

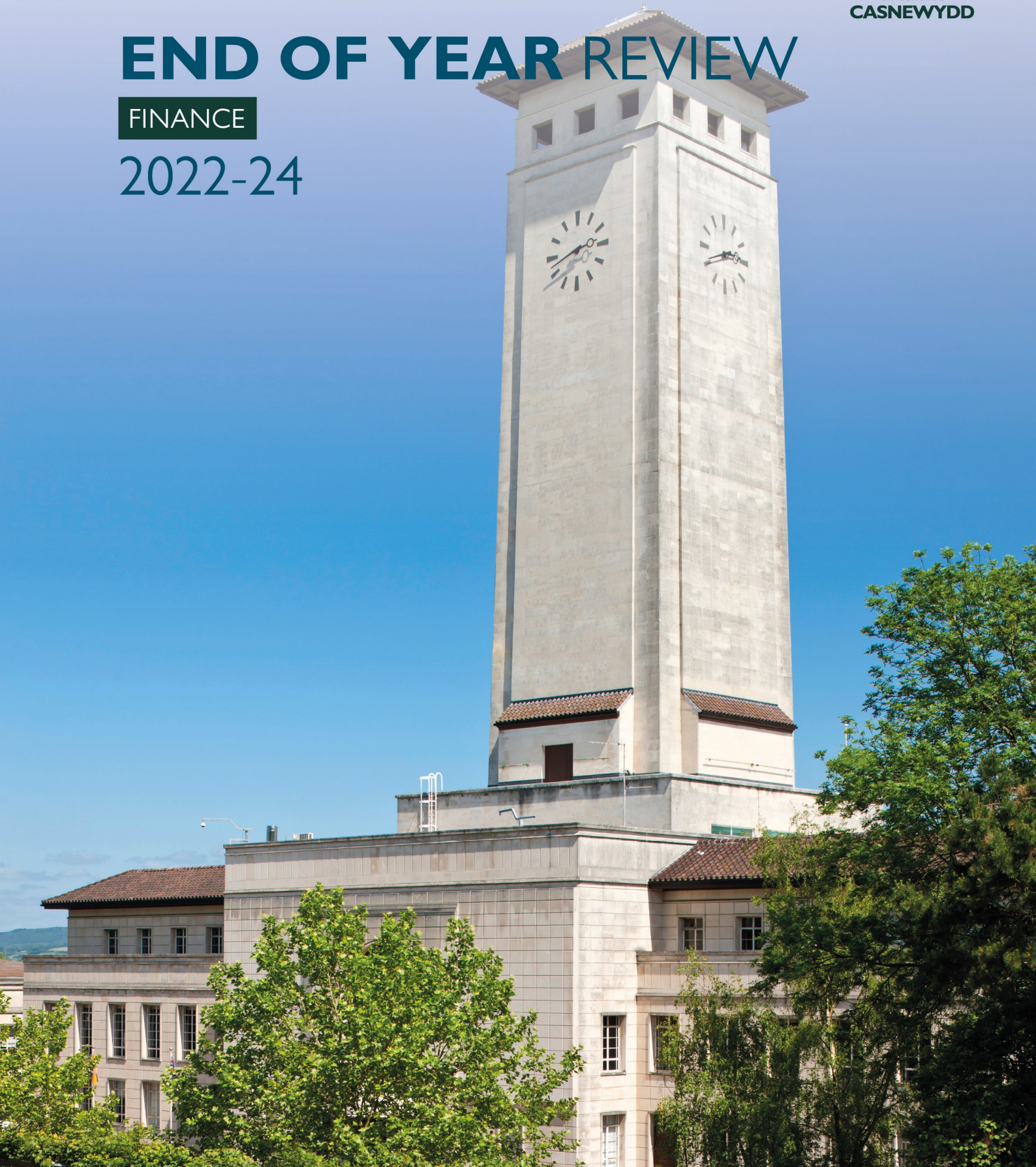


NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

END OF YEAR REVIEW

FINANCE

2022-24



Contents

	Page No.
Introduction	2
Head of Service Executive Summary	4
Finance 22/23 Overview	6
Programmes and Projects	8
Workforce Development	9
Objectives and Actions	10
Performance Measures	24
Glossary	28

Strategic Leads

Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment	Councillor Jane Mudd
Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation	Councillor Dimitri Batrouni
Cabinet Member for Community Well-being	Councillor Debbie Harvey
Director for Transformation and Corporate	Rhys Cornwall
Head of Finance	Meirion Rushworth

Introduction

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 has four Well-being Objectives to support its mission to deliver an Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for Everyone and contribute towards Wales' Well-being Goals set in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. To support the delivery of these objectives and strategic priorities, each service area has developed their service plan. The Finance Service Plan 2022-24 outlines its own priorities and how the service will contribute towards the Corporate Plan and deliver continuous improvement.

Since the Senior Management Structure implemented in Autumn 2021, the Finance service comprises of six teams: Accountancy; Internal Audit; Procurement/e-payments; Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services. Together, the teams provide a diverse mix of services and activities that support the Council's service areas; setting overall policy frameworks for the whole Council; and Revenues, as one of the biggest external customer departments dealing with all households and businesses and Customer Services dealing with the Council's external service requests, both face to face and phone/digital transactions. Examples of the areas / functions include:

- Setting policy, good practice, training, support and co-ordination to enable effective financial management and strategic planning of a net revenue budget of c£340m, supporting over 200 budget manager's/service managers, Head teachers and Members.
- Supporting the organisation develop its services and deliver key projects with financial advice and support as needed.
- Providing assurance to the Council and Schools on the effectiveness and efficiency of its governance, risk management and internal control of its financial and non-financial resources including where necessary the investigation of impropriety / theft.
- Collect c£120m of income from Council Tax, Business Rates and various sundry debts.
- Manage and support the Council's interaction with its suppliers to ensure value for money through e-ordering, payments and support services in tendering / awarding / managing contracts.
- Supporting the Head of Finance in carrying out his statutory Section 151 responsibilities.

