

SERVICE PLAN – 2022-23 FINANCIAL YEAR

1. Service Area

RESOURCES

2. Responsible Chief Officer

NIGEL AURELIUS, ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (RESOURCES)

3. Purpose of the Service Area

- (i) The provision of insightful, pro-active and efficient business support services.
- (ii) Ensuring residents receive the benefits to which they are entitled and have access to 21st Century customer services.
- (iii) Ensuring the Council is supported and well governed, enabling front line services to deliver better outcomes for Torfaen citizens
- (iv) Managing the Greater Gwent Pension Fund and Administration in accordance with good governance

4. Long Term Vision / Ambition for the services provided and / or the residents who receive them

The ambition of the Resources Directorate is to not only be excellent at doing the basics but to add real value to the organisation and support the Council in realizing its ambitions and aspirations. We have an extremely professional workforce and our real strength is taking time to truly understand our customers and building strong working partnerships to help achieve our collective goals. Valued members of the wider “Torfaen” team, we are not afraid of change and transformation, indeed we actively encourage it so that we can be as efficient and effective as possible and so make the most difference to the day to day lives of our residents.

The Resources Directorate serves a wide variety of customers with most of our services supporting internal colleagues and Members. More specific ambitions tailored to our various customer groups are;

Business Support Services:

We will:

- Ensure governance is robust, open, transparent, modern and effective.
- Ensure we support the Council in defining its strategic priorities and goals for the medium term.
- Ensure we support the Council and its services to continue to deliver on their priorities.
- Ensure we have in place a Medium-Term Resourcing Strategy to assist in delivering on our priorities.
- Ensure we deliver on a workforce strategy that meets our needs going forward and in particular addresses the twin issues of succession planning and an ageing workforce
- Ensure we have in place leading edge business support systems, which are consistently applied across the Council to ensure we are as efficient as we can be.
- Ensure we are insightful in anticipating national and local influences to inform future opportunities for service delivery change and transformation.
- Ensure we have in place a modern approach to Performance Management to ensure the organisation is moving effectively towards the Council’s strategic goals.
- Ensure we continue to support regional collaborations by delivering high quality support.

Benefits Services:

We will:

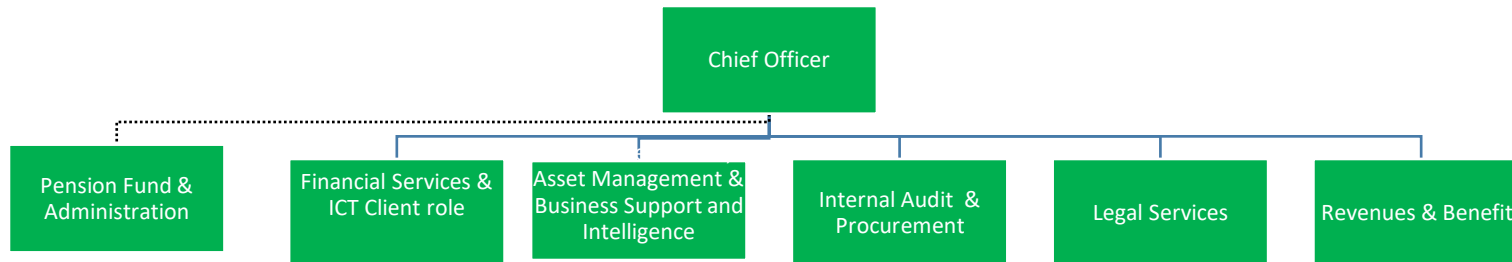
- Ensure residents have access to the benefits available to them and particularly support a smooth transition to the new system of Universal Credit.
- Ensure we develop and move the service offer from one of universally providing benefits to one that provides advice, guidance and support to residents.
- Ensure the shared benefits (which also includes revenues) service with Monmouthshire continues to perform with a reducing resource base.
- Ensure we support the emerging digital and customer services strategy to improve access, availability and efficiency.

The Greater Gwent Pension Fund:

We will:

- Ensure all benefits are paid in accordance with appropriate legislation.
- Ensure excellence in overall governance arrangements.
- Ensure the Fund is managed appropriately, in accordance with all relevant standards and is able to meet its liabilities.
- Ensure we support the Welsh Pension Partnership in the pooling of assets to increase investment returns and reduce fees.
- Ensure we are a responsible investor that is able to meet our environmental obligations.

