Item: 6.1

**Development and Infrastructure Committee: 14 November 2023.** 

Performance Monitoring – Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.

Report by Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.

# 1. Purpose of Report

To advise on the performance of the Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure service for the reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2023.

# 2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to scrutinise:

### 2.1.

The performance of the Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure service for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023, as set out in section 4 and Annex 1 to this report.

#### 3. Directorate Performance Indicators

Directorate performance indicators provide the mechanism through which the performance of aspects of the services provided year on year are monitored. The monitoring report for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure is attached as Annex 1.

# 4. Directorate Complaints and Compliments

#### 4.1.

Table 1 below sets out numbers of complaints and compliments made to Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure in the six-month period 1 April to 30 September 2023, and for two preceding six-month monitoring periods.

Table 1.	Six months ending 30 September 2022.	Six months ending 31 March 2023.	Six months ending 30 September 2023.	Totals.
Complaints.	21.	60.	23.	104.
Compliments.	108.	70.	63.	241.

#### 4.2.

When considering the raw data within Table 1 above, it should be noted that the Council has adopted a policy of encouraging staff to record all complaints against the Council through the Complaints Handling Procedure. This includes complaints that are quickly and satisfactorily resolved by the frontline service, thereby enabling the Council to identify any trends that would help to improve the service. As a result of this policy, the number of complaints captured by the procedure may increase and that does not necessarily reflect an increase in the number of people contacting the service to express dissatisfaction with the Council.

#### 4.3.

When complaints are received, they are often very complex and take time to respond to. However, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman makes clear that it is more important to respond fully and fairly to a complaint than it is to respond within the deadline.

#### 4.4.

It is also important to note that the number of complaints received by the Council does not capture the number of first-time service requests that front-line teams handle and manage each day. A great deal of effort goes towards dealing with these service requests to find an immediate resolution for customers which means that relatively few complaints are raised.

#### 4.5.

Between April and September 2023 there were no discernible relationships in terms of the types of complaints received.

#### 4.6.

For six months ending 31 March 2023 the complaint figure was high in comparison to other periods. There was a discernible relationship in terms of the types of complaints received over that period, these related to the issues with stones and other objects being put on top of bins to secure the lids down in windy weather. In addition to the number of complaints there were also a number of calls from members of the public which did not meet the threshold to be logged as a complaint in terms of the policy but were from residents unhappy with the bin-lids issue, some of these were dealt with as general enquiries or service requests. The Waste team, working with the front-line operators, provided interim advice, then tested a number of suggested solutions and issued revised guidance in March 2023.

#### 4.7.

In the reporting period April to September 2023, the number for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure complaints generally is broken down as follows:

- 14 complaints were not upheld.
- 3 complaints were partially upheld.
- 5 complaints were upheld.
- 1 complaint outcome is yet to be determined.

#### 4.8.

The Directorate Complaints Officer works with Heads of Service, Managers and Officers to improve the flow of communication and response time regarding complaints and provides a support mechanism in terms of advice. The Customer Services Platform system is very beneficial in regard to recording of formal complaints and in the longer term, when reporting capacity has increased, efficiency of reporting should increase. Internally run complaints training is offered to all Council staff and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman run courses periodically.

#### 4.9.

It is encouraging to observe the number of compliments received across the Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure Directorate noting that the detail on these compliments is provided in the quarterly reports produced by the Complaints Officer and submitted to the Information Governance Officer. The compliments received during this six-month monitoring period vary in nature – the majority are in relation to the service provided by the Trading Standards team, but others relate to various other services provided by Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, namely, waste operations and policy, roads operations, building standards, development management, development and marine planning, environmental health, building cleaning, IT and directorate business support. A reminder of how to report compliments was sent to all Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure staff in July 2023 and a further reminder is due to go out to all staff in November 2023 (including those who do not have access to a computer); managers also play a key part in encouraging their teams to ensure compliments are shared and sent to the Directorate Business Support team for recording. Compliments are recorded through the Customer Services Platform.

# 5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with its performance management process and procedures and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

# 6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

# 7. Legal Aspects

The Council's performance management systems help the Council to meet its statutory obligation to secure best value.

# 8. Contact Officers

Hayley Green, Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, extension 2301, Email hayley.green@orkney.gov.uk

Roddy MacKay, Head of Planning and Community Protection, extension 2530, Email roddy.mackay@orkney.gov.uk

Louise Cutler, Directorate Business Support Team Manager, extension 2851, Email louise.cutler@orkney.gov.uk

## 9. Annex

Annex 1 – Summary of the performance of the Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure service against its performance indicator targets for the 6 months ending 30 September 2023.

