

Finance and Corporate Resources

Finance and Corporate Resource Plan 2023-24

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Section One – Introduction

I am pleased to introduce our Resource Plan for 2023-24 which sets out outcomes and priorities for the coming year.

The five services within Finance and Corporate Resources help to ensure that the council operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities.

Administration and Legal Services provides essential support for the core democratic and governance arrangements of the council as well as providing a full range of legal advice and support, managing electoral events and licensing and registration services to the public.

Communications and Strategy provides accurate, timely information for employees and residents. The service is responsible for the council's publications, its websites, intranet and social media. It also co-ordinates all Media enquiries. The service incorporates the Research and Improvement Unit as well as the Community Engagement Team, which provides support to the Community Planning Board, and provides a single interface for community engagement including neighbourhood planning.

Finance Services provides sound financial stewardship to ensure the council's priorities are effectively funded and expenditure, including procurement, is appropriately monitored, controlled and reported. Finance Services is split between transactional activities including payables, procurement, risk management and insurance, revenues and benefits, customer services and development and money matters advice; and Strategy which includes budget strategy, budget monitoring and providing financial support to all Resources.

Information Technology Services supports all council services through the maintenance of over 5,000 computers and servers running over 200 business applications across council Resources. This delivery is supported by council wide networks covering telephone, printing, mail and internet technologies.

Personnel Services is responsible for delivery of the personnel policies and practices across the council. This includes employee learning and organisational development; consultation; supporting unemployed people into jobs, training or further education. The service also manages payroll, health, safety and wellbeing and is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of equality and diversity legislation, good practice, and advancing equality for all.

The Resource is also responsible for **Audit and Compliance Services**, which provides assurance on the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance arrangements, as well as ensuring compliance with European grant award requirements.

Paul Manning
Executive Director
Finance and Corporate Resources

Section Two – Key areas of focus for the year ahead

2.0. Overview

The Resource has identified the main challenges, risks and new developments which will have significant impact on the delivery of services in the coming year. These are outlined briefly below.

2.1. Cost of living Crisis

The UK is experiencing the worst cost-of-living crisis in 40 years. With inflation soaring into double figures both the UK and the Scottish Government have formally recognised the severity of the crisis and have deployed emergency measures to help mitigate the effects of rising costs. While all sectors of society are seeing prices rise the impacts are greatest for those on the lowest incomes. The council recognises the immense pressures being faced by households across South Lanarkshire, and acknowledges the potential for additional demands on council services. The council has identified a range of new and existing support which can help households manage scarce resources and services will continue to explore all avenues to support the most vulnerable in the year ahead.

While doing all we can to support our communities in these difficult times, the council recognises that inflationary pressures will also present significant challenges for council services as budgets are increasingly squeezed by rising costs.

2.2. Financial Strategy The Resource leads on financial planning and reporting for the Council. Over recent years, the challenges for Local Government finance have continued, around balancing pressures of meeting additional demand and costs of delivering services. A key part of the financial management process is the development of Financial Strategies, developing financial plans which deliver the council's visions, values and priorities, while recognising and responding to financial constraints. Financial strategies are prepared annually and approved by members leading to the final approval of annual budgets. This process includes consideration and approval of efficiency and savings options and considers requirements for investment. One of the key features for future strategies will be the output from our programme of Transformational Reviews, which is covered at section 2.4. The strategic approach to financial planning also includes planning for Capital programmes of work. One of the main features of the budget for 2023-24 are exceptional items of additional costs, brought about by inflation. This increases the level of budget gap that requires to be managed by the Council, and is likely to feature for a period of time.

2.3. Involving Our Communities Our Council and Community plans both reflect the priorities of our communities and connect to the neighbourhood plans created in smaller areas of South Lanarkshire. We will continue to progress delivery of these, developing appropriate ways to codesign services with local people.

Our ambition is that all communities in South Lanarkshire have the opportunity to identify their local priorities and can see these reflected in the way we engage and work with them. Supporting community groups to represent the views of their neighbours and to work together to address issues that matter to them is the way we will progress this.

We will work to develop opportunities for our community to take action themselves, including continuing to support community asset transfer, developing our communities access to community benefits and helping them to take action to improve sustainability.

2.4. Deliver effective Employability Services to support Individuals and Business Covid19 has had a significant impact on Individuals and the Labour Market.

