

**APPENDIX 1**

**Finance and Resources**

**Service Improvement Plan 2022-2025**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Service Improvement Plan for Finance and Resources covers the period from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The plan outlines what the service intends to achieve over the next three years based on the resources expected to be available.
- 1.2 In 2021/22, in recognition of the considerable impact of the pandemic, services produced single-year delivery plans, which were focused on actions required to manage the response to and recovery from the coronavirus. As restrictions continue to ease and public services can have a greater focus again on business as usual, the council is once again producing three-year improvement plans.
- 1.3 Council services continue to operate in a challenging context. The ongoing recovery from the pandemic and its effects continue to be felt by individuals, businesses, communities and the public sector. Councils have a role to play in supporting people through the current cost of living crisis by focusing on tackling inequalities and working to improve wellbeing. There are numerous legislative requirements relating to that work, including duties in relation to child poverty, the public sector equality duty and community empowerment. External events, such as the UK's departure from the EU and the war in Ukraine, are exacerbating supply chain issues and inflationary pressures and these have an impact on the Council's key strategic projects. Councils are also navigating an increasingly complex funding landscape resulting from increased demands and increasing costs but also arising from the introduction of new funding streams such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Service Improvement Plan sets out the likely impact that these issues will have on the service and our actions to address them.
- 1.4 The Council Plan clearly articulates the Council's priorities for Renfrewshire, and along with the Community Plan, sets out an ambitious programme of work. A new Council Plan is developed every five years, aligned with the cycle of local government elections. Renfrewshire's new Council Plan is currently being developed and will be presented to elected members after the summer recess later this year. It will set out the high-level strategic outcome the Council intends to achieve and detail the steps needed to delivery on these. Future Service Improvement Plans will align to those high level outcomes; for now, key actions are grouped under four themes:
- Place: what we do to support our economy, our infrastructure, our assets;
  - People: what we do to support our communities and individual residents;

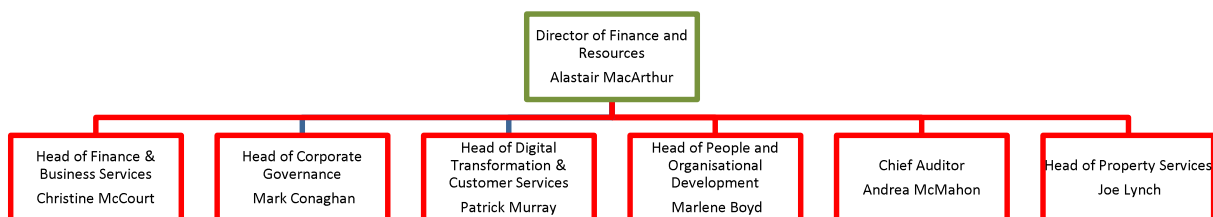
- Sustainability: what we do to address climate issues and promote sustainable services and communities;
- Living our Values: what we do in terms of our organisational behaviours and approaches.

- 1.5 The Community Plan is a ten-year plan and the current Renfrewshire Plan runs from 2017 to 2027. It is good practice to review these plans regularly to ensure they remain ambitious and fit for purpose. The Renfrewshire Community Plan is currently being reviewed and this will involve engagement with key stakeholders. A revised Community Plan will also be presented to elected members and the Community Planning Partnership after the summer recess.
- 1.6 Service Improvement Plans informs each service's Workforce Plan and Risk Register and are the overarching documents which sets the programme of development and improvement activity within the service as well as providing context for budget decisions. Finance & Resources are also responsible for financial strategies, the Digital Strategy and the People Strategy.
- 1.7 A mid-year progress update on the Service Improvement Plan will be presented to board in autumn 2022, and an outturn report in May 2023. Early in 2023, Finance and Resources will review this plan and produce a revised version to reflect both progress and any changing priorities.

## 2. What we do

3.3 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.

3.4 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.



3.5 Finance and Resources is led by the Director, Alastair MacArthur, and he is supported five Heads of Service and the Chief Auditor. A new structure for the service was approved by Leadership Board on 16 June 2021 and included some realignment of existing remits, with Heads of Service now responsible for Digital, Customer & Transformation, Finance & Business Services, and People & Organisational Development. The Corporate Governance remit is unchanged. Property Services is unchanged at present but is intended to be within scope of an extended facilities management review that will consider all service areas with a role in property investment and maintenance.