# **Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure Performance Indicator Report - 6 Monthly**

Service Performance Indicators at 30 September 2023



#### Performance Indicator

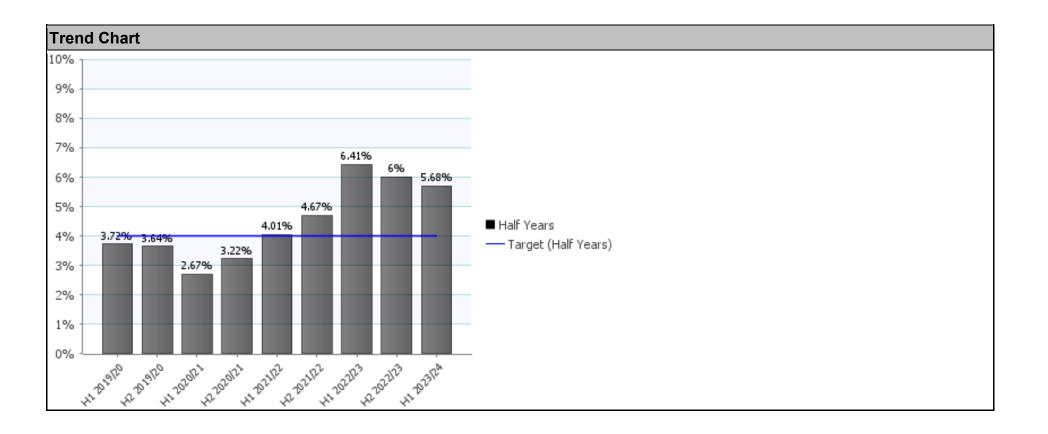
CCG 01 – Sickness absence – The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence, expressed as a percentage of the number of working days available.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
4%	5.68%	6.1%	AMBER	

#### Comment

The Service continues to work closely with the Human Resources Team to ensure that short term and long-term sickness absence is addressed as a matter of priority. However, these matters are individually unique and it is difficult to forecast or prevent occasional fluctuations in the performance percentage over reporting periods. The Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure Senior Management Team are aware of the areas within the service where sickness levels are higher and work with relevant managers to address these.

# Annex 1

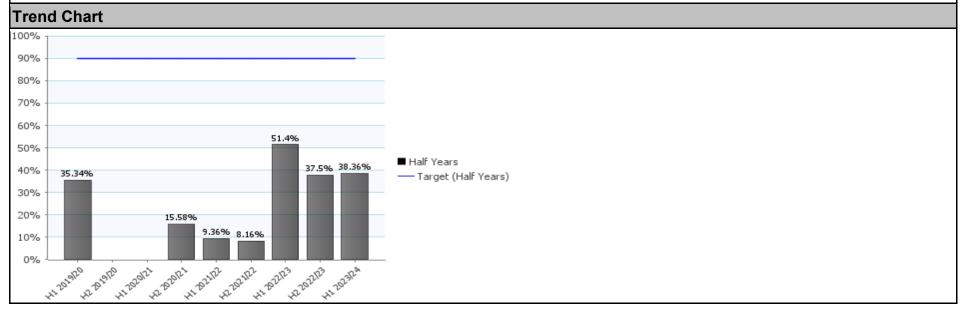


CCG 02 – Sickness absence – Of the staff who had frequent and/or long-term sickness absence (they activated the sickness absence triggers), the proportion of these where there was management intervention.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
90%	38.36%	79%	RED	

#### Comment

Intervention by managers is discussed at the Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure (NSI) performance monitoring meetings. The NSI Senior Management Team continues to work with Human Resources and managers within their own teams to ensure that more active intervention takes place in the future. The Senior Management Team is aware of the areas within the service where intervention has not taken place and discuss this with the relevant managers and will provide any support required. There is confidence that managers in most areas are holding conversations with staff on their return to work but that the conversations are not being recorded. There is an expectation that the performance for this indicator will gradually improve over future reporting periods but as little has changed since the last reporting period a reminder will be issued to all staff with line management responsibilities and further training will be arranged.

