

WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE
COUNCIL

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027



Contents

Foreword from the Leader of the Council	4
Our Vision and Values	5
Monitoring Outcome Delivery	6
Support Services	6
The Strategic Plan in Context	8
Our Strategic Priorities	10

Strategic Priorities & Outcomes

1 Our Communities Resilient and Thriving	13
2 Our Environment A Greener Future	19
3 Our Economy Strong and Flourishing	25
4 Our Council Inclusive and Adaptable	31



Foreword from the Leader of the Council

Since the previous Strategic Plan was implemented back in 2017, there has been a substantial shift in the social and economic landscape in West Dunbartonshire. In the last two years alone, our communities have been impacted by Brexit, a global pandemic and unprecedented financial instability. This period has shown us the best of West Dunbartonshire and how our communities can rise to challenges, and it has also uncovered vast inequality.

This inequality, combined with increased demand and reduced resource, means it is now more important than ever that we set out a clear and comprehensive plan for the next five years which will support us to deliver improved outcomes for all residents through the provision of quality public services.

The focus of our day to day service delivery, is on ensuring that we are doing things right, delivering agreed services to the required quality standards, whereas the focus of our Strategic Plan is on ensuring that we are doing the right things for our area. This requires modernising where required, driving change and exploiting opportunities to benefit our people, our businesses and our communities.

This document will be the road map for our Council for the next five years, setting out our vision for the area and led by priorities identified in partnership with the people who live, work and trade here. Each and every action taken by this Council will align with at least one of these priorities, whether it is helping to create resilient and thriving communities by providing increased educational opportunities and involving residents in local decision making; working towards a greener West Dunbartonshire with increased recycling rates and creating a sense of pride and ownership in neighbourhoods; ensuring our local economy is strong and flourishing by attracting long-term investment opportunities and supporting households with the guidance and skills to be economically self-sufficient; or making sure our organisation is inclusive and adaptable, striving for continuous improvement and innovation, with a workforce who feel valued and recognise the importance of the work they do.

I know that with a firm focus on these priorities, we can make great strides in reducing inequality among our residents and support our communities to not only recover, but to grow stronger and more resilient.

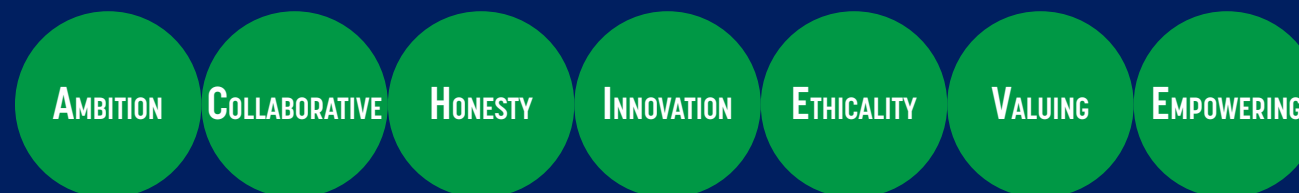
Our Vision and Values



Delivering services which build on the strengths and resilience of our neighbourhoods and supporting all residents to fulfil their individual potential, and that of their communities"

Good governance flows from shared values and culture. Our values, set out below, underpin everything we do and describe how we will deliver this Plan.

These values reflect the personal stake that every one of us has in delivering our Council's priorities and underpins our commitment to the values we have adopted as a Council:



At the core of what we do as a Council is a commitment to 'Support our Communities to Thrive'. The strategic priorities we have adopted are focused on improving the lives of the people of West Dunbartonshire, by promoting equality for all.

Monitoring Outcome Delivery

Council officers will oversee the delivery of this Plan through the Performance Monitoring Review Group (PMRG) which will meet on a monthly basis. Updates on outcome delivery and performance will be shared with our Corporate Management Team, led by the Chief Executive, to inform strategic decision-making and resource allocation. This will ensure that the Council maintains focus on achieving the outcomes throughout service planning and delivery and that the aims of this Plan are reflected in all relevant supporting strategies.

Elected Members will receive bi-annual briefing reports on progress in delivering the outcomes in this Plan and an Annual Performance and Benchmarking report summary will be provided each year to Committee.

Progress in delivering the outcomes will also be monitored internally at strategic management team meetings through updates on the delivery of key activities supporting outcome delivery in accordance with the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Planning and Performance Framework.

Support services

Delivery of this Plan is dependent on a wide range of services such as Business Support, Communications, Corporate Procurement Unit, Democratic Services and Finance, HR, ICT, Legal, Organisational Development and Performance and Strategy. These organisation-wide functions support frontline services by providing business support based on specialised knowledge, best practice and technology. They also support good governance, ensuring that:

- **Resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities**
- **There is sound and inclusive decision making**
- **There is clear accountability for the use of those resources**

