency. Enhanced workflows and targeted guidance have been implemented to support staff in managing increasingly complex requests

### Benefits

Rising demand has added over 33,000 extra processes in 2024/25, creating backlogs and longer processing times, compounded by staffing pressures and Universal Credit transitions.

### Digital Development vs. Expectation

Integrating new technology with existing systems continues to present challenges, particularly where projects depend on legacy infrastructure. The time required to engage with suppliers, clarify requirements, and agree on the scope of integration can extend project timelines.

## Areas for improvement

**Scottish Welfare Fund** - maintain processing time scales by stabilising staffing resources within the team. Scrutinise monthly budget spend to ensure awards are in line with 'high priority' as any overspend will impact the budget and could see the fund have to move to the high most compelling award category. This means that crisis grants would be paid but community care grants would only be able to supply essential to those most in need.

Information Management - Performance continues to fall short of the Regulator's 95% compliance benchmark, highlighting the need for targeted improvement efforts. Response times are being adversely affected by limited staffing and infrastructure, particularly as the complexity of incoming requests increases. This combination of high demand and constrained resources has resulted in delays and missed deadlines, which in turn is impacting the quality and consistency of service delivery. While digital solutions are being procured to help manage these pressures, they remain in the implementation phase and are not yet fully operational, limiting their immediate effectiveness

**Benefits** – The team has received temporary funding from the DWP, allowing the recruitment of three temporary staff and the creation of a dedicated project team to explore the automation of incoming work from the DWP. While some automation has been implemented, a significant proportion is failing, the project team are investigating the causes and working closely with the software supplier to improve the integration. The team is also liaising directly with the DWP providing feedback on the quality of incoming data. These measures are intended to improve efficiency, reduce backlogs, and ensure more timely processing of benefits.

# Our year ahead

## Priorities for 2025/26

Customer and Online Services has a significant role to play in the next three years to support the council's 3-year change plan, and the policy priorities set out in the Plan for Fife particularly in terms of tackling poverty and prevention.

Over the next year we plan to strengthen the good performance and progress outlined in this report and build on the priorities for change and improvement set last year by focussing on:

Redesigning registration services to streamline process and integrate systems: moving from traditional to streamlined, virtual-first services and appointments online to improve accessibility, efficiency for customers and the council, lower costs and carbon footprint. This builds on the digital improvements already made: 57.3% of all birth registration appointments and 23.7% of death registrations were booked online in 2024. Next, we will introduce virtual appointments and reduce the number of buildings, standardise processes, reduce duplication and make better use of current resources.

Implement a new integrated customer service model across the council that supports seamless and effective self-service, allowing people to move effortlessly between channels—whether chat, social media, telephone, or face-to-face—without losing context or having to repeat information. This approach enhances accessibility and efficiency, empowering customers to serve themselves while freeing up staff to focus on more complex, value-added tasks. Building on recent digital advancements, online transactions have grown from 175,506 in 2021/22 to 244,110 in 2024/25, and online accounts have increased from 81,245 to 230,767 in the

same timeframe. Simplifying processes will not only drive income generation but also release resources to prioritise service delivery and preventative measures.

Continue to work on an effective for the No Wrong Door approach to provide a more holistic and targeted approach, addressing the diverse needs of residents and delivering comprehensive support and early intervention for those living in complex circumstances. This approach aims to improve outcomes for vulnerable residents.





















Aim to integrate services more effectively, this reform will enhance efficiency, reduce delays, and ensure residents receive the right support at the right time. To strengthen this further, Customer Service Centres and associated buildings will be realigned to better reflect community support needs, ensuring physical access complements the improved digital offer and aligns with the principles of No Wrong Door. By integrating services more effectively, this reform will enhance efficiency, reduce delays, and ensure residents receive the right support at the right time.

Optimising digital solutions to improve repair scheduling for a more responsive service: moving from manual and fragmented processes to a streamlined, user-friendly online system that enables customers to easily report issues and schedule repairs. This improves responsiveness and transparency while reducing delays and administrative burden for staff. Recent improvements have contributed to an increase in the percentage of repair contacts answered, rising from 80.83% in 2020/21 to 85.84% in 2024/25, and customer satisfaction with online forms has increased to over 88% in 2024/25. Next steps include further enhancing self-service options, automating scheduling workflows, and reducing avoidable contact to free up resources for those who cannot or choose not to self-serve.

# Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown Trend:  Improving  No change  Getting worse





## Objective COS Customer

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Status	Trend
Customer and Online Services Stage 1 Complaints dealt actioned < 5 days	92%	96%	93%	97%	96%	90%		
Customer & Online Services Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days	100%	96%	94%	90%	95%	85%		
Fife Council Stage 1 Complaints actioned < 5 days	89%	88%	86%	86%	83%	90%		
Fife Council Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days	80%	84%	76%	75%	75%	85%		
Number of Twitter Followers	53,150	53,900	55,244	55,451	54,508	N/A		
Number of Facebook Fans	52,441	53,613	56,472	56,472	61,393	N/A		
% agreeing that the council is good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions (Scottish Household Survey)	48%	29%	33%	27%	N/A	51%		
% agreeing that the council is good at letting people know about the kinds of services it provides (Scottish Household Survey)	48%	48%	37%	36%	N/A	73%		
Number of Online Transactions	135,427	175,506	179,468	236,120	244,110	N/A		
Number of Online Accounts	81,245	142,025	175,875	205,246	230,767	N/A		











# Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown Trend:  Improving  No change  Getting worse

## Objective COS LGBF

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Family Group Av 2023/24	Target	Status	Trend
Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (£) (LGBF)	£1.68	1.53	2.58	-0.14	£5.21	£5.89		
Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year (LGBF)	93.60%	95.30%	95.80%	95.20%	95.80%	95.50%		





























## Objective COS P4F

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Status	Trend
Number of Crisis Grants	32,349	29,770	32,597	26,309	21,738	N/A		
Spend on Community Care Grants	£822,416.58	1156009.01	1563144.07	2292709.81	2576021.19	N/A		
Spend on Crisis Grants	2540079.33	2543949.24	2791807.41	2357190.21	2138718.72	N/A		
Total on Scottish Welfare Fund application	3362495.91	3699958.25	4354951.48	4649900.02	3459329.54	N/A		
Number of Community Care Grants	10,853	4,085	4,476	4,384	3,274	N/A		

# Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown Trend:  Improving  No change  Getting worse



























## Objective COS Resources

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Status	Trend
Customer & Online Services - Average WDL per FTE	DIV/0	17.06	16.14	16.32	14.61	16.2		
Customer & Online Services - Average Long Term WDL per FTE	DIV/0	13.79	11.01	11.22	10.55	11.1		
COS Workforce who are Female (%)	79.70%	73.60%	75.80%	78.70%	78.60%	N/A		
COS Workforce who are Full-time (%)	68%	64.70%	63.50%	68.60%	66.60%	N/A		
COS Workforce who are Permanent Employees (%)	88.90%	88.80%	91.90%	92.40%	95.60%	N/A		
COS Number of Voluntary Redundancies (FTEs)	15	0	0	0	0	N/A		
COS Employees aged 24 and under (%)	2.60%	4.70%	5.80%	4.10%	4.80%	N/A		
COS Employees aged 29 and under (%)	7%	10.80%	13.20%	10.60%	11.80%	N/A		
COS Employees aged 55 and over (%)	24%	31.20%	31.60%	31%	31.60%	N/A		
COS Number of WYI Bids	0	0	2	0	0	N/A		
COS Number of WYI Programme new starts	1	0	0	0	0	N/A		
Customer & Online Services Employee Turnover				7.57%	6.22%	10%		
Cost of collecting Non Domestic Rate per chargeable property (£)	£14.19	£3.92	£1.96	-£0.57	£0	N/A		
Cost of collecting sundry debtors per debtor account issued (£)	£6.71	£4.73	£4.78	£4.21	£0	N/A		

# Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown Trend:  Improving  No change  Getting worse

















## Objective COS Service Operations

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Status	Trend
In year collection of Non Domestic Rates (%)	98.70%	99%	97.60%	96.60%	97.50%	97%		
Average Time to process new HB/CTR claims (in days)	20.4	37.7	19.8	18	36.2	22		
Average Time to process notification of changes (days)	3.5	5.6	3	4	13.2	7		
Average Time to Process New CTR Claims (days)	23.8	31	19.3	16.7	33.7	22		
Average Time to Process CTR Changes (days)	9.1	11.1	4.7	3.8	11.1	7		
Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered in the year		28%	29%	38%	36%	35%		
% of Sundry Debt collected in year					89.20%	89.50%		
% of Contacts Answered - Revenues		87%	82.70%	83.40%	83.20%	90%		
% of Contacts Answered - Contact Centre	86.93%	86.43%	88.38%	91.04%	91.73%	90%		
Registration input accurately %	97.80%	98.40%	98.40%	97.70%	97%	97%		
Average processing time - Crisis Grants (days)	1	3	2	1	2	1		
Average processing time - Community Care Grants (days)	21.2	37.3	9.8	20.4	15.6	15		
% of Contacts Answered - Out of Hours	92.47%	96.72%	97.70%	98.89%	99.14%	90%		



# Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown Trend:  Improving  No change  Getting worse

Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target	Status	Trend
% of Contacts Answered - General	88.53%	81.34%	83.78%	83.19%	87.07%	90%		
% of Contacts Answered - Repairs	80.83%	76.27%	78.48%	84.41%	85.84%	90%		
% of Contacts Answered - Social Work	86.32%	88.99%	90.16%	93.02%	96.16%	90%		
Number of welfare fund applications made		33,855	37,073	30,693	25,012	N/A		
% FOI requests completed on time	88.30%	88.55%	84.49%	88.15%	86.68%	90%		
% of EIR requests completed on time	93.55%	89.64%	91.92%	89.48%	89.96%	90%		
No. of Fife.gov.uk Sessions			10,200,000	7,043,300	7,714,300	N/A		
% of SAR requests complete on time	86.81%	83.99%	81.64%	82.35%	84.12%	80%		
Number of Transactions by Customer Service Centres	83,192	145,068	187,240	207,528	194,962	N/A	