

Economy and Environment Service Plan 2024 – 2025



The principal purpose of the Service is to:

Provide leadership to facilitate the delivery of Council Plan strategic outcomes to grow the local economy, address the climate emergency, support the health and wellbeing of our communities, protect and safeguard our natural capital, and ensure a supply of high quality, affordable housing. With a focus on enabling sustainable new development and investment, providing high quality services to our customers, protecting and improving our local environment and supporting inclusive economic growth, we will work in partnership with customers, businesses, communities, and our community planning partners to help realise the ambition and vision of the Council Plan.

The service leads the following Council Plan Strategic Outcomes:

- Lead role in delivering Council Plan strategic outcomes on the local economy and climate emergency.
- Supporting role on health and wellbeing outcomes including public health protection and strategic housing.
- Customer facing services including Planning, Building Standards, Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Business Gateway.
- Strategic economic partnerships development and support, external funding.

The service demonstrates the Council's Principles by:

Safeguard our future



- Addressing the climate emergency through leading the development and delivery of the Climate Emergency Route Map and Action Plan.
- Protecting our natural capital through a range of countryside and environment projects, regulation of certain farming practices and private water supplies and through our Planning policies.
- Protecting our local environment through our controls on environmental nuisance and pollution and strategy to address vacant and derelict land.

Support our citizens



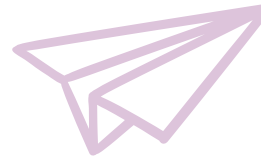
- Delivery, through partnerships, of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to our people, places and our business communities.
- Work with our partners to protect citizens as consumers from harm arising from scams and unlawful trading activities.
- Protect our citizens from toxins in purchased food and private water supplies.
- Provide services through Business Gateway to support citizens to realise their potential as entrepreneurs.
- Digitise more of our services to increase their accessibility.

Support our communities



- Support the development of local place plan initiatives led by local communities, and the development and delivery of community led projects.
- Work in partnership including through our strategic partnerships.
- Deliver the Communities & Place element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Place Planning Partnership.
- Support delivery of place-based economic development projects and Place Plans.
- Empower individuals to make informed procurement decisions through our Trusted Trader scheme.
- Work in partnership with new businesses by giving them advice on how to trade legally and fairly.

Be a responsive Council



- Maintain high standards through reviewing our customer charters and key customer-facing processes.
- Seek and act upon feedback from our customers
- Maintain sustainable finances through maximising opportunities to attract external funding.
- Make best use of resources by using internal resources as match funding to leverage additional project or programme-based funding and seeking best value across all areas of service delivery.
- Applying sound project and programme management structures in planning and delivering programmes and projects.
- Support informed economic development delivery through the supply of high-quality economic data, information, and analysis.

