Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Title of Report:	**Corporate Services Business Plans - Six Month Review**
Committee Report Submitted To:	**Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**24 November 2026**
For Decision or For Information	**For Information**
To be discussed In Committee	**No**

Linkage to Council Strategy (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Outcome	Services that consistently meet or exceed standards achieved by the best performing Councils
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	N/A

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	As per Business Plan
Included in Current Year Estimates	**YES**
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	Within the report

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	No
Legal Opinion Obtained	No

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date: N/A
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the Six Month Review of the 2026/2027 Corporate Services Business Plans for information.

2.0 Introduction

Council approved the Corporate Services Business Plans in April 2026. Progress on achieving the objectives can be viewed in each of the service area reports below. The Business Plans represented a continuation of work from the 2025/26 period, as well as new targets for 2026/27 for each of the service areas:

- ODHR (Appendix 1)
- Policy and Community Planning (Appendix 2)
- Land & Property and Strategic Asset Management (Appendix 3)
- Democratic and Central Services (Appendix 4)
- ICT (Appendix 5)
- Performance (Appendix 6)
- Legal (Appendix 7)

The Plans for each of the service areas were developed based upon:

- The emerging actions from the Community Planning Process
- The Council Plan
- Endorsed service area strategies
- Relevant Central government strategies and polices
- Council decisions and direction from the 2025/26 period

3.0 The Purpose of the Plans

The purpose of the annual Business Plans is to:

- Give a clear sense of what the service is for and the challenges it faces
- Show how it is supporting Council's priorities
- Show how it is contributing to the efficiency drive and transformation of service delivery
- Show how it is aligning its resources to meet the challenges ahead
- Help us to hold ourselves to account and ensure we deliver for Council and its residents
- Bring key information together in one place about the service, which Members, staff and stakeholders can understand

4.0 Recommendation

The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee is asked to note the Corporate Services Business Plans - Six Month Review for the 2026/27 period.

Business Plan Objective 1
1. Openness and Transparency Focuses on creating a culture where information flows freely, fostering trust, collaboration, and informed decision-making. It aims to improve internal communications, engage staff at all levels, and enhance leadership visibility. Success is measured by staff feeling valued, empowered, and connected to the Council's mission.
Lead Officer(s):
Head of ODHR

Link to Corporate Strategy:
Empowering and Supporting our People and Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Link to Community Plan:
A thriving economy, A sustainable accessible environment & A healthy safe community
Link to Performance Improvement Plan:

Work Stream	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Q1 2026/27 Update	Q2 2026/27 Update
1a	**Induction Programme** In-person staff induction to be held each quarter and led by a member of the Senior Management Team to support the online induction process. The staff induction will include: • Emphasis to be placed on a One Council approach. • Zero-tolerance and behavioural standards need to be reinforced. • Mentoring to be provided for new staff and link with a buddy.	1 January 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 1.1.4 • Quarterly in-person induction in place by 1 January 2027	• Proposed induction format and schedule identified; awaiting departmental information to send a proposal to SMT for review and feedback	• Induction format approved by SMT. Plans underway to schedule for 1 January 2027 onwards. • New starter list being prepared for SMT monthly going forward.

	• Rotate new staff around work locations for familiarisation with the rest of the team. Subject to obtaining permission from each individual, provide information and a photo of new starters within each team and corporately circulate a new starters list.				
1b	**Communications Strategy** • Work with the Corporate Communications Team to strengthen internal communications • Provide advice and support to the Democratic and Central Services Manager to ensure adequate resources are in place to lead and implement the updated Communication Strategy	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 1.1 and 1.1.8 • Agree with Corporate Communications Team how to improve internal communications • Recruitment for 3 x Corporate Communications staff to be completed by 31 December 2026	• Team structure agreed. • One officer assigned to 1 x Corporate Comms role. • R&S in progress with interviews completed by 30.09.26	• Recruitment complete for 2 officers, start date of 01 November 2026. • Meeting arranged with PR/Comms to streamline staff comms.
1c	**Management of Change Framework** • Create a Management of Change Framework to be followed when change is being considered. To include a suite of templates that consider: 1. The reasons for the required change; 2. Business case (including PESTLE & SWOT analysis, costed options and the preferred option); 3. A project plan; 4. A communication plan;	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 1.4 • Work with the Performance and Transformation Officer to develop the HR templates to create the Management of Change Framework by 31 December 2026	• Initial research in progress	• Draft in progress – anticipated for SMT review end November

