

2024/25
DELIVERY PLAN

**REGULATORY &
REGENERATION**



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1. Introduction

Regulatory & Regeneration comprises a wide range of services covering legal, trading standards, licensing, records management, planning, building standards, environmental health, democratic and registration services, economic development and procurement. It is one of seven strategic areas responsible for delivering the Council's Strategic Plan. Key actions to help achieve that are set out in this Delivery Plan, together with actions to address any performance issues and service priorities identified in the planning process.

The progress of this Plan will be monitored and managed by the management team and reported to Corporate Services Committee and Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee (economic development elements only) twice yearly, at mid-year and year-end.

2. Performance Review

The management team completed a detailed review of 2023/24 performance, focusing on the following:

- 2023/24 Delivery Plan year end progress;
- Local Government Benchmarking Framework comparative data;
- National Planning Improvement Framework;
- Citizens' Panel feedback;
- Telephone Survey feedback;
- Complaints; and
- Continuous Improvement.

This review highlighted our key achievements and challenges in 2023/24. These are summarised below.

Key Achievements in 2023/24

Listed below are some of the major achievements in each service area that were particularly challenging or unusual. All services achieve many other fantastic outcomes for the Council and its residents throughout the year which are not recorded here but are often as important.

Cross Service

- Implemented the Short-Term Let Licence regime with over 90 applications processed within a short time frame, working with other Council services including Environmental Health and Building Standards to ensure that the accommodation was of a suitable standard.
- Expansion of the Queens Quay District Heating Network continued, with the connection to 46 Clydebank Housing Association flats.
- Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee approved the Masterplan for the redevelopment of the Artizan Centre as part of the Levelling Up Fund programme.
- Infrastructure funding package over £44m and Final Business Case approved for the former Exxon site by the Council and City Region Cabinet and planning permission secured.

Democratic & Registration Services

- Successfully conducted the review of polling districts and polling places in West Dunbartonshire taking into account changes to the implementation of phase one of the Election Act 2022, changes to the UK Parliamentary boundary and the potential loss of some existing polling places.
- Successfully managed the transfer of the Clydebank Registration Service to Clydebank Library as a result of the closure of the Clydebank Town centre Office, thus contributing to the efficient management of the Council's estate.

Legal Services & Trading Standards

- Successfully undertook tobacco enforcement work, removing illicit tobacco from a retailer and imposing financial penalties on another. In undertaking this work, we worked with partner agencies such as Police Scotland and HMRC.
- Achieved Financial Close (legal commitment) for the construction of the Faifley Education and Community campus which included complex phasing and interface agreements.
- Introduced a new evidence-based Statement of Licensing Policy for the Licensing Board in relation to its alcohol function, following a wide ranging consultation exercise.

Planning, Building Standards & Environmental Health

- Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Manager appointed as Scottish Convenor of RTPI 2024.
- 2023 Scottish Thistle Award National Winner Celebrating Thriving Communities for Rediscovering the "Antonine Wall" Project and short listed for the Scottish Planning Innovation Awards "People" Category.

- Delivered complex and major planning consents within challenging timescales for key regeneration projects, including Faifley Campus, Exxon detailed permission for infrastructure and development platforms and redevelopment of Glencairn House, the oldest building in Dumbarton Town Centre.
- Audited over 400 open space sites for the Evidence Base for Local Development Plan 3.
- Responded to the urgent demand for inspection checks of host properties as part of the Scottish Governments Ukrainian refugee sponsorship scheme to ensure they are safe and fit for habitation.
- Annual Air Quality Progress Report 2023 was approved by the Scottish Government who commented on the high standard of compliance and reporting.

Economic Development and Regeneration

- Stage 1 bid to Glasgow City Region Investment Zone submitted, with the Council now supporting a Stage 2 bid for the Scottish Marine Technology Park to be part of an Advanced Manufacturing Investment Zone.
- Provided support to 200 new business start-ups and developed and implemented a range of business interventions through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide growth support to local businesses.
- Developed a new Economic Development Strategy Action Plan for 2022 to 2027, providing a clear strategic approach to economic development and resource allocation to improve economic performance.
- Delivered improvements in Alexandria Town Centre and launched a Community Grant scheme for community groups and organisations in West Dunbartonshire using Place Based Investment Programme funding.
- Reinvigorated the Climate Change Action Plan delivery group.
- Upgrading of Building Management Systems across the majority of the Council estate completed.
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy was approved by Committee in February 2024 for wider consultation.

Procurement

- Successfully implemented the revised team structure following the Council wide efficiencies.
- Delivered a renewed Purchase to Pay Framework.
- Collaborated with partners and 48 suppliers to continue to improve sustainability and deliver local, social and community benefits resulting in:
 - £24,717 donated to local community projects;
 - 32 work experience posts;
 - 32 presentations delivered to community groups and schools ; and
 - 7 full time employment posts being filled.