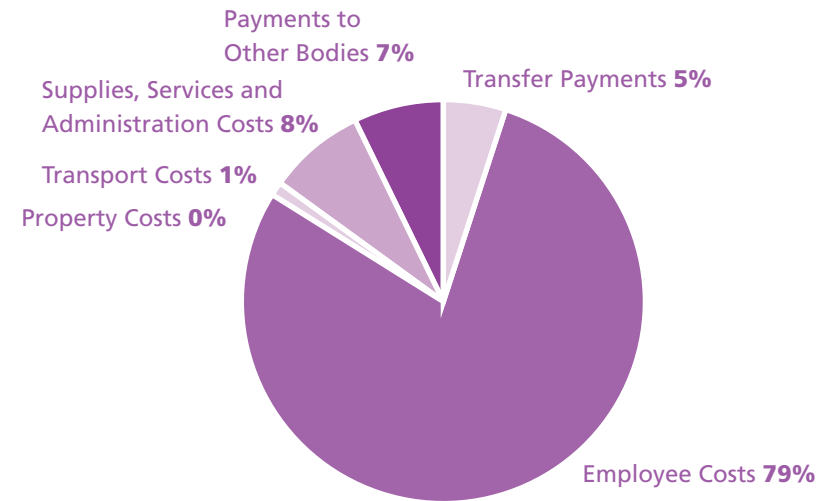
Resource Plan

The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

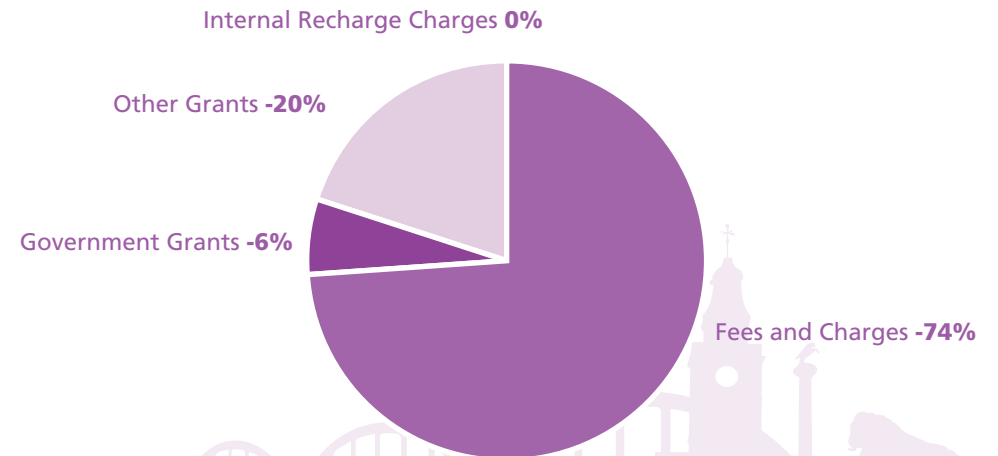
Budget:

| Economy & Environment Budget Estimates Summary Service Analysis | Budget Estimates Economy & Environment £ |
|--|---|
| Expense | |
| Employee Costs | 6,409,548 |
| Property Costs | 37,472 |
| Transport Costs | 71,039 |
| Supplies, Services and Administration Costs | 639,887 |
| Payments to Other Bodies | 599,666 |
| Transfer Payments | 383,000 |
| Expense Total | 8,140,612 |
| Income | |
| Fees and Charges | (3,374,805) |
| Government Grants | (281,000) |
| Other Grants | (909,863) |
| Internal Recharge Income | (10,946) |
| External Recharges | 0 |
| Income Total | (4,576,614) |
| Grand Total | 3,563,998 |