Through the Corporate Plan and beyond, the Finance Services will continue to build on delivering more 'self-service' functions, both internally such as the Council's Budget Management System and externally through the development of the Council's Customer Relationship System and My Account enabling residents and businesses to engage with the Council electronically in more areas and design and build solutions with services to deal with these efficiently and effectively. Specifically within Revenues and Benefits, we will roll out 'self-service' in Council Tax and Benefits administration, as part of the My Account offer. Ensuring the Council's resources are focussed on its key priorities is increasingly important and our Finance Business Partners will support and develop strong, integrated financial planning, management and governance. The Internal Audit team continue to provide high level assurance service to the Council on the financial and non-financial governance, risk management and internal control.

Supporting the Council and City through the Covid Pandemic throughout the previous two years or so has dominated our agenda and our work on supporting businesses and households and individuals is still on-going, either Covid or increasingly, cost of living related - business rates reductions scheme, winter fuel payments, WG & NCC cost of living support scheme for example.

As we write this, the financial outlook for public services is increasingly challenging and uncertain and also, the Council has a new Corporate Plan. We will aim to support and where applicable, deliver on key deliverables and objectives in the Plan as well as support the organisation in navigating through the financial challenges. Specifically, as we do this, we will need to work in the Council's 'new normal' arrangements and ensure staff are working in the most effective, efficient and safe manner.

Finance Objectives

Objective 1- Support the medium to long term financial management & planning (Revenue and Capital) across the Council to focus resources on key objectives and help financial sustainability of Council services.

Objective 2 - Develop a range of customer focused services via re-opening of face-to-face services and development of the 'Newport App' and 'My Council Services' systems.

Objective 3 - Embed social value, carbon reduction and Welsh TOMs into the Council's procurement processes.

Objective 4 - Revenues and Benefits team and Income Collection team support households and businesses through the Cost-of-Living crisis.

Head of Service Executive Summary

Then 2022/23 financial year performance against the service plan objectives and targets has been a successful one for the service. This achievement is more impressive when one considers that the service area expanded significantly following the Council re-structure in 2021, all parts of the service are now working in a 'hybrid fashion' and has taken some getting used to; there were legacy Covid support schemes still operating in the first half of the year adding to workloads, new 'Cost of Living' schemes being administered which again were adding to workloads and the service co-ordinated and managed the development of the 2023/24 budget which turned out to be the most challenging one than most of us can remember. Service Managers, Team Leaders and all colleagues have risen to the challenge, and this is *their* achievement.

In terms of progress against our objectives and key projects, the following are some of the key areas:

- Work on implementing the Council's new Finance System made good progress and continues to move on and we envisage an implementation date of October 2023. This is later than planned but in hindsight, the original date of April 2023 was unrealistic; especially because our implementation consultants are supporting us 'off-site' in the main.
- Work on introducing self-service into the revenues and benefits department was completed in the revenues team and 'soft launched' in February/March 2023 and the software required for the benefits team has now been installed.
- We have embedded 'Social Value and Carbon reduction measures' into the Council's procurement processes and this priority is now a key feature in how we ensure our suppliers/contractors/partners deliver this as added value when spending the Council's money for the benefit of Newport.

On performance, most targets were met other than:

- Financial forecasts reviewed and updated – which is reported in the Finance service but reflects performance across the organisation. Consistency of budget managers reviewing and updating forecasts against budgets is a challenge with some areas requiring significant improvement. It will need to be taken forward with CMT and Directorate Management Teams.
- Grant claims submitted on time – this is reported in the Finance service but reflects performance across the organisation as the processes of completing these involves service areas as well as accountancy. We fell behind target but often; by a small margin and no payments of grants were impacted. Again, it will need to be taken forward with CMT and Directorate Management Teams.

In overall terms, as said above, the 2022/23-year performance and progress in achieving our key objectives was very good.

As we look forward to 2023/24 and beyond, some key issues and focus for the service; building on the success of last year, will be:

- Improving our customer services processes and methods. We will need external help to do this, but the focus is to ensure:
 - We focus on the 'end to end' processes and performance around customer services and not just the current 'front end'.
 - We extend the use of the Council's 'My Council Services' system to service areas and therefore integrate more customer services / other requests (the front end) into service area processes to fulfil service requests (the back end).
 - We review our current system design and processes.

The service area will need a review of its structure in some parts to support and enable that.

- Implement the Council's new financial system across the organisation and schools.
- Maximise the use of self-service in revenues and implement it within the benefits area. Identify and bed in service and efficiency improvements that may come from this.

- Explore different operating models for the delivery of Internal Audit services to the Council.
- On-going monitoring and self-evaluation of the procurement processes robustness, including the 'Procurement Gateway Board' in leveraging social value and carbon reduction benefits to the Council and Newport
- Embedding new financial support and in particular financial monitoring arrangements across the organisation

As we focus on the above, a key risk for the service is resource levels and difficulty in recruitment. This is especially an issue in

- Internal Audit where there is a c40% vacancy rate and acting up temporary arrangements for senior roles, including the Chief Internal Auditor. The team resource levels were also reduced for 2023/24 and this has created significant risk across several issues/areas.
- Accountancy central team which focusses on overall co-ordination, capital programme monitoring, treasury management and technical accounting. The level of technical expertise resources as well as projects support is very low creates significant risk across several issues / areas.