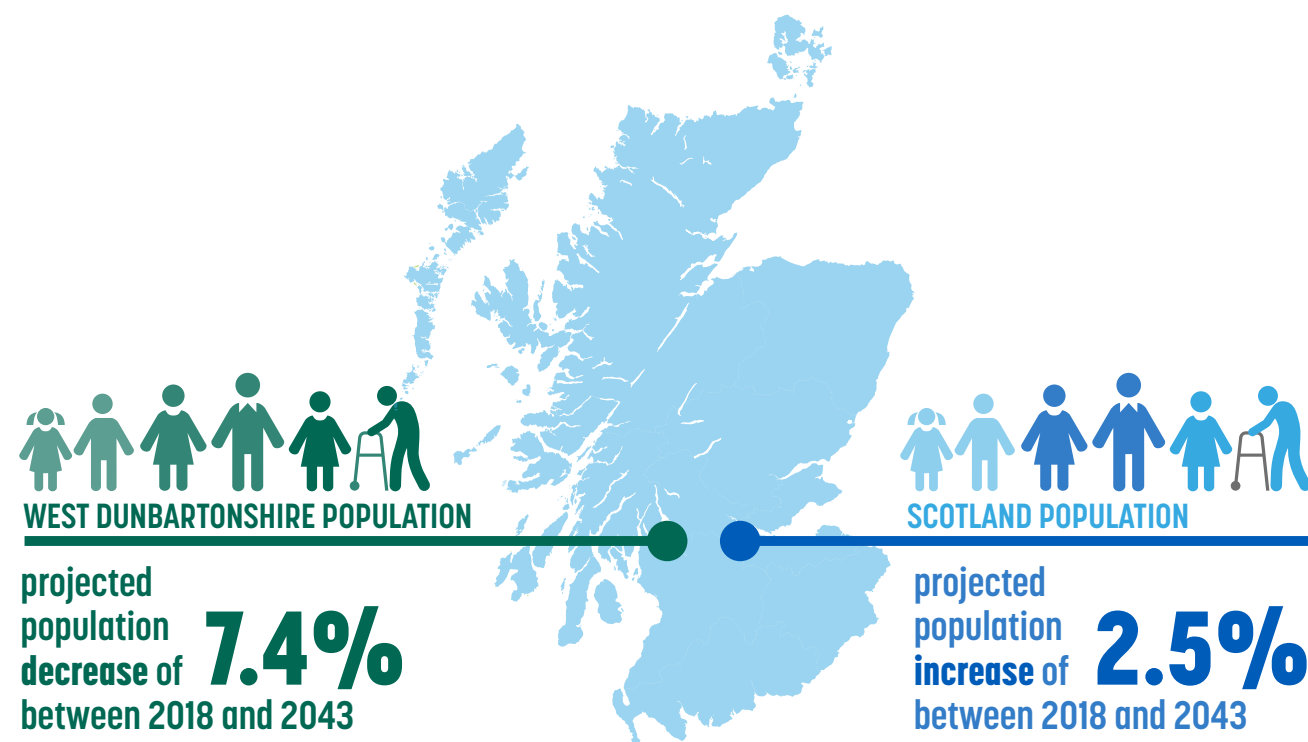
Good governance is about ensuring the Council is doing the right things, in the right way and for the benefit of the communities it serves. It leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources and positive outcomes. Back-office services have a key role in ensuring that the Council adheres to these principles and achieves positive outcomes for service users.



The Strategic Plan in Context

West Dunbartonshire is a diverse area with a rich industrial heritage still evident in our local communities today. Across the three main areas of Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven we see diversity from the densely populated urban centre of Clydebank to the more rural setting of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, sitting in and beyond the northern edge of the Authority.

Between 2018 and 2028, the population of West Dunbartonshire is projected to decrease from 89,130 to 87,141. A further decrease is projected, with the population at 82,537 by 2043. This is an overall decrease of 7.4%, which compares to a projected increase of 2.5% for Scotland as a whole in the same time period.



Between 2018 and 2028, the 45-64 age group is projected to see the largest percentage decrease (-13.4%) and the 65 to 74 age group is projected to see the largest percentage increase (+22.6%). In terms of size, however, 45 to 64 is projected to remain the largest age group. The average age of the population of West Dunbartonshire is projected to increase as the baby boomer generation ages and more people are expected to live longer.

Life expectancy is the number of years a person is expected to live from birth. In Scotland, life expectancy has generally improved since 1980, although we still have one of the lowest life expectancies in Europe. Improvements have been modest in recent years with stalling increases in life expectancy for both males and females. Factors that influence life expectancy include gender, where you live and inequalities in income, education and access to services. Another important measure is healthy life expectancy, which is the number of years a person would expect to live in a 'healthy' state.

Councils throughout Scotland face a number of challenges, not least the requirement to deliver a wide range of services during a period of increasing demand and diminishing resources. These challenges were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which effected significant change to societies across the world, the effects of which will likely reverberate for years to come.

Nationally the proportion of people experiencing mental health issues increased during the pandemic, with some groups particularly affected such as young adults and women; shielding older adults; adults with pre-existing mental health conditions, and Black, Asian and ethnic minority adults. This trend is set against a backdrop of an increasing recognition of wider mental health challenges, including loneliness and social isolation. Clearly it will be important to continue to focus on reducing mental health inequalities, improving mental health across all ages, and working to promote flexibility, integration and responsiveness in service provision.

Sudden societal shocks, such as COVID-19, tend to quicken the pace of developments already in motion - for example, the shift from physical to virtual spaces as well as greater instances of remote working. As such, digital infrastructure and digital literacy will become increasingly important in future years. As a result, the pace of organisational developments will also likely quicken.

Transformational change is therefore becoming increasingly important to meet current and future challenges. These include the implications of COVID-19; budget constraints; increases in the cost of living, service re-design; increased unemployment; ageing demographics; Brexit; Climate Change; and managing public expectations as to what the Council can do in light of diminishing resources - all of which will have profound implications for local authorities in the coming years.