Expenses



Income



Workforce

Our people, our posts

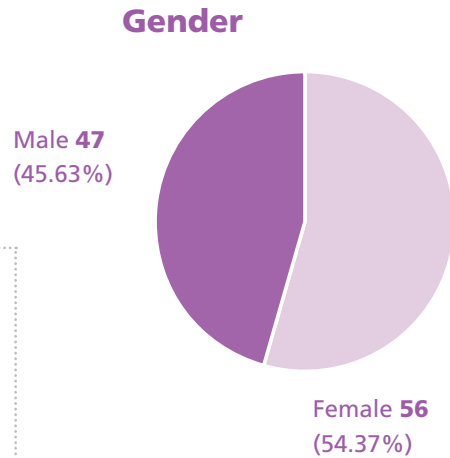
Our People as at 1 April 2024



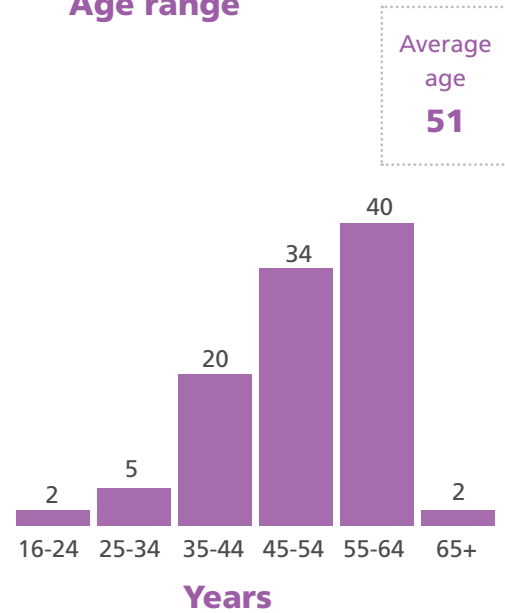
Number of people
103



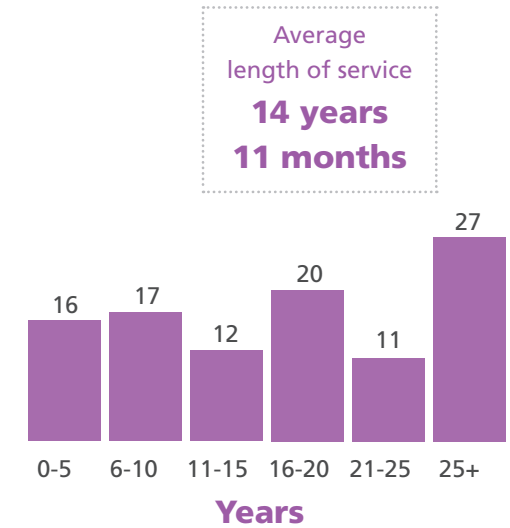
Number of posts
103



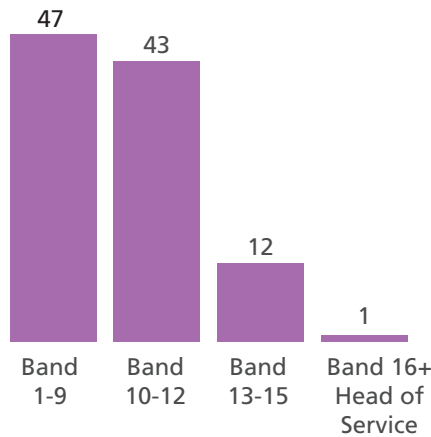
Age range



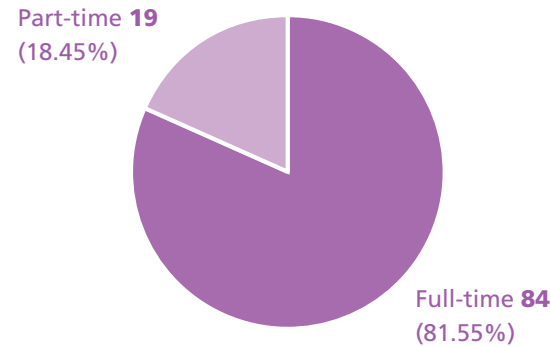
Length of service



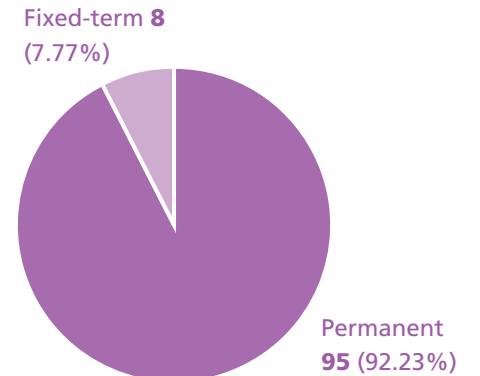
Pay Band of Employees



Employment Basis



Employment Type



Highlights of workforce engagement and planning in 2024/25:

The Community Protection Service, comprising Environmental Health and Trading Standards, is drafting a five-year People Plan, in consultation with staff. This has been an ongoing process since 2022 and has involved one-to-one sessions, development days and staff surveys. Trade Unions have also been consulted.

There will be an ongoing programme of staff development events focussed on supporting the local economy, including in-person development workshops and online webinars. This is a continuation of development activity from 2023/24 which covered topics including Place Planning, Green Economy and Employability.