There has been an escalation in skills shortage and a change in the support required for individuals seeking employment. There are new groups of unemployed people seeking support, different from those groups the employability programmes were originally designed for.

Programmes will have to address new need, in addition to offering enhanced assistance to those traditionally supported in this area. Opportunities for employment and work placements have changed, so creative approaches to the provision of occupational experiences and effective use of funding streams to maximise support are required. The current economic picture is mixed, with some areas of the economy struggling to fill vacancies and others recovering more slowly. The impact of Brexit is also continuing to an effect on the supply of skilled and qualified labour.

The council is working closely with its partners to make effective use of funding streams to support those most in need of employability support, and to develop programmes which meet demands and anticipated workforce and labour market shortages.

2.5. Recruitment and Retention There have been significant changes in the available labour market through Brexit and the impact of Covid. Covid has also impacted on the life choices made by employees around employment. These impacts have led to increasing turnover and difficulties in recruitment. Improving both recruitment and retention will be essential in ensuring the council has sufficient employee resources to meet service requirements.

2.6. Oracle Fusion The current Oracle system (People Connect/HRMS, FMS) is being migrated to Fusion, Oracle's cloud based solution. This is a significant change programme affecting the whole workforce and work will now focus on delivering significant improvements to process, support agile working, employee self-service and engagement as well as greater levels of automation and improved management information. These efficiency improvements will be captured to support the council's financial position. This change project will also provide a platform for continuing service improvements and efficiencies.

2.7. Strategic digital developments The Council is investing heavily in digital technologies to improve the delivery of services to citizens, streamline and standardise business processes, and improve collaboration and partnership working (for example Health and Social Care Partnership - HSCP). This investment is targeted on delivering significant productivity improvements and cost savings. Information Technology (IT) has a major part to play in digital transformation by implementing and supporting new technologies at pace and at scale.

IT projects will continue to be prioritised based upon need, business case and alignment with Council Priorities. Partnerships with Local Government Digital Office, NHS Lanarkshire, Scottish Government and key suppliers will be leveraged to share best practices and accelerate rollout and adoption of new digital solutions. IT will continue to maintain high levels of availability of IT estate and high levels of support to officers and elected members.

Key IT activities will include completing the rollout of agile working for council staff, replacement of legacy business applications (for example Housing & Property, Social Work) and the rollout of digital connectivity solutions to improve internet access, deliver wider economic benefits and support digital inclusion.

2.8. Sustainable Development and Climate Change The council acknowledges the serious and immediate threat of climate change and is committed to accelerating the

pace of action in response to the climate emergency and in Scotland's transition to a net-zero and climate resilient society and economy. It is expected that, as a public body, the council leads by example and uses its role to influence area-wide climate change action and sustainability. The Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2022-27) sets out how the council aims to develop sustainably and tackle climate change.

Section Three – Resource Outcomes

3.1. Resource Outcomes

Finance and Corporate Resources has established the following Resource outcomes to support the delivery of Connect Outcomes in 2023-24.

| Connect Outcomes | Resource Outcomes |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Communities and Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals and communities in South Lanarkshire are engaged and able to participate in decision-making processes |
| Education and Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Resource Outcomes for this Connect Outcome |
| Health and Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Resource Outcomes for this Connect Outcome |
| Children and Young People | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Resource Outcomes for this Connect Outcome |
| Housing and Land | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Resource Outcomes for this Connect Outcome |
| Our Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A people-centred approach to recovery is implemented to help individuals, communities, businesses and the social and third sector thrive |

3.2. Delivering the Plan and achieving Best Value

In working towards the six Outcomes, the council aims to continually improve and ensure effective and efficient use of resources, and our business will be conducted with integrity, transparency and will operate to the highest standards.

Finance and Corporate Resources has established the following Resource outcomes to support Delivering the Plan and achieving Best Value.

| | |
|---|--|
| Delivering the Plan and achieving Best Value | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship• Customers experience high quality and improving council services• The workforce has the skills, flexibility and capacity to deliver the council's priorities• Digital and ICT services meet the needs of the council and its customers |
|---|--|

Section Four – Measures and actions

4.0. Performance measures and action plan

This section of the Resource Plan is divided into two parts: part (a) sets out our main performance measures against our outcomes; and part (b) describes the key actions we will take in the coming year to respond to the challenges ahead and improve services and outcomes.

