

To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board

On: 31 March 2021

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Finance and Resources Service - Service Delivery Plan 2021- 22

1. Summary

- 1.1 Each year, Council services develop and prepare a Service Improvement Plan for approval by elected members. Service Improvement Plans are three year rolling plans which set out the key priorities and actions which will be progressed by the service, and the performance measures and associated targets which will be used to evidence progress made.
- 1.2 From previous reports to both Council and this policy board, elected members will be aware of the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to have on the provision of services by the organisation overall. Finance and Resources staff have responded with great commitment and flexibility to adapt and establish new services and undertake new activities, as well as delivering existing services in different ways to support local people and communities, particularly those most in need.
- 1.3 In light of the significant change to the context in which the Council is operating in, an interim change has been made to the service improvement planning process for 2021/22, with Service Delivery Plans being developed for each Council service. Although these plans still focus on some of the longer term ambitions and priorities being progressed by services, there is a much greater focus on the next 12 months, and the work that will be undertaken as part of the ongoing COVID response to stabilise and adapt the way in which services are provided going forward.
- 1.4 The Service Delivery Plan sits beneath the Council Plan, Community Plan, and alongside the Risk Management Plan and the People Strategy to form a suite of documents which provides the strategic direction for the service.
- 1.5 The Plan sets out the priorities being addressed; the key tasks to be implemented; the implementation timetable; and our measures of success.
- 1.6 A six-monthly update on progress of the Service Delivery Plan will be presented to the appropriate policy boards in autumn 2021, and early summer 2022.

2. Recommendations

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

- (a) approves the attached Finance and Resources Service - Service Delivery Plan 2021-22; and
- (b) agrees that mid-year progress of the Service Delivery Plan be reported to the appropriate policy board in autumn 2021, and early summer 2022.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Finance and Resources Service is one of the largest services within Renfrewshire Council, and employs approximately 1,100 employees. The service 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.
- 3.2 The Service also leads on the delivery of strategic change and organisational development across the Council as well as leading on a number of high profile projects for the Council such as the rollout of Business World, an integrated financial and HR system, transforming how the Council manages and delivers its key financial and management processes as well as delivering the new Transformation Programme – Right for Renfrewshire, Digital First and supporting the development and delivery of major investment programmes including City Deal, the Cultural Infrastructure Programme and the Schools Estate Management Plan.
- 3.3 As set out within Section 1 of this report, the service improvement planning process has been adapted this year to reflect the significantly different context in which services are now operating due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions in place over the past 12 months, and currently, continue to impact on the ability of services to operate in the same way, whilst new services are being delivered in response to the pandemic. Services have therefore developed interim Service Delivery Plans in place of the Service Improvement Plans, with a greater focus on the next 12 months and on work being undertaken to respond and recover from the impacts of the pandemic, in addition to ongoing work to progress the key priorities of the service and the organisation overall.
- 3.4 The Service Delivery Plan is an important mechanism by which elected members scrutinise the work of the Finance and Resources Service and consider and set policy direction as necessary. Importantly, the Service Delivery Plan also links the Council Plan and Community Plan priorities to strategic and operational activity within the service, which supports employees to understand how their role contributes to the Council delivering its objectives. Section 7 of the attached Service Delivery Plan details the specific actions the service will progress in order to support the Council's immediate priorities and future direction.

4. Key Achievements 2020/21

- 4.1 The impact of the pandemic on Renfrewshire's communities, residents and businesses has been unprecedented, and Finance and Resources Service continues to play a leading role supporting the Council's response. At a strategic level this has involved supporting staff and communities through the changes to service delivery and managing the financial implications of the pandemic.
- 4.2 As with other areas of the Council, since March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has significantly changed the way in which Finance and Resources Service has provided services and, for many service areas, the actual services which they deliver. Priorities for the service have also changed to respond to the many issues caused by the pandemic and for recovery planning.
- 4.3 Key achievements for 2020/21 include:

- Delivering customer service through a digital call centre and supporting customers to make access services and make payments online. The Contact Centre, supported by Advice Works staff, took on the Shielding and Scottish Government national helplines.
- Staff from Customer and Business Services took on administration of the Self Isolation Support Grants (SISGs) through the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). The grant opened on 12 October 2020 and staff assist customers with applications and triage customers seeking wider support and routing any requirements to the local assistance team. The service has also managed the changing guidelines of the grant, in terms of the eligibility criteria (which has widened the range of people able to claim) and the timeframe of the isolation period, which has reduced from 14 to 10 days.
- Staff from Customer and Business Services have been fully supporting the HSCP with all administration tasks in relation to care home testing and the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines.
- The registration team supported those customers who lost family members to the virus and other reasons by the continued registration of deaths remotely. Initially the service moved from providing a service across three locations to an online service for death registrations only. This involved relocating the registration staff to the Community Safety Hub in Paisley and the extension of the service from a five day to a seven day per week service. The service then relocated to 5 High Street, Paisley, to accommodate the change in Government guidance requiring the clearing of the backlog in birth registrations. This meant the re-introduction of face to face appointments with members of the public. The service also recommenced marriage and civil partnership ceremonies including the re-opening of the marriage suite at Renfrewshire House. However, due to the current restrictions, the Registration services have now returned to appointment only, whilst the registration of deaths continues to be undertaken remotely. Marriage ceremonies and Civil Partnerships will continue to be performed, though these will be in line with new restrictions on numbers (5 people).
 - ICT Services were proactive and upscaled the remote access infrastructure, anticipating increased usage (i.e. up to 4,000 connections) prior to the initial lockdown in March 2020. This increase in capacity was tested up-front with high volume of remote connections via Edinburgh-based cloud hosted data centres, as part of the adoption of Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). Internal remote-control software tools were also reconfigured to enable the seamless support of Council provisioned end-user devices in the office or at home. This enabled the successful rapid transition from office working to home working.
 - Registered MyAccount users increased to 70,182, representing more than 4 out of every 5 households in Renfrewshire. This has been delivered primarily by the Digital First team who created a digital solution and process for all Business grants, free school meal payments, and licencing applications – this approach has ensured a more direct access to services for our customers, reduced handoffs for back office staff and preventing unnecessary call backs. The Digital First Team, alongside the Economic Development team in the Chief Executive's Service, have developed a digital process for businesses to access grants if they have been impacted by increased and extended protective measures in November 2020 and now the second lockdown. Finance have been responsible

for the payment of these grants which have totalled almost £60 million, providing vital lifeline support to Renfrewshire's businesses.

- Council Tax recovery action was paused for four months in recognition of the challenges many people found themselves in, customers were actively encouraged to contact the service to change payment start dates and agree changes to payment schedules. This is recognised in the reduction in council tax collected compared with the same period last year – at 28 July 2020 Council Tax collection was 40.54%, which was 1.08% down on the equivalent period last year. In advance of reminders being issued, large scale pro-active customer contact was undertaken directly by the revenues team to offer support and direct applications to the Council Tax Reduction scheme. Normal recovery processes have now resumed. Where customers indicate that they are struggling, a range of measures are in place to provide advice and support.
- The Right for Renfrewshire transformation programme was paused at the beginning of the pandemic to allow the Council to implement its emergency response. The programme was restarted by the Corporate Management Team in autumn 2020 with the initial focus being on stepping back up the implementation of tranche 1 change projects. Right for Renfrewshire is now the primary vehicle to support delivery of savings supporting the Council's financial strategy and a progress report was provided to Leadership Board in December 2020. The report provided Elected Members and the public with an update on the progress of the tranche 1 service redesigns. For Finance and Resources, this include the Customer Transactions service design, which will bring Customer and Business services functions around mediated access to services and transactional (repeatable) universal business service. Subject to COVID-19 impacts, the service design is expected to be completed by the early part of 2022.
- The Finance Team produced a treasury management mid-year review and a general fund financial update to Council in December, and they have continued to work with COSLA and SOLACE on the impact of COVID-19 on local authorities. As such, a significant amount of work has been progressed to further update the assessment of the Council's financial outlook moving into 2021/22 and thereafter into 2022/23.
- The Health and Safety team have been an integral part of the Council's emergency management team, providing clear guidance in response to Government, NHS and Health Protection Scotland policies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team has revised and developed new policies, as part of the organisational response to suppressing COVID-19 and to support our workforce to work safely in new ways, including: Homeworking guidance; Schools checklists; and COVID-19-Age risk assessments. The service also rolled out the employee flu vaccination programme.
- Almost all service areas in Finance and Resources were involved in the first Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) in Scotland, at Johnstone Town Hall in early December 2020. The ATS at Johnstone was used to identify the level of infection that existed in the community in people who have no symptoms, with a view to further reducing the spread of the virus. Staff from CBS, ICT, Health & Safety, Human Resources and Organisational Development, Property and Project Management Unit were all involved in the successful pilot, with over

5,000 eligible residents and workers participating. Health and Safety staff have continued to support and advise on the home testing kits process for our frontline care staff and priority staff groups (e.g. Teachers) and establishment of further community test sites. In addition, CBS staff are administering the care home and care at home testing regime in support of HSCP and providing administrative support for the schools testing regime.

