# ITEM No ...6......

- REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 20 FEBRUARY 2023
- REPORT ON: CORPORATE SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2021-24 PROGRESS REPORT
- **REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

**REPORT NO:** 4-2023

#### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide a progress report on the 2021-24 Corporate Services Service Plan.

#### 2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the Service Plan update appended to the Report.

#### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### 4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In November 2020, elected members endorsed the Council's Action Plan to address the recommendations from the Best Value Audit (Article IV of the minute of the meeting of Dundee City Council on 16 November 2020, Report No: 284-2020 refers). The Action Plan sets out that all services are to develop a Service Plan for the period 2021-24 and present these plans to the appropriate Committee and provide progress reports twice yearly.
- 4.2 Report No 21-2021 presenting the Service Plan for Corporate Services for the period 2021/2024 was approved at the Policy & Resources Committee on 21 June 2021 (article IV refers). The Service Plan sets out the strategic direction for Corporate Services for the next three years (financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24) and outlines key priorities and improvements which the service intends to deliver, based on the financial and employee resources which are expected to be available. It also sets out in more detail the service's key responsibilities and identifies the key actions to be undertaken to meet these priorities, as well as the performance indicators which will be used to monitor progress.
- 4.3 The Report provide an update on the performance indicators and actions under each priority theme in the Corporate Services Service Plan for the period to 30 September 2022. In each theme, where required, the report identifies further improvement activity to achieve the targets and actions in the plan.
- 4.4 As a strategic service area the key priorities for Corporate Services are:
  - 1. Sustainable financial strategy
  - 2. Implementation and delivery of Our People Strategy
  - 3. Implementation and delivery of the Digital Strategy
  - 4. Delivering a robust and secure corporate IT platform
  - 5. Improving income collection
  - 6. Developing collaborative partnerships
  - 7. Providing assurance of good corporate governance, including effective audit and benchmarking
- 4.5 The Corporate Services Service Plan sets out performance measures and actions for each specific service area. Performance in relation to these measures and actions will be monitored in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework and reported to Committee.

#### 5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

#### 6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

ROBERT EMMOTT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

**10 FEBRUARY 2023** 





City Council City Council FOR THE FUTURE

# **Corporate Services**

Quarters 1 & 2 Performance Report 2022/23



This report sets out the progress of Corporate Services against its Service Plan for 2022/23.

It reflects continued progress both in the day to day provision of core services the delivery of new initiatives and the development of policy.

Key aspects are the approval of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, development of Community Wealth Building and the implementation of Fuel Well 3.



#### **Service Priorities**

- Sustainable financial strategy
- Implementation and delivery of Our People and Workforce Strategy
- Implementation and delivery of the Digital Strategy
- Delivering a robust and secure corporate IT platform
- Improving income collection
- Developing collaborative partnerships
- Providing assurance of good corporate governance, including effective audit and benchmarking





#### Action status Key:

**Not started:** Action has been assigned to an officer but not started **Overdue:** The action's due date has passed and the action is not yet complete. **In Progress:** The action has progress and is not at no update. **Complete:** The action is complete.

### **Corporate Finance**

Action we have taken

#### **Accounting Strategy**

The accounting statements for the Council and all relevant external bodies have been prepared and audited in line with established timetables with 'clean' audit certificates received in all instances. The service has continued to monitor the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets with regular reports to elected members.

An updated Medium-term Financial Strategy was prepared and considered by members in September. This strategy sets out the key factors that will impact on the Council's in future years, a forecast of the projected revenue budget deficit over the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 and recommends an approach to meeting these challenges and setting a balanced budget over this period. The team have also commenced a review of the capital plan in line with affordability due to inflationary cost pressures that will be reported to members later in the year.

#### **Financial Services & Investment**

The service continued to provide a wide range of support and advice to Council services and partnering organisations. In terms of the of Tayside Pension Fund, the accounts were completed in line with required deadlines and there were no significant issues identified from the audit process

The team have been engaged in the roll out of further changes to Parent Pay that will modernise the approach for school pupils to both choose and pay for their school lunches. The initial phase comprises Secondary Schools that have been completed by September and the team are now working across all Primary Schools with the entire process on schedule to be completed by early in the new year.