5. Service Area Team Structure / Groupings



6. Challenges currently facing the Chief Officer / Service Area

	Challenges	Proposed Actions
overarching statement ... Support & Governance		
1	Ensuring the Council remains financially resilient and delivers on its financial plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate budget monitoring in place • Recommend an appropriate Reserves policy. • Supporting Chief Officers with financial plans • Reporting to Cabinet and other forums as required • Regular briefings to Leadership • Ensure financial consequences of plans are appropriately worked through • Income Strategy developed & embedded • Challenging base spending levels periodically • Ensure Collection fund and tax base monitored and managed
2	Preparation for the new Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete data analysis to show progress made against priorities during the past 5 years • Liaise with the Leader to determine future approach for corporate planning • Support services in developing and agreeing priorities • Agree content of new document and publish • Agree supporting performance framework to monitor and report delivery
3	Delivering a medium term financial plan that supports the Council's priorities and establishing an affordable budget for 2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium term forecast prepared • Developing underpinning financial plan • Linking to service plan • Detailed budgets prepared; engagement with CO's ; financial modelling
4	Ensuring the Council has in place an affordable capital strategy that supports its priorities and the Asset Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying service requirements and schemes • Modelling funding • Options for members • Asset management strategy and plan • Treasury management plan; capital strategy
5	Delivering the Workplace Transformation Programme during 22/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Head of HR, Pensions and Asset Management in developing and obtaining Leadership approval of the revised approach • Recommending the funding options and budget for the project. • Supporting the Head of HR, Pensions and Asset Management in delivering the project, within the specified timescales & budget.

6. Challenges currently facing the Chief Officer / Service Area

	Challenges	Proposed Actions
overarching statement ... Support & Governance		
6	Addressing the issue of an ageing workforce and ensuring succession planning is in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leaver Scholarship programme • Consider succession planning as part of the new Workforce Strategy
7	Ensuring our looked after Children have the best employment opportunities when leaving care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policy that every child leaving care is considered for employment by the Council where it is appropriate.
8	Meeting our workforce challenges around skills, sickness and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy in place • Sickness pilot concluded/lessons learnt and rolled out • Mental health awareness programme • Corporate training programme • Support to employee staff group • Review and update the agile working policy.
9	Developing a new procurement approach that embraces the policies and priorities in the new Welsh Government Procurement Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the new working partnership/delegation module with Cardiff Council and manage the transition period. • Agree revised procurement strategy • Introduce new internal Commissioning & Procurement Panel.
10	Developing the Council's approach to performance management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Balanced Scorecards & Power BI to monitor Council performance more effectively. • Revise the Councils approach to Service Planning & Self Evaluation • Publish the Council's first Statutory Self Evaluation Assessment
11	Ensuring the financial viability of the Greater Gwent Pension Fund in light of the challenges it faces and supporting the Welsh Pension Partnership (WPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend appropriate Investment strategy and returns • Encourage/lobby for a positive actuarial outcome • Full participation in WPP • Pooling of funds.

6. Challenges currently facing the Chief Officer / Service Area

	Challenges	Proposed Actions
overarching statement ... Support & Governance		
12	Maintaining an appropriate national and regional presence to contribute to national agendas, ensure Torfaen has a voice and that learning / insight can be gleaned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and represent Torfean at South Wales Treasurers (SWT) and SWT Executive • Attend and represent Capital Finance and Investment Group/21st Century Schools Board • Attend and represent Torfaen at Welsh Government Finance Sub Group • Attend and represent Cardiff City Deal Finance Group • Attend and represent Torfaen National liaison with Wales Audit Office (WAO) and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
13	Ensuring the Council has in place appropriate and sound governance arrangements and these are regularly reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the Corporate Governance and Risk Management Working Group • Reports to Audit Committee and Leadership • Annual Governance Statement process • Develop a strategic conversation within the council around 'appetite for risk and impact of audit and review'.
14	Providing support services to the SRS and Section 151 support and guidance to the SRS Strategic Board, Finance and Governance Board and the Chief Operating Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to various boards • Assistance in putting in place strategic finance plan and sound governance arrangements; revision of MOU.
15	Providing leadership and direction to the Resources Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular briefings and Worksmart reviews undertaken • Leadership team meetings • Provide the strategic direction.
16	Providing an appropriate level of support for Members, particularly now that many tasks can be self-service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a needs analysis • Determine training needs • Deliver regular Member training sessions

6. Challenges currently facing the Chief Officer / Service Area

	Challenges	Proposed Actions
overarching statement ... Support & Governance		
17	Administering ad-hoc Welfare Schemes on behalf of Welsh Government, acting as Agent to make payments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand and administer the relevant welfare scheme in line with Welsh Government guidance and direction.

7. Proposed change activities for the 2022 / 2023 financial year ...

Change activities proposed by the team including details of what the change will deliver, and why it is needed (such as behaviour changes and improved outcomes)	timescale for the change (single year / multi-year including an approx. milestone date)	performance measure / milestone for monitoring	level of current performance	2022/23 target	completed well-being assessment (please tick)
overarching statement ... Support & Governance					
Team / grouping ... Business Intelligence					
Work across all service areas to develop and implement a new approach to performance management and reporting, utilising a Balanced Scorecard and Power BI.	During 2022/23 & 2023/24	New performance reporting and monitoring arrangements in place.	n/a	New	
Support the development and implementation of the new Corporate Plan and its supporting strategic framework	During 2022/23	New corporate plan and strategic framework published.	n/a	New	
Develop and publish the Council's first statutory self-assessment report (<i>including the Statutory Annual Well-Being Report</i>)	Publication by October 2022	Self-assessment report published	n/a	New	
Revise the council's approach to Service Planning and Self Evaluation for 2023/24, that takes account of an imbeds; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requirements of the LGE Act 2021, - <i>our new Corporate Plan, and our Strategic Framework</i> 	Guidance agreed by November 2022	New guidance available	n/a	New	
Develop and implement an induction and training programme for new and returning elected members following the local government elections 2022.	During 2022/23	Induction and training plan in place and delivered for all members. Monitoring of take up	n/a	New	