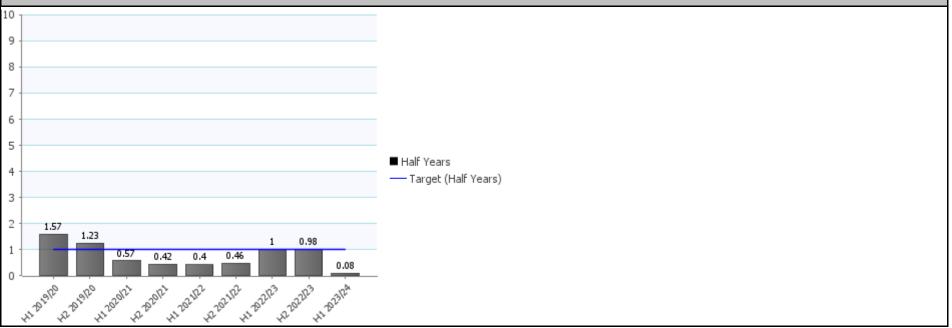


CCG 03 – Staff accidents – The number of staff accidents within the service, per thirty staff per year.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
1	0.08	2.1	GREEN	

#### Comment

The number of accidents reported during this period was extremely low for a service of this size which includes Road and Waste Operations and has many health and safety risks. The service reported only one accident which was a slips/trips/falls. Heads of Service will be reminding managers and teams to ensure that accident reports are completed and submitted. There were no RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents in this period.

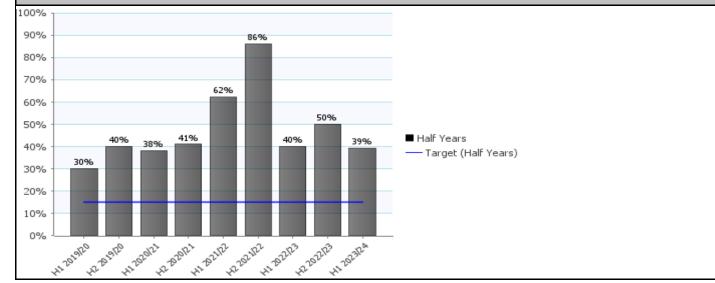


CCG 04 – Budget control – The number of significant variances (priority actions) generated at subjective group level, as a proportion of cost centres held.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
15%		31%	RED	

#### Comment

The Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure (NSI) Senior Management Team continues to contribute to the Revenue Expenditure Monitoring Report (REMR) process and flag up areas of concerns and difficulties. Meetings between NSI and Finance are in place to ensure detailed discussions take place prior to reports going forward to committee. There have been a lot of changes and transition in posts as a result of the new Council structure; in particular at service manager and budget holder levels, and there remains a degree of post holders having to pick up, be trained on and understand, new areas which can be complex. As experience develops, this indicator should improve going forward. There are known discrepancies between the profiled labour charges and actual costs being booked, leading to increased variances despite no underlying issue. Therefore action is being taken to review profiles and to bring them more in line with the actual time taken for costs to be booked to budget codes, thereby reducing the number of variances.

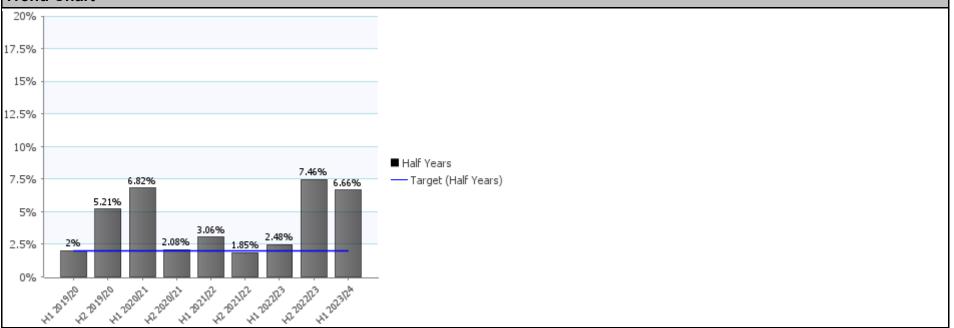


CCG 05 – Recruitment and retention – The number of advertised service staff vacancies still vacant after six months from the time of advert, as a proportion of total staff vacancies.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
2%	6.66%	4.1%	RED	

#### Comment

Five posts remained vacant during this period: Administrative Assistant Operational Support, Service Manager Fleet, Senior Quantity Surveyor, Driver/Roadworker 2 and Public Lighting Operative Kirkwall. It should be noted that there are continuing challenges within the service in recruiting to some posts. This matter continues to be discussed both within Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure and within the Corporate Leadership Team and is a growing challenge across the Council.