- The COVID-19 vaccination programme began in December 2020, prioritising those with the greatest clinical need including those aged over 80, and health and social care workers. The service provided project management support to the HSCP and CBS staff for care homes (e.g. booking transport to take care home staff for vaccination). From February, three Mass Vaccination Centres were established in Renfrewshire (at Renfrew Leisure Centre, Johnstone Town Hall, and Paisley Lagoon Leisure Centre). Staff from property services, ICT, health and safety, HR and the project management unit have all assisted in both the planning stages and have continued to provide ongoing support and expertise to the wider vaccination programme and the three centres.

5. Key priorities

- 5.1 Over the next 12 months, the focus for Finance and Resources Service will include understanding and addressing the impact of COVID-19, with a strong focus on recovery. Across the service, and the Council, we will work to stabilise and support services and the wider Renfrewshire community as we move through the new national recovery route map and associated changes to restrictions.
- 5.2 Priority areas for the service over the next 12 months include:
- **Financial Sustainability** –the impact of the pandemic has already and will continue to affect service costs, service demands, income streams and disruption to transformation plans. The financial outlook over the relatively short period of the next two years, is subject to significantly increased uncertainty and there will be a need for the budget position in 2021/22 to rely on the application of temporary financial flexibilities to address the reported budget deficit, as well as the re-purposing of existing resources for social and economic renewal plans and programmes to secure financial resilience and sustainability for the Council.
 - **Preparing and delivery of elections** - for the next Scottish Parliament election due to be held on 6 May 2021 and Scottish Local Elections scheduled for May 2022.
 - **Digital transformation for our customers** – the service will continue working towards transferring services online; to provide online services so easy and efficient most people choose to use them and can do so unaided; and implement the eight workstreams and associated action plans to progress this priority area, including work on smart data, digital participation etc.
 - **Remobilisation of services** – support our workforce to safely return to offices and building-based services when appropriate / returning to in-person meetings as well as hybrid versions.
 - **Right for Renfrewshire** – officers within the service will continue to lead the progression of this programme across the organisation and implement the service

redesigns identified for tranche 1 for this service. The Tranche 2 Right for Renfrewshire workstreams will also be scoped out and approval sought from the Leadership Board in due course as and when organisational capacity is sufficiently released from the demands of the COVID-19 response and recovery process.

- **Brexit** - the service continues to engage with national bodies, including COSLA, to help anticipate the impacts of Brexit on local government. The cross-service Strategic Brexit Officer Group has been re-established to plan for the potential medium to long term impact on both the Council and the area.
- **ICT support and provision** – the continued re-modelling of the ICT operating model with a focus on new ways of ICT provision and harnessing new technologies. This will be aided by the new enterprise and service applications, training and as part of the Digital strategy to build digital confidence across our whole workforce by equipping employees with the required knowledge and capabilities to use technology effectively and safely.
- **Staff physical and mental wellbeing support** - will remain a major focus and the Health, Safety and Well-Being Strategy 2018-21 will be reviewed for appropriateness in collaboration with our Trade Unions.
- **People Strategy: 'Our People, Our Future 2021-2026'** - will launch in spring 2021. This new strategy will integrate the council's approach to organisational development and workforce planning. It will have an immediate focus on supporting services and staff in response to COVID-19 and during the recovery phase with flexible and accessible supportive resources and training for all staff.
- **Staff development** - 'Leading Our Values' and 'Living Our Values' training will commence roll out to all managers and staff, starting a cultural change by embedding our values in day-to-day decision making. Training will be more accessible using multiple channels and formats to reach all staff. There will be a focus on enhancing the skills and opportunities of frontline staff and 'People Management Essentials' training for anyone with management responsibility.

6. Actions and Performance Indicators

- 6.1 In developing this plan, a full review of indicators and actions in light of the current context has been undertaken. Activities to deliver the key priorities outlined above have been identified alongside appropriate performance indicators.
- 6.2 Due to the changing national and local position it is challenging to assess what suitable long-term targets are appropriate for performance indicators and accurately establish milestones for longer-term service actions, therefore the focus for Service Delivery Plans' action plans and performance scorecards is on key activities over the next 12 months. Some longer-term priorities will be included however timescales and targets may have changed due to the significant impact of the pandemic on service delivery. Wherever possible, the service continues to look ahead beyond the next 12 months - targets and actions can also be updated through the year as the operating environment steadies and this can be highlighted for elected members at the mid-term point.

- 6.3 Where appropriate, targets have been provided, but in other areas these have been paused and will be reviewed at the mid-term point. Where performance indicators or actions relate to activities which have not been able to continue at present due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these have been paused for this year, as outlined in the appendix, and new indicators and actions relating to COVID-19 response and recovery have been included, for example indicators around self-isolation grants.
- 6.4 Longer term key priority areas are still included in the action plans, but the immediate focus remains on Renfrewshire's response to and recovery from the pandemic, with a clear alignment to delivery of the Council's high-level recovery plans, the Economic Recovery Plan and Social Renewal Plan.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
 3. **Community/Council Planning** – none
 4. **Property/Assets** – none
 5. **Information Technology** – none
 6. **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. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 7. **Health & Safety** – none
 8. **Procurement** – none
 9. **Risk** – As noted in section 5, of the Service Delivery Plan outlines the corporate and strategic risks for the service
 10. **Privacy Impact** - none
 11. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
 12. **Climate Change** - As noted in section 7, the new Leadership Board sub-group on Climate Change will continue to meet and develop an adaptation plan for the Council.
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List of Background Papers:None

Authors: Nicola Irvine-Brown and Gemma Wilson, Strategic Planning & Policy Development