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Team / grouping ... Admin & Business Support Services					
Conduct a review of Admin and Business Support and implement agreed changes and improvements	During 2022/23	Review concluded and agreed changes implemented	n/a	New	
Team / grouping ... HR & Asset Management					
Develop and implement a new Workforce Strategy	During 2022/23	Strategy published and delivery plan established	n/a	New	
Introduce the new school leaver scholarship programme as an evolution of the proposed school leavers scheme and maximise apprenticeship opportunities throughout the Council	During 2022/23	Scholarship established and apprenticeship opportunities increased	n/a	New	
Implement the Workplace Transformation Programme	During 2022/23	Programme implemented	n/a	New	
Implement the subsequent improvement programme resulting from the review of sickness absence management.	During 2022/23	Reduction in overall absence sickness rates	n/a	Yes	x
Team / grouping ... Procurement					
Implement the new working partnership/delegation module with Cardiff Council and manage the transition period	During 2022/23	New partnership/delegation module implemented	n/a	to be determined new	no

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Change activities proposed by the team including details of what the change will deliver, and why it is needed (such as behaviour changes and improved outcomes)	timescale for the change (single year / multi-year including an approx. milestone date)	performance measure / milestone for monitoring	level of current performance	2022/23 target	completed well-being assessment (please tick)
Team / grouping ... Revs & Bens					
Administer ad-hoc Welsh Government Welfare Schemes as required.	During 2022/23	Payments made to eligible residents as instructed by Welsh Government.	n/a	New	

8. Key Performance Measures & Targets

	Performance measures	Actual at end of 2020/21	Target for 2021/22	Actual at QTR 3 2021/22	Target for 2022/23
Business Support & Intelligence					
1	Percentage of complaints upheld/ part upheld	-	0%	46.15%	0%
2	Percentage of FOI's responded to on time	-	100%	100%	100%
Financial Services					
3	Percentage of undisputed trade Invoices paid within 30 days	97.31%	98%	97.92%	98%
4	Level of general fund balance	-	£5.7m	£557,0000	£5.7m
5	Percentage of approved budget mitigations achieved by service areas	-	100%	94.3%	100%
6	Percentage over/underspend to working budget	-	0.25%	-1.66%	0.25%
7	Capital Borrowing - Value of external debt	-	£156.58m	£123,200,000	£156.58m
8	Resources support services net budget as a percentage of our net expenditure budget	-	6%	5.8%	6%
Human Resources & Asset Management					
9	Number of days lost to mental health related absence as a percentage of total absence	30.14%	30%	20.00%	33%
10	Average age of workforce – Annual Measure	44.5	44	Annual	44
11	Number of days lost to sickness per FTE for the whole authority (PAM) – Annual Measure	8.41	9 DAYS	Annual	9 days

12	Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes within the authority during the year per 1,000 employees (Annual Measure) (PAM)	3.37	10.00	Annual	10
13	Asset Management -Income from disposal of surplus property (Annual Measure)	-	£750,000-	Annual	£750,000
Internal Audit & Procurement					
14	Percentage completion of core elements of audit plan	-	100%	72.7%	100%
Legal Services					
15	Value of legal spend with external barristers	-	£185,700	£139,662	£216,188
Rev's, Ben's & Customer Care					
16	Percentage of council tax collected (in year)	95.3%	97%	72.5%	97%
17	Average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and change events for Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Combined Processing Time)	2.75%	7 days	0.4	7 days
18	Number of discretionary housing payments made	2571	2,000.00	552.00	2,000.00
19	Value of discretionary housing payments made in year	1,126,376	355,684	488,348	324,938
20	Council tax reduction scheme caseload	-	10200	10,025.00	10,000
21	Percentage number of payments received by cash/cheque	-	7.5%	1.84%	7.50%
22	Level of outstanding aged debt - council tax (debt older than current financial year)	-	£3.5m	£4,213,400	£3.5m

23	Level of outstanding aged debt - overpaid housing benefit (debt over 365 days)	-	£1.4m	£1,610,292	£1.4m
24	Level of outstanding aged debt - financials - debtors (debt over 365 days)	-	£1.7m	£1,886,505.34	£1.7m

9. Very High & High Risks for the Service Area

	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Level	Treat or Tolerate
65	There is a risk of potential disruption to service provision as a result of the Council experiencing significant difficulties in obtaining ICT equipment (laptops & desktop computers) that are suitable for business use due to the national shortages of these specific devices.	5 High	3 Moderate	High	Tolerate