We continue to manage the above both with short term and longer-term mitigation as best as possible. A number of re-structures and change in operating models are in progress and we will, as far as possible, build some resilience into structures as part of these changes. We will also need to develop our hybrid working arrangements in the forthcoming year and ensure that the right people are together at the right times.

Finance 2022/23 Overview

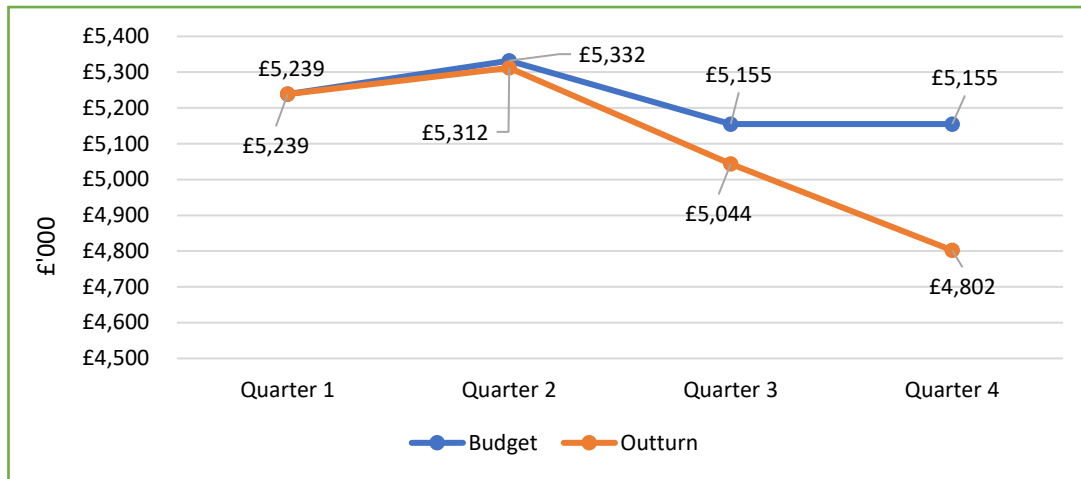
Service Plan Objectives

Objective	End of Year (Red / Amber / Green)
Objective 1 - Support the medium to long term financial management & planning (Revenue and Capital) across the Council to focus resources on key objectives and help financial sustainability of Council services.	
Objective 2 - Develop a range of customer focused services via re-opening of face-to-face services and development of the 'Newport App' and 'My Council Services' systems.	
Objective 3 - Embed social value, carbon reduction and Welsh TOMs into the Council's procurement processes.	
Objective 4 - Revenues and Benefits team and Income Collection team support households and businesses through the Cost-of-Living crisis.	

Service Area Risks

Risk	Corporate / Service Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Quarter 1 Risk Score	Quarter 2 Risk Score	Quarter 3 Risk Score	Quarter 4 Risk Score
Balancing the Council's Medium-Term Budget	Corporate Risk	20	10	12	20	20	20
Council Income Reduction	Service Risk	12	8	8	8	8	4
In Year Financial management (Revenue)	Service Risk	12	8	9	9	6	6
ICT - Key Finance Systems Failure	Service Risk	16	5	9	9	9	12
ICT- Self-service within C Tax/NNDR area	Service Risk	9	6	4	4	1	Risk Closed
(New) In-year financial management (capital)	Service Risk	12	6	-	-	12	12
(New) Failure to achieve completion of the Annual IA Plan	Service Risk	12	9	-	-	9	12

Service Area Revenue Outturn



Programmes and Projects

Programme / Project Title	Project Overview	Well-being Objective(s) supported	Expected Completion Date (Quarter / Year)	Quarter 4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
Digital Transactions for Council Taxpayers and those applying for and in receipt of Housing Benefits	To provide the means for customers to carry out routine transactions digitally. To enable citizens to access their council tax / HB records and carry out routine transactions digitally which will improve efficiency, reduce costs and reduce unnecessary contact. It will also allow the Revenues Team to focus more on recovery of debts and not deal with low level transactional matters.	Well-being Objective 4	Quarter 3 2022/23	C	Digital online services have been successfully introduced and for the first time enable residents to manage their council tax accounts online. Following a soft launch, to enable any issues to be flagged and resolved, a publicity campaign was carried out during February and March 2023 to coincide with the issue of the new bills for 2023-24. This has already resulted in a number of customers opting to receive their bills digitally.
Upgrade to a new financial system	The replacement of the existing financial system, which is on an unsupported platform and not integrated, with a fully integrated, Cloud-based, system which improves the user experience, quality of reporting and access on a more remote basis.	Well-being Objective 4	Quarter 1 2023/24	75%	The last quarter's activity has focussed on completion of configuration of the new system. The project team have been undertaking preparation for User Acceptance Testing, which is due to commence in the next quarter. In addition, the team have been gaining additional knowledge and familiarisation with the system. Also, work has commenced on building the interfaces between the new system and other feeder systems. A detailed project plan, which is fully resourced, now exists, although this has highlighted the need to defer the go-live date until October 2023. There remains a risk to achieving this, due to the volume and variety of work to be completed over the next 6 months and the external factors that impact upon the project.