Regional partnerships, participatory budgeting, holistic planning, ever-increasing community involvement, climate change - these themes are likely to gain traction in the years ahead as common challenges become more apparent, shared goals emerge, and resources become scarcer. The task of negating the impact of these challenges may be categorised generally as 'future proofing' the region, ensuring it remains relevant and prosperous in an increasingly global world - in short, it will involve the effectual delivery of the Council's priorities, all of which are interlinked to a greater or lesser degree and tend towards realising the Council's vision as well as aligning to the Scottish Government's National Priorities (NP4).

Since late 2021, the UK has experienced several changes to events globally and nationally including Brexit, the conflict in Ukraine as well as the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic have led to rising costs for businesses and individuals. Consumer price inflation has continued to rise to its highest level in almost 40 years. This rise, which includes the cost of energy, has meant many UK citizens are seeing an impact on their cost of living. For many, this has meant having to make decisions about how they spend their income, and how this affects their standard of living.

A common theme, across all the priorities identified in this plan, is stronger integration of strategies and interventions aimed at both addressing key challenges, but also better-realising opportunities. This is particularly true in promoting health and wellbeing, where those factors, often described as key determinants, influence options, choices and patterns of behaviour, which in turn shape health and wellbeing outcomes. Building on the collaborative strength of the Council's Covid-19 response will be vital here, both between agencies and the third sector, but also within communities.

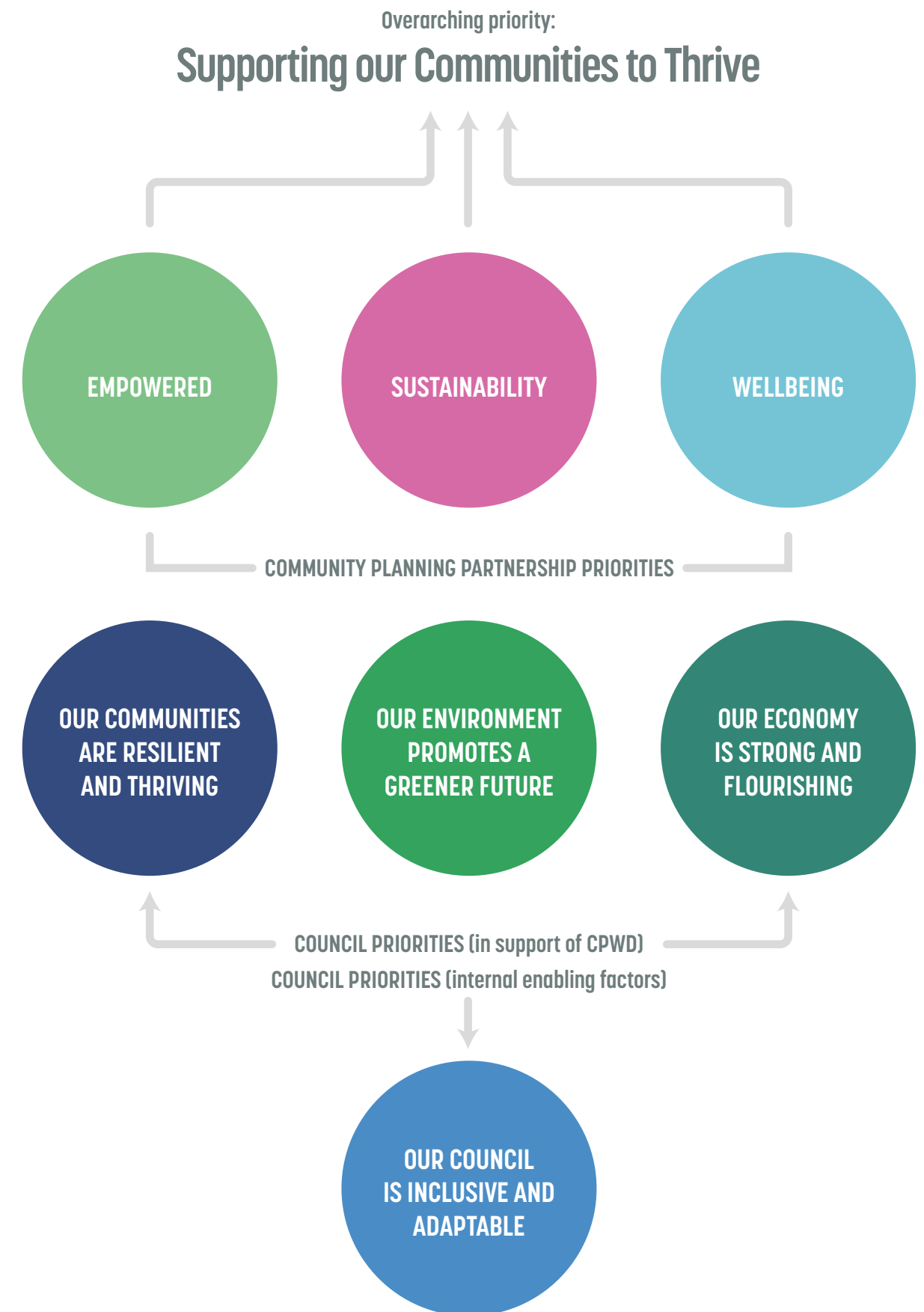
Our Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities of the Council, as detailed in this plan, explain how the Council will work to improve the lives of residents. The priorities are guided by the Administration's election commitments, and support delivery of Community Planning West Dunbartonshire's (CPWD) Local Outcomes and Improvement Plan and the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) strategic plan.

