



Laois County Council Corporate Plan 2024-2029



Comhairle Chontae
Laoise | Laois
County Council

The Corporate Plan 2024-2029 sets out an outline of Laois County Council's vision, mission and high-level objectives for the next five years.

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Foreword from Chief Executive

This Corporate Plan provides a positive and ambitious strategic framework for Laois County Council for the next five years. It outlines our mission as a local authority, the values that underpin that mission and the five key objectives that the Council will endeavour to achieve.

The focus of this Council will be to build on the strengths of the County, its citizens, and the exceptional quality of life on offer. The Council is committed to improving that quality of life through the many services provided by Laois County Council but particularly in the areas of economic development, housing provision, regeneration, and community development.

A central ambition will be to unlock the economic potential of County Laois. The creation of employment opportunities in our county is key to providing the quality of life that its citizens deserve. The approach will be to work in partnership with the key stakeholders to bring investment into the County and to support the existing strong and vibrant SME sector. Included will be a new emphasis on tourism development that reflects the importance of tourism and maximises the potential of the recreational and cultural assets within Laois.

This Corporate Plan provides the strategic framework for Laois to continue to outperform in the delivery of high-quality social housing. There will be an increased focus on affordable and other housing delivery pipelines to ensure there is sustainable housing delivery model across the County. This will be supported through rural and urban regeneration across the county, informed by ambitious plan-making and delivered through securing the highest levels of government investment. It is critical that vacant and derelict properties are brought back into use, that public realms are attractive and the communities across Laois' towns and villages feel supported.

This Council is committed to being a leader in addressing the significant challenge of climate change and will continue to plan for the sustainable development of the County over the next five years. This will be an ambition that is reflected across all the operational areas of the Council and will see the ambitious goals outlined in our Climate Action Plan achieved.

Key to the delivery of the ambitious strategic objectives in this Plan will be a focus on citizen centric, continuous business innovation and by continuing to attract and retain the right talent. This Plan also challenges the Council to keep pace with the digital agenda over the next five years and to increase the range of services that are available online.

The Council will keep the plan under continuous review; the Council will need to be flexible and to adapt to changing circumstances as required. By working in partnership with the elected members, the community and all the other key stakeholders Laois County Council will strive to ensure that Laois is an excellent place to live in, to work in, to invest in and to enjoy.

Michael Rainey

Chief Executive Laois County Council

Message from An Cathaoirleach

As Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council, I welcome the publication of our Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2029.

The motto of this Council is “i bpáirt leis an pobal” – in partnership with the community. This concept of working closely with the communities of this county is something that this Council takes very much to heart.

The Corporate Plan serves as this Council’s strategic framework for action and public service delivery during the lifetime of the current Council. It will be core to Laois County Council being the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level, to its pivotal role in leading economic, social and community development, in delivering efficient and good value services and in representing citizens and communities as effectively and accountably as possible.

It will provide a framework within which Annual Service Delivery Plans will be formulated. These Plans will detail the activities to be undertaken across all key function areas in order to deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan and will translate these objectives into more detailed supporting strategies and actions which link with annual departmental activities. They will also be linked to the budgetary process, to Performance Management Development Systems and to relevant service and performance indicators.

This Plan does not stand in isolation but has been prepared against the backdrop of regional, national, European and international policy documents, such as the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to name but a few.

I wish to express appreciation to the Chief Executive, Management Team and staff, Members of the Corporate Policy Group and others for their work in the preparation of this Plan. On behalf of the Elected Members of Laois County Council, I wish to pledge our commitment to ensuring this Corporate Plan is appropriately monitored and delivered over the next five year period. I look forward to working with all the Elected Members, with the support of the Chief Executive and staff, playing our part in developing and enhancing our County to make it the best place to live, work and visit.