#### Internal Audit, Corporate Fraud & Risk Management and Insurance

The service has worked to deliver the internal audit plan for 2021/22 with regular reports and updates being submitted to Scrutiny Committee. The Internal Audit Annual report was completed and reported to Scrutiny Committee in June 2022 providing an independent annual internal audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control framework. This opinion was included within the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The Corporate Fraud Team continue to work to mitigate the risk of fraud occurring within the Council and prepare their annual report for reporting to the Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

The Corporate Risk Management Co-ordinator continues to provide advice and support to all services and maintain the various risk registers that are reported separately to Committee for information. The structure and set up of the service will continue to be reviewed to determine how best to deliver plans going forward. The Insurance Team have continued to run an effective service to ensure that the Council's assets are adequately and effectively insured and have provided regular professional advice and guidance to departments on insurance and operational risk management issues.

#### **Corporate Procurement**

The service continued to provide a wide range of support and procurement advice to Council services and partnering organisations and also continues to be involved in development of the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy. On 22 August 2022, Policy & Resources Committee approved a Commercial Partnership Proposal with Scotland Excel. A key outcome of the partnership will be to review the Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy but this will seek to support the development of other improvements such as:

- contract optimisation
- improved contract and supplier management
- procurement benefits tracking
- further collaborative working opportunities
- review and development of procurement systems

Further progress from this review will be reflected in future service plan progress updates.

# **Corporate Finance**

# Monthly indicators as at the end of each quarter

Status	Performance Indicator	June 2022	September 2022	Current Target	Long Term	Notes & History Note
		Value	Value		Trend	
	Payment of creditors - % < 30 days	94%	91%	95%	-	This is to be kept under review, in conjunction with the robust application of the Council's No Purchase Order, No Pay Policy.
	Payment of local creditors - % < 14 days	94%	92%	90%	-	Slight dip in performance with root cause identified and corrective actions put in place. Remains above target level.

# Actions

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
	Develop a Strategic Asset Management Plan to guide the Council through the recovery phase and support the ambition to build back better	75%	CIPFA have been engaged to undertake this work that will be reported back to the Capital Governance Group.
	Review the areas for improvement in relation to the management of assets within the Council's Annual Governance Statement and their relevance in line with the priorities emerging from Covid19, as set out in the recovery plan priorities.	100%	Now completed
	Explore opportunities to better link our financial planning and Transformation priorities to address the significant financial impacts of COVID-19	100%	The key areas of focus for Transformation are reflected in the Council Plan that was approved in December 2022. These include: • Property Rationalisation • Digital Council • Service Redesign • City & Regional Shared Services • Payments and Income Generation Progress on these items will be reviewed and reported as part of the established arrangements for monitoring the Council Plan.

Manage revenue and capital budgets in light of monitoring information	100%	Revenue and Capital Budgets are being monitored and the outcome of this is reported timeously to CMT then detailed information is also submitted regularly to elected members. This position will continue to be closely monitored.
Review opportunities for collaborative procurement across Tayside	100%	Given there are currently no staff within the TPC and the overall resource within the DCC Procurement Team is extremely limited, the opportunities to prioritise at collaborative procurement are very challenging at this moment. Notwithstanding this, the various tests of change exercise noted there may be possible wider efficiencies that can be generated through reviewing service standards and works specifications with partners e.g. roads maintenance etc. These will be taken forward by the respective leads.
Community Wealth Building	100%	Progress is being made on implementing the actions outlined in the initial review undertaken by CLES and is being monitored through the pillar groups. A new fixed-term post has been established to co-ordinate this project and will hopefully be recruited to in the new year. The intention is to hold a launch event with anchor partners aimed that is aimed to ensure better collaboration on key community wealth building priorities. The development of a Community Wealth Building Strategy will be incorporated as a key priority with the City / Council Plans and further progress will be reported through the established arrangements for monitoring these plans.
Update the medium- and long- term financial plans	100%	An updated long-term forecast that reflects latest assumptions on pay, inflation, council tax levels and grant settlement was reported to Policy & Resources Committee in September (report 257-2022 refers).

#### **Areas for Improvement**

Strategic Asset Management Plan – CIPFA have been appointed to undertake this work, this work in on schedule to be reported back to Capital Governance Group shortly and progress will be reported in next Corporate Services Service Plan Progress Update.

### Customer Services & IT

Action we have taken

#### **Council Advice Services**

This service continues to see demand for services to support customers in need. Scottish Welfare Fund has had increasing demand over recent years, and this has continued following the pandemic and current cost of living crisis. As at the end of Q2 2022/23 the service had considered 6,259 Crisis grant applications and 1,509 Community Care Grant applications with a cumulative spend of £975,249.

