Governance and Assurance Service Plan

2023 – 2024

Dumfries & Galloway

The principal purpose of the Service is to deliver the following services:

- Legal Services
- Democratic Services (Committee and Member Services and Elections; Information Governance)
- Licensing
- Internal Audit
- Risk Management, Development Support and Scrutiny Review support;
- Community Protection (includes Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
- Resilience and Community Safety (includes Community Resilience, Housing and Licensing Standards, and Shared Health Resilience Service)

And in doing so:

- To promote high standards of governance and compliance across our Council
- To audit and scrutinise services across the Council to ensure compliance and encourage best practice
- To keep the people and businesses in our region safe and ensure compliance
- To enhance democracy and sound decision-making
- To provide early legal intervention and prevention across all Council functions
- To protect our most vulnerable, promote community resilience and contribute to the region's preparation, response and recovery in the event of a major incident or civil emergency
- enabling a wide range of activity which delivers on the Council's Strategic Outcomes, through our Legal, Democratic, Audit and Risk functions.

The Service has a lead role in delivering the following Council Plan Strategic Outcomes:

Travel Connectivity and Infrastructure

- Communities are protected from the impact of floods.
- People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive.

The service demonstrates the Council's Principles by:

Safeguard our future

Working to **address the climate emergency** through:

- Working in partnership to prepare for, respond to and recover from Severe Weather events which will increasingly affect the region and its residents.

- Supporting local residents and businesses affected by flooding.

- Undertaking air quality monitoring

Support our citizens

Working to **put customers at the heart of services** through:

- Enabling participation and engagement in the Democratic process.

- Ensuring the public have access to information and their data is handled appropriately.

Supporting the most vulnerable and in need through:

- The advice, support, guidance, and court representation we provide in relation to Child Protection, Permanence, Adult Support and Protection and Adults with Incapacity.

- Providing Legal advice on leases and occupancy agreements in connection with the Afghan and Ukraine resettlements.

Support our communities

Empowering communities and individuals through:

- Providing access for the public to decision making and information to enable them to take a participative role in decisions which impact their lives and the environment.

- Our Trusted Trader Scheme.

- Enabling Community Asset Transfer of Council properties through legal support and advice.

Work in partnership with Communities and Local, National and Regional Partners: across a range of functions to ensure our communities and our critical services are safe, protected and resilient.

Be a responsive Council
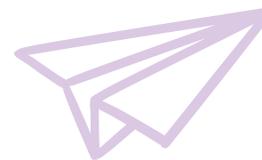
Communicate openly through:

- Information Governance and Complaints Handling processes which ensure that the Council is a listening, responsive organisation that welcomes feedback from its customers and takes steps to address any issues at the earliest opportunity.

- Maintaining situational awareness for residents during Civil Emergencies through the use of Dumfries and Galloway Virtual Operations Support Team.

Be organised to deliver through:

- A solution focussed and enabling Legal Services, providing advice to client services, recognising their needs and priorities as well as our obligations.