Key Challenges in 23/24

Cross Service

- The national skills shortage of qualified and experienced officers in Planning, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Building Standards continued in 2023/24, resulting in reduced staff complements across many services and increased demands on existing and inexperienced staff. This is a challenge experienced by most local authorities and has resulted in alternative service delivery models, including the use of agency staff and initiatives being led at a national level such as Future Planners Project and Building Standards hub. A new Regulatory apprenticeship is being developed and may provide opportunities in the future.

Democratic & Registration Services

- It was a very challenging year for the Committee and Members' Services teams with the appointment and induction of a new team leader and other staff due a higher than usual turnover of staff. This put additional pressure on all members of the team to cover the workload and deliver the service.
- Preparation for a national election with a considerably altered election team increased demands on the core election team within Democratic & Registration Services.

Legal Services & Trading Standards

- Increased requirement for specialist construction contracts associated with infrastructure and regeneration priorities impacted on the Contracts and Property Section's workload, changing the skills dynamic required to meet client requirements.
- Increased number of cases presenting to Social Work Services where the applicant's immigration status may be relevant to whether the Council's statutory duties are activated thereby requiring carefully considered advice on an emerging and ever changing area of law in a short timeframe.

Planning, Building Standards & Environmental Health

- The introduction a new development planning system under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 brought substantial challenges in terms of new procedures and a requirement to ensure that all applicants were familiar and compliant with the changes.
- Environmental Health continued to progress work through the food inspection Covid recovery programme despite the removal of two EHO posts from the structure in December 2022.
- Additional duties imposed by the new Short Term Lets Licensing regime placed additional demands on the Environmental Health Service.

Economic Development and Regeneration

- Delivering private sector homes at Queens Quay continued to be a challenge in 2023/24 but we meet with our commercial partner regularly to monitor and encourage development interest.
- Businesses continued to face many economic challenges in 2023/24, including rising inflation and energy costs. The business interventions developed through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the on-going advice and support available through Business Gateway will continue to provide assistance to help them recover and grow in the year ahead.
- Delivery of the Levelling Up Fund programme of works in Dumbarton town centre against tight funding timescales was challenging given the multi-disciplinary support and buy-in from a number of different stakeholders required to develop and deliver projects of this nature.
- With temporary resource challenges, it was challenging to adequately resource all projects and to meet some of the tight deadlines associated with external funding.
- Despite carbon emissions for 2022/23 showing a reduction from 2021/22, it is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve the targets as outlined in our Climate Change Strategy. In order to ensure Net Zero targets are met for 2045, additional resources and finance will require to be considered if we are to meet future targets.
- The Cost of Living crisis has seen a significant uplift in the number of residents requiring Energy Efficiency support. This has proved challenging to facilitate within our existing resources.

Procurement

- It has been a challenging year for the Corporate Procurement Unit due to the Council efficiency options which led to a reduction in resource. Processes are being introduced which place more responsibility for procurement on client services. However, whilst these will reduce demand on the team in the longer term, there is currently an enhanced requirement to support these client services.

3. Strategic Assessment

The Regulatory & Regeneration management team completed a detailed strategic assessment to determine the major influences on service delivery and priorities in 2024/25 and beyond. This covered a review of local and national political priorities, new legislation and technology, Council policies, and our continued recovery from the pandemic, cost of living crisis and the financial challenges facing the Council. The key issues are outlined below.

Key Factors

Financial Challenges

The entire public sector is continuing to face significant financial challenges due to a range of factors including inflationary cost increases, pay awards not being fully funded by the Scottish Government and insufficient overall funding to support the delivery of front line and back office services. The Council are currently faced with an estimated cumulative funding gap in 2025/26 of £9.8m rising to £40.4m by 2028/29. We will continue to monitor the overall financial position of the Council and updates on estimated future budget gaps will be reported to Elected Members throughout 2024/25.

These challenges require further action to balance our budget and protect services for residents. Within Regulatory & Regeneration, this means that available funding will be reduced over time and we will need to reconfigure how we work, what we do, where we work, and potentially reduce the number of people employed. In this context, we will aim to continue to provide a sustainable, quality service to internal clients and the public.

Budget Sensitivity Analysis

In reviewing the service budget projections, consideration has been given to the sensitivity of these budgets, in particular for higher risk/ higher value budgets which may have a significant impact on budgetary control and future budget projections. The analysis has considered sensitivity around demand, costs and charges, and income levels.

In Regulatory and Regeneration there were no budgets identified as being more susceptible to fluctuations. However, on a more Council-wide basis, the Council's cost of borrowing is susceptible to fluctuations in the bank interest rate due to the level of the Council's short-term borrowing.

