



**Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council**

***CORPORATE SERVICES  
Policy and Community Planning***

***BUSINESS PLAN  
2024/25***

## **SECTION 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT**

### **1.1 FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT**

#### **Corporate Policy**

- Assist with the development and review of the Council's Council Strategy
- Development and review of the Council Constitution
- Development of policy initiatives and provide assistance and support to the policy making processes of Council.
- s of Council.

#### **Community Planning**

- Evidence gathering and analysis of data for an evidence informed Community Plan
- Facilitate capacity building and culture change re community planning
- Initiate consultation, engagement and communication initiatives with stakeholders
- Develop appropriate delivery mechanisms to achieve the outcomes identified within the Community Plan.
- Develop and establish performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the community plan/delivery plan.

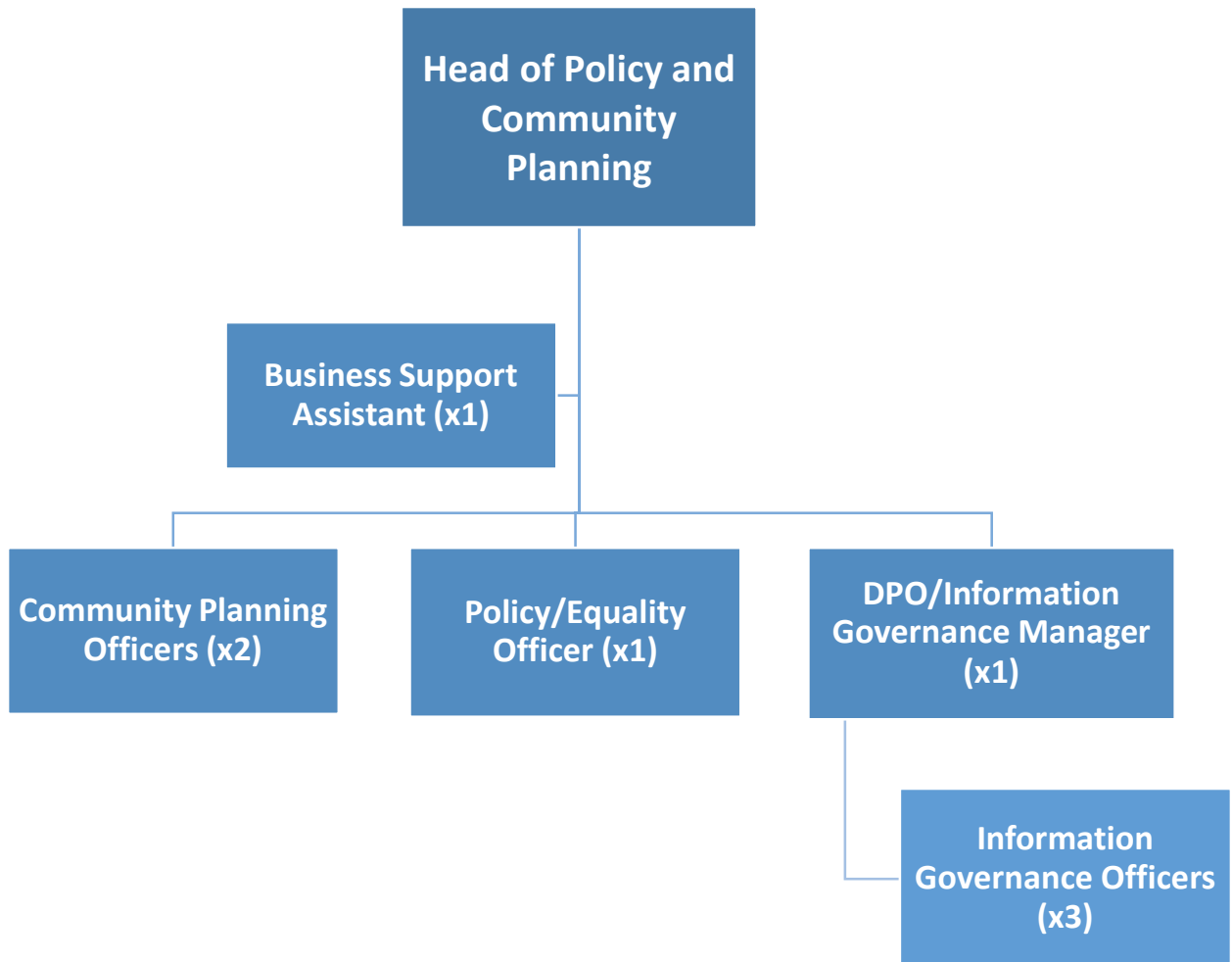
#### **Information Governance**

- Co-ordinate Council compliance with access to information legislation such as Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act and Environmental Information Regulations.
- Development of a corporate records management strategy and framework with associated policies, procedures and systems.
- Development and implementation of a Disposal and Retention Schedule for Council

#### **Equality and Diversity**

- Develop and implement strategies, policies and initiatives to promote equality of opportunity and appreciation of diversity within Council.
- Ensure Council meets its legal obligations in relation to equality and diversity.
- Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the disability duties.

## 1.2 DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING STRUCTURE



### 1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The strategic objectives of the Service area are to:

- Ensure that the Council delivers its services in accordance with its legal obligations and best practice relating to equality and diversity and develops/implements strategies, policies and initiatives which promote equality and diversity within the Council.
- Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourages participation by disabled people in public life.
- Support the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan which includes evidence gathering, community engagement activities, performance management and putting in place governance and reporting mechanisms.
- Develop and implement an information management strategy and framework for the Council which co-ordinates Council compliance with a range of access to information legislation.
- Develop and implement a records management strategy and framework for the Council with associated policies, procedures and systems, ensuring that it supports the priorities and statutory obligations of the Council.
- Support the development of relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems to support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council.

#### **COUNCIL STRATEGY:**

Aligned with the following Council Strategic Aims and Objectives:

- Cohesive Leadership
- Local Economy
- Improvement and Innovation
- Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities
- Climate Change and Our Environment.

#### **LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT:**

The functions of the service are shaped primarily by a range of legislative obligations such as the Local Government Act 2014, S75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the

Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

#### **RESOURCE CONTEXT:**

The functions of the service are facilitated by a small team of 7 people and the budget for the service for the 2023/24 financial year is £438,622. Staff salaries make up the bulk of the Department's budget.

#### **INTERNAL CONTEXT:**

The policy, equality and information governance functions of the service are primarily corporate in nature and require the co-operation and input of officers across the Council, for example in relation to dealing with requests for access to information, screening of policies, etc.

#### **EXTERNAL CONTEXT:**

The Community Planning function is externally influenced by legislation and by statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities. It also requires input from, and external reporting to, statutory partners, the community and voluntary sector and the general public.

The Equality Commission plays a major role in oversight and compliance as well as offering advice and guidance on the application of Section 75 Equality and Good Relations legal obligations by Council, as well as a range of other legislation relating to equality and diversity issues such as disability, race, gender, etc.,

The Information Commissioners' Officer undertakes an oversight role and compliance role in relation to how Council has dealt with requests for access to information, data protection and other information related legislation. The Information Commissioners' Office also provides guidance in relation to a range of information related legislation.

### **1.4. SWOT ANALYSIS AND PESTLE ANALYSIS**

A SWOT Analysis and a PESTLE Analysis were undertaken in relation to the Policy and Community Planning Department to help identify issues which could potentially impact on the business planning process:

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable and skilled team of staff able to use their own initiative to take forward projects.</li> <li>• Established systems and processes in place which underpin and support the functions of the service area.</li> <li>• Positive relationships established with a range of internal and external stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small team of staff and resource light.</li> <li>• Unforeseen or long-term absence can have a detrimental impact on the work of the service area due to lack of cover.</li> <li>• Lack of co-operation internally and externally can impede progress of actions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to access best practice ideas from other Councils.</li> <li>• Can provide positive PR opportunities for Council.</li> <li>• Can help develop a robust and effective Council Strategy.</li> <li>• Can help deliver positive change for people in Causeway Coast and Glens area through community planning activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing use of legal actions taken against Council which impact on the service area, eg compliance issues.</li> <li>• Impact on resources available through the budgeting and rates setting process within Council.</li> </ul>