Cllr. Pdraig Fleming
Cathaoirleach Laois County Council

Our Vision

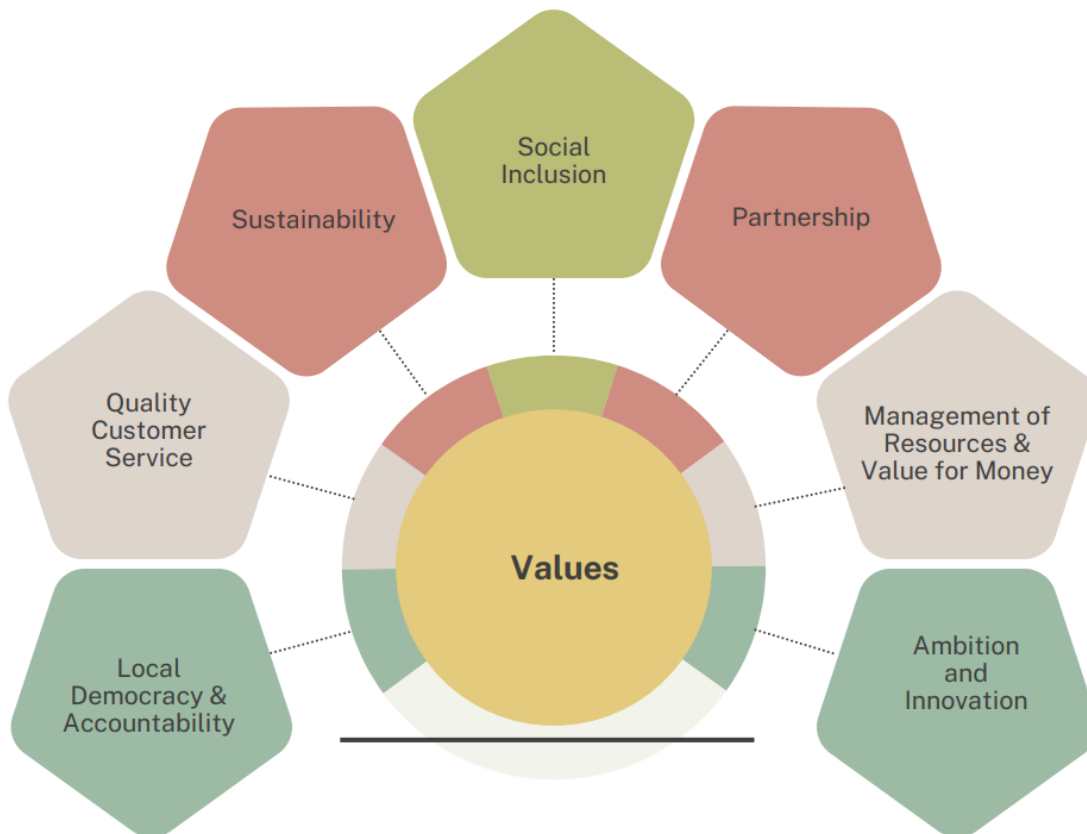
That Laois continues to be an excellent place to live in, to work in, to invest in and to enjoy.

Our Mission

The Council through strong civic leadership and innovation will lead the sustainable economic, social, cultural and community development of our County through the delivery of quality public services to the communities we serve.

Our Values

Laois County Council is committed to embedding the following values throughout the organisation, ensuring that they are reflected in the actions, behaviour and decision making of our staff. By doing so we aim to deliver excellent services to the people, businesses, and communities that we serve, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability and integrity.



Local Democracy & Accountability:

The Council will exercise its democratic mandate in an impartial, transparent and accountable manner, subject to legal, ethical and statutory requirements.

Quality Customer Service:

The Council is committed to providing a high-quality service to our customers, in an ambitious, inclusive, equitable and responsive manner.

Sustainability:

The Council is committed to ensuring it delivers services that accord in ways with the principle of sustainability, that facilitate economic progress and social cohesion, and to enhance and safeguard the natural and built environment while enhancing climate resilience.

Social Inclusion:

The Council is committed to promoting social inclusion through its activities and to deliver for all the people of the county.

Partnership:

The Council values partnership with private sector, state agencies, community groups, the wider community and our workforce.

Management of Resources & Value for Money:

The Council is committed to the efficient and effective use of the available financial and human resources.

Ambition and Innovation:

The Council will be ambitious in its plans for the County and will seek to be innovative in helping to deliver on those plans.