#### **4. Overview of Achievements 2021/22**

- 4.1 As part of the council's approach to managing the pandemic response, council services each produced a one-year Service Delivery Plan in 2021. These focused on the actions necessary to manage the response and the recovery from the pandemic. A full outturn report on that Service Delivery Plan has also been presented to this Board. The outturn details the achievements of Finance and Resources during 2021/22 and sets out progress against actions and performance targets.
- 3.2 As well as delivering 'business as usual' and meeting the additional demands resulting from the pandemic, Finance and Resources continued to deliver on strategic priorities during 2021/22.
- 3.3 Working together, HR & OD and Property Services have enabled a post-pandemic return to the workforce for staff who have been working from home during the last two years. Temporary changes to offices and revised health and safety guidance have been implemented to allow staff to have a phased return to office-based work in as safe a manner as possible.
- 3.4 The Human Resources and Organisational Development team have had a strong focus on employee wellbeing over the last two years, particularly in relation to mental health. Additional resources and guidance have been made available and this includes new training materials on issues such as resilience and mindfulness. The team also introduced a new Employee Benefits Portal.
- 3.5 Property Services continued to support Children's Services by completing refurbishments and new build programmes in early years education and in acquiring a site for a new Paisley Grammar campus.
- 3.6 Democratic Services successfully delivered the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021 and local authority elections in May 2022.
- 3.7 Identifying efficiencies and improving customer access continue to be key features of the work of Digital, Transformation and Customer Services and of Finance & Business Services. A number of front-facing customer processes are now able to be accessed online, speeding up the customer journey as well as delivering

efficiencies for the Council. Plans are in place to further progress such changes. The service also established a cross-council Digital Board to ensure representation of all service areas as the Digital Strategy is implemented.

## **4. Our Strategic Context**

### **National policy context**

- 4.1 The council has adapted the way services are delivered over the last two years and will continue to respond to national guidance as the pandemic recovery continues. 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 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. The recovery phase is likely to continue for some time and council activity will reflect this. This recovery is guided by the national Strategic Framework for Recovery. Digital services have become much more widely used but in-person services are now returning as public health restrictions continue to ease. As the recovery progresses, the council will work with staff, residents and partners to identify new ways of working which best meet the needs of our people and our communities.
- 4.2 Renfrewshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set a target of achieving net zero carbon emissions in Renfrewshire by 2030. Work continues to progress towards this, with a Plan for Net Zero currently being developed which will map out the journey for the organisation and the area to achieve this challenging target. As well as Council-led projects to help tackle climate issues, a Community Climate Fund allows local groups to bid for up to £3000 for localised initiatives which meet their community's needs and align to the Council's drive towards net zero.
- 4.3 The impact of the UK leaving the EU in 2020 is not yet fully apparent, given the impact that the coronavirus has had on the economy and on day-to-day life. A main driver of how Renfrewshire is impacted will be in the operation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is in a 'pre-launch' phase. This fund is intended as a replacement for previous EU funding and will be allocated to local authorities according to a funding formula. More detail is expected over the next few months.

### **Local policy context**

- 4.4 In December 2020, Council approved an Economic Recovery Plan for Renfrewshire. It sets the direction of travel for measures to support the local economy through coronavirus response, recovery and beyond. The plan acknowledges the

significant impact of the pandemic on the local and national economy, and what that means for the people, business and communities of Renfrewshire.