4.a. How we will measure our performance

The impact of Covid19 continues to have a significant effect on performance for some services. The table below shows our key performance measures, with actual data for the last 2 years and the target for 2023-24. To provide additional context for the targets, information is provided within the notes column, where applicable.

| Resource Outcome: The council demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------------|--|
| Measure | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 Target | Links | Service | Notes |
| 1. Pay invoices within the target of 28 days (local target) | 93.4% | tbc at Q4 | 90.0% | 07.02 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 2. Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year - in year (incl water) (local target) | 95.5% | tbc at Q4 | 95.2% | C07.02 | Finance (Trans) | Target reduced from 95.5% to 95.2% due to impact of cost of living crisis on households |
| 3. % of Non-Domestic rates income achieved (local target) | 97.5% | tbc at Q4 | 97.0% | 07.02 | Finance (Trans) | Target reduced from 97.5% to 97.0% due to impact of cost of living crisis on businesses |
| 4. Sundry Income collection (local target) | 98.1% | tbc at Q4 | 97.0% | 07.02 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 5. Liquor licensing processing target - 97% within service targets (local target) | 92% | tbc at Q4 | 97% | 07.01 | Admin and Legal | This year's targets remain the same and are realistic, based on the service's experience, anticipated workload and desire to drive continuous improvements |
| 6. Registration processing target - 97% within service targets (local target) | 93% | tbc at Q4 | 97% | 07.01 | Admin and Legal | |
| 7. Citizenship processing target - 97% within service targets (local target) | 100% | tbc at Q4 | 97% | 07.01 | Admin and Legal | |
| 8. Complaints processing target - 97% within service targets (local target) | 100% | tbc at Q4 | 97% | 07.01 | Admin and Legal | |

Resource Outcome: A people-centred approach to recovery is implemented to help individuals, communities, businesses and the social and third sector thrive.

| Measure | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 Target | Links | Service | Notes |
|---|----------------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------|---|
| 9. Number of unemployed people supported via council-operated employability programmes (local target) | 1,934 People * | tbc at Q4 | 1,350 people | C06.01 | Personnel | Target increased from 1,200 in 2022-23 to 1,350 in 2023-24 to include additional engagements to counter the expectation that the cost of living crisis will have a negative impact on the local labour market. |
| 10. Number of unemployed people gaining sustainable employment (local target) | 1,146 People * | tbc at Q4 | 675 people | C06.13 | Personnel | Target increased from 600 in 2022-23 to 675 in 2023-24 because higher jobs outcomes are expected through targeted recruitment drives, particularly within SIMD areas where households are likely to be affected by the cost of living crisis. |
| 11. Number of unemployed people accessing further education or training (local target) | 219 People * | tbc at Q4 | 225 people | C06.02 | Personnel | Target increased from 200 in 2022-23 to 225 in 2023-24 because we expect more people to access up-skilling training and policies are targeted at expanding sectors such as Renewable Energy |

* The main reason the actual results were higher in 2021-22 was due to increased funding to support economic recovery, and the resilience of the local economy bouncing back to previous pre-covid levels.

| Resource Outcome: Customers experience high quality and improving council services | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| Measure | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 Target | Links | Service | Notes |
| 12. Customer Service Centre - % of calls answered (local target) | 93% | tbc at Q4 | 90% | C07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 13. Customer Service Centre – average queue time (local target) | 93 seconds | tbc at Q4 | 5 mins | C07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target changed from 2 mins (in 2022-23) to 5 mins. which will continue to provide customers with a responsive service. Online contact options continue to be offered, providing 24 hour access to many council services. |
| 14. Benefits administration – average processing times for new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims (local target) | 13 days | tbc at Q4 | 14 days | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 15. Benefits administration – average processing times for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction change in circumstances (local target) | 2 days | tbc at Q4 | 4 days | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 16. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction – accuracy of processing (local target) | 94.4% | tbc at Q4 | 94.0% | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target increased from 93.5% in 2022-23 to 94% in 2023-24 to acknowledge recovery journey following Covid |
| 17. Scottish Welfare Fund – average processing times for Crisis Grants (National target) | 2 days | tbc at Q4 | 2 days | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |
| 18. Scottish Welfare Fund – average processing times for Community Care grants (National target) | 16 days | tbc at Q4 | 15 days | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | Target remains the same |

Resource Outcome: Customers experience high quality and improving council services

| Measure | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 Target | Links | Service | Notes |
|---|---------|---------|----------------|-------|-----------------|---|
| 19. Money Matters Advice – customer service - % cases responded to within 5 days of initial customer contact (local target) | N/A | N/A | 95% | 07.01 | Finance (Trans) | This is a new measure -data now available from the new case management system introduced in April 2022. |