Fuel Well Dundee 3 was launched in August 20 22, A total of £1.06m from the Scottish Governments Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Funding was committed to support households in Dundee struggling with rising energy costs. The team worked tirelessly with partners to ensure this funding was received by those in most need.

In addition to the above the team continue to support households throughout the city with Welfare Benefit/ Money Debt & Energy advice alongside partners as an effective means to tackle poverty and inequalities within communities.

#### **Benefit Delivery**

The Benefit Delivery Team are responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax, the team also deal with assessing entitlement to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payment, Local Authority Tenant Hardship fund and Educational Benefits such as free school meals, holiday support payments.

In addition to business as usual work the Benefit Delivery team administered the Scottish Government's £150 Cost of Living support to over 56,000 households throughout the city. Further financial support of more than £674,000 has been paid directly into the bank accounts of families in receipt of free school meals due to low income to provide financial support out with term time.

#### **Customer Services**

This team provides a face-to-face front-line service at Dundee House and East & West District offices alongside a corporate telephony service.

Whilst some of the work in the service is self-contained there are numerous interdependencies across services, particularly Housing Repairs and Environment. Management of these relationships is vital to the success of the service.

Whilst there has been a significant reduction in customers requiring face to face services, we have seen an increase in demand for digital and telephony services. This is a similar trend throughout other local authorities in Scotland. Due to a high turnover of staff there have been some challenges, mainly with housing repairs where customers have made repeat phone calls and faced normal than longer waiting times. Recruitment has now been completed to replace those who have left.

#### **Corporate Debt**

The Corporate Debt Team are responsible for the collection of Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayment, Rent arrears and sales ledger debt as well as the billing and collection of Non-domestic Rates.

The Council Tax Collection team continue to work closely with our debt collection partners (Sheriff Officers) to collect unpaid Council Tax where customers have failed to engage with the accounts or collection team. This team also work closely with Council Advice Services to identify where I intervention would help support individuals. Council Tax collection at the end of Quarter 2 was up 4.48% on the same reporting period in the previous year. It should be noted however some of this can be attributed to the Scottish Government's £150 Cost of Living award which was credited to the Council Tax account where applicable.

The Rent arrears team who collect outstanding rent debts work closely with colleagues in Neighbourhood Services (Housing) and other support services such as Council Advice Services and the Benefit Delivery Team to ensure tenants are supported to remain in their tenancy and understand their obligation to pay rent. New software was implemented at the start of the financial year which allow the team to take early intervention with tenants who are accruing rent arrears and can support

them to make an application to the Local Authority Tenant Hardship Fund or for a Discretionary Housing Payment if Applicable. At the end of quarter 2, rent arrears were slightly higher than the same period last year, this is a similar trend throughout Scotland.

The Sales Ledger Team deal with outstanding invoices on behalf of various services including Health & Social Care, City Development and Environment Services continue to concentrate on collection. As at the end of quarter 2 the team have collected £31.08m which is 92.15% of all invoices raised.

#### Information Technology.

The Council continues to invest in the Microsoft 365 product set. Further adoption of this technology has seen the Council adopting Sharepoint, Teams and OneDrive as its standard platform for document storage and collaboration and for individual staff members file storage.

Progress continues in the deployment of further modules of the Councils integrated housing management and repairs solution which will modernise the system and bring productivity improvements.

Adoption of cloud technology for the Councils Citrix platform has commenced. In the lead up to this 1,000 new network computers have been deployed across the Council estate centrally managed by a new console.

500 further laptops and peripheral devices purchased and mostly now deployed to support the Councils hybrid working policy.

900 laptops have been deployed to Morgan Academy in support of their plans for 1 to 1 provision of devices to pupils as a pilot for a city wide adoption of this facility.

# **Customer Services & IT**

### Monthly indicators as at the end of each quarter

Status	Performance Indicator	June 2022	September 2022	Current Target	Long Term	Notes & History Note
		Value	Value		Trend	
	Improve in year Non Domestic Rates collection rate (monthly)	18.67%	41.89%	96%	•	Collection levels up 3.27% on the same period last year.
	Average number of days taken to process new claims.	14	14	12	1	Performance has continued to improve for the month of September, therefore improving overall average