Budget Savings

Across the service, numbers of employees have been reduced. This will either result in new ways of working, changes in service standards and in some cases, cessation of services. These impacts will be monitored and any unexpected adverse consequences will be addressed through management action or, if required, will be reported to members.

Action: Monitor and review the impact of budget savings

Economic Development Action Plan

An Economic Development Strategy Action Plan for 2022/27 was approved by IRED Committee in November 2023. It sets out the vision and priorities for delivering economic growth and improved well-being in West Dunbartonshire's communities and is aligned to the Strategic Plan 2022/27, the Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy and the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation. The action plan to deliver the strategy has been developed for implementation in 2024/25. It focuses on delivering key regeneration sites, developing the Queens Quay site, identifying and developing commercial opportunities, supporting business recovery, and supporting town centre revitalisation (details below). The action plan will be implemented throughout 2024/25 and progress monitored and reported to IRED.

Action: Implement, monitor and report the progress of the 2024/25 Economic Development action plan
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Deliver Key Regeneration Sites

A number of key regeneration projects, which span multiple years, will continue to be taken forward in 2024/25. These include:

- Infrastructure delivery on the Exxon site;
- Alexandria Masterplan which will transform the town centre and surrounding areas;
- Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework which will inform interventions delivered funded through the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next 7-10 years;
- Securing planning approval for the Scottish Marine Technology Park (SMTP) at the Carless site, and pursuing funding opportunities including Vacant and Derelict Land fund and Investment Zone; and

- A range of projects funded through the £20m Levelling Up fund, including the redevelopment of Glencairn House, the regeneration of the Artizan Shopping centre, and connecting Dumbarton Central to the Town Centre, all of which will have a significant impact on Dumbarton and the town centre vibrancy.

Actions: Deliver key regeneration sites across West Dunbartonshire; Ensure regeneration sites are progressed to enable high quality development to be achieved on the ground and; Monitor the development of the key regeneration sites to ensure they comply with the approved consent

Queens Quay

Infrastructure works for this 80 acre residential waterfront development were completed in 2020/21. In the year ahead, the focus on securing housing developments across the site in partnership with site owner Clydeside Regeneration Ltd. will continue. This continues to be a challenge, particularly in relation to flatted private homes which the market is finding commercially challenging. Discussions will continue with a range of public and private sector parties.

Action: Promote the next phase of Queens Quay Housing

Deliver Key Commercial Opportunities

Identifying commercial opportunities in conjunction with the private sector will continue to be a priority. Discussions with developers who may wish to enter a partnership with the Council to achieve joint benefits from a commercial, housing and low carbon perspective will be progressed. The Regeneration Capital Fund with £12.77m has been allocated across a number of projects. The Fund's key operating principles and allocations to specific projects agreed by Committee will be progressed. Opportunities include:

- Exxon – as infrastructure works progress, the Council will consider how to promote and deliver the best uses for the site and, working with the City Region and Scottish Enterprise, will encourage developer interest in the site to meet the growth targets set out in the City Deal business case.
- NHS Golden Jubilee – we will seek to deliver the extension of the District Heating network to the hospital and explore opportunities presented by the expansion of the hospital for development and regeneration of Queen Quay and Clydebank, generally.
- Scottish Marine Technology Park – we will continue to work with the Malin Group in their ambition to deliver the Scottish Marine Technology Park at the former Carless site near Old Kilpatrick, and assist them in attracting business and funding to the site. A

project board has been established to provide support and direction as the Malin Group progress the development through the planning and infrastructure implementation stages.

Action: Explore commercial opportunities in our town centres and wider regeneration sites

Supporting Business Recovery

In April 2022 the UK government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda, providing funding for local investment across the UK by March 2025. A Local Investment Plan has been developed and approved by the UK Government as part of a wider Glasgow City Region Investment Plan through the Fund. The business support proposals within the Investment Plan will be available until March 2025 to support business recovery and include a Business Recovery & Growth fund, Early Stage Growth grants, Towards Net Zero Grant, Enhancing Tourism Events & Attractions Fund, Business Gateway Expert Help and Shopfront & Small Business Improvement Grants.

Action: Develop and implement business support interventions through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
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Supporting Town Centre Revitalisation

Assisting town centres to recover from the pandemic and cost of living crisis will continue to be a focus in 2024/25, with support for high street businesses a key priority and in response to community needs. We will continue to develop projects to make our town centres attractive places and take advantage of the external funding, including UK Government's levelling up programme and Place-Based Investment Programme funds provided by Scottish Government.