<p><b>POLITICAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme for Government yet to be developed – could possibly have implications for the Community Planning process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ECONOMIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of cost of living on community planning activities.</li> <li>• Challenges to financial resources both internal and external.</li> <li>• Setting of central government budgets could potentially have an impact on the ability to progress community planning initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOCIO-CULTURAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased lobbying by special interest groups which impact particularly on the equality agenda.</li> <li>• An ageing population in CC&amp;G which will impact on community planning and equality activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TECHNOLOGICAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New technological developments which can help provide better customer accessibility to Council services, for example the introduction of SignVideo.</li> </ul>

<p><b>LEGAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection issues increasingly arising, particularly data breaches.</li> <li>• Increasingly complex requests on a range of access to information issues.</li> <li>• Complex guidance from ICO on information access issues and the need for legal guidance.</li> <li>• Increased likelihood of legal challenge to various decisions of Council.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater emphasis on climate change and environmental issues and indicators which will impact on community planning activities and initiatives.</li> <li>• Use of Rural Needs Assessments in policy development work within Council.</li> </ul>
--	---

### 1.5. PRE-REQUISITES AND EXTERNAL DEPENDENCIES

The following outlines the pre-requisites and external dependencies which could potentially impact or influence this Business Plan (predicated on certain things being in place):

- The Equality Forum is maintained and meeting quarterly.
- The S75 consultee database is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- ICT systems will support any new technology introduced, such as SignVideo.
- The Community Planning Partnership continues to work together effectively.
- A revised/updated Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan are agreed and in place.
- An Information Security and Management Working Group is in place and meeting regularly.
- Sufficient resources (people and financial) are made available to the Department to enable it to function effectively.

### 1.6. ASSUMPTIONS

- Sufficient resources will be available to enable the Department to function effectively.
- The Community Planning baseline data can be reviewed and updated as required.
- A process for the management of requests for access to information is in place and adequately resourced.
- Processes for S75 screening, Rural Needs Assessments and Data Protection Assessments are in place and such screening is actively taking place within Council.

## **SECTION 2: POLICY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING BUSINESS PLAN**

### **2.1 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES**

- Support the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan which includes evidence gathering, community engagement activities, performance management and putting in place governance and reporting mechanisms.
- Support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council by developing and maintaining relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems.



<b>Directorate</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Service Area</b>	Policy and Community Planning
<b>Reporting Year</b>	2024/25

<b>Business Plan Objective 1: Community Planning</b>
<b>Support the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan which includes evidence gathering, community engagement activities, performance management and putting in place governance and reporting mechanisms.</b>
<b>Lead Officer(s):</b>
Elizabeth Beattie (Head of Policy & Community Planning) Bebhinn McKinley (Community Planning Officer) Gary Mullan (Community Planning Officer)
<b>Link to Corporate Strategy:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohesive Leadership</li> <li>• Local Economy</li> <li>• Improvement and Innovation</li> <li>• Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities</li> <li>Climate Change and Our Environment</li> </ul>
<b>Link to Community Plan:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Thriving Economy</li> <li>• A Healthy Safe Community</li> <li>A Sustainable Accessible Environment</li> </ul>

<b>Link to Performance Improvement Plan:</b>
<b>Not applicable</b>

<b>Work Stream</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Financial Information/ Budget £</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Performance Indicator(s) APSE Benchmarking Indicators</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
<b>Community Planning</b>	Management and facilitation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Planning Strategic Partnership	<b>£2000.00</b>	April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of Partnership Meetings</li> <li>No of Action Steering Group Meetings</li> <li>Attendance Improvement (Increase by 10%)</li> </ul>		
	Provision of training and development opportunities for Community Planning Action Leads and Community Planning partners for progression of performance monitoring and reporting in relation to Community Planning Delivery Plan Actions for CC&G.	<b>£3000.00</b>	April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Conference event to be delivered early 2024.</li> <li>Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%)</li> <li>Community Planning Partners / Thematic and Action Leads participate in OBA Performance Monitoring</li> </ul>		
	Collaborative training, awareness raising sessions and events across the themes of the CC&G Community Plan. Promotion of inter-professional interactions	<b>£2000.00</b>	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%)</li> <li>Community Planning Partners / Thematic and Action Leads</li> </ul>		

