

*The 'go to' organisation for local
government improvement in Scotland*

is.
improvement **service**



Business Plan **2025—2026**

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1. Introduction

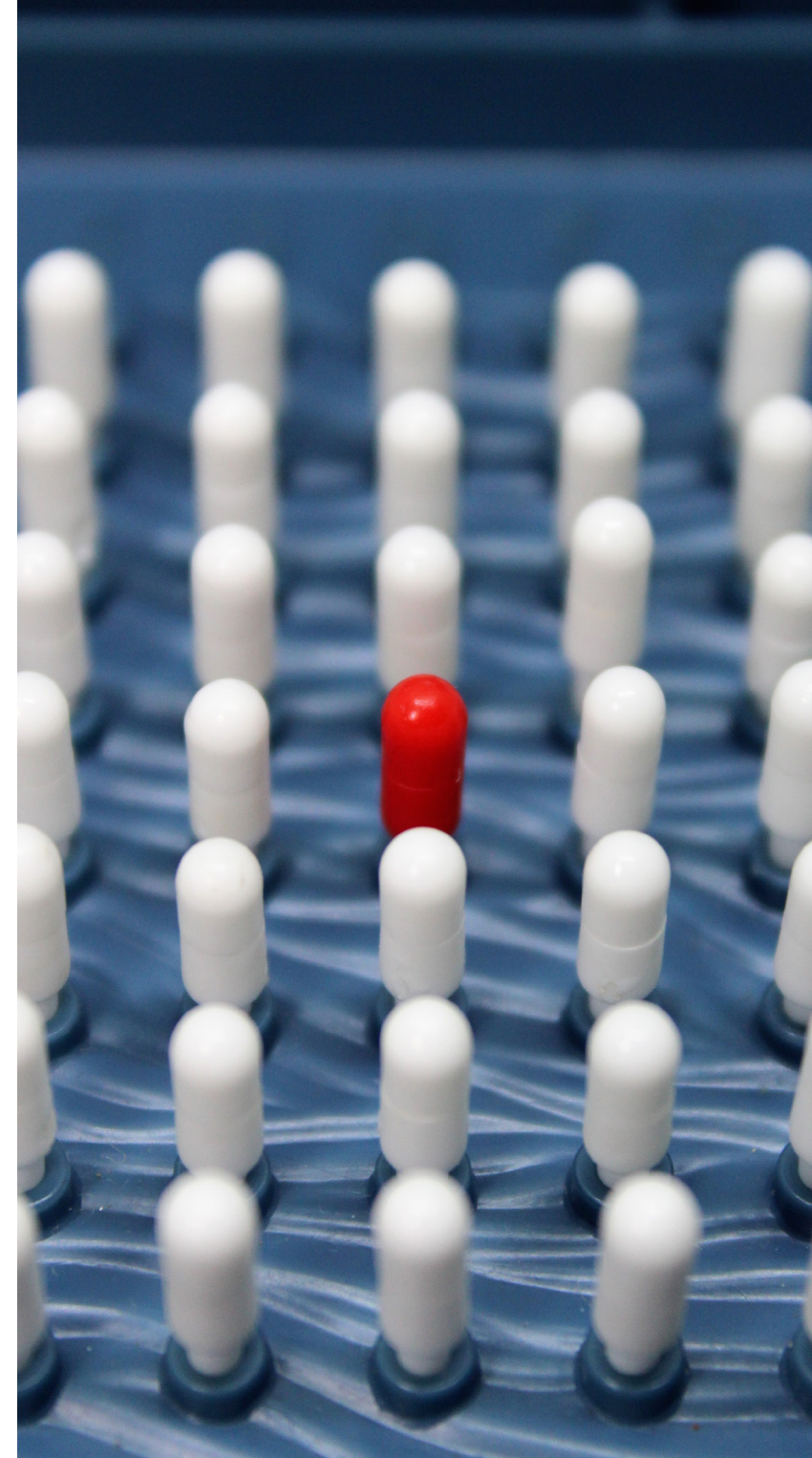
The Improvement Service (IS) is the 'go-to' organisation for local government improvement in Scotland.

Our Vision

The Improvement Service will support local authorities, working with their partners, to deliver transformational change to sustain and where possible improve outcomes, reduce inequalities and achieve efficiencies.

Our Purpose

- Provide leadership to local government and the wider system on transformation and improvement;
- Develop capability and capacity for improvement within local government;
- Support local authorities to collaborate and work together to tackle shared challenges and drive improvement and innovation;
- Support local authorities to share knowledge, practice, learning and skills;
- Deliver national improvement programmes for local government and partners, supporting local authorities to improve at a local level;
- Provide research, data and intelligence to inform local government's policy-making and decision-making and to drive improvement;



- Deliver national shared service applications and technology platforms; and
- Broker additional resources from outwith the sector to support our improvement work.

Our Strategic Priorities 2023–2027

- We will assist local authorities to transform and transition to new models of service delivery
- We will support local government to deliver sector-led improvement in a range of policy and service areas
- We will provide leadership and facilitate collaboration to enable a more preventative, integrated approach to tackling poverty and inequality
- We will support local government to deliver digital and data enabled transformation

Our Business Plan for 2025-26 takes forward the commitments in our [Strategic Framework](#) and sets out our deliverables and activities for the coming year.



2. Our Operating Context

As we enter the third year of our Strategic Framework 2023 – 2027, local government continues to face a number of significant challenges, many of which are multifaceted.

Demand for local authority services continues to increase within a challenging financial environment, resulting in local authorities facing ongoing difficult choices about spending priorities and cuts as well as considering how best they can innovate and transform service delivery.

In October 2024, 12 months following the official launch of the [Solace/IS transformation programme](#), the Accounts Commission published a report, Transformation in Councils, as part of their annual local government overview. Significant reference was made to the transformation programme, giving rise to both opportunities and expectations across the sector. The Commission noted that “[In the next 12 months we expect]... *Solace and the Improvement Service to sustain momentum of the Transformation Programme and be clear on the actions needed to successfully deliver across the different workstreams. This includes more clarity on timescales, costs, resources, outcomes, outputs and impact*”.

The Commission highlighted the significant risks around workforce capacity and skills to realise the ambitions of the transformation programme and the importance of effective collaboration across the sector to realise the potential of the sector-led transformation work. It was acknowledged that whilst the work is at an early stage, “*the Commission urgently calls for the pace to be accelerated*”. Finally, in the next 12 months, the Commission expects “*individual councils to prioritise and urgently progress the delivery of their local transformation ambitions and engage effectively in sector led transformation activity, securing political backing and committing resources*”.



Across 2025/26, we will continue to work with Solace Scotland to deliver the various workstreams within the transformation programme and to start to evidence the tangible benefits of local government's sector-led approach to transformation.

We published a report in October 2024 on [Navigating Demographic Change](#), which highlighted Scotland's changing demographic, the impact on public services, the action already being taken by local government and the Scottish Government and identifying examples of innovative practice aimed at informing future action. There has been significant interest in the research, and we will continue to support local authorities as they consider how best to transform their services to respond to their changing demographics.



There are ongoing workforce challenges, as highlighted in a report that we published with Solace and the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) in September 2024, on Scotland's Local Government Workforce 2024. The report highlights that *'Scotland's councils are facing significant challenges in maintaining and developing workforce capacity caused by a range of factors including financial pressures; an ageing workforce; increased service demand; recruitment difficulties; differing population changes across the country; skills gaps and pay competition from other sectors'*. This report also identified many acute challenges in several job

roles, particularly in social care and social work, but there are also gaps in a growing number of professional roles such as trading standards officers, planners and environmental health officers. Across the next 12 months, we will work with colleagues from the local government family as part of the Local Government Workforce Board, to drive forward the action plan arising from the report.

During 2024/25, we worked with COSLA to develop the Local Government Assurance and Improvement Framework, which sets out the current 'architecture' that exists in relation to council and local government body improvement and assurance, which also clearly relates to accountability. This Framework also sets out a future vision for local government in terms of improvement and scrutiny and in support of this, we will continue to focus our energies in 2025/26 on further strengthening and embedding our improvement architecture within local government. This will include ongoing work with COSLA, Solace and the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government to develop a Local Government Data Platform, continuing to pilot our new Peer Collaborative improvement service,



which will support sector-led improvement in a range of service areas, continuing to embed more rigorous, consistent and robust approaches to self-assessment/ self-evaluation and finally, continuing to develop the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. Our National Planning Improvement Champion will also continue to deliver the National Planning Improvement Framework and embed the National Planning Improvement Hub.

Despite various policies and strategies aimed at reducing inequality, significant challenges remain in Scotland in areas such as health, income and education. Average living standards, measured by household incomes, have not returned to pre-2010 levels of growth and have declined since 2019. Food insecurity, homelessness and fuel poverty have also increased.

Across the next 12 months, we will continue to deliver programmes and projects which are centred on tackling poverty and inequality. This will include working with West Lothian Council to develop a replicable dashboard to help local government identify pockets of unmet need and address child poverty, and continuing to support local authorities and their community planning partners in their efforts to tackle child poverty. As part of this support, we will work with rural local authorities and health boards on the particular challenges for remote, rural and island areas in supporting families living in poverty.

We will also support councils and their partners in designing, delivering, and monitoring Fairer Futures Partnership projects aiming to reduce poverty and inequality by delivering on public service reform. These Partnerships have been established in 8 local authorities to be exemplars of how the key principles of Partnership,

Place, Prevention and People-centred can be delivered in practice, as outlined in the Christie Commission report on the future delivery of public services.

Local government is also facing challenges in relation to meeting the Scottish Government's climate change targets, which will require significant investment and changes in how services are delivered. Local authorities are in the challenging position of balancing environmental goals with other pressing financial and social priorities and supporting a just transition to net zero to avoid deepening existing inequalities. During 2025/26, we will continue to provide local authorities with the data and knowledge to help them decide on the actions, targets and tempo needed to achieve net zero emissions, through the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service which we are delivering in partnership with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute.



We will also support local authorities in their engagement with community groups and constituents by helping them demonstrate area-wide progress and priorities.

Technological advancement and innovation continues to accelerate, resulting in growing and changing digital demands being placed on local government. Whilst council services are much more accessible than previously, we need to guard against an increased risk of exclusion within our most vulnerable communities. Cyber security remains a huge priority and risk for local authorities, requiring a combination of technical, cultural and behavioural practices to

manage it effectively. The financial pressures and skills shortages facing local government are proving to be key drivers for greater collaboration on digital, particularly for new statutory requirements.

During 2025/26, we will maximise the use of our digital assets, skills and capabilities and develop more shared services for local government in Scotland. This will include continuing to work with the early adopter local authorities (Argyll and Bute, City of Edinburgh and Highland) to develop a national visitor levy platform. Subject to the agreement of Solace Scotland, we will also transition the discovery project we undertook on developing a national blue badge application service into a prototyping phase. Finally, we will continue to achieve ISO27001 re-accreditation.



Data and intelligence are important levers for enabling transformation, and poor data can impede digital opportunities. For example, Artificial Intelligence relies on the availability of, and access to, accurate and timely data as well as an understanding of how to utilise the data to specific use cases to improve outcomes. High-quality and timely data, evidence and intelligence are fundamental to informing local decision-making, improving and transforming services, achieving better outcomes and driving efficiencies within the current financial



constraints. The Improvement Service will continue to play a key role in supporting improvements in data and intelligence for Scottish local government, through the delivery of our [Data and Intelligence Strategy 2023 -2027](#).

Whilst we can plan as best as possible for the year ahead, it is impossible to predict the challenges and opportunities that we might face as the year progresses. What we can do is ensure that we remain a flexible, innovative and responsive organisation, able to adapt to support local authorities through whatever issues they encounter.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2025, we will continue to support local government to deliver sector-led improvement through our products and services and look for new opportunities to deploy and flex our core improvement architecture in priority policy and service areas.



3. Our Strategic Priorities

Our Strategic Framework 2023 – 2027, sets out our four strategic priorities. Whilst described separately, they are clearly linked and interdependent.