As well as clearly defining a set of Council priorities which directly support and empower residents in line with the long-term aspirations of the Community Planning Partnership and HSCP, the Council has agreed organisational priorities to inform how services are run. This will ensure the Council is able to deliver on its overarching aspiration to reduce inequality for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Our priorities will be delivered through the Council's Strategic Delivery Plans and in partnership with our strategic partners in CWPD and HSCP. Strategic Delivery Plans provide detail on actions to be taken while also reflecting the context and challenges facing services and the organisation as a whole. They will take into account the need to address factors such as the increasingly challenging financial landscape for the public sector in Scotland, deprivation across our communities and areas where investment is required to accelerate outcome improvements.

The diagram opposite details how the Council priorities link to and support the Local Outcome Improvement Plan's long-term aspirations.





Strategic priorities & outcomes

Our Communities – Resilient and Thriving



We aim to ensure that West Dunbartonshire has resilient and thriving communities, in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area. We want communities to frequently tell us what is important to them and how well services are working and to work with us to improve services. Communities also need to be resilient and adaptable during emergencies to ensure a seamless return to normal life.

The communities we live in and the relationships we have are the primary source of our physical and mental health – which in turn affects the kind of life we are able to live and the part we play in society. Our communities are key assets and by investing in them we can cultivate the conditions for people to flourish. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges for communities, it has also offered many examples of positive community spirit and highlighted the willingness of people to volunteer to help others, particularly the most vulnerable.

The pandemic has emphasised the importance of community assets and personal connections in building community resilience and the ability to

respond to challenges, with the worsening mental health of people of all ages coming to the fore. Future policy will need to account for ensuring the sustainability of the authority's third sector as a key anchor to support the co-design of interventions, strengthen social infrastructure across the area, and bring people together to guard against the emerging rises in community tension often driven by national factors. Intergenerational activities are crucial in achieving this.

Tackling inequalities and bringing to life people's rights to get involved in democracy and to fully participate in decision making is the hallmark of a fair society. Our equality outcomes for 2021-25 commit us to increasing the voice and participation of underrepresented groups, for example, BME people, disabled people and young people in community empowerment, capacity building and community budgeting.

Culture is our past, present and future. It's what we have inherited, what we are experiencing now and what we would like to see remembered. We will preserve and make accessible our local cultural

and historic heritage to enhance the wellbeing of residents.

Poverty and lifestyle choices pose the biggest barriers to being involved in sport. Increasing inclusion across West Dunbartonshire will also enable those in more deprived areas to participate in more sports and cultural activities. Group participation is an effective way to get young people involved in sport and cultural activities

The pandemic highlighted the deep-rooted inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes. These inequalities are also reflected in how we age, with significant variations in life-expectancy and healthy life-expectancy across the authority. We also know that many older people are more likely to have multiple long-term conditions with socio-economic inequalities being a key influencing factor. The changing nature of the demography of older people may increasingly influence these trends going forward.

Closing the educational attainment gap for the children and young people most likely to be experiencing poverty and disadvantage remains a significant challenge, particularly in helping them realise their full potential and promoting social mobility. Building positive engagement with education for young people and their families from the outset and strengthening pathways to continued education, skills development and employment opportunities are all key.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on children and young people, with the disruption to their education and concerns regarding disengagement, particularly among the most vulnerable. However, it is perhaps the mental health of our young people that is of greatest concern. Responding to the mental health challenges increasingly facing young people will be a key challenge going forward.

Improving children’s and young people’s mental health should be seen within the wider context of tackling societal inequalities. There are factors that make a child or young person more vulnerable to experiencing difficulties with their mental health, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); experiencing homelessness and living in poverty.

West Dunbartonshire’s role in education is primarily one of supporting schools. School is an important setting for forming or changing health behaviours with well-targeted interventions. Whole school approaches to improving health are likely to be more effective. For example, offering healthy school meals, physical activity at school and access to culture can increase school attainment levels; improve mental and physical health.

Housing costs are continuing to rise for both home ownership and renting, and become unaffordable for low-income families, exacerbated by a scarcity of the mid-sized homes sought by growing families and older people looking to downsize within their community. This continues to have knock-on impacts for social mobility and risks locking more families into smaller, poorer quality housing at the lower end of the market with associated health, wellbeing and educational implications.

Our specific priorities and commitments to deliver this outcome are set out in the following pages. To deliver them, we will work closely with communities and partner services.

Objectives	What does success look like?
Our neighbourhoods are safe, resilient and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council services are accessible and inclusive for all• A reduction in hate crime and anti-social behaviour• Create opportunities for services to work in partnership with residents, to involve them in local decision making• Create opportunities for those with lived experience to become involved in shaping services• Our built environment is designed to promote feelings of safety for all residents• Residents are supported to take advantage of the Community Empowerment (Scotland 2015) Act• Communities are supported to contribute to Participatory Budgeting
Our residents’ health and wellbeing remains a priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services and 3rd sector partners working in an integrated and collaborative way to support children and families• Support adults to live as independently as possible• People and families have access to mental health support• Babies and children have the best start in life and are supported in local communities• Support people and families to increase physical activity and improve wellbeing• Every resident has access to good quality leisure facilities
Our residents are supported to increase life and learning skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved educational attainment and reduce the poverty attainment gap• Every child has access to good quality education and the opportunity to achieve their potential• Libraries support residents to access learning and support enabling them to fully participate in their local community• Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved

How we will measure this	2027 target
% of public space CCTV cameras operational	↑
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved	↑
% of Council resources directed by communities	↑
% of all street light repairs completed within 7 days	↑
Number of attendances per 1,000 population for indoor sports and leisure facilities	↑
% of children who have reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time of the child’s 27-30 month child health review	↑
% of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible	↑
% of air quality monitoring stations complying with the national objective for nitrogen dioxide	↑
% of youth homeless presentations	↓