- Clydebank has been awarded £20 million funding from the UK Government as part of the Long-Term Plan for Towns. This funding will support delivery of the projects which originate from approved Clydebank Development Framework and reflect the priorities of the local community. The Framework provides a vision for how the town will be transformed, from reducing retail dominance to a vibrant mixed use and inhabited town centre that meets the needs of the whole community. It includes, among other interventions, development of the former Playdrome site, a transport hub at Clydebank Station, improved connections between the town centre and Queens Quay, and related community-led activity. We will look for ways to secure additional funding and attracting commercial and other development interest. A Clydebank Town Board, chaired by Liz Connolly Principal of West College Scotland will be established to oversee the Fund and Plans.

- In Dumbarton, the focus for the next year and beyond will be the Levelling Up Fund programme of works including the refurbishment and reuse of Glencairn House as a library and museum and the revitalisation of the Artizan Centre. Another levelling up project, Connecting Dumbarton, was completed in early 2024.
- In Alexandria the next phase of the 2021 Masterplan will be implemented, with an emphasis on place based funded projects. This will include improved walking and cycling routes, town centre building improvements and projects that directly respond to local community and business priorities.

Action: Support town centre revitalisation
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Climate Change Action Plan

The Council developed a Climate Change Strategy in response to the climate emergency and to provide a route map towards meeting Scotland's national net zero carbon target by 2045. This Strategy informs annual action plans, with actions devolved to relevant service areas. Progress against the 2024/25 action plan will be monitored and reported to senior management and Council on a regular basis.

Action: Co-ordinate, monitor and report the progress of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan for 2024/25
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Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)

During 2023/24, the Council commenced works on a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) which will set out the long-term plan for heat decarbonisation and improved energy efficiency of buildings throughout the Council area. The consultative draft Strategy was approved in February 2024. Scotland's statutory greenhouse gas emissions reduction and fuel poverty targets will be the drivers of this area-based approach. When the final strategy is approved, it will set out the changes needed to each sector of buildings stock, identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and prioritise delivery areas. A Delivery Plan will accompany the LHEES, developed in partnership with key stakeholders.

Action: Develop Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan

Elections Act 2022 – Phase 2

The Elections Act 2022 made changes to the UK electoral system in terms of the security, accessibility and transparency of elections and campaigning. It applies to UK Parliamentary elections and includes the requirement for voters to show photo ID at polling stations and additional support for people with disabilities to make voting easier. The changes introduced will need to be well planned and in place for the UK Parliamentary election in 2024. Phase two of the Act has yet to be implemented and will have a particular impact on absent voting; specifically on the application for and the handling of postal votes, the criteria for allowing proxy votes and restrictions on political campaigners.

Action: Implement the various requirements of the Elections Act 2022 in time for the UK parliamentary Elections in 2024

UK Parliamentary General Election 2024

The UK General Election is due to take place at some point during 2024/25, with the date still to be announced. The uncertainty on the date of the election will make planning for the election much more difficult than a planned election date and will mean that the election team will need to be prepared and ready to go at very short notice. While most of the pressure will fall to the core election team, all areas of the Council will be asked to support the election and ensure its effective delivery.

Action: Organise and implement the UK General Election for the new West Dunbartonshire Constituency

District Heating Network

The District Heating Network provides low carbon heating and cooling solutions to the Queens Quay regeneration site. It aims to significantly reduce fuel poverty and deprivation within some of the poorer neighbourhoods of West Dunbartonshire and, crucially, contribute to key climate change targets. As the District Heating Network matures, it is anticipated that new customer and expansion opportunities will arise.

Legal services will continue to support the expansion programme through the provision of legal advice and leadership in the negotiation of contracts with prospective customers.

Action: Provide legal services to the Council and West Dunbartonshire Energy LLP in relation to heat supply agreements and network supply contracts

Sale of Nicotine Vapour Products (Vapes) to Underage Children

Vapes were originally introduced as a smoking cessation device, a safer alternative to traditional tobacco for adults. They carry the same age restriction for purchase as tobacco of 18 years or over. The introduction of flavoured Vapes with bright colours and child-appealing flavours has led to a growing trend of underage young people purchasing them for their own use.

In West Dunbartonshire, complaints have been received from concerned parents, teachers and local residents about shops selling Vapes to underage children. There are Government plans to introduce legislation to ban disposable vapes and notwithstanding the merits of such a ban, this may create a black market in the sale of disposable vapes that will require additional resources to tackle.

The Council has 42 premises registered to sell Vapes, 133 premises registered to sell only tobacco, and 99 premises for both tobacco and Vapes. Complaints and intelligence logs will be analysed to identify premises which sell Vapes to underage children and integrity testing carried out where required. In addition, all intelligence relating to the sale of illicit tobacco will be compiled to identify premises which require action.

