



Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services Business Plan

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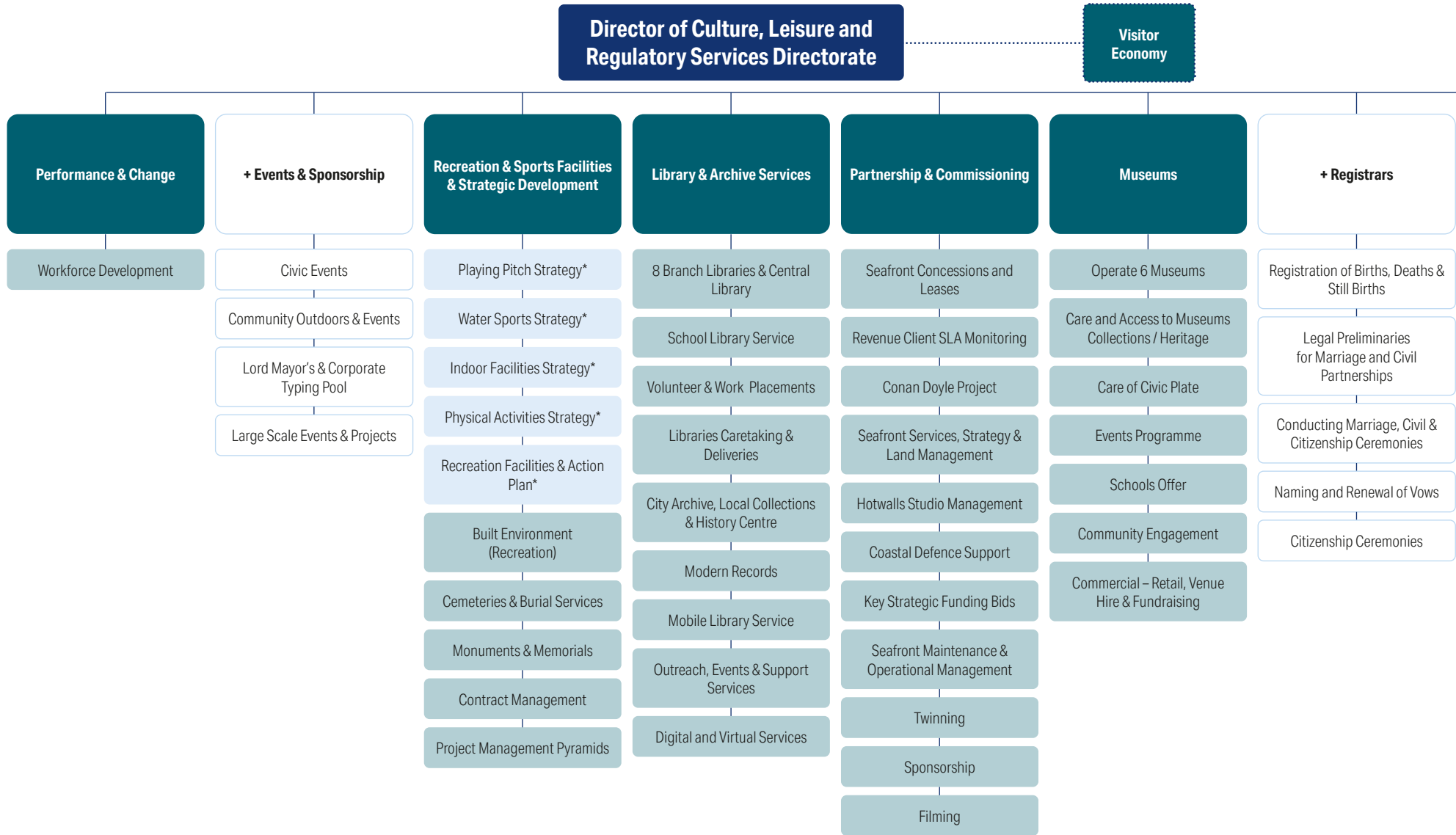
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Section 1:

Introduction

1.1 Directorate structure



Key
 * Funded Public Health
 2 Year Post

Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services Directorate

Visitor Economy

Business Development Service

- Business Support Team Civic Offices
- Business Planning and Performance
- Leisure Card Management
- Corporate Complaints
- Freedom of Information
- Poster Site Management & Income Stream

Parks & Open Spaces

- Local Football Facilities Plan
- Grounds Maintenance for all Parks & Open Spaces
- Portsmouth Hill & Hilsea Lines Rangers
- Contract Monitoring
- Allotment Management
- Memorial Seat Management
- Parks Infrastructure Maintenance
- Play Area Maintenance
- Sports Pitch Management
- Arboriculture Management
- Commercial Garden Centre
- Conservation of habitats
- Splashpool Management

The Hive

- Voluntary Sector & Support Team
- Access & Equalities Team
- Volunteer Bureau
- Project Bridge
- Community Engagement Team
- Social Enterprise Support
- HIVE Clerical Support & Project Management
- External Grants & Funding (inc HIWCF/Portsmouth Lottery) Internal Grants & Funding (Capital & Transition Funding)
- 12 Community Centres SLA & Projects
- Business planning & Performance

Visitor Services

- Visitor Information Service
- Destination Tourism & Marketing & Digital Services
- Tourist Guides, Greeters & Volunteers

Regulatory Services, Trading Standards & Environmental Health

- Pollution Control Statutory Nuisance and Environmental Permitting
- Environmental Health Business Support, Food Law Compliance, Health & Safety and Public & Animal Health Licensing
- Trading Standards
- Review & Assessment of Air Quality
- Community Funerals
- Pest Control
- Port Health – Border Regulation
- Primary Authority Partnerships
- Statutory Returns & Database Management

Licensing

- Administering License & Registrations Under Licensing Act 2003 & Gambling Act 2005
- Licensing for Charitable collections & Street Trading
- Licensing for Amenities on the Highways and Sex Establishments
- Guidance and Support for Applications
- Monitoring and Investigative Function
- Enforcement & Prosecution
- Administration & Enforcement of the Licensing Regime relating to Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Private Hire Operations

Emergency Planning (Shared Service)

- Fully Shared Service for Portsmouth & Southampton City Council
- Compliance with Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Major Accident Hazards
- Pipeline Safety
- Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information
- Professional Support to Client Borough Councils

1.2 Setting the context

Change of government

The change of government in summer 2024 is likely to bring about an accompanying transformation in social policy. This is likely to include changes to housing reform, further progress on Martyn's Law, changes to the tapering of welfare and benefits and changes to the health agenda. There may also be changes to the Equality Act 2010 and associated requirements on the public sector to consider how our policies affect those protected under the Equality Act.

Cost of living crisis

With many of our residents facing increasing financial pressures (rising mortgages, rents, utilities and food bills) the offer from Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services Directorate ("CLRS") is ever more critical. Across our services we offer a range of free or low cost activities, from open spaces to reading activities, to engagement with heritage, free events, low cost or free access to sports facilities. Our Regulatory Services departments complement this offer by ensuring that our residents have a safe and secure environment in which to enjoy their leisure time and thrive. Whilst our budgets are increasingly stretched, the majority of our staff are dedicated to front line delivery, as our key focus is always the customer.

Pressure on our budgets has also meant that the directorate has been required to absorb additional costs into its cash limit, such as an increasing demand for food inspectors, to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency regime (see Regulatory Services).

The Local Government Association (LGA) paper, **Signals of the Future (2022)**¹ identified that the British public have reached their peak in support for a high tax high spend state, with inflationary pressures likely to move opinion further against national and local taxation. However, whilst there is no increase in budget, the legacy from the Covid pandemic (including loneliness and mental health legacy) and the cost of living crisis have increased demand on services. Health, adults and children's services remain top spending priorities for the majority of local authorities. Culture and leisure services are uniquely placed to contribute towards these outcomes. The LGA paper also points to the previous government's Levelling Up policy paper, which highlights the imperative to:

- Boost living standards; spread opportunities; restore community, pride and belonging; empower communities.

This business plan will show how the directorate is contributing directly towards these outcomes.

National policy picture

Since the last business plan, several briefing papers have been issued on the place of culture in society. The All Party Parliamentary Group published **A Case For Culture in 2022**² which considers the cultural sector in a post Brexit and post Covid world. Whilst the paper is primarily focussed on northern cities, the principles apply; culture is something that makes a place somewhere desirable to live, study, work and invest. Culture is an essential lever for widening access and can work across multiple policy agendas, to deliver positive economic and social outcomes. In February 2024 the All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and

¹ Signals of the future | Local Government Association

² NCAPPG-The-Case-for-Culture-Report.pdf (northernculture.org.uk)

Wellbeing published their creative health review. This review found that culture can dynamically alter health inequalities.³

In 2023, Key Cities in partnership with Arts Council England, published **Culture and Place in Britain**,⁴ which identified a direct correlation between higher socio-economic deprivation and cities with a limited cultural offer, illustrating the benefits that our services can bring to the wellbeing of Portsmouth. University College London have also published various papers on the impact of culture, including **Impact of Arts and Cultural Engagement on Population Health (2023)**.⁵ This paper connects the participation in arts and culture to longevity and positive health outcomes at all life stages, including physical and mental health and social behaviours.

A view of culture and leisure services as an optional extra does not take account of the growing mental health crisis among young people and the growing demand on the statutory services that provide child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). A 2023 report by Barnados argues for a national funded strategy for social prescribing link workers.⁶ Social prescribing is the provision of non-clinical treatments targeted towards adults or children. As this can include getting out in nature, participating in cultural or creative hobbies or sports, culture and leisure services are well placed to meet this growing need. The report also notes that the engagement of children and adolescents in community assets can combat social exclusion that has arisen post pandemic and in

conjunction with the cost of living crisis where families are precluded from activity on account of cost.

In response to the report, the government at the time commented that *'social prescribing can be an empowering and potentially life changing intervention for those that need it and play a key role in cutting waiting lists'*⁷

Influence from Key National Stakeholders

Several strategy papers from national stakeholders also influence the directorate.

Get Active: a strategy for sport and physical activity was published in 2023.⁸ The strategy has three central priorities: make the nation more active, make sport and physical activity more inclusive and move towards a more sustainable sector. Further in this document, reference will be made to King George V Playing Fields major project, which includes the objective to increase football participation amongst women and improve biodiversity at the site.

Central government also published a **National Disability Strategy** in 2021.⁹ This strategy found that many non able-bodied persons felt excluded from leisure opportunities. The Council's sports and leisure provider, BH Live, seeks actively to overcome barriers to activity and their strategy and programming will be considered further in this document.

3 National Centre for Creative Health (ncch.org.uk)

4 Culture and Place in Britain - Key Cities

5 Arts-and-population-health-FINAL-March-2023.pdf (sbbresearch.org)

6 The Missing Link: social prescribing for children and young people | Barnardo's (barnados.org.uk)

7 Calls for strategy on 'social prescribing' in England amid youth mental health crisis | Mental health | The Guardian

8 Get Active: a strategy for the future of sport and physical activity - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

9 National Disability Strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Local Government Association also provides a crucial role in direction setting for local authorities. Their paper, **Cornerstones of Culture**, published in autumn 2022 ¹⁰ argues for the importance of funding culture at a local level. Public funding to the cultural sector supports growth in the creative industries and visitor economy, accounting for 2.2 million jobs and in the creative sector, contributing £115.9 billion to the UK. These outcomes can only be achieved through a sustainable funding model for local government.

The directorate works with **Arts Council England** in several service areas, as they continue to be an important stakeholder in our work. Their grant programme supports arts, libraries and museums projects across the UK, in alignment with their 10 year strategy to 2023, **Let's Create**. In January 2024 Arts Council England announced that they were extending their National Portfolio Investment Programme 2023–2026 through to spring 2027.¹¹

Our leisure approaches are informed by specialist partners such as Sport England, whose publication, **Future of Public Sector Leisure** (2022)¹² points to the challenges faced by the sector – including the rising cost of energy. This document identifies the importance of the transition of traditional leisure services to active wellbeing centres, to create a closer relationship between health and leisure through social prescribing and co-location of services – as evidenced by the design plans for the new leisure centre with onsite GP Practice at Bransbury.

In 2023, the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** launched their new 10 year strategy, Heritage 2033¹³. This strategy comprises four investment

principles: saving heritage; protecting the environment; inclusion, access and participation; and organisational sustainability. Funding programmes will continue to be offered on an open basis with decisions delegated to regional committees. Our Victoria Park project is a Heritage funded project with outcomes measured against the funding criteria.

Legislative change

Environment Act 2021

Under this legislation, from 2024, biodiversity net gain requires every housing and infrastructural development to increase natural space by 10%. Also under the Act is the government's 25 year Environment Plan, which includes the creation of the Nature Recovery Network (NRN), which includes a wide range of representation from government and sector bodies. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will be established, which will allow for the coordination of nature development, based around a county pattern. Policy will be integrated via a range of methods including via the existing Countryside Stewardship Scheme. In December 2023 the government announced the allocation of the responsible authorities for the LNRS.¹⁴ Whilst Portsmouth will fall under Hampshire County Council for this purpose, the city will need to engage with the Hampshire team and Public Health, Planning, Parks and Strategy are working collaboratively for this purpose. The government have mandated that the LNRS should be published by spring 2025.¹⁵

10 Cornerstones of Culture | Local Government Association

11 Time to think... | Arts Council England

12 Future of public leisure | Sport England

13 Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy | The National Lottery Heritage Fund

14 Local nature recovery strategies: responsible authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

15 Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

This bill is known as 'Protect Duty' or 'Martyr's Law'. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the consistent delivery of security preparedness across the UK to protect the public. It will mean that premises (and some events) will need to put in proportionate and appropriate measures depending on the activity scheduled to take place. The legislation will affect several of our services, such as Sports and Leisure, Parks, Events, Libraries and Museums and Licensing, together with our partners such as performance venues and local businesses. All premises within scope of the legislation will need to register with the Regulator, who will coordinate with a Designated Senior Officer in the organisation. The extent of preparation will depend on whether the premises/event qualifies as 'Standard Tier' (capacity of 100–799 individuals) or 'Enhanced Tier' (800 plus individuals).

In preparation for this bill, the government undertook initial consultation in 2021, held stakeholder discussions in 2022, held sectoral webinars in early 2023 and held roadshows across the UK in May 2023, after the draft bill was published. The Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) then undertook pre-legislative scrutiny of the published draft bill.

Following feedback from the consultations and HASC's pre-legislative scrutiny, the government reviewed their proposals which relate to Standard Tier premises. Consequently, a further government consultation was issued for the period February to March 2024.¹⁶ It is intended that prior to implementation of the legislation, there will be a period of 18–24 months following royal assent for stakeholders to prepare for their new obligations.