- Forward thinking in reviewing of new legislation and dissemination of Legal Advice Notes
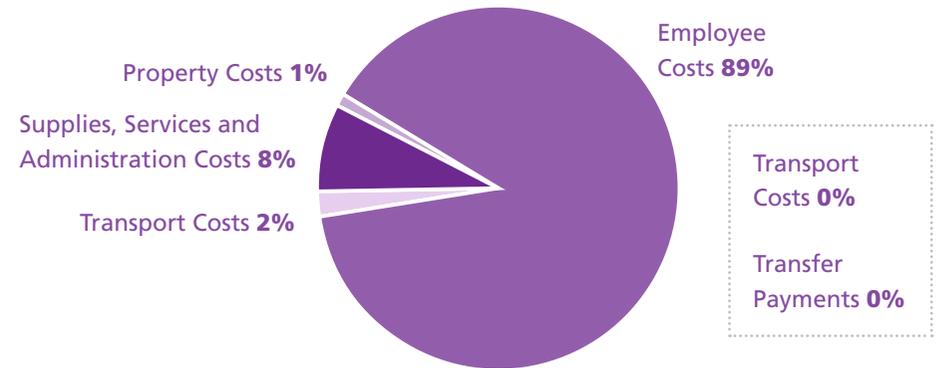
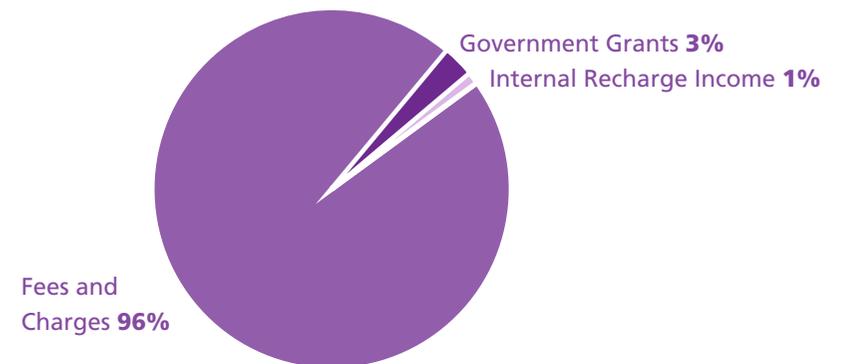The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

Budget*

Budget Estimate Summary Service Analysis	Budget Estimates Governance and Assurance £
Expense	
Employee Costs	5,233,040
Property Costs	32,683
Transport Costs	101,380
Supplies, Services and Administration Costs	495,870
Payments to Other Bodies	11,750
Transfer Payments	23,000
Expense Total	**5,897,723**
Income	
Fees and Charges	-887,630
Government Grants	-31,000
Internal Recharge Income	-8,000
Income Total	**-926,630**
Grand Total	**4,971.093**

*Based on indicative estimates as at March 2023

Expenses

Property Costs **1%**

Supplies, Services and Administration Costs **8%**

Transport Costs **2%**

Employee Costs **89%**

Transport Costs **0%**

Transfer Payments **0%**

Income

Government Grants **3%**

Internal Recharge Income **1%**

Fees and Charges **96%**
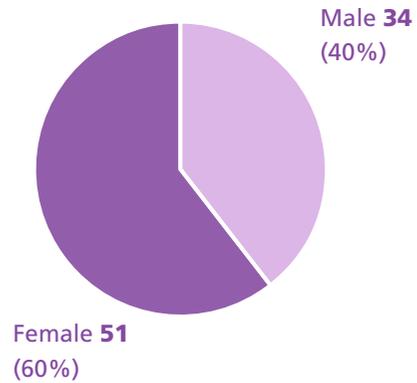
Our people, our posts

Our People as at 1 April 2023
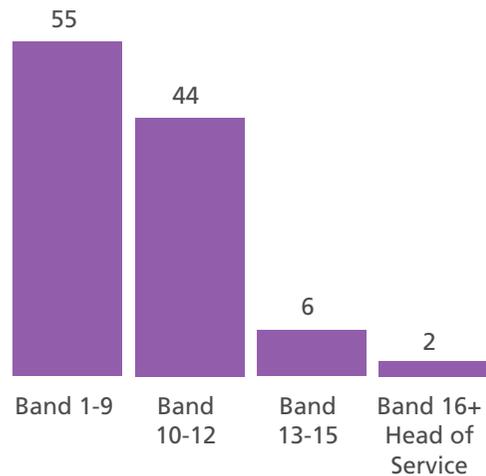
Number of people
85