How we will measure this	2027 target
Number of visits to funded and part funded museums and heritage centres (in person & virtual) per 1,000 population	↑
Number of library visits (physical & virtual) per 1,000 population	↑
% of 3 & 4 year old children at ELC achieving the benchmark in literacy and numeracy	↑
% of ELC achieving meeting the National Standard Criteria of good and above	↑
% of children and young people achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy & numeracy	↑
% of establishments delivering good or very good high-quality learning & teaching	↑
% of school attendance	↑

Key commitments

- We aim to encourage more people to become active citizens, taking responsibility for their local areas. We will ‘help communities to help themselves’ by supporting them to take advantage of and build on the assets within their local area (e.g. buildings, people, skills, and networks) to help solve local challenges. We will build upon the successful partnerships and initiatives which have developed during the Covid-19 pandemic to further strengthen and empower communities.
- We will support Local Neighbourhood Plan development and provide timely and co-ordinated consultation responses from the Council.
- We will continue to support communities and Community Councils to achieve the aims of the Community Empowerment Act and will continue to provide communities with up-to-date information and advice to support and promote volunteering and will encourage Council employees to volunteer to develop their skills and experience, build links with communities and support local initiatives.
- We will work with Police and other agencies to ensure anti-social behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively and will work with young people targeted in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour.
- We will focus on combatting sexual violence and domestic abuse through partnership working and our Domestic Abuse Strategy, protecting all survivors and their families in safe and appropriate accommodation.
- We will work with partners through the West Dunbartonshire Anti-social Behaviour Task Group and Community Planning Safer DIG to tackle all forms of hate crime.



- We will support the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum to ensure service accessibility and will provide guidance, training and support for all staff to address equalities issues.
- Our Libraries, Arts & Heritage, Parks and Adult Learning Programmes will promote wellbeing by providing free and accessible community facilities, exhibitions and parks and outdoor activities and offering a range of learning opportunities.
- We will work with partners through West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust to support people to get and stay active; ensuring physical activity and sport facilities are high quality and accessible.
- We will focus on strengthening collaboration between partners to improve early education, health and wellbeing outcomes for pre-school children and help families access free high-quality childcare and early education that is fully inclusive and accessible.
- We will focus on narrowing the development gaps that affect children and families who are at the greatest disadvantage (e.g. those who live in poverty or have a poor home environment, have special educational needs and/or are in our care).
- We will work closely with partners to take a more proactive approach to provide advice and information relating to housing and empower frontline staff to encourage people to take responsibility for their housing needs, supporting people to live in the least restrictive environments possible, by developing and implementing our rapid rehousing policies.
- We will focus on breaking down intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor health, promoting new ways of working to tackle disadvantages.



Our Environment - A Greener Future



This outcome reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and meet the challenges and opportunities of responding to climate change. Global warming is leading to an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, flooding and heatwaves and changes in pests and diseases. It will affect social and environmental determinants of health including clean air, safe drinking water, supply of sufficient food and access to secure shelter. It will also damage local infrastructure and services, reduce productivity, increase the likelihood of conflict and climate migration and increase the loss of biodiversity.

In January 2021, West Dunbartonshire Council developed the Climate Change Strategy, committing, in response to the global climate emergency, a long term target for West Dunbartonshire to become net zero by 2045.

The Council has different levels of control and influence in protecting the environment and addressing climate change. It is responsible for complying with legislation relating to the environmental impacts from its activities, such as heating and

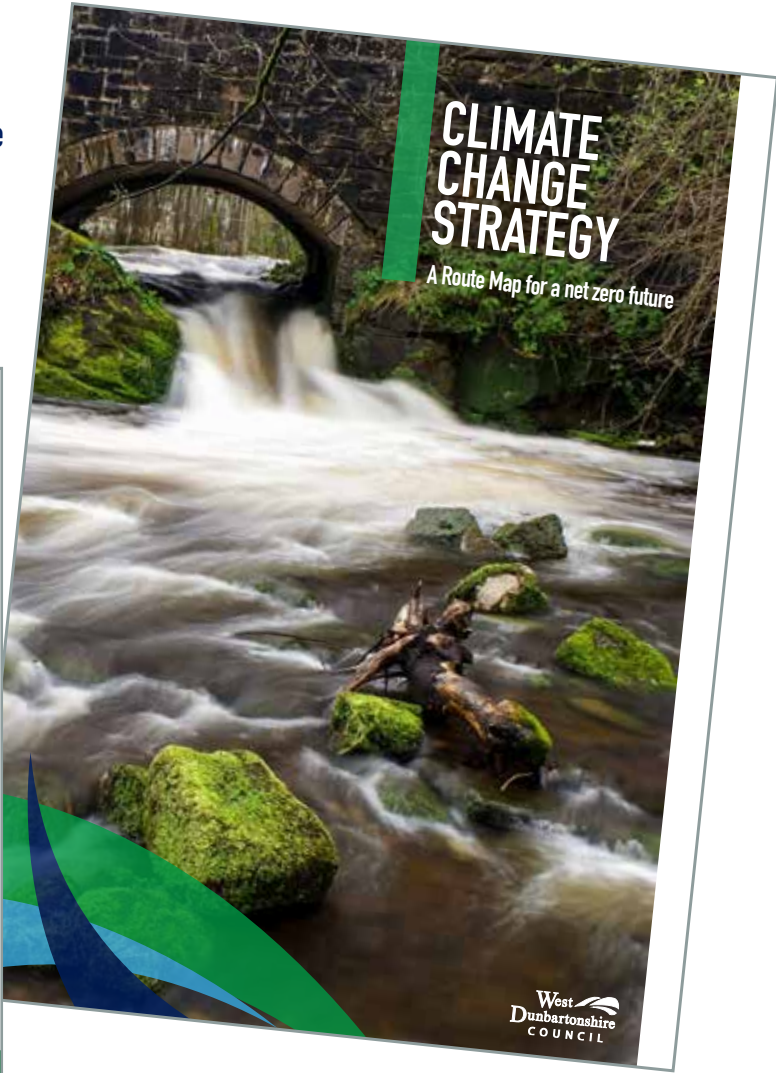
powering our offices, using vehicles and generating waste; managing the environmental impacts from the activities of West Dunbartonshire residents and businesses, such as air pollution from local transport and the reduction, recycling and disposal of household waste; and enforcing environmental legislation on businesses, such as in relation to product packaging, banned substances and energy certificates. It also has capacity to influence wider environmental action by working with partners within West Dunbartonshire.