Finance and Resources Service

Service Delivery Plan 2021-2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Services have, on an annual basis, produced a Service Improvement Plan (SIP) which sets out the strategic direction and outlines key programmes, actions and improvements which we intend to deliver over the following three years, based on the resources likely to be available. These feed into the Council and Community Plans, detailing how Services, partners and stakeholders will work together, focusing on activities which will support the delivery of these plans for Renfrewshire.
- 1.2. During the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, planned meetings of Council and all policy boards were paused, with the Emergencies Board established in order to support decision making and cross-party scrutiny during this critical period. Due to the cancellation of many policy boards, Service Improvement Plans for each service were not approved by all policy boards at that time. Interim reporting on service performance was re-established after summer 2020 with Service Update reports being presented at each board cycle between August 2020 and January 2021.
- 1.3. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the operation of the Council and on how services are delivered. Whilst there have been periods where national policy required some services to be paused, most Council services have continued throughout the year and have had to adapt to new ways of working. At the same time, the Council has taken on additional tasks directly related to supporting residents through the pandemic, whether as a single agency, or more often as a key partner with other public and third sector organisations. The operating environment has changed frequently and often at short notice and the Council has had to be flexible and adaptable to manage this change and adjust services accordingly. This 'response' phase is likely to continue for some time and will have a major impact on service delivery over the lifetime of this Plan.
- 1.4. Running parallel with the Council's response to the immediate concerns brought about by the pandemic and the associated restrictions has been work to consider how Renfrewshire recovers and rebuilds when restrictions ease and services begin to return to 'business as usual'. On 17 December 2020, Council approved the Economic Recovery Plan 2020-22 which focuses on job retention and creation, employability, supporting upskilling and innovation, tackling inequalities and delivering a 'green' recovery. Aligned to this will be the Social Renewal Plan, which is the Council's response to findings that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted particular groups in society, exacerbating existing inequalities. This Plan will have wide-ranging priorities including addressing economic impacts but also including issues such as digital exclusion and social isolation.
- 1.5. The Council's financial outlook over the relatively short period of the next two years is subject to significantly increased uncertainty in comparison to that which existed at the beginning of 2020. In this context, the next two to three years may represent the most critical period in the financial history of the Council. It is now a necessity that the Council is highly focused on re-mobilising and driving forward the transformation programme, once it is freed from COVID-19 demands, in order to deliver the targeted savings. This is critical to provide confidence that the Council will be positioned to secure the financial sustainability of priority services.
- 1.6. As a result of the pandemic, actions, performance indicators and targets across some areas of the service are no longer relevant or have been heavily disrupted, and there has been a significant shift in the priorities of services. To reflect this, performance reporting arrangements for 2021/22 will take the form of this Service Delivery Plan (SDP).
- 1.7. The focus of the SDP will be on service delivery over the next 12 months, reflecting the greater focus on recovery and renewal, rather than traditional service improvement activity. Some longer-term priorities will be included, however timescales and targets may have had to change due to the significant impact of the pandemic on service delivery. Nonetheless we will remain focused on progressing with the improvement agenda and the pandemic may allow some opportunity to accelerate some activity, such as in health and well-being and digital. However, the ongoing uncertainty means that there remains scope for plans to be disrupted going forward.

- 1.8. A six-monthly update on progress of the SDP will be presented to the appropriate policy boards in autumn 2021, and early summer 2022.

2. IMPACT OF COVID-19

- 2.1. The impact of the pandemic on Renfrewshire's communities, residents and businesses has been unprecedented and no Council service was untouched by the lockdown and associated restrictions at that time. The Council worked with partners to continue to deliver vital frontline services throughout the period, as well as create new services (such as the Local Assistance Team) to respond to immediate critical needs. The workforce demonstrated its resilience and flexibility by adapting to new ways of working, whether that was finding new ways to support our most vulnerable, taking on entirely new duties whether as part of an existing role or as a redeployment, or adapting to full-time home based working. Staff continue to respond to an ever-changing set of circumstances and demands.
- 2.2. During Summer 2020, the Council worked to restart impacted services in line with Scottish Government guidance. In parallel to this work, the Council also commenced work with partners to develop local recovery plans for Renfrewshire, which set out the key actions that will be taken jointly to support communities and businesses to recover from the impact of the pandemic going forward.
- 2.3. Unfortunately, Renfrewshire has been subject to several different levels of severe restriction since October 2020 and remains in Level 4 at the time of writing. The situation continues to evolve, and the Council remains very much in response mode - supporting local people, businesses and communities impacted by COVID-19 and associated current restrictions. There is a continued focus on supporting both mass testing and mass vaccinations, and practical support for those self-isolating is still being offered.
- 2.4. As with other areas of the Council, since March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has significantly changed the way in which Finance and Resources has provided services and, for many areas, the actual services which they deliver. Priorities for the Finance and Resources Service have also changed to deal with the many issues caused by the pandemic and also to prepare recovery actions post COVID-19. Wherever possible existing priorities have continued to be delivered, such as the launch and embedding of the Council's Values, publication of 'A digital strategy for Renfrewshire' and a digital board established to progress this, and that sound governance arrangements and internal audit reviews and checks have been maintained throughout.
- 2.5. Given the constricted timelines and staff concentrating on responding to COVID-19 it was not possible to involve employees as widely in the process of contributing to the SDP as happens during the normal course of producing the SIPs. However, staff will be included more widely in the development of the next Plan and are currently engaged in the renewal and recovery plans.

3. WHAT WE DO

- 3.1 Finance and Resources Service is one of the largest services within Renfrewshire Council, and employs approximately 1,100 employees. The service 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.
- 3.2 The Service also leads on the delivery of strategic change and organisational development across the Council as well as leading on a number of high profile projects for the Council such as the rollout of Business World, an integrated financial and HR system, transforming how the Council manages and delivers its key financial and management processes as well as delivering the new Transformation Programme – Right for Renfrewshire, Digital First and supporting the development and delivery of major investment programmes including City Deal, the Cultural Infrastructure Programme and the Schools Estate Management Plan.
- 3.3 The service is led by the Director of Finance and Resources, who is supported by a Senior Management Team (SMT) that includes six Heads of Service and the Chief Auditor. The directorate team is supported in its strategic and operational responsibilities by the Departmental Management Team (DMT).



4 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES 2020/21

- 4.1 Despite the main focus of the service over the last year being to tackle COVID-19 and supporting our communities and businesses, during this period the Finance and Resources Service has still managed to deliver a wide range of achievements across the service.
- 4.2 Finance and Resources Services responded, adapted and changed their approaches to service delivery to ensure communities and staff were supported over the year. Throughout, staff had a positive 'can do' attitude and desire to help communities, which included: Architects, Project Managers and Estates staff using their spare time to help clean schools; Internal Audit officers working on the Local Assistance Team to assist those individuals shielding; administration staff supporting the essential worker Childcare Hubs; and Surveyors, Energy Officers and Clerk of Works doing driving duties to help Environment & Infrastructure deliver essential services.
- 4.3 Overall, the service has been fundamental to supporting our staff, services, and suppliers throughout this last year, by maintaining core activities such as payroll, HR and employee services, ICT support and the creditors team etc.

Providing support for Renfrewshire communities and customers

- 4.4 The Contact Centre very quickly moved to a virtual call centre with all staff working from home to provide a telephone service for essential calls only. Face to face provision in all three Customer Service locations closed at the start of lockdown, with services moved online, backed up by phone support where required – this included benefits and Council Tax. Customers have been supported to continue to make payments online or in their local areas via Post Office or Paypoint. The Contact Centre, supported by Advice Works staff took on the Shielding and Scottish Government national helplines, and support was enhanced by the creation of new digital forms for online completion, where customers were comfortable with this.
- 4.5 The service has continued to experience an increase in enquiries from individuals and families whose financial circumstances have been affected during the pandemic and associated lockdowns, as highlighted below:
- Number of people in receipt of Universal Credit in Renfrewshire increased by 92% from 7,604 in March 2020 to 15,462 in November 2020, higher than the percentage increase for Scotland as a whole in the same time period (80%).
 - Discretionary Housing Payment awards for non bedroom tax cases increased by £68k, year to date compared to the same period last year.
 - 18,988 households were receiving Council Tax Reduction at the end of December 2020, this is up by 1,486 from the December 2019 count of 17,502 (8.49% increase).
 - 7,806 crisis grant applications were made between April and December 2020, an increase of 1,336 on the same period last year. At a national level it was recently reported that Scottish Welfare Fund crisis grant applications were 29% higher in November 2020 than in November 2019.
 - Since 12 October when the Self-Isolation Grant (£500) was introduced through to 10 January 2021, a total of 638 applications have been made resulting in 199 awards.