	5. The risks to be managed and the barriers to be overcome; 6. How early and continued staff involvement is to be undertaken, including reaching remote staff, Trade Unions, and Elected Members; 7. A description of the proposed change process; 8. To identify what corporate working will be required and who needs to be involved; 9. The Public Relations plan; 10. TUPE implications; 11. Human, physical and financial resource arrangements including accommodation; 12. Links to Climate Change Strategy; 13. Health, Safety and Wellbeing considerations.				
1d	**Annual Staff Survey** Undertake an annual staff survey, review and revise existing plans where appropriate, and/or connect these directly to future years' People Strategy initiatives.	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 1.7 • Undertake survey by 31 December 2026 • Report produced for SMT consideration by 31 March 2027	• Survey and comms ready to publish – live date 01.10.2026	• Survey completed 01.10-31.10.2026. • Good response rate 36% of all staff, approx. 11% increase on 2024 survey. • Analysis to be presented to SMT in November 2026.

Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**		
Risk – delays due to capacity within the ODHR Team and other teams on which delivery of some actions depends. Mitigation – ODHR resources are being reviewed to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to support delivery of the actions.		

Business Plan Objective 2:
2. Wellbeing and Belonging Supporting staff wellbeing and fostering a sense of belonging are critical to the Council's success. The strategy adopts the "5 Pillars of staff wellbeing" from the Great Place to Work Framework, which include mental, physical and financial health, work-life balance, job design and fulfilment, relationships, and psychological safety. Initiatives under this theme include health and safety improvements, stress management projects, and enhanced support for remote staff.
Lead Officer(s):
Head of ODHR

Link to Corporate Strategy:
Empowering and Supporting our People and Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Link to Community Plan:
A thriving economy, A sustainable accessible environment & A healthy safe community
Link to Performance Improvement Plan:

Work Stream	**Actions**	**Timescale**	**Performance Indicator(s)** **APSE Benchmarking Indicators**	**Q1 2026/27 Update**	**Q2 2026/27 Update**
2a	**Corporate Health and Wellbeing** Report to Council to consider recruiting a Corporate Health and Wellbeing Lead Officer to coordinate:	30 June 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 2.2 • Confirm where officer, if approved, will sit in	• Officer confirmed to sit in Corporate Health and Safety section	No further action

	• The deployment of health screening services to ensure they are available to all having regard to job type, work location and accessibility; • Access to all for wellbeing provision that has consideration for job type, work location and accessibility; • An improved familiarity with the Westfield Health Package ensuring accessibility for remote staff; • Develop a programme of activities and events, e.g. wellbeing, exercise, learning and competitions.		organisation structure by 30 June 2026 • Report to Council by 30 June 2026	• JD, PS drafted by ODHR and with Head of Performance for consideration.	
2b	**Mental Health Champions** • Arrange a meeting with employees who have completed Mental Health First Aid training to establish a staff network of Mental Health Champions across the Council. • Use the Mental Health Champions as a consultee group when developing relevant policies and processes. • Develop a calendar of events to recognise and promote key wellbeing dates throughout the year.	31 July 2026 31 August 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 2.2 • Mental Health Champions network established by 31 July 2026; report to SMT on proposed wellbeing events and activities by 31 August 2026.	• All MHFA contacted and expression of interest available to all staff • Initial MH Network meeting scheduled for 15.09.26	• Second meeting conducted with good cross departmental attendance and successful engagement. • Next steps agreed to review staff survey findings for wellbeing/mental health events, activities and training

					• Further meeting arranged following this – early 2027
2c	**Organisation Structure** • Continue to populate the organisation structure. • Prioritise the replacement of temporary staff by filling all permanent posts across the organisation. Where possible, and once this programme is complete, temporary staff should only be used to backfill critical or seasonal posts that cannot be filled through permanent contracts. • Agreement from the Senior Management Team will be required.	30 June 2026 31 July 2026 31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 2.3 • Report to SMT on remaining vacancies across the organisation, including options for a fast-track approach, by 30 June 2026. • Agree a prioritisation plan by 31 July 2026 • Implement the agreed approach by 31 March 2027.	• Report provided to SMT. Fast track approach agreed for ES and L&D roles. • HRBP's to meet with Directors/HoS to discuss priority posts for advancement to recruitment	• Report with Directors for recruitment prioritisation. • General Operative recruitment for 40+ staff conducted in September. • Pre-employment checks underway with start dates anticipated for 02 November 2026 and 01 December 2026. • Sport and Well being progressing with campaign to cover multiple sites and vacancies. • Campaign for 11 caretakers in SWB in progress. • Campaign for 3 x mechanics in progress. • Posts anticipated remaining

					following current recruitment 17.79fte

Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**
Risk – the resource may not be approved, resulting in reliance on current officers to deliver health and wellbeing actions, which could cause delays or incomplete delivery. In relation to the organisation structure, agreement from SMT and Heads of Service will be required. Mitigation – prepare a detailed report to Council on the benefits of a Health and Wellbeing Lead Officer, and secure SMT and management support for a fast-track approach to high-volume recruitment.