	across the themes of community, health, the environment, tourism, and the economy.			participate in OBA Performance Monitoring		
	Participative and innovative community engagement and consultative activities in support of Community Planning in CC&G	<b>£2000.00</b>	April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%)</li> <li>• Participative support with Dementia Suffers Partners through Age Concern &amp; Public Health Authority (PHA)</li> <li>• Number of Community Planning collaborative events / training taking place local</li> <li>• Inter-professional participation and engagement at Community Planning events</li> </ul>		
	To further develop engagement opportunities with young people of CC&G through a 'Youth Voice' initiative.	<b>£2000.00</b>	April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number / range of engagement activities undertaken</li> <li>• Evaluation of effectiveness of engagement activities.</li> </ul>		

**Risk Management**

**Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**

**Risk 1 - Nonparticipation by supporting partners in Community Planning process.**

Mitigation

**Advanced schedule of Statutory Partnership meetings**

**Enhance and sustain relationships with Statutory Partners**

**Risk 2 - Budget Cuts**

Mitigation

**Partnership support with greater collaboration**

**Business Plan Objective 2: Policy Development**

**Support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council by developing and maintaining relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems.**

**Lead Officer(s):**

**Head of Policy and Community Planning  
Policy/Equality Officer**

**Link to Council Strategy:**

- **Cohesive Leadership**
- **Improvement and Innovation**

**Link to Community Plan:**

- **A Thriving Economy**
- **A Healthy Safe Community**
- **A Sustainable Accessible Environment**

**Link to Performance Improvement Plan:**

**Not applicable**

Work Stream	Actions	Financial Information/ Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s)  APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Progress	RAG Status
Policy Development	Assist with the development of a new Council Corporate Strategy.	£5,000	March 2025	New Corporate Strategy in place for 1 April 2025		
	Review and amend Council Constitution on an annual basis (or as required).	0	April 2024 to March 2025			
	Review the log of Council policies and develop a resource to provide easy access to policies for staff.	0	December 2024			
<b>Risk Management</b>						
<b>Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:</b>						
None identified.						

<b>Business Plan Objective 3: Equality and Diversity</b>
<b>Ensure that the Council addresses equality and diversity issues in accordance with its legal obligations and best practice and develops/implements strategies, policies and initiatives which promote equality and diversity within the Council.</b>
<b>Lead Officer(s):</b>
<b>Head of Policy and Community Planning Policy/Equality Officer</b>
<b>Link to Corporate Strategy:</b>

- Improvement and Innovation
- Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities

**Link to Community Plan:**

- A Thriving Economy
- A Healthy Safe Community
- A Sustainable Accessible Environment

**Link to Performance Improvement Plan:**

Not applicable

Work Stream	Actions	Financial Information/ Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) <b>APSE Benchmarking Indicators</b>	Progress	RAG Status
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Work with the proposed EDI working group to identify key improvement actions to support building accessibility.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of Council owned buildings that are accessible to people with a disability.</li> </ul>		
	Develop a programme of actions to address known inequalities.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve the AutismNI Impact Award in RVLC and CLC.</li> <li>• Trial the introduction of communication boards in Council.</li> <li>• Introduce Makaton Flash Cards in Civic Centre Reception areas</li> </ul>		

				and Leisure Centre Reception areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of JAM Card training to Leisure Centre Reception areas.</li> </ul>		
	Develop and implement a range of communication, information and engagement activities designed to positively improve levels of interaction on equality and diversity issues.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop 10 new easy read documents across Council.</li> <li>• Increase the accessibility of GDPR documentation.</li> <li>• Facilitate officers to engage with the equality forum on 4 Council projects/policies.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	Improve consultation practices within Council		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft a consultation policy for all forms of consultation.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with disability partners to have 3 Easy Read documents peer reviewed.</li> </ul>		

**Risk Management**  
**Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**  
There is a risk that the budget required for improvements exceeds current agreement by Director of Corporate Services, mitigate by ranking and scheduling key actions. Reliance on other departments may mean actions slip into the following year, mitigate by asking Heads of service to feedback on Equality Action Plan Actions on a quarterly basis.