**PORTLAOISE
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley



Cllr. Paddy Buggy



Cllr. Marie Tuohy



Cllr. John Joe Fennelly



Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald



Cllr. Barry Walsh



Cllr. Tommy Mulligan

**BORRIS-ON-OSSORY /
MOUNTMELICK
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr. Conor Bergin



Cllr. Paddy Bracken



Cllr. James Kelly



Cllr. Ollie Clooney



Cllr. John King



Cllr. Seamus McDonald

**GRAIGUECULLEN /
PORTARLINGTON
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**



Cllr. Padraig Fleming



Cllr. Ben Brennan



Cllr. Aisling Moran



Cllr. Paschal McEvoy

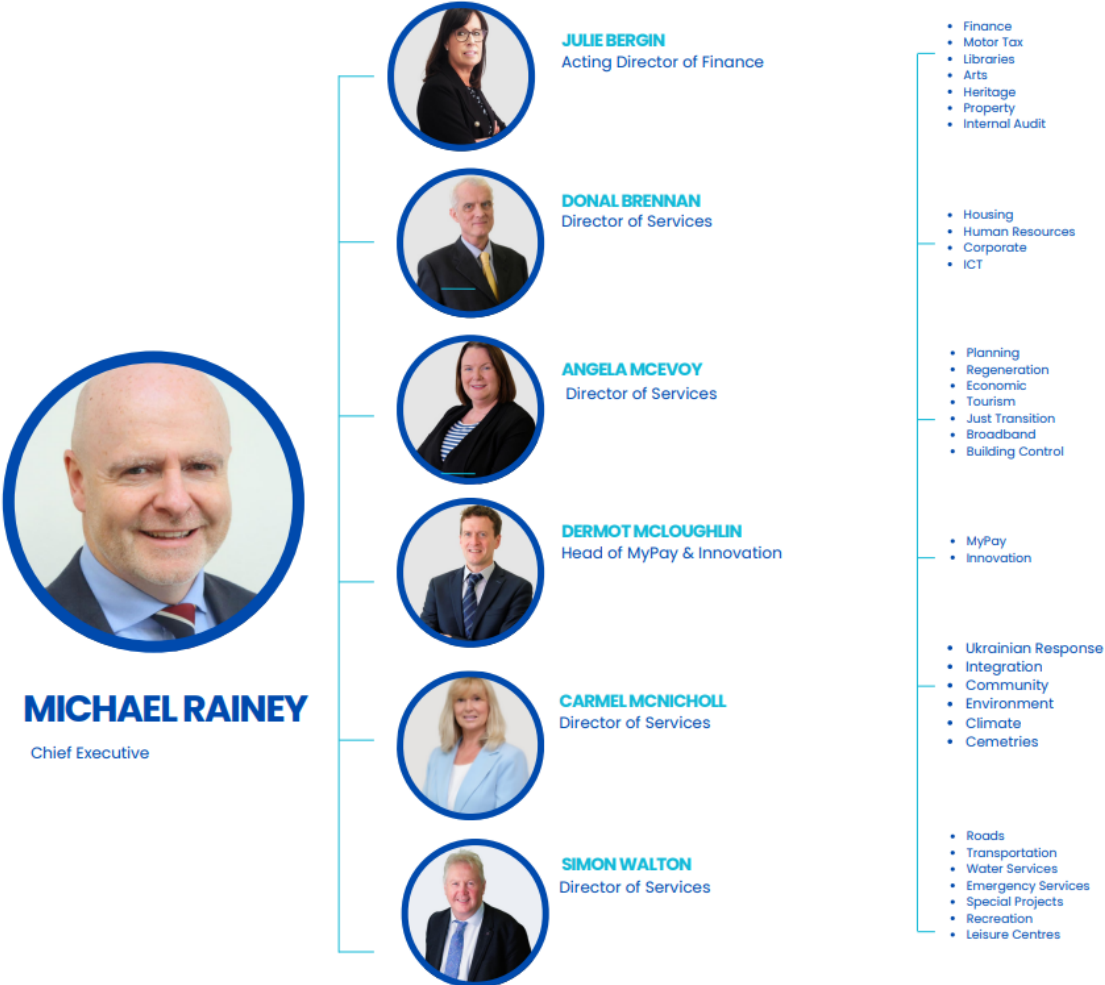


Cllr. Vivienne Phelan



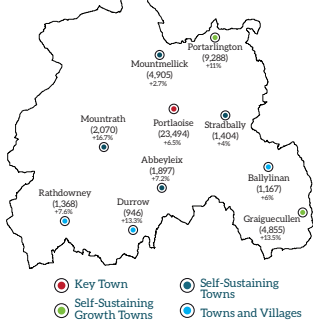
Cllr. Aidan Mullins

Our Executive Team



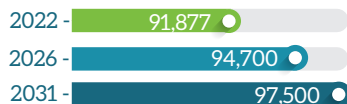
Laois County Profile

Settlement population in 2022 and change since 2016



Laois Population in 2022
91,877

+7,180 (+8.5%) from 2016
+11,318 (+14%) from 2011
+5,623 (+6.1%) 2022 to 2031

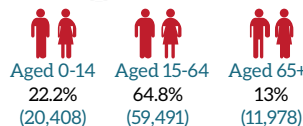


Population estimates for 2026 and 2031 based on Laois CDP and NPF Projections

1.8% of State (5.14m)

22nd highest Population in State

37.3 Average Age of Population*



69.1% living in rural areas (63,528)

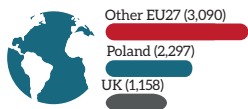
30.9% living in towns (28,349)