Business Plan Objective 3:
3. Trustworthy Leadership The Council aims to develop leadership that embodies integrity, honesty, transparency, competence, empathy, and accountability. Leaders' roles are clarified including expecting them to foster a psychologically safe environment, support staff development, and be proactive in managing change. Leadership development programmes, including a leadership academy and future leaders programme, are key components of this theme.
Lead Officer(s):
Head of ODHR

Link to Corporate Strategy:
Empowering and Supporting our People & Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Link to Community Plan:
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Link to Performance Improvement Plan:

Work Stream	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Q1 2026/27 Update	Q2 2026/27 Update
3a	**HR News** • Make more effective use of the Human Resources News bulletins to recognise and appropriately celebrate the contribution of all staff involved in a successful project, service award, etc. • Ensure remote staff are fully informed and included.	30 September 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 3.1.2 • Decision from SMT on which achievements to celebrate, e.g. years of service and awards.	• Celebration of Learning Event being organised by ODHR in September 2026 • Reviewing available comms options for remote staff with ICT	• Celebration of Learning Event to be rescheduled. • Consider a wider event to recognise service among other things. • Wellbeing 'Step Challenge' event complete • Inclusions in HR News for licence, apprentices, placements and assistance to study achievements
3b	**Online Organisation Structure** • Develop online Organisation Structure with pictures in conjunction with ICT	30 September 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 3.4 • HR to work with ICT to develop online organisation charts	• Discussed with ICT to progress	• Outlook has organisation structure in place which has pictures of staff, where authorisation has been granted. Currently live.

					Consider staff comms regarding this. • ICT working on a solution within the Staff Portal also. • Expect to be live for 01 December 2026.

Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**
Risk – rely on other officers/departments to deliver on these actions Mitigation – engagement with staff to deliver a more effective HR News, engage with ICT for delivery of the photographic organisation structure

Business Plan Objective 4:
4. Developing Our Talent and Workforce This theme emphasises attracting and retaining diverse talent, providing learning and development opportunities, and creating clear career pathways. Development to the "Connect, Contribute and Grow" Performance Review Framework supports continuous improvement and professional growth. Workforce planning, succession planning, and talent management initiatives ensure the Council's workforce is adaptable and future ready.
Lead Officer(s):
Head of ODHR

Link to Corporate Strategy:
Empowering and Supporting our People & Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
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A thriving economy, A sustainable accessible environment & A healthy safe community
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Work Stream	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Q1 Update 2026/27	Q2 Update 2026/27
4a	**Annual Workforce Plans** • As part of the business planning cycle, develop a framework for annual workforce planning to understand current and future recruitment and succession planning needs, including identifying and addressing skills gaps, critical roles, and inform recruitment planning	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 4.3 • Framework developed by ODHR and Performance and Transformation Officer for business planning cycle 2027		• No progress as yet; will progress when Corporate Induction and Change Framework complete
4b	**Career Progression** • Continue to promote and communicate effectively growth opportunities such as, secondments to new work roles, acting up opportunities, filling short term vacancies etc. • Continue to create "job families" that inform a variety of career pathways and ensure career progression opportunities are available to all eligible staff, regardless of job type. • Continue to develop career paths including access to apprenticeships, secondments, and job shadowing opportunities to inform progression and promotion processes.	In place 31 March 2027 31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 4.4, 4.5 and 4.8.2 • Job families framework further developed by 31 March 2027; career pathways further developed by 31 March 2027 and development opportunities communicated to staff already in place.	• Development opportunities highlighted to staff via the Staff News, staff portal and internal email. Consideration being given to a staff app to allow staff without access to email the ability to view information instantly, in line with staff who have access to email/computer.	• Discussing staff app options with ICT. No decision made yet as to way forward. • Acting up Policy with Trade Unions for consideration. • Continuing to review with managers resource requirements and consider all options, i.e. apprenticeships, placements, etc.