- 4.6 The Self-Isolation Support Grant (SISG) through the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is administered by local authorities, providing a grant of £500 to individuals who are in receipt of low income benefits and who lose income as a result of being required to self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The scheme opened on 12 October 2020. Staff assist customers with an application and triage customers seeking wider support and route any requirements to the local assistance team. The service has also managed the changing guidelines of the grant, in terms of the eligibility criteria (which has widened the range of people able to claim) and the timeframe of the isolation period, which has reduced from 14 to 10 day.
- 4.7 Staff within CBS have been fully supporting the HSCP with all administration tasks in relation to care home testing and the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines.
- 4.8 Customer and Business Services and Finance staff have been involved in ensuring free school meal payments have been made throughout the year, including over holiday periods, with direct payments of £100 made before Christmas to all eligible families. Payments to families will total an estimated £4 million to over 5,000 families in 2020/21.
- 4.9 The registration team supported those customers who lost family members to the virus and other reasons by the continued registration of deaths remotely. Initially the service moved from providing a service across three locations to an online service for death registrations only. This involved relocating the registration staff to the Community Safety Hub in Paisley and the extension of the service from a five day to a seven day per week service. The service then relocated to 5 High Street, Paisley, to accommodate the change in Government guidance requiring the clearing of the backlog in birth registrations. This meant the re-introduction of face to face appointments with members of the public. The service also recommenced marriage and civil partnership ceremonies including the re-opening of the marriage suite at Renfrewshire House. However, due to the current restrictions, the Registration services have now returned to appointment only, whilst the registration of deaths continues to be undertaken remotely. Marriage ceremonies and Civil Partnerships will continue to be performed, though these will be in line with new restrictions on numbers (5 people).
- 4.10 The Licensing Service established an oversight board on the potential impact of COVID-19 on construction sites and contracts during the pandemic. Licensing has adapted and been flexible as Government policy has changed due to the national and local restrictions, such as the responding to the reopening and closing of licensed premises, and changing number of guests permitted at weddings and civil partnerships.

Providing digital and ICT expertise

- 4.11 Committee Services has supported the move from physical meetings of the Council and its Boards to online meetings. This included: the establishment of weekly online meetings of the Emergencies Board; the first ever meeting of the Council held remotely; and holding school placing request appeals, which allowed parents to participate in those hearings. The team continue to support meetings being held remotely using video technology. Officers from the service have continued to investigate ways of enabling public attendance at meetings and the potential for streaming each meeting as it happens. As such, a new system has been purchased, Public-I, this will allow hybrid meetings to take place.
- 4.12 ICT Services were proactive and upscaled the remote access infrastructure anticipating increased usage (i.e. up to 4,000 connections) prior to the initial lockdown in March 2020. This increase in capacity was tested up-front with high volume of remote connections via Edinburgh-based cloud hosted data centres, as part of the adoption of Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). Internal remote-control software tools were also reconfigured to enable the seamless support of Council provisioned end-user devices in the office or at home. This enabled the successful rapid transition from office working to home working.
- 4.13 ICT continued to capitalise on the Microsoft O365 tool, which has allowed staff for anytime/anywhere conferencing, collaboration and information sharing, and has provided the ability for newly created teams to be established and effective in delivering critical services for Renfrewshire's most vulnerable. ICT have continued to configure and deploy new end user devices providing additional staff with the ability to work

from home during the pandemic, this has all been supported by Microsoft O365 training courses being made available for staff.

- 4.14 Registered MyAccount users increased to 70,182, representing more than 4 out of every 5 households in Renfrewshire. This has been delivered primarily by the Digital First team who created a digital solution and process for all Business grants, free school meal payments, and licencing applications – this approach has ensured a more direct access to services for our customers, reduced handoffs for back office staff and preventing unnecessary call backs. The Digital First Team, alongside the Economic Development team in the Chief Executive's Service, have developed a digital process for businesses to access grants if they have been impacted by increased and extended protective measures in November 2020 and now the second lockdown. Finance have been responsible for the payment of these grants which have totalled almost £60 million, providing vital lifeline support to Renfrewshire's businesses.
- 4.15 A digital strategy for Renfrewshire was developed and approved by the Leadership Board in September 2020. The strategy outlines an approach to embedding digital across all that the Council does and to ensure that it works collaboratively to maximise the opportunities from emerging digital technologies and new ways of working and doing business.

Business rates and revenue collection

- 4.16 Council Tax recovery action was paused for four months in recognition of the challenges many people found themselves in, customers were actively encouraged to contact the service to change payment start dates and agree changes to payment schedules. This is recognised in the reduction in council tax collected compared with the same period last year – at 28 July 2020 Council Tax collection was 40.54%, which was 1.08% down on the equivalent period last year. In advance of reminders being issued, large scale pro-active customer contact was undertaken directly by the revenues team to offer support and direct applications to the Council Tax Reduction scheme. Normal recovery processes have now fully resumed. Where customers indicate that they are struggling a range of measures are in place to provide advice and support.
- 4.17 Business rates annual billing was delayed until July 2020 to take account of the new COVID-19 related reliefs introduced by the Scottish Government and the team are now supporting businesses in relation to payment arrangements. As a result, the first payment for those paying monthly was due to be paid on 7 August 2020, with businesses that pay twice yearly payments not making their first payment until the end of August. Non-Domestic Rates collection was 1.87% compared to 29.6%, as at 28 July 2019 (down 27.73%). The Business Team has also supported activities required to help local businesses apply for newly launched government support grants. The team have helped provide financial support to businesses with in excess of £50m to be paid.

Ensure financial sustainability of the council

- 4.18 The Right for Renfrewshire transformation programme was paused at the beginning of the pandemic to allow the Council to implement its emergency response. The programme was restarted by the Corporate Management Team in autumn 2020 with the initial focus being on stepping back up the implementation of tranche 1 change projects.
- 4.19 Right for Renfrewshire is now the primary vehicle to support the delivery of savings supporting the Council's financial strategy and a progress report was provided to Leadership Board in December 2020. The report provided Elected Members and the public with an update on the progress of the tranche 1 service redesigns. For Finance and Resources, this include the Customer Transactions service design, which will bring Customer and Business services functions around mediated access to services and transactional (repeatable) universal business service. Subject to COVID-19 impacts, the service design is expected to be completed by the early part of 2022.
- 4.20 The Finance Team produced a treasury management mid-year review and a general fund financial update to Council in December, and they have continued to work with COSLA and SOLACE on the impact of COVID-19 on local authorities. In the General Fund Financial Update to Council on 17 December, it outlined an expectation that – excluding education, early learning and childcare hubs – the net additional costs expected

to be incurred in relation to COVID-19 were in the region of £19 million - £21 million. Yet the report noted that “should this change materially, for example with further recurring Tier 4 restrictions applying for prolonged period, there is likely to be a consequential impact on council services and associated costs”. Therefore, potentially this second lockdown may lead to a revising of this estimate once again.

- 4.21 On the 4th March 2021 the Council agreed a budget of £449.8million for 2021/22, and to continue the £443.5million capital investment programme. As part of the 2021/22 budget Council Tax will be frozen and the Council has agreed £2.7million to help tackle inequalities and support people most affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Supporting our workforce

- 4.22 The Health and Safety team have been an integral part of the Council’s emergency management team, providing clear guidance in response to Government, NHS and Health Protection Scotland policies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team has revised and developed new policies, as part of the organisational response to suppressing COVID-19 and to support our workforce to work safely in new ways, including: Homeworking guidance; Schools checklists; and COVID-19-Age risk assessments etc. The service also rolled out the employee flu vaccination programme.
- 4.23 Protecting mental health and wellbeing is a key priority for the team. The team have worked closely with the communications and marketing service to regularly engage with the workforce and provide access to a wide range of mental health and wellbeing support and services. This has included; development of a wellbeing hub on the Council website for all employees to access; enhancements to the staff counselling service to include specialist Post Traumatic Incident support for employees affected by COVID-19; mental health awareness training for managers and supervisors updated and promoted widely through the wellbeing hub; and a dedicated COVID-19 telephone line to provide quick and effective support for Council employees to discuss health concerns. Most recently, in January 2021, a new wellbeing campaign, “Our Wellbeing”, was launched. All colleagues across the Council have been asked to get involved by visiting the staff wellbeing page online, familiarising themselves with the support available and being part of the ongoing conversation about wellbeing at home and in the workplace.
- 4.24 The ongoing recruitment of essential staff such as care workers, cleaners and teachers, has continued by using digital means as has the ongoing delivery of our payroll service while working at home. The service also worked closely with national government, partners and trade unions to actively manage and redeploy staffing resources to meet the most critical services over the emergency period.