Number of posts
107

Gender
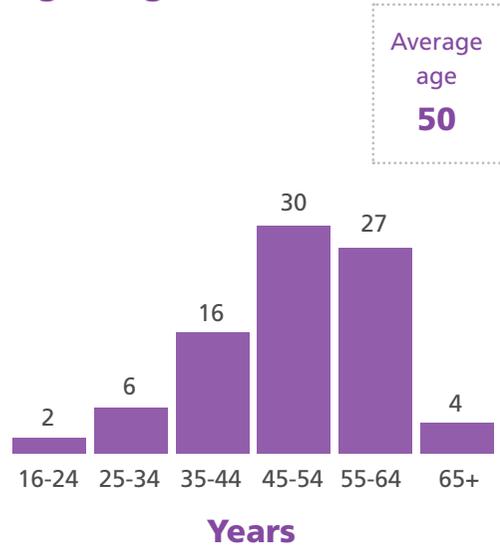
Male **34** (40%)

Female **51** (60%)

Age range

Average age
50

Age	Count
16-24	2
25-34	6
35-44	16
45-54	30
55-64	27
65+	4

Years

Length of service

Average length of service
14 years
11 months

Years	Count
0-5	13
6-10	9
11-15	8
16-20	21
21-25	10
25+	24

Years

Pay Band of Employees

Band	Count
Band 1-9	55
Band 10-12	44
Band 13-15	6
Band 16+ Head of Service	2

Employment Basis

Part-time **25** (17.44%)

Full-time **82** (82.56%)

Employment Type

Fixed term **9** (8.4%)

Permanent **98** (91.58%)
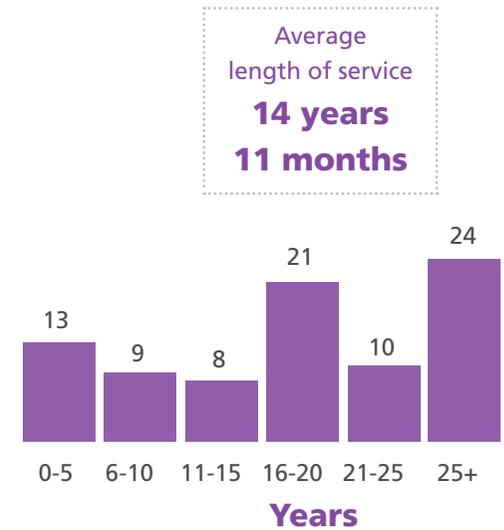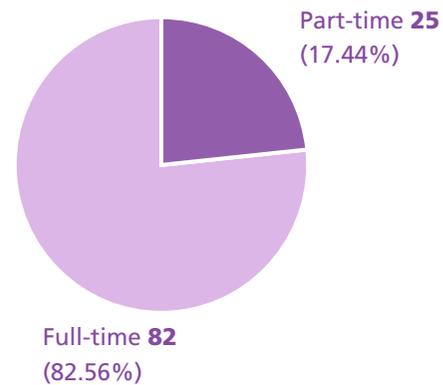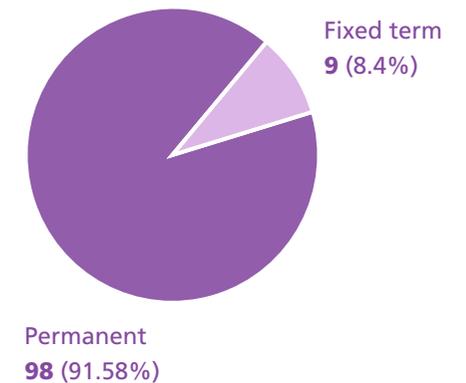
Highlights of workforce engagement and planning in 2023/2024:

- **Succession planning** – particularly where there is an older age profile or temporary posts we need to plan to ensure service continuity.

- **Diversification of the workforce** – to be, as much as possible, representative of the population and the people that we work with.

- **Training and development** – building leadership and management capacity as well as professional qualifications and skills throughout our teams.

- **Promoting our culture and values** – continue to place a high priority on staff engagement, communication and our commitment to public service and supporting those who need help the most.