4c	**Resourcing** • Ensure effective resources are in place to implement agreed delivery plans by supporting any organisation reviews.	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 4.6 • Work with relevant managers to recruit resources required, as identified.	• ODHR facilitating structure reviews in Funding Unit, Democratic Services, Health and Built Environment and ODHR itself. • ODHR have identified 220 permanent vacancies. Report presented to SMT for consideration and prioritisation of key roles for recruitment campaigns.	• Funding Unit now complete • Democratic Services, 1 x post in recruitment stage, 1 x further post for review and recruitment. • Continuing to work with Head of HBE, to progress structure population permanently. • ODHR underway. • Directors aware of the vacancies within their area.
4d	**Connect, Contribute and Grow Performance Review Framework - SkillGate Module** • Develop a SkillGate module for appraisee and appraiser training techniques to ensure all managers have the skills to undertake the Connect, Contribute and Grow Performance Review Framework.	30 September 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 4.8.1 • SkillGate module developed and available for appraiser and appraisee training by 30 September 2026.	• Draft being finalised and available for internal review initially	• Module in final draft – anticipated completion w/c 09.11.2026
4e	**Coaching & Mentoring** • Continue to offer mentoring to Senior Management Team and Heads of Service.	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 4.9 • Continue with Head of Service Programme	• HoS Coaching programme in place with 1 delegate	• Procurement complete for Tier 4 Programme.

	• Consider offering mentoring to Tier 4 and Tier 5 managers and supervisors.		• Review completed and SMT to consider next steps for Tier 4 and Tier 5 by 31 December 2026.	discontinuing programme • Tier 4 & 5 programme ready for procurement September	• Expressions of Interest included within November 2026 HR News. Placed limited and selection exercise may be required.
4f	**Development / Implementation of Learning and Development Plan** • Develop a Learning and Development Plan using the information gathered following the CCG Review process • Implementation of the Learning and Development Plan	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 1.3.3 • Learning and Development Plan to be produced by 31 March 2027, with implementation thereafter	• CCG L&D needs collated ongoing	• CCG L&D needs collated ongoing
4g	**Embedding the Use of the E-learning Platform (SkillGate)** • Operational use of module author tool • Increasing compliance to 70%	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Actions 4.8.4 and 4.8.5 • Increase compliance with mandatory courses to 70%	• Additional support provided to operational supervisors provided in August 2026. • 3 x author modules in progress • 68% compliance	• Support and reminders complete with operational supervisors • 3 x author modules in progress nearing completion • Working alongside LGTG for group wide modules – Safeguarding (complete pending final policy) & R&S Refresher • 73% compliance

4h	**Performance Review/Appraisal Process** • Support managers to complete the Connect Contribute Grow Review process • Record and monitor completion rates • Report completion rates to SMT after each review period • Report completion rates against the target of 50% in the Performance Improvement Plan	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Actions 1.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, and 1.3.3 • Consider alongside SMT a plan to encourage completion • Target completion rate of 50%	• Additional guidance and communication circulated for all staff through HR News, and direct circulation to Directors, Heads of Service and senior management. • Compliance Planning - 30.18%, HR 15%, Dem Services 30%	• Additional guidance and communication circulated for all staff through HR News • Compliance period to date: • HR 45%, Env Services 4%, Planning 9.4%

Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**
Risk – inconsistent staff and manager compliance, limited buy-in, and delays or incomplete delivery due to resourcing pressures. Mitigation – prepare a report to Council on HR resource requirements to support delivery.

Business Plan Objective 5:
5. Building the Basics The Council seeks to further develop efficient and effective human resources policies, data systems, and performance management processes. This includes harmonising legacy policies, implementing digital dashboards for workforce data, and ensuring compliance with legislation. The focus is on creating straightforward, equitable, and inclusive procedures that support organisational effectiveness.
Lead Officer(s):
Head of ODHR

Link to Corporate Strategy:
Empowering and Supporting our People & Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement

Link to Community Plan:
A thriving economy, A sustainable accessible environment & A healthy safe community
Link to Performance Improvement Plan:

Work Stream	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator(s) APSE Benchmarking Indicators	Quarter 1 2026/27	Quarter 2 2026/27
5a	**Policies and Procedures** • Continue to promote the rolling calendar of reminders and updates on policies and procedures ensuring visibility for all staff. • Draft and agree the following policies in conjunction with Trade Unions: o TOIL Policy o Acting Up / Honorarium Policy	1 April 2026 31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.4 • Reminders and updates on policies and procedures to be issued x 12 • Approval of 2 x policies and procedures	• TOIL meetings scheduled September • Acting Up pending SMT review	• Continuing to engage with management and Trade Unions regarding TOIL • Acting Up Policy with Trade Unions for consideration. • Learning and Development Policy agreed at October 2026 CPR and Full Council.
5b	**Conduct ODHR Resource Assessment** • Undertake an organisational analysis of the human, financial and physical resources available to the Head of Organisation Development and Human Resources to ensure they can	30 June 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.6 • Report to Council for consideration of staffing requirements by 30 June 2026	• Report approval at CP&R and Full Council. Implementation ongoing. • Recruitment of HR Projects Officer to	• Implementation ongoing. 1 x post closed and pending selection process.