Across 2025-26, we will focus our resources on providing improvement support and services that will help us deliver our four strategic priorities, as follows:

We will assist local authorities to transform and transition to new models of service delivery

During 2025-26, we will:

- Continue to work with Solace Scotland to deliver the Solace/IS Transformation Programme, through the IS Programme Management Office. This will include:
 - supporting Project Sponsors and Project Directors in the delivery of each project and ensuring all interdependencies are acknowledged and incorporated into the work;
 - continuing to deliver the Leadership Practitioner Forum which seeks to develop knowledge and leadership capacity across the sector and share knowledge from work in each local authority area;
 - delivering business cases/proposals for discussion with the Solace branch; and
 - partnering with academics and others to input case studies, learning, research and expertise to our work, particularly the national research we are undertaking on public service reform.



- Develop and promote the use of our national shared service applications and technology, identifying opportunities to create new digital public services to underpin new service delivery models emerging through our work with Solace.
- Work with the early adopter councils (Argyll and Bute, City of Edinburgh and Highland) to develop a national visitor levy platform, to support the implementation of the new visitor levy legislation.
- Explore opportunities when they present themselves, to investigate the feasibility of reusing existing assets, technology and infrastructure to deliver new digital shared services.
- Develop our offer of change management support to enhance skills and knowledge to support councils with transformational and operational level change, working with our Local Authority Change Managers' Network.
- Develop resources and support for organisational development in councils and partner organisations and continue to work with our Organisational Development Network, providing support to enhance skills, knowledge and capability for effective approaches to organisational development, culture change, workforce planning, facilitation and leadership.
- Continue to embed our service design approach across all of our programmes and products and services.
- Continue to deliver the Local Government Connect Network, which is a network for local government colleagues in the early stages of their careers who are looking to progress.
- Facilitate the development of elected members to help them navigate the changing landscape.
- Deliver a range of improvement work to help local government deliver The Promise, to strengthen, enable and assure the delivery of high quality, sustainable early learning and childcare services, and plan for a system of school age childcare.
- Develop resources and support to enhance consideration of place-based approaches when making decisions that impact place and wellbeing and the reduction of inequality.

We will support local government to deliver sector-led improvement in a range of policy and service areas

During 2025-26, we will:

- Deploy and flex our core improvement architecture to support sector-led improvement across different policy and service areas, including planning (through our National Planning Improvement Champion), children and young people's services (through our work on Early Learning and Childcare Expansion, the Promise, child poverty and the UNCRC, employability, protecting people, community wealth building and climate change (through our Scottish Climate Intelligence Service in partnership with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute).
- Work with planning authorities, Scottish Government and partners, through our National Planning Improvement Champion, to deliver the National Planning Improvement Framework.
- Continue to pilot our new Peer Collaborative Improvement service, which will support sector-led improvement in a range of service areas. The learning from these pilots will inform future development and roll-out of a wider programme of Peer Collaborative Improvement.
- Continue to facilitate and coordinate peer networks across our existing and emerging work programmes (e.g. Change Managers Network, Organisational Development Network, Scottish Community Planning Network), to support local authorities to share knowledge, practice, learning and skills.



- Continue to deliver and develop the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) to support Councils' own improvement journeys through access to rich and timely comparative data and analysis, bespoke support for Councils, and peer events to share practice and learning.
- Embed more rigorous, consistent and robust approaches to self-assessment/self-evaluation and continue to deliver a range of self-assessment and improvement planning support to councils and partnerships.

We will provide leadership and facilitate collaboration to enable a more preventative, integrated approach to tackling poverty and inequality

During 2025-26, we will:

- Continue to support the implementation of No One Left Behind, the Scottish and Local Government Employability Partnership's ambition to radically transform employability provision to ensure that services are locally evidenced and delivered, person-centred, flexible and holistic to support access to and progression in sustainable fair work, helping to tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality.
- Work with local and national partners to support the development and delivery of effective local child poverty action reports and promote proactive and strategic work on tackling the three main drivers of child poverty.
- Work with West Lothian Council to develop a replicable dashboard to help local government identify pockets of unmet need and address child poverty.
- Continue to work with iStand UK on the Scalable Approach to Vulnerability Via Interoperability (SAVVI) process to identify robust legal gateways that will enable authorities to effectively use data to target families at risk of or experiencing poverty.
- Continue to provide support for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act across local government.
- Support the sector with the delivery of The Promise.



- Continue to co-ordinate the National Violence Against Women Network and support local multi-agency Violence Against Women Partnerships to implement the Equally Safe strategy to help improve outcomes for women, children and young people across Scotland affected by violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Support the Scottish Government and COSLA to develop a National Equally Safe Measurement Framework to measure the progress being made to tackle violence against women and girls at a local and national level and identify areas for improvement.
- Continue to coordinate the local Trauma Champions and Trauma Leads Network to support local authorities and key community planning partners to strengthen their capacity and capability around embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach, and use the National Trauma Roadmap to support local areas with improvement planning, evidencing progress and impact measurement.
- Work with Public Health Scotland to develop a Scotland-wide Learning System on place based transformation of the social determinants of health to create the conditions for system-wide action to improve the wellbeing of people and planet and reduce inequality.
- Lead the development of Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships, which involves embedding advice workers in health settings which supports earlier intervention and the engagement of individuals who would not usually use 'traditional' advice services.
- Support local authorities to implement Community Wealth Building approaches, with a particular focus on inclusive models of business ownership.
- Support councils and their partners in designing, delivering and monitoring Fairer Futures Partnership projects aiming to reduce poverty and inequality by delivering on public service reform while ensuring effective links between this activity and the wider transformation programme.
- Ensure that we design and deliver digital public services that are inclusive, ethical and resilient and uphold people's digital rights.

4. We will support local government to deliver digital and data enabled transformation

During 2025-26, we will:

- Continue to grow the percentage of the eligible population (aged 12+) using mygovscot myaccount, along with the number of public bodies deploying mygovscot myaccount.
- Work with local authorities to identify and prototype new use cases for our existing national shared digital service platforms.
- Continue to work with the early adopter councils (Argyll and Bute, City of Edinburgh and Highland) to develop a new national visitor levy platform.
- Subject to the agreement of Solace Scotland, we will transition the discovery project we undertook on developing a national blue badge application service into a prototyping phase.
- Work with Solace Scotland to identify opportunities and candidate services to develop new digital shared services, to achieve savings, efficiencies and consistent customer experience.
- In partnership with Young Scot, promote the Young Scot Membership mobile app, to increase uptake adoption and to help young people access a growing suite of discounts, rewards and activities, including local concessions.
- Launch and promote a Digital National Entitlement Card for Young Scot cardholders which will enable citizens to access a range of public services through their mobile device.



- Work with the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government, COSLA, Solace, Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government to deliver phase 2 of the Local Government Data Platform project. This will include the Improvement Service developing a prototype of the Data Platform, re-using existing digital assets.
- Continue to provide open data access to the Spatial Hub, which provides a range of geospatial datasets that anyone can access, use and share.
- Continue to co-chair a Local Government Data Standards Board with the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government.
- Protect and maintain our ISO27001 certification status.

Supporting the Delivery of our Strategic Priorities

We have two interlinked teams within the IS, which contribute to the delivery of our four strategic priorities – Transformation, Performance and Improvement and Digital Public Services.

Our detailed deliverables for 2025-26, aligned to our strategic priorities, are outlined in Appendix 1.



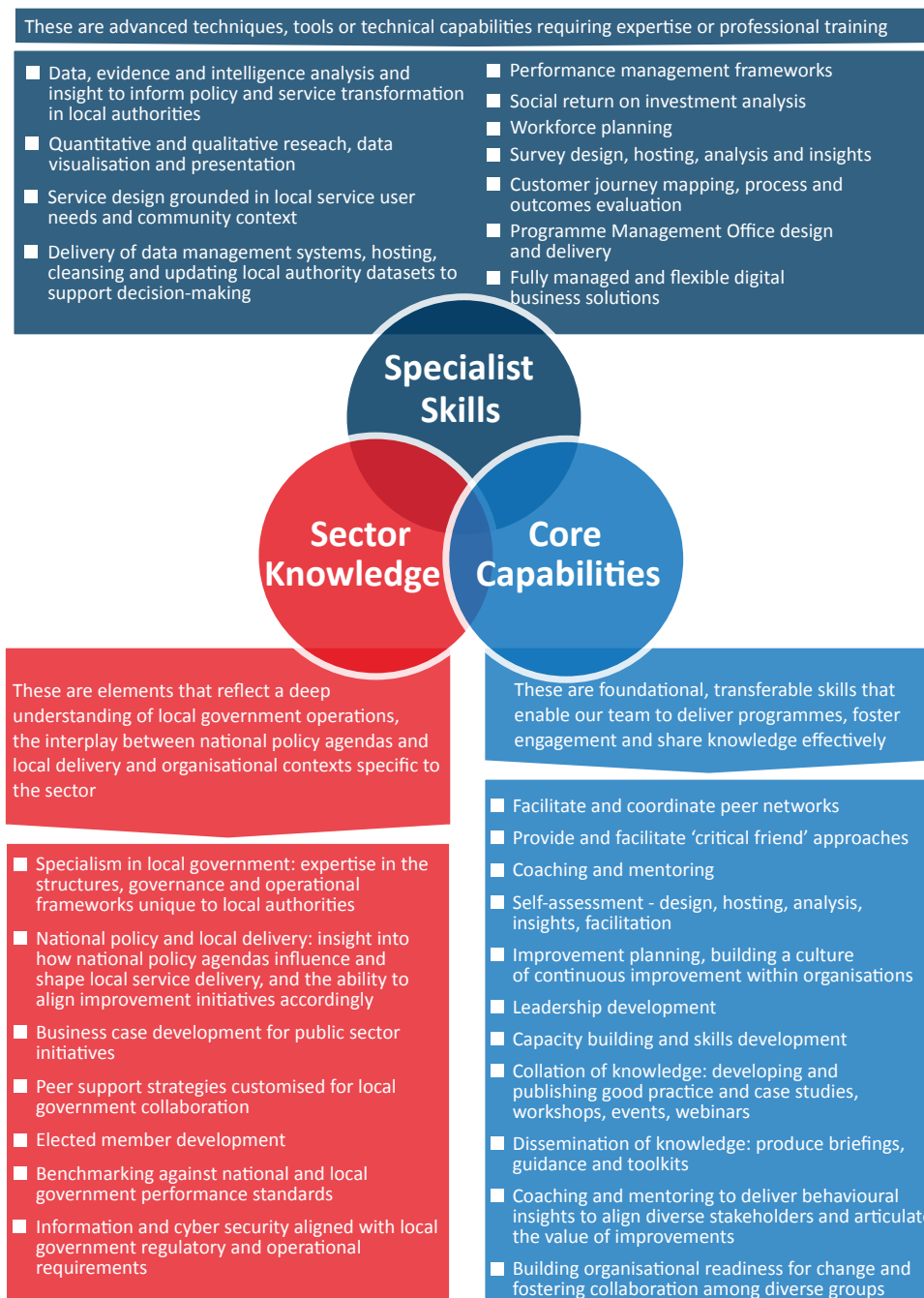
Our Improvement Architecture

We have a comprehensive improvement architecture which can be deployed and flexed to support sector-led improvement across different policy and service areas.

The diagram sets out our improvement architecture, which is comprised of our Core Capabilities, Specialist Skills, and Sector Knowledge:

- **Core Capabilities:** These are foundational, transferable skills rooted in improvement approaches that enable our teams to deliver programmes, foster engagement, and share knowledge effectively.
- **Specialist Skills:** These are advanced techniques, tools, or technical capabilities requiring expertise or professional training, including the delivery and management of national digital shared services for local government.
- **Sector Knowledge:** These are elements that reflect a deep understanding of local government operations, the interplay between national policy agendas and local delivery, and organisational contexts specific to local government.

All aspects of our architecture are rooted in our experience of delivering improvement work in the specific context of local government. Through this Architecture the knowledge, experience and abilities across the organisation are interlinked, enabling us to provide a tailored mix of approaches and tools most relevant to delivering an improvement response to the needs of local government.