A new programme of staff development events will be undertaken within the Planning and Development Service, starting with an in-person session at The Bridge in August. This will include practical workshops for both Development Management and Development Planning staff. Future sessions will include Strategic Housing and Building Standards.

Capacity and Resources

Areas of pressure have been identified in some services including Development Management and Community Protection which have experienced increased demands and capacity issues in the previous 12 months. The development and implementation of improvement action plans and People Plans will continue in these areas to support staff. Recruitment of qualified professional staff continues to be a challenge.

A number of posts within the economic development teams are funded from external sources and policy development funds including the Economic Recovery Fund set up during the COVID 19 response. Those funds are only available until the end of 2024/25 and work will be undertaken to identify possible alternatives during the year to seek to minimise any potential 2025/26 budget pressure.



Economy and Environment Service Plan 2024/25

– all data will be recorded and reported through Pentana

Council Plan Delivery 2024/25

Strategic Outcome 1: There is a diversified and growing local economy that benefits all.

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| NEXT PHASE - Develop a clear proposition to lobby for development of a cluster or investment zone in the west of the region, to support economic growth and opportunity. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy National Planning Framework 4 Local Development Plan 3 |
| NEXT PHASE - Deliver the current UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme across the three investment priorities of Community and Place, Local Business and People and Skills by 31st March 2025. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy |
| CARRY FORWARD - Prepare Regional Food Plan with partners, building on the excellent work of the Dumfries and Galloway Sustainable Food Partnership and other stakeholders. | To be defined | Scottish Government Good Food Nation Act 2022 |

Strategic Outcome 3: Rural communities and places are vibrant and thriving

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| NEXT PHASE - Work with communities in Gretna, Kirkconnel and Kelloholm, Stranraer, Whithorn and Wigtown to develop their Borderlands Place Plans and Town Investment Plans. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE – Help communities to develop local place plans and deliver their ambitions, through engagement and advice to communities with local partners | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |

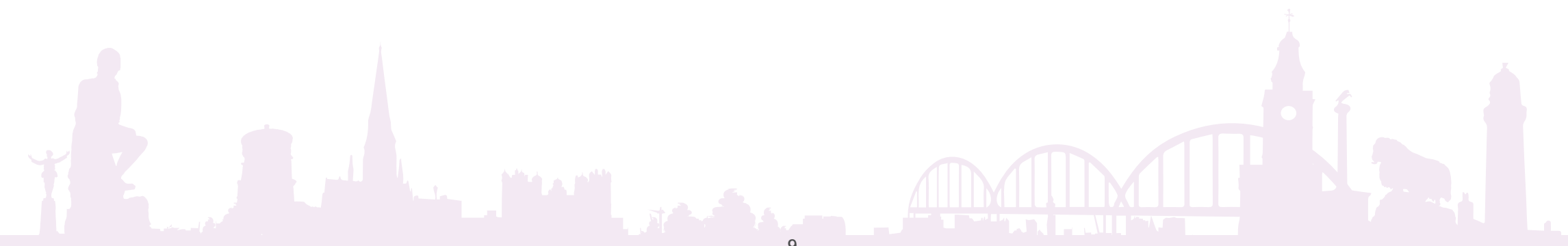
| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| NEXT PHASE - Support the community led development at the former 'Oven' building in Dumfries town centre to develop town centre housing and flexible business space | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy Dynamically Different Dumfries **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Support the Dumfries Town Board to develop a Long-Term Plan and 3-year investment plan for Dumfries. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy Dynamically Different Dumfries **Area Reporting |

Strategic Outcome 4: Enhancing the region's natural capital benefits local communities and businesses

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| NEXT PHASE - Implement the next phase of the Borderlands Natural Capital programme. | Environment Team | Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal/ Local Biodiversity Action Plan/ Regional Land Use Framework **Area Reporting |
| NEW - Develop new Strategic Landscape Projects in readiness for external funding bids. | Environment Team | Local Biodiversity Action Plan/ Regional Land Use Framework |
| NEW - Prepare Local Biodiversity Plan. | Environment Team | Local Biodiversity Action Plan/ Regional Land Use Framework |
| NEW - Revision of the Forest and Woodlands Strategy | Environment Team | Local Biodiversity Action Plan/ Regional Land Use Framework |