Portsmouth City Council will set up a core steering and reporting body for the purpose of planning and implementation of this legislation. This

will work across several directorates, including CLRS and will work closely with other cross-directorate workstreams including Health & Safety and Prevent.¹⁷

Changes to marriage law

Registration of marriages changed in May 2021 to the schedule system, which meant that the mother's name was now required to be shown on the marriage certificate. In April 2022, the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 came into force.¹⁸ This meant that outdoor weddings – which had been permitted on a temporary basis during the pandemic – was now made permanent. Previously this had been allowed only within a permanent outdoor structure.

As at July 2022 the Law Commission for England and Wales recommended reform to weddings law and asked the government to review the law to reflect its recommendations.¹⁹ If the recommendations become law, then the focus of regulation will shift from a registered building to a marriage officiant. This will open up a broad range of locations for couples to get married, including parks, gardens, beaches, woods, cruise ships and village halls. With the cost of living pressures, this may also make weddings more affordable.

If approved the reforms will also bring consistency of regulation across all beliefs, including the legalising of non-religious beliefs. Civil weddings will be able to be conducted by independent (regulated) officiants, as well as registrars. Notice of intended weddings will be able to be posted online by couples, together with freedom for couples to choose their registration district.

¹⁶ Home Office consultation template (publishing.service.gov.uk)

¹⁷ Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹⁸ Outdoor civil weddings and civil partnerships made permanent - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹⁹ Outdated weddings laws to be overhauled under new reforms - Law Commission

Our Registrars Service will keep updated and embed the change as they become law.

Data Protection and Digital Information Bill

This bill, once enacted, will remove both the requirement for a wet signature to documents and for paper registers to be held. It will therefore ease the death registration process and allow our Registrars Service to offer a higher quality service. It will avoid the duplication of both paper and electronic registers being held.²⁰

Changes to the Historic Environment Record

The Historic Environment Record sits with the Museum Service and is funded by Planning Services.

Historic Environment Records are covered by clause 236 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which was enacted in October 2023.²¹ The new legislation will require local authorities to maintain a Historic Environment Record (HER) to a minimum standard, regarding areas such as content, digitalisation and interoperability.

Aspects of the Act relating to Historic Environment Records ('HERs') will be implemented during 2024. It is likely to take two or three years from the implementation of the legislation for HERs at local authorities to achieve the required minimum standard. Local authorities will be expected to cover the costs of maintaining the HER to the standard and it is not intended that funding will be ring-fenced by central government to cover the additional costs.

Changes to Cemeteries practice

In December 2022 the Law Commission commenced a new project *Burial, Cremation and New Funerary Methods*.²² This project is partly in response to increased land pressure and capacity concerns regarding cemeteries and burials. At the present time, only local authorities within London are permitted to reclaim purchased graves where existing burials have taken place and there is remaining capacity in the grave to be used. Some local authorities have taken to submitting private bills to parliament to extend this right. The Law Commission project will include a review of laws governing burials and this is of interest to the Cemeteries Service as it develops.

Increased regulatory powers

Legislative reform in this area will bring additional enforcement duties upon the Regulatory Services teams. Incoming examples (not exhaustive) include:

- Food Regulation – Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023
- Restrictions on shampoos, soaps – The Cosmetic Products (Restriction of Chemical Substances) Regulations 2023
- Single Use plastic – The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023
- New licensing regulatory framework for non surgical cosmetic procedures under the Health and Care Act 2022

20 Data Protection and Digital Information Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

21 Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

22 Burial, Cremation, and New Funerary Methods - Law Commission

King's Speech 2024

Proposed legislation as contained in the King's Speech in July 2024, with relevance to the directorate as follows:

- **Product Safety and Metrology bill.**

The aim of this bill is to:

- Provide regulatory stability and deliver more protection for consumers
- Update the legal metrology framework, governing the accuracy of weights and measures for purchased goods.

- **Digital Information and Smart Data bill**

- This is carried over from the previous government, see above.

- **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) bill**

- This is carried over from the previous government, see above.

- **Tobacco and Vapes bill**

This was started by the previous government. The aim of this bill is to:

- Introduce a progressive smoking ban to gradually end the sale of tobacco products. Children born on or after 1 January 2009 will never be able to be legally sold cigarettes
- Stop vapes and other consumer nicotine products from being deliberately branded and advertised to appeal to children.

Innovative, efficient and effective delivery

With change approaching from government social policy and legislative change already on the horizon, the directorate is focused on delivering in the most agile way against a challenging budget horizon. Shared service models have been adopted where appropriate with other authorities in order to achieve best value and deliver most effectively for our residents.

The directorate continues to work with partners, where this also achieves dynamic outcomes for the city. This can be seen in collaboration with the BBC, MoD and Royal Navy to deliver D Day 80, partnering with Chichester Festival Theatre to deliver a youth hub, working with Portsmouth Creates to raise the profile of the city's cultural industries, and working with partners such as Shaping Portsmouth and Tourism South East to deliver the visitor economy.

The directorate looks to work across the Council beyond its departments, as it recognises the strength in collaborative working models. Examples here include the Greening Development working group, a strategic group across Public Health, Planning, Housing, Parks, Strategy and Regeneration. A further example is the work of the Regulatory Services team with Public Health and Transport, regarding air quality monitoring.

The directorate seeks always to put the customer first, and many services are offered at low or no cost to the customer. Where fees are charged, these are considered sensitively, via an annual review process, which is taken to the relevant portfolio as decision maker.

Co-production models are also important to the directorate as an innovate and effective model of delivery. This includes, at the Waterfront Garden Centre, engagement of individuals with learning difficulties as growers via referral from Adult Social Care. The volunteer cohort is also an integral part of the operating model of the directorate, across many departments including Libraries, Museums and Parks.

Major projects within the directorate include Bransbury Park, Victoria Park and the Border Control Post, together with King George V Football Complex. The latter has now been handed over to the Hampshire Football Association as operator. It should be noted that there is no project management office within the directorate, and projects are managed by the existing staff cohort.

1.3 City Vision 2040

The City Vision 2040 is a shared vision for the city which has been facilitated by the Council and developed with city partners and stakeholders to represent the city priorities moving forward.



The directorate delivers against the City Vision as follows:

Healthy and Happy City

A wide range of free to access events and active seafront offer; multiple hectares of green and open space comprising formal parks, pocket parks and other spaces to enjoy; sports and leisure recreation offer; council support to Hive Portsmouth including volunteering opportunities.

City rich in culture and creativity

an offer of six museums, with five free to enter; funding and professional support to a range of arts and culture partners.

City with a thriving economy

– Regulatory Services working with Port Health Border Control and managing an enforcement regime of over 250 statutory duties; Licensing regulating a range of licenses and approvals under a regulatory regime; Registrars service providing marriage, birth, death and citizenship registration and ceremonies.

City of Lifelong Learning

Nine libraries, mobile offer and archives service providing an outreach offer and free activities all year round; community engagement undertaken by Libraries and Museums services; community centres with activity offer across the city.

Green city

active management of green and open spaces; biodiversity management, outreach and engagement opportunities at sites across the city.

1.4 Delivering for Portsmouth: the Council Plan

The Council's corporate plan sets out a threefold mission which is:

to work together with partners and communities to:

- Champion and celebrate our city
- Improve the lives of our residents and ensure they are prepared for the next stages of their lives
- Enhance our environment and protect it for the future.

The priorities that flow from the mission (and intersect with our directorate) are:

No.	Priority headline	Priority outcomes	Service output and examples
1	Make our streets and public spaces safer, cleaner, greener	Tackle envirocrime Ensure robust regulatory services	Parks: keep our parks and natural spaces clean and tidy. Take prompt action against flytipping e.g. at countryside sites. Regulatory Services: take action against rogue traders who seek to exploit consumers
2	Ensure the city is a welcoming, vibrant and inclusive place to live, work and visit	Sport and leisure opportunities Cultural activity and experience	Bransbury Leisure Centre major project King George V Football Complex Use the City Centenary 2026 for cultural events Libraries and Museums public engagement programmes.
3	Make sure when people need additional help to live their lives, it is there for them	Support children and families with early help Provide support to people struggling with the cost of living	School Library Service initiatives and events Provision of free events and initiatives across the culture and leisure portfolio. HIVE Portsmouth support
4	Protect and enhance the environment of the city	Ensure we are resilient to provide nature based solutions Air quality	Biodiversity management for our countryside sites. Regulatory air quality team working collaboratively with public health and transport teams.
5	Strengthen the city economy, creating jobs and opportunities for residents	Improve opportunities for young people in the city	Through our culture revenue clients, provide funding support to enable the development of education and outreach programmes, including organisations such as New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth Creates and Portsmouth Guildhall. Supported internships and work placements.
6	Make sure we are an efficient and effective organisation.	Implement a digital strategy Maintain preventative options to reduce demand on services and systems	Directorate engagement with corporate project team with ideas for potential areas for digitisation and improved efficiency. Resource and support our partners e.g. HIVE Portsmouth.
7	Speak up for our city	Border Control Post Work with strategic partners	Regulatory Services continue to lobby central government for resolution to funding gap on Port Health. Engagement with Portsmouth Creates

Priorities for the individual portfolios that the directorate reports to include:

Culture, Regeneration and Economic Development portfolio:

- Portsmouth Centenary
- Bransbury Park leisure complex major project
- Cemeteries plan
- Hive Portsmouth

Climate Change and Greening the city

- Greening work (biodiversity management)
- Air and water quality

Environmental services

- Regulatory services (consumer protection, law enforcement)

Community Safety, Leisure and Sport:

- Border Control Post
- Leisure and sport opportunities across the city to improve wellbeing.

1.5 Council Strategies

Strategies developed by the directorate are referred to directly in the relevant sections of the business plan.

There are several other Council strategies that have an impact on the directorate.

The **Health and Wellbeing strategy 2022–2030**²³ considers the wider determinants of health, including social inequalities. The directorate is ideally placed to deliver against the wider determinants of health, as it is well established and shown in this business plan that arts, culture and leisure engagement have a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing. Services are able to provide immediate support to those in financial hardship (e.g. Leisure Card, libraries, museums), together with supporting a community response to local need, for example through the HIVE. Educational attainment is also set out as a wider determinant of health, for future life outcomes; by providing and supporting a wide range of literacy programmes, our libraries and museums services are a key partner in this outcome.

The draft **Heritage Strategy**²⁴ sets out how the Council will conserve and interpret the heritage of Portsmouth, so that it continues to reflect the rich history of the city and supports the shared city vision, Imagine Portsmouth, which looks towards 2040. The city's heritage has shaped what and how the city has developed over time and will continue to influence the city's future. Understanding and interpreting the heritage story for the city is hugely important, to foster the sense of civic identity, but also because of the importance of heritage in creating the future for Portsmouth. Heritage themes and assets are crucial to the future economic success of the city and understanding the past gives us a sense of the present and confidence for the future.

²³ health-and-wellbeing-strategy-january-2022-accessible.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

²⁴ Heritage Strategy - Appendix A.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

Portsmouth's **Greening Strategy and Delivery Plan**²⁵ sets out several green infrastructure objectives that cut across Council directorates. The objectives include to create, improve, protect, maintain and connect green infrastructure. The expansion of the Countryside team (sitting in the Parks Service) and their important contribution as qualified ecologists, has allowed the growth of volunteer greening opportunities across the city under the supervision of Countryside Officers. Examples of inner city greening undertaken include sites at Tipner Coastal Walkway, Gatcombe Park, Highgrove open space and Fratton Bridge. The team continue to work collaboratively with the Green and Healthy team in Public Health, as members of the cross cutting Greening Development Group.

The Council's **Social Value Policy** was adopted in 2021.²⁶ This defines Portsmouth's social value as comprising three strands: social impact (improve the wellbeing of local people), economic impact (improve opportunities for local businesses) and sustainability impact (build back greener). Through its broad range of services, the directorate is well placed to contribute towards all three impacts. As set out in the Local Government Association paper, **Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes**,²⁷ the directorate offers a broad remit of services which commissioned social prescribing link workers may refer enquirers to – including parks and open spaces, libraries, museums, leisure centres and arts spaces.

The Council's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy covers the period 2023–2026**²⁸ and is based on the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government.²⁹ The framework is comprised of four parts: community engagement (1), organisational

commitment (2), customer care (3) and diverse workforce (4). The directorate is committed to working with the development of the framework. Existing community engagement work in the directorate is extensive, ranging from the community co-production with local residents concerning Victoria Park, to engagement with the local community via the local housing association with regard to developing community uses and activity programming for Eastney Beam Engine House. Likewise, the Volunteer Futures project was very much a co-production project, with the aim of bringing in underrepresented audiences.

The directorate is comprised in the most part of frontline customer facing roles and has a high level of customer engagement. All enquiries to the directorate are welcome.

In terms of workforce diversity, the directorate is engaged in areas where the Council has made commitments, for example, in committing to internship placements with neuro-diverse young people in services where this can be accommodated.

25 PORTSMOUTH GREENING STRATEGY and DELIVERY PLAN

26 Social Value Policy March 2021 (portsmouth.gov.uk)

27 Harnessing culture and sport to deliver social prescribing and improve health outcomes | Local Government Association

28 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Draft Strategy (portsmouth.gov.uk)

29 Equality Framework for Local Government | Local Government Association

Section 2:

Services

2.1 Workforce development

Supported Internships

Workplace inclusion is an important part of the Council's commitment to the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion agenda. In 2023 the Council's Post 16 Skills team, received funding in part from the Department for Education and in part from the Department for Work and Pensions access to work scheme. This allowed the Council to develop a Supported Internships programme. To qualify for the programme, interns had to have an Education Health Care Plan and qualify under Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The objective of the programme was to support said young people into employment and reduce 'NEET' figures (not in education, employment or training). Six placements in total were offered for the first year with the directorate offering two placements: one in the Museums Service and one in the Hive. Subject to funding, the Supported Internships scheme will be a rolling programme offered by the Council year on year which CLRS will continue to support.

Apprenticeships

The Council offers a broad range of apprenticeships as part of their commitment to workforce engagement. These can be undertaken at the commencement of a career journey or taken on by an existing employee. The directorate has several employees engaged in apprenticeships ranging from Level 2 through to Level 7. These have been across the areas of business administration and leadership, regulatory compliance and horticulture. Both internships and apprenticeships form part of the directorate's commitment to offer 'brilliant career opportunities', as referenced in the City Vision 2040. The directorate will continue to offer apprenticeships where there is resource allocation to enable this to happen.

Volunteering

Volunteering is available across many services in the directorate. Its benefits include the ability for services to listen, consult and engage with local communities, and feedback. It also meets the City Vision objective regarding lifelong learning and healthy and happy. Opportunities are available in the following areas of the directorate:

Parks: Waterfront Garden Centre demonstrates the core values of the city vision: healthy and happy, green city, lifelong learning. The centre engages both volunteers and growers via social enterprise. For the growers, referrals are made both internally via Adult Services and externally from Solent NHS Trust and Aldingbourne Trust. The garden centre provides a safe and nurturing environment for the growers to develop social and life skills, enabled by the volunteers in a supporting capacity. It also allows for a social prescribing model for those with mental health conditions, where traditional health plans are not necessarily the best outcome.