- 4.5 The Council also has a Social Renewal Plan which sets out joint plans (with our partners) to address the inequalities which exist in Renfrewshire, and which were made worse by the pandemic. The plan was developed after consultation with communities, and the council continues to seek views on these issues through consultation exercises and our Public Services Panel. Rising prices, particularly for food and fuel, may lead to more households experiencing absolute or relative poverty, and lead to increased demand for the supports and services the public and third sectors can offer.
- 4.6 Renfrewshire's population is predicted to grow by 2.1% by 2030, a higher rate of growth than the Scottish average. In common with the rest of Scotland, Renfrewshire has an ageing population due to the combined impact of a falling birth rate and increasing life expectancy. There has been positive net migration into Renfrewshire in recent years, both from within Scotland and from overseas. The job creation resulting from infrastructure projects and economic regeneration, coupled with new house building, may contribute to an increase in the working age population in the medium and long-term. Deprivation does remain a challenge in Renfrewshire, however, and this has considerable implications for council services in terms of meeting current and future needs but also in undertaking work with partners to lift people out of poverty.
- 4.7 Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drugs Commission made its recommendations in 2020, setting out clear measures that partners across Renfrewshire need to take to reduce drug and alcohol related harms and promote recovery.
- 4.8 The Council's transformation programme continued throughout the pandemic but the launch of subsequent phases was paused. New phases of transformation will start during 2022. Finance and Resources lead on this area of work and are reviewing the Right for Renfrewshire programme to ensure it reflects the impact of the last two years.
- 4.9 All local authorities in Scotland are subject to a Best Value Audit inspection at least once in every council term (i.e. every five years). Renfrewshire's last inspection was in 2017 and resulted in 7 key recommendations being made. These help determine improvement actions within the council and each year, Audit Scotland publish an overview report detailing progress against the audit as well as scrutiny



of council finances. Audit Scotland will produce an updated approach to these audits later this year, and this is likely to reflect the significant change in the operating environment of councils.

- 4.10 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 of the risks 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         | High        |
| Cyber Attack                | High        |
| Administration of Elections | High        |

- 4.11 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. 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.
- 4.12 The Council has a set of values which shape the way our staff interact with colleagues, with local communities, with partner organisations and with all stakeholders. The organisational changes which will be delivered as part of this Service Improvement Plan (see Section 5.5) are aligned to one of the four values, which are:

- We are **fair**, we treat each other and everyone we deal with respectfully and work hard to build trust in Renfrewshire Council.
- We are **helpful**, we care about getting things right and are always approachable.
- We are great **collaborators**; we work as one team and with people who care about this place.
- We value **learning** to help us innovate, improve and deliver better services.

4.13 In 2020, Council approved the new People Strategy. The first two years of the strategy are focused on three priority areas – health and wellbeing, new ways of working, and staff communication and engagement. The Council’s workforce has shown considerable resilience over the last two years and no service was left unchanged during the pandemic. Our staff adapted quickly to the necessary changes, whether it was a change in how frontline delivery was handled, adopting new ways of communicating with our customers, or switching to full-time working from home. As the country emerges from the pandemic, the Council, like other organisations, will seek to build on the new ways of working and find an approach which delivers the best possible service for residents whilst promoting a healthy work-life balance for staff.

4.14 Partnership working across the Council and beyond is vital to the delivery of services to Renfrewshire’s communities. The Chief Executive chairs Renfrewshire’s Community Planning Executive Group. The Chief Executive’s Service works with many different partners across the public, private and third sectors including; Engage Renfrewshire, West College Scotland, the University of the West of Scotland, local Credit Unions, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, and Visit Scotland. The Chief Executive’s Service also leads on developing Strategic Partnership Agreements with key third sector organisations delivering major projects in the area.

## **Our Finances**

4.15 All local authorities in Scotland have experienced a hugely challenging and complex set of circumstances over the last two years and it is recognised that the financial impact on councils from COVID-19 will continue for some time. This includes the impact on service costs, service demands and income streams, as well as the cost of unavoidable delays to some transformation programmes. Councils are also impacted by the rising costs of goods and services caused by inflationary

pressures and global supply chain issues. Renfrewshire Council actively manages these pressures through its short- and medium-term financial planning and is acknowledged by Audit Scotland to have sound financial arrangements in place.

- 4.16 However, the Council's financial outlook remains subject to significant uncertainty. The most recent analysis reported to Council on 3 March 2022 suggests that Renfrewshire Council will experience a funding deficit in the range of £18m-£50m in the three years following 2022/23, unless mitigating action is taken.
- 4.17 Budgets are approved each year for both Capital and Revenue purposes. Revenue budgets allow for expenditure and income on day-to-day operational activities, such as employee costs, or supplies. For 2022/23, the Revenue budget approved for General Services on 3 March 2022 was £486m, and for the Housing Revenue Account £55m.
- 4.18 Capital budgets allow for expenditure on the creation or enhancement of assets. The capital budget approved for General Services on 3 March 2022 was £437m for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, and for the Housing Revenue Account £267m for the period 2022/23 to 2027/28.
- 4.19 Finance and Resources has a budget of £34.6m for 2022/23.