Strategic Outcome 5: Businesses are supported to start and grow

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| NEXT PHASE - Progress the Borderlands Business Infrastructure investment programme, advance detailed site appraisals and Final Business Cases for funding approval. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Continue to deliver an e-commerce support programme to 25 businesses to help them get online and benefit from new customer opportunities. | Business Gateway | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Continue to support 50 local businesses with the costs of doing business through providing funding from the Climate Resilience Fund. | Business Gateway | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |



Strategic Outcome 6: Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy

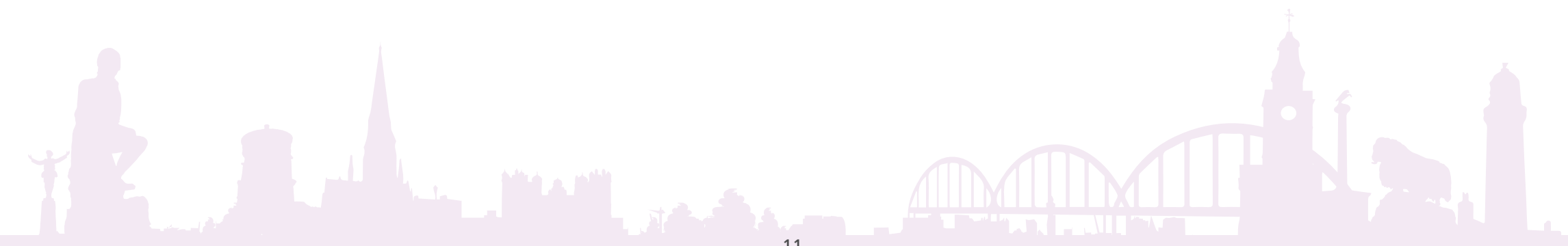
| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|--|---|
| NEXT PHASE - Deliver the UK Levelling Up Fund programme, Reactivating Galloway, managing the programme and supporting project delivery with community organisations for Stranraer Water Sports Hub & Dalbeattie Rocks & Wheels projects and advance delivery of the regeneration of The George, Stranraer. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - As part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, conclude the Full Business Case and obtain funder approvals for the delivery of the Stranraer Marina expansion project. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Secure future funding from the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and support project delivery with the community lead organisation for the RCGF supported Lockerbie Old School. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Deliver the UK Levelling Up Fund programme, Three Rivers Active Tourism, managing the programme across Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire and support the development of the Annan Harbour regeneration scheme and its project lead the Annan Harbour Action Group. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Progress Local Development Plan 3 including housing needs assessment and transport appraisal. | Development Planning team | Local Development Plan |
| NEXT PHASE - Implement the actions in the Vacant and Derelict Land and Property strategy. | Strategic Housing & Regeneration Investment Team | Vacant and Derelict Land and Property Strategy |
| NEW - Review the Council's Industrial Property Portfolio. | Strategic Economic Investment | Regional Economic Strategy **Area Reporting |

Strategic Outcome 7: Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| NEW - Periodic Review of the Dumfries and Galloway Core Paths Plan. | Environment Team | Core Paths Plan / Access Strategy **Area Reporting |

Strategic Outcome 10: Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| NEXT PHASE - Progress the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy plan. | Environment Team | Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy/ Climate Emergency action Plan/ Strategic Route Map to Net Zero |
| CARRY FORWARD - Work with partners identify and progress opportunities for district heating solutions focusing on Dumfries and Stranraer initially. | Environment Team | Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy/ Climate Emergency action Plan/ Strategic Route Map to Net Zero **Area Reporting |