	support the scale and range of changes required for organisational development		• Subject to approval, recruitment to commence thereafter	commence in September 2026.	• Further post to be advertised January 2027.
5c	**Terms and Conditions** • In consultation with Trade Unions complete the transition of staff from legacy to the new terms and conditions of service	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.8 • Review of outstanding issues by 31 October 2026 • Prioritise and plan activities by 31 December 2026	•	• Review NICS Planning staff and consider options to transfer to CCG terms and conditions.
5d	**Time Recording Compliance** • Quarterly compliance checks and reporting • Introduce and implement ticket system for time and recording queries to benchmark repetitive requests	31 July 2026 31 October 2026 31 January 2027 30 April 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.1 • 4 x compliance checks per year • Ticket system introduced by 31 October 2026	• Ticket system being implemented from October 2026.	• Ticket System delayed due to operational pressures, system will be implemented as soon as possible.
5e	**TOIL Management** • In line with agreed policy support management to streamline TOIL management processes across the organisation	31 March 2027	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.7 • Following implementation of agreed TOIL Policy HR to support management to record TOIL in a consistent manner		• Continuing to engage with management and Trade Unions regarding TOIL
5f	**Public Holiday Administration** • Guidance for staff and managers to record and manage records regarding staff working on a public holiday	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.7 • Guidance for staff and managers issued by 31 December 2026.	•	• Work in progress.
5g	**HARK** • Data migration from PAMS to HARK	31 December 2026	• Linked to People Strategy Action 5.3	• Work in progress for migration.	• Work in progress for migration.

	• Consider utilisation of technology to reduce administrative burden	31 March 2027	• Data migration by 31 December 2026 • Project team established to review HR processes and maximise use of the new system by 31 March 2027		

Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**
Risk – staff and manager compliance may be inconsistent, actions may be delayed or only partially completed due to resourcing pressures, and there may be delays arising from trade union consultation. Mitigation – prepare a report to Council on HR resource requirements and engage trade unions at an early stage on policies, procedures, and terms and conditions.

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

CORPORATE SERVICES
Policy and Community Planning

BUSINESS PLAN
2026/27

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.

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.