## **5. Our Strategic Priorities**

5.1 As noted in the introduction to this plan, Service Improvement Plans align to the Council and Community Plans. Actions and performance indicators are each grouped according to the strategic outcomes set out in the Council Plan. As that Plan has yet to be approved, actions and indicators in this SIP are set out under four broad themes.

- Place: what we do to support our economy, our infrastructure, our assets;
- People: what we do to support our communities and individual residents;
- Sustainability: what we do to address climate issues and promote sustainable services and communities;
- Living our Values: what we do in terms of our organisational behaviours and approaches.





## 5.2 Strategic Priority: Place

| <b>What will we do?</b>  | <b>What difference will we make?</b> | <b>Who is leading this?</b>           | <b>When will we do it by?</b> |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Work with Children's Services to deliver the new Paisley Grammar Community Campus.     |                                      | Head of Property Services             | 31 March 2025                 |
| Implement the actions arising from the Council's financial sustainability workstreams. |                                      | Head of Finance and Business Services | 31 March 2024                 |

The service does not currently have any performance indicators relating to this priority.

### 5.3 Strategic Priority: People

| What will we do?  | What difference will we make?                                  | Who is leading this?                                  | When will we do it by? |
|---|--|---|------------------------|
| Under Connectivity As A Service (CaaS) complete the rollout of Fibre To The Premise (FTTP) across 75% of Renfrewshire as a geography by the summer of 2023. | The provision of gigabit connectivity across the Council area. | Head of Digital, Transformation and Customer Services | 31 August 2023         |

| Performance Indicator   | Frequency            | Last update | Current Value | Current Target | Traffic Light Icon  | 2022/23 Target | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target |
|---|----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Time taken for processing new housing benefit applications up until the posting of notification of outcome of the application (cumulative)                    | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 18.1          | 24             |    | 24             | 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 and Annual | 2021/22     | 7.94          | 10             |  | 10             | 10             | 10             |
| Average speed of processing a Crisis Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days  | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 2             | 2              |  | 2              | 2              | 2              |
| Average speed of processing a Community Care Grant (Scottish Welfare Fund) in days  | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 10            | 15             |  | 15             | 15             | 15             |

## 5.4 Strategic Priority: Sustainability

| 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 the Council's Energy Management Unit as well as national and local partners to explore alternative energy options for Council buildings. |                               | Head of Property Services | 31 March 2024          |
| Review lifecycle replacement programme for Council buildings.  |                               | Head of Property Services | 31 March 2023          |






The service does not currently have any performance indicators relating to this priority.

## 5.5 Strategic Priority: Living our Values








| What will we do?   | What difference will we make?   | Who is leading this?                                | When will we do it by? |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Implement the next phase of transformation as part of Right for Renfrewshire.  |   | Head of Digital, Transformation & Customer Services | 31 March 2025          |
| Develop and implement a new assurance model for business as usual risks.   | The new approach recognises that since BAU risks are not generally related to our ambitions but rather are inherent by default of the type of organisation we are, and the services we provide, there is more to be gained by shifting our focus away from risk scoring and towards risk assurance. | Risk Manager  | 31 Mar 2024            |
| 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  | Head of HR & OD                                     | 31 Mar 2023            |
| 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.  | Head of People & OD                                 | 31 Dec 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.   | Head of People & OD                                 | 31 Dec 2022            |
| Develop an overall strategic recruitment and talent management plan to enable us to meet future workforce demands            | 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 opportunities for career progression and understand the path to  | Head of People & OD                                 | 31 Oct 2022            |



|  |  |                     |             |
|--|--|---------------------|-------------|
|  | take and the support that is available.            |                     |             |
| Develop and new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy for the council | The council will become a more inclusive employer. | Head of People & OD | 31 Dec 2022 |