Strategic Outcome 23: Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy

| Delivery Plan Action | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|--|--|
| NEXT PHASE - Support partners in delivering the commitment in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in Dumfries and Galloway. | Strategic Housing & Regeneration Investment Team | Local Housing Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEXT PHASE - Work in partnership with the local community and Wheatley Homes South to support wholesale regeneration of the Lochside area. | Strategic Housing & Regeneration Investment Team | Local Housing Strategy **Area Reporting |
| NEW - Preparation of the Local Housing Strategy. | Strategic Housing & Regeneration Investment Team | Local Housing Strategy |
| NEW - Redevelop on site at Thistle Grove, Collin - progress the project to the main works contract tender stage (implement the decision via Project Implementation Plan, conduct further formal engagement and consultation). | Housing Standards Team | Local Housing Strategy **Area Reporting |

Service Delivery 2024/25

| What are we planning to do? | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Community Protection Delivery of Animal Feeds Official Controls. | Trading Standards | Official Control Regulations, as adopted by Scottish law. Trading Standards team plan |
| Delivery of the Joint Health Protection Plan. | Environmental Health | Joint Health Protection Plan Environmental Health team plan. Council Plan – Health and Wellbeing |
| Delivery of the Gull Management Plan. | Environmental Health | Council Plan – Support our communities; Focus on local and place |
| Development and delivery of the Food Law service plan. | Environmental Health | Council Plan – Be a responsive Council; Maintain high standards. Food Law service plan. |
| Delivery of the Animal Health and Welfare Framework. | Trading Standards | Council Plan – Economy; Rural communities are vibrant and thriving. Scottish Animal Health and Welfare Framework. |

Change and Improvement Activities 2024/25

| What are we planning to do what is the intended outcome? | What team will do it? | Linked Strategy / Plan **Area Reporting |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Community Protection Transformation: Database replacement | Community Protection | Council Plan – Be a responsive Council; Be organised to deliver |
| Review of Private Water Supply regulation | Environmental Health | Council Plan – Be a responsive Council; Be organised to deliver. |
| Finalise Community Protection 2024 – 2029 People Plan | Community Protection | Council Plan – Be a responsive Council; Be organised to deliver. |

Economy and Environment Success Measures 2024/25

Measures

| Success Measure | Target | Timescale / Frequency | Benchmark **Area Reporting |
|---|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Percentage of young people who start-up businesses | 15% | Annual | Internal |
| The average time (weeks) to deal with major development planning applications | 35 | Annual | Internal |
| The average time (weeks) to deal with local development planning applications | 12 | Annual | Internal |
| The average time (weeks) to deal with householder development planning applications | 8 | Annual | Internal |
| Percentage of Building Warrant applications responded to within 20 days | 60% | Quarterly | Internal |
| Percentage of completion certificates responded to within 10 working days | 95% | Quarterly | Internal |
| The percentage customer satisfaction rating for Development Management | 75% | Annual | Internal |
| Customer satisfaction rating for Building Standards | 75% | Annual | Internal |
| Number of farms checked to ensure legal compliance in their trading activities. | 100 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Community Protection – The Number of Export Health Certificates Issued | 150 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Total number of Traders on the Trusted Trader Scheme | 180 | Annual | Internal and External |
| The number of food businesses inspected by Environmental Health Annually | 300 | Quarterly | Internal |
| The Number of businesses inspected by Trading Standards Annually | 300 | Quarterly | Internal |
| The 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 |
| Community Protection – The Number of Animal Feed Inspections | 152 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Community Protection – Food Hygiene Inspection Scheme Passes | 75% | Quarterly | Internal |
| Environmental Health - Safety and Public Health inspections | 100 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Customer Satisfaction rating for Environmental Health | 80% | Annual | Internal |
| Customer Satisfaction rating for Trading Standards | 80% | Annual | Internal |