Population by Geographical Area*

CSO definition of Urban = settlements > 1,500 population

Demographics

Top 3 Nationalities other than Irish*



10% Non-Irish Nationals

Persons Living Alone*



21.1% of population in Private Households

Good or Very Good Health*



83.8% of the total population

Persons with a Disability*



21.9% of the total population

Our Community

Persons providing regular unpaid care*



Volunteering*



14.3% of the total population

Pobal HP Deprivation Index



15.4% of population are living in disadvantaged areas (Small Areas)

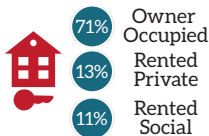
Homes & Housing

Housing Stock & Private Households*



2.94 Average Household Size*

Housing Tenure*

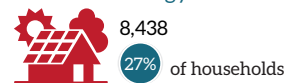


7.5% Housing Vacancy*

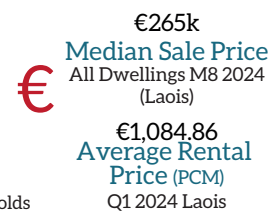
Housing Type*



Households with Renewable Energy*

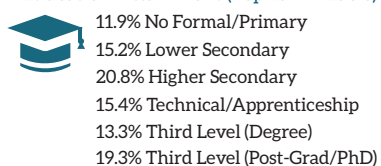


Sales & Rental Prices



Education

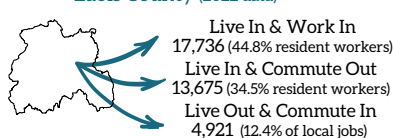
Education Attainment (Pop 15+ in Laois)*



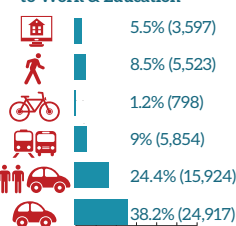
Average Travel Time of Commuters (to Work)

32.3 minutes

Commuter Flows in Laois County (2022 data)



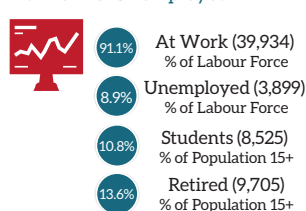
Means of Travel* to Work & Education



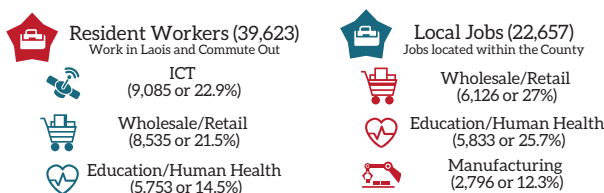
***Note: excludes not stated.