Parks: at Victoria Park project, volunteering is very much central to the key principles of the project design, outcomes and evaluation. The design of the project included a volunteer hub building and office with full facilities, and the funding of the project included scope for a Volunteer Coordinator. The coordinator then developed a full offer, particularly aimed at young people and adults currently not in education, employment or training, thereby offering a productive learning environment. Volunteer recruitment included a wide breadth, from social media volunteers, to weekly community gardening, volunteer art about the park, historic research and graphic design. Corporate day volunteering was also on offer, opportunities offered through Creative Advances³⁰ (working with adult services) and the development of a Friends Group. Volunteers were recruited through the Hive and Job Centre.

³⁰ Home - Creative Advances (creative-advances.co.uk)

Parks: Countryside volunteering is a widely available opportunity across the range of our countryside sites. This can take a variety of forms. Opportunities exist for participation in volunteer work parties at the Portsdown Hill, Hilsea Lines and Milton Common sites. This can include roles to encompass tasks such as habitat management and scrub control, naturalisation of habitat and reintroduction of native planting and litter picking. Volunteer groups are also becoming established for the smaller inner city sites, volunteering can include activity such as hedge aftercare (wildlife corridor development), bramble removal and wildflower sowing. Countryside volunteering therefore meets both the lifelong learning and green city objectives of the City Vision.

Libraries have a strong record in offering volunteering opportunities which support the library service. Activities on offer both provide a sense of connection to the community and personal development, together with work experience.

The Library Service very much seeks to champion equality of access to information. Volunteers have helped expand reach through the Home Library Service. Volunteer support including hosting for Reading Friends groups all over the city enables social connection. The Visually Impaired group also have volunteers supporting their weekly sessions. Depending on individual interest, other opportunities include volunteering at the History Centre and Archive to catalogue, digitise and transcribe. Alternatively, volunteers can engage in branch library support such as helping with displays, supporting library clubs, providing IT support to customers. Volunteers are also engaged with Friends groups in two of our city libraries.

Museums also have a broad volunteering offer. Opportunities include working with the service engagement team, to develop and deliver fun, interactive events and activities. At Eastney Gas Engine House, volunteers are involved in conserving and maintaining the collections both on display and in store. Collections volunteers also help with the Natural History

collection at Cumberland House, Portsmouth Museum and Hilsea Store. For volunteers who prefer frontline engagement, front of house volunteer opportunities are available at Southsea Castle, Portsmouth Museum and Cumberland House. Other bespoke volunteer opportunities include research for the Historic Environment Record, military history cataloguing for the D Day collection and plant care volunteers at Cumberland House.

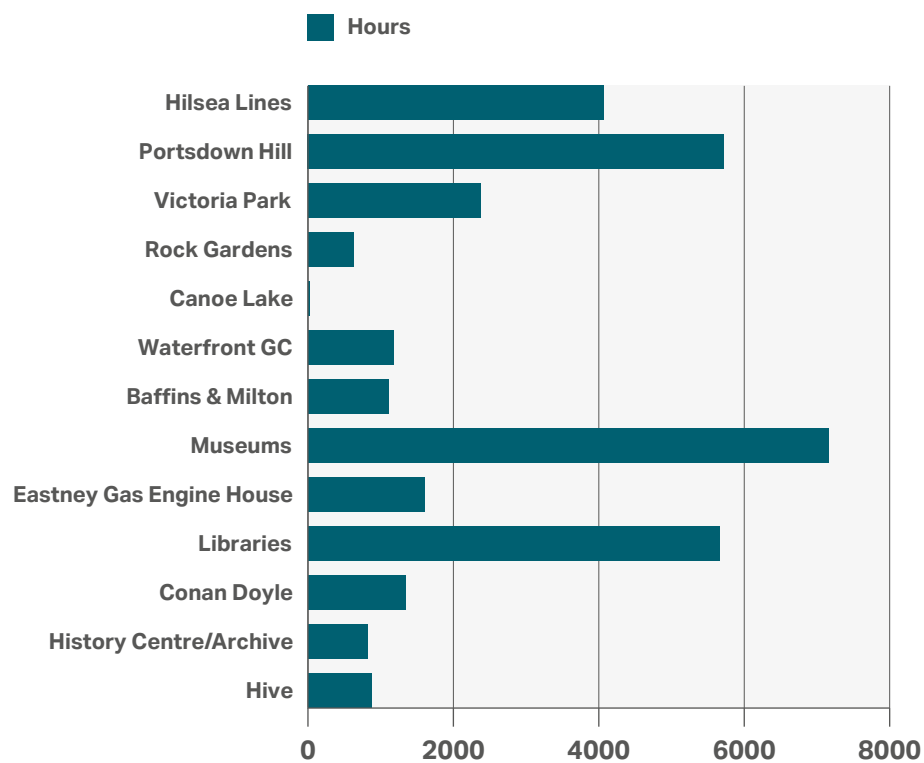
Hive, the strategic organisation in the city comprises representatives from the voluntary and community sector (VCSE), local clinical commissioning group and the Council. It delivers against the City Vision by supercharging volunteers and building strong partnerships (thriving economy). Hive connects VCSE groups within the city to benefit its residents by maximising choice of alternative support. The Hive VCSE network can access marginalised groups that have previously been hard to reach. Volunteering support for the Hive can take one of two forms. Firstly, individuals who volunteer for the Hive itself, volunteer on the Hive front desk to help with providing advice and signposting to services. The Hive also has a volunteer registration role and registers and places volunteers within organisations in the city.

The directorate keeps statistics on its volunteering input. Volunteering for the previous year, by service, is quantified as follows:

Note that the Hive volunteer numbers are for volunteers directly in Hive, not for volunteers placed by Hive.

The equivalent value of the volunteering hours has been estimated at 17 full time staffing roles, with total hours equivalent to 32,885 per annum.

It is worth reiterating that the benefits of volunteering are much more than their quantifiable value and delivery to the service concerned. Key outcomes for volunteering include: access to further learning and training, development of community and social connection and health and wellbeing benefits, both to physical and mental health.



Ways of Working

The majority of the directorate’s services are customer facing. Many of the services have seen increased demand, both since the pandemic and in response to the cost of living crisis; for example, enquiries to the Hive Helpdesk in Central Library rose by 60% between year 2022/2023 and year 2023/2024.

Most of our services are delivering a service directly to residents and visitors, making it necessary for them to attend the working environment to be able to effectively carry out their role. The directorate is committed to providing a high level of customer service and values the impact that face to face collaboration and learning and development opportunities present. However, when and where appropriate, some staff are able to hybrid work within the context of the business need.

The directorate fully embraced Microsoft 365 and Sharepoint technology as one of the Council’s early adopters. Together with the rest of the Council, the directorate is using this technology to work more efficiently by working on documents collaboratively in real time. There are Sharepoint champions across the directorate who can assist their colleagues.

The directorate continues to represent its unique needs to the corporate centre. For example, the HR business partner, Finance business partner and IT business partner participate in directorate management team meetings and are kept fully apprised of the demands of the directorate. The directorate has a high number of satellite sites and outposts which means different methods of communication are key, as not all staff have access to email, intranet and Sharepoint during their working day. The directorate issues a bi-monthly newsletter, to keep all employees informed and engaged regarding leading workstreams, celebrations of awards and new funding streams, staff successes and corporate information such as the corporate priorities and behaviours. Each service

and team hold regular team meetings, to discuss and embed both corporate agenda items and matters specific to individual services.

Corporate Values

In 2023 the Council, following consultation with staff of all levels in the organisation, adopted the following values



The directorate continually works to embed these values both internally and externally throughout its work programmes. The directorate staff newsletter also incorporates examples of where the corporate priorities, missions and values are demonstrated, to help staff recognise the positive impact that the work they do has in delivering the council's priorities in meeting the needs of our residents, communities and visitors.

In the 2023 staff survey, 80% of the directorate staff rated their line manager as excellent or good. 82% strongly agreed or agreed that they understand how their work contributes to the Council Plan and Priorities.

Service changes overview

Since the last business plan, several services within the directorate have undergone changes, as the directorate has aimed to grow resilience by redesigning its services as opportunity allows. Changes have taken place as follows:

Licensing and Regulatory Services have combined the administrative functions of each respective team into one resourcing team, allowing for the sharing of best practice, greater learning, improved customer service and turnaround.

The **Events and Civic service** have combined with the Registrars service team under one senior manager. The previous Events and Civic Manager had previous experience of working with the Registrars service during the pandemic and therefore a natural alignment arose.

The **Modern Records and Historic Records** teams have been merged so that all officers are both Modern and Historical Records Officers, working in both locations. As with other services above this allows for a broadening of knowledge and team resilience. The Modern Records Manager is in position under a shared services agreement with West Sussex County Council which allows for greater collaboration between the two authorities in the professional field of Modern Records.

2.2 Events, Civic and Lord Mayor's Service

The Events Service delivers against the City Vision 2040 objectives of a **city rich in culture and creativity, a city with a thriving economy** and **a healthy and happy city**. It looks to embrace the Council Plan regarding **Mission 1: Improve Lives**, as it looks to put culture at the heart of the city's success.

Our high profile events, which form our core offering, promote the city beyond the municipal boundary. These include Victorious, our Civic events (e.g. Remembrance, Mayor Making), Live at the Bandstand, the International Kite Festival and Armed Forces Day. Our lead events also provide opportunities for partnership working, for example with Nova International for the Great South Run and with Victorious Festivals Limited. In 2025, Portsmouth Pride Trust will be hosting UK Pride 2025, which will be supported by the Council's Events Team.

Significant anniversaries that have meaning for the city include D Day 80 (2024), VE Day and VJ Day (2025) and the centenary year for Portsmouth's city status (2026). To put on an offer to the city for these anniversaries, the Events team work collaboratively with other services such as the Museums Service, the Partnerships and Commissioning Team and the Visitor Services and Tourism team.

Where some event celebrations are tied to commemorative anniversaries, this does restrict the extent to which the Events team is able to influence the calendar. However, the service will allocate events to quieter seasons of the year where they are able, to bring an annual balance to the offer.

Events are both provided directly by the service (e.g. Live at the Bandstand) and also by partnering with external organisations to stage an event (e.g. the International Kite Festival / Kite Society). All events are required to go through the Portsmouth Event Safety Advisory Group (PESAG). PESAG is a group of city stakeholders that have an interest in events (e.g. public services, emergency services and council

departments). The service are looking to further develop guidance and training for amateur organisers as this will help to grow events provision in the community.

The service also offer sponsorship opportunities to the business sector. This allows businesses to contribute **social value** to the city and offers exposure to new audiences.

There are several ways that the service is looking to develop in the coming years:

- Growing our staff, particularly where we have staff in new roles - this is pertinent where the Events team has combined with the Register Service and Civic Team under one senior manager.
- Looking at developing our social media presence.
- Looking for opportunities in areas outside the south of the city, utilising other Council land where feasible. This includes looking to make the Bandstand on Tour events a permanent part of the events programme following a successful trial in 2023.
- Working with Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme to see whether the service would be able to establish a mini-bandstand in other areas of the city.

Following the success of the Victoria Park People's Park project, particularly regarding the quality of the activity and event programme which was co-produced with local communities of parks users, the Events Service will look to utilise the opportunities that have arisen from this high-profile project to create opportunities elsewhere in the city.

The success of the Events Service very much depends on collaborative working with internal and external partners. This includes working with the Royal Navy, which has a strong presence in the city and is such an important part of the city's identity and heritage. The service looks to build on the established good relationship to enhance existing events

where there is a naval or ceremonial element. There is an opportunity to learn more about naval ceremonial etiquette and how this can be built into the core offer, for example Armed Forces Day.

Where possible at events, the service works with other council departments to showcase council initiatives to improve lives. This might include, at high profile events, including stalls to highlight council services such as Switched On Portsmouth³¹, Safe At Home Portsmouth³² and the cost of living support, together with working with the Library Service to promote the Council's offer.

The City Vision 2040 **green city** objective is also important to the service. The service provides a green events guide³³ for event organisers to advise how they can embed green and sustainable practices into their events. Whilst cost is prohibitive for some initiatives, event suppliers are encouraged to use local suppliers and minimise independent travel. All events have water bottle fillers, to incorporate the legislation on single use plastics.³⁴

The Southsea Coastal Scheme, delivered by Coastal Partners, is constructing new coastal defences over the coming years which reduce the risk of a major flood event. The events team are in regular liaison with the coastal team, as the works are divided into several frontage projects over the coming years to 2028 and as such sections of council land (that the service utilise to run events) will not be available at certain times. The service has developed a flexible approach to work with the team, to

relocate events to other locations where permissible. This has led to new expressions of events, such as Bandstand on Tour.

As at the 2021 census, Portsmouth comprised 14.8% population ethnic groupings other than white.³⁵ The service would like to be able to do more to serve minority communities, increase their attendance at events and encourage and support them to make applications for celebrations that are important to their culture, for example Eid and Diwali.

As referenced in section 1 of this document, the Events service are also affected by the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) bill, known as Martyn's Law.³⁶ Once this proposal becomes law, it will mean that some events will need to put in place proportionate and appropriate measures depending on the activity scheduled to take place. The Events Service is working closely with other departments and stakeholders to prepare for the necessary changes to practice.

Lord Mayor's Service

Part of the events team comprises the Lord Mayor's Office, a small cohort of staff who support the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress during their tenure. Going forward the Lord Mayors hosted and civic events will be integrated with the city events team, to build greater resilience.

The Lord Mayor's accommodation includes the city's silver collection, this was promoted during a major exhibition in spring 2023, Silver City.³⁷ Following conclusion of the exhibition period, 'silver tours' will become

31 switchedonportsmouth.co.uk

32 wearesafeathome.co.uk

33 [Green events guide \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](https://portsmouth.gov.uk/green-events-guide)

34 [Single-use plastics ban: plates, bowls, trays, containers, cutlery and balloon sticks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

35 [2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

36 [Terrorism \(Protection of premises\) draft bill: overarching documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

37 [Silver City exhibition illuminated by newly acquired gold ring - Portsmouth City Council](https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

available to book each summer via the Lord Mayor's team and the tour experience will include tea in the Parlour. This will enable more people to experience the city's culture in an accessible way. The silver tours will also be incorporated into the city cruise programme, as part of a wider city tour itinerary offer and the team will collaborate with the Visitor Services and Tourism team for this purpose.

It is also intended that, under the new combined service of Events and the Register Service, the Lord Mayor's Parlour will be licensed for wedding ceremonies.