Action: Identify premises which sell Vapes to underage children and conduct integrity testing where required
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Legal Support across a Range of Projects

Legal Services continues to play a pivotal role in supporting Council services with various projects. Often these projects are challenging from a legal perspective and require careful legal consideration to make sure that the Council's interests are protected or that our statutory duties are carried out.

For example, Legal Services are supporting the Gruggies Burn Flood Prevention Scheme and advising on the Council's duties in terms of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009; providing legal advice in relation to the development of the Marine Technology Park, a key regeneration site for the Council, including high value development agreements and construction contracts; negotiating and drafting novel connection agreement and related commercial agreements between Council and NHS so to connect the Golden Jubilee Hospital to the District Heating network; and providing complex advice relating to a proposed co-operation arrangements relating to a Net Zero project with Glasgow City Council.

Action: Continue to provide high quality and timely legal support across all Council services

Short Measures

The accurate measurement of goods for sale is at the heart of Trading Standards work. When households are struggling with the rising cost of living, it is particularly important that they are not also suffering consumer detriment as a result of short measurement.

Short measures means consumers don't get what they pay for, which in turn has an effect on compliant businesses, making it difficult for consumers to accurately compare prices to get the best deal. Ultimately, it leads to poor consumer confidence. West Dunbartonshire is an area of high deprivation and it's important that we do all we can to empower consumers, ensuring a fair market place that allows them to make confident, well informed choices.

To achieve this, officers will undertake a series of routine weight checks in a variety of retail premises, sharing the results with other Scottish Authorities to build a picture of the market as a whole. Specific regard will be given to every day food items and 'high' value necessities such as heating fuel and petroleum.

Action: Undertake proactive weights and measures work in a variety of retail premises, with a specific focus on every day food and necessities such as heating fuel and petroleum

20 Minute Mapping Tool

The 20 Minute Mapping tool that we have implemented takes advantage of rapidly evolving data technology to provide better service delivery. It provides an evidenced way of understanding our residents access to critical services using the available walking and wheeling network. As such, the tool will seek to support multiple services to inform better decision making in accordance with this key national policy. It will also play a critical part in supporting the development and delivery of Local Development Plan 3, ensuring that proposed new development supports this spatial concept and in turn our communities as well as other service areas. Beyond a focus at a local level, the tool will be used to inform research across the city region, supported by partners within Clydesdale and other local councils. The aspiration is to introduce a consistent baseline measurement of service access to ensure a clear and coherent strategy across the region.

Action: Continue to develop the 20 minute mapping tool for use at both local and regional levels
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Reimagining the Antonine Wall

The first phase of the Project was completed in March 2023, with work well underway on the second phase, 'Reimagining the Antonine Wall'. This will explore regeneration, reinterpretation and access opportunities and improved visitor offers at key locations. The Project Manager will be scoping out Phase 2 in 2024/25 and identifying funding sources with a new partnership agreement with the 5 Local Authorities and Historic Environment Scotland.

Action: Develop the Reimagining the Antonine Wall project – Phase 2

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is a delivery partnership between the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland, funded and supported by the Health Foundation and Scottish Government with the support of COSLA. Clydebank is one of the pilot community areas selected with the ambition of improving wellbeing and reducing inequalities. The Programme in its present form is due to finish in May 2024. Work is underway to take the Programme forward with a different approach and form.

Action: Scope out the next phase of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme and how the health and wellbeing and reduction of inequalities outcomes can be taken forward

Local Development Plan 3

Work has commenced on the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP3) with the Development Plan Scheme agreed by the 2023 December Planning Committee. Over 400 open space sites have been audited which will provide an evidence basis and allow the preparation of a strategy, including policies about the development, maintenance and use of open spaces. The play sufficiency assessment is to commence and will include statements relating to the quality, quantity and accessibility of play opportunities in the planning authority area. Work this year will concentrate in putting together a robust evidence basis to allow the submission of the Gatecheck by December 2024 to Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division.

Action: Prepare a robust evidence report for submission for Gatecheck to Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division
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Local Place Plans

The invitation to prepare Local Place Plans was issued to organisations and individuals in October 2023 and an advert placed in the local press. The Council has prepared a West Dunbartonshire “How-to” guide to encourage and assist local communities to prepare a Local Place Plan. A number of Community Councils have expressed an interest in preparing a Local Place Plan and this will be taken forward in 2024/25.

Action: Promote and support communities in the preparation of Local Place Plans

New Building Standards Regulations

The Building Warrant fees are used by verifiers to deliver the building standards verification (building warrant) service. There will be an uplift in Building Warrant Fees in 2024 but with this greater constraints will be placed on Councils to ensure that the additional fee income is reinvested in the Building Standards Service. A new Compliance Process for High Risk Buildings is being established together with an enhancement of consistent enforcement powers and regular inspections.