4. Our Corporate Priorities

We will:

- Continue to strengthen our approach to local authority relationship management.
- Continue to strengthen our partnerships with COSLA, Solace and Public Health Scotland and deliver our Joint Working Agreement between the IS and Audit Scotland (working on behalf of the Accounts Commission).
- Continue to explore opportunities across the IS to generate savings and efficiencies.
- Identify new business development and growth opportunities in line with our Strategic Framework priorities.
- Roll out our approach to measuring our impact, including being able to evidence value-for-money and where possible, to evidence what our activities are worth in financial terms.
- Deliver our Communications Strategy 2023-2027.
- Deliver our Research and Intelligence Strategy 2023-2027.
- Ensure the IS Visitor Levy payment system has robust financial management in place in order to safely secure, account for and reconcile all monies received; through client banking, trustee arrangements and system integration with the bank, SAGE and the Visitor Levy platform.



- Continue to develop a business partnering approach between Finance and IS budget holders in order to achieve added value through proactive and efficient management of funds, assistance with procurement, VAT, due diligence and financial governance.
- Develop guidance materials and a training course on preparation of forecasts for IS budget holders, advising on the use of SAGE dashboards and completion of budget templates.
- Implement changes to accounting methodology and reporting required by revised accounting standard FRS 102.
- Embed the company's refreshed approach to Risk Management, including its new Risk Management Policy, Procedures and Risk Appetite Statement.
- Continue to embed our approach to cyber security/information security management systems and protect and maintain our ISO27001 certification.
- Undertake our biennial organisation-wide Public Service Improvement Framework self-assessment.
- Support the Board to implement its governance improvement plan.
- Continue to invest in developing our employees, including delivering one in-person company-wide development day.
- Undertake the Equally Safe at Work Employer Accreditation to identify opportunities to promote equality and diversity within the IS and progress a number of commitments in our Fair Work First policy.
- Celebrate the IS' 20th anniversary by publishing regular monthly content that marks this significant milestone and showcases the work that the IS has delivered for Scottish local government, while also looking ahead to the future.

5. Key Successes 2024/25

Our main achievements from 2024-25 are captured in our [Annual Report](#). Some key highlights are as follows:



For every £1 of core grant invested in the Improvement Service, we brought in an additional £6.68.



We successfully maintained our ISO 27001 accreditation.



Our employee satisfaction rate increased to 86% with 92% of staff agreeing that the IS has a positive working culture.



Our stakeholder satisfaction rate was 88% with 90% of stakeholders agreeing that they were satisfied with the support provided by the Improvement Service.

Transformation, Performance and Improvement

- In the last 12 months, work has continued at pace to deliver the [Solace/IS Transformation Programme](#), including completing discovery work on our six short-term transformation discovery projects. We commenced work on national research, which is focused on undertaking a robust analysis of public service reform and collaboration from both a national and international perspective, with several academics agreeing to support this work. We also hosted several events for our Leadership Practitioner Forum.
- We launched our new approach to Peer Collaborative Improvement, and completed a well-evaluated pilot focused on the Scottish Welfare Fund, and involving colleagues from Falkirk, Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Midlothian councils to test this new approach. COSLA officers were also involved and played a key role in linking local practice to the development of national policy. This important development is a key element of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Board's commitment to develop and deliver a more assertive approach to sector-led improvement, with the LGBF positioned as a key cornerstone.

- We published the 12th annual Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) National Benchmarking [Overview Report](#) in March. We also started publishing data releases on a monthly basis via the [LGBF Dashboard](#), to provide councils with access to more timely data.
- We facilitated 8 [Public Service Improvement Framework](#) (PSIF) self-assessments in six councils, 2 self-assessments in Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) and 1 self-assessment in an Integration Joint Board. At the request of councils, we developed a new checklist on Workforce Innovation and a corporate checklist focused upon the seven themes in the Best Value Revised Statutory Guidance 2020. We also launched a new national CPP self-assessment, which 20 CPPs participated in.
- Working with Solace Scotland and the Society of Personal Development Scotland (SPDS), we published [Scotland's Local Authority Workforce Report 2024](#). This report warns that councils are operating in a difficult economic, financial and labour market situation, with a range of ongoing organisational and workforce pressures. It also highlights the excellent work already being undertaken by councils to address these challenges and



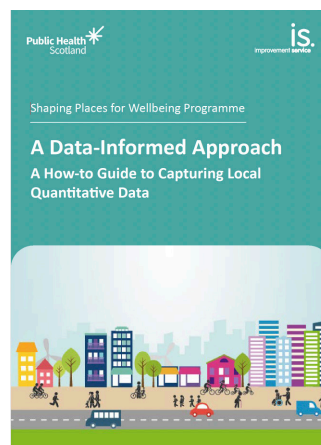
showcases examples of innovative best practice that have been adopted across the country as a means to mitigate workforce risks.

- We launched the [Local Government Connect Network](#), designed to bring together professionals in the early stages of their local government career, encouraging professional connections and providing opportunities for personal and professional development through a mix of online and in person events and mentorship opportunities. 26 councils and local government partner organisations are participating in the Network.
- We have hosted webinars in partnership with the Standards Commission for Scotland on aspects of the Councillors Code of Conduct, produced guidance for community councillors on complying with the Nolan Principles of standards in public life, and published briefings on topical issues such as the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act. We have also delivered bespoke support to councils on effective scrutiny development for elected members, working relationships, elected member development strategies, and improvements to democratic governance processes.
- We published [a report](#) exploring the latest demographic trends as included within the Census, the implications of these, and good practice in developing policy responses from Scotland and internationally.



- We won the [Local Area Research & Intelligence Association \(LARIA\)](#) Research Impact Award for Best Use of Data for our work with West Lothian Council to identify unmet need. This project used data to better understand child poverty within West Lothian Council. By combining and analysing publicly available and council held data, we were able to use analytical insights and local knowledge to create a model showing places where support entitlement is not reaching those in need. We secured funding through the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund, in partnership with West Lothian Council, to develop a replicable dashboard to help local government identify pockets of unmet need and address child poverty.

- We delivered [The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme](#) in partnership with Public Health Scotland. Between 2021 and June 2024 the Programme worked locally in seven towns across Scotland (Alloa, Ayr, Clydebank, Dalkeith, Dunoon, Fraserburgh and Rutherglen) supporting councils, health boards and other stakeholders to develop the resources to take a place-based approach in their decisions and actions and aimed to improve Scotland's wellbeing and reduce inequalities. We developed a range of resources, including comprehensive 'How-To' Guides to enable anyone in Scotland to take a place-based approach. Throughout the Programme, we have been sharing our learning and approach through our



'Shaping our thinking, Sharing our Learning' blog posts, Impact Stories and Testimonials from stakeholders involved in the Programme.

- In partnership with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, we launched the [Scottish Climate Intelligence Service](#) in September 2024, jointly funded by Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities to support the planning and delivery of programmes aimed at reducing area-wide carbon emissions across Scotland.



- The National Planning Improvement Champion in the Improvement Service agreed to host the new [National Planning Improvement Hub](#), which was announced in the Programme for Government to build capacity and resilience in the planning system, and to improve consistency and efficiency in decision-making. Its initial priority will be to help planning authorities make quicker decisions on hydrogen planning applications, with a plan to support wider developments in the future. The National Planning Improvement team also tested the new National Planning Improvement Framework, which was developed with stakeholders from a range of perspectives and interests in planning.

- We published the [SLAED Indicators Report 2022/23](#), and incorporated new measures that reflect the wellbeing economy. We were successful in securing funding to appoint a Community Wealth Building Project Officer. The officer worked on mapping progress in approaches to Community Wealth Building across Scotland, and will support councils to implement these, with a particular focus on inclusive models of business ownership.



- We continued to support and improve the delivery of [Early Learning and Childcare](#) services across Scotland, strengthening the delivery of high quality, sustainable ELC services and bridging the gap between national policy and local service delivery.

- We worked with local authorities to provide advice and support on preparing for the requirements of and in implementing the new [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) legislation.

- We produced a [joint annual report](#) with COSLA, Local Government and The Promise, which sets out how local government has been working to keep its promise.



- We were nominated, in partnership with the National Violence Against Women Network, for Campaign of the Year Award at the Scottish Public Service Awards 2024 for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

- We published [initial findings](#) from an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships (WAHPs) 'test-and-learn' initiative, funded by the Scottish Government. WAHPs provide access to welfare rights and money advice services in GP Practices. The findings from this evaluation show that over 16,000 individuals used the service during the 'test-and-learn' period, making financial gains of £23 million.



- We supported the Scottish Community Planning Network to develop as a forum to grow and embed a shared vision for partnership working. The Network provides the opportunity for mutual support and capacity building, information exchange and building personal networks, now supported by our new Community Planning Project Officer.

Digital Public Services

- The [mygovscot myaccount](#) service continued to increase its user base to over 2.6 million users, accounting for 54% of the eligible Scottish population (aged 12+).



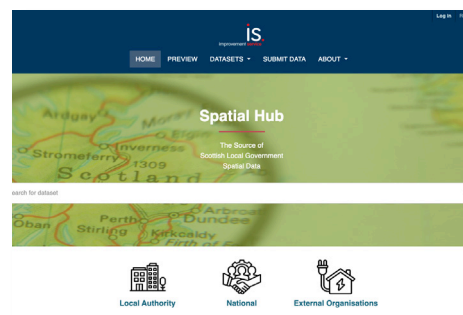
- The mygovscot myaccount toolkit, which comprises a variety of authentication, identity verification and data services, is now used by 41 organisations across Scotland, including all 32 local authorities, and is integrated to 97 entities. In March, a redesigned version of mygovscot myaccount was launched, which aims to improve the user experience of citizens accessing public services online. We also introduced passkeys to make it easier for users to sign in, while still maintaining security.
- mygovscot myaccount is powering a new Digital Right to Work Service, which is live with COSLA, the Improvement Service and Robert Gordon University, with East Ayrshire Council becoming the first local authority to use the platform in November 2024. Using a UK or Irish Passport, or Yoti app, an applicant will receive an email asking them to sign into the Right To Work Identity Verification Service. Their identity will be verified using the Yoti Identity Service and council agents can then download proof of the right to work checks and attach it to the candidate's HR file.
 - We commenced work in partnership with Argyll and Bute, City of Edinburgh and Highland councils to develop a National Visitor Levy Platform which will be used to administer Local Authority Visitor Levy Schemes. The platform will enable accommodation providers to register their properties, submit levy returns and make necessary payments.
 - We worked with 8 local authorities to review how Blue Badge applications were being administered by different Scottish Local Authorities and whether there were opportunities to deliver the service nationally. We produced a discovery report for the Solace Scotland branch, recommending that we undertake a full feasibility study on developing a bespoke Scottish platform for blue badge administration.
 - We worked with three local authorities to assess the feasibility to design a digital platform to replace a laborious manual process for squad management for Unpaid Work (Community Payback Orders).
 - We commenced work on the development of a prototype for the Local Government Data Platform.
 - With over 2.8 million cardholders, the [National Entitlement Card](#) continues to support the delivery of national and local services, making it convenient for citizens to access various public services and facilities with only one card. Getyournec.scot has processed over one million National Entitlement Card applications online, for over 60s concessionary travel, disabled concessionary travel, young person's free bus travel and Young Scot cards. 150 million free bus journeys have now been made by children and young people across Scotland as part of the Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme.

- Now used by 20 local authorities and across 1,483 schools, the use of parentsportal.scot continues to grow. 2024 saw the highest usage of the platform to date and it is now used by over 236,000 parents/ guardians to access educational services related to over 338,000 children. The mobile application version of parentsportal for both Android (over 18K downloads) and iOS users (over 28K downloads) also continues to prove popular with parents.

- We worked with North Lanarkshire and East Lothian councils to integrate bisaccount.scot to back office systems, to provide authentication services for businesses accessing online council services.

- We successfully retained our ISO27001 accreditation following an annual audit.

- 2024 further established the [Spatial Hub](#) as the Planning and Environment Evidence Base for Scotland. This was achieved through enhancing the vast data and intelligence sources related to these key policy themes.