Economy, Jobs & Income

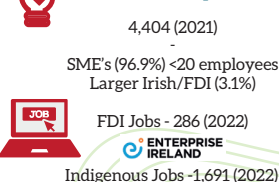
Economic Status - At Work & Unemployed*



Top 3 Employment Sectors (2022 data)



Active Enterprises



Average Disposable Income per person 2020
€19,659 (25th highest in State)

Laois LEO Clients - 143 (2022)
People employed by LEO supported enterprises - 747 (2022)

Infrastructure & Facilities

Average Drive Time to Dublin Airport
Approx. 80 minutes

Access to Broadband
78% of households

Remote Hubs and Connectivity



Water and Wastewater Facilities*

21,456 (69%) Households on Public Water Mains
18,360 (59%) Households on Public Wastewater Scheme

People & Place
peopleandplace.ie

* Data sourced from CSO Census 2022

High Level Objectives



Laois County Council will:

- 1. Develop the economic potential of the county and facilitate increased local employment.*
- 2. Support and enable the provision of housing and associated facilities to serve the people of the county.*
- 3. Enable the people of the county to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the county.*
- 4. Facilitate and promote the sustainable development of the county, including the delivery of key infrastructural projects in accordance with good environmental standards and practices.*
- 5. Position the council as a dynamic, innovative, people focused, organisation which delivers quality public services to the people of the county.*

JIT NATIONAL ENTERPRISE PARK





High-Level Objective 1

Develop the economic potential of the county and facilitate increased local employment.

- *Work with IDA and Enterprise Ireland to attract industry and businesses to establish within the county.*
- *Support the development and sustainability of local enterprises through the work of the Local Enterprise Office*
- *Work with education providers to support a skilled workforce equipped for the challenges of the changing labour markets.*
- *Work with local organisations to enhance community-based enterprise opportunities.*
- *Rejuvenate our towns and villages in line with the Town Centre First policy so as to sustain, develop and enhance these centres as focal points for the urban and rural economies.*
- *Encourage the further development of the sustainable tourism and hospitality offering in the county, supporting not only jobs in the sector but also enhancing the recreational opportunities of the county.*
- *Provide for plan-led economic development of the county.*
- *Develop and implement a marketing strategy for the county to promote the county as a key location for foreign and domestic investment.*
- *Work with the private sector and state agencies to maintain appropriate availability of enterprise spaces and business development sites; where necessary to develop spaces on our own account similar to the J17 Technological Park in Portlaoise and the former Avon site in Portarlington.*





High-Level Objective 2

Support and enable the provision of housing and associated facilities to serve the people of the county.

- *Sustainably zone sufficient land in accordance with the national planning framework and regional strategies to allow the private sector housing market to flourish.*
- *Continue to fully meet the Council's social and affordable housing obligations in line with Housing for All, delivering well designed housing appropriate for people's needs.*
- *Engage with utility providers so that their services keep pace with the planned development of the county.*
- *Work with national government and other bodies so that essential services such as social infrastructure, school places, healthcare provision, and recreational facilities keep pace with the development of the county.*
- *Implement sustainable housing policies which seek to address the changing accommodation needs of the residents of our county throughout the different stages of their lives. In this we will seek to incorporate the principles of universal design where appropriate.*
- *Support the development of sustainable travel options, linking where people live with their destinations for work or recreation.*
- *Seek to develop serviced sites at suitable locations in settlements around the county where it is economic for people to build their own houses.*
- *Assess the scale of housing demand (including suppressed demand) to meet the future needs of the county.*





High-Level Objective 3

Enable the people of the county to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the county.

- *Provide for public and community infrastructure that support people to live in a more sustainable manner with enhanced well-being.*
- *Encourage opportunities for arts, culture and social events in our towns and village*
- *Develop Laois' reputation as a place that nurtures creativity and culture, while protecting our heritage and enhancing well-being.*
- *Promote and support community safety through the implementation of the Community Safety Partnership model in the county.*
- *Encourage civic participation and support local communities to lead on their own developments and support capacity development within local communities and sports organisations.*
- *Deliver on the actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan.*
- *Encourage and promote the participation of young people in the future development of the County.*
- *Support the delivery and implementation of strategies such as the Laois Age Friendly Strategy and the Laois Healthy Ireland programme which seek to optimise the health and well-being of people in the county.*
- *Update the Laois Integration Strategy, supporting the development of a welcoming and inclusive county.*
- *Continue to build capacity in the Town Team structures (and similar participative structures) across the county.*
- *Direct targeted investment towards structurally weak towns and locations of need.*



Leabharlann

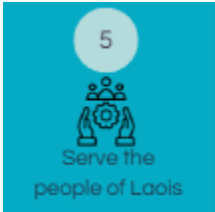


High-Level Objective 4

Facilitate and promote the sustainable development of the county, including the delivery of key infrastructural projects in accordance with good environmental standards and practices.