2.3 Partnerships and Commissioning

By providing revenue and governance support to several organisations in the city, the Council can influence the wider cultural offer, in support of the Council Plan, to put **culture at the heart of the city's success**.

A recent assessment by McKinsey argues that the influence of the arts sector is considerable with impacts crossing the economy, individuals and communities:³⁸

Impact on the economy



Gross value added

The value to the UK economy of the goods and services produced in the sector



Turnover

The revenues generated from the sale of goods and services in the sector



Employment

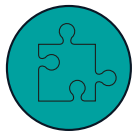
The number of jobs in the sector (including part-time, contractors, self-employed)



Enterprises

The number of enterprises in the sector (that in turn create gross value added, and jobs)

Impact on individuals



Skills

Development of new skills, such as creativity and problem-solving



Wellbeing and health

Contribution to improving wellbeing and health

Impact on communities



Sociable behaviour

Encouragement of sociable behaviour



Place-making

Contribution to attractiveness and prosperity of communities



Discourse

Stimulation of discourse and reflection

Regionally there is marked enthusiasm amongst local bodies to reinvigorate the cultural offer post Covid and develop a renewed cultural identity. Solent Growth Partnership is working with Arts Council England to create a Solent Cultural Plan to stimulate the cultural economy with local organisations, including the Council, having been invited as part of the consultation process.³⁹

Revenue support is reviewed annually by the Council as part of its formal decision-making process and the Council currently provides a broad remit of support to organisations, including Kings Theatre, New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth Creates and Portsmouth Guildhall. The funding from the Council enables the organisations to use the monies as seed funding, from which to leverage further funding from elsewhere.

Two of the organisations funded, Aspex Visual Arts Trust and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, have been successful in their applications to Arts Council England to be recognised as National Portfolio Organisations.

In autumn 2023, Portsmouth Creates was successful in receiving a Place Partnership Award in the sum of £650,000 over three years, from Arts Council England.⁴⁰ This funding builds on the funding provided to Portsmouth Creates by the founding partners, comprising the Council, University of Portsmouth and Victorious Festival. The Place Partnership funding will enable Portsmouth Creates to work with community creatives in the city to support talent, encourage growth and new investment.

The funding will also enable mentorships, apprenticeships and a Youth Board for young people. We Shine, which last displayed in 2022, is also set to return in 2024 and 2026. This speaks directly to the City Vision missive, a city rich in culture and creativity, together with the Council Plan to champion Portsmouth on the national stage. Portsmouth Creates

38 Assessing the direct impact of the UK arts sector | McKinsey

39 Solent Partners and Arts Council England develop Cultural Plan to build a regional Cultural and Creative sector proposition for future investment - Solent LEP

40 Portsmouth awarded £650,000 to strengthen creativity and culture | Arts Council England

also continues to offer the We Create Markets, which, having originated during the pandemic, continue to offer local creatives an opportunity to run independent stalls in a 'high street' location, over the course of a weekend. The organisation also offers the city the We Connect events, which support the growth of the creative and cultural sector.

The Guildhall Basement Project recently developed The Base through a remodelling of the existing basement of the Guildhall.⁴¹ This new facility is aimed at supporting young creative talent (the 11–25 age group) in Portsmouth. It delivers specialist programmes and workshops to support young people in creative projects, working with schools, colleges and other cultural partners. It aims to deliver a social objective in line with the Guildhall Trust's ethos, by removing barriers to engagement and providing a supportive environment for young people from low income and underrepresented groups to develop creative talent through opportunities. A Youth Advisory Panel has been involved since project inception and will continue to support the development of the space. In addition to funding from the Council, the project has also been in receipt of Arts Council England funding.

Accountability for the grant payments is supported by way of accompanying Service Level Agreements against which release of funds is set. This requires the organisations to produce evidence to the Council by way of business plans, audited accounts and operational policies. It also requires the organisations to evidence adherence to Council policies, such as equality, diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability.

The grants provided to the organisations are set annually through the revenue budget allocation and where the Council is required to make savings, as with all services, there is a risk of such funding being cut in the future.

Twining and sister cities

The Council plan includes a mission to champion Portsmouth and advocate for it at a broader level. Twining promotes the city internationally and contributes to the tourism and visitor economy. It also supports the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion principles by welcoming communities from different cultures. Currently the city has relationships with:

- Caen, France - twinned since 1987. This relationship has been key in the development of events programming for D Day anniversaries.
- Duisburg, Germany - twinned since 1950.⁴²
- Haifa, Israel - sister link since 1963
- Maizuru, Japan - sister city since 1998
- Portsmouth Atlantic Compact - established in 2013. This established links with the following: Portsmouth Virginia, Portsmouth New Hampshire and Portsmouth Rhode Island.
- Sydney, Australia - sister link since 1984
- Zhuahai, China - friendship city confirmed in 2014
- Zhanjiang, China - sister city since 2018
- Sylhet, Bangladesh - sister city since 2019
- Falkland Islands - sister city since 2021
- Halifax, Nova Scotia - sister city since 2021.

All twinned locations are supported by the Lord Mayor's and Events team, to promote and arrange visits.⁴³

41 The Base – A Creative Space For Young People (thebaseguildhall.com)

42 Duisburg - 70th anniversary - Portsmouth City Council

43 Twining - Portsmouth City Council

2.4 Sports and Leisure

Whilst there is no statutory obligation on the Council to provide sports and leisure services, the Council's sports and leisure provision, together with other partners in the city, contributes directly to the City Vision 2040 of a **healthy and happy city**. The Council's mission, to **improve lives** and support those struggling to make ends meet, includes enabling access for all to sports and leisure opportunities. The Portsmouth Health and Wellbeing Strategy, whilst identifying the key contribution of physical activity towards a healthy and happy city, also highlighted the contribution of financial barriers towards the wider determinants of health.⁴⁴

The value of sport and leisure to the UK economy cannot be overestimated. The Local Government Association's briefing paper, Promoting Health and Wellbeing Through Public Services (November 2023),⁴⁵ indicates as follows:

- £9.5 billion contribution to the UK economy comprising £5.2 billion in healthcare savings and £1.7 billion in social care savings.
- £72 billion in social value via a healthier population, consumer expenditure, improved work productivity, improved educational attainment and crime reduction.

Challenging inactivity is set out in the government's sports strategy 'Get Active' (August 2023).⁴⁶ This looks to target the least active groups, with inactivity remaining high, now exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis. **The Portsmouth Public Health Director Annual**

Report 2023 found that where twice as many people are obese in the most deprived areas as in the least deprived, a higher proportion of disposable income would need to be spent to support a healthy diet, from those on low incomes.⁴⁷ In addition, the Local Authority Health Profile for Portsmouth for 2023 shows that obesity rates are higher than the national average.⁴⁸ There is therefore an imperative upon the local authority to make sport and leisure more accessible, regardless of background. This principle very much aligns with **Sport England's** ten year strategy, Uniting the Movement⁴⁹ which looks to develop active environments and address under-representation. The data underpinning the Sport England strategy is contained in their **Active Lives** data set.⁵⁰

In developing an updated strategy for Portsmouth, the Council looks to align with the latest research in the sector. In addition to the above bodies and papers, this includes working regionally with bodies such as Energise Me,⁵¹ the Hampshire and Isle of Wight organisation for improving physical activity. Consultation on particular projects has also involved engagement with the Football Foundation, England Netball, Swim England and the Lawn Tennis Association, together with more local bodies such as BH Live, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Netball Association and Pompey in the Community.

Energise Me's strategic plan for 2022–2025, We Can Be Active, is based on an Active Partnerships model.⁵² This involves working with organisations in the region to make the aspirations of Sport England a

44 Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Appendix B.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

45 Sport and leisure: promoting health and wellbeing through public services | Local Government Association

46 Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity (publishing.service.gov.uk)

47 Director of Public Health's Annual Report - Full report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

48 Local Authority Health Profiles - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

49 Uniting the Movement | Sport England

50 Active Lives | Sport England

51 Energise Me - Changing lives through physical activity and sport

52 Home | Active Partnerships

reality via a place-based partnership. Their We Can Be Active⁵³ strategy looks to focus on the areas where inequality is greatest – in Portsmouth, Charles Dickens Ward. To support the development of active lifestyles in the city, the partnership model, Active Portsmouth Alliance, is a collaborative approach across health, local authority, VCSE and leisure sectors in the city.

The Council's **vision for Sport and Physical Activity in Portsmouth (Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance)** was approved in autumn 2023.⁵⁴ This document sets out an evidential basis for capital investment around sport and physical activity in the city, by following the Sport England Strategic Outcome Planning Guidance based on the Uniting the Movement strategy.

The strategy for Portsmouth provides a long-term alignment of the city's sports and leisure facilities with the needs of the city's residents. It covers the capital investment requirements to secure facilities for the next 10 years and includes the evidence base for the decisions that have been and will be made.

It is crucial that sport and leisure services provided by the Council continue to be **subsidised, affordable, universal and targeted** to meet the needs of the city's residents, irrespective of economic and social background. To achieve this, the majority of the Council's leisure facilities are managed under a contract with BH Live, a charitable social enterprise, where any generated surplus is reinvested into the contract for the benefit of sports and leisure provision. The Council has direct input into the contract and ongoing monitoring of such, to ensure that sports development objectives are progressed and that provision looks to challenge issues of disparity of access.

BH Live has a strong sports development programme as part of the partnership agreement with the Council. The aim of the development programme is to increase participation in physical activity and sport across the city, by encouraging residents to remain active and by targeting underrepresented communities. Therefore, the sports development team have linked in with BAME communities and provided more activities for women such as female only swimming and badminton.

Outreach towards the older generation (over fifty fives) includes walking football and walking netball. Portsmouth Interaction also sits within BH Live, the aim of this group programme being to improve health and social outcomes for adults with a mental health condition. Alongside this is a referral process, via community mental health trusts, NHS referral, social prescribers and Council department referrals.

Junior academies exist for cycling, gymnastics and tennis, to encourage physical activity habits in children. This includes free swimming for under 12s, city wide. BH Live also provides a SEND physical activity which has an inclusive aim to encourage physical activity and confidence outside of a mainstream setting. This is in addition to working with Headway, DS Active (Down Syndrome) and adults with visual impairment.

BH Live also engages in the Holiday Activities and Food programme to provide fun physical activities to children who may face a financial barrier to participation.

The Council also continues to provide the Leisure Card. This provides discounted activities, across a range of leisure and culture facilities, which ensures that access to sports activities is open to all in the city. BH Live continues to work with the Council to help promote the Leisure Card.

53 We Can Be Active Strategy for Hampshire and Isle of Wight - Energise Me

54 Agenda for Cabinet Member - The Leader (Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio) on Friday, 6th October, 2023, 10.00 am Portsmouth City Council

The Card has seen significant growth over the past year, both in terms of demand and onboarding of more partner agencies.

In January 2022 the Pyramids fully re-opened following a considerable renovation which replaced the leisure pools and events space into Exploria and a new gym. Exploria comprises a soft play and bounce function and as part of the Pyramids is also operated under the BH Live contract. The repurposing was undertaken to address the significant operational losses that the centre had been making.⁵⁵ As at one year of trading in the new configuration, the deficit had reduced to such an extent that represented a 90% reduction in the subsidy required to operate the centre. The Exploria section opened slightly earlier than the gym, in August 2021. An analysis at one year since opening confirmed that participation levels at the bounce and play were 27% higher than the pre Covid participation for the leisure pools. In the face of ongoing budget pressures, if the reconfiguration had not been undertaken, the Pyramids centre would have had to close, reducing the overall sports and leisure offer to the city.

A key partnership in delivering against sports and leisure provision in the city is the partnership between the Council and the Andrew Simpson Centre, a watersports centre situated in the north-east of the city.

The centre has been in receipt of capital funding from the Council for improvement works; as part of the contract with the centre, performance is monitored quarterly by the Council, regarding financial performance and utilisation.

The Centre is committed, as part of its vision, to engage with schools and underrepresented sections of the community. It participates in the Leisure Card and all centres are part of the Andrew Simpson Foundation. The Foundation delivers a charitable programme, which aims to broaden

access to watersports for young people and to limit financial barriers to participation. Prior to 2017, the watersports centre at this Portsmouth location had been run as a profit centre rather than under a non-profit trust such as the Andrew Simpson Foundation, for the benefit of the community and broadening access.

The Centre also offers subsidies to local schools so that young people have opportunity to experience watersports. Opportunities for young people also come via the Holiday Activities and Food Programme delivery, in partnership with the Council, throughout the year.

In addition, the Centre delivers the Portsmouth Sail Training Trust. This programme offers watersports activities to young people who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education, from across a range of schools in the city.

For young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, the Centre provides a SEND Sail Club.

In summer 2023, the centre created a pop up watersports centre to complement the flagship event Formula Kite European Championships. This pop-up centre enabled young people from the local area to participate in several water-based activities during the event.

In 2018 the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy⁵⁶, supported by Sport England, identified that there was a challenge regarding the quality and quantity of pitches and ancillary facilities in Portsmouth, to support adult football in addition to provision for women and girls. The Council had also at that time made a commitment to the Football Foundation having expressed interest in the ParkLife Scheme, this Scheme being a work programme between the Premier League, Sport England and the Football Foundation to deliver artificial grass pitches for football across the UK.

55 Pyramids 12 months report to CLED 17 March 2023 v2.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

56 Final Draft Portsmouth City Council Stage D -PPS - V7 - 08.03.18.pdf

King George V Playing Fields in Cosham was identified as the most appropriate site for this purpose and the Council undertook consultation with football clubs together with residents in Cosham, with the consultation revealing strong support for the scheme. In addition, the site had suffered arson in 2017 so this provided an opportunity for restoration or upgrade. Hampshire Football Association took on the new site as operator and worked with local clubs to develop a usage plan for the site to meet the needs of the community.

This development sits well with the overall sports and leisure objectives for the city, to increase levels of physical activity, reduce obesity and increase sports participation by underrepresented groups.

2.5 Library and Archive Service

2025 will mark the 175th anniversary of the Public Libraries Act 1850, which, through a modest increase in local taxation, gave local authorities the ability to establish free public libraries. Sixty years ago, the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 updated this Act to require that local authorities 'provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.⁵⁷ This is superintended by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Since 2010, more than 800 libraries across the country have closed due to the financial pressure on local authorities.⁵⁸

The nine library centres across the city are effectively an early intervention service to provide knowledge and support, particularly for those from deprived backgrounds. As established centres for the community across different areas in the city, with different needs, they offer a place of respite and refuge to many, including those in need of social connection and information. Through the delivery of a wide range of services and activities, libraries can deliver real social change and enable an informed, engaged and literate city.

The library centres are also an important bulwark against misinformation and enable the development of empathy for others in a polarised world.

The Library and Archive Service is a key deliverer against the City Vision objective, lifelong learning, together with contributing directly to the Council's mission to **improve lives**.