The Service is committed to excellence with regards to workforce engagement and planning and undertakes comprehensive staff engagement through a range of approaches including staff development days, team meetings and 1:1s. The Service also has a staff communications team with representatives from every part of the Service.

Additionally, service leadership and officers engage and plan more broadly through a wide range of internal, partnership and project working groups.

Council Plan Delivery 2023/24

Strategic Outcome 8: Communities are protected from the impact of floods.

Ref	Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan Area Reporting**
8.3	Continue to support local residents and businesses affected by flooding which will include a subsidy scheme for protection products, resilience support and engagement	Resilience and Community Safety	Community Resilience Plan

Strategic Outcome 11: People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive.

Ref	Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan Area Reporting**
11.5	Implement the improvements and investment in Governance and Assurance Service to build capacity, improve efficiency and strengthen governance.	Governance and Assurance	Finance, Procurement and Transformation Improvement Plan
11.6	Update our Licensing Board arrangements which will deliver a more effective and efficient consideration of applications	Licensing	Council Plan – Be a Responsive Council Area**

** Indicates where information will be reported to Area Committee

Service Delivery 2023/24

What are we planning to do?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan Area Reporting**
Implementation of Licensing Equality Actions 2021-2025	Licensing	Equality Outcomes
Prepare Annual Governance Statement	Democratic	FPT Improvement Plan
Elections Print and Post Procurement	Democratic	Procurement Strategy
Improving Gypsy Traveller Sites - Phase 2 (Area)	Resilience & Community Safety	The Council's Housing Needs and Demands Assessment Area**
Enhance Dumfries and Galloway's Emergency Community Resilience	Resilience & Community Safety	Community Resilience Policy
Enhance the regions Severe Weather Resilience	Resilience & Community Safety	Corporate Resilience Policy
Implement the Storm ARWEN Review Findings	Resilience & Community Safety	Corporate Resilience Policy
Establishment of Curator Ad Litem Scheme	Legal	Governance & Assurance Objectives/ Improvement Framework
Physical Record Consolidation	Democratic	Records Management Plan Information Strategy
Community Protection Delivery of Animal Feeds Official Controls	Community Protection	Feed Service Delivery Plan, as part of the Delegated Service Level Agreement.
Establishment of a Port Health Unit	Community Protection	DEFRA Target Operating Model for the UK Border Strategy for imports into Great Britain. Area**

** Indicates where information will be reported to Area Committee

Change and Improvement Activities 2023/24

What are we planning to do and what is the intended outcome?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
Review of Legal Fees and Basis of Charges Planning & Property	Legal	Financial Strategy
Review of Polling Stations/Places	Democratic	
Review Committee Template & Guidance	Democratic	
Review of Licensing Policy Statement	Licensing	
Review of Taxi Provision	Licensing	
Update the Licensing Board Arrangements	Licensing	
Paperless/Paperlite Committees	Democratic	Digital Strategy
Review of Council Bonds, Processes and Terms	Legal	
External assessment against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)	Internal Audit	
Refresh our Corporate Resilience & Business Continuity Arrangements	Resilience & Community Safety	
Phase 2 IGS – EDRMS (Electronic Document & Records Management System)	Democratic	Digital Strategy
Phase 1 Information Governance & Strategy	Democratic	Information Strategy
Hybrid Committee Audio Visual System Replacement	Democratic	Digital Strategy
Community Protection Transformation: Customer Journey	Community Protection	Digital Strategy
Community Protection Transformation: Database replacement	Community Protection	Digital Strategy
Transition and Implementation of Case Management System (CIVICA)	Legal	Digital Strategy
Review of Licensing Fees	Licensing	Fees and Charges
Management-led review of Environmental Health and Trading Standards to increase resilience	Community Protection	
Introduce an appointment booking, payment and officer tasking system for Pest Control	Resilience & Community Safety	Digital Strategy
Retailer Pricing Project	Community Protection	
Project on Safety and Availability of Vapes to Young People – 10000 Voices Research	Community Protection	10,000 Voices
Project on Safety and Availability of Beauty Treatments – 10000 Voices Research	Community Protection	10,000 Voices
Project on Safety and Hygiene of Food from Takeaways – 10000 Voices Research	Community Protection	10,000 Voices
Anti-Social Behaviour Activity in Schools – 10000 Voices Research	Resilience & Community Safety	10,000 Voices

