

**To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board**

**On: 8 June 2023**

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**Report by: Director of Finance and Resources**

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**Heading: Finance and Resources 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Service Improvement Plan for Finance and Resources is a three-year plan covering the period 2023-2026. The purpose of the Plan is to identify the priorities being addressed, the key tasks to be implemented, the implementation timetable and our measures of success.
- 1.2 The Service Improvement Plan is part of a suite of documents which describe the strategic direction for the Service and the Council, and also includes the Council Plan, Community Plan, Risk Management Plan, and the Workforce Plan. Following the approval of the new Council Plan 2022-2027 in September 2022, work has been undertaken to review the format of Service Improvement Plans to make these more accessible, easier to understand and clearly demonstrate service contribution towards delivering the new Council Plan strategic outcomes.
- 1.3 The Service Improvement Plan is appended to this report and includes performance indicators and an action plan grouped under the Council Plan themes. A mid-year progress update on the Service Improvement Plan will be submitted to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in the autumn of 2023.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board:

- (a) approves the attached Service Improvement Plan; and
- (b) notes that mid-year progress of this Service Improvement Plan will be reported to this Board in the Autumn of 2023, with updates to the performance indicators and action plan.

## **3. Background**

3.1 Finance and Resources enables and supports the smooth running and strategic management of the Council's financial, legal, property, ICT, human resources, and customer and business services as well as maintaining sound audit and governance across the Council. The Council restructure outlined in a paper to Council in December 2022 has resulted in Procurement moving from the Chief Executive's Service to Finance and Resources, where it is now part of the remit of the Head of Finance and Procurement. Under the same restructure, property services will transition under the management of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure over the summer period.

3.2 The service leads on the delivery of strategic change and organisational development across the Council. It also supports the development and delivery of frontline services as well as major investment programmes such as City Deal and the Cultural Infrastructure Programme.

3.3 Support services such as those provided by Finance and Resources have been critical to shifting focus back to a strategic, forward-looking approach after the pandemic.

## **4. Service Improvement Plan 2023-2024: What do we want to achieve?**

4.1. Council services continue to operate in a challenging context. The Council and services remain ambitious for our people and our place, and the Service Improvement Plan process ensures a clear focus on continuous improvement. The Service Improvement Plans process allows us to describe where activity is targeted, and through the 6-monthly updates described below, provide a balanced view on progress.

4.2. Our Service Improvement Plan sets out actions for the next three years, and in 2023/24 our particular areas of focus will be:

- Developing and implementing actions from the financial sustainability workstreams to maintain sustainable, effective and efficient services within our challenging financial environment;
- Supporting the Council's transformation programme, through the provision of professional services including financial management, HR support, digital solutions and project management
- Continuing to deliver a new suite of HR policies, including the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and a Wellbeing Strategy to support our employees and ensure we continue to be an employer of choice in the region;
- Working with local suppliers to increase the proportion of our procurement spend on local businesses;
- Implementing the new licensing regime for short-term lets in line with new Scottish Government requirements, beginning with pre-existing lets;
- Continuing to deliver a broad range of support services to the rest of the Council, including Elected Members and supporting the governance and effective running of the Council's Policy Boards;
- Progressing the Purchase to Pay project, delivering a far more efficient, consistent process, with improved data and insight and reduced duplication;
- Rolling out the new Supporting Attendance policy across the Council, in order to best support our employee's health and wellbeing and improve absence levels;
- Developing a new Customer Strategy, in order to ensure we continue to deliver excellent customer services that best meets the needs of our customers and utilises the opportunities within new and emerging technologies;
- Implementing our Green Print Strategy, in order to reduce our reliance on paper, drive down printing costs and support the organisation's work towards net zero.

## **5. Monitoring progress**

- 5.1 Progress on the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan is regularly monitored by the Senior Management Team and will be reported to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board on a six-monthly basis. A mid-year review of progress will be brought to this Board in Autumn 2023 and an annual outturn report in Spring 2024.