- Already adopted by almost every Scottish public sector organisation, a priority for the [One Scotland Gazetteer \(OSG\)](#) service in 2024 was further automating and increasing usage,

through migrating existing users to the OSG webservice. This API gives almost any system the ability to access the latest authoritative address and street information, streamlining digital service provision, while preventing duplication of effort and reducing resource requirements in do so.

- We launched a paid for geospatial information offer for local authorities and partners.
- During 2024, we incorporated new developments to improve [tellmesotland](https://tellmesotland.gov.uk), Scotland's national public notice portal. The new look tellmesotland site is now supported by mygovscot myaccount, streamlining the process for the public and businesses to sign up for tellmesotland and access public information notices (PINs) in their local area. The new site has also improved the process of uploading PINs to the tellmesotland portal, making it easier for local authority staff. Local authorities can also see how many views their public notices receive.



6. How We Measure Success

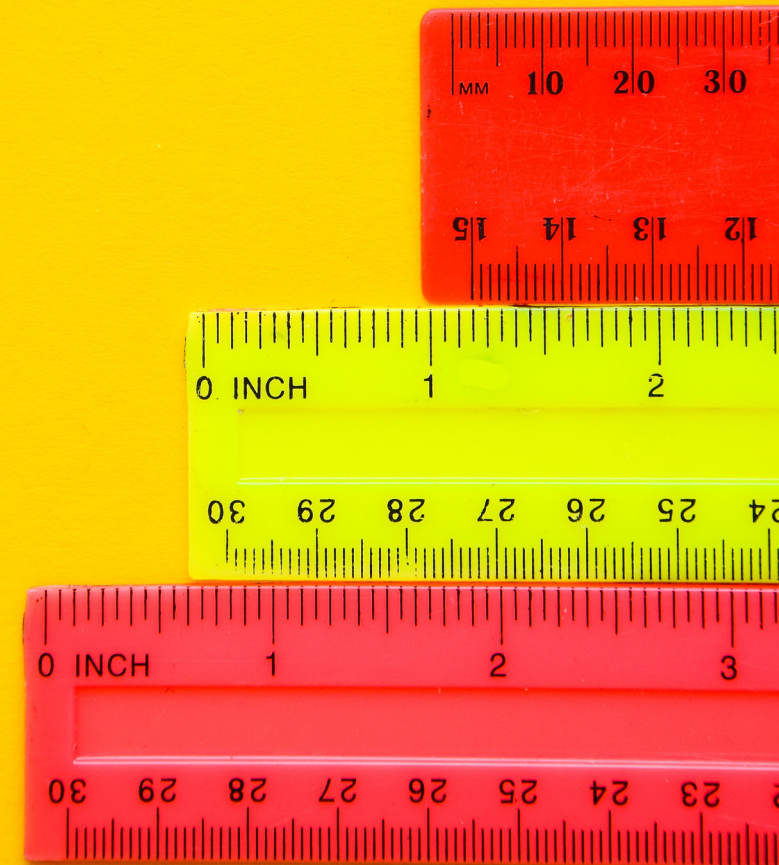
As part of our continuous improvement journey, our approach to performance management is aimed at providing more meaningful evidence of delivery and performance against our plan and providing evidence of the wider impact of the Improvement Service in supporting councils and partners to improve.

We report on our performance quarterly to our Audit Committee and Board. During 2024, we worked with the IS Board to develop a quarterly strategic performance dashboard, which includes quarterly information on our finances, human resources, governance, communications, delivery of IS Strategic Framework and the usage and availability of our digital public services. We also developed an annual strategic performance dashboard, which provides an overview of performance information gathered annually, for example, employee and stakeholder satisfaction.

We issue an annual stakeholder survey and employee survey to measure stakeholder and employee satisfaction. We continue to develop case studies to evidence the impact of the products, services and support that we provide.

During 2024/25, we focused our efforts on further developing our approach to measuring our impact, including being able to evidence value-for-money and where possible, to evidence what our activities are worth in financial terms. We developed an approach to social value/return on investment which we tested with three of our projects:

- Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls – for every £1 invested, we delivered £11 in benefits. Outcomes for local authorities included increased partnership working, greater sharing of resources and information and the ability to influence national policy and practice.



- Sub-council area population projections - for every £1 invested, we delivered £9 in benefits. Outcomes for local authorities included improved local decision making, cost savings through skilled external service, avoidance of additional licensing fees and reduced local staffing requirements.
- Digital Public Services platform for Under 22 Free Bus Travel Card – for every £1 invested, we delivered £13 in benefits. Outcomes for local authorities included a digital service supported by skilled staff processing applications and savings of over £4 million authorities would have spent on processing applications.

We will continue to roll out this approach to other key projects during 2025-26, to continue to build the evidence base of the value we are delivering to local authorities.

7. How We Are Funded

Our detailed spending plans are fully integrated and aligned to our Business Plan for the coming year.

We will continue to receive £1.656M from Scottish Government, via the local government block expenditure grant. This core grant funds our core capacities: sector-led improvement, including self-assessment and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework; organisational development; elected member development; transformation and change; research; and communications. The core grant also funds a small corporate team delivering business support and finance functions and covers the running costs of the organisation.

During 2024, Scottish Government agreed to baseline the following in the local government block expenditure grant - the £2.7M we receive for the delivery of our Digital Public Services and £1.4M we receive for the delivery of the National Entitlement Card Programme Office, the production of over 60 and disabled concessionary travel cards and a contribution towards the operation of the One Scotland Gazetteer.

Our core grant has remained cash flat since 2010-11, which places increasing importance on our ability to leverage additional funding into the organisation. Other income streams have continued to grow steadily, for example:

- Specific grant agreements have been secured for a range of programmes, each of which is underpinned by a separate grant agreement containing discrete deliverables. The vast bulk of agreements are with Scottish Government.



- We broker partnerships and will continue to run collaborative programmes on behalf of all 32 councils, bringing in agreed funding from local government e.g., the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service.
- We secure commercial income from Ordnance Survey, for the onward supply of spatial data which features in Ordnance Survey products.
- We provide support services to the following local government professional associations: Heads of Planning Scotland, Scottish Local Authority Economic Development Group and Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists. Part of the support also includes hosting and banking arrangements.
- Through effective cashflow management of funds received in advance of need, we aim to maximise interest on deposits, which amounted to £126k in the 2023-24 financial year.
- We will explore business development and growth opportunities for the benefit of local government, in line with our Strategic Framework.
- We will consider how we can start to deploy increased advertising on more of our digital platforms, working with the Council Advertising Network.

The funding source underpinning each key deliverable is contained in the detailed business plan (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1: The Business Plan 2025-26

The tables below highlight our detailed deliverables for 2025-26. We have also highlighted where a deliverable makes a direct contribution to one or more of our strategic priorities:

1. We will assist local authorities to transform and transition to new models of service delivery.
2. We will support local government to deliver sector-led improvement in a range of policy and service areas.
3. We will provide leadership and facilitate collaboration to enable a more preventative, integrated approach to tackling poverty and inequality.
4. We will support local government to deliver digital and data enabled transformation.

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Solace/IS Transformation Programme	<p>During 2025-26, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide Programme Management Office (PMO) support across the entire scope of the programme and support the Chief Executive Working Group in its governance role. • Further enhance the expertise and capability for each of the projects through the continued recruitment of volunteers from across the local government sector and the use of subject matter experts as appropriate. • Support Chief Executives, in their role as Project Sponsors, and the Project Directors in the delivery of each project and ensuring all interdependencies are acknowledged and incorporated into the work. • Support Solace in allocating resources across the programme to ensure progress and sustainability. • Continue to deliver the Leadership Practitioner Forum which will seek to develop knowledge and leadership capacity across the sector and share knowledge from work in each local authority area. • Deliver initial business cases / proposals for discussion with the Solace branch. • Seek to partner with academics, the private sector and others to input case studies, learning, research and expertise into the delivery of the Solace/IS transformation work. 	Gerard McCormack, Head of Transformation, Performance and Improvement	<p>By March 2026, we will have provided the Solace Scotland branch with a range of the following to support the implementation of the projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline business cases • Project Initiation Documents • Proposals for new and emerging projects. <p>The submission of the documents will be dependent on the progress made across each project.</p>	Core grant	1, 2, 3, 4

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Change Management	<p>We will continue to develop our offer of change management support to enhance skills and knowledge to support councils with transformational and operational level change. This will include: the continued development of the Change Managers' Network both on the Knowledge Hub and through events. We will continue to respond to the needs of councils by providing tailored support where requested, and developing resources such as our online service design toolkit that all councils can access. We will also focus on developing support for strategic leaders in change and transformation.</p> <p>Examples of our deliverables include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will host our Change Manager's networking event online at least every eight weeks. All 32 local authorities will be invited and encouraged to participate including sharing practice and lessons learned. • We will listen and respond to requests from councils and tailor support to make best use of resources and share across the network, when appropriate. • We will build on the content already available on our website and Knowledge Hub and further develop our Toolkit Series. 	Gerard McCormack, Head of Transformation, Performance and Improvement	Local authority colleagues will have improved skills and knowledge to deliver change and transformation.	Core grant	1

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Local Government Connect Network	<p>We will deliver the Local Government Connect Network, supporting over 130 professionals to connect as mentors and mentees to broaden perspectives and provide guidance to aspiring leaders as they navigate local government careers. We will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a steering group consisting of representatives of mentors and mentees to ensure a collaborative approach to learning from the pilot and identifying next steps. • Provide digital and face to face learning events for the network that supports the mentoring experience and develops practice in this area. • Track the experience and benefits for mentor pairings, understanding mutual benefits as well as focusing on outcomes for mentees as the direct beneficiary. 	Gerard McCormack, Head of Transformation, Performance and Improvement	Local authority colleagues at early stages in their careers feel supported to navigate the local government sector as a career pathway and develop their skills and confidence in doing so.	Core Grant	1
Organisational Development/ Workforce Planning	<p>We will continue to develop the resources and support for organisational development in councils and partner organisations. We will continue to work with our organisational development network providing support to enhance skills, knowledge and capability for effective approaches to organisational development, culture change, workforce planning, facilitation and leadership.</p> <p>Our deliverables include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Organisational Development Network events virtually every 6-8 weeks encouraging participation from all 32 local authorities. Events will provide support for colleagues on organisational development and wellbeing issues and will include Key Topic events, Open Space events and Headspace Sessions. • Work with SPDS Workforce Planning Portfolio Group to develop and share workforce planning practice, guidance and resources. • Work with network members to share organisational development and leadership development learning resources. 	Amanda Spark, Programme Manager, Organisational Development	Local authority and partner colleagues will have enhanced skills and knowledge to support organisational change and transformation.	Core grant	1

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Organisational Development/ Workforce Planning	<p>We will continue to actively work with public service partners to provide opportunities for cross public service organisational development learning and networking. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to share leadership development practices and resources and to look for opportunities for joint working and activities. • Working with SPDS to explore and progress collaboration for leadership development in Scottish Local Government. • Participating in the Local Government Workforce Board to take forward the recommendations in the Scotland's Local Government Workforce Report 2024. • Participating in the LGA Workforce Planning Network and collaborating to share resources and learning. 	Amanda Spark, Programme Manager, Organisational Development	<p>Strong relationships and enhanced skills and knowledge to support organisational development.</p> <p>Enhanced Leadership Development offer for Local Government.</p>	Core grant	1
Benchmarking	<p>We will continue to deliver the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) as a key element of a more assertive approach to sector-led performance improvement, including Peer Collaborative Improvement. We will work with partners to ensure the LGBF is positioned as a central component of future accountability and assurance arrangements underpinning the Verity House Agreement, and to support the realisation of the full implementation of Crerar. We will continue to advance the technology underpinning the LGBF dashboard to position the LGBF as a primary vehicle for delivery of the Local Government Data Platform.</p>	Emily Lynch, Programme Manager, Performance Management and Benchmarking	<p>The LGBF supports councils, and Local Government as a sector, in their efforts to make better use of data and intelligence in scrutiny, decision making, improvement and public transparency.</p>	Core Grant +32 Council MOU Agreement	2, 4