Governance and Assurances Services Success Measures 2023/24

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark Area Reporting **
Number of farms checked to ensure legal compliance in their trading activities.	150	Quarterly	Internal
Number of Export Health Certificates issued	150	Quarterly	Internal
The Percentage of Animal Welfare Referrals from other Agencies followed up	50%	Quarterly	Internal
Dog Control Referrals	50%	Quarterly	Internal
Total number of Traders on the Trusted Trader Scheme	160	Quarterly	Internal and External
Number of food businesses inspected by Environmental Health Annually	300	Quarterly	Internal
Number of businesses inspected by Trading Standards Annually	350	Quarterly	Internal
Number of new, small and medium sized businesses identified given advice and supported by Trading Standards and Environmental Health to ensure legal compliance in their trading activities	100	Quarterly	Internal
Number of Animal Feed Inspections	200	Quarterly	Internal and External
Food Hygiene Inspection Scheme Passes	80%	Quarterly	Internal and External
Health & Safety Referrals	80%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of income target met generated from Community Safety Antisocial Behaviour Detection Patrols	100%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of people who feel safe in their neighbourhood (daytime and night-time)	87%	Annual	Internal
Percentage of HMO licence applications processed within twelve months which is a statutory requirement	100%	Monthly	Internal New Measure
Percentage of internal audit outputs complete in a year.	75%	Annual	Internal
Community Safety Quality Assurance	84%	Quarterly	Internal
Environmental Health Safety and Public Health inspections	150	Quarterly	Internal
Annual Local Resilience and Corporate Emergency Preparedness Assessment	100%	Annual	Internal

Percentage of Short Term Let Licences issued to new hosts within 9 months of application	100%	Monthly	Internal New Measure
Percentage of Short Term Let Licences issued to existing hosts within 12 months of application	100%	Monthly	Internal New Measure
Customer Satisfaction rating for Environmental Health	80%	Annual	Internal
Customer Satisfaction rating for Trading Standards	80%	Annual	Internal
Percentage of Member satisfied with service as measured through Member satisfaction survey	85%	Annual	Internal
Customer Satisfaction levels within Legal Services	80%	Annual	Internal
Satisfactory quality assurance feedback received for completed internal audits	80%	Annual	Internal
Percentage of Gypsy/Travellers surveyed in relation to the Councils management of the site	85%	Annual	Internal
Number of private water supplies risk assessed	103	Quarterly	Internal and External
Number of samples taken from private water supplies	600	Quarterly	Internal and External
The percentage of failed water samples followed up	90%	Quarterly	Internal
Food Sampling	115	Quarterly	Internal
Sustainability of Private Water Supplies	8	Quarterly	Internal