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## **Implications of the Report**

- 1. Financial** – This report notes the financial challenges facing the local authority and the work that will be undertaken by the service to manage this.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The Service Improvement Plan details several pieces of work being progressed by the People & OD team.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – Service Improvement Plans reflect the contribution of each service to the Council and Community Plans.
4. **Legal** – The Service Improvement Plan includes an action on implementing a new licencing regime for short-term lets.
5. **Property/Assets** – The report notes progress on work relating to council property and sustainability.
6. **Information Technology** – Digital resources are now key to the delivery of services and strategies are in place to manage this.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. The delivery of actions included in the appendix will be impact assessed where appropriate.
8. **Health & Safety** – The Service Improvement Plan includes actions relating to employee wellbeing and absence.
9. **Procurement** – The Service Improvement Plan includes actions relating to procurement activity.
10. **Risk** – Risks related to the delivery and management of services are regularly monitored and included in Renfrewshire Council's Corporate and Strategic Risk Registers.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – None
13. **Climate Change** – The Service Improvement Plan includes actions and indicators under the theme "Green" demonstrating how it will contribute to Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.

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**List of Background Papers:** None

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**Appendix 1:** Service Improvement Plan 2023-2026

# Finance & Resources

Service Improvement Plan 2023 - 26



Renfrewshire  
Council

# Welcome to our Service Improvement Plan



Thanks for taking the time to read our new Service Improvement Plan, which sets out how our team will contribute to the delivery of the strategic outcomes described in the Council Plan 2022 to 2027 of Place; Economy; Fair; Green and Living Our Values, and to our cross-cutting theme of Improving Outcomes for Children and Families.

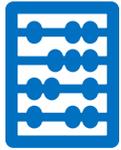
Local government continues to operate in a challenging context but we continue to target our resources where they are needed most. Recent years have brought great challenges not only to councils but to all our lives, and I'm proud of how the service has responded, whether that was directly delivering support during the pandemic, implementing digital solutions to improve our services to customers or continuing to provide vital professional services to the rest of the Council.

As well as our customer-facing services supporting Renfrewshire residents with advice services, registrations, payments and benefits, we also support the rest of the Council by providing financial management and audit, legal services, human resource services, property services, ICT and project management. We've recently welcomed our Procurement colleagues into the service and their expertise will help us deliver on key priorities such as our financial sustainability work and our Council commitment to Net Zero.

We work together as a team to deliver effective and efficient professional services whether that's in areas that directly impact our residents or in areas where our support helps other services to make that impact. I'm grateful for the hard work and commitment of my whole service for their contribution to making Renfrewshire a great place to work, live and visit.

*Alastair*

# Finance & Resources – our service



Strategic and operational financial advice and accountancy, Council Tax, rates and benefit processing



Business services providing administrative support across services including payroll and employee services



Human resources including health & safety, training and workforce planning



Legal services providing advice and support to all council services



Strategic and commercial procurement supporting tendering, fair working practice and sustainability



Customer services providing professional front facing customer and administrative support councilwide



Transformation, providing project & programme management



ICT services, provision of ICT equipment, security and compliance, hosting, storing & connectivity



Internal audit, fraud, insurance and risk management



Support for elected members and boards including delivering elections

# Finance & Resources - about us

Finance and Resources leads the delivery of a wide range of professional services which support the smooth running and strategic management of the Council. Finance and Resources is led by the Director, Alastair MacArthur, and he is supported by five Heads of Service and the Chief Auditor.

**Business Services** delivers financial operations including Revenues and Benefits, and provides business support to other Council services

**Corporate Governance** provides legal services and supports the governance and effective running of Council and policy boards

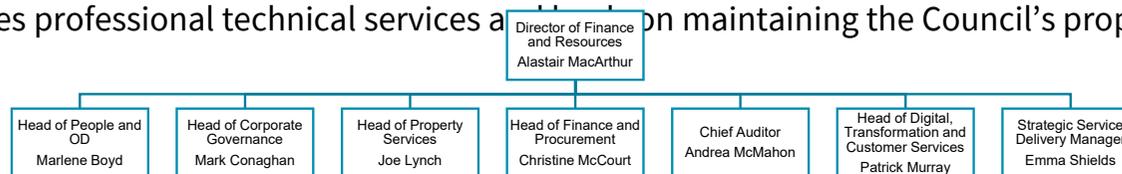
**Digital, Transformation and Customer Services** leads on ICT provision, project and programme management, and our front-facing customer services, and leads on our Digital Strategy

**Finance and Procurement** provides financial and budgetary management services and a corporate procurement service to all council services, as well as providing a range of business support

**Internal Audit** leads on audit activity and risk management, ensuring robust controls are in place to manage risks associated with council activity

**People and OD** delivers HR services including supporting recruitment, professional development and employee wellbeing

**Property Services** provides professional technical services and support on maintaining the Council's property



# Our resources and risks

## BUDGET

For 2023/24, the Revenue budget approved for General Services on 2 March 2023 was **£483m**.