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
LG Data Platform	We will deliver Phase 2 in the development of the Local Government Data Platform which aims to reduce reporting requirements, facilitate greater use and re-use of existing data, and deliver greater co-ordination and automation of existing processes. This will include the Improvement Service developing a prototype of the Data Platform, re-using existing digital assets.	Emily Lynch, Programme Manager, Performance Management and Benchmarking Joseph Gavart, Project Manager	Reducing the effort and cost required to collate and provide data within councils, improving the timeliness and quality of data collected, and providing richer insight from the data collected to support progress in improving outcomes.	Core Grant/ Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub/ DPS Grant	4
Self-Assessment	We will continue to develop and deliver a wide range of self-assessment support to councils and partnerships. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering self-assessments and improvement planning sessions online. • Working with councils who are new to PSIF, with support around piloting self-assessment and the training of officers to undertake the process. • Working with partners to further develop and embed more rigorous and consistent approaches to self-assessment. • Developing a 'Transformation' self-assessment checklist to support councils in their preparation for this year's Best Value thematic audit. • Working with the community planning partnerships who participated in the new national community planning self-assessment to develop local improvement plans. • Supporting the Peer Collaborative Improvement process with self-assessment activity to identify areas for improvement in the process. 	Barry McLeod, Programme Manager, PSIF	Continuous improvement within council services and Community Planning Partnership Boards/ Committees will be supported by focusing upon agreed priorities and improvement planning.	Core grant	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Peer Collaborative Improvement	We will continue to pilot our new Peer Collaborative Improvement service, which will support sector-led improvement in a range of service areas.	Emily Lynch, Benchmarking and Performance Management, Programme Manager	Peer Collaborative Improvement presents a significant opportunity for Local Government to implement a sector-led approach to improvement, within the context of the Verity House Agreement and future local government accountability and assurance arrangements.	Core Grant & £50K income from interest on investments	2
Democratic Governance Support	<p>We will support effective democratic governance in Scottish local government. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing the capacity of officers to support effective democratic governance in Scottish Local Government. • providing national development resources, such as briefings, guidance and workshops to develop elected members as effective political leaders. • facilitating and influencing partner organisations to provide support and develop resources for elected members and officers. • supporting councils to empower local people to become active citizens and get involved in shaping decisions that affect them. 	David Barr, Programme Manager, Democratic Governance	<p>Enhanced officer capacity to support elected members to be effective political leaders.</p> <p>Enhanced knowledge and understanding for elected members of their roles, responsibilities and key issues relevant to local government.</p> <p>Improved relationships, trust and respect between elected members, officers and citizens.</p>	Core grant	1, 2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Communications	<p>We will continue to embed our communications strategy and plans, ensuring a consistent and corporate approach across all IS communications. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting and developing creative, targeted and engaging ways to share learning across local authorities and partners to support sector wide learning and improvement; • developing consistent and targeted campaigns to promote and market our core products and services; • collating case studies, sharing knowledge and practice both internally and externally; • working with partners to complement and align with national campaigns; • delivering our own events and working with partners to deliver events; and • measuring the impact of our communications activity. <p>We will also seek to partner with academics, the private sector and others (including for example, the Local Government Information Unit) to input case studies, learning, research and expertise into the delivery of the Solace/IS transformation work</p> <p>We will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support teams as they implement their communications plans. • Produce an annual communications review, reporting on our communications activities and highlighting successes, lessons learned, and areas for improvement. 	Martin MacKinnon, Communications and Digital Services Manager	Better collaboration and knowledge sharing across teams and individuals.	Core grant	1, 2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Economic Development	<p>We will work with Scottish Government, SLAED, EDAS and others to support local government to deliver on Community Wealth Building (CWB), with a particular focus on the Inclusive Ownership Pillar. Our deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and evaluate quarterly CWB Practitioner Network meetings. • Further develop and manage a CWB Sharepoint site, with all published CWB action plans/strategies shared, as well as relevant updates, strategies and reports, aligned with the EDAS CWB Centre for Excellence. • Develop a comprehensive overview of CWB implementation across Scotland. Data will be continually maintained and made available to the CWB Network and Scottish Government. • Support local authorities to come together to work on solutions to the challenges and barriers they face in the delivery of CWB. • Facilitate the sharing of best practice across relevant networks in Scotland including holding in-person and online events. • Make relevant connections with other public bodies to align approaches and share knowledge. 	<p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p> <p>Hannah Brown, Project Manager, Economic Outcomes</p>	<p>Local Authorities in Scotland are supported to deliver on Community Wealth Building (CWB).</p> <p>CWB best practice is shared.</p> <p>There is a constantly updated overview of CWB implementation.</p> <p>Local Authorities are supported to come together to work on solutions to the challenges and barriers they face in the delivery of CWB.</p> <p>Connections are made with other public bodies and knowledge shared and work aligned where possible.</p> <p>Better connections are made with other policy areas which will help to deliver and will be supported by the delivery of CWB approaches.</p>	SG Specific grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
SLAED (Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group)	<p>We will continue to provide support to SLAED through the secretariat agreement. This includes support to the Executive and Sub Groups to maximise the profile of SLAED and take forward strategic priorities. We will work with SLAED to support the implementation of their Strategic Plan. Our deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and support at all SLAED Executive meetings, with support to the other subgroups as required. • Support and encourage regular meetings of sub-groups and assist in developing engaging agendas. • The organisation of the SLAED AGM and a range of themed events throughout the year. • Annual collation and publication of the SLAED Indicators Report. • Keep SLAED Indicators Framework under ongoing review with particular focus on emerging priorities, such as CWB / wellbeing economy. • Support SLAED with research, collation of consultation responses and other ad hoc support as required. • Support SLAED to engage with Solace lead for the economy. • Make connections into other thematic areas e.g. child poverty, just transition to net zero, planning, childcare and transport. • Support engagement with the internal CWB project and associated workstreams with partner organisations e.g. EDAS, Scottish Government, etc. 	<p>Hannah Brown, Project Manager, Economic Outcomes</p> <p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p>	<p>Local economic development officer voice is heard at local, regional and national level and informs policy development and delivery.</p> <p>Engagement and practice sharing between economic development officers is improved and promotes improvements in service delivery.</p> <p>Economic development officers are better connected locally with officers in other related and complementary service areas and joining up practice and priorities.</p>	SLAED SLA	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
SCOTS (Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists)	<p>We will continue to provide support to SCOTS through a Service Level Agreement. This includes support to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meetings and issue agendas, papers and draft minutes for the Executive Board and weekly Strategic Issue Group meetings. • Ensure effective engagement with SCOTS members and stakeholders through all relevant channels including social media in line with a Communications Protocol. • Ensure that the website content is kept up to date and that the website is appropriately hosted, updated and developed in line with the requirements of SCOTS. • Provide support and administration to SCOTS Knowledge Hub groups. • Provide an event management service for the annual SCOTS conference and twice-yearly Business Meetings. 	Angela Mairs, Business Support Assistant	Enhanced engagement and knowledge sharing across the collaboration.	SCOTS SLA	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Employability	<p>We will continue to support a co-ordinated Local Government response to delivering No One Left Behind in line with the priorities set out in relevant national strategies.</p> <p>High level deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building stronger, more effective partnerships with Scottish Government, COSLA, Local Government, the third sector and Local Employability Partnerships. • Supporting a collective leadership approach to delivering Specialist Employability Support. • Ensuring a collaborative, partnership and solution-focused approach to driving forward improvement, through sharing good practice and building capacity across the employability system. • Establishing cross-sector working groups to lead on delivery against improvement actions contained in the Employability Strategic Plan. • Supporting the further development of a shared data recording, reporting and measurement framework that goes beyond high level statistics and evidences the wider value of employability provision. • Supporting the professional network of employability leads via SLAED to contribute to national workstreams. 	Susie Donkin, Employability Partnership Manager	<p>Strengthened relationships between SG/LG/key stakeholders including the third sector.</p> <p>Every Local Employability Partnership will more effectively deliver employability support and will have a minimum service offer to support people who require specialist employability support to progress towards and into employment.</p> <p>Better sharing of national and local data and other information to help plan local activity and evidence the impact.</p> <p>The wider network of employability staff will have access to upskilling opportunities, best practice and topical information, giving the opportunity to grow their professional networks.</p>	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Child Poverty	<p>We will work with local and national partners to support the development and delivery of effective local child poverty action reports and associated activity. We will continue to support networks to identify and share good practice in relation to tackling child poverty. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPARs) and provide feedback to lead officers, focused on improvement. • Provide support to local authorities and health boards to carry out the assessment process and co-ordinating support from across the national partners to help with the delivery of identified improvements. • Co-ordinate and host the Child Poverty and Rural Child Poverty Peer Support Networks. • Continue to work with iStand UK on the SAVVI approach to data standards and explore other ways of using data better to target support to families in need. • Work with Research and West Lothian Council colleagues on the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund funded development of the Child Poverty Index. • Share practice from LCPARs across Scotland and provide improvement support in areas where there are gaps. • Deliver briefing notes and webinars for elected members. • Co-chair the National Partners Co-ordination Group. • Work with national partners to deliver the joint work plan and identify how to jointly support local areas on key thematic issues. • Work with rural and island councils and health boards to further develop approaches to data and information governance, to develop approaches to integrating the voices of lived experience into delivery and carry out more in depth work on rural childcare challenges. 	<p>Hanna McCulloch, National Coordinator, Local Child Poverty Action Reports</p> <p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p>	<p>LCPARs better reflect priorities, how local areas are tackling the drivers of child poverty, how priority groups are targeted and how they sit within wider strategic priorities.</p> <p>Local authorities and health boards are able to learn from each other and improve practice.</p> <p>A cohesive offer of support is available to local government and NHS boards from across the national partners.</p> <p>Work to tackle child poverty is more effective and is making a difference.</p>	SG Specific Grant	2, 3, 4