Mass testing and vaccination programme for Renfrewshire

- 4.25 Almost all service areas in Finance and Resources were involved in the first Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) in Scotland, at Johnstone Town Hall in early December 2020. The ATS at Johnstone was used to identify the level of infection that existed in the community in people who have no symptoms, with a view to further reducing the spread of the virus. Staff from CBS, ICT, Health & Safety, Human Resources and Organisational Development, Property and Project Management Unit were all involved in the successful pilot, with over 5,000 eligible residents and workers participating. Health and Safety staff have continued to support and advise on the home testing kits process for our frontline care staff and priority staff groups (e.g. Teachers) and establishment of further community test sites. In addition, CBS staff are administering the care home and care at home testing regime in support of HSCP and providing administrative support for the schools testing regime.
- 4.26 The COVID-19 vaccination programme began in December 2020, prioritising those with the greatest clinical need including those aged over 80, and health and social care workers. The service provided project management support to the HSCP and CBS staff for care homes (e.g. booking transport to take care home staff for vaccination). From February, three Mass Vaccination Centres were established in Renfrewshire (at Renfrew Leisure Centre, Johnstone Town Hall, and Paisley Lagoon Leisure Centre). Staff from property services, ICT, health and safety, HR and the project management unit have all assisted in both the planning stages and continued to provide ongoing support and expertise to the wider vaccination programme and the three centres.

5 OUR STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National policy context

- 5.1 Across the Local Government sector, the pandemic and associated lockdown has affected many aspects of the Councils' finances, for the mobilisation of new services, addressing recovery costs as well as the lost income from closures of facilities and reductions in income from fees and charges. The sector has faced significant financial challenges and financial uncertainty remains. There has also been a significant disruption to the normal budget setting cycle at both a UK level and consequently Scottish Government level following the unprecedented economic impact that has emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.2 Scotland's climate change legislation (The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019) sets a target of net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045. The act makes provision about advice, plans and reports in relation to those targets. The objective is to contribute appropriately to the world's efforts to deliver on the Paris Agreement reached at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In November 2021, Glasgow will host the 26th Conference of the Parties, known as COP26, which is designed to produce an international response to the climate emergency. This was originally planned for November 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic.
- 5.3 The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2020-21 focuses on dealing with the economic, health and social crisis caused by COVID-19, while taking steps to ensure that in responding to the pandemic Scotland also delivers on the government's commitments to tackle child poverty and to reach net-zero by 2045. The commitment to a Green recovery includes creating a Green Jobs Fund to boost opportunities in this area, as well as a fund to improve local authority refuse collection infrastructure and develop a new route map to reduce waste and meet Scotland's waste and recycling targets for 2025.
- 5.4 The Scottish Government set up a Social Renewal Advisory Board to look at how to deliver a fairer society while Scotland recovers from the effects of the pandemic. A [report](#) was published in January setting out 20 Calls to Action around the themes of Money and Work; People, Rights and Advancing Equality; and Communities and Collective Endeavour.
- 5.5 Following the referendum in 2016, the UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020 and entered a 'transition period' which ended on 31 December 2020. The UK-EU Trade Cooperation Agreement was ratified by the UK Parliament on 30 December 2020, covering the key areas of the new trading relationship between the UK and the EU. Further supporting legislation including the UK Internal Market Act 2020 and the Scottish Government's EU (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2020 have also recently been passed. Further details on other provisions of relevance to local government (such as procurement, 'state aid', the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) are in development.
- 5.6 Significant financial support has been made available through programmes funded by both the UK and Scottish Governments to seek to mitigate the adverse impact on individuals and businesses that are unable to live and work as normal due to the restrictions placed on them under the initial lockdown period, and the tiered system of protective measures now being used during the second wave of the pandemic. The scale and range of financial support measures put in place is unprecedented with almost £45m distributed directly to businesses in Renfrewshire by the Council since March 2020 to help them mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and the operational restrictions imposed by the Government to tackle the pandemic.
- 5.7 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and Review of Community Planning aims to empower community bodies through supporting them in taking ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services. Communities of place or interest also have new rights under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to request participation in the planning and delivery of services, which has implications for the Council and other public services.
- 5.8 An updated Strategic Framework for the easing of lockdown restrictions was published by the Scottish Government on 23 February. A further document will be published in mid-March giving more detail on the

sequencing of re-opening the economy from late April onwards. In the coming months vaccination will become the main tool of suppression, however before that there is a need to use a range of other measures including test and protect, expanding testing capacity and travel restrictions.

5.9 Legislation to address the pandemic has been introduced, including:

- The Coronavirus Act 2020, passed by the UK Parliament as the statutory basis for measures to implement the lockdown and to make changes to other legislation to relax rules and timescales on matters such as the rules on claiming statutory sick pay and allowing for the remote registration of deaths.
- The Public Health (Coronavirus)(Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, providing a detailed set of rules for Scotland covering such matters as which types of businesses had to close during the pandemic, which activities had to stop or were restricted, the exemptions that applied to these general rules and the powers of enforcement to Police Scotland and local authorities in relation to the lockdown. The Emergencies Board agreed to delegate responsibility to Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers to exercise relevant enforcement powers for the Council as authorised officers under this Act.
- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 introduced a wide range of measures covering such matters as protecting tenancies, making temporary changes to child protection procedures and the Children's Hearings system, extending timescales for determining civic licensing applications and freedom of information requests, extending the duration of planning permission, the justice system and allowing local authorities to exclude the public from meetings.
- The Coronavirus (Scotland)(No2) Act 2020 introduced a range of powers for the Scottish Ministers, Health Boards and local authorities to intervene in the way care homes were operated. This included a power to local authorities to purchase care homes in certain circumstances. There are provisions relating to marriage and civil partnerships and the Act also reversed the previous changes to the timescales for dealing with freedom of information requests. There are further provisions regarding the operation of the justice system and termination of student tenancies.

Local policy context

- 5.10 The Council's financial outlook over the relatively short period of the next two years, is subject to significantly increased uncertainty at the end of 2020 in comparison to that which existed at the beginning of 2020. In this context, the next two to three years may represent the most critical period in the financial history of the Council. It is now a necessity that the Council is highly focused on re-mobilising and driving forward the Right for Renfrewshire transformation programme once it is freed from COVID-19 demands in order to deliver the targeted £25 million of savings. This is critical to provide confidence that the Council will be positioned to secure the financial sustainability of priority services.
- 5.11 Although COVID-19 response and recovery will be the major focus over the next twelve months, the Council still has huge ambitions for Renfrewshire, and many activities to support our high-level priority areas will continue to be channelled through our recovery approach. Alongside the Council's own financial recovery planning, two major strategic recovery plans – Renfrewshire's Economic Recovery Plan and Social Renewal Plan – will sit alongside the Council and Community Plans, to set a clear strategic direction for the organisation in these unprecedented and rapidly changing times.
- 5.12 In December 2020, Council approved an Economic Recovery Plan for Renfrewshire, developed in conjunction with Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Panel and building on the strong foundation of Renfrewshire's Economic Strategy. The Plan sets out the direction of travel to support Renfrewshire's economy as we move out of the response and into the recovery phase of the pandemic, recognising the significant impact on the local and national economy and what this means at a local level for Renfrewshire's businesses, communities and people. The Plan is a key priority and will be coordinated by the Head of Economy and Development in collaboration with a wide variety of local partners.
- 5.13 A Social Renewal Plan for Renfrewshire is currently being finalised, recognising the inequalities that exist in Renfrewshire, significantly deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and setting out joint plans to work with our partners, communities and other stakeholders to address these. Supporting this work, a Community Impact Assessment was undertaken, examining the existing data around the impact of COVID-19 in tandem

with understanding people's experiences of the pandemic, through listening events and the Public Services Panel survey to Renfrewshire citizens.