Workforce Development

To support workforce development across Finance Service, the following actions have been identified as priority between 2022-24.

Action	Outcome(s) of Action Delivery	Action Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
Introduce succession planning practices and strengthen resilience in teams to extent possible.	Service Managers provide opportunities for staff to develop, provide career progression and job shadowing. This will support formalising succession plans and create the foundations for a regular reviewing cycle.	1 st April 2021	31 st March 2023	80%	A restructure of the Revenues & Benefits Team is currently being carried out, once completed staff will have more opportunity to broaden their skills which will help with staff development and recruitment. A restructure of customer services is to be completed in 2023/24 and will need to design in resilience at management/team leader levels
Review the current approach to recruitment within Finance, with a particular focus on entry level posts.	Improve the likelihood of recruiting to vacant posts and create new routes for people to enter Finance. This may include the introduction of graduate schemes, traineeships or school leaver schemes.	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	5%	As reported previously, this work will accelerate once the changes to the structure in Accountancy are implemented during Quarter 1 of 2023/24. It was not anticipated that progress would be made during the final quarter of 2022/23. A trainee role is being recruited into procurement and the structure adapted to accommodate that

Objectives and Action Plan Update

Objective 1 - Support the medium to long term financial management & planning (Revenue and Capital) across the Council to focus resources on key objectives and help financial sustainability of Council services.						Objective 1 End of Year Assessment	
Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
1	Development of the new Capital programme.	Review of the existing programme, followed by a new five-year Capital Programme which reflects the Council's corporate ambitions whilst being affordable, prudent and sustainable.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	C	The Capital Programme for 2023/24 was approved by Cabinet in February 2023 and the overarching Capital Strategy was approved by Council in the same month. Therefore, this action has been completed.
2	Adopt and embed a rolling approach to programme management.	A rolling capital programme that will be updated on an annual basis.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	C	The Council set its Capital & Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 in February 2023. Part of this included approval of the Capital Programme for the five-year period commencing 2023/24. As part of that strategy, it was confirmed that a rolling approach would be adopted for programme management going forward. Therefore, this action is now complete. As a consequence, the programme will be fully reviewed on an annual basis, as opposed to once every five years.
3	Review of activity associated with the closure of accounts.	The introduction of a programme of review of activity across Accountancy, with the aim of identifying ways to complete tasks more efficiently, automate them,	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	15%	As reported previously, the delays associated with completing the 2021/22 accounts process significantly impacted upon the ability to undertake the desired level of

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
3	Review of activity associated with the closure of accounts.	The introduction of a programme of review of activity across Accountancy, with the aim of identifying ways to complete tasks more efficiently, automate them, undertake them in advance of the year-end or not undertake them at all if there is no value added.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	15%	review work prior to commencing the 2022/23 accounts process. Therefore, it has only been possible to consider a small number of improvements. An example of this is a more structured process for the approval of earmarked reserve transfers that has been introduced. As the focus will be on completing the draft accounts for 2022/23 during the first quarter of 2023, it is unlikely that any significant review work will possible until July 2023, at the earliest, although business partnering teams will complete a lessons learned exercise during May 2023, which will be used to inform any changes going forward.
4	Review of the approach taken to technical aspects of the accounts.	A robust review of historic approaches to processes such as asset valuations (in line with new audit advice), the utilisation of the new system to automate and facilitate more of the technical aspects and updated approaches to the production of the core statements.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	10%	As reported previously, the delays associated with completing the 2021/22 accounts process significantly impacted upon the ability to undertake the desired level of review work prior to commencing the 2022/23 accounts process. Therefore, it has only been possible to focus on those recommendations that originated from the Audit Wales ISA260 Report and the subsequent lessons learned exercise, which was considered by Governance & Audit Committee in March 2023.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
4	Review of the approach taken to technical aspects of the accounts.	A robust review of historic approaches to processes such as asset valuations (in line with new audit advice), the utilisation of the new system to automate and facilitate more of the technical aspects and updated approaches to the production of the core statements.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	10%	As the focus will be on completing the draft accounts for 2022/23 during the first quarter of 2023, it is unlikely that any significant review work will be possible until July 2023, at the earliest, unless there are any technical issues that need resolving whilst the draft accounts are being prepared.
5	Ensure the new financial system maximises the quality of financial information provided to budget holders.	An easy to use, readily accessible financial system, which provides real-time management information and interactive, useful reporting tools.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	30 th June 2023	15%	The majority of this work will take place later in the year and, therefore, there has been little progress during Quarter 4. However, some of the configuration work undertaken on the Budgeting & Forecasting module will be relevant to budget holders and every effort has been made to ensure that the system is easy to navigate and use.
6	Expand the financial training offer to include general financial training for budget managers – augmenting and co-ordinated with current offers.	Budget managers with a wider appreciation of the financial context that the Council works within, including Council funding sources, basic accounting concepts, capital and treasury management.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	30 th September 2023	10%	In line with the previous update, the majority of work associated with this action will be undertaken during the summer of 2023. However, as part of a review of the structure and operating model within Accountancy, areas for inclusion within a revised training package have been identified.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
7	Review, amend and embed robustly a revised operating model that underpins the revenue budget management process.	Clarity of expectations upon budget managers and Accountancy staff, a robust approach for identification of risk-based areas and a revised annual budget monitoring timetable.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	35%	Activity during the final quarter of 2022/23 has been focussed on determining the revised approach to the Council's budget monitoring process, in light of the reduction in Accountancy capacity arising from the 2023/24 savings requirement. This has seen a focus on the frequency of monitoring going forward and a ways to strengthen the ability of budget managers to provide robust forecasts. During the next quarter, the revised arrangements will be agreed, introduced and communicated with Heads of Services and budget holders.
8	Consider the climate and nature emergency and carbon reduction initiatives within the Council's long term capital programme and revenue budget / Medium Term Financial Plan, maximising the use of external funding where possible.	Climate and decarbonisation incorporated in to the MTFP & capital programme, subject to affordability. Capital and Treasury Management Strategy reviewed and updated to ensure they consider climate change and the nature emergency.	Well-being Objective 4 / Strategic Priority 3 Climate Change Plan	1 st May 2022	31 st December 2022	C	The Council's capital programme for 2023/24 has been drafted and will be approved in February 2023. Due to funding constraints it has not been possible to afford new schemes at this stage. However, flexibility remains for there to be additional borrowing in future years if it is affordable. Should this be possible, carbon reduction schemes may be added to the programme at that point, subject to other priorities.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
8	Consider the climate and nature emergency and carbon reduction initiatives within the Council's long term capital programme and revenue budget / Medium Term Financial Plan, maximising the use of external funding where possible.	Climate and decarbonisation incorporated in to the MTFP & capital programme, subject to affordability. Capital and Treasury Management Strategy reviewed and updated to ensure they consider climate change and the nature emergency.	Well-being Objective 4 / Strategic Priority 3 Climate Change Plan	1 st May 2022	31 st December 2022	C	However, despite current funding constraints, it is still possible to undertake borrowing on an invest to save basis and, therefore, carbon reduction schemes are still an option, providing that sufficient savings are generated to cover the capital financing costs. The costing of the climate change plans for inclusion within the MTFP and revenue budget is in progress
9	Review all investments to ensure they are invested in ethically based funds.	Existing investments reviewed. Ethically based investments reflected in our Capital and Treasury Management Strategy	Well-being Objective 4 / Strategic Priority 3 Climate Change Plan	1 st May 2022	31 st March 2023	C	The Council has made enquiries regarding existing investments to understand the ethical approaches being taken. In addition, in line with Treasury Management Code requirements, the Council has included its own ESG considerations in its draft Treasury Management Strategy to be approved during February. ESG will, therefore, be a key consideration when undertaking any new investments going forward.
10	Use our influence to encourage the staff pension fund to invest in ethically based funds.	Pension board aware.	Well-being Objective 4 / Strategic Priority 3 Climate Change Plan	1 st May 2022	31 st December 2022	C	Whilst this is an ongoing action, it has been completed for the initial purpose intended. The Gwent Pension Scheme has a focus on ethical investments and is making progress in this regard.