#### Actions

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
•	Update the Digital Strategy	60%	A new digital strategy will be put forward to committee in the new year in line with the recently agreed council plan priorities.
	Evaluate changing city poverty profiles and ensure service specification meets changing needs at city and ward levels	65%	Work continues to ensure service provision in different areas of Dundee is data driven. Area profiles for Linlathen and Stobswell West continue to be used. Recent links to NHS Tayside and Public Health Scotland will be used to assess health impacts for particular localities and linked to Council anonymous data sets held in order to inform future service delivery.
	Review new models of operational front-line work in light of changes in priorities following review of Council and City plans	75%	Service delivery continues to be reviewed in line with changing demands.
	Continued development of IT solutions, including collaboration tools for remote working	80%	The Council has many components in place which enables mobile and hybrid working for many years. This has been further expanded by
			of Council laptops issued to staff

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
Status	Action	% Progress	<ul> <li>Provision of budget to provide all remote workers with a Council device</li> <li>The ability to manage Council and personal devices giving access to Council data remotely</li> <li>the installation across the city of nearly 1000 network computers with cameras attached enabling video conferencing from the desktop</li> <li>Upgrade and expansion of wifi facilities in Council buildings across the City.</li> <li>Installation of video conferencing equipment in multiple corporate meeting rooms</li> <li>Additional components have now been added</li> <li>Receipt and issue of 500 laptops in line with the Councils</li> </ul>
			<ul> <li>laptops in line with the Councils policy on hybrid working</li> <li>Deployment of Teams, Sharepoint and Onedrive as the Councils primary document storage mechanisms with secure access on and off the Council network 24*7.</li> </ul>
			Further items still to be progressed have been hampered by delays in receipt of equipment including
			<ul> <li>Wifi equipment to expand and enhance provision across Council buildings</li> <li>Docking stations to enable optimal utilisation within the of Council laptops.</li> </ul>
			Availability of contractors to assist with the installation of new Wifi equipment is a further limiting factor in that deployment.
	Lead on exploring the potential of MS Teams to enable Council/Committee meetings to continue to take place virtually	100%	Microsoft Teams well established to enable Council/Committee meetings to take place virtually.
	Review and revise city wide co-ordinated advice plan with main local advice partners	100%	Dundee Advice Strategy 22-24 agreed at P&R committee 27 June 22

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
<b>I</b>	Refresh the IT Strategy	100%	An update of the IT strategy was presented to CLT in November 2021
	Prepare and implement a new advice strategy for Dundee incorporating the recommendations of the Dundee Fairness Commission	100%	Advice Strategy in place and approved at Committee in July 2022. Business plan in place to support strategy.
	Adopt an "advice first" principle and strategy response to food insecurity, ensuring people in financial crisis are supported to access all the financial support to which they are entitled	100%	Dundee Advice Strategy in place. Covers food insecurity. Working with food insecurity organisations to embed.
	Maximise take up of school clothing grants, free school meals, Educational Maintenance Allowance and Best Start Grants	100%	Educational benefits awarded in line with council Tax reduction. In the main no separate application required in order to maximise take up.
	Examine repeat Scottish Welfare Fund applicants and identify preventative approaches to achieve longer- term solutions	100%	Applications have been interrogated. Customers are being contacted to sign up for assistance to maximise income and reduce reliance on Scottish Welfare Fund.
	Increase fuel debt write-off cases by 10% through Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project	100%	Schedule of individual customers with fuel debt now prepared from 4088 Fuel Well households surveyed. System of ongoing communication of fuel debt options for households developed and will also be used going forward in 2022/23
	Increase take-up of warm home discounts by 7% through the Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project	100%	Schedule of individual company lists now prepared for 4,088 Fuel Well households. Significant increase in warm homes discount has been achieved through Fuel Well 2 process in 2021/22. System of ongoing communication of Warm Homes Discount to households developed and will also be used in 2022/23

# **Democratic & Legal Services**

Action we have taken

Democratic and Legal Services principal focus continues to be:

• making the case for a more sustainable, public, national laboratory service for Scotland;

• ensuring that the democratic institutions continue to operate in as close to normal a fashion as possible, both for the City Council and also for outside bodies including the Dundee City Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board, Tayside Valuation Joint Board, Tayside Contracts Joint Committee, Tay Road Bridge Joint Board and Tay Cities Region Joint Committee and also for individual Elected Members, as they all continue to support the City and the Region in its recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic and as they respond to the new financial challenges facing both the Council and the outside bodies and also the citizens who they serve;

• successfully planning and administering elections, including the Council Election which took place in May 2022; and

• continuing to provide a safe and sensitive registration service for significant life events, including births and deaths and to celebrate weddings and civil partnerships.