Action: Develop a plan to ensure compliance with the new Building Standards Regulations is implemented
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Changes to Procurement Process

Changes to the procurement process were agreed at a Council meeting in March 2023 in order to streamline the process and deliver efficiencies. To achieve this, the Corporate Procurement Unit will develop training material and a training calendar to support service areas with non-regulated procurement under £2m works and non-complex procurement for low contractual risk projects. Services will administer these projects utilising framework agreement direct awards using the QuickQuote portal on Public Contracts Scotland. This will remove onerous tasks such as market research, contract strategies, mini competitions, scorecards, monitoring activity and certain Key Performance Indicators for those contracts.

Action: Provide procurement advice, guidance and support on non-complex procurement for low contractual risk projects

Procurement Improvement Plan

Following a Fit for Future service review, a Procurement Improvement Plan was developed to address key findings over a three year period. With the Purchase to Pay Framework completed in 2023/24, the Corporate Procurement Unit will continue to implement actions in 2024/25 to streamline the customer experience. This will focus on improving on-line guidance and forms, improving process and procedural documents, user training and service engagement together with team resilience and communication, which will increase the growth of suppliers through the electronic e-invoicing platform.

Action: Continue to implement the key deliverables from the Procurement Improvement Plan

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is central to all that we do. The actions set out in this section, as well as those at an operational level not included in this Delivery Plan, demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement and take account of the wider Best Value focus on vision and leadership; governance and accountability; effective use of resources; partnerships and collaborative working; working with communities; sustainability; and fairness and equality.

Action Plan

The challenges identified in Section 2 and the key factors identified in Section 3 have informed Regulatory & Regeneration priorities for 2024/25. Appendix 1 sets out the action plan to address them. It also includes:

- performance indicators that will enable progress to be monitored and reported to stakeholders;
- strategic workforce actions to address workforce issues identified in the planning process; and
- strategic and/or service risks.

In relation to the latter, strategic risks represent the potential for the Council to take advantage of opportunities or fail to meet stated strategic objectives and those that require strategic leadership. Service risks relate to service delivery and represent the potential for impact on individual services, or the experience of those who work within the services, i.e. employees, partners, contractors and volunteers, or service users and clients in receipt of the services provided. In identifying the relevant risks for 2024/25 and actions to mitigate them, we aim to improve or maintain the current position (i.e. the current risk score) set out in the appendix.

4. Resources

Finance

Regulatory & Regeneration has a net revenue budget of £3.440m and a capital budget of £17.333m in 2024/25. A breakdown is set out below. We will make the best use of the resources available to deliver on key priority areas and secure external/match funding where this is possible.

Service Area (Figures subject to ongoing verification)	Gross Expenditure 2024/25 (£m)	Gross Income 2024/25 (£m)	Net Expenditure 2024/25 (£m)	Capital Budget 2024/25 (£m)
Democratic & Registration	0.907m	-0.083m	0.824m	0.000m
Environmental Health	1.050m	-0.358m	0.692m	0.000m
Licensing	0.328m	-0.453m	-0.125m	0.000m
Legal Services & Trading Standards	0.956m	-0.172m	0.784m	0.000m
Procurement	0.705m	-0.112m	0.594m	0.000m
Building & Planning	1.384m	-0.727m	0.657m	0.010m
Economic Development	1.286m	-1.272m	0.015m	17.323m
Total	6.616m	-3.176m	3.440m	17.333m

Employees

Employee Numbers

The headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) staff in each service area (as of 31st March 2024) are as follows:

Regulatory and Regeneration	Headcount	FTE
Democratic and Registration Services	21	18.36
Economic Development	16	15.03
Legal Services	21	20.26
Planning, Building Control	36	34.30
Regulatory Management	3	2.80
Procurement	10	9.86
TOTAL	107	100.61

Absence

The 2023/24 quarterly absence figures for Regulatory & Regeneration are shown below together with the Council average for the same periods for comparison. Absence was significantly lower the Council average throughout 2023/24:

Absence in 2023/24	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual FTE days lost per FTE employee
Regulatory & Regeneration	0.86	1.72	1.53	2.52	5.94
COUNCIL WIDE TOTAL	3.64	3.36	4.67	5.01	13.74

Appendix 1: Action Plan

Please Note: PI targets for 2024/25 are indicative until 2023/24 year-end data becomes available.