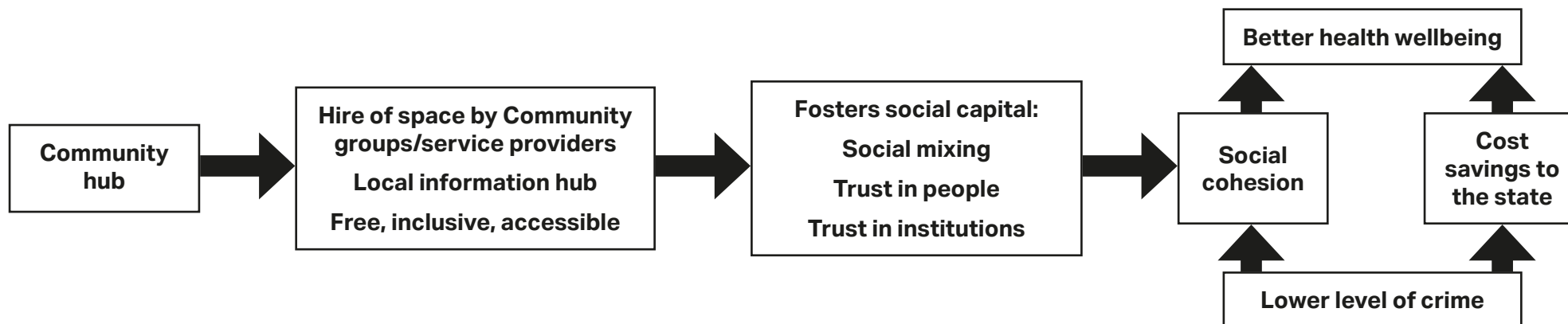
The figure on the following page represents the social and community value of libraries.⁵⁹ The Big Issue in 2023 reported on the vital contribution of libraries, as 'safe, non-judgemental, free' spaces, a 'community hub, where there's no stigma attached. Anyone can access, no matter what'.⁶⁰

57 Libraries as a statutory service - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

58 Libraries should be at the heart of public life, for those from less privileged backgrounds, they provide vistas of opportunity - Richard Ovenden, Financial Times, 3 July 2024.

59 Libraries for Living, and for Living Better.pdf (librariesconnected.org.uk)

60 Inside UK's 'vital' libraries providing 'warm banks' as cost of living bites and households struggle (bigissue.com)



Through delivery to improve literacy outcomes in the city, libraries can indirectly improve outcomes for our residents in areas of health, housing, education and employment.⁶¹ The libraries are also an essential bulwark against digital exclusion, by offering essential digital services through internet enabled public access technology (and WiFi). A recent implementation, using Arts Council Funding, has been to install 'office pods' in the Central and North End libraries, to serve those in the community who work flexibly.

The Library Service adheres to the Libraries Connected framework. Libraries Connected is a UK charity (formerly Society of Chief Librarians). It is funded partly by the Arts Council as the Investment Principle Support Organisation (IPSO) for UK libraries. An Investment Principle Support Organisation works to support other organisations (in this case, libraries) in the cultural sector to embed the Arts Council's Investment Principles in their work.

Libraries Connected comprises four workstreams, or 'offers':

- Culture and creativity
- Health and wellbeing
- Information and digital
- Reading and literacy



61 This argument is included in the Portsmouth Health & Wellbeing Strategy health-and-wellbeing-strategy-january-2022-accessible.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

It also has two overarching promises:

Children's Promise: to welcome children from the earliest months of life, helping parents and carers to support them as they grow.

Vision & Print Impaired People's Promise: provide library and information services to almost 2 million blind & visually impaired people in the UK.

The value of libraries cannot be underestimated. In 2023 Libraries Connected, in partnership with University of East Anglia, published a report, Libraries for living and for living better.⁶² This report found that:

For every £1 spent, the return on investment from direct library services into mental health benefits is £10.

The productivity gain from a single visit to a library to combat loneliness can be equated to £21 per person.

Health and Wellbeing

All the libraries provide an annual programme of activities, the majority of which are free. Together with the warm welcome spaces initiative (including hot drinks provision) the library centres provide essential opportunities for social contact and interaction for those who may have little opportunity to meet and engage with others.

Social prescription (non-clinical interventions to improve health outcomes) is also offered via the Reading Well: Books on Prescription scheme⁶³ which encourages people to manage their health and wellbeing by reading self-help books.

In connection with the Visual Impaired (VI) Promise, the service has a dedicated Visual Impairment Services Officer, who runs two VI drop-in groups that each meet weekly. This operates as both a social group and a consultation forum, with outside agencies frequently consulting users on accessibility of services and wider issues. In 2023 the officer won the Libraries Connected Award for Vision and Print Impaired Services including her educational and cross-generational work.⁶⁴

Annually, the service engages with HiVis Fortnight, this event promotes the accessibility of library services, supported by the organisation Reading Sight.⁶⁵

Reading and Literacy

Where there is relatively low book ownership at home, the libraries are key to raising literacy and children may borrow up to 20 books and audio items, in addition to electronic items. There are no library charges for loans or reservations. Young people are also encouraged to use the libraries for homework and digital support, where they may not have the space or provision at home. Latest figures from National Literacy Trust confirm that book ownership has fallen amongst children in receipt of free school meals and it is well established that reading performance is strongly associated with book ownership. The Trust also confirmed that the cost of living crisis has led to parents purchasing fewer books for their children. The library offer therefore forms a central tenet in supporting children and families in the city.⁶⁶

62 Libraries for Living, and for Living Better.pdf (librariesconnected.org.uk)

63 Reading Well | Reading Agency

64 Libraries Connected Awards 2023 winners revealed! | Libraries Connected

65 Hi VIS Fortnight 2023 - 1-14 June 2023 - Reading Sight

66 Book ownership in 2023 | National Literacy Trust

There is also a significant provision of books in dual languages to serve those communities in the city that speak English as a second language.

The service partners with the Book Trust,⁶⁷ a charity to reach children with material. This includes gift packs of books to babies (via Registrars), Treasure Packs to nurseries and Time to Read packs to Reception. The library centres also hold regular Rhymetime and Storytime which encourages families to make visits to the library a regular occurrence, at the same time developing attachment, social interaction and speech/ language development. Activities for older children are often free and run through school holidays, such the Coding Clubs.

For adults, Reading Groups provide an opportunity for social connection as well as sharing a love of reading. Part of the outreach provision includes a Reading Friends adults group comprising diverse ethnic minority backgrounds, building community together.

Working with schools

Book exchange visits are very popular with the city's schools and provide an opportunity to build relationship with the local library and take a book home. The School Library Service operates as a traded service of the council, via service level agreements with schools and provides a broad reading development offer including:

- A provision of books to each school in accordance with numbers on roll;
- 'Meet the Author' events
- Portsmouth Literature Quiz for primary and secondary
- Portsmouth Book Award for primary and secondary – which includes a winning celebratory event at a local theatre

- 'Big City Read' in conjunction with the Education service – which includes a gifted book, related work and author livestream event as part of primary to secondary transition.

A big event in the annual calendar for children's provision is the Summer Reading Challenge. The aim of this event is to keep the momentum of reading development over the summer holiday period. An additional provision is the Summer Reading Challenge Plus, where disadvantaged pupils are identified by schools to visit the library and engage in the Challenge prior to the commencement of the holiday period, to remove any barriers from their participation in the Challenge. The service has also engaged with Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) to promote the Challenge and reading to disadvantaged families.

The importance of the Library Service offer towards the city's reading and literacy is attainment is clearly demonstrated by the 2024 What Kids Are Reading report, by Renaissance Learning.⁶⁸ The report, based on a survey of 1.2 million pupils showed a 4.4% decrease in the number of books read, compared to 2023. The data for children's enjoyment of reading in their free time was lowest from those in receipt of free school meals, illustrating the importance in Portsmouth of targeting particular school cohorts via the Summer Reading Challenge and Big City Read events.

In recent years the Summer Reading Challenge winners event has collaborated with the Countryside Officer (Parks service) to include age appropriate activities for children and families at the event, such as making seed bombs and learning about pollinating. This is in conjunction with other family based activities (face painting, mascots, puppetry and silent disco) together with children receiving a special medal at the winners event, usually held at Southsea Castle in collaboration with the Museums service.

67 What we do at BookTrust | BookTrust

68 What Kids Are Reading | Renaissance Learning

Culture and Creativity via Outreach and Development

Part of the Library Service includes outreach and development activity. This is facilitated by Arts Council England grant funding. Recent projects include 'Volunteer Futures' and 'Doyle Detectives'.

The objective of Volunteer Futures is to enable direct targeting of communities of multiple deprivation, together with broadening volunteering opportunities to a wider audience. The project has engaged higher numbers of neuro-diverse and young people engaged in its community projects, such as EmPower Paulsgrove. The project officer has engaged a wide range of organisations across the city in the project to consider how barriers to volunteering by underrepresented groups can be overcome.

The Doyle Detectives project utilises the city's Conan Doyle collection as an educational resource and is an enabling opportunity for neurodiverse individuals and people with mental and/or physical disabilities to volunteer to gain work, life skills and experience. Experience gained will enable some volunteer Detectives to return to formal work settings and for others will develop confidence to continue and broaden volunteering experience.

The Library Outreach team aim to bring the library service out of the buildings and into communities. This can include attending community events such as collaborating with the Regeneration directorate's 'community parties' across the city and attending large-scale events, such as Victorious Festival, with the Mobile Library. The outreach staff also work in partnership with the Portsmouth HAF programme to provide a broad range of family friendly activity at libraries across the city all year round.

The Outreach team have a particular focus on libraries in the north of the city with an aim to increase borrowing and engagement in those areas. Outreach activity includes promotion of the annual BookFest. The BookFest programme seeks to have a broad base appeal; in 2023 the festival included a rap workshop for young people aged 14–16 funded by Arts Council England. This was so popular participants were calling their friends throughout the day to come and join!

Arts Council England funding has also enabled the service to purchase two environmentally sustainable (electronic) tuk-tuks. These will be based each in the north and south of the city and will be a further addition to the Home Library service, by reaching out to those who cannot physically attend a library; they will also enable engagement at community events.

Information and Digital

Partnership between the service and the City of Portsmouth College at libraries across the city provides a supportive environment for digital learning to offer equity of access to IT resources. Since the pandemic the library service has seen an exponential rise in demand for digital resources. The offer includes – eBook, eAudio, music downloads, music streaming, eMagazines and eNewspapers.

Arts Council England funding in 2023 has enabled the service to purchase two 'office pods' for two libraries, to enable provision for those who work independently / flexibly and need to use an ad hoc 'office' environment.

Archives and Modern Records

Under the Local Government Act 1972, the Archives Service is a statutory service. The service has held archive accreditation since 2016, and in 2023 reapplied to retain accreditation. Reaccreditation included an updated access policy which aims to develop new ways to allow people to access the collections, as part of democratising access for all users. Approval for the archive policies to proceed to accreditation application was approved by Committee in October 2023.⁶⁹

In conjunction with the broadening of access, the service appointed an Outreach Officer in autumn 2023. The Archives Outreach Officer will go into schools and other community settings, to enable and encourage the connection of all communities with the city archives, including underrepresented communities.

Modern Records deals with documents required by the Council. Since 2023 Modern Records has been managed under a shared service arrangement with West Sussex County Council. This allows for resilience and shared professional practice across the authorities. As there are synergies between the Modern Records and Historical Archives sections, the officers from these sections have been merged into one team, with Modern Records and Historical Officers working across both sections.

In 2023, the archives sector in the UK approved a Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship (degree level) to open up equality of access to this profession.⁷⁰ Libraries and Archives Service is one of the first local authorities in the country to engage with this apprenticeship and two apprentices have now started their three year course, to qualify in 2026 / 27.

In recent years, there has been a sharper focus on Modern Records, following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in 2018. GDPR, together with the Council's corporate transition to Sharepoint, bring records management under further scrutiny. In addition, the Modern Records section is also required to manage born digital documentation via a professional software solution.

69 Archive Policies decision Report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

70 Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeships - Archives sector (nationalarchives.gov.uk)

2.6 Museums Service

Museums have the power to change lives. Dynamic exhibitions can enable conversations around identity and inclusion and help people of all backgrounds develop confidence through the medium of the collections, together with the ability to cross generational and cultural boundaries.

The Council adopted a strategy for the Museums Service in March 2022.⁷¹ The strategy has three core objectives: to be more relevant to our residents, to be more 'in the thick of it' and to be more sustainable. Through relevance, the strategy aims to identify 'Portsmouthness' through the stories the museums tell, to express the qualities, characteristics and distinctiveness of the city. The aim is for residents to interact with the history of Portsmouth as their history and for the Museums Service to offer co-production opportunities and work with communities.

To be more 'in the thick of it', the strategy identifies the importance of being present in community spaces in the city and not restricting practice to museum buildings. Partnership working, both locally, nationally and internationally will continue to be important. Nationally, the museum service offers exhibits for loan and receives loans from collections elsewhere; this allows important objects the opportunity for display within a relevant exhibition, such objects may not otherwise be on public display. Loans are similarly made into Portsmouth. Internationally, the Museums Service has connections, particularly with regard to D Day Story and receives international visitor groups regularly, raising the profile of the city. Sustainability is explored through making the best use of our natural history collections to explore biodiversity and climate change through public engagement.

The Museums Association paper, **Empowering Collections 2030**,⁷² argues for the crucial importance of museums in the cultural sector for their ability to utilise their collections to appeal to a diverse audience and engage with the current issues of the day (e.g. Portsmouth Ocean Exhibition, 2023). This might also include looking at collections from a post-colonial perspective. Secondly to engage with a digital audience to make the collections more accessible (e.g. our Curators utilising Facebook Live events to showcase items from our collection).

D Day Story is a flagship museum in the city, with both national and international significance and the commemorative anniversaries of the D Day landings, such as D Day 80 in 2024, are key to our city's heritage and education programmes.

D Day 80 allowed the Museums service to work in partnership both internally, with our Events Service and with external stakeholders including the National Museum of the Royal Navy and Ministry of Defence.⁷³ This enabled a wide range of audience engagement to take place throughout the city. The benefit of large scale events allows for national media coverage, highlighting Portsmouth and bringing attention to the city as a sought after destination. The service is also working in partnership with the University of Portsmouth and other higher education institutions, following the award of nine PhD studentships from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, as part of the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme Round 4.⁷⁴ The projects are enabling further work into the collections and archives of the Libraries and Museums services and the relationship between these objects, and support wider aspirations of working with the city's communities.