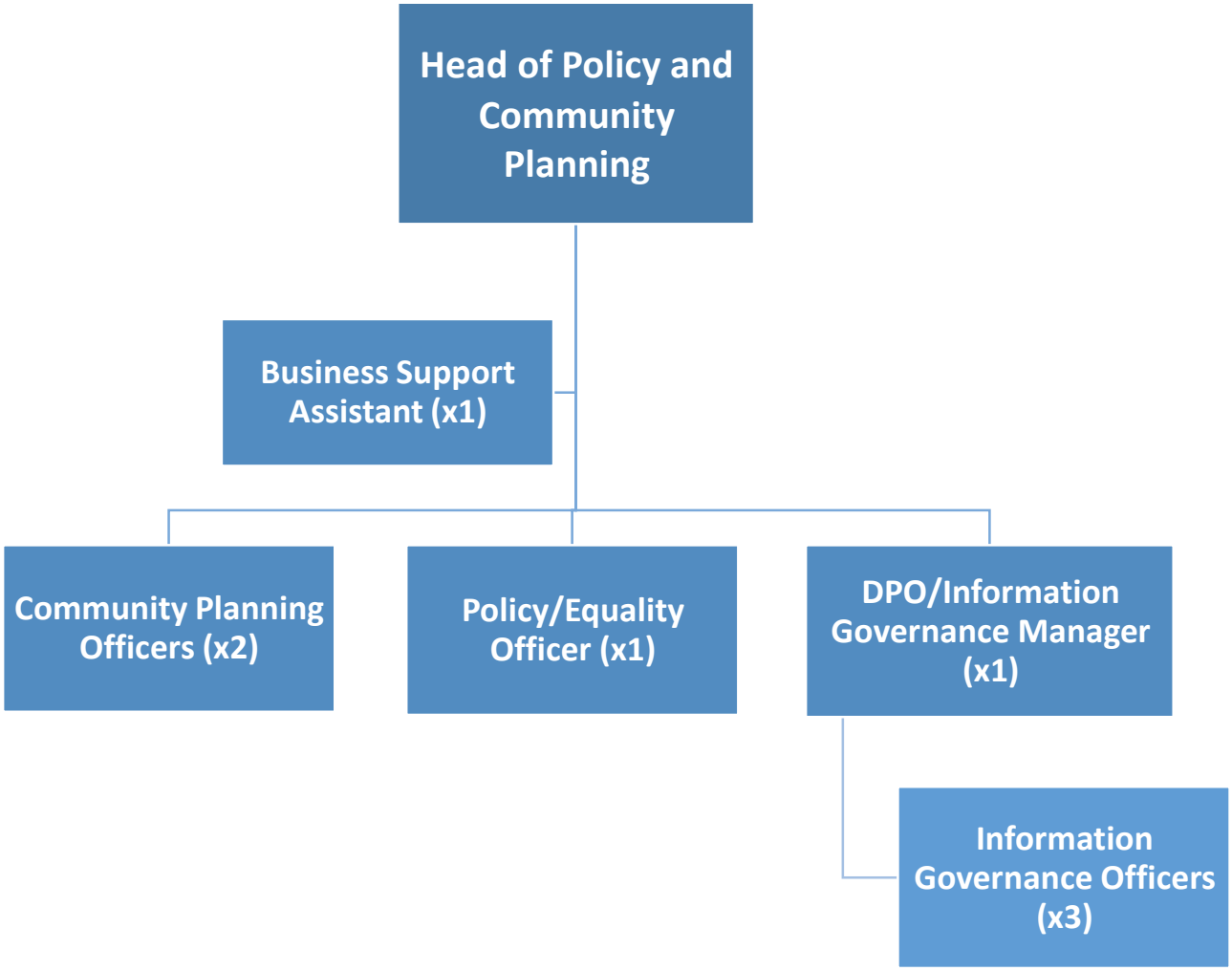
Information Governance

- 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 PLAN:

Aligned with the following Council Strategic priorities:

- Engaging and communicating with our customers
- Empowering and supporting our people
- Creating conditions to deliver opportunities for our Borough
- Sustainability and managing our natural and build environment
- Governance, quality and continuous improvement.

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 9 people and the budget for the service for the 2026/27 financial year is £551,014.44. 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:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• A knowledgeable and skilled team of staff able to use their own initiative to take forward projects. • Established systems and processes in place which underpin and support the functions of the service area. • Positive relationships established with a range of internal and external stakeholders.	• A small team of staff and resource light. • Unforeseen or long-term absence can have a detrimental impact on the work of the service area due to lack of cover. • Lack of co-operation internally and externally can impede progress of actions.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Able to access best practice ideas from other Councils. • Can provide positive PR opportunities for Council. • Can help develop a robust and effective Council Strategy. • Can help deliver positive change for people in Causeway Coast and Glens area through community planning activities.	• Increasing use of legal actions taken against Council which impact on the service area, eg compliance issues. • Impact on resources available through the budgeting and rates setting process within Council. • Use of AI generated requests for Information Requests, increasing in volume and complexity

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC
• Implementation of strategies by the NI Assembly/Government Departments could possibly have implications for the Community Planning process.	• Impact of cost of living on community planning activities. • Challenges to financial resources both internal and external. • Central government budgets could potentially have an impact on the ability to progress community planning initiatives.
SOCIO-CULTURAL	**TECHNOLOGICAL**
• Increased lobbying by special interest groups which impact particularly on the equality agenda. • An ageing population in CC&G which will impact community planning and equality activities.	• New technological developments which can help provide better customer accessibility to Council services, for example the introduction of SignVideo.

LEGAL • Data Protection issues are increasingly arising, particularly data breaches. • Increasingly complex requests on a range of access to information issues. • Complex guidance from ICO on information access issues and the need for legal guidance. • Increased likelihood of legal challenge to various decisions of Council.	**ENVIRONMENTAL** • Greater emphasis on climate change and environmental issues and indicators which will impact on community planning activities and initiatives. • Use of Rural Needs Assessments in policy development work within Council.

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.

- Specific Objectives:

  Equality and Diversity - 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.

  Disability - 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.

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

  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).

  Community Planning - 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.

Directorate	Corporate Services
Service Area	Policy and Community Planning
Reporting Year	2026/27

Business Plan Objective 1: Equality and Diversity

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.

Lead Officer(s):

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

Link to Corporate Strategy:

- **Engaging and communicating with our customers**
- **Empowering and supporting our people**
- **Sustainability and managing our natural and build environment**
- **Governance, quality and continuous improvement.**

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
Equality and Diversity	Work to identify key improvement actions to support building accessibility.		April 2026 to March 2027	• Increase the percentage of Council owned buildings that are accessible to people with a disability.	Quarterly meetings with Estates – Kenny Keys Meeting with Maria – 16th November. Minor works have been completed, but these will not change buildings accessibility. There needs to be a set budget to make the necessary changes. However, Infrastructure is also working through	