	1. Our communities
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	Our residents health and wellbeing remains a priority
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Percentage of air quality monitoring stations complying with the national objective for nitrogen dioxide at the nearest building façades of residential properties , schools, hospitals and care homes (40ug/m3 NO2)	100%	Mark Walsh
Percentage of highest priority pest control service requests responded to within 2 working days	95%	John Stevenson
Total annual redress won for consumers by Trading Standards Group (£)	N/A	Annemarie Clelland
Food Law: Percentage of food businesses in the highest risk category (1 to 6 monthly inspections by Food & Business Group) that were inspected on time	100%	Eilidh Paton
Food Law: Percentage of food businesses in the high risk category (12 monthly inspections by Food & Business Group) that were inspected on time	80%	Eilidh Paton
Number of reports of bogus/cold callers	N/A	Annemarie Clelland

Action	Due Date	Owner
Identify premises which sell Vapes to underage children and conduct integrity testing where required	31-Mar-2025	Annemarie Clelland
Undertake proactive weights and measures work in a variety of retail premises, with a specific focus on every day food and necessities such as heating fuel and petroleum	31-Mar-2025	Annemarie Clelland
Scope out the next phase of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme and how the health and wellbeing and reduction of inequalities outcomes can be taken forward	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford

	2. Our Environment
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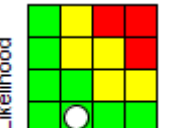
	Our local environment is protected, enhanced and valued
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Air Quality: PM10 Concentration	18	Mark Walsh

	Our resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Tonnage of carbon dioxide emissions from Council operations and assets	19,342	Rachel Moir

Action	Due Date	Owner
Co-ordinate, monitor and report the progress of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan for 2024/25	31-Mar-2025	Rachel Moir
Develop Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan	31-Mar-2025	Rachel Moir

Risk	Description	Current Assessment	Target Assessment	Owner
Inability to reduce carbon footprint in line with targets	The risk that the Council will be unable to achieve net zero emissions by 2045, both in relation to mitigating carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Net zero refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere. This target has been developed in a way that mirrors the emission reduction trajectory set by the Scottish Government in light of the Climate Emergency.	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	Gillian McNamara

Ob	Our neighbourhoods are sustainable and attractive
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Percentage of private landlord applications administered and processed within 21 days	95%	John Stevenson

Action	Due Date	Owner
Promote the next phase of Queens Quay Housing	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford; Gillian McNamara

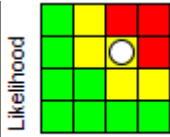
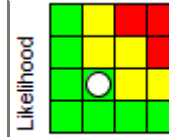
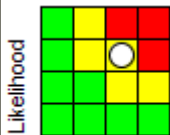
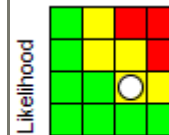
	3. Our Economy
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	Our area has the infrastructure for sustainable and inclusive growth where businesses can flourish
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Number of businesses given advice and assistance to start up through Business Gateway	180	Gillian Scholes
Percentage of procurement spent on local small/medium-sized enterprises and SMEs who have a presence in West Dunbartonshire	36%	Laura Adams; Angus Cameron
No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	19.78	Gillian Scholes
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	100%	Gillian Scholes
Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes	40	Pamela Clifford

Action	Due Date	Owner
Implement, monitor and report the progress of the 2024/25 Economic Development action plan	31-Mar-2025	Gillian McNamara

Action	Due Date	Owner
Deliver key regeneration sites across West Dunbartonshire	31-Mar-2025	Gillian McNamara
Ensure regeneration sites are progressed to enable high quality development to be achieved on the ground	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Monitor the development of the key regeneration sites to ensure they comply with the approved consent	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Explore commercial opportunities in our town centres and wider regeneration sites	31-Mar-2025	Magda Swider
Develop and implement business support interventions through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund	31-Mar-2025	Gillian Scholes
Support town centre revitalisation	31-Mar-2025	Magda Swider

Risk	Description	Current Assessment	Target Assessment	Owner
Failure to deliver Queens Quay Masterplan	Following completion of Council investment there is a risk the housing plot sales do not materialise in the next 3-7 years, with implications for the return on investment and the business case for the District Heating Network.	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	Pamela Clifford; Gillian McNamara
Inability to meet demands of Council to progress regeneration projects within desired timescales	The number and complexity of regeneration projects is putting considerable strain on the resources available which can be exacerbated by delays out with the control of the service and when pinch points on different projects occur at roughly the same time.	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	Pamela Clifford; Alan Douglas; Gillian McNamara

	4. Our Council
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	Our workforce is resilient and skilled where digital technology supports service delivery for our residents
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Action	Due Date	Owner
Develop and implement wellbeing, employee engagement, equality, and learning and development plans to enable capabilities, improve resilience and promote a diverse workforce	31-Mar-2025	Alan Douglas
Develop and implement employee life cycle plans in line with the People First Strategy to attract and retain the workforce	31-Mar-2025	Alan Douglas
Implement service review process including role design, use of new technology, and new ways of working to add resilience, address gaps, and establish opportunities for efficiencies	31-Mar-2025	Alan Douglas
Develop and implement learning and development plans and development opportunities to improve capabilities and resilience within the workforce	31-Mar-2025	Alan Douglas