Objective 2 - Develop a range of customer focused services via re-opening of face-to-face services and development of the 'Newport App' and 'My Council Services' systems.

Objective 2 End of Year Assessment

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
1	Support the provision of Benefits Service to Newport citizens that makes best use of the resources available.	Capita Connect integration. Transfer of HB enquiry lines to the Contact Centre. Maximise the use of automated and digitised services.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st April 2020	31 st March 2024	20%	New customer portal launched online, Customer Services are signposting callers to the new portal
2	Review of administrative processes and services within customer services.	By moving to the use of technology such as artificial intelligence systems we can make repetitive processes more efficient freeing up staff to deal with more complex queries.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	20%	No further progress has been made with this due to resources being limited while we focused on the reopening of Face-to-Face services in the central library & museum building
3	Explore all options available for the use of robotics within the Revenues and Benefits Section.	To remove the requirement for staff to carry out repetitive standard transactions, to free up resources for debt recovery and welfare related matters.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2024	0%	We have not managed to identify a suitable use for the corporate automation application (robotics). This is because the things we have identified to progress as part of our digital agenda can be achieved more easily by using our existing software and utilising some additional modules and functionality. This action will be deleted.
4	Continuing Development of the Newport App and My Council Services (MCS) system. Look at opportunities that occur by being part of project and project boards such as Digital strategy and web redevelopment.	Staff and Residents are able to report, pay and request services from anywhere. Staff to have the ability to mobile work with Real - Time Reporting.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st January 2023	31 st March 2024	5%	Funding agreed for permanent operational support and 2 year extension to projects. Structure of team and job description review started. Certificate purchased to amend the current MCS form links. This will now show the customer myaccount.newport.gov.uk instead of iweb.itouchvision.com.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
4	Continuing Development of the Newport App and My Council Services system. Look at opportunities that occur by being part of project and project boards such as Digital strategy and web redevelopment.	Staff and Residents are able to report, pay and request services from anywhere. Staff to have the ability to mobile work with Real - Time Reporting.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st January 2023	31 st March 2024	5%	This will help with a more seamless connection from NCC website to MCS. GDS Portal provided by Abavus (supplier of MCS) for development and testing. This will provide a new style for the customer portal and show a more cohesive link from the website. The style is based on the government design style. Booking system created for re-opening of the Information Zone at the Library.
5	Government Design Standards to be utilised across customer facing platforms to enhance the customer experience.	This means that residents accessing our services through Government portals or the Council's website will have consistency in any forms that they may need to complete.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st September 2022	31 st March 2023	C	All forms standardised. No further actions to be completed as any new forms will now follow the same format.
6	Develop an appointment system for the re-opening of the F2F. Incorporate self-scanning, booking in functionality. Deliver for all services providing appointments.	In-person services using new technologies such as appointment bookings, scan stations and promoting self-service opportunities.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st December 2022	31 st March 2023	C	A new appointment system has been created and is currently used by Customer Services, Housing Benefit and Planning to meet with residents where necessary.
7	Explore and implement System Rationalisation across the authority looking a way to replace or integrate back-office systems through use of 'My Council Services' system.	Suggested areas for review - Regulatory Services, HOTH, Allotments, Trees.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st April 2023	31 st March 2025	N/A	Action commence reporting in 2023.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
8	Reopen Face to Face services at the Central Library & Museum.	Residents will be able to access services by the way of an appointment booking system and automatic check-in when they arrive enabling us to be more efficient in managing resources available. Residents will also be able to use scanning stations to provide relevant documentation needed for some services such as Housing Benefits which will result paperless working and reduced costs associated with scanning/photocopying.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	C	Move planning now in place for handover to NCC following building works. Risk assessments & premises Manager to be reviewed.
9	Develop and enable digital/ self-service Functionality of the 'Capita Revs / Bens IT system.	Enable the Council's Council Tax / NNDR system which allows residents and businesses to transact digitally and to have a self-service functionality. This will improve the efficiency revenue transactions and provide greater options for users to monitor and pay their bills.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st December 2019	31 st March 2024	C	Residents are now able to register and use the self-service council tax functionality.
10	Embed the digital / self-service functionality of the Revs/Bens system into the Newport City Council website as part of 'my council services' to offer a consistent experience for the customer.	Integration of self-service system functionality into the Council's web service software partner into the main council website.	WBO 2 / Strategic Priority 6 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 4 Digital Strategy	1 st March 2020	31 st March 2023	C	Work to resolve the final technical issues is almost complete and it is envisioned that a 'soft launch' go live date in early autumn is achievable.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
11	Complete a desktop review of the two main Revenues IT systems to assess strengths and weaknesses across a number of review areas. Complete a review of other users experience of each system to augment and inform the above analysis.	A more robust and supported platform solution to deliver council tax, benefits and NNDR services.	Not Applicable	1 st November 2021	31 st March 2024	15%	This will be a major piece of work and needs to be properly programmed for after the Finance system replacement has been finalised, and the options available can be explored and reported on for a decision on the future ICT provision can be made.