A further environmental crisis we are facing, in addition to climate change and biodiversity loss, is unsustainable resource usage. We are using the planet's resources at a faster rate than they are being replenished and in a way which does not allow most of these resources to be reused within our economic systems. In order to address this crisis, we need to move to a circular economy model. This is a more resource-efficient alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) where resources are used for as long as possible, and then products and materials are recovered, regenerated, or recycled.

Equally important is how we manage our built environment in terms of the transition to a green economy to create green jobs while tackling long-standing social challenges affecting the health and wellbeing of low-income families – including reducing fuel poverty by improving energy efficiency and further enhancing access to green spaces. In addition, housing has an important influence on poverty and health inequalities in Scotland. This is through the effects of housing costs, housing quality, fuel poverty and the role of housing in community life. The mixture of house sizes, types and tenures is an important consideration in the creation of strong communities. Further detail on how the Council, and its partners, will address and support housing, and housing-related opportunities and challenges can be found in the **West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy**.



The priorities and commitments to deliver this outcome focus on how the Council will help to protect the environment, tackle climate change and promote sustainability through its service delivery and interactions with residents and partners. Further detail on how the Council will reduce carbon emissions from its own operations can be found in the **West Dunbartonshire Council Climate Change Strategy**.



Objectives	What does success look like?
Our local environment is protected, enhanced and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Our public spaces are attractive and welcomingOur residents feel pride in their local neighbourhoodIncrease in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilledIncrease in the percentage of county land which promotes diversity of habitat and species
Our resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase in the percentage of businesses taking action to reduce their carbon impactReduction in CO2 emissions under the Council's influence in the local areaResidents actively involved in tackling climate change and protecting the environmentThe economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly
Our neighbourhoods are sustainable and attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased investment in our housing stock including improving energy efficiencyEnsure future housing developments meet the changing needs of our populationImprove quality of neighbourhoodsOur roads and transport network are maintained and promote safe travel routes

How we will measure this	2027 target
% of residents satisfied with the street cleaning service	↑
% of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces	↑
% of total household waste that is recycled	↑
Air Quality: PM10 Concentration	↓
Tonnage of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled	↓
Tonnage of carbon dioxide emissions from Council operations and assets	↓
Number of new supply social housing for rent	↑
% of residents satisfied with roads maintenance	↑
% satisfaction with quality of new build Council housing	↑
% of serious road related defects repaired within 2 working days of being reported	↑
% of Council houses that are energy efficient	↑

Key commitments

- We will use our interactions with communities to raise awareness of environmental impacts and harness community capacity to address them, providing support and opportunities for learning to local communities, schools, and businesses to promote positive environmental action and collaborative working, leading to constructive behavioural change.
- We will support awareness raising and education on biodiversity and the value of natural capital to society and the economy and will create, protect, enhance, and manage sustainable green infrastructure and biodiversity on Council managed land and assets.
- We will work closely with other Waste Disposal Authorities to share ideas and opportunities for joint working/collaboration and innovation.
- We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and will work with partners to expand and promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling.
- We will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities to increase carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions, such as tree planting.
- We will work with partners and developers to help ensure all housing developments are low carbon and enhance biodiversity.
- We will commit to minimising the environmental impact of our activities and help to protect the environment of West Dunbartonshire. Working with partners we will tackle climate change and embed environmental sustainability into everything we do and foster the links between the environment, people, and the economy.
- We will continue to provide safe, suitably maintained highways that support and encourage new housing development and economic growth and employ a flexible approach to reviewing, amending, and developing the network to reflect changing travel demand and traffic patterns.





Our Economy - Strong and Flourishing

3

This outcome aims to ensure that, using our local capabilities, innovations, and skills – we build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy. It also reflects the need for our infrastructure to meet the demands of a changing population and economy, by providing great connections and sufficient employment space.

We need our infrastructure to support continuous economic growth, whilst helping to tackle the climate emergency. There is a need to develop and promote sustainable forms of transport and decarbonise road transport. There is a need to continuously explore how existing employment areas can be supported and where new growth should be directed.

Clearly the most immediate challenge is the work to ensure a strong recovery from the impact of the pandemic. As we move beyond the immediate response, longer- term recovery and growth, a focus on skills and lifelong learning will be a central element here, not only for young people but also for those people who will need to renew their skills as the world of work continues to change.