The capital budget approved for General Services on 2 March 2023 was **£424m** for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The Finance & Resources revenue budget for 2023/24 is approximately **£40m**.

Finance and Resources also supports all other council services with financial and budget management as well as providing support to our capital projects.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council's risk management arrangements are well established with all strategic, corporate and service risks being reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. Strategic risks are more outward in nature, whereas corporate ones are more inward and often affect more than one service department. Corporate and strategic risks, where senior officers in the Finance & Resources service are owners or joint owners are shown below. The Finance & Resources service also plays a significant role in the management of many 'business as usual' risks that exist within the council.

Risks	Evaluations
<b>Our strategic risks</b>	
Financial Sustainability	Very High
Financial Stability	Very High
Cyber Attack	High
Administration of Elections	High

# Transformation and financial sustainability

The Council's financial outlook is significantly challenging. The most recent analysis reported to Council on 2 March 2023 suggests that Renfrewshire Council will experience a funding deficit in the range of £40m-£45m in the three years following 2023/24, unless mitigating action is taken.

The Council continues to explore ways to transform how we deliver our services – to improve the experience of our customers and service-users but also to ensure the Council's financial sustainability.

**Finance & Resources** continues to support this through:

Delivering **transformation** savings workstreams for Finance & Resources

Leading with the cross-service **Financial Sustainability** workstreams led by the Corporate Management Team

Providing Council services with **finance and HR partner advice and support** to deliver service-specific savings

Providing **project ad programme management** support to the transformation programme

# Workforce development and wellbeing

The Council launched its people strategy [“Our People, Our Future”](#) in 2021, which identifies three priority areas:



health and wellbeing

new ways of working

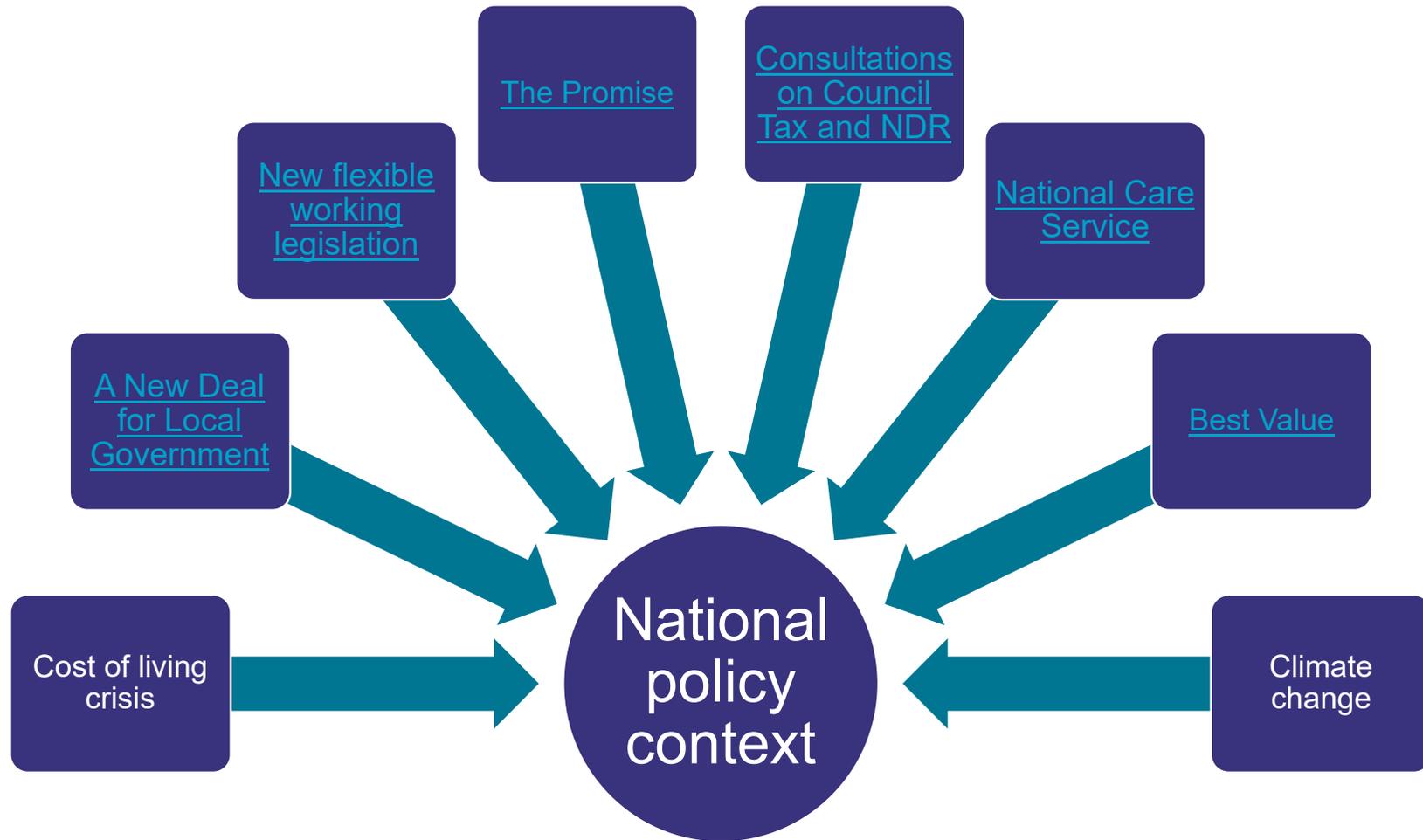


staff communication and engagement

The strategy also integrates the Council’s organisational development vision and workforce planning activities into three strategic outcomes - **our approaches improve; our skills strengthen; and our culture evolves.**

The strategy is aligned with the new Council Plan and ensures focus on supporting staff through service transformation, changing culture norms, embedding our values within decision making and improving staff and service user experiences of the Council.

**Finance & Resources** will ensure these priorities are reflected in our workforce. High-level actions arising from the people strategy are embedded in our Service Improvement Plan and will be monitored through this.



# Our local policy context

## Our Values

- Our Values describe our promise to our communities, staff, and partners. They guide how we deliver services and make decisions.

## Council and Community Plans

- Our Council Plan and Community Plan set the strategic framework for our organisation and describe what we want to achieve for Renfrewshire

## Fairer Renfrewshire Programme

- Brings together existing programmes of work focused on achieving fairness and equity, and tackling the inequalities that exist across Renfrewshire's communities.

## Best Value

- Aims to ensure good governance; manage resources effectively; focus on improvement; and, most important of all, deliver the best possible outcomes for local people.

## Trauma

- We understand what trauma is, and how it affects people, so we will now work differently.

## HR Policy Review

- Ensuring our policies remain relevant to a modern workplace with staff wellbeing a core component.

## Digital

- Aligning digital activity across the Council under this single vision and direction, maximising the benefits for customers and staff.

## Procurement Strategy

- Managing demand, delivering social value and best value, and aligning our procurement activity with the vision and priorities of the Council.

## Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- Every area of the Council has a role to play in promoting equality and diversity. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unfair treatment and asks public bodies to show how they make a positive difference to equality groups.

# Our key priorities

Ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

Supporting people through the cost of living crisis through efficient delivery of grants and funds

Supporting governance and oversight through effective audit programmes and risk management

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce

Realising our digital ambitions, delivering modern, efficient services fit for the future

Leading a sustainable procurement approach, supporting the Council's net zero ambitions

Developing our long term workforce plan for the organisation

Supporting transformation and change across the organisation

# Our focus for 2023/24

- Implementing actions from the financial sustainability workstreams, supporting services to deliver savings targets to support the long-term financial planning for the organisation;
- Continuing to deliver a new suite of HR policies, including the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and a Wellbeing Strategy
- Supporting the Council to deliver New Ways of Working;
- Delivering a new approach to recruitment and talent management, ensuring that the Council is an employer of choice and that current employees can develop and progress here;
- Rolling out the new Supporting Attendance policy, supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce;
- Working with local suppliers to increase the proportion of our procurement spend on local businesses which in turn supports the local economy;
- Continue to implement Connectivity as a Service including wi-fi rollout across corporate and school estate;
- Progressing the Purchase to Pay project in Business Services, delivering a far more efficient, consistent process, with improved data and insight and reduced duplication;
- Developing a new Customer Strategy, in order to ensure we continue to deliver excellent customer services that best meets the needs of our customers and utilises the opportunities within new and emerging technologies;
- Implementing our Green Print Strategy, in order to reduce our reliance on paper, drive down printing costs and support the organisation's work towards net zero;
- Implementing the new licensing regime for short-term lets;
- Continuing to deliver a broad range of support services to the rest of the Council, including elected members;
- Continuing to bolster our cyber-resilience through technical and non-technical measures, protecting our digital assets.