- *Promote balanced urban and rural development of the county.*
- *Sustain, develop and enhance town and village centres as focal points for their communities in line with the Town Centre First policy.*
- *Encourage the re-use/re-purposing of properties and sites within our towns and villages to address vacancy and underutilisation, while driving economic growth.*
- *Continue to enhance the public realm of our towns and villages so that people can enjoy, and be proud of, the place where they live and work.*
- *Deliver on the commitments within the Laois Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026*
- *Develop flood defences in priority locations such as Mountmellick, Portarlinton, and Clonaslee.*
- *Facilitate the transition to Electric Vehicles by expanding the charging network*
- *Through sustainable infrastructure that respects climate and environmental constraints we will develop Laois as a climate friendly location to live and work within the emerging low carbon economy.*
- *We will seek to maintain Laois' position as a highly digitally connected county and we will also work to optimise digital inclusion across the county.*
- *Work with the National Transportation Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland so that the transport networks within the county are improved to meet the development needs of the county.*





High-Level Objective 5

Position the council as a dynamic, innovative, people focused, organisation which delivers quality public services to the people of the county.

- Invest in staff development to foster innovation and to deliver an empowered workforce capable of delivering change.
- Seek to be viewed nationally as an employer of choice.
- Seek to have secure, modern, linked systems that will make sure our service provision is efficient and effective as we work towards the national target of having 90% of applicable local government services online by 2030.
- Improve the customer experience using systems and digital solutions that align the organisation with our customers' needs.
- Improve our communications, and engagement, with community groups and the people of the county overall to deepen the broader understanding of our functions and the services we deliver, while seeking to improve the feedback on those services.
- With a strong commitment to continuous improvement, our MyPay unit- the flagship payroll and superannuation Shared Services Centre for the Local Government sector- will continue to lead the way in innovation, offering forward-thinking, efficient solutions that set the benchmark for excellence in shared services within the sector nationally.
- Further embed the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty into the everyday work of the Council.
- As an organisation that is led by a democratically elected Council committed serving the people of the County, we will ensure effective corporate governance with regular reporting on the activities of the Council, and with a policy-led and a plan-led approach to the development of the county.



Ongoing Commitment to a Sustainable Future

Laois County Council is dedicated to confronting the critical challenge of climate change with the implementation of our Climate Action Plan. Our approach focuses on working alongside local organisations and communities to reduce emissions and improve the resilience of our infrastructure, particularly in anticipation of extreme weather events.

Tackling greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change are fundamental goals for our county. Success will depend on

the collective efforts of Council staff, elected representatives, Government Departments, and all the people of Laois. Through collaboration and commitment, we can drive the positive changes needed to ensure a sustainable and resilient future for Laois.

The Laois Corporate Plan 2024-2029 contributes to 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 27 of the 169 targets.



Public Sector Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, places a duty on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights, in their daily work.

The Act states under Section 42(1) that a “public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination,
- b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.”

The Council, in preparing strategic plans, must assess and identify the human rights and equality issues that are relevant to their functions. The Council must also identify the policies and practices that they have in place or that they plan to put in place to address these issues and must report on their developments and achievement in that regard.

The Council will strive to fulfil its obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. The Council has produced an assessment of the equality and human rights issues relevant to its purpose and functions. In the implementation of this Corporate Plan, across all its service areas, the Council will have regard to this public sector duty in the design and implementation of its programmes.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – How we are Organised.
- Appendix 2– Our Operating Environment.
- Appendix 3- Summary of Selected Key & Ongoing Actions
- Appendix 4 - Implementation, Monitoring & Review
- Appendix 5 - Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty
- Appendix 6 - Selected Strategies and Plans Influencing Local Government
- Appendix 7 - Service Indicators
- Appendix 8 - Consultation for Corporate Plan
- Appendix 9 MyPay Shared Services Centre-





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