In the longer term, we will need to build resilience and continue to work with partners and stakeholders in working towards our aspirations to deliver Inclusive Growth - labour market accessibility, business innovation and expanding the green economy are all likely to be key areas.

More specifically, the pandemic has had some immediate effects, with restrictions resulting in an overnight adoption of home-working and a severe impact on hospitality, retail, and local consumer services. The consequences of these factors were most noticeable for young people, women and low earners who were more likely to be furloughed or at risk of unemployment, as they often dominate employment in the sectors hardest hit.

Businesses are facing many challenges in the current economic situation. These include the ongoing recovery from the Covid pandemic, rising fuel and energy costs, rising inflation generally, and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact, leading to many jobs being classified as 'vulnerable'

(particularly in hospitality, tourism, retail and manufacturing) and a contraction in job vacancies and hiring. This has impacted workers in low-pay and/or insecure jobs the most and increased the risk of lower-skilled workers facing unemployment and job insecurity. The capacity and capability of many businesses have also been significantly stretched in terms of their resilience and financial health.

However, the consequences of Covid-19 may negatively affect youth employment in the region. Experience tells us that while recessions naturally drive up unemployment across the population, the effects are more severe for those who have only recently left full-time education. While the realities of being unemployed are damaging in real time – potentially putting health, well-being and security at risk – the experience can also negatively impact a person’s employment and pay for years to come. This is particularly worrying for young people, who are more likely to experience unemployment during a downturn, and who have their whole working lives ahead of them.

The relationship between poverty and inequality, and poor health and wellbeing outcomes is well documented. The pandemic has exacerbated this negative correlation. Loosening the relationship will need to continue to be a primary focus of our combined efforts, from prevention and promotion/ enabling of more healthy living, to tackling wider determinants such as employment, education, housing and the environment, and improving access to health and care.

Linked to the point above, child poverty is at the root of many poor outcomes for children and young people including education, health and wellbeing and even routes into care, and factors influencing the scale and severity of child poverty in the area are broad-based. Strengthening linkages between interventions and strategies aimed at young people and our wider approach to inclusive growth will be vital in working to realise the full potential of our young people.

The specific objectives and commitments for this priority, outlined in the following pages, will enable the economy to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and support long-term growth. To deliver them, we will continue to work in close partnership with public sector partners, businesses, and Further Education establishments. We will focus on ensuring that people have the skills they need to access employment, as this will support a good quality of life and help businesses to grow. We will ensure that infrastructure provides excellent connectivity, enabling access to opportunities and opening up sites for development. As highlighted in the Climate Change strategy, we also need to ensure that economic growth and infrastructure development support the transition to net zero carbon emissions.

Objectives	What does success look like?
Our area has the infrastructure for sustainable and inclusive growth where businesses can flourish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximise opportunities for long-term investment in local regeneration• Attract investment to ensure the growth and development of local businesses• Local businesses are supported to recover from the impact of the pandemic through stimulating entrepreneurialism
Our residents are supported to access employment and training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced outcomes for residents from our employment and business supports• Support positive destinations for our young people• Increase opportunities in the labour market to reduce unemployment and job insecurity• Provide advice and advocacy to support households to deal with financial instability
Our partnerships will support economic development to deliver increased prosperity for our area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families are supported to be economically self-sufficient and resilient• Improve population skills and reduce the proportion of employers reporting skills shortages or gaps• Increase employability skills so that individuals are well prepared for employment and attractive to employers

How we will measure this	2027 target
Number of businesses given advice and assistance to start up through Business Gateway	↑
% of procurement spent on local small/medium-sized enterprises and SMEs who have a presence in West Dunbartonshire	↑
Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes	↑
% of young people entering a positive destination	↑
Number of local people entering employment through Working4U	↑
Number of local people gaining a full qualification through Working4U	↑
Number of people receiving support through Working4U with more than one barrier to employment (aggregate)	↑
% of local people with increased or sustained income through reduced debt liability/debt management	↑

Key commitments:

- Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund, we own and manage a diverse portfolio of property and other investment assets. We will use this to support growth in the area and ensure there is a diverse range of properties and land assets available to meet the aims of economic development.
- We will work with partners to encourage and support the City Region regeneration programme.
- We will deliver a wider determinants programme of work to address the range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health outcomes, thereby improving health and reducing health inequalities. This will include for example our work with partners to improve air quality.
- We will provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations to ensure effective business continuity management including providing advice and support to businesses to assist in recovery from Covid-19 and adaptation to the new EU trading relationships.
- Develop Skills Plans for priority sectors to promote relevant job opportunities and help businesses meet their recruitment and skills needs and promote enterprise skills programmes to help people think about self-employment and support start-ups and existing businesses.
- We will focus on supporting inclusive economic growth in West Dunbartonshire working with all partners to promote and extend opportunities for supported employment for disadvantaged people with a focus on embedding employability skills so that individuals are well-prepared for employment and attractive to employers.





Our Council - Inclusive and Adaptable

4

This priority aims to ensure West Dunbartonshire Council is a transformational and modern Council demonstrating best value. How we operate as a Council in terms of service delivery, our people, resources, and physical assets are critical elements of estate modernisation. Delivering services differently should be focused on improving outcomes in ways that are affordable. The aim is to find more efficient and effective ways to improve outcomes for communities and, their experiences of services. This might mean providing services very differently or changing how and what services are provided. We also need to be resilient and adaptable during emergencies to ensure a seamless return to normal life.