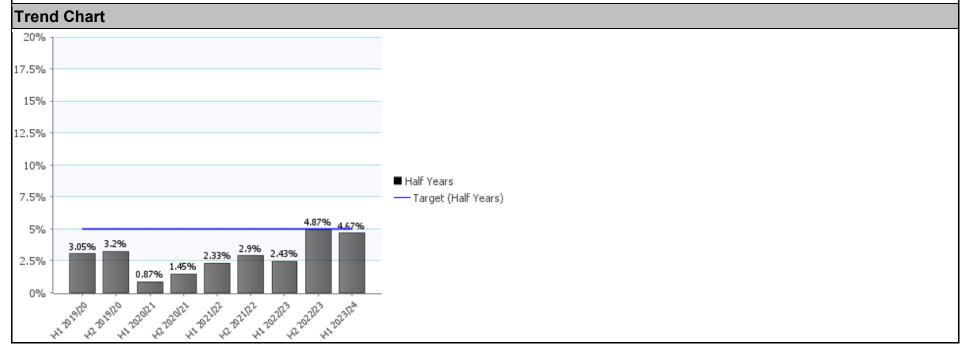


CCG 06 – Recruitment and retention – The number of permanent service staff who leave the employment of Orkney Islands Council – but not through retirement or redundancy – as a proportion of all permanent service staff.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
5%	4.67%	10.1%	GREEN	

#### Comment

There were 321 permanent staff employed at this reporting period, 15 permanent members of staff left the Council, 13 staff resigned from their positions and two were for other reasons. Whilst the indicator remains green, there are some instances of staff leaving across the service for a range of individual reasons which leads to the need for new recruitment, induction and training which can be a very lengthy process. The Council continues to experience competition from the private sector who have the flexibility to offer and negotiate better terms and conditions, several members of staff have been approached direct from external companies offering opportunities and as a consequence these staff have left the Council.



CCG 07 – ERD – The number of staff who receive (at least) an annual face-to-face performance review and development meeting, as a proportion of the total number of staff within the service.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
90%	88.2%	79%	AMBER	

#### Comment

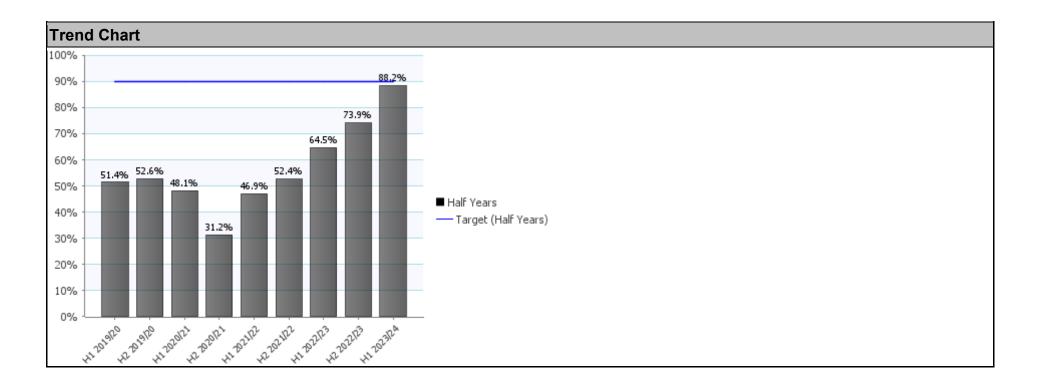
There is a significant improvement in the performance of this indicator which we are seeing each reporting period and which we anticipate will continue to improve.

The Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure (NSI) Senior Management Team continue to meet on a regular basis with Human Resources to review the Good Conversation process (formerly known as Employee Review and Development) performance and to identify areas requiring support and training.

Heads of Service continue to work very closely with managers to provide support and to ensure that meetings are carried out on an annual basis. The recording sheet of the status of these meetings is held centrally and is accessible to the Corporate Director and all Heads of Service so they can check at any point in time on progress. Managers continue to provide regular support to operational staff as required.

Additional administrative support is dedicated to this process and these teams proactively send reminders to managers, set up meeting dates and issue the paperwork for the meetings, this support has had a positive impact on the performance of this indicator.