Objective 3 - Embed social value, carbon reduction and Welsh TOMs into the Council's procurement processes.

Objective 3 End of Year Assessment

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
1	Use information gained from existing contracts to inform future direction for new tender specifications, carbon questionnaires and social value measures and requirements (TOMs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tender templates and documentation developed for use across the procurement Gateway Process. • Carbon reporting taking place for contracts in line with WPPN 06/21. • WPPN 12/21 informing new specifications and questionnaires. • Value of contracts that will require carbon reporting agreed. 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st December 2022 and on-going	C	<p>The work required to enable the achievement of this action is being undertaken by the Carbon Reduction Team (CRT). The CRT now have a graduate looking at spend profiles and engaging with key strategic suppliers, and the work to develop tools and to work with suppliers to understand their carbon reduction plans has commenced.</p> <p>The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Executive Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and Newport Managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity is now business as usual.</p>
2	Develop and build on the Council's procurement gateway process to fully consider climate change, carbon reduction and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New template forms are developed and being used. • Forms are added to intranet pages. 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st October 2022	C	<p>The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.</p>

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
3	Consider climate change and carbon reduction action at the early stage of the procurement planning process and contract development by: Developing a new tender action timetable template; and Using annual forward work plans to help inform on upcoming tenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New template forms are developed and being used Carbon Reduction Team involved in reviewing Carbon Reduction measures in project proposals prior to Gateway sign off. Tender Action Timetable updated and in use. 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st October 2022 and on-going	C	The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed. Carbon/Climate considerations are now embedded into the gateway process, and the Carbon reduction Team will sign off this element before the forms go to Board for approval.
4	Implement a social value tool (e.g. National Themes, Outcomes and Measures known as TOMs) that considers climate change/ carbon reduction and community wealth / other community/city benefits to assist with evaluation. Ensure 'procurement process 1 & 2 (quotations and low value tenders) adhere to Contract Standing Orders which ensures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender value for carbon questionnaire and TOMs is agreed (>75k) National TOMs and carbon questionnaire for tenders agreed and in use. 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st December 2022	C	The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and the Welsh National TOMs Social value Framework has been used to draw up a core list of measures for NCC that consider, amongst other things, carbon and sustainability. Briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
4	local suppliers are always considered where appropriate and contribute to community wealth building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender value for carbon questionnaire and TOMs is agreed (>75k) National TOMs and carbon questionnaire for tenders agreed and in use. 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st December 2022	C	All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.
5	Provide appropriate training to undertake the new processes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement staff Staff/managers undertaking the procurement process Gateway decision makers 	Guidance and training material produced and in use to inform and train colleagues in new Gateway processes.	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st December 2022	C	Training and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport Managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.
6	Ensure collaborative contracts include carbon reduction measures and that collaborative contract management includes the ability to capture lifetime data and seek continuous improvements.	Collaborative contracts measures meet with NCC requirements before committing. Arrangements monitored to make sure that carbon reduction measures are in place	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st October 2022 and on-going	C	The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
6	Ensure collaborative contracts include carbon reduction measures and that collaborative contract management includes the ability to capture lifetime data and seek continuous improvements.	Collaborative contracts meet with NCC requirements before committing. Arrangements monitored to make sure that carbon reduction measures are in place	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st October 2022 and on-going	C	Clearly new collaborative contract opportunities will present themselves going forward, and this action was to ensure the basis for considering carbon reduction becomes standard practice for all tendering, collaborative or otherwise.
7	Use the Welsh National TOMs as scorable evaluation criteria in medium & high value tenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance and tender documentation amended to include a new Climate/Carbon section detailing the drive to net zero and the expectations on our suppliers. Guidance and tender documentation amended to include scorable questions which will be evaluated and will feed into overall evaluation 	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st December 2022	C	The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.12.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.
8	Brief potential suppliers on the carbon reduction need for each procurement.	Supplier events or other communication methods set up and taken place to inform suppliers of Carbon Reduction requirements.	WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 3 WBO 4 / Strategic Priority 7 Climate Change Plan Procurement Strategy	1 st June 2022	31 st October 2022 and on-going	C	The modifications to the tender process, and procurement gateway process are now complete, and briefing sessions have taken place with Exec Board, CMT, Service Area DMT's and more recently Newport managers Network. All the foundations are now laid, and this activity will become business as usual going forward. The completion date of 31.10.22 was to get the new system embedded, and all the training undertaken which has now been completed.