| Performance Indicator   | Frequency            | Last update | Current Value | Current Target | Traffic Light Icon   | 2022/23 Target | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target |
|---|----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Customer Service Unit - % of calls answered   | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 97%           | 90%            |    | 90%            | 90%            | 90%            |
| % of calls answered by the Customer Service Unit within target (40 seconds)   | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 58%           | 70%            |    | 70%            | 70%            | 70%            |
| Cost of collecting council tax per chargeable dwelling  | Annual               | 2020/21     | N/A           | 11.5           |  | 11.5           | 11.5           | 11.5           |
| Percentage of Council Tax due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative position to date)             | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 95.48%        | 96%            |  | 96%            | 96%            | 96%            |
| Total % of investigation (Stage 2) complaints responded to within targets by Finance & Resources (cumulative to date) | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22     | 87.73%        | 85%            |  | 85%            | 85%            | 85%            |

|   |                      |         |        |      |  |      |      |      |
|---|----------------------|---------|--------|------|--|------|------|------|
| Number of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt, as a percentage of all invoices paid council wide (cumulative) | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 95.5%  | 96%  |    | 96%  | 96%  | 96%  |
| The proportion of operational accommodation in satisfactory condition.  | Annual               | 2020/21 | N/A    | 94%  |    | 94%  | 94%  | 94%  |
| The proportion of operational accommodation that is suitable for its current use.                                 | Annual               | 2020/21 | N/A    | 96%  |    | 96%  | 96%  | 96%  |
| Average number of work days lost through sickness absence per employee (F&R) (FTE)                                | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 7.77   | 8.5  |  | 8.5  | 8.5  | 8.5  |
| % of FOI reviews completed within 20 days (Councilwide)   | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 100%   | 100% |  | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| % of Finance and Resources FOI requests completed within timescale  | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 98.33% | 100% |  | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Percentage of IT incidents fixed within target fix time (annual cumulative to date figure)                        | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 94.1%  | 85%  |  | 85%  | 85%  | 85%  |

|   |                      |         |        |        |  |        |        |        |
|---|----------------------|---------|--------|--------|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Percentage of IT service requests fulfilled within target fix time (annual cumulative figure)           | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 87.1%  | 85%    |    | 85%    | 85%    | 85%    |
| Percentage of uptime for key IT systems   | Quarterly            |         | 99.99% | 99%    |    | 99%    | 99%    | 99%    |
| Percentage of income due from Council Tax for prior years (cumulative position to date)                 | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 97.21% | 97.27% |    | 97.27% | 97.27% | 97.27% |
| Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates due in the year, collected by the end of the year (cumulative to date) | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 92.61% | 98%    |  | 98%    | 98%    | 98%    |
| Percentage of Audit Plan completed (cumulative)   | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 92.1%  | 95%    |  | 95%    | 95%    | 95%    |
| F&R Front Line complaints (Cumulative)  | Quarterly and Annual | 2021/22 | 75.87% | 85%    |  | 85%    | 85%    | 85%    |
| Average days Small and Medium sized businesses invoices paid  | Quarterly            |         | 11.84  | 28     |  | 28     | 28     | 28     |

## 5.6 Additional Management Information

As well as actions and performance measures, the Chief Executive's Service will monitor indicators from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). This is a national dataset compiled by the Improvement Service and reported on retrospectively. The most recent dataset covers 2020/21; data for 2021/22 will be published in early 2023.

| Performance Indicator  | Frequency | Last update | Current Value |
|--|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Total usable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue                | Annual    | 2020/21     | 43.29%        |
| Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue | Annual    | 2020/21     | 2.51%         |
| Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream – General Fund                  | Annual    | 2020/21     | 4.70%         |
| Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream – Housing Revenue Account       | Annual    | 2020/21     | 51.40%        |
| Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure                         | Annual    | 2020/21     | 98.85%        |
| Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure                    | Annual    | 2020/21     | 5.64%         |
| Percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women                   | Annual    | 2020/21     | 57.11%        |
| The gender pay gap   | Annual    | 2020/21     | 3.67%         |
| Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)                               | Annual    | 2020/21     | 11.89         |