- 5.14 Established in 2018, Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drugs Commission published its key findings and recommendations in December 2020, providing clear direction to community planning partners on the action that must be taken to fundamentally address the impact of alcohol and drug use in Renfrewshire. Key areas of focus during early 2021 will be to develop the partnership governance structures required to drive this work and to progress actions which were identified within the Commission report as requiring immediate action.
- 5.15 Following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019, we will continue to support the Climate Change sub-committee of the Leadership Board to develop a range of plans to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions and support partners, businesses and citizens in Renfrewshire to reduce theirs.
- 5.16 Renfrewshire Council's change and transformation programme, Right for Renfrewshire, was formally paused in the response to the Council and its resources being fully focused on managing the COVID-19 response and remobilised in late summer, reviewed to reflect the changed environment and experiences due to the COVID-19 response and recovery.
- 5.17 A new Digital Strategy for Renfrewshire was approved by the Leadership Board in September 2020, outlining our approach to embedding digital across all that we do in a way that closely aligns with our ambitions for Renfrewshire and ensures that we work collaboratively to maximise the opportunities from emerging digital technologies and new ways of working and doing business. The Strategy also reflects the learning and experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, showing the increasing importance of digital in how we work, provide services, engage with our communities and educate our children.
- 5.18 Following the Council's positive Best Value Audit inspection, Audit Scotland provided direction on areas for improvement, with 7 key recommendations forming an improvement plan. Actions from the improvement plan are embedded within the Council and Community Plans and are driven at a service level through the service planning process. The context in which the Council is operating and delivering services against, has changed significantly since the Best Value Assurance Report was published in 2017. Since the emergence of the pandemic, the Council has had to respond and adapt at pace to fundamental levels of change, and will be required to continue to do so into the longer term as the full impact of the pandemic on the Council's financial position, the local economy and communities is realised. The recommendations within the Best Value Assurance Report and linked improvement plan do remain relevant, and the ongoing work with the Council's external auditors continues to support the organisation's ongoing improvement
- 5.19 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. Other risks, which may occur only for or within our own service, will be contained in our service risk register which is reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. The corporate risks where Finance and Resources Services are owner or joint owners are shown below.

Finance and Resources corporate risks:		Evaluation:
Financial Stability		Very High
Financial Sustainability		Very High
Organisation Resilience		High
Regulatory Services/ Statutory Activities		High
Asset Management		High
Information Handling		High
Administration of Elections		High
Employee wellbeing		Moderate

Equalities

- 5.20 Every area of work within the Council has a role to play in promoting equality and diversity. While this is the right thing to do and has clear advantages for the Council, there are also legal requirements. Equality law (The Equality Act 2010) protects people from unfair treatment and asks public bodies (including Renfrewshire Council) to show how they make a positive difference to equality groups.
- 5.21 One of the specific duties requires the Council to publish a set of Equality Outcomes and report progress towards them every two years. The new Equality Outcomes have been developed for Renfrewshire through engagement with organisations such as Diversity and Equality Alliance in Renfrewshire (DEAR) and designed to reflect the understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on communities in Renfrewshire. The draft Outcomes were agreed by Council in March 2021, and further consultation will be undertaken during 2021.
- 5.22 The Council recognises that equality needs to be both mainstreamed fully into policies and procedures and also ensure that Equality Outcomes are given high priority, by being part of mainstream progress reporting. Finance and Resources Service will continue to actively promote equality and diversity mainstreaming through the work of the main service areas and through the relevant operational plans.

People Strategy

- 5.23 The Council will launch “Our People, Our Future”, a new People Strategy in 2021. This five-year plan will have an immediate focus on supporting staff and services within the context of the pandemic and the recovery phase. It will thereafter be realigned with the new Council Plan and focus on supporting staff through service transformation, changing cultural norms, embedding our values within decision making and improving staff and service user experiences of the Council.
- 5.24 The strategy will be focused on high-level outcomes and with a flexible approach which will be bespoke for each service, reflecting the requirements of each service and group of staff. The actions arising from the strategy will be embedded in each service plan from mid-year review in autumn and reported on therein. It is intended that the new approach focuses not only on processes and planning, but on skills development and cultural change. HR and OD colleagues will work with all services throughout 2021 to develop actions which fit the needs and duties of its staff.

6 Priority Areas

- 6.1 Based on the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the service response to it, the recovery plans already underway and the national and local context in which the service is operating in, the focus for Finance and Resources Service Delivery Plan will be for the next 12 months and the priority, or critical areas will include:
- **Financial Sustainability** –the impact of the pandemic has already and will continue to affect service costs, service demands, income streams and disruption to transformation plans. The financial outlook over the relatively short period of the next two years, is subject to significantly increased uncertainty and there will be a need for the budget position in 2021/22 to rely on the application of temporary financial flexibilities to address the reported budget deficit, as well as the re-purposing of existing resources for social and economic renewal plans and programmes to secure financial resilience and sustainability for the Council.
 - **Preparing and delivery of elections** - for the next Scottish Parliament election due to be held on 6 May 2021 and Scottish Local Elections scheduled for May 2022.
 - **Digital transformation for our customers** – the service will continue working towards transferring services online. To provide online services so easy and efficient most people choose to use them and can do so unaided; and implement the eight workstreams and associated action plans to progress this priority area, including work on smart data, digital participation etc.
 - **Remobilisation of services** – support our workforce to safely return to offices and building-based services when appropriate / returning to in-person meetings as well as hybrid versions.

- **Right for Renfrewshire** – officers within the service will continue to lead the progression of this programme across the organisation and implement the service redesigns for tranche 1 for this service. The Tranche 2 Right for Renfrewshire workstreams will also be scoped out and approval sought from the Leadership Board in due course as and when organisational capacity is sufficiently released from the demands of the COVID-19 response and recovery process.
- **Brexit** - the service continues to engage with national bodies, including COSLA, to help anticipate the impacts of Brexit on local government. The cross-service Strategic Brexit Officer Group has been re-established to plan for the potential medium to long term impact on both the Council and the area.
- **ICT support and provision** – the continued re-modelling of the ICT operating model with a focus on new ways of ICT provision and harnessing new technologies. This will be aided by the new enterprise and service applications, training and as part of the Digital strategy to build digital confidence across our whole workforce by equipping employees with the required knowledge and capabilities to use technology effectively and safely.
- **Staff physical and mental wellbeing support** - will remain a major focus and the Health, Safety and Well-Being Strategy 2018-21 will be reviewed for appropriateness in collaboration with our Trade Unions.
- **People Strategy: ‘Our People, Our Future 2021-2026’** - will launch in spring 2021. This new strategy will integrate the council’s approach to organisational development and workforce planning. It will have an immediate focus on supporting services and staff in response to COVID-19 and during the recovery phase with flexible and accessible supportive resources and training for all staff.
- **Staff development** - ‘Leading Our Values’ and ‘Living Our Values’ training will commence roll out to all managers and staff, starting a cultural change by embedding our values in day-to-day decision making. Training will be more accessible using multiple channels and formats to reach all staff. There will be a focus on enhancing the skills and opportunities of frontline staff and ‘People Management Essentials’ training for anyone with management responsibility.

7 ACTIONS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 7.1 Due to the changing national and local position it is challenging to assess what suitable long-term targets are appropriate for performance indicators and accurately establish milestones for longer-term service actions, therefore the focus for Service Delivery Plans’ action plans and performance scorecards is on key activities over the next 12 months. Some longer-term priorities will be included, however timescales and targets may have changed due to the significant impact of the pandemic on service delivery.
- 7.2 Where appropriate, targets have been provided, but in other areas these have been paused and will be reviewed at the mid-term point of the SDP. Where performance indicators or actions relate to activities which have not been able to continue at present due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these have been paused for this year, as outlined below, and new indicators and actions relating to COVID-19 response and recovery have been included.
- 7.3 Longer term key priority areas are still included in the action plans, but the immediate focus remains on Renfrewshire’s response to and recovery from the pandemic, with a clear alignment to delivery of the Council’s high-level recovery plans, the Economic Recovery Plan and Social Renewal Plan.
- 7.4 A variety of performance measures are applied across the service which includes external suites of indicators. Performance against selected indicators is reported quarterly to the Council’s Corporate Management Team. Performance against all indicators in this Service Delivery Plan is reported to elected members in the mid-year monitoring report and the outturn report.