Objective 4 - Revenues and Benefits team and Income Collection team support households and businesses through the Cost-of-Living crisis.

Objective 4 End of Year Assessment

Ref	Action	Action Outcome(s)	Well-being Objective Supported	Start Date	Expected Completion Date	Q4 RAG Assessment / % Completion	Commentary
1	Identify all qualifying households for the WG scheme.	Make payments to all registered households.	Not Applicable	1 st April 2022	31 st October 2023	C	All households were identified and those paying by direct debit were paid automatically whilst the remainder were contacted and provided with details of how to register for a payment.
2	Design and agree Newport local scheme.	Ensure appropriate households / individuals are targeted to receive support	Not Applicable	1 st April 2022	31 st October 2023	C	The Newport discretionary cost of living scheme was agreed in September 2022.
3	Identify all qualifying households / individuals for the Newport Local Scheme.	Make payments to all qualifying households / individuals	Not Applicable	1 st September 2022	31 st March 2023	C	Households identified as entitled to a discretionary cost of living payment were issued with information and payments.
4	Pay 'Winter Fuel' benefits in line with qualifying criteria.	Make payments to all qualifying households / individuals.	Not Applicable	1 st September 2022	31 st March 2023	C	The winter fuel payment scheme has now closed and all households identified as entitled from benefit records were issued with a voucher that could be cashed at any Post Office. A very small number of households have not yet cashed their vouchers, and should the voucher expire the payment will be re-issued in an alternative format.
5	Carry out and implement the business rate revaluation due in April 2023.	Update all property valuations and ensure that all stakeholders have the information they require at the appropriate time: Ratepayers; NCC; VOA. Provide regular updates and impact assessments on the proposed revaluation as information becomes available from October 2022 onwards.	Not Applicable	1 st October 2022	31 st March 2023	C	The revaluation exercise of updating all property records to reflect the new rateable values has been completed and rate payers notified of their new rateable values, bills were issued in March 2023 with any applicable transitional relief awarded.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure / Description	Reporting Frequency (Quarterly / Half-yearly / Annual)	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2022/23	Commentary
(New) Grant claims Percentage of grant claims submitted in line with awarding body deadlines.	Quarterly	No Data	No Data	77%	95%	The percentage shown reflects the total performance for both Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 in 2022/23. Across the period, a total of 114 grant claims were submitted, with 88 of those being submitted on time. Of those that were submitted late, in a number of cases the delay would have been only a small number of days and, in some of those, there may have been agreement with the funding body for a claim to be submitted late. Delays are often caused by delays in receiving information from either the funding body or service contacts. Going forward, relevant parties will be reminded of the need to provide information in a timely fashion and additional planning work will be undertaken to ensure that preparatory work is completed in advance of deadlines.
(New) Budget monitoring - Budget Manager submissions Percentage of monthly forecasts submitted by budget managers.	Monthly	No Data	No Data	67.3%	80%	The percentage shown reflects the cumulative performance throughout the 2022/23 financial year, across the whole Council. The performance is inconsistent across service areas, with a number of services exceeding the target and others performing significantly under the target.

Performance Measure / Description	Reporting Frequency (Quarterly / Half-yearly / Annual)	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2022/23	Commentary
(New) Budget monitoring - Budget Manager submissions Percentage of monthly forecasts submitted by budget managers.	Monthly	No Data	No Data	67.3%	80%	Going forward, especially in light of revised budget monitoring arrangements for 2023/24, Finance Business Partners will work closely with budget managers (providing training where required) with the aim of increasing compliance. Heads of Service will also need to ensure that their budget managers prioritise the submission of forecasts on a monthly basis.
Increased Council Tax paid by Direct Debit.	Annual	62.4%	65.35%	66.7%	67%	The number of direct debit payers has increased overall, with a large increase early in the year to coincide with the cost-of-living payment scheme. However, as the year has progressed a larger than expected number have subsequently cancelled their direct debits possibly due to the cost of living crisis.
Percentage of Internal Audit Plan completed	Quarterly	78%	71%	77%	80%	Although the target for completion of the IA plan was 80%, 77% of the plan was achieved, which given the reduced resources within the team for the year is a really good outcome. There was sufficient and appropriate audit coverage across most service areas to give assurance on the adequacy of the internal control environment, governance arrangements and risk management processes in place. The number of audit opinions issued within the audit reports delivered is sufficient to enable the Chief Internal Auditor to give an appropriate overall audit opinion in their annual report.