# Annex 1

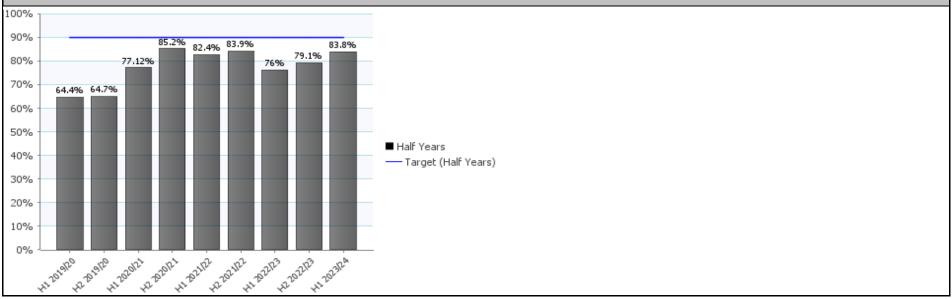


CCG 08 – Invoice payment – The number of invoices that were submitted accurately, and paid within 30 days of invoice date, as a proportion of the total number of invoices paid.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
90%	83.8%	79%	AMBER	

#### Comment

There has been good improvement with this indicator. There are some challenges with suppliers who send out invoices long after the date on the invoice, sometimes many months and sometimes longer, therefore the performance indicator is exceedingly difficult to meet. It also seems that some invoices are received before the goods are actually received, meaning they cannot be paid until the goods are received and checked. Progress on invoicing is usually reported to the Corporate Director on a weekly basis, this is currently on hold due to a lack of capacity to provide this information but will be reinstated when resources allow. The service has been advised that this performance indicator is one of the Local Government Benchmark Framework set of indicators and therefore this indicator cannot be altered.



CCG 09 – Mandatory training – The number of staff who have completed all mandatory training courses, as a percentage of the total number of staff in the service.

Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG	
90%	52.42%	79%	RED	

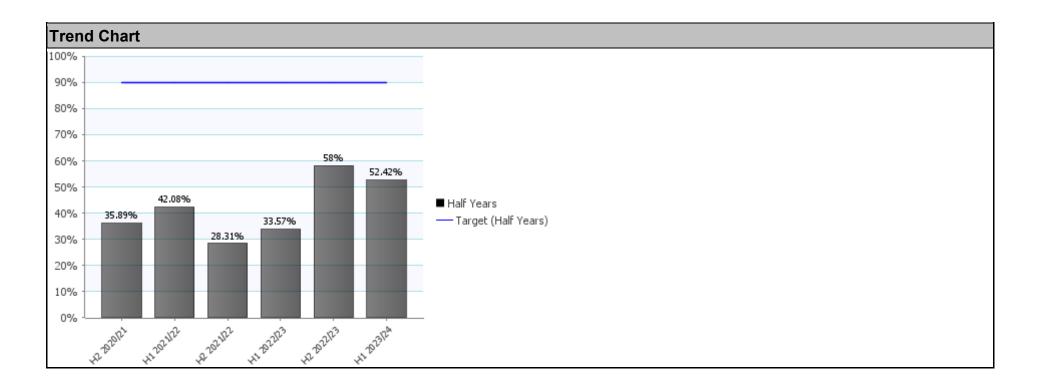
#### Comment

The Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure (NSI) Senior Management Team continues to work closely with Human Resources to overcome challenges in ensuring that all staff complete mandatory iLearn training. Some staff, primarily operational staff, complete certain training as a matter of course and as part of their job specific training, and it was agreed with Human Resources and with the Safety and Contingencies Team that these staff do not need to complete the iLearn training as well as this would be duplication; for accuracy of reporting these staff were removed from the report.

Human Resources provide paper-based training materials for those staff who do not have IT access, managers arrange group team sessions to cover the training but noting that this can still be challenging, particularly with staff based on the outer isles. iLearn is a web-based system so staff who do not have a Council IT account can still access the training through their own personal devices, staff would need to undertake this training out with their standard Council working hours so a system of either taking the time back or being paid for the training needs to be explored. There may also be opportunities for these staff to book times at Council locations where they can access a computer to complete the training, this may be at local schools or at other offices, again, this is an opportunity that needs to be explored formally.

Line managers receive automated emails from the iLearn system to inform them that staff training is overdue but staff members do not receive these emails direct. A discussion has taken place with Learning and Development recently and consideration is being given to switching this facility back on which would prove extremely helpful. The automated emails go out to remind people that training is overdue, and there has been a request made to see if the reminder could be sent a month or so in advance of the training deadline date so that arrangements can be made for the training to be completed prior to the deadline.

# Annex 1



## Personnel key

Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure – Hayley Green Head of Planning and Community Protection – Roddy MacKay Head of Neighbourhood Services – Lorna Richardson Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities – Kenny MacPherson

## **RAG** key

**Red** - the performance indicator is experiencing significant underperformance, with a medium to high risk of failure to meet its target. **Amber** - the performance indicator is experiencing minor underperformance, with a low risk of failure to meet its target. **Green** - the performance indicator is likely to meet or exceed its target.