# Other plans, strategies and reports



**For Finance & Resources, a wide range of reports are presented to the Finance, Resources & Customer Services Policy Board. Papers and access to video recordings of past meetings can be found [here](#).**

# Delivering the Council Plan - PLACE

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Work with Children's Services to deliver the new Paisley Grammar Community Campus	Pupils and staff enjoy a modern, fit for purpose, school estate which supports learning and achievement.	31 July 2026
Support delivery of the Council's infrastructure investment programme	Renfrewshire's residents have access to a range of modern, fit for purpose facilities.	31 March 2026
Implement the actions arising from the Council's financial sustainability workstreams	We will contribute to the long-term financial future of the council ensuring that key services remain sustainable.	31 March 2024
Delivering strong universal services to all Renfrewshire citizens	We will provide a range of services to all Renfrewshire residents, including the delivery of billing, registration services, customer service provision and digital services such as those available through My Account.	31 March 2027
Implement the first phase of the Scottish Government's new licensing regime for short-term lets	We will ensure that all premises currently used for short-term lets are compliant with the law.	31 March 2024

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Please note, there are no service-specific performance indicators for the strategic outcome Place

# Delivering the Council Plan - ECONOMY

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Actively engage with Renfrewshire suppliers to increase the percentage of procurement spend	Increasing local procurement spend supports local job creation and the sustainability of local businesses. It contributes to community wealth building and post-pandemic economic recovery	31 March 2024
Develop a Community Wealth Building Plan for Renfrewshire	Community-wealth building contributes to the sustainability of the local economy and supports job and wealth creation.	31 December 2023

Performance Indicator	Frequency	2021/22 Value	Latest Update	Latest Value	2023/24 Target
% of procurement spend spent on local enterprises	Annual	18.87%	2021/22	N/A	23%

# Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Under Connectivity As A Service (CaaS) complete the rollout of Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) across 75% of Renfrewshire as a geography by the summer of 2023	The provision of gigabit connectivity across the Council area.	31 August 2023
Engage and participate in trauma informed and responsive Renfrewshire programme	We understand what trauma is, and how it affects people, so we will now work differently: Learning and working together to co-create fair and helpful collaborations to support healing and recovery with people affected by trauma.	31 March 2024
Continue to support residents with the cost-of-living crisis through the provision of advice services, grants and other funding	People experiencing hardship are supported to maximise their income.	31 March 2024

# Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Performance Indicators- academic year	Frequency	2021/22 Value	Latest Update	Latest Value	2023/24 Target
Time taken for processing new housing benefit applications up until the posting of notification of outcome of the application (cumulative)	Quarterly	18.1	2022/23	38.51	24
Time taken for processing change of circumstance housing benefit applications up until the posting of notification of outcome of the application (cumulative)	Quarterly	7.94	2022/23	14.35	10
Average speed of processing a Crisis Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days	Quarterly	2	2022/23	2	2
Average speed of processing a Community Care Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days	Quarterly	10	2022/23	13	15

# Delivering the Council Plan - GREEN

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Develop costed, targeted interventions and actions to support our net zero journey within the Council and working in partnership with key stakeholders	Working together with communities and partner organisations we can support the transition to a net zero society, ensuring we contribute to reducing and mitigating the impact of climate change. As a large public sector organisation, the council has a duty to lead by example and to influence others.	31 October 2023
Ensure that climate considerations are taken into account in our procurement strategies and tenders with a focus on reducing emissions	Working together with other services we can support the reduction of emissions, waste and consumption by challenging usage, taking an innovative approach to specification, better utilising technological solutions and promoting the circular economy.	31 March 2025
Implement the Green Print Strategy in order to reduce our reliance on paper, drive down printing costs and support the organisation's work towards net zero	Reducing print use will contribute to the Council's Net Zero goals, improve the customer experience through provision of end-to-end digital services, and reduce the risk of information security incidents.	31 March 2024

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Please note, there are no service-specific performance indicators for the strategic outcome Green