** Indicates where information will be reported to Area Committee

Council Wide Indicators

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
People			
The average number of days lost per all other (non teacher) local government employees through sickness absence	9 days	Monthly	Internal External: LGBF
Percentage of days lost per employee through sickness absence as a percentage of total possible attendances	4%	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of staff who have completed an annual performance development review	95%	Monthly	Internal
Enquiries / Complaints			
Percentage of Elected Member enquiries dealt with through the Elected Members Enquiry Service within the agreed timescales	85%	Quarterly	Internal External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Community Council enquiries dealt with through the Community Council Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of MP/MSP enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Youth Councillor enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations requests received that have been responded to within 20 working days of receipt	90%	Monthly	Internal / External
Percentage of requests for subject access requests completed within one month	85%	Monthly	Internal
Finance			
Revenue Budget Outturn - Projected Outturn as a % of Budget	100%	Monthly	Internal
Health and Safety			
Number of Head of Service Safety Visits	2	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Significant Health and Safety Risk Priorities with Actions Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total HSE/SFRS Interfaces resulting in legal enforcement action	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total HSE/SFRS Interfaces with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
RIDDOR reportable incidents outside of HSE legal reporting timescales	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Serious incident investigation reports overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total serious incident reports with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Number of RIDDOR reportable dangerous occurrences employee injuries and diseases	Service specific*	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of 3rd Party RIDDOR reportable incidents	Service specific*	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of near misses	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of employee accidents	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of violent incidents to employees	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal

*Bespoke to service based on previous baseline information and subject to agreement between Service and H&S.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators (LGBF)

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population	Data Only	Annual	Internal External – LGBF
Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	Data Only	Annual	Internal External: LGBF

Governance and Assurance Services Risk Register

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Ineffectiveness of our response to a Civil Emergency or Disruptive Event	• Loss of life, property & infrastructure. • Loss or interruption of service delivery. • Interruption to daily life for the wider community. • Increase in public and Elected Members complaints. • Possible loss of reputation. • Possible widespread negative media coverage. • Possible Fatal Accident Inquiry. • Possible Parliamentary or Independent Inquiries.	**Mitigation** • Corporate and Directorate Business Continuity Plans in place for disruptive events inc; corporate systems or supply chain failure, utility outage, denial of access to key buildings, loss of staff). • Community Resilience Plans in place. • Regular Training and Exercising for appropriate staff. • Local Resilience Partnership business plans in place. **Contingency** • Graduated Readiness Implementation Plan for Extreme weather. • Graduated Security Plan (terrorist threat). • Council Emergency Centre kept at appropriate state of readiness. • Internal Notification and mobilisation Plans. • Maintenance of public warning and informing systems 6. Systems to identify and triage "persons at risk".

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Failing to ensure the Council complies with statutory responsibility or regulations	• Complying with significant range of legislation that has both general and specific application across the Council, affecting reputation; resulting in legal challenge; compensation or fines; complaints or inspections.	**Internal Controls** • Specialist officers are available and support Council services to comply with the wide range of regulation and legislation the Council is required to comply with. • Clear Standing orders and Schemes of Delegation set out the extent of decision making and the framework in which decisions can be taken. • Policies and procedures are developed and available for a wide range of routine and non-routine matters to assist Members and Officers to proceed with decision making in compliance with legislation. • Internal control processes are reviewed by managers and assessed by Internal Audit to ensure they are adequate. • Staff training and developments on essential aspects of compliance are in place and delivered to staff who require this. • Effective complaints procedures are available and internal review procedures help us learn. Powers of Monitoring Officer are exercised and approach to this is elaborated for officers and Elected Members. • Corporate Services professional advisers participate in important project boards to ensure early advice is available and taken account of.