4.b. What actions we will take

Resource Outcome: Individuals and communities in South Lanarkshire are engaged and able to participate in decision-making processes

| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
|---|---|--------|---------------------------|
| 1. Increase routes for communities to participate in decision making and priority setting | Increase activity around our Place Based Participatory Budgeting programme in priority neighbourhoods | 01.05 | Community Engagement Team |
| | Increase the number of communities with their own community-led neighbourhood plans | C01.05 | Community Engagement Team |
| | Implement new approaches to community involvement in decision making such as a community Wishlist approach to community benefits and the delivery of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing project | C01.05 | Community Engagement Team |
| 2. Take forward IT strategic developments | Complete procurement exercise to identify partner to meet SLC Digital Connectivity requirements, including improved availability and affordability of broadband and 4G/5G mobile services across the council area | C01.07 | IT |

Resource Outcome: A people-centred approach to recovery is implemented to help individuals, communities, businesses and the social and third sector thrive.

| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
|---|---|--------|-----------|
| 3. Deliver effective Employability Services to support Individuals and Business | Monitor and adjust the delivery plan agreed via the LEP and Community Planning Partners | C06.10 | Personnel |

Resource Outcome: The council demonstrates high standards of governance and sound financial stewardship

| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
|--|---|-------|--------------------|
| 4. Lead financial planning and reporting for the council | Financial Strategy to be agreed by June 2023 | 07.02 | Finance (Strategy) |
| | Budget proposals to be considered by members by December 2023 | 07.02 | Finance (Strategy) |
| | Budget agreed by March 2024 | 07.02 | Finance (Strategy) |

| | | | |
|---|---|--------------|--------------------|
| | Capital programme for 2024-25 to be agreed by March 2024 | 07.02 | Finance (Strategy) |
| 5. Governance | Consideration of the case for an additional emergency committee | 07.02 | Admin and Legal |
| Resource Outcome: Customers experience high quality and improving council services | | | |
| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
| | | | |
| Resource Outcome: The workforce has the skills, flexibility and capacity to deliver the council's priorities | | | |
| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
| 6. Implement the Council Workforce Plans to match Service need | Resource Workforce Plans are in place and will be monitored and adjusted throughout the year. Any additional actions will be reported via Resource Workforce Monitoring reports | C07.03 | Personnel |
| Resource Outcome: Digital and ICT services meet the needs of the council and its customers | | | |
| Action | Steps we will take to deliver our actions | Links | Service |
| 7. Take forward IT strategic developments | Migrate to new Integrated Housing and Property Management system by November 2023 | 07.04 | IT |
| | Develop and deliver training plan to upskill IT staff in new technologies | 07.04 | IT |

Section Five – Resourcing the Plan

5.0. Introduction

In this section we consider the resources needed to implement our plan, including funding and staffing.

5.1. Revenue Budget 2023-24

The Resource has a Net Revenue Budget of £40.202 million for 2023-24. The table below allocates this budget across the services:

| NET Budget by Service | 2023-24 | |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Detail | £ million | % |
| Finance Services (Transactions) | 18.057 | 45% |
| Finance Services (Strategy) | 2.117 | 5% |
| Information Technology Services | 5.133 | 13% |
| Administration and Legal Services | 4.188 | 10% |
| Communications and Strategy (incl Community and Engagement and Research and Improvement) | 2.755 | 7% |
| Personnel Services | 7.579 | 19% |
| Audit and Compliance | 0.373 | 1% |
| Total | 40.202 | 100% |

5.2. Capital Budget 2023-24

The following capital budget of £7.230 million is allocated to the Resource for 2023-24:

| Capital Programme 2023-24 | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Project | £ million |
| IT Infrastructure – Business As Usual | 0.450 |
| Oracle Fusion | 6.780 |
| Total | 7.230 |

5.3. Resource Employees

Finance and Corporate Resources has 954 employees as at February 2023. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.

| Service | Number of employees |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Finance Services (Transactions) | 400 |
| Finance Services (Strategy) | 75 |
| Information Technology Services | 105 |
| Administration and Legal Services | 93 |
| Communications and Strategy | 51 |
| Personnel Services | 217 |
| Other (Audit and Compliance) | 13 |
| Total | 954 |