# Delivering the Council Plan – LIVING OUR VALUES

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Implement the next phase of the Council's transformation programme	The council adapts to a changing environment and continues to provide critical services in a sustainable way.	31 March 2025
Support the Council in developing New Ways of Working	Will provide a more modern workplace that will increase attraction and aid retention of great talent. It will also ensure we provide quality services to our customers.	31 March 2024
Support the Council with improving attendance and reducing absence	Reduce absence across the council, to ensure a more consistent service delivery to our customers and deliver cost savings.	31 December 2023
Develop a Wellbeing Strategy that meets the needs of our workforce as we emerge for the pandemic and look towards the future	Set a positive culture around health and wellbeing, reduce burnout and improve attendance across the council.	31 August 2023
Develop an overall strategic recruitment and talent management strategy	Given the national challenges in recruitment, the council has to adopt a more strategic report to recruitment and talent management. We will attract the right candidates, and employees will have opportunities for career progression and understand the path to take and the support that is available.	31 March 2024

# Delivering the Council Plan – LIVING OUR VALUES

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Develop and new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy for the council	The council will become a more inclusive employer.	31 December 2023
Deliver the Purchase to Pay programme which will streamline payments and deliver a more efficient process	Customers and suppliers benefit from more efficient processing.	31 December 2025
Develop a new Customer Strategy in order to ensure we continue to deliver excellent customer services that best meet the needs of our customers and utilise the opportunities within new and emerging technologies	Our customer service remains modern, efficient and effective, focused on the best possible outcomes for customers.	31 March 2024
Continue to implement a range of technical and non-technical measures to bolster our cyber resilience, protecting our digital assets	We make use of technology to minimise the risk of cyber threats, and through training and awareness raising we support our staff and elected members to understand and mitigate the risks.	31 March 2024
Deliver the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24	We provide oversight of the controls in place to manage risks, and support services to develop mitigations.	31 March 2024
Support the wider workforce with learning and professional development opportunities.	We have a skilled, effective workforce who are supported in continuous learning.	31 March 2024

# Delivering the Council Plan – LIVING OUR VALUES

Performance Indicators– academic year	Frequency	2021/22 Value	Latest Update	Latest Value	2023/24 Target
Customer Service Unit - % of calls answered	Quarterly	97%	2022/23	96%	90%
Cost of collecting council tax per chargeable dwelling	Annual	8.04	2021/22	N/A	11.5
Percentage of Council Tax due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative position to date)	Quarterly	95.48%	2022/23	95.3%	96%
Total % of investigation (Stage 2) complaints responded to within targets by Finance & Resources (cumulative to date)	Quarterly	87.73%	2022/23	84.9%	85%
Number of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt, as a percentage of all invoices paid council wide (cumulative)	Quarterly	95.5%	2022/23	90.21%	96%
Average number of work days lost through sickness absence per employee (F&R) (FTE)	Quarterly	7.77	Qtr 3 2022/23	2.38	8.5 Days
% of Finance and Resources FOI requests completed within timescale	Quarterly	97%	2022/23	97.2%	100%
Percentage of income due from Council Tax for prior years (cumulative position to date)	Quarterly	97.21%	2022/23	97.21%	97.27%
Percentage of Non Domestic Rates due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative to date)	Quarterly	92.61%	2022/23	95.67%	98%
Percentage of Audit Plan completed (cumulative)	Quarterly	92.1%	2022/23	93.2%	95%
F&R Front Line complaints (Cumulative)	Quarterly	75.87%	2022/23	86.6%	85%
Average days Small and Medium sized businesses invoices paid	Quarterly	11.84	2022/23	13.06	28 Days

# Delivering the Council Plan – Cross-cutting theme

## IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

'Across all of our work and all of our efforts, we hope for loving and happy lives for Renfrewshire's **children** – working together to get it right for children, families and communities – protecting, learning, achieving and nurturing. Every priority of this Council Plan will contribute to improving the lives of Renfrewshire's children and their families. It is our fundamental duty as an organisation and our shared responsibility as citizens of this place to ensure that our children inherit a Renfrewshire where their wellbeing is nurtured, their futures are bright, and their environment is safe and healthy.'

Additional actions for cross-cutting theme	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Contribute to the Council's commitment to The Promise for all care experienced people	Care experienced young people have better outcomes and a more positive experience of care; feel listened to and valued; can build and maintain good relationships.	31 March 2026

# Finance & Resources

Service Improvement Plan 2023 – 26

For more information, please contact:

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