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Failure to deliver minimum site standards at Thistle Grove Gypsy/ Traveller site	• Risk of not having a Fit for Purpose Site for Gypsy/ Traveller residents at the Thistle Grove Site. • In addition, the Council could be in breach of the Scottish Government's minimum site standards. This may result in scrutiny from the Scottish Housing Regulator and/or the Scottish Government.	**Mitigation** • Carry out an Options Appraisal for Members to decide which Option should be implemented. • Implementation of agreed Option. • Continue to communicate with the Scottish Government to ensure that the needs of Gypsy/Traveller site residents are considered as a priority in future decision making. • Regular monitoring of the Implementation Plan.
Not ensuring our information security and data protection processes are adequate	• Processing of personal data securely using appropriate technical and organisational measures. • Implementation of records management plan. • Compliance with new general data protection regulations. • Ensuring partners and suppliers comply with GDPR in relation to their work and activity with the Council. • Awareness, recognition and responsiveness to requests from data subjects seeking to exercise their new rights under GDPR.	**Internal Controls** • Development and improvement of software and processes to comply with GDPR and RMP. • Formulation and implementation of GDPR Action Plan. Review and implementation of updated Records Management Plan. • Record retention procedures and schedules in place and adhered to. Regular update and review with ICO guidance and requirements. • Appointment of Data Protection Officer for Council to advise on processes and development and navigate complex regulations and requirements. • Training and education of staff and other ICT users to raise awareness and improve skills. • Open approach to procedures and reporting of breaches – including detecting, reporting and investigation. • Review of existing contracts and agreements with partners and contractors to meet GDPR requirements. • Development of standard clauses for future contracts and agreements to ensure compliance is embedded on data protection and information security.

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Failure to deliver potential new duties which may arise in relation to imports from EU	• Ability to achieve full cost recovery through fees and charges due to unknown volume of work in initial changes and then changes to volume of work due to factors outwith our control such as closure of the port. • Amendment of the Northern Ireland Protocol, resulting in there being no requirement for the Port Health Authority once staff have been recruited. • Threats to Port Health staff .	**Mitigation** • Phased implementation will ensure we build up intelligence on freight traffic before recruiting the full staffing complement. The initial phases will be funded by Scottish Government. **Contingency** • There will be a potential need for additional staff through succession planning within the Environmental Health service so any change in circumstance may allow absorption of some of the new staff.
Failure to deliver statutory duties	• Failure to remove harmful products from the market which then cause physical harm or loss of life. • Failure to prevent financial harm. • Failure to prevent pollution and contamination through animal by-products, infectious disease, dust etc.	**Mitigation** • Prioritise resources towards statutory duties which impact the health and safety of citizens. **Contingency** • Filling vacancies, succession planning, training of existing staff to maintain competencies, digitisation and ongoing review of working practices.
Failure to charge appropriate level of legal fees and charges in order to recover incurred costs and achieve best value	• Failure to achieve best value .	**Mitigation** • Benchmarking exercise to be carried out and complete by 28 March 2024. **Contingency** • Current fees as per policy.
Failure to comply with statutory duty to develop and maintain Common Good Register for Common Good Trusts and Assets	• Shortage of staff resources, unavailability of solicitors due to other priorities, failure to recruit to meet capacity, unavailability of essential staff from other services for instructions and information gathering.	**Mitigation** • Working Group established to allocate tasks for identifying Common Good properties in different areas. **Contingency** • Scheduled programme to be established to set key milestone dates for completion of tasks.

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
Create and Develop Ongoing Processes of Identifying New Legislation and the Law	• Applying incorrect or outdated statutory obligations.	**Mitigation** • To put in place new processes to monitor new legislation on the horizon, Bills in consultation and opportunities for input, to liaise with service clients and provide advice and guidance if necessary in advance of implementation. **Contingency** • To work closely with solicitors in other local authorities to capture identified impacts.
Establishment of Curator Ad Litem Scheme	• Failure to entice appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced solicitors on to the Scheme.	**Mitigation** • To follow early engagement and consultation with solicitors within the Sheriffdom. **Contingency** • To make amendments to the draft scheme if necessary and revisit the proposed regulated fee structure and revert to the Sheriff for further approvals.
Failure to deliver Critical/Essential Services	Failure to have: • Appropriate Business Continuity Plans in place to deliver critical and essential services in times of major incidents. • Increase in demand for support from our Services for a widening volume of activities and initiative . • Reduction in resources financial and staffing.	**Mitigation** • Carry out an ongoing review of Business Continuity Plans, focussing on critical and essential services. • Prioritisation of critical/essential services by senior management. • Strong partnership working with other organisations and our communities. • External funding sourced wherever possible.