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	<p>We will provide support for the implementation of the UNCRC across local government, hosting a project manager and project officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a champion for children's rights and promote the inclusion of children and young people in decision-making. • Deliver a collaborative action learning programme on Children's Rights Budgeting. • Facilitate and host a peer support network constituted of officers from across all local authorities in Scotland. • Produce quality learning materials as required, linking with other IS teams to ensure effective dissemination. • Support councils to identify practical action which will further embed and improve the realisation of children's rights across their services, not just within children's services/education, including through support and self-evaluation. • Liaise with other programmes and professional networks to support and encourage them to share, promote and mainstream a child's rights based approach. • Lead on the delivery of webinars and briefing notes for elected members via the Elected Member Development Programme. • Host an implementation partners space. • Provide training/upskilling via webinars for officers. • Work with partners to help co-ordinate and deliver national, regional and local events in order to share good practice and learning. • Maintain the UNCRC implementation Knowledge Hub as an online repository to share resources and learning. 	<p>Rebecca Spillane, Project Manager, UNCRC Implementation</p> <p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p>	<p>Local authorities are better able to implement the UNCRC in relation to Scots Law and across services.</p> <p>Local government influences the development of national guidance.</p> <p>Children's rights are better upheld and local authority officers feel more confident in supporting children's rights across a wide range of services.</p>	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
The Promise	<p>We will continue supporting the local government sector with the delivery of 'The Promise' in line with the priorities of the upcoming Plan 24-30.</p> <p>We will also continue to support the work of the Local Government Promise Programme Board with the sector level improvement support it requires, including engaging with the Promise Leads network and Scottish Government Research Advisory Board.</p>	David Barr, Programme Manager: Democratic Governance	Local government will be supported in its implementation of The Promise through identification of good practice to be shared and areas that potentially require development either at a local or national level.	Core Grant	2, 3
Early Learning and Childcare	<p>Support Councils in ELC Service Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support councils in addressing the thematic challenge of 2-year-old uptake, continuing to work with Local Authorities to understand the stakeholders and processes involved in 2-year-old uptake to meet the needs of children and families, identifying, and understanding good practice and giving direct support to authorities in implementing good practice and service improvements. Improve Guidance and Processes in Setting Sustainable Rates. Work with Local Authorities to support the sharing of good practice in the application of sustainable rates best practice by facilitating events with a particular focus on building and maintaining constructive relationships with partner providers. Support councils in workforce planning improvements and implementation of the Sector Workforce Strategy 	Adam Hall, Programme Manager	Effective mechanisms will be in place to assure the delivery of ELC services across Scotland, including communicating successes and challenges facing stakeholders.	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Early Learning and Childcare	<p>Assurance and Delivery Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with the Improvement Service ELC Delivery Progress Reporting into academic year 2025-26 and beyond to give an overlap with the new census mechanism and implementation of SEEMIS. Support councils in workforce planning improvements, utilising experience in ELC to understand workforce requirements and support workforce planning, recruitment, and retention. Periodic engagement with local authorities to understand status of local ELC services. Support the definition and delivery of the Outcomes Measurement Framework for funded early learning and childcare in Scotland which is jointly owned and supported by Scottish Government, local government, and sector delivery partners. Support the ELC Quality Improvement Group by collating and analysing data on the quality of ELC settings across Local Authorities and the private, voluntary, and independent sector. <p>Source and develop content that benefits the ELC sector, evidences the benefits being realised, informs local authorities' ELC service planning and can be used as promotional material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together experts on specific topics including workforce recruitment and retention, SEEMIS, quality improvement to deliver events that are of value to ELC colleagues. Create and maintain a knowledge bank that brings together the various policy details of the expansion for use as a reference tool (using Khub). Create, curate and maintain other Khub groups as required (e.g., SEEMIS, Deferrals). 	Adam Hall, Programme Manager	Effective mechanisms will be in place to assure the delivery of ELC services across Scotland, including communicating successes and challenges facing stakeholders.	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Tackling Violence Against Women	<p>We will continue to co-ordinate the National VAW Network and work to ensure that every local authority area in Scotland has a high performing multi-agency Violence Against Women Partnership that engages effectively with community planning processes. We will support Scottish Government and COSLA to develop a National Equally Safe Measurement Framework to support a consistent approach to measuring the progress being made to tackle violence against women and girls at a local and national level and identify areas for improvement. Deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting local authorities to adopt a multi-agency approach to implement the Equally Safe strategy in order to improve outcomes for women, children and young people affected by violence, abuse and exploitation in local communities across Scotland. • Working in partnership with Public Health Scotland to launch a Public Health Implementation Forum to support local authorities and other key partners to adopt a public health approach to preventing violence against women and girls. • Developing guidance and tools to support local authorities to embed survivors' voice and lived experience into system and service design processes in a high quality, sustainable and trauma-informed way. • Providing evaluation support to local authorities working to improve outcomes for women, children and young people experiencing violence, abuse and exploitation to help them to measure and demonstrate the impact and to identify areas for potential improvement. 	Joanna McLaughlin, Programme Manager, Protecting People	Local authorities, and their partner organisations, will have increased capacity and capability to work in a way that improves outcomes for women, children and young people affected by violence and abuse.	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Adopting a Trauma Informed Approach	<p>We will support local authorities and key community planning partners to strengthen their capacity and capability around embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach, to ensure local organisations, systems and workforces can better respond to the needs of people and communities experiencing trauma.</p> <p>Deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to bring together local Trauma Champions, lead officers and key stakeholders to share experiences, learning, good practice and shared challenges; • Continuing to develop tools and resources to support with embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach across services, systems and workforces, identifying opportunities to strengthen links across relevant policy agendas; and • Continuing to support local authorities and community planning partners to use the Roadmap for Trauma-Informed and Responsive Change to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement with this work and help them to put systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of this work. 	<p>Laura James, National Improvement Lead – Trauma</p> <p>Joanna McLaughlin, Programme Manager, Protecting People</p>	Local authorities, and their partner organisations will have increased capacity and capability to work in a way that improves outcomes for people affected by psychological trauma.	SG Specific Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Place-Based Approaches	<p>We will continue to promote, facilitate and develop place-based working including its input into climate crisis action, delivering Scotland's Public Health Priorities, the Scottish Government Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and National Planning Framework 4. We will continue to work with partners (COSLA, Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government) to support and promote the effective use of Place and Wellbeing Outcomes when delivering on priorities around reducing inequity and climate change. We will promote the Place Principle, 20 minute neighbourhood/ local living ambitions and the Place Standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will promote awareness and use of Scotland's Place and Wellbeing Outcomes as a key element to delivering place based, preventative approaches to reducing inequity. • We will promote the tools and resources developed during the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme. This was a delivery partnership with Public Health Scotland to support place-based approaches that creates conditions for better wellbeing by enabling system-wide action to improve wellbeing of people and planet and reduce inequalities. • We will help connect councils better with good practice, support elected members' knowledge and scrutiny on this issue and work to embed the value of place-based approaches across the full range of service areas and professional groups that have a role to play. 	Irene Beautyman, Place and Wellbeing Partnership Lead	<p>Councils are supported to collaborate with partners on place-based approaches with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.</p> <p>Delivering places that enable wellbeing of communities.</p>	Core Grant	3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Planning Skills	<p>We will continue to deliver a Planning Skills Programme that leads the behavioural change required for those working within the planning system to deliver the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, National Planning Framework 4, Scottish Planning Policy and the Digital Planning Strategy. Key areas of interest are the implementation of the Place Principle and the contribution of planning to climate change, public health and reducing inequality. In doing so, we will work closely with Scottish Government, COSLA, Heads of Planning Scotland, Royal Town Planning Institute and the Key Agencies Group.</p> <p>High level deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training events on topics requested by planning authorities and key agencies. • Input into national working groups to support the training and development of planning authority staff. 	<p>Trevor Moffat, Project Manager, Planning for Place</p> <p>Irene Beautyman, Place and Wellbeing Partnership Lead, Planning for Place Programme Manager</p>	Engagement and practice sharing between Planning officers is improved and promotes improvements in service delivery.	HOPS SLA	2
HOPS	<p>We will continue to provide support to Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS), including supporting implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, National Planning Framework 4, Scottish Planning Policy and place-based working. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination between planning authorities and other organisations within the built environment to deliver the HOPS business plan. • Support of the National Planning Improvement Framework in conjunction with the High-Level Group on Planning. 	<p>Trevor Moffat, Project Manager, Planning for Place</p> <p>Irene Beautyman, Place and Wellbeing Partnership Lead, Planning for Place Programme Manager</p>	Local Planning Authority voice is heard at local, regional and national level and informs policy development and delivery.	HOPS SLA	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
National Planning Improvement	<p>We will support improvement within the Scottish planning system. This will involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with planning authorities to complete the piloting of the new National Planning Improvement Framework that enables them to self-assess their performance and identify what steps need to be taken to improve performance. We will gather the lessons from this to inform the implementation programme for years 2 and 3. We will also support planning authorities to monitor and progress the improvement actions that they have identified and help them to tackle these through providing assistance where required. • We will continue to develop the national planning improvement hub to support planning authorities on key issues around energy and housing through supporting them to upskill, build their capacity and gain access to the specialist expertise that they need. • We will undertake analysis and research and share this with key players to help inform actions to support improvement. We will do this through an annual workforce survey, the national customer and stakeholder survey on planning services and through analysis of data gathered by, for example, the National Planning Improvement Framework. 	Craig McLaren, National Planning Improvement Champion	<p>Planning authorities will embed assessment-based improvement and good practice.</p> <p>Planning authorities implement improvement actions.</p> <p>Strategic challenges facing the planning system are identified and tackled.</p>	SG Specific Grant	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Scottish Climate Intelligence Service (SCIS)	<p>Working with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, Sustainable Scotland Network, Scottish Government and COSLA we will continue to deliver the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity across all local authority functions through a comprehensive training and support programme, to effectively use the Climate OS platform to enable planning, monitoring and delivery of climate action at the scale and pace required for achieving area-based target progress. • Build capability in skills, knowledge, and influence to ensure that climate impact is a priority embedded in all decision making. • Support local authorities and Scottish Government to work together to develop and deliver climate projects and programmes at the pace and scale required. 	<p>Capacity Building Manager – Scottish Climate Intelligence Service</p> <p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p>	<p>Capability and capacity across Scotland's local authorities will be improved to enable delivery of net zero and realise the wider benefits of effective climate action. It will give local authorities, their partners and their communities the data, skills, and knowledge to lead the programmes of area-wide emissions reduction which are essential to delivery of the Climate Change Plan.</p>	<p>Scottish Government and Local Government grant funding</p>	<p>2, 4</p>

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Climate Change	<p>We will work with SOLACE, COSLA, the Sustainable Scotland Network and others to provide practical support to councils in relation to the improvement agenda around climate change. This will include helping connect councils better with good practice, supporting elected members' knowledge and scrutiny on this issue, supporting links to shared ambitions in promoting public health and helping embed the climate change agenda across the full range of service areas and professional groups that have a role to play. We will:</p> <p>Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the IS in terms of its internal business activities including updating the IS Approach to Net Zero and managing the IS Climate Change working group for sharing ideas and best practice. • Work with all IS Programmes to embed climate change where relevant including training on climate change for IS staff. <p>External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with Sustainable Scotland Network continue to grow and support the local authority network for sharing best practice across Scotland. • Delivery of webinars and briefing notes for Elected Members, climate change/sustainability officers and other relevant local authority officers. • Produce quality learning materials as required, linking with other IS teams, especially SCIS, and SSN, to ensure effective dissemination of information across the organisation, to partners and the wider public sector. 	<p>Rami Zaatari, Climate Change Transformation Project Manager.</p> <p>Miriam McKenna, Programme Manager, Inequality, Economy and Climate Change</p>	<p>The IS is better equipped to provide climate change leadership and support to our stakeholders.</p> <p>IS projects and programmes have consideration of climate change included in their work.</p> <p>Councils can easily access information and support on the various components of climate change.</p> <p>The co-benefits of action to mitigate or prevent climate change are better understood and are part of business cases or options appraisals.</p> <p>Topics such as Just Transition are better understood across a range of council services.</p>	Core Grant	2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Public Service Reform	<p>Support Change in Local Authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the expansion of Fairer Futures Projects by continuing with direct support to Local Authorities in supporting the design and delivery of specific change programmes that embed an outcome focused and person-centred approach into service planning and delivery of reform. • Coordinate work between public and third sector along with community planning partners, supporting and challenging the development and implementation of service change and transformation plans. • Support collection and distribution of shared learning and best practice that can be used to drive further place-based approaches to service change. • Establish a strong and systematic link between Scottish Government's reform work and the Solace/IS Transformation Programme, enabling co-ordination and visibility between the two. <p>Support Scottish Community Planning Managers' Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Scottish Community Planning Managers' Network (SCPMN), supporting its use as a forum to develop and embed a shared vision for partnership working - identifying the current barriers and exploring ways to strengthen relationships so that more collaborative working across the community planning partners can be put into practice. • Perform a secretariat role for the SCPMN to support the chair of the network and provide administrative support for meetings of the Network. 	Adam Hall, Programme Manager	Working with local authorities and their Community Planning Partners, we will support and assure the delivery and development of public services that exemplify the Christie Principles.	SG Specific Grant	1, 2, 3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Community Councils	<p>We will further develop and support the Scottish Community Councils' website, newsletter and webinar series. We will continue to support the Community Council Liaison Officer Network at events and on the Knowledge Hub, as appropriate. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of Community Councillors' skills and knowledge by delivering regular webinars for Community Councillors and providing access to Open University courses on a wide range of topics. • Develop content for the website, such as case studies and stories of good practice, to support Community Councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities, and how they can make a positive impact. • Support councils to work more effectively with Community Councils by sharing good practice and supporting the development of good practice (i.e. effective complaints processes and innovations to Schemes of Establishment). • Subject to further funding from the Scottish Rural Network (SRN) we will provide specific support for Rural and Island's Community Councillors, including eLearning on the Island's Act. 	<p>David Barr, Programme Manager, Democratic Governance</p> <p>Brian Davey, Communications Officer, Community Councils</p>	<p>Community Councillors will be better placed to make a positive contribution to their communities and the governance of the local area.</p> <p>Councils will be better placed to work effectively with their Community Councils and will implement better governance and support arrangements.</p>	SG Specific Grant	2