## **Business Plan Objective 4: Disability Duties**

**Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourages participation by disabled people in public life.**

### **Lead Officer(s):**

**Head of Policy and Community Planning  
Policy/Equality Officer**

### **Link to Corporate Strategy:**

- **Improvement and Innovation**
- **Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities**

### **Link to Community Plan:**

- **A Thriving Economy**
- **A Healthy Safe Community**
- **A Sustainable Accessible Environment**

### **Link to Performance Improvement Plan:**

**Not applicable**



Work Stream	Actions	Financial Information/ Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s)  APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Progress	RAG Status
Disability Duties	Review the Council's Disability Action Plan in line with identified inequalities.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft and consult on a new Disability Action Plan for Council.</li> </ul>		
	Develop and implement measures to improve access to Council services by people with a disability.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft and design a pilot for an improved assistance scheme for individuals at Recycling Centres.</li> <li>Develop a reasonable adjustment in service provision protocol for managers.</li> <li>Review feedback from the citizens survey 2024 to identify new inequalities.</li> <li>Expand Changing places provision at Rathlin Island.</li> <li>Continued provision of Makaton sign education to staff and Elected members via inclusion in the staff news.</li> <li>Reinvigorate Equality Screening within Council through reminders and support.</li> <li>Autism Friendly visitor guides provided for 4 main Leisure centres.</li> </ul>		

	Develop and implement initiatives to promote awareness of and positive attitudes to people with a disability.		April 2024 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve the Diversity Champion in 3 awareness raising campaigns.</li> <li>• Provision of 5 awareness raising articles on lived experience or understanding disabilities.</li> <li>• All staff re-trained on equality and diversity issues in 2024 / 2025</li> </ul>		
--	---	--	--------------------------	--	--	--

**Risk Management  
Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**

None identified.

**Business Plan Objective 4: Information Governance**

**Develop and implement an information management strategy and framework for the Council (including an effective data protection regime and records management strategy and framework).**

**Lead Officer(s):**

**Head of Policy and Community Planning  
Information Governance Manager/Data Protection Officer**

**Link to Corporate Strategy:**

- **Improvement and Innovation**

<b>Link to Community Plan:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A Thriving Economy</b></li> <li>• <b>A Healthy Safe Community</b></li> <li>• <b>A Sustainable Accessible Environment</b></li> </ul>
<b>Link to Performance Improvement Plan:</b>
Not applicable

Work Stream	Actions	Financial Information/ Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) <b>APSE Benchmarking Indicators</b>	Progress	RAG Status
<b>Information Governance Policies and Guidance</b>	Review, streamline and update Council's information governance policies and procedures taking into account ICO issued guidance and relevant case law.		April 2024 to March 2025	Number of logged requests responded to within 20 working days to increase from 85% to 90%		
	Consolidate the information held within Information Governance's repository. Review and update the Staff Portal as regards information law policies.					
	Develop a guidance bank for all staff in relation to the requirements of information legislation.					
	Undertake a review of the Council's Publication Scheme.					
<b>Information Governance Training</b>	Work with OD/HR to ensure the annual training plan includes information governance training	Training budget held by OD/HR				

	appropriate to different levels of staff within Council (to include induction training and annual refresher training for senior managers).					
<b>Records Management</b>	Work with OD/HR to ensure training on records management is included in the annual training plan for different levels of staff (to include induction training).	Training budget held by OD/HR				
	Support the on-going work of the Information Security Management Group (ISMG).					
	Establish a process for monitoring adherence to records management guidance.					
	Review the Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule and work with Departments to ensure regular implementation of the Schedule.					
<b>Data Protection</b>	Review, streamline and update Council's data protection policies and procedures taking into account ICO issued guidance and relevant case law.					
	Work with other Departments to review operational issues and policies relating to CCTV and other mobile cameras.					
	Conduct a review of privacy notices across the Council.					
	Review data breach training and notification/logging system.					

**Risk Management**  
**Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**

**None identified.**