Performance Measure / Description	Reporting Frequency (Quarterly / Half-yearly / Annual)	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2022/23	Commentary
Percentage of Internal Audit Plan completed	Quarterly	78%	71%	77%	80%	Resources were reduced due to vacancies within the team which in part were covered internally and also by an external company but unfortunately, only limited additional resources could be provided.
Percentage Council Tax Collection	Monthly	95.4%	96.1%	96.1%	96%	Not Applicable
Percentage Non-Domestic Rates Collected.	Monthly	94.4%	96.3%	97.8%	96.5%	Not Applicable
Percentage total Council Tax Collected as a percentage of annual budgeted amount.	Monthly	101%	100.53%	100.3%	100%	Not Applicable
Percentage of Council Tax arrears collected	Monthly	25.4%	32.71%	30%	30%	Not Applicable
Percentage of NDDR arrears collected	Annual	22.8%	42.51%	50%	40%	Not Applicable
Number of days to issue a draft report	Quarterly	8 days	5 days	5 days	10 days	Not Applicable
Number of days to issue a final report	Quarterly	3 days	3 days	2 days	5 days	Not Applicable
Percentage agreed management actions-implemented within 6 months of receipt of final Internal Audit Report.	Quarterly	71%	80%	91%	90%	Not Applicable
Percentage Payment of Invoices within timescales	Monthly	91.9%	92.61%	90%	90%	Not Applicable
Percentage of customer transaction requests carried out Face to Face	Monthly	29%	0.86% (1,459)	0.6%	30% or less	Not Applicable
Customer Contact Centre average wait time-Council Tax enquiries	Monthly	14 minutes 29 seconds	22 minutes 59 seconds	20 mins 23 secs	25 minutes	Not Applicable
Customer transaction requests made online using MCS	Monthly	Not available	76.5% (320,133)	78.4%	70% or more	Not Applicable
Customer Contact Centre average wait time-main enquiry line.	Monthly	4 minutes 56 seconds	8 minutes 1 second	4 mins 29 secs	5 minutes or less	Not Applicable
Customer Contact Centre average wait time-Welsh enquiry line	Monthly	2 minutes 26 seconds	3 minutes 44 seconds	2 mins 17 secs	5 minutes or less	Not Applicable

Performance Measure / Description	Reporting Frequency (Quarterly / Half-yearly / Annual)	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2022/23	Commentary
(New) Average time of processing new housing benefit claims	Monthly	34 days	33.19 days	25.7 days	32 days	The team have been focussed on reducing the time to process housing benefit claims and a number of initiatives have enabled the target to be exceeded.
(New) Average time of processing change events.	Monthly	9.32 days	7.9 days	6.3 days	14 days	The use of some automation in the processing of changes in circumstance for benefit customers as well as removal of some of the covid support schemes has enabled the target to be exceeded.
(New) The amount of housing benefit overpayments recovered during the quarter as a percentage of the total amount of housing benefit overpayments identified during the quarter	Quarterly	102.02%	105.4%	115.1%	Min 103%	The team's proactive collection strategy has enabled the target to be exceeded.
(New) The amount of housing benefit overpayments written off during the quarter as a percentage of the total amount of housing benefit overpayments outstanding	Quarterly	0.01%	3.84%	0.49%	2%	Due to the improved collection of housing benefit overpayments a lower than anticipated write of percentage was achieved.
(New) Budget monitoring – Forecast accuracy Percentage variance between January forecast and final outturn	Annual	No Data	No Data	0.1%	0.5%	Not Applicable
(New) Financial Training Satisfaction or better ratings from individuals participating in training provided by Finance service	Quarterly	No Data	No Data	100%	80%	Not Applicable

Glossary

Service Area Project / Action Assessment

RAG Status	Description
X%	Project / Action is not on track to deliver with major issues preventing the action being completed by the agreed ' <i>Target Date</i> '. Immediate management interventions is required to improve performance and escalation to Directorate Management Team and/or relevant Board.
x%	Project / Action is mainly on track with some minor issues which could prevent the Project / Action being completed by the agreed ' <i>Target Date</i> '. Management intervention(s) required to improve performance and close monitoring by the Head of Service / Service Management Team.
X%	Project / Action is on track to be completed by the Agreed ' <i>Target Date</i> '.
C	Project / Action has been successfully delivered

Performance Measure Monitoring / Tolerance Assessment

Newport City Council has agreed a 15% tolerance against targets set in service plans.

RAG Status	Description
=>15%	Performance is under achieving against Target or previous year's performance. Immediate management intervention and escalation to Directorate Management Board is required.
<15%	Performance is off target or Previous Year's Performance but within a variance of 15%. Management intervention and close monitoring by the Head of Service / Service Management Team is required.
	Performance is achieving / succeeding against its agreed Target or Previous Year's Performance. Commentary may be provided by service area to support the performance update.

Risk Assessment Matrix

Probability	5	5 - Moderate	10 - Major	15 - Severe	20 - Severe	25 - Severe
	4	4 - Moderate	8 - Moderate	12 - Major	16 - Severe	20 - Severe
	3	3 - Low	6 - Moderate	9 - Major	12 - Major	15 - Severe
	2	2 - Low	4 - Moderate	6 - Moderate	8 - Moderate	10 - Major
	1	1 - Very Low	2 - Low	3 - Low	4 - Moderate	5 - Moderate
		1	2	3	4	5
		Impact				

Abbreviations

Abbreviation		Description
CMT	Corporate Management Team	
DMT	Directorate Management Team	
MCS	My council Services	