71 Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 8th March, 2022, 1.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

72 Empowering Collections - Museums Association

73 Agenda for Cabinet Member - The Leader (Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio) on Friday, 16th February, 2024, 10.00 am Portsmouth City Council

74 Agenda for Cabinet Member - The Leader (Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio) on Friday, 6th October, 2023, 10.00 am Portsmouth City Council

Central to programming is increasing accessibility to our collections. The service achieves this by sharing many of its collection displays online via social media, which also allows for engagement by voting for favourite objects (D Day in 80 Objects campaign). Moreover, 'Facebook Lives' enable the sharing of stories about the collections. Other opportunities have involved showcasing Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, to tie in with popular calendar events, such as Creepy Objects campaign during October 2023, which also had connection to secondary activities to engage in, such as craft and trails.

Making our collections more accessible is also achieved by taking objects out to the community. The service is looking towards 'pop up museum' opportunities where small collections can be brought to city communities outside the city centre, such as through the D Day 80 pop ups. This follows the significant success of the 'pop up' museum situated in Cascades during the height of the pandemic which reached footfall of over 66,000 with QR codes enabling reach to further activity.

The service is also working to engage with underrepresented audiences as demonstrated by a project engagement in 2023. Following a successful funding bid to the Dulverton Trust⁷⁵ and Artswork,⁷⁶ a youth engagement project commenced at D Day Story, working with young people from five youth clubs across the city. Creative workshops between professional artists and the young people led to an exploration of young people 'Finding their voice' which was then expressed through art work, in a consideration of identity and history. The project offered up a blueprint of collaborative working across Council services and youth engagement.

A key principle for the service is to ensure that there is no financial barrier to participation. The service engages as a stakeholder with Holiday

Activities and Food (HAF)⁷⁷ which allows for free activity to be provided to eligible families. This has included events throughout the year during school holidays, such as Victorian Christmas, where HAF visitors can engage for free. There have also been discounted events offered for Leisure Card holders.

Museums are in a unique position to explore identity, celebrate cultural difference and champion inclusion. They are well placed to engage with broad sections of the community and utilise collections to discuss diversity and inclusivity. The service plans to engage with a different community in the city each year and tie in educational programming alongside this; for example, by programming events and activities round Chinese New Year.

For both Silver City and D Day 80, commemorative books have been published.

Museums budgets remain under pressure due to utilities and buildings costs. Income generation is therefore important, but only where this does not create barriers to participation. Where museum entrance remains free, additional activities can be subject to small charges, and those charges then waived on an eligibility basis (e.g. through HAF or Leisure Card). Big annual events, such as Easter, provide opportunity for on cost charging where applicable, for activities such as trails, at the city museums such as Cumberland House, Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery and Southsea Castle. For the trails, tokens are provided to city food banks and pantries so that low income groups can access for free. Likewise the Museum Service is looking to work with Community Centres for onward referrals, so that underrepresented groups can be directly targeted and involved in the service.

75 The Dulverton Trust

76 Home | Artswork

77 Holiday activities and food programme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Community engagement includes directly targeting housing communities with particular connections to the city's heritage. For example, the city has housing associated with Dickens, such as Nickleby House and Copperfield House together with a local school named Dickens Academy. Working with these communities could enable development of community events in connection with Charles Dickens Birthplace. The service is also pursuing community engagement through connecting with family centres in the city and are eager to encourage contemporary collecting.

Future aspirations include opening the Charles Dickens Birthplace on a bookable slot model as a 'lived experience' museum, to include authentic sounds and smells. This would help manage capacity and resourcing at this venue, whilst also offering a multi-sensory experience. This would be dependent on the success of external funding bids and other budgetary constraints.

For Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, several rooms are undergoing refurbishment to develop a modern city art gallery to engage with community art programmes.

The service has had considerable success at Eastney Beam site to enable engagement of the city's residents with heritage. A successful bid was made to National Lottery Heritage Fund, which enabled a programme of engagement activity at Eastney Beam during autumn 2023 and included open days 'Valiant Victorians' and 'Hallow-Steam' punk weekend. This targeted project led to hundreds of visitors to the site, who then provided ideas as to how they wanted the site to run as a museum in the future. This will build the future of the site on a co-production model. The evaluation and consultation will inform funding for the next stage of the project, through to design and delivery.

The service also seeks to support the Council's commitment to the environment. Longer term, the aspiration is for Cumberland House Natural History Museum to be an environmental role model, and for the building to become carbon neutral. This particular museum undertakes a considerable role in environmental education. The Natural History curatorial team work regularly with the Countryside team; this has enabled family friendly activities to be held, together with external partners to promote and learn about our coastal environment, the importance of wildflowers and biodiversity, swan awareness (focussing on Canoe Lake) and songs of nature activities.

2.7 Visit Portsmouth

The Visit Portsmouth team contribute directly towards the City Vision 2040 priority, a city with a **thriving economy**.

In 2023 an update was published to the UK Tourism Recovery Plan.⁷⁸ This update advised that as at 2023 recovery remained mixed: whilst domestic visitor numbers had recovered to 2019 levels, international visitor numbers were at 73% of 2019 figures, with spend reaching 91% of 2019 levels.

Pre-pandemic figures valued tourism at around £600 million per year (direct and indirect revenue), supporting around 12,000 jobs in Portsmouth. The visitor economy promotes Portsmouth both nationally and internationally.

The Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy covers the period 2023– 2028 and was adopted by the Council in December 2022.⁷⁹ It demonstrates adherence to the Council Plan and Mission to Stand Up For Portsmouth and have a strong voice in our region.

Objectives

The strategy has 3 key objectives:

- To grow the profile of Portsmouth as a national brand;
- To increase the value of the visitor economy in Portsmouth;
- To work with partners to manage and develop the destination offer

To grow Portsmouth as a national brand

This will be achieved through year round marketing campaigns, including our brands 'Portsmouth, the Great Waterfront City', 'Portsmouth, Put The Wind In Your Sails' and 'Portsmouth – More to Explore in 2024'. Profile raising will be achieved through leveraging the benefits to the city of major

events – for example Victorious Festival, which has an economic impact of £15m.⁸⁰ The team will continue to work with national press to promote the city and work with regional and national partners to increase the international market.

To increase the value of the visitor economy

This will be achieved through continuing to offer free online listing on the Visit Portsmouth website, together with the production of cost effective publications. Digital campaigns will focus on the day market and staying market. Liaison with partners such as Visit Britain, Tourism South East and travel partners will grow the share of the international market. The team will continue to support the city's events programme, promotion to include for example Victorious Festival, D Day 80, and Great South Run, encouraging visitors to return to the city and generate income.

To work with partners to manage and develop the offer

The team continue to hold regular Destination Network meetings, which allows all the tourism partners in the city to be kept informed and share developments. Partners are essential to the implementation of the strategy objectives, as working together presents a stronger and broader Portsmouth offer and allows the group to both share best practice and work on joint initiatives.

In March 2023, the Portsmouth marketing campaign Portsmouth, the Place to Be in 23 saw some very effective results. The in-house digital campaign generated over 1.2 million impressions, with a reach of over 440,000.⁸¹

78 Tourism Recovery Plan: Update on delivery (publishing.service.gov.uk)

79 24.444 Tourism Strategy_appendix 1.indd (portsmouth.gov.uk)

80 Victorious Festival: Evidencing economic and wider impacts - Bluegrass (bluegrassresearch.co.uk)

81 Update on Tourism and Visitor Economy activity April to September 2023.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

The summer and autumn 2023 partnership campaigns included Victorious Festival, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays, The D Day Story and South Western Railway. The campaign included large digital advertising screens at London Waterloo station. Results for this campaign comprised 8.94 million impressions for the outdoor elements and the associated online digital campaign delivered over 4.1 million impressions.

Digital marketing

The service delivers digital marketing through the following platforms:

www.visitportsmouth.co.uk – around 950,000 annual visits. (These figures dipped from 995,000 pre-covid, to 647,288 in 2020, then 752,034 in 2021.)

Facebook – 40,000+ page likes

Twitter – 16,700+ followers

Instagram – 3,800+ followers

YouTube – 774,000+ video views – or 18,100 hours

The service shares content widely with others to promote Portsmouth on other groups. This has included England's Coast, Tourism South East, Key Cities and the regional railway companies. Regional and national partnership engagement has also been key and included Tourism South East Meet Beyond London campaign, England's Coast and Visit England/Visit Britain.

The service is signed up to Tourism South East regarding international marketing campaigns for US, Canada, France, Germany and the Netherlands markets. The service also works with Brittany Ferries and Portsmouth International Port to drive more visitors to the city from the

continent, including through supporting the Shaping Portsmouth Cruise Programme.

The Hard Information Point continues to be an important promotion point for the city with 25,000 visitors engaging between April 2023 and March 2024. Other Information Points are set up at Central Library, Portsmouth International Port and Gunwharf Quays, together with a pop up Information Point at Victorious Festival. Installed in 2023, the large wayfinder map display is a welcome addition at Portsmouth and Southsea station, providing orientation and walking times to places of interest.

The team also launched a green tourism scheme in February 2024 which supports the city vision for a green city and forms part of the Council's plan towards tackling the climate crisis. The criteria for the award is based around three themes (people, place, planet) with the objective of the scheme to promote sustainable and responsible tourism in the city. Successful applicants will then be able to use their membership of the scheme as part of their promotional and marketing activity in collaboration with Visit Portsmouth.

The team has also worked on the development of the Portsmouth, the Great Waterfront City brand, with new variations being available for destination partners to use. These are also used across new welcome signage and banners in the city.

Following a commissioned review into Destination Management Organisations, Visit England have now commenced a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) programme.⁸² This will allow for English tourism to be supported at a regional level. The creation of LVEPs is in early stages and will continue to be monitored.

⁸² Local Visitor Economy Partnership Programme (visitbritain.org)

2.8 Parks and Countryside

The Parks Service has a key role to play in the delivery of the City Vision 2040 a **healthy and happy city** and **green city**. It also delivers against the Council Plan to improve lives and enhance the environment.

Parks played an essential role during the pandemic and, during the cost of living crisis, provide a free and easy way for people to get active and boost mental health and wellbeing.

Parks provide a cheap and cost-effective way to get people active, reduce obesity, boost mental wellbeing, and strengthen immune systems. At the same time, they can help act as green corridors for wildlife, refuges for pollinators, act as sustainable drainage systems, and mitigate the impact of air pollution.⁸³

The Council recently published a new long term Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.⁸⁴ This strategy identifies 7 principles which will inform plans to protect the city's open spaces over the next 15 years:

- Parks as community spaces
- Celebrating and protecting the environment through our parks
- Parks as spaces for lifelong learning
- Parks for our health and wellbeing
- Accessible and well designed parks
- Maximising safety and facility provision
- Financially resourcing our parks

These principles are supported by up to date national policy and research. The Local Government Association also continue to lobby government to introduce a Green Parks Fund to enable councils to invest in small initiatives to support parks and open spaces.⁸⁵

Due to the island geography of the city, the ability to increase the green space available is limited and relies on the relationship with the Planning Service and associated developer agreements. In some instances, where it is not possible to increase the quantity of green space, it is possible to improve the quality of the space. Significant improvements rely on sources of funding outside of annual revenue – as revenue funding is absorbed by maintaining the city's spaces. Potential funding sources include:

- Grants: some of our countryside open spaces are funded through an Environmental Stewardship grant with Natural England
- Sports grants: working with the Football Foundation enabled the Council to secure funding for improved public facilities and pitches at King George V Playing Fields
- Lottery: the Council were successful in a bid for over £2 million to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, accompanied by capital funding, for the Victoria Park project
- Community Infrastructure Levy under the Planning Act 2008 - where the Planning service can use development to deliver infrastructure e.g. for parks improvements.
- Section 106 under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - where the Planning service negotiate contributions from developers to support infrastructure that may be required consequent to the development.

To enhance the environment, the Parks Service are working to meet the Council's objective to deliver a phased withdrawal of pesticides.⁸⁶ This is being implemented via a range of measures including restricting use

83 Parks fit for the future | Local Government Association

84 Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 6th February, 2024, 2.30 pm Portsmouth City Council

85 Parks fit for the future | Local Government Association

86 Agenda for Full Council on Tuesday, 19th July, 2022, 2.10 pm Portsmouth City Council

to a minimum, increasing use of woodchip as a weed suppressant, and reducing mowing regimes to allow for 'wild' areas in parks and around tree bases. Trials are also ongoing regarding alternative weed control; such working method does require a significantly higher level of resource to achieve the required outcome.⁸⁷

In support of the City Vision and Council Plan, in the last two years the Parks Service have expanded their team of **Countryside Officers**. One officer is concentrated particularly in the Baffins and Milton areas and has strengthened connection to groups such as Baffins Pond Association and Milton Neighbourhood Forum. The officer has also developed several new volunteer groups, including a conservation group for Baffins and volunteer groups for Great Salterns and Milton Common. The other officer works on a more city wide basis, advising on biodiversity enhancements for small parks and pockets of open space. The officer has also responded to particular requests for advice and help from community groups such as Friends Of Old Portsmouth Association. The officer also works in close collaboration with the Libraries Service and Museums Service, with local schools, to promote biodiversity education and activities to children in schools across the city, together with attendance at family friendly open days and events.

The Parks Service collaborate with other stakeholders in the Council both regarding the pesticides workstream (Housing, Highways) and in pursuit of the Council's greening strategy. Greening includes biodiversity enhancement and green infrastructure initiatives (such as tree canopy cover).⁸⁸ The Parks Service Countryside Officers regularly engage with the Greening Development Group (Public Health) to this end and to advise in particular on matters of ecology.

The Parks Service also care for the city's cemeteries, which also comprise considerable areas of green space as well providing space for quiet contemplation and space for wildlife. The Cemeteries Service have developed a draft strategy for the future provision of the service for the next 10 years.⁸⁹ This strategy comprises 7 areas of focus, one of the principles being to enhance cemetery green space. Delivery of this principle includes actively managing the cemetery trees and establishing new planting and wildlife areas, where this is appropriate within the cemetery design.

Parks and Play

The parks of the city include play spaces for all ages, from doorstep sites, aimed at very young children, to local sites for young children to use (independently from adult supervision), to neighbourhood sites which comprise adventure play with an element of risk, for young people. Within the Parks Service the Play and Infrastructure Team comprise qualified Play Inspectors, who regularly inspect all the city sites and carry out maintenance and new installations as required.⁹⁰

An important part of the strategic direction for parks and open spaces includes ensuring that parks are fully accessible and spaces that all can enjoy. To this end, in several of the city's parks, the service has installed autism communication boards to aid play. The boards enable children with limited or no language skills to communicate more easily.

87 Microsoft Word - Parks Service response to TECS Scrutiny Panel request for information (rev 31-08-23) (portsmouth.gov.uk)

88 Portsmouth Greening Strategy and Delivery Plan.pdf

89 Portsmouth Cemeteries Delivery Plan for the future provision of burial services in the city, 2023 - 2033

90 Register of Play Inspectors International - Making Play Safe

Widening access to greenspace

A key concern within national and local policy objectives, reflected in the Parks Strategy and the Greening Plan is to widen access to green spaces. This objective is clearly reflected in the recent major projects undertaken by the Parks Service.