				• Work with Estates Services to review completed external access audits and develop a prioritised action plan for delivery through the maintenance budget, with any key issues requiring additional investment or corporate decision-making flagged to the Director of Corporate Services.	condition surveys and their actions may resolve some of the issues. List of work compiled with levels of risk attached.	
	Develop a program of actions regarding rural inclusion		April 2026 to March 2027	• Develop a Rural Inclusion Toolkit to strengthen guidance for staff and improve the quality and impact of Rural Needs Assessments. • Promote the importance of Rural Needs Assessments with Senior Management, Staff and Elected Members.	Completed Sent to Moira for Approval 27.10.26 Email 3.11.26	

				• Research the feasibility of introducing a corporate Equality and Rural Evidence Hub. (Taking into account any GDPR restrictions).		
	Develop and implement a range of communication, information and engagement activities designed to positively improve levels of interaction on equality and diversity issues.		April 2026 to March 2027	• Develop 5 new easy read documents across Council. • Work in partnership with disability partners to have 2 Easy Read documents peer reviewed. • Implement pre-visit guides for all 4 civic buildings. Draft 2 pre-visit guides for cemeteries. • Facilitate officers to engage with the equality forum on 4 Council projects/policies. • Develop Neuro-diversity friendly meeting guidance.	Biodiversity Consultation Harbour & Marina Consultation Mark Ashton Biodiversity & Harbour & Marinas Riada House Drafted & with GDPR ANPD Carpark barrier CTFF Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan Harbour & Marinas Strategy	

				• Educate staff about sensory impacts. • Work with the Town and Village Management team to develop a walkabout to improve elected members' understanding of Visual Impairments. • Develop and provide staff information updates on policy matters, highlighting how Equality Screening and Rural Needs Assessments can strengthen the development of policies, strategies and protocols, ensuring clear links to improved decision-making.	Completed – Emailed to Moira 27.10.2026 Waiting on RNIB Email all Staff 14.04.26 Making Mitigation Meaningful emailed to PR 03.11.26	
	Improve Equality Monitoring across services		April 2026 to March 2027	• Research the feasibility of introducing a corporate Equality and Rural Evidence Hub. (Taking into account any GDPR restrictions). • Develop Equality Screening guidance for staff and improve the	Drafted sent to Moira 27.10.26	

				quality and impact of Equality Screening assessments. • Continue to work with OD/HR to provide Equality Screening and Rural Needs Assessment training for relevant staff, ensuring consistent application across Council services.	Training completed for these and Consultations	

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 2: Disability

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**
- **Equality/Policy Officer**

Link to Corporate Strategy:

- **Engaging and communicating with our customers**
- **Empowering and supporting our people**
- **Governance, quality and continuous improvement.**

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
	Develop and implement measures to improve access to Council services by people with a disability.		April 2026 to March 2027	• Continued provision of Makaton sign education to staff and Elected members via inclusion in the staff news. • Continue to highlight the importance of Equality Screening within Council through reminders and support.	Continued in each episode of the staff news Emailed 03.11.26	
	Develop and implement initiatives to promote awareness of and positive attitudes to people with a disability.		April 2026 to March 2027	• Involve the Diversity Champion in 3 awareness raising campaigns. • Provision of 5 awareness raising articles on lived experience, inclusion or understanding disabilities.	Learning Disability Week Breastfeeding Autism Impact Awards Making Mitigation Meaningful to be included in the next staff news	
Risk Management **Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:**						
Training budgetary constraints, identify potential free training or alternative free formats for education.						

Business Plan Objective 3: 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:

- **Engaging and communicating with our customers**
- **Empowering and supporting our people**
- **Governance, quality and continuous improvement.**

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	Review and amend Council Constitution on an annual basis (or as required).	0	April 2026 to March 2027	Amendments of Constitution conducted as required.	Who has responsibility for this not Elizabeth has retired?	

	Review the log of Council policies and develop a resource to provide easy access to policies for staff.	0	April 2026 to March 2027	Up-to-date log of Council Policies.	Email sent to Moira - 03.08.2026 & 02.11.2026 seeking approval to progress.	
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:

- **Engaging and communicating with our customers**
- **Empowering and supporting our people**
- **Creating conditions to deliver opportunities for our Borough**
- **Sustainability and managing our natural and build environment**
- **Governance, quality and continuous improvement.**