The Covid-19 pandemic placed a great deal of stress on public sector organisations. As category 1 responders, the Council activated major incident response mode. This involved, among other things, an immediate reprioritisation of employees and activity. The Strategic Resilience Group (SRG) and Organisational Resilience Group (ORG) were stood up to assist with this cross-service work. Services in collaboration redeployed and re-tasked employees

in a cross-service manner, to focus all efforts on the response. Looking to the future, the Council has an opportunity to reflect upon the pandemic experience and question long-held assumptions about how work should be done and the role of the office.

This kind of change will require transformational thinking grounded in facts. Transformational change is increasingly important to councils as they seek to improve local outcomes with less money. Successful transformation requires robust planning, clear and coherent leadership and suitably skilled employees. This requires investing the time and knowledge of political and managerial leaders and key employees, including trade unions to develop the thinking and plans for a medium- and long-term strategy.

Technology plays an increasing role in everyday life to deliver transformational services West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners need residents to have access to fast broadband. Similarly, for residents – living anywhere in West Dunbartonshire should not be a barrier to working from home. The Covid-19 crisis has confirmed the foundational importance of digital technologies

in all aspects of life, and enhanced investment will likewise be a foundation of economic recovery and a robust and resilient wellbeing economy

The underlying financial outlook is challenging. General revenue funding has been decreasing in real terms over the last decade once ring-fenced and unfunded elements are factored in. This does not include additional funding in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Looking ahead, the Scottish Government’s Resource Spending Review published in May 2022 states that Council funding will remain as ‘flat cash’ (at current 2022/23 levels) until 2025/26 with a £100m added in 2026/27. This is a real terms erosion of core funding for Local Government of 7% over that four year period.

The area’s population is ageing, with the 80+ age group growing the fastest. The older population is also becoming more diverse, as the wider demographic trends are increasingly reflected in our older generation. Although perhaps too early to be definitive, the socio-economic profile of our older population may also be changing, with house-ownership less dominant, and people working longer over a more varied career pattern. Future service provision will need to take account of these factors.

Older people make up an increasing proportion of the workforce. The latest West Dunbartonshire data provides that 45.1% of West Dunbartonshire Council’s workforce is over 50 years of age; 16.2% is over the age of 60. This presents both challenges and opportunities, not least how we capture and capitalise on the experience, skills and potential of older workers. As the working population continues to age, there will be an increasing need to refresh and develop skills and learning, to reflect the changing nature of work.

Our Equality Outcomes for 2021-25, identified an underrepresentation of disabled and black minority ethnic people in the workforce, and a need to tackle

societal occupational segregation in a variety of roles. A more diverse workforce will better reflect the lived experiences of the people of West Dunbartonshire, and is better able to meet current and future challenges.

It is too soon to assess any full impact of exiting the EU on patterns of immigration and/or on some existing communities. However, early indications suggest that economic immigration from the EU has slowed, with some evidence of skills and labour shortages feeding through to the local economy and potential longer-term implications for the inclusive growth agenda.

The Council has a strong record of engaging with communities on services and strategies. This reflects our commitment to openness and transparency and supports informed decision-making on council services. We also encourage and support communities to direct development in their local areas. We aim to increase the involvement of residents in service design, such as by using a wider range of engagement methods and reaching marginalised communities.

Objectives	What does success look like?
Our workforce is resilient and skilled where digital technology supports service delivery for our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A workforce who feels valued and recognises the importance of the work they do• All employees are provided with the technology and training needed to do their job effectively• All employees have equity of support and opportunity
Our Council is adaptable and focused on delivering best value for our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embrace commercial opportunities to protect public services and generate new income• A financial plan that reflects the Council’s key priorities• Our customer channels maximise resident experience while ensuring efficiency in delivery of services• The way we work embodies continuous improvement, innovation and ambition
Our residents are engaged and empowered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents have the opportunity to scrutinise Council policy and performance through access to Council meetings and publications• Increased participation from under-represented groups• Continued communication with residents to ensure higher awareness and satisfaction• People participate in service design and delivery

How we will measure this	2027 target
% of Council employees satisfied with WDC as a place to work	↑
% of employee attendance improvement rate (teachers and local government)	↑
Rent collected as a % of total rent due	↑
Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling £	↑
% of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year %	↑
Number of transactions undertaken online	↑
Income generated as a % of total revenue budget	↑
% of residents who are satisfied with the Council website	↑
% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 5 working days	↑
% of residents who feel the Council communicates well with them	↑
Residents satisfaction with Council services overall	↑
% of committee agendas published within standing order timescales	↑

Key commitments

- We will engage residents, service users and partners in the planning of services, through a variety of means and will continue to embed the Council's best practice principles for consultation and engagement through the Engaging Communities Framework and Communicating Effectively Framework.
- We will maintain transparency around our savings proposals and target efficiency savings and new income generation before service reductions and will embed financial discipline in decision-making to increase value for money assurance for Council Taxpayers.
- We will support high-quality, consistent citizen experience Council-wide and will enhance the citizen experience through improved digital services developing the automation of repetitive, low-value activities and integrations ensuring services remain accessible to all.
- We will support employees' wellbeing and will encourage flexible working using a mix of workspaces (offices, working from home, remote working) to best meet service and citizen needs.



Contact us

For further information, please contact:

Nicola Docherty
Performance & Strategy Team Leader
West Dunbartonshire Council
16 Church Street
Dumbarton
G82 1QL

Email: performance@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or audio and can be translated into different community languages. Please contact us to request this.