| | | | |
|--|------|-----------|------------------------------|
| The number of Private water supplies risk assessed | 330 | Quarterly | Internal and External |
| The number of samples taken from regulated private water supplies | 534 | Quarterly | Internal and External |
| The percentage of failed water samples followed up | 90% | Quarterly | Internal |
| Community Protection – Food Sampling | 100 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Community Protection – Sustainability of Private Water Supplies | 16 | Quarterly | Internal |
| Percentage of HMO licence applications processed within twelve months which is a statutory requirement | 100% | Monthly | Internal **Area Reporting |
| Percentage of Short Term Let Licences issued to new hosts within 9 months of application | 100% | Monthly | Internal **Area Reporting |
| Percentage of Short Term Let Licences issued to existing hosts within 12 months of application | 100% | Monthly | Internal **Area Reporting |
| Percentage of Gypsy/Travellers surveyed in relation to the Councils management of the site | 80% | Annual | Internal **Area Reporting |

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 appraisal in the last 12 months - Updated | 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 |
| 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% | Quarterly | Internal |
| Health and Safety | | | |
| Number of Head of Service Safety Visits | 2 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Total Number Significant Health and Safety Risk Priorities with Actions Overdue | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Total Number HSE/SFRS Interfaces resulting in legal enforcement action | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of HSE/SFRS Interfaces with actions overdue | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents outside of HSE legal reporting timescales | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of Serious Incident Investigation Reports Overdue | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Total Number of Serious Incident Reports with actions overdue | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of RIDDOR Reportable Dangerous Occurrences, Employee Injuries and Diseases | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of 3rd Party RIDDOR incidents | 0 | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of Reported Near Misses | Data only | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of Employee Reported Accidents | Data only | Six Monthly | Internal |
| Number of Reported Violent Incidents to Employees | Data only | Six Monthly | Internal |

Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators

| Success Measure | Target | Timescale / Frequency | Benchmark |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Cost of planning and building standards per planning application | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks) | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Proportion of Properties receiving superfast broadband | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Town Vacancy Rates | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| CO2 emissions area wide per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| CO2 emissions area wide - emissions within scope of local authority per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| CO2 emissions from Transport per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| CO2 emissions from Electricity per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| CO2 emissions from Natural Gas per capita | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population | Data only | Annual | Internal External – LGBF |
| Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizens advice per 1,000 population | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |
| Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population | Data only | Annual | Internal / External: LGBF |

Economy and Environment Risk Register

| Risk | Risk Factors | Mitigation / Contingency |
|---|--|--|
| Reduced ability to support the delivery of affordable homes within the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in Scottish Government funding for affordable housing. • Delays in the planning process. • Shortage of construction materials and workforce. • Additional financial constraints on development partners, including rising costs of borrowing and reduced revenue income due to recent legislative requirements. | <p>Mitigation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Forum continues proactive approach to identifying future development opportunities and resolving barriers to delivery. • Strategic Housing Investment Plan Annual Review. <p>Contingency Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek new development opportunities in areas of housing demand. • Regular communication with the Scottish Government to ensure that new projects can be brought into the Plan. • Identify additional funding opportunities to support strategic developments. |
| Failure to balance the revenue budget in the context of reducing income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under recovery of fees and charges. • Failure to control expenditure. | <p>Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced budget monitoring at departmental and service level. • Apply corrective measures to control expenditure when required. |

Failure to deliver our lead role in building the local economy

- Insufficient officer and funding capacity to support our lead role.
- Less than robust Project Planning and Business Case Development to inform capital investment decision making.
- Project outcomes and benefits not met.
- Negative national/international economic factors outwith our control.

Mitigation

- Maximise the use of external funding.
- Utilise consultancy services to bolster peak demands of workload and strengthen Project Management.
- Ensuring resources are targeted to support Council Plan strategic outcomes.
- Ensure all capital investment decisions are informed by robust Business Cases.
- Robust evaluation of project outcomes and benefits following through on Business Case delivery.
- Maximise opportunities arising from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal projects and programmes, Scottish Government regeneration funding and UK Levelling Up Fund projects and work with partners through the Regional Economic Partnership including South of Scotland Enterprise and South of Scotland Destination Alliance.