Strategic Outcome 1: Reshaping our place, our economy and our future

The Service delivers this priority through ensuring the financial management of the Council is strategic and sustainable and the ongoing work to support the Community Asset Transfer applications in line with legislation around Community Empowerment.



Priorities 2021/22

- Ensuring that the Council's current financial position remains stable and within the financial planning parameters established when the Council sets its budget.
- Continuing to provide high quality advice and support to effectively develop and deliver on the medium-term financial strategy
- Strengthening community empowerment through supporting the community assets transfer applications.

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Continue to revise and implement the Financial Strategy, which will focus on delivering required savings through the transformation programme and effective workforce planning	Sustainable future	Director	31 March 2022
Support the ongoing development of community engagement and participation, in particular for community assets transfer applications	Community empowerment	Head of Property	31 March 2022
Financial implications of COVID-19, and the rebuilding of financial resilience following unprecedented costs incurred in responding to the pandemic	Re-focusing and re-purposing of existing resources and programmes towards the most important priorities that emerge will be critical as well as protecting the Council's ability to deliver existing plans	Head of Finance	31 March 2022

Performance Indicators

A new Performance Indicator has been included in this Outcome in the Service Delivery Plan this year: Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue. This is a new financial sustainability indicator as part of the Local Government Benchmarking framework.

Performance Indicator	Frequency	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target (Q3 or 19/20)	Traffic Light Icon	2020/21 Target
Asset Management Transfer - number of months from receipt of an application to a determination being issued from the Council	Annual	2019/20	11*	6		6
NEW LGBF PI - Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	Annual	2019/20	%	Data only		Data only

***Explanation of performance** -The 2019/20 data is based on only 1 transfer as although 9 Community Asset Transfer requests were received not all proceeded to consideration by the Community Asset Transfer Panel, as 8 of the applications were at an initial enquiry stage or did not comply with the requirements of the Act

Strategic Outcome 3: Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Finance and Resources Service contributes to this priority through its commitment to providing advice and support to those impacted by welfare reform and the rollout of Universal Credit across Renfrewshire. In addition to this, Customer and Business Services continues to support the early learning and childcare workforce to increase the number and proportion of funded placements by 2021, and Property Services assist in ensuring that our early learning establishments are fit for purpose.

Priorities 2021/22

- Provide resource capacity to ensure that early learning and childcare funded placements are increased and that our establishments are fit for purpose.
- Consolidating the Living Wage into our Pay and Grading Structure as an hourly rate of pay for Local Government Employees.
- Continue to support and advise individuals and families who need financial assistance and/or financial circumstances have been affected during the pandemic and associated lockdowns, and ensure that the processing of a Social Welfare Fund; Community Care Grant; Crisis Grant; and Self-Isolation Grant are dealt with speedily and accurately for these individuals.

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Support the development and delivery of the early learning and childcare expansion plans, in particular delivery of new facilities	Provide resource capacity to ensure that early learning and childcare funded placements are increased.	Head of Finance, Head of Property Services and Head of Customer and Business Services	Autumn 2021
School Estates – delivery of Paisley Grammar School expansion	To improve school estate	Head of Property Services	2025
Implement revisions to the Council's Pay and Grading Structure for Local Government Employees, by consolidating the Living Wage into this structure as an hourly rate of pay for Local Government employees.	Improvements across the remainder of the pay structure, which includes restoring the pay differentials between grades eroded by recent increases in the living wage, removing overlaps between grades and reducing the overall length of each grade	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	April 2021

Performance Indicators

A new Performance Indicator has been included in this Outcome in the Service Delivery Plan this year: Average speed of processing a Self-Isolation grant application in days

Performance Indicator	Frequency	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target (Q3 or 19/20)	Traffic Light Icon	2021/22 Target
Time taken for processing new housing benefit applications up until the posting of notification of outcome of the application (cumulative)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	15.09	24	✓	24
Time taken for processing change of circumstance housing benefit applications up until the posting of notification of outcome of the application (cumulative)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	3.91	10	✓	10
Average speed of processing a Crisis Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	2	2	✓	2
Average speed of processing a Community Care Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	6	15	✓	15
NEW PI: Average speed of processing a Self-Isolation Grant in days	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	1	2	✓	2

Strategic Outcome 4: Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy

The Service contributes to this priority through ongoing work around supporting the reduction in our carbon emissions across public buildings, fleet, waste, street lighting and staff travel.

Priorities 2021/22

- Support the work of the Climate Change Sub Committee and work with partners on energy options for Council buildings

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Input to and implement the climate change working group recommendations, specifically to: work with national and local partners to explore alternative energy options for Council buildings; and review the lifecycle replacement programme for Council buildings	Reduction in carbon emissions	Head of Property Services	31 March 2023

Strategic Outcome 5: Working together to improve outcomes

The majority of actions and performance indicators for Finance and Resources Service are located under this priority. This is in part due to the overarching nature of the services we provide across the breadth and depth of the Council to support and facilitate the smooth running of services. The Service contributes to this priority through the provision of a full range of financial, property, legal, ICT, business support services, as well as human resources and organisational development.

Priorities 2021/22

- Re-mobilisation of services and returning to buildings when possible as facilities start to open in line with the Scottish Government Routemap, adjustment may have to be made to physical spaces to allow for physical distancing and to comply with relevant guidance. In addition, the impact on employees will continue to be subject to regular reviews as new ways of working are established, whether that remains working from home or a return to office environments.
- The continued re-modelling of the ICT operating model with focus on new ways of ICT provision and harnessing new technologies.
- Cyber Security including upscaling of MS O365 security modules, PSN, and Cyber Essentials(+).
- Further expanding enterprise and service applications, including new developments for business world, implementation of a new planning system Uniform (from Accolade), and rollout of Eclipse for Adult Services, Criminal Justice etc.
- Improve the digital experience for staff by providing Microsoft O365 training and Use Your Own Device. As part of the digital strategy, building digital confidence across our whole workforce by equipping employees with the required knowledge and capabilities to use technology effectively and safely, this will include: establishing current and future skills set requirements across the council; carrying out a digital skills audit; removing digital barriers; promoting digital leadership; offering modern and appropriate training and development for all; and introducing Digital Champions who are active sponsors from our senior leadership population.
- Driven by customer and staff needs and requirements we will redesign our services to deliver secure, joined up digital services across all channels and services, delivering a fast, responsive multi-channel service for all. We will automate simple, repetitive, and rule-based tasks using the council's intelligent automation capabilities and we will innovate wherever possible to deliver services fit for the digital age
- Optimise revenue collection balanced with ensuring that people are given appropriate advice and financial support suitable to their circumstances
- Continue to lead on the Right for Renfrewshire programme across the organisation and implement the service redesigns identified for tranche 1 for this service. The Tranche 2 RforR workstreams will also be scoped out and approval sought from the Leadership Board
- People Strategy: 'Our People, Our Future 2021-2026', will launch in spring 2021. This new strategy will integrate the council's approach to organisational development and workforce planning. It will have an immediate focus on supporting services and staff in response to COVID-19 and during the recovery phase with flexible and accessible supportive resources and training for all staff. It will thereafter be strategically aligned with the new Council Plan and focus on supporting services and staff throughout transformation programmes over the coming years. The strategy will be driven using a strategic outcomes framework with suggested activity, providing services with the flexibility to decide what is the priority for them and what will have the biggest impact in line with their needs and Council priorities. Services will work with HR colleagues to develop 2021/22 priority actions arising from the strategy, which will be embedded in each service delivery plan and reported on therein.