The **Victoria Park** project is aimed at restoring and reviving the concept of the 'People's Park'. This project has been funded by a successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Central to the project is a community and events workstream. This is aimed at attracting local residents into the park, by providing:

- A community hub 'The Greenhouse' for learning and volunteering
- Year round events and activities, which to date have included: Summer of Love Family Day, Opera in the Park, Sunday Funday and Coronation Big Lunch, Yoga In the Park, Wellbeing Walks, Teddy-Bears Picnic, Easter Trail.

Following the success of the Levelling Up bid to transform the connectivity and space in the northern tip of the city, work has been undertaken with Sustrans, the national cycling and walking charity, to consider how the green space at Hilsea Lines, known as 'Foxes Forest' can be made more accessible so that more people can enjoy the space. Recommendations received from Sustrans will be incorporated into reports and plans going forward. Existing work at the space has included the installation of a radar activated bi-directional gate for access improvement.

Access has also been an important consideration for the King George V project. In addition to biodiversity net gain at the site, with new native scrub and hedge planting, a key objective for the site is to increase

participation in football by underrepresented groups, including provision for women and girls (see Sports & Leisure).

2.9 Seafront

The seafront forms part of the open space and natural capital of the city. It contributes to the City Vision 2040 healthy and happy city, green city and thriving economy and towards the Council's mission to improve lives.

The island of Portsea offers a comprehensive coastline including the seafront which runs for 6km from Portsmouth Harbour to Langstone Harbour. Comprising 'blue space', the seafront contributes to our health and wellbeing similarly to 'green space'. It provides a sense of interconnectedness with the natural world, opportunities for sensory pleasure and contributes to improved mental health outcomes.⁹¹ The promenade provides abundant opportunity for active travel, physical activity and recreational activity. The seafront is a Conservation Area, with Southsea Common a listed park.

The Seafront Masterplan was adopted by the Council in March 2021.⁹²

The plan includes the following objectives for the seafront:

- Increased vibrancy
- Take into account heritage when improving the public realm
- Protect biodiversity

Vibrancy

Vibrancy at the seafront is provided by a range of concessions. Small scale cafes and other activities are particularly welcomed where they may enable the diversity of the cultural offer, for example through catering offerings from other cultures. Concessions also provide opportunities for local and small businesses to grow and develop, whilst strengthening the local economy and complimenting the broad events programme.

Lighting contributes to vibrancy at the seafront by providing a distinct sense of place. It makes the seafront more distinctive and appeals to a sense of safety. To support environmental objectives, 1.7km of LED festoon lighting has been recently installed at the seafront as a more energy efficient system, which is also more able to withstand the salt laden winds. CIL funding has also allowed for festoon lighting to be installed on trees at Canoe Lake.

Heritage and the public realm

The coastal defence works are a major project undertaken by the Council to reduce the risk of flooding for the next 100 years. At the same time, the works offer a unique opportunity to improve the public realm and cultural setting of the seafront.

This has necessitated a flexible and collaborative approach from seafront service and other services within Culture and Leisure. Depending on the phase of work concerned, events have been relocated, such as the Bandstand Series. The works have also meant that some higher value concession opportunities have been unavailable, affecting the income of the service.

The seafront service has engaged a fixed term post appointment of Seafront Arts Programme Officer, to liaise directly with the Coastal Partners team on behalf of the Council. The programme will add to the distinct character of the seafront by integrating art and creativity. It will include a variety of art forms beyond standard public art considerations including light installations, creative writing and performance. Art works will range in scale from big sculptures to small interventions, spread across the 4.5km of the main seafront, from local to national artists, with

⁹¹ Improving access to greenspace: 2020 review (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁹² Agenda for Cabinet on Friday, 19th March, 2021, 3.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

art celebrating the city's heritage and communities. Commissions agreed include artwork from the current Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage. The scheme will include opportunities for young people to engage with the arts and contribute to the scheme.

The seafront includes 15 memorials in the area, 11 of which are listed. Following weather damage, the Trident and Aboukir Memorials (Grade II listed), situated between the Beach Club and Blue Reef Aquarium have been removed by Coastal Partners and will be returned to the sub-frontage once the coastal defence works in that area are completed. The Shannon, Trafalgar and Chesapeake Memorials will also be moved, as part of the coastal works, which will allow for the placing of them in a more appropriate setting.

Biodiversity and environment

Due to their crucial contribution to biodiversity, the seafront in Portsmouth includes two designated Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs) – Eastney Beach and Fort Cumberland. Eastney Beach is clearly distinguishable from west Portsmouth beaches as it includes vegetated shingle – a rare habitat.

In addition to protecting habitats, any new initiatives at the seafront also take account of sustainability. The council continue (as funding allows) to fund a Park and Ride bus service to Southsea seafront in the summer months as part of a commitment to sustainable travel. In 2021 Solent Transport were funded by the Department for Transport to run a trial of e-scooters in the Solent region as part of a national trial with Portsmouth City Council being one of the participating local authorities.⁹³

The trial forms part of the wider Solent Future Transport Zone to provide sustainable travel choices, including in the seafront area of Portsmouth.

Accessibility and the seafront

The promenade provides access to the seafront from Eastney to Clarence Pier. The service is committed to supporting the Council's equality framework regarding seafront access. There are mobility access points to the beach to support those with mobility difficulties (pending the coastal defence works). The access points (rubber matting) are supported by adjacent disabled parking spaces and dropped kerb.

Wooden panels have also been trialled to make a pathway across the shingle. Feedback was positive from users and whilst the panels have been withdrawn during the winter periods, they have returned for summer. The wooden ramp will be duplicated at other areas of the seafront following its success.⁹⁴

Officers continue to investigate options to increase accessibility towards long term objectives to support people with disabilities to gain access in and out of the sea. Trials of a floating wheelchair have taken place which have enabled access into the sea, but the extent of the shingle gradient and therefore difficulties coming out of the sea, has prevented rolling out the use of this facility.

Moving forward it is hoped that the Coastal Partners may be able to design in a solution as part of the coastal defence works, in which the floating wheelchair could be fully utilised safely.

93 Rental e-scooter trial approved to continue across the Solent Region until May 2024. – Solent Transport (solent-transport.com)

94 Seafront Accessibility update report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

Safety at the Seafront – supporting our residents and visitors

The Seafront team host a regular Water Safety Forum which meets at least four times annually, with a focus on the summer season. This includes representatives from stakeholder groups with an interest in the seafront, organisations supporting water safety, representatives from harbour authorities, other local authorities and on water groups. These meetings allow all Forum Members to bring up any operational and pressing issues and share practice together with any health and safety concerns. Topics considered include designated swim zones, use of personal watercrafts and anti-social behaviour.

Whilst the delivery of safe seafront operations were already in place, the Seafront team commissioned a water safety policy for the city in 2023 to allow for best practice across all the areas of open water to be documented for which the Council is responsible.⁹⁵ The policy will allow the Council to mitigate against risk and challenges and demonstrate that a comprehensive approach to water safety is taken by the authority. The policy includes a clear analysis of drowning risk zones across the city and demonstrates that risk assessments and controls are in place. The policy provides a framework for the Council with which to reference operational delivery such as lifeguard provision, beach risk assessment and water safety signage.

Together with the voluntary lifeguard provision between Pyramids and South Parade Pier (Portsmouth & Southsea Voluntary Lifeguards),⁹⁶ the Seafront team works closely with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for the provision of lifeguards from Pyramids to Eastney Beach, which includes three seasonal kiosks (two in 2024 due to coastal works).

Beach huts leisure offer

The seafront includes 3 sites comprising beach huts under tenancy, at Lumps Fort, St. Georges and Eastney. There is strong demand for the huts, with a waiting list having been closed for several years due to such demand. To enable residents to experience the enjoyment of the huts, three huts are available (outside the annual tenancies) all year round for weekly rental. The service will be developing a small number of accessible beach huts, which will be primarily for use by those with mobility challenges. Due to the planned location of the huts at Eastney, the service has been required to undertake extended ecological surveys, as part of the planning process for the new huts, which it is hoped will be available for the public to book during 2024.

Hotwalls

The Hotwalls Studios are situated at Broad Street, Old Portsmouth. They form a landmark development, with nineteenth century soldiers' barracks, Point Battery, having been converted into artist studios. The studios deliver against the City Vision objective, a city rich in culture and creativity, together with the Council's plan to improve lives. The 13 studios provide an environment in which start up creatives can commence and grow their business in an environment of mutual support, creativity and innovation and provide a mixed business model of individual artists and shared studios. The site is also a Grade I listed scheduled monument. The Council supports the studios by managing the tenancies, developing an events programme in the form of exhibitions and seasonal markets, together with social media and marketing campaigns.

⁹⁵ Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 31st October, 2023, 2.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

⁹⁶ PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHSEA VOLUNTARY LIFEGUARDS (portsmouthlifeguards.org)

The area of the Hotwalls in Old Portsmouth is challenged by anti-social behaviour, including 'tombstoning' in an area which includes strong tides due to shipping movements. Both the Seafront and Hotwalls teams are represented in a cross-working group with the city's Mediation Service, together with youth workers at Motiv8 to apply a cross agency approach.

The seafront is a heavily used area seven days a week, particularly in the period from Easter to October each year. It is managed by a very small staff team and therefore additional hours during high season are worked by a group of managers from across the directorate, to provide the necessary level of cover during weekends.



2.10 HIVE Portsmouth

The aim of HIVE Portsmouth is to work across the city in partnership with voluntary, private and public sector organisations. It connects local people and groups to leverage the strength of individuals and communities as an alternative to traditional services.⁹⁷

Through building strong partnerships through collaboration, and providing care and support to residents, HIVE Portsmouth delivers against the City Vision to build a **healthy and happy city**. It supports the council's plan to improve lives.

During the pandemic, HIVE Portsmouth became an essential part of the delivery infrastructure that was crucial to Portsmouth's response. During this time, HIVE Portsmouth was a critical component in the delivery of food parcels, medicine and support to those who were shielding.

Post the pandemic, the strategic goals of HIVE Portsmouth are in accordance with the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This includes:

- Working as a cooperative to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Portsmouth;
- Working to develop the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector of the city;
- Working to support social action on the issues faced by Portsmouth

Whilst HIVE Portsmouth is independent from Portsmouth City Council, there are staff members that report to the Business Manager, whose post is part accountable to the Council and part accountable to HIVE Portsmouth.

Data captured by HIVE Portsmouth provides key intelligence regarding where future needs lie. Analysis points to the following needs:

- Support diverse groups to ensure representation;
- Mental health support needs, following on from lockdown and periods of isolation;
- Financial concerns, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis – manifesting in demand for foodbanks, school uniform, white goods, community pantries

Hive workstreams

Moving forward, the Hive's work continues to focus on the following areas:

1. Mental health support
2. Admission avoidance
3. Disability support
4. Cost of living support
5. Social inclusion
6. Sector support

Mental health support includes establishing an independent panel to include service users and experts, carers and the VCSE sector and develop a mental health network. This Lived Experience Network, which includes people of all ages and those with serious mental illnesses, has been instrumental in the setting up of the Mental Health Hub, which has now been running for over a year. The network helps facilitate the involvement of experts by experience to city organisations.

⁹⁷ PCC strategic relationship with Hive

Hospital admission avoidance: The Wellbeing Collective model is a scheme which has been in place since April 2022 partnering HIVE Portsmouth and the British Red Cross, which supports admission avoidance and helps individuals to be discharged safely back home to complete their recoveries. These goals are achieved through targeted support to individuals from organisations with expertise in those areas. This has the added advantage of reducing the incidence of bed-blocking at QA Hospital which is an ongoing issue and reaches over 400 people each year through community based volunteers and staff with a 97% rate of admissions avoidance.

A **Portsmouth Disability Group** has been established via HIVE Portsmouth. The group, which is established and run by disabled people, is working both proactively to identify issues of concern to those with physical disabilities and reactively as sounding board for local organisations looking for specific advice. Access, employment, transport and healthcare have been identified by the group as the issues they most want to tackle. The group works closely with a network of organisations and charities which have come forward to offer their guidance and assistance.

Cost of living support from HIVE Portsmouth continues support to the community pantry network across the city. The Uniform Shop also continues to be an important part of this, supporting the workstream with 931 families in 2023. HIVE Portsmouth also facilitates and distributes donations and grant funding, which helps groups and organisations across the city support our most vulnerable residents. A close relationship with PCC'S Tackling Poverty Co-Ordinator further supports residents with the increasing cost of living.

Social inclusion. A workstream began during the pandemic, to provide digital devices to enable residents to access online services, including via donations from Shaping Portsmouth Bridging the Digital Divide project. The digital inclusion project is now focussed on providing digital training and improving access to digital devices in community settings. HIVE Portsmouth is working with Society of St. James, Two Saints and City of Sanctuary to consider how homeless residents can connect with free data and devices.

Sector support: HIVE Portsmouth continue to support the Portsmouth Lottery and convene the panels to award the community grants element. The charity also promotes a wide range of volunteering opportunities available in the city, from school reading to care befrienders, digital buddies, emergency response and brokerage service for bespoke volunteering.

Advice about governance, policy and funding information is offered to new social enterprises in the city. This includes support for applications to Companies House for Community Interest Company (CIC) status or applications to the Charity Commission, together with bid writing support. The provision of networking meetings also enables new organisations to connect with other VCSE organisations.

The Community Helpdesk, situated in Central Library, continues to support visitors on a drop-in basis with a wide range of needs, together with a helpdesk email and telephone support line. The Hive directory holds over 800 organisations for referral and is continually updated.

2.11 Regulatory Services

Regulatory Services delivers directly against the Council Plan to **improve lives** through its Environmental Health and Trading Standards services. Workstreams deliver to **tackle the climate crisis**, both through delivery of statutory requirements (such as air quality) and by **standing up for Portsmouth** regarding water quality concerns. Much of the work of the department is underpinned by statute.

The service delivers against three strands of the City Vision: to become **a green city, a healthy and happy city** and **a city with a thriving economy**. Through the range of services it delivers, the department helps residents and visitors feel safe in the city, be that through noise nuisance resolution, pest control, food safety or actions taken regarding fraudulent trading, product safety and age restricted sales.