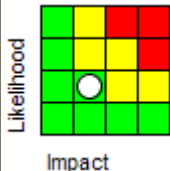
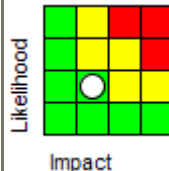
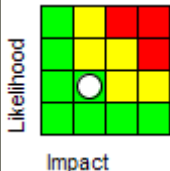
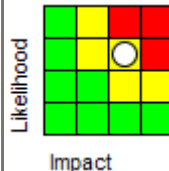
	Our Council is adaptable and focused on delivering best value for our residents
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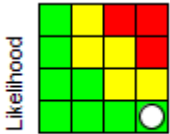
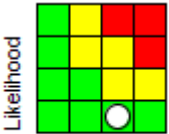



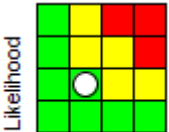


Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Planning applications (major developments) - average number of weeks to decision	16	Pamela Clifford
Planning applications (householder) - average number of weeks to decision	8	Pamela Clifford
Planning applications (local development, excluding householder) - average number of weeks to decision	12	Pamela Clifford

Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
% of contract award notices published within 30 calendar days from award letter being sent	100%	Laura Adams; Angus Cameron
Annual Cash Savings target achieved	£400,000.00	Laura Adams; Angus Cameron
Percentage of Environmental Health service requests from citizens first responded to within 2 working days	90%	John Stevenson
Percentage of building warrant applications responded to within 20 working days	85%	Judi Ferguson

Action	Due Date	Owner
Monitor and review the impact of budget savings	31-Mar-2025	Alan Douglas
Provide legal services to the Council and West Dunbartonshire Energy LLP in relation to heat supply agreements and network supply contracts	31-Mar-2025	Michael McDougall
Continue to provide high quality and timely legal support across all Council services	31-Mar-2025	Michael McDougall
Continue to develop the 20 minute mapping tool for use at both local and regional levels	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Develop the Reimagining the Antonine Wall project – Phase 2	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Prepare a robust evidence report for submission for Gatecheck to Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Promote and support communities in the preparation of Local Place Plans	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford

Action	Due Date	Owner
Develop a plan to ensure compliance with the Building Standards Service is implemented	31-Mar-2025	Pamela Clifford
Provide procurement advice, guidance and support on non-complex procurement for low contractual risk projects	31-Mar-2025	Laura Adams; Angus Cameron
Continue to implement the key deliverables from the Procurement Improvement Plan	31-Mar-2025	Laura Adams; Angus Cameron

Risk	Description	Current Assessment	Target Assessment	Owner
Failure to monitor and enforce regulatory areas with public risk	The Council fails to comply with statutory regulatory duties in respect of environmental health, trading standards and licensing laws.			Annemarie Clelland; Michael McDougall; John Stevenson
Income for services continues to be dramatically reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis.	Relates to registration, licensing, planning and building control which have been impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis.			Alan Douglas

Risk	Description	Current Assessment	Target Assessment	Owner
Failure to adequately respond to an emergency situation such as a multiple fatality workplace accident, outbreak of food borne communicable disease, a major public health incident or pandemic	There is a national shortage of qualified staff in Environmental Health, across Scotland. This impacts on West Dunbartonshire Council. Vacancy levels at WDC might impact on our ability to respond to emergencies.			John Stevenson
Inability to recruit successfully to enable performance to be maintained	There is a current issue with recruitment of qualified staff in various parts of the service.			Pamela Clifford; John Stevenson
Failure to secure best value of procurement spend and ensure compliance with financial regulations	Improved procurement management process, contract strategies, planning, monitoring and reporting in collaboration with services will continue to mitigate against non-compliant procurement spend.			Laura Adams; Angus Cameron
Failure to continue to achieve increased savings from procurement activity	As second or third generation revenue contracts seldom deliver the same cost savings as first generation, the contract strategies need to focus on governance, operating models, total cost of ownership, service quality and innovation.			Laura Adams; Angus Cameron

Ob	Our residents are engaged and empowered
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Performance Indicator	2024/25	Owner
	Target	
Percentage of Council and Committee minutes produced within 3 clear working days of the meeting	98%	Carol-Ann Burns
% of committee agendas published within standing order timescales	99%	Carol-Ann Burns

Action	Due Date	Owner
Implement the various requirements of the Elections Act 2022 in time for the UK parliamentary Elections in 2024	31-Mar-2025	George Hawthorn
Organise and implement the UK General Election for the new West Dunbartonshire Constituency	31-Mar-2025	George Hawthorn