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
Information Governance Policies and Guidance	Review, streamline and update Council's information governance policies and procedures taking into account ICO issued guidance and relevant case law.		April 2026 – March 2027	Number of logged requests responded to within 20 working days to increase from 85% to 90%	Review undertaken by Cleaver, Fulton, Rankin and the IG Team completed in 2024. Streamlining of policies on-going.	
	Consolidate the information held within Information Governance's repository. Review and update the Staff Portal as regards information law policies.				Consolidation on-going. Updating of Staff Portal on-going.	
	Develop a guidance bank for all staff in relation to the requirements of information legislation.				Development of guidance bank commenced.	
	Undertake a review of the Council's Publication Scheme.				Scoping exercise underway.	
	Conduct an information audit and update Information Asset Register				IGOs have initiated this work with business areas – work to be carried out on phased basis.	
Information Governance Training	Work with OD/HR to ensure the annual training plan includes information governance training appropriate to different levels of staff within Council (to include induction training and annual	Training budget held by OD/HR			Training roll-out underway with Tiers 1, 2, 3 and 4 complete.	

	refresher training for senior managers).					
	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			Still to be completed	
	Support the on-going work of the Information Security Management Group (ISMG).				The ISMG has been restarted. Action Plan in place and being worked through.	
Records Management	Establish a process for monitoring adherence to records management guidance.				Scoping work currently underway via consultation with other councils by the IGOs. IGOs working on a scoping exercise.	
	Review the Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule and work with Departments to ensure regular implementation of the Schedule.				Currently underway. IGOs undertaking audit to identify whether Creation and Disposal logs are being kept by business areas – being conducted on phased basis.	
Data Protection	Review, streamline and update Council's data protection policies and procedures taking into account ICO issued guidance and relevant case law.				Review conducted by Cleaver, Fulton & Rankin and IG. Streamlining and updating currently underway.	
	Work with other Departments to review operational issues and policies relating to CCTV and other mobile cameras.				Work ongoing.	

	Conduct a review of privacy notices across the Council.				Currently on-going.	
	Review data breach training and notification/logging system.				IG Team working with ICT to develop a logging system via SharePoint. Currently running this on a pilot basis with two business areas.	
	AI Strategy				Work being undertaken by the IG Team to develop an AI strategy which provides guidance to business areas within Council to ensure it is applied in line with data protection considerations in Council projects.	

Risk Management Identify Risks and any Mitigating Actions Required:
None identified.

Business Plan Objective 5: Community Planning
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.
Lead Officer(s):
• **Head of Policy & Community Planning** • **Community Planning Officers**

Link to Corporate Strategy:
• **Engaging and communicating with our customers** • **Empowering and supporting our people** • **Creating conditions to deliver opportunities for our Borough** • **Sustainability and managing our natural and build environment** • **Governance, quality and continuous improvement.**
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
Community Planning	Management and facilitation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Planning Strategic Partnership	**£2000.00**	April 2026 to March 2027	• No of Partnership Meetings • No of Action Steering Group Meetings • Attendance Improvement	• **Statutory Partnership** Meeting held in **May & October 2026** • **Innovation Workshop** held in **July 2026** incorporating SP	

					• **2 x ASG Meetings held in May & October 2026** • Good, sustained attendance by all Statutory Partners.	
	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.	**£3000.00**	April 2026 to March 2027	• Thematic Training events to be delivered September & October 2026. • Participation Improvement Community Planning Partners / Thematic and Action Leads participation in Performance Monitoring	3 x Thematic Training events completed during September & October • Addressing vulnerability • Community & Community Safety Group Health & wellbeing Group Further events to take place in relation to: • Infrastructure & Environment • Education Tourism & Economy	
	Collaborative training, awareness raising sessions and events across the themes of the CC&G Community Plan. Promotion of inter-professional interactions across the themes of community, health, the	**£2000.00**	April 2026 to March 2027	• Participation Improvement • Community Planning Partners / Thematic and Action Leads participate in Performance Monitoring	Under development for March 2027	

	environment, tourism, and the economy.					
	Collaborative Innovation Workshop with CP Statutory Partners and CFTF	**£2000.00**	July 2026 to October 2026	• Delivery Plan Workshop to be held in November 2026	• **Innovation Workshop** held in **July 2026** incorporating SP	
	Research and Development including publication of the 'Statutory Priorities' within the Delivery Plan	**£2000.00**	March 2027	• Update publication of Delivery Plan Strategic Priorities • (Z-Fold Cards) • Webpage	Publication of revised Delivery Plan in April 2026 in addition to circulation it was also published on the Webpage Promotional merchandise acquired and distributed from April 2026. Further development of Z Cards in next 6months.	
	To further develop engagement opportunities with young people of CC&G through a 'Youth Voice' initiative.	**£2000.00**	April 2026 to March 2027	• Number / range of engagement activities undertaken • Evaluation of effectiveness of engagement activities. •	Community Planning Officer continues to Chair Youth Voice Project Board. Opportunities created over the last 6 months for stronger engagement with Youth Voice and Councils' Youth Campions.	
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**
Mitigatio**n**
Partnership support with greater collaboration