- The health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce will remain a primary focus. This will include the continued roll out of the vaccination programme and testing to protect our frontline care staff, services and community. Physical and mental wellbeing support for all staff will remain a key focus and the Health, Safety and Well-Being Strategy 2018-21 will be reviewed for appropriateness in collaboration with our Trade Unions.
- 'Leading Our Values' and 'Living Our Values' training will commence roll out to all managers and staff, starting a cultural change by embedding our values in day-to-day decision making. Our Values will also be embedded across all key policies in the employment lifecycle - starting with Recruitment, Induction and People, Performance and Talent. Other policies will follow, selected by priority as part of a policy review programme.
- A new flexible approach to all staff development will be implemented - training will be more accessible using multiple channels and formats to reach all staff. There will be a focus on enhancing the skills and opportunities of frontline staff and 'People Management Essentials' training for anyone with management responsibility.
- Continue to engage with national bodies including COSLA to help anticipate the impact of Brexit on local government. The cross-service Strategic Brexit Officer Group has been re-established to plan for the potential medium to long term impact on both the Council and the area.

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Successfully develop and lead the delivery of the new Right for Renfrewshire transformation programme across the Council. Specifically, for 2021/22 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scope out Tranche 2 RforR workstreams - implement the service redesigns identified for tranche 1 	We will be leaner and more efficient, a digitally leading public sector body, doing the right things well, responsive to citizens changing needs and expectations and which prioritises more limited resources to where it can make the biggest positive impact on peoples' lives across Renfrewshire.	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022
Deliver £2.1 m of savings through the digital transformation of existing services through streamlined, flexible access and choice underpinned by self-serve digital channels and standardised, automated universal processes across the Council.	We will provide increased choice and flexibility for customers and will simplify and standardise processes for customers and staff	Head of Customer and Business Services	31 March 2022
Optimise revenue collection balanced with ensuring that people are given appropriate advice and financial support suitable to their circumstances	Council income streams will be maximised and financial support requests, changes and updates will be assessed in line with KPI targets; ensuring that financial support to customers is optimised	Head of Customer and Business Services	31 March 2022
Continue to make sure that all statutory duties are delivered, business operating models are maintained, ICT systems and support meet requirements, human resources activity and guidance remains, and high levels of customer services are still achieved	Staff have the support they need to do their job and customers can access the services they need.	SMT	31 March 2022
Director of Finance and Resources Service chairs the Strategic Brexit Officer Group (SBOG), which will continue to monitor progress and engage with COSLA, the Scottish Government and other organisations as appropriate as the nature of the UK's future relationship with the EU becomes clearer.	We will continue to monitor the impact of Brexit	Director	31 March 2022





What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Ensure the preparedness of the Council for the next Scottish Parliament election due to be held on 6 May 2021 and Scottish Local Elections scheduled for May 2022.	Election team and valuation joint board are well prepared for the upcoming elections	Head of Corporate Governance	31 March 2022
Continue to assess and improve the suitability of office accommodation post-pandemic and action the corporate asset strategy	Our offices are modern and future proofed	Head of Property Services	31 March 2022
Develop a 12/24/36 month plan for the next phase of Business World to continue to exploit the functionality, to enhance service delivery and deliver efficiencies across the Council	We have robust employee and service information to ensure informed planning.	Head of ICT	31 March 2022
Chair and participate in the Digital Board, who are responsible for the ownership of Digital across the Council and ensure that the Digital Strategy and the eight workstreams are implemented.	Ensure user and customer experience is embedded throughout services	Director of Finance and Resource & Head of ICT	31 March 2022 (ongoing actions)
Lead on the Digital Foundations workstream from the Digital Strategy and implement action plan	Improved interconnection of platforms, systems, and applications across the Council and for Renfrewshire to have a good mobile, broadband network and public Wi-Fi coverage.	Head of ICT	31 March 2022
Lead on the Digital Skills workstream from the Digital Strategy and implement action plan	Our Digital Strategy will start to embed digital skills across all that we do and work collaboratively to optimise the opportunities from our systems, emerging digital technologies and new ways of working.	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022 (ongoing)
Lead on the Digital Council workstream from the Digital Strategy and implement action plan	Create a digital culture within the Council, utilising opportunities to use new technology to improve service delivery	Head of Customer and Business Services	31 March 2022
Launch the new people strategy 'Our People Our Future 2021-2026', in spring 2021, with an immediate focus in 2021/22 on supporting the council's COVID-19 response and recovery plans with flexible and accessible supportive resources and training for all staff.	Supporting staff through service transformation, changing culture norms, embedding our values within decision making and improving staff and service user experiences of the Council.	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022 (ongoing annual review)
Fully implement the Health, Safety and Well-Being Strategy 2018-21 and review for appropriateness. Physical and mental wellbeing will be a key focus for all staff in response to and recovery from COVID-19, including the roll out of the vaccination programme and testing.	Staff can access support and advice for their physical and mental well being Staff who are eligible, and willing have been vaccinated. That regular testing is in place for the identified cohort of frontline staff.	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022 (ongoing annual review)



















What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do it by?
Commence 'Leading Our Values' and 'Living Our Values' training roll out to all managers and staff and be reflected in our policies	Values will start to be embedded across the organisation and be reflected in key policies in the employment lifecycle	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022 (ongoing annual review)
Ensure that people development being offered to staff will be flexible, accessible and on-demand supporting the council's immediate response to Covid-19 and our wider transformation plans	Staff can access training and opportunities for personal development	Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	31 March 2022 (ongoing annual review)
Lead on the review of absence policy and procedures	Improve and implement effective absence policy	Director of Finance and Resources & Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	30 June 2021

Performance Indicators

A number of new Performance Indicators have been included in this Outcome in the Service Delivery Plan this year, including:

- Average days SMEs invoices paid
- Number of FOI appeals to Scottish Information Commissioner
- Number of FOI appeals decided in favour of Council

Performance Indicator	Frequency	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target (Q3 or 19/20)	Traffic Light Icon	2021/22 Target
Customer Service Unit - % of calls answered	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	95%	90%		90%
% of calls answered by the Customer Service Unit within target (40 seconds)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	68%	70%		Data only
Cost of collecting council tax per chargeable dwelling	Annual	2019/20	£8.75	£8.95		£8.95
Percentage of Council Tax due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative position to date)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	86.02%	87.98%		Data only

Number of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt, as a percentage of all invoices paid council wide (cumulative)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	97.36%	96%		96%
Average days Small and Medium sized businesses invoices paid (new)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	9.38 days	28 days		28 days
Central Support Services as a percentage of Council Running Costs (Total Gross Expenditure)	Annual	2019/20	5.01%	Data only		Data only
Percentage of income due from Council Tax for prior years (cumulative position to date)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	97.22%	Data only		Data only
Percentage of Non Domestic Rates due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative to date)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	63.33%	Data only		Data only
% of FOI reviews completed within 20 days (Councilwide)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	100%	100%		100%
% of Finance and Resources FOI requests completed within timescale	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	98%	100%		100%
Number of FOI appeals to Scottish Information Commissioner (new)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	0	Data only		Data only
Number of FOI appeals decided in favour of Council (new)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	0	Data only		Data only
The proportion of operational accommodation in satisfactory condition.	Annual	2019/20	94.45%	93%		93%
The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use	Annual	2019/20	95.19%	95%		95%
Percentage of IT incidents fixed within target fix time (annual cumulative to date figure)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	94.1%	85%		85%
Percentage of IT service requests fulfilled within target fix time (annual cumulative figure)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	86.7%	85%		85%
Percentage of uptime for key IT systems	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	99.9%	99%		99%
Total % of investigation (Stage 2) complaints responded to within targets by Finance & Resources (cumulative to date)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	89.19%	85%		85%
F&R Front Line complaints (Cumulative)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	89.23%	85%		85%
Average number of work days lost through sickness absence per employee (F&R) (FTE)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	2.47	1.9		8.5 (annual)
Percentage of Audit Plan completed (cumulative)	Quarterly	Q3 2020/21	67.4%	66.5%		95%