#### Democratic & Legal Services Actions

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
	Develop long term plans for Tayside Scientific Services	50%	Discussions are still ongoing at a national level involving the Provider Laboratories, SOLACE, COSLA and Food Standards Scotland.
	Deliver the 2022 Local Government Elections	100%	Now completed

# People

Action we have taken

### **Strateg**y

Our People Strategy has now been fully reviewed and was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in December 2022. The strategy is framed around the Employee Journey linking to our shared values and priorities for the Council. Engagement and one-one and Quality conversations are now ready to be launched.

#### Policy

A revised People policy framework is being undertaking to ensure that they are in line with current legislation and modernised to take account of equality and new ways of working.

#### Workforce Modernisation

Corporate Business Support continues to support the Ukrainian effort continues and support improvement work around the Employee Experience. Strategic engagement with the trade unions continues regularly.

Hybrid working has been agreed and is now in place, informing workstyles and digital requirements for employees. The digital roll out is progressing well.

#### Young People Workforce Initiatives – Youth Employability Team

There has been significant effort and investment to support young people into local employment in Dundee and there are currently 21 modern apprentices and 14 graduate apprenticeships in DCC across services and disciplines. There is also a graduate programme in place to support 11 fully funded placement opportunities for 12 months for young unemployed/underemployed graduates, (up to age 24), providing them with relevant work experience, increasing their employability skills to improve future employment prospects. Further research is also being undertaken by the Youth Employability Team to improve recruitment and engagement of young people.

#### **Employee Well-being**

The teams continue to progress support around employee well-being and resilience. The Health and Safety team continues to be crucial to the safe working practices, including workplaces across all services. The new Well-being Support Service continues to develop approaches to ensure the resilience of employees and has invested in methods to mitigate potential trauma in the future. A rebranding exercise is underway to ensure current circumstances are reflected and post Covid messages are relevant.

Health and Safety policies are currently being reviewed to take account of the changing environment for employees.

The sickness absence dashboard is now in place. Alongside this we are developing a Wellbeing action plan working with the trade unions. A new Wellbeing Framework is drafted and will be launched in early 2023.

### **Skills Development**

Considerable progress has been made around broader learning approaches such as the use of Office 365 which will be set out in the new People Strategy.

A sizable number of resources are now in place to support our employees and communities in Trauma informed approaches and practice.

Leadership development review and qualifications are almost complete.

## People Performance Indicator

### Actions

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
<u> </u>	Review of terms and conditions	3%	Continuing to gather information to inform terms and conditions work.
<u> </u>	Review terms and conditions of service to reflect our 'new normal'	21%	Continuing to gather information to inform terms and conditions work.
<b>—</b>	Review Health and Safety Policy corporately and in Services to reflect new ways of working	45%	This is an ongoing action and does not currently have a definite end date.
	Ensure that our young people are supported with Employability opportunities in Dundee and across the Tay Cities	88%	This work continues. Expected update at year end to detail this but programmes continue to be provided.
	Review Our People and Workforce Strategy to reflect the new normal	100%	The Review of the Workforce Plan has been completed. Next steps implementation and consultation with the trade unions
	Work with all services to review working practices to increase flexibility and mobility	100%	The future of flexible working practices will be set through the new Our People Strategy and will report in the Corporate Services Service Plan.
	Work with Services to review workforce resources and succession plans	100%	Resources have been circulated to management teams.
	Continue to promote learning and development and health and wellbeing strategies	100%	This work will be central to our new People Strategy.
	Review all policies and procedures to reflect changes to the way we work including the requirement for an increasingly flexible workforce	100%	Hybrid Working Guidance in place as well as the development of a new portal on One Dundee. The flexible Working Policy review is completed.
<b>I</b>	Staff Deployment Team consolidated and development of internal jobs market	100%	Deployment now established in Youth Employability Team. Internal jobs market still to be further developed.
	Build on the success of the Mass Vaccination Centre deployment models	100%	Staff deployed to support Self Isolation Grant award process. Deployment process in place however minimal requests submitted

# **Best Value**

Status	Action	% Progress	Notes & History Latest Note
	Corporate Services - Implement 3- year service plans which set out clear prioritisation of key actions and targets for each strategic service area to enable transparency in reporting service performance to service committees	100%	Corporate Services Service Plan for 2021-2024 was approved at Policy & Resources Committee on 21 June 2021.
<b>I</b>	Corporate Services - Report progress towards Service Plans to Service and Scrutiny twice yearly	100%	This Report provides the latest update on delivery of the service plans.
	Corporate Services - Develop a workforce plan	100%	Work is underway to complete Corporate Services Workforce Plan.