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Community Planning Improvement Board (CPIB)	<p>We will continue to support the CPIB in their work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local systems and partnerships to develop the leadership, influence, services and approaches that are effective in improving outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable. • Set the strategic vision for Community Planning Partnerships to carry out this vital role. • Understand what support, innovation and/or change is needed to make community planning work more effectively for and with local communities. • Capture and share good practice that is happening locally, and help identify and address barriers which are preventing progress. 	Emily Lynch, Benchmarking and Performance Management, Programme Manager	<p>We will evidence how excellent outcomes are being achieved locally when partners come together and respond innovatively, and will work with CP partners to tackle challenges slowing progress.</p> <p>We will surface with Scottish Government Ministers those barriers which are getting in the way of delivering person-led services.</p>	Core Grant	1, 3
Community Planning Outcomes Profile	We will update the Community Planning Outcomes Profile and support CPPs to utilise the profile to enhance local planning, performance and reporting arrangements, including that required for the Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.	Emily Lynch, Programme Manager, Performance Management and Benchmarking	CPOP work supports councils and Community Planning Partnerships to make better use of data to inform decision making by providing a useful high-level overview of whether the lives of local communities are improving and whether inequalities are reducing over time. The 10-year time-series data provides a valuable resource for partnerships in tracking progress against Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.	Core Grant	4

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Research	<p>We will promote and support development of research and analytical skills, capability and capacity within the IS and across the local government sector to support access to and use of evidence. This includes promotion of IS commercial 'paid for' research offer to provide ad hoc research capacity.</p> <p>Within the IS we will work with colleagues to help coordinate and facilitate cross- team collaboration; to share knowledge and expertise to encourage best practice in our analytical activities; to provide advice and support to colleagues on research matters; and to gather information on ongoing research and internal research needs within the organisation to help us prioritise our activities.</p> <p>We will work directly with researchers and analysts within local government, partner organisations and higher education institutions to develop networks that can share best practice, build capacity, and promote use of evidence in decision making.</p>	Nick Cassidy, Research Manager	Improve the quality of research outputs within the IS and across local government. Build research capacity and capability and an evidence base. This will improve access to high quality evidence that can inform better decision making to promote better outcomes for citizens and communities.	Core Grant	1, 2, 3, 4
Research	We will continuously review existing research and analytical activities within the IS and develop an ongoing set of planned research projects based on strategic priorities.	Nick Cassidy, Research Manager	Directly provide evidence to support the achievement of local government priorities and to identify future challenges and opportunities.	Core Grant	1, 2, 3, 4
Advice Services	We will support local authorities to demonstrate the impact of their investment in advice services	Karen Carrick, Evaluation Manager John Mitchell, Project Manager	We will produce evidence of the impact of local authority investment in debt and welfare rights advice services. This will focus on the key metrics of the numbers and demographic of service users, and the levels of debt and financial gains.	SG Specific Grant	3

Supporting Transformation, Performance and Improvement

Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Evaluation	<p>We will deliver evaluation support within the IS and to external organisations. Support to the latter is by participating in advisory groups or carrying out evaluations on a commercial basis. A wide range of evaluations and reviews focusing on outcomes, process or both are undertaken. This will include cost benefit and social value analyses. We will deliver ‘paid for’ support to those local authorities which have commissioned our services.</p> <p>We will continue to promote our evaluation offer and to submit tenders for relevant work that is advertised.</p> <p>We have ongoing commitments from Scottish Government to support our evaluations of the Place Based Investment Programme- Direct Grants; the Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships and from COSLA to evaluate a grants programme to tackle illegal money lending.</p>	Karen Carrick, Evaluation Programme Manager	We will provide the information, insights and intelligence that are required to support effective decision making and best value resource allocation. This will support councils and others to contribute to achieving national and local outcomes and having a positive impact on people and communities.	External funding sources including Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Care Inspectorate and COSLA.	2, 3, 4 depending on type and purpose of evaluation.

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Governance	We will ensure our partnerships continue to be governed effectively and that agreements and governance mechanisms are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.	Andrew Campbell, Head of Digital Public Services	Provide continuity and stability of service for all DPS Portfolio products and services, enabling local government and other customers to continue to provide services to their citizens/ users. Supporting local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments.	DPS Grant	4
Future Strategy	<p>We will endeavor to build on our assets, capacities, and skills within DPS to identify opportunities to deliver more digital shared services and shared resources for Scottish local government.</p> <p>As requested by our customer base we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and promote a Digital Young Scot National Entitlement Card, accessible via a new Young Scot membership app. • Work with the Visitor Levy Early Adopter Group to design, develop and implement a national visitor levy platform by March 2026. • Assess the feasibility of developing a national Blue Badge shared service, as recommended by the Blue Badge Discovery Report published in 2024. • Work with Local Authority Justice colleagues to explore the feasibility of developing a national shared service for Squad Management of Community Payback Orders (Unpaid Work). • Work with Solace Scotland to assess the suitability of candidate services to develop new digital national shared services. 	Andrew Campbell, Head of Digital Public Services	By delivering an increased range of shared services and resources to local authorities and their partners, we will be able to identify cost savings and provide examples of how our shared services/ resources increase the resilience and sustainability of the sector.	DPS Grant	1, 4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
SOLACE/IS Transformation Programme – Visitor Levy National Platform	<p>Develop a national visitor levy platform in partnership with Argyll & Bute, City of Edinburgh and Highland Councils (The Early Adopter Group) to provide a consistent national digital channel to facilitate and administer local visitor levy schemes.</p> <p>National platform to be developed by March 2026 ahead of City of Edinburgh Council launching in July 2026.</p> <p>Work with other Local Authorities to onboard the national platform should they choose to implement a scheme.</p>	Andrew Campbell, Head of Digital Public Services	A developed national digital shared service which provides a consistent, efficient and effective platform to facilitate and administer multiple visitor levy schemes.	Local Authority Direct Funding	1, 4
Digital Strategy	We will continue building on the strong foundations of the myaccount services and increase additional value to the national local government asset, by seeking opportunities to align closely with the Digital Identity Scotland Programme where and if appropriate and applicable as it looks to develop a joint common approach to digital identity establishment across the public sector.	Andrew Campbell, Head of Digital Public Services	Support the measures laid out in the Digital Strategy which will ensure that Scotland will fulfil its potential in a constantly evolving digital world.	DPS Grant	4
Information Assurance and Information Security	<p>We will continue to maintain regulatory and legislative compliance to protect individuals' privacy and manage risk. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting and maintaining ISO27001 certification status, as we enter a new 3-year audit cycle with a forthcoming external audit in August 2025. Implementing appropriate risk management policies and strategies as an ongoing activity. Providing a focus for UK GDPR and associated activities. Maintaining a focus on the UK Government Digital Identity Trust Framework, to analyse and assess implications and to make recommendations for how we respond. 	<p>Cameron Walker, Strategic Technical and Security Advisor</p> <p>Daniel Glennie, IT Security Manager</p>	Provide continuity and stability of service for all DPS Portfolio products and services, enabling local government and other customers to continue to provide services to their citizens/ users.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services

Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Information Assurance and Information Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will maintain a culture of good cyber hygiene. This will include ensuring plans for cyber resilience, business continuity, disaster recovery and incident management are robust and up to date, and by testing them systematically and periodically against several simulations to ensure appropriate controls are in place to protect against threats and vulnerabilities. We will undertake an IT health check at least annually in Q3. • Ensuring digital workplace technologies to support remote and hybrid workforce models are implemented in line with best professional and industry practice. This will include progressing ongoing work to secure our Office 365 environment to one of optimised security. • Developing and maintaining a Cyber Awareness Training Programme, securing the full participation of all staff in it. • Working to get the maximum benefit from the Managed Security Operations Centre by adding further security metrics to provide an even higher security capability and posture, and to minimise cyber security risk. 	Cameron Walker, Strategic Technical and Security Advisor Daniel Glennie, IT Security Manager	Provide continuity and stability of service for all DPS Portfolio products and services, enabling local government and other customers to continue to provide services to their citizens/ users.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Technical Assurance	<p>We will continue maintaining a healthy IT environment and culture, ensuring systems supported are performant, available, scalable, flexible and in a secure environment. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop our Cloud Hosting Strategy - we have successfully migrated all of our infrastructure to Amazon Web Services and will continue to enhance our security and BC/DR capabilities using native AWS tools and selected 3rd party offerings. Ensuring people and third parties are provided with the information required to operate, maintain, support, deliver, and protect our IT infrastructure and our investment. Ensuring systems are maintained and documented to the right level to agreed standards using the agreed framework. Providing advice so that the right technology decisions are made by the organisation. Reviewing technical skills, identifying training required and providing a training programme. 	Cameron Walker, Strategic Technical and Security Advisor	Provide continuity and stability of service for all DPS Portfolio products and services, enabling local government and other customers to continue to provide services to their citizens/ users.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Operations	<p>We will ensure that service availability to service providers and users remains at, or near, 100% availability levels.</p> <p>Customer service enquiries will be acknowledged, responded to, and resolved in line with SLA's.</p>	Jillian Edwardson, Customer Service Manager	Access to DPS services is maintained and customer resolutions are responded to in an expedited manner to ensure swift access to services for users.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Product Development – Portfolio	We will refine and implement the Development Roadmap for myaccount and the wider portfolio. We will continually improve, review and enhance all platforms based on customer feedback.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Increased customer satisfaction, more customers using our platforms which will in turn reduce workload for council staff e.g. more parents using parentsportal will mean fewer permission slips being printed and manually chased by office staff.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Product Development - myaccount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain continuity of service for the myaccount service. • Continue to enhance the new user interface of mygovscot myaccount based on customer feedback. • Continue to enhance the user interface of the agent portal for the mygovscot myaccount identity verification service which is used by myjobscotland organisations for digital Right to Work checks. • Explore the feasibility of adding the Yoti docscan process into the myaccount platform which enables citizens to verify their account using uploaded documentation. 	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	<p>Supporting local government and the wider public sector to deliver their online services.</p> <p>Offering new options to citizens to verify their myaccount and access a larger basket of services online.</p> <p>Easier and faster access for citizens to access their myaccount and reduce the risk of phishing attacks.</p>	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services

Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Product Development - parentsportal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the parentsportal.scot offering by continuing to update the new parentsportal.scot app on a monthly basis. Maintain continuity of service for parentsportal.scot. Continue to improve, review and enhance parentsportal.scot based on customer feedback. 	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	<p>Increase in numbers of parents using parentsportal.scot which then supports councils in reducing costs around non-digital communications with parents e.g. paper ADC or permission slips.</p> <p>Increase in numbers of parents using parentsportal.scot.</p>	DPS Grant	4
DPS Product Development – bisaccount.scot	Undertake a light touch redesign of bisaccount.scot in to improve the customer experience, ahead of the platform being utilised for Visitor Levy authentication in 2026.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Supporting local government and the wider public sector to deliver their online services.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Product Development – National Entitlement Card (NEC)	We will continually improve, review and enhance the new Young Scot Membership App based on customer feedback.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Supporting NECPO, Young Scot and local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Product Development – getyournec.scot	We will continually improve, review and enhance getyournec.scot based on customer feedback.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Supporting local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Product Development – Data Hub	Maintain continuity of service for the Data Hub.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Supports local government and service providers to cleanse their data quicker and save more of their time.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Product Development – datapipeline. scot	Maintain continuity of service for datapipeline.scot to enable Scottish Government to securely distribute and sort early learning and childcare data for eligible parents of children aged 1.3–3 years old.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Provides one national platform to securely distribute and sort data, saving each council from developing their own solution. Reusing the same platform for other use cases will prove cost- effective for service providers.	SG ELC Grant	4
DPS Product Development – dcn.scot (Scottish Dog Control Notice Database)	Continually improve and enhance the platform and explore future options for its development, based on the User Forum, and discussions with Scottish Government/Police Scotland around potential changes to the legislation.	Fiona Gray, Product and Project Manager	Dcn.scot continues to save precious council and Police time by making data available 24/7 but further enhancements (dependent on new legislation) could make a bigger impact on dog incident data/ investigations across Scotland.	SG Justice	4
DPS Onboarding and Engagement - Portfolio	We will continue helping citizens manage their relationships with public services, online and offline. We will maintain continuity of service for services, operating and managing them effectively, resiliently, and innovatively. We will continue to expand service uptake, adoption, and usage levels, making refinements in response to customer and stakeholder needs.	Cheryl Adamson, Relationship Manager	Supporting local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments. Contributes to helping local government reduce their carbon footprint by offering digital solutions. DPS team trusted as the 'go-to' for digital business solutions in local government.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Onboarding and Engagement, - Citizen Portfolio myaccount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow myaccount registered subscriber numbers to 2.9M annually by 31 March 2026. • Expand authentication request volumes to 20M annually by 31 March 2026. • Promote mygovscot myaccount communications toolkit that supports councils and service providers to give users consistent messaging to help strengthen the product and promote myaccount. This will in turn help to increase the number of myaccount subscribers and raise awareness of the platform and its capabilities. • Promote the benefits of the mygovscot myaccount 'toolkit' that the platform has to offer which can help streamline processes, save councils and organisations money and also help to improve the customer journey. • Onboard 6 councils and other public sector organisations that use myjobscotland, to the Identity Verification Right to Work service via mygovscot myaccount. • Pro-actively seek to expand myaccount (beyond local government) and work with service providers and partners that can utilise myaccount to help enhance the user experience for their customer base. 	Julie Edington, Business Development Manager	<p>Platform will continue to grow; not only are we hoping to see an increase to 2.9M accounts but also to hit 20M authentication requests annually.</p> <p>Supporting local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments.</p> <p>Branching out working with new customers to offer them the 'toolkit' of benefits that myaccount offers.</p>	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Onboarding and Engagement, Citizen Portfolio - parentsportal.scot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parentsportal.scot footprint to 25 councils, 1,600 schools, 280,000 parents, 310,000 pupils by 31 March 2026. • Continue to pro-actively target local authorities that have yet to onboard and offer demos and anything else that may be required of them to onboard the platform. • Continue to promote usage of the parentsportal.scot marketing toolkit as well as monitor usage of toolkit. • Continue to promote the parentsportal.scot app to all councils and the benefits the app brings. • Offer the training platform to councils that have onboarded to enrich their understanding of the platform and regularly check-in with them to ensure they are still using the platform effectively and finding it of value to their council. 	Julie Edington, Business Development Manager	<p>By continuing to grow, usage of the platform will help create cost savings for the councils that have onboarded as the platform offers a digital solution which means fewer manual steps and less paper printed to be dropped in school bags. It will also help to ease phone calls, emails, and other forms of communication to the schools.</p> <p>It will continue to help create, enable, and enhance a digital relationship between the parent, the pupil and the school, and can help local government deliver on their digital transformation strategies.</p> <p>Marketing toolkit will help councils to promote parentsportal.scot amongst parents and showcase its offerings which in turn can help increase uptake.</p>	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Onboarding and Engagement, Citizen Portfolio - getyournec.scot	Continue to support the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme and process up to 1M applications, and 1.5M overall for National Entitlement Card applications by 31 March 2026.	Julie Edington, Business Development Manager	Support Scottish Government to deliver on key national objectives. By continuous improvement of the platform and exploring new features and application routes we can ease pressures for local government because the more people that opt for the online application route will mean less paper applications that need to be processed.	DPS Grant/ Transport Scotland U22 Funding	4
DPS Onboarding and Engagement, Citizen Portfolio - bisaccount.scot	Continuously monitor feedback and increase usage and uptake of the platform to enhance/improve the customer experience. Work closely with the Product Development team to support the re-design of bisaccount, ahead of the platform being utilised for Visitor Levy authentication in 2026.	Julie Edington, Business Development Manager	Give public sector organisations across Scotland a shared and secure method of verifying who businesses are online. Growth of the platform will help to increase usage and awareness of bisaccount.scot . Improved customer satisfaction due to a new and improved look and feel bisaccount platform.	DPS Grant	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Onboarding and Engagement, Citizen Portfolio - Young Scot	<p>Facilitate growth in usage and impact of the Young Scot Membership Platform - powered by myaccount - helping to drive up membership numbers to 180,000 by 31 March 2026.</p> <p>Promote the new Young Scot Membership App to raise its profile and increase usage.</p>	Julie Edington, Business Development Manager	Growing the Young Scot Membership platform and Young Scot app will in turn help to support young people of Scotland by helping them to access the benefits and discounts that Young Scot offers that are on offer to them.	Young Scot Funding	4
DPS Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio - Data Hub	<p>Increase adoption and impact of the Data Hub.</p> <p>Explore potential for improvement and addition to Data Hub capability.</p> <p>Provide training in how to use service.</p>	Simon Roberts, Data & Engagement Manager	Cleansing data can be complicated, time consuming and a labour-intensive process but Data Hub eases those pain points and continues to be an effective solution for the Scottish public sector, helping to derive quality and accurate local data, to inform decision- making. This will save users of Data Hub time/ effort/ resource and their project money.	DPS Grant	4
DPS Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio – datapipeline. scot	<p>Work with ELC team to get the remaining local authorities onboarded with datapipeline.scot.</p> <p>Explore other use cases for datapipeline.scot. Seek opportunities to have other organisations/local government use it.</p>	Simon Roberts, Data & Engagement Manager	If other use cases are identified for datapipeline. scot it will demonstrate good use of public sector money as there is no duplication; we have built something that is reusable.	DPS Grant/ELC Funding/ Other	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
DPS Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio – dcn.scot (Scottish Dog Control Notice Database)	Work closely with the product development team to explore what new features can be added to the DCN platform and work together to promote this.	Simon Roberts, Data & Engagement Manager	<p>DCN continues to offer an effective way to bring together the records of all 32 local authorities into a centralised online database that is accessible by local authorities and Police Scotland.</p> <p>Make councils aware of any newly added features to help increase usage, and to help improve customer satisfaction and user experience.</p>	SG Justice	4

Digital Public Services					
Area	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
National Entitlement Card Scheme	<p>We will continue to ensure the smooth delivery of the National Entitlement Card (NEC) Scheme. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the new contracts agreed in 2021 for card application management, bureau services and smartcard supply are performant and meet Service Level Agreement (SLA) obligations. • Assess whether supplier contracts should be extended for a further year, or conduct a new procurement exercise. • Ensure National Entitlement Cards are produced and issued in line with SLA obligations. • Ensure the NEC Stakeholder Forum, led by NEC Programme Office, is maintained as an effective interface with councils and other scheme users. • Lead the delivery of the scheme's business development plan focused on increased card usage and exploitation in conjunction with the NECPO and scheme users. • Maintain the scheme's regulatory and legislative compliance. • Maintain alignment of the scheme with the Digital Public Services' roadmap. • Promote the use of the PASS Scheme's Verify App, which will enable vendors/security staff to verify the legitimacy and age of cardholders and eliminate fraud. 	<p>Tony Jones, NEC Programme Manager</p> <p>Andrew Campbell, Head of Digital Public Services</p>	<p>Supporting local government to deliver on their priorities and commitments.</p> <p>Supporting Scottish Government to deliver on key national objectives.</p>	DPS Grant/ Transport Scotland U22 Funding	4

Data and Intelligence					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Geospatial support services	<p>We will deliver our geospatial support service to assist with the maintenance and publication of geospatial information by local authorities and partners.</p> <p>The offer includes data hosting and publication, a dataset management service (including the corporate Address and Street Gazetteers), provision of analytics and insight, provision of webmapping services, data cleansing and geocoding, reporting capabilities and the provision of user training.</p>	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager	<p>Enabling the expansion of our reach of geospatial services and support to councils and partners, helping them to retain essential data capabilities to inform policy and decision making, while delivering efficiencies in process.</p> <p>The improved geospatial data will enhance national datasets for key use cases by partners and citizens.</p> <p>We will generate income to cover resourcing.</p>	External Funding Sources	4
Spatial Hub	<p>We will continue to support the Spatial Hub software and infrastructure, including a series of technical upgrades in order to best meet the needs of the data users. This includes new user sign up and authentication systems, usage statistics and more.</p> <p>We will continue to work with local authorities to extend the range of spatial datasets and improve the quality of spatial information available. As part of this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually review data formats and web mapping functionality to ensure that these meet user requirements. Move towards further automation in upload schema validation so that some datasets can be shared with the Spatial Hub in a more efficient way. 	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager	<p>Continuity and stability of enhanced Spatial Hub services.</p> <p>Spatial Hub users will have access to an increased range of spatial datasets, of improved quality.</p> <p>Increased range and format of key national datasets available.</p>	Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub	4

Data and Intelligence					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Spatial Hub	We shall continue to publish key national datasets under open data terms, unlocking access to key national data themes, including education, health, planning, environment and energy, subject to grant funding.	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager	Key national datasets are publicly available.	SG Specific Grant	4
Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio - Spatial Hub	We will continue to work with our existing Spatial Hub commercial partner to serve Spatial Hub data to non-public sector users, whilst also exploring additional future partnerships to increase the customer base.	Simon Roberts, Data and Engagement Manager	Revenue generation through commercial partner sales and greater use of IS data assets.	Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub	4
Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio - Spatial Hub/Use of Data	We will explore further commercial opportunities relating to our data infrastructure; including extending the scope and capacity of the Spatial Hub to store and share data from external sources, such as utility companies and the NHS.	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager Simon Roberts, Data and Engagement Manager	Potential increase in commercial income for IS and greater use of IS data assets.	Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub	4
Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio: One Scotland Gazetteer (OSG)	As the authoritative street and addressing source for Scotland, the One Scotland Gazetteer shall continue to support and underpin systems across the Scottish public sector. The information forms the bedrock of the emergency services' command and control operations as well as over 80 different public sector organisations. We will continue to work with local authority gazetteer custodians and Ordnance Survey/GeoPlace to improve and enhance the data for these users, and promote the use of the OSG API, allowing real-time access to the authoritative data.	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager Simon Roberts, Data & Engagement Manager	More efficient public services through centralised information source. Access to the most comprehensive and current addressing dataset in Scotland. High data currency and reliability.	DPS Grant/ Gazetteer Revenue	4

Data and Intelligence					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Onboarding & Engagement Data Portfolio: TellMeScotland	<p>Following the redevelopment of tellmescotland in 2024, we now look to expand the content sourced from local authorities and partner organisations, as well as increasing usage amongst citizens and businesses.</p> <p>This shall further establish tellmescotland as Scotland's authoritative citizen notification service.</p>	<p>Simon Roberts, Data and Engagement Manager</p> <p>Aline Kirkland, Digital Planning Data Project Manager</p>	Enables the continual improvement of digital information provision by local government and partners to citizens and businesses.	Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub	4
Digital Planning	<p>We will continue to work with all planning authorities relating to improving the data standards and governance of the key datasets which underpin the planning system. This includes working with local government colleagues to improve Development Management, Local Development Plan and the Land Audits.</p> <p>We shall also continue to support Heads of Planning Scotland and support the key agencies in the planning process providing a critical engagement role.</p>	Ron Wilkinson, Spatial Information Services Programme Manager	<p>Seeking to unlock the value of planning data.</p> <p>Opening up data services and opportunities will help to drive the digital economy.</p>	SG Specific Grant	1, 4
Digital Planning	We will provide focused training to local government and partners relating to utilising location data as part of managing and analysing planning information.	Aline Kirkland, Digital Planning Data Project Manager	Supporting local government through funded training programmes to support day to day delivery of key tasks and deliver improvements to national datasets.	External funding sources	4

Data and Intelligence					
Project	Deliverable	Lead Officer	Expected Project Impact	Funding Source	Direct contribution to Strategic Priorities
Cloud Connector Framework	<p>We will continue to provide the Idox Cloud Connector Framework service, which serves planning, building standards and gazetteer data from all local authority Uniform casework management systems to a central IS portal.</p> <p>Once quality assured, the data is published as a consistent national datasets, saving consumers of the data significant time and effort, by negating the requirement to resource the information from all 34 authorities.</p>	Will Hensman, Project Manager (Land and Property)	<p>Saves resources in local authorities from not having to manually upload data provisions.</p> <p>Provides a more robust, automated and reliable way of obtaining key data sources from local authorities whilst reducing the time lag from local authorities data submission to the availability of national datasets by users.</p>	Gazetteer Revenue/ Spatial Hub	4

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