Environmental Health

Water quality has an impact on public health and whilst responsibility for monitoring water quality falls to the Environment Agency, the service is engaging in ongoing dialogue with Southern Water, **to stand up for Portsmouth**.⁹⁸ The beach is a fundamental part of the city's identity and is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Over the last four years, the water quality at Southsea East has declined and during 2023 Regulatory Services undertook water sampling to assist the Environment Agency. Engagement continues with Southern Water and other local stakeholders including Havant Borough Council, Langstone Harbour Board and Coastal Partners to understand and look to reverse the factors that are contributing to the decline in water quality. This is an important workstream as water quality concerns could affect visitor destination

choices and secondary spend. Until water quality has improved (and such improvement reflected in the Environment Agency's classification), there is a statutory requirement for public signage to be displayed to advise residents and visitors to the affected area.⁹⁹

Air Quality

As part of the Council's commitment to tackling climate change, work is undertaken collaboratively across Transport, Licensing, Public Health and Regulatory Services to deliver against Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). This sits under DEFRA and places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality within their boundaries.¹⁰⁰ The air quality team within Regulatory Services are required to report on the levels of pollution obtained from monitoring data at pollution hotspots in the city and submit an Annual Status Report to DEFRA. The monitoring network is considerable and covers over 230 sites.

The annual report provides the baseline data with which to set and review policy objectives. Where pollution exceeds National Air Quality Objectives (NAQO), the Council has designed intervention measures as part of its Transport and Public Health strategies, as it is under a ministerial direction to bring air pollution levels down to legal limits as soon as possible.

Pest Control

There is no statutory requirement on the Council to deliver treatments regarding insect infestations. Historically the Council has provided this service and it has come to broader attention following media scrutiny of bedbugs in recent years. Bed bug infestations also cause health

98 Bathing Water Quality.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

99 Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 9th January, 2024, 2.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

100 Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Support Website | DEFRA

detriment and economic consequences with regard to property. As such, in delivering the Council plan to improve the lives of the city's residents and from a public health perspective, the Council does have an interest in delivering such a service.

Whilst demand for bed bug treatment is consistent, a successful treatment demands both significant resources in time and staffing, together with diligent commitment over time by the resident concerned to take active measures. Success of the treatment is therefore not solely dependent on the Council's service delivery. Therefore to offer a comprehensive service (multiple phased delivery) without sure success of elimination may raise concerns from a customer satisfaction perspective. For this reason some comparable local authorities have ceased delivery of this service altogether.

With budgets under pressure, discussion is ongoing whether to cease delivery of the service, but with exceptions to include City Council tenants and providers of care to vulnerable individuals.

Rats and Mice

There is a statutory requirement on the Council to provide pest control regarding rats and mice, set out in the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.¹⁰¹ It should be noted that the responsibility only falls where the rodents are on local authority land (open space or buildings).

There is no requirement to provide a service outside these parameters. However, given the commitment of the Council towards the City Vision 'thriving economy' and towards broader public health objectives, the team offer a pay-as-you-use service together with a longer term contractual option to private residents, businesses, commercial and private landlords.

Noise nuisance

The Council has a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which includes the prevention of statutory nuisance. The statutory responsibility does not include the provision of a 'night noise' service and many other local authorities have ceased this provision. For many years the Council has provided an out of hours seven day service. However, it is clear from monitoring that reactive deployment of this service is most in demand Sundays to Thursdays. By reviewing provision to a five day week Sunday to Thursday, this will not significantly impact on service delivery and will also increase staff resource to redeploy into areas of need.

Procedural review was implemented in 2024 regarding domestic noise. Recent procedure had been to issue notification correspondence to those accused of nuisance, without firm evidence having yet been received. The change to procedure means that the person accused of nuisance will be written to once evidence of ongoing and persistent nuisance has been received. This will allow the service to operate more robustly and reduce costs.

Trading Standards

The service continues to consider the most effective way to deliver to protect consumers against rogue practices, whilst currently supporting legitimate business in the city. The service is led by intelligence, with referrals from Citizens Advice, following which the team triage the information and decide whether investigation is required.

To support businesses, the service also offers advice regarding the demands of new emerging legislation.

101 Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 (legislation.gov.uk)

Consumer protection is a growing area with additional enforcement duties arising from legislative reform. The table below sets out examples on the near horizon:

Legislation or statute	Impact
Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023	Affects food regulations
The Cosmetic Products (Restriction of Chemical Substances) Regulations 2023	New restrictions on compound found in fragrances, shampoos, soaps, cosmetics
The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023	These regulations ban the sale of single use plastic plates, trays, bowls and cutlery, food and drink containers and balloon sticks.
The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971(Amendment) Order 2023	Includes nitrous oxide within the 1971 Act and may impact retail environments.
Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023	Will reform the Proceeds of Crime Act with regard to crypto-assets.
Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill	Will provide significant reform of consumer protection legislation.
Tobacco and Vapes Bill	Intended to reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to children

In view of the increasing legislative demands, the service is taking several steps to manage demand:

Regional support: National Trading Standards¹⁰² is a funded national team with which the Portsmouth team can engage, in areas of work including e-Crime, Feed, Estate Agency, Intelligence and Scams.

Home Office grant funding allows local authority financial investigators to access investigation tools held by the National Crime Agency.

Alternative enforcement measures – Closure orders reduce the burden on the service and prevent criminal behaviour, for example with regard to illicit tobacco.¹⁰³ Under The Tobacco Products (Traceability and Security Features) Regulations 2019, the team can also refer illicit tobacco trading on to HMRC who can impose penalties or remove the business’s Tobacco Track and Trace Economic Operator ID. These alternative steps remove the burden on the service to prosecute offenders.

102 Welcome to National Trading Standards

103 Shop is shut down after illegal vape and cigarette sales - Portsmouth City Council

Apprenticeships levy funded courses for staff including Regulatory Compliance Officer Level 4.

The overlap with **public health** objectives cannot be overemphasised as the work of trading standards is imperative to mitigating the volume of counterfeit tobacco products (and underage sales) in the market. Prosecutions by the Council have resulted in sentencing including community orders and confiscation orders. An outcome of forfeiture and confiscation also allows the service to receive a proportion of funds recovered back into the budget (Proceeds of Crime Act 2002)¹⁰⁴ as a further deterrent. The government are also looking to introduce new legislation to protect new generations from smoking which will be accompanied by new burdens funding shared between trading standards, border force and HMRC.¹⁰⁵ This includes the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which intends to strengthen enforcement around illicit vapes and underage sales.¹⁰⁶

Rogue trade both disrupts the economy of the city and puts consumers under considerable mental health strain. The cost of living crisis provides new opportunities for rogue traders to engage in fraudulent business practices, such as the rising cost of energy providing exploitative opportunity for energy tariff mis-selling.

Food Safety

Whilst an intelligence led approach leads the inspection of businesses, the service has a statutory requirement to deliver to the Food Standards Agency's 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by

Local Authorities'.¹⁰⁷ The service is required to demonstrate that it is a 'competent authority' which means that it has in place effective measures to meet its statutory obligations regarding food and food safety.

The service delivers a programme of inspections and interventions throughout the year to food based businesses, which is undertaken on a risk assessed basis. This is affected via the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (Food Standards Agency) which gives a certificate rating of 1 to 5 displayed prominently at food premises. Ratings are granted following inspection and compliance with food hygiene law, looking at food handling, storage, preparation and cleanliness of facilities.¹⁰⁸ Through such activity, the service is delivering against the City Vision and Council Plan to **improve lives**, by:

- Improving the health of the local community;
- Encouraging food businesses and operators to be cleaner and safer;
- Supporting the local economy by giving advice and taking action to ensure businesses trade within the law.

By extension the service continues to liaise with the government regarding the Border Target Operating Model which directs how food imports are managed and has important implications for biosecurity. Regulatory checks at the Port will include biosecurity aspects, to prevent the arrival of disease in the UK, via disease causing agents being present in animals and food products of animal origin for onward human consumption. More information on this can be found in the Major Projects section of this document.

104 Fact sheet: Overview POCA (publishing.service.gov.uk)

105 Prime Minister to create 'smokefree generation' by ending cigarette sales to those born on or after 1 January 2009 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

106 Use and sale of illegal vapes - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)

107 Local authorities | Food Standards Agency

108 Food Hygiene Rating Scheme | Food Standards Agency

Animal Welfare

The department has responsibilities under the Animal Health Act 1981 to ensure the welfare of farm animals and imported animals regarding movement and identification and in connection with biosecurity aspects as mentioned above. Under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, the service has responsibilities regarding areas such as dog breeding, cat/dog boarding and daycare and keeping/training animals for exhibition, such as in circuses. The service also has responsibility regarding the licensing of wild animals, the management of riding establishments and zoos.¹⁰⁹ This connects to the environment care agenda of the council plan.

Beauty treatments (non surgical cosmetic procedures)

In autumn 2023 the government issued an 8 week consultation on beauty treatments which will form the basis of a new licensing regime for cosmetic businesses and practitioners. The licensing scheme will require beauty practitioners to be licensed to perform certain procedures from licensed premises, under the authority of the Health and Care Act 2022. The intention of introducing a new regulatory framework is to both safeguard consumers and strengthen the industry. Beauty procedures under the licensing scheme will be categorised via a tier system, depending on the risks and potential complications associated with the procedure.¹¹⁰

Team restructuring

As set out in the chapter on workforce development, the Regulatory Services team has recently merged with Licensing to create a new Resources Team to serve both functions. The combined team allows for greater resilience as the knowledge base grows and provides for delivery

improvement to match demand across both areas. This follows previous efficiencies over a period of years, with previous departments of Trading Standards and Environmental Health having combined to form Regulatory Services.

109 Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2007, Hire out horses licence (England) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), Zoo Licensing Act 1981.

110 The licensing of non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2.12 Licensing Service

The licensing service delivers to:

1: to improve lives – the actions of the service make the city a safer place to live;

2: to protect and enhance the environment – the Portsmouth Clean Air Zone, launched in 2021, remains in force and applies to taxis and private hire vehicles;

3: stand up for Portsmouth – advocating the delivery of high standards of passenger safety for persons using the services of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles licensed by Portsmouth City Council.

National picture

As with other statutory services, the licensing service is required to keep in step with changing legislation. In 2020, the Department of Transport introduced new statutory guidance for taxi and private hire vehicles licensing authorities, to use their powers to protect children and vulnerable adults.¹¹¹ In February 2023, the new statutory guidance was set before Licensing Committee and was adopted with effect from 1 April 2023.¹¹² The Department of Transport also published Best Practice Guidance to licensing authorities in November 2023 and the service will progress to review this against existing council policy.¹¹³

App Based bookings for private hire work continue to be a challenge for all licensing authorities as it has enabled to a far greater extent, the practice of cross border licensing where a licensing authority is legally able to licence operators, vehicles and drivers in one area but will work predominately in another licensing authority area. There is no change in legislation to date and the service are looking at information sharing

protocols, where local authorities would be authorised to share details with one another in respect of drivers, vehicles and private hire operators.

Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005

The aim of the service is to ensure Portsmouth is a city where residents, visitors and businesses feel safe. This scope includes persons and premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 for the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment, late night refreshment, licensing of premises for gambling facilities under the Gambling Act 2005, consents for street trading, permits for street entertainment, licensing for scrap metal dealers, charitable collections and sex establishments.

Following a review undertaken by the Gambling Commission of the Gambling Act 2005, there is a current white paper which sets out the government's intentions to reform gambling regulation.¹¹⁴ This will lead to legislative change in due course and will affect future fee review.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) bill – Protect Duty

This bill, known as Martyn's Law, will have a consequential effect on the Licensing Act 2003. This is because, in the risk assessments required, some of the application requirements will be embedded into the Licensing Act. Where the new legislation affects venues (e.g. capacity at venues), Martyn's Law, also known as Protect Duty, will need to be reflected in a revision of the Licensing Act.

111 Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

112 Agenda for Licensing Committee on Friday, 24th February, 2023, 3.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

113 Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

114 High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

Under this Act, the temporary provisions of the Business and Planning Act 2020 regarding pavement licensing was made permanent on 31 March 2024. Until this point, temporary regulations have run to September 2024. Pavement licensing will therefore be subject to a permanent regulatory scheme which ensures that businesses can benefit from providing additional facilities on the highway to encourage persons to frequent their premises whilst maintaining suitable and safe use of the highway by pedestrians.

Healthy and Happy City

Under statutory requirements to review at least every 5 years, the Council's local policies for alcohol and gambling are currently being reviewed and updated to ensure a healthy and happy city environment.

In pursuance of equalities, diversity and inclusion improvement, the Licensing Service is working with other services and the Portsmouth Disability Advisory Group (HIVE Portsmouth) to look at accessible transport, to accommodate mobility requirements and assistance dogs. This workstream also considers more broadly the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Green City

On 25 July 2022 the Licensing Committee provided a report on the trial, authorised by the Traffic and Transport Committee, to allow a trial scheme for private hire vehicles to use certain bus lanes in the city.¹¹⁵ A

follow up report to Traffic and Transport Committee on 23 March 2023 recommended that the trial continue until further notice.¹¹⁶ The aim of the trial is to reduce congestion, particularly in the areas of the Clean Air Zone.

Thriving Economy – Safe Streets

The service is required to interpret the legislation as referenced above to inform stakeholders, Licensing Members and external agencies. The team works closely with the police, safeguarding agencies and jointly with other authorities. In financial year 2022/23, the service delivered 100% success in defending appeals against licensing decisions and pursuit of legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

The quality of delivery of the service enables confidence in the city in areas such as crime prevention, transport, tourism and town centre development, thereby encouraging investment and economic growth. The service also support initiatives in the nighttime economy such as White Ribbon¹¹⁷ and Safer Portsmouth.¹¹⁸ This includes raising awareness of the bystander in liaison with the Hampshire Police Commissioner's Office towards changing attitudes.¹¹⁹ Bystander training will be rolled out to the taxi cohort as an awareness raising initiative to support the creation of safer streets and communities.

The staff team have also committed to learning and development opportunities on modern slavery risks and issues.

115 Agenda for Licensing Committee on Monday, 25th July, 2022, 3.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

116 PHVs in Bus Lanes Trial TT Report March 23 FINAL V2.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

117 City leaders make the promise to end male violence against women - Portsmouth City Council

118 Information for businesses - Safer Portsmouth

119 YC-Report-2022-Online-FINAL-VERSION.pdf (hampshire-pcc.gov.uk)

2.13 Registration Service

The Registration Service cares for the needs of the people of the city by registering births, deaths, still-births, marriages and civil partnerships. In addition, it conducts celebratory ceremonies and citizenship ceremonies. This is a statutory service with the quality of service delivering against the City Vision 2040 building a healthy and happy city through the values of community, equality and respect.

The service deal with sensitive issues and the quality of the relationship of the service with the community is important.

Changes since the pandemic

During the pandemic, registration services were permitted to receive electronic transfer of medical certificates in lieu of physical documents. Some NHS Trusts have since returned to physical documentation, however Queen Alexandra Hospital Cosham have decided to keep electronic transfer. This is intended to avoid any delays in the registration of death process (unless there has been a delay with the medical examiner).

Reflecting similar issues to the above, the government have also introduced the **Data Protection and Digital Information Bill** which will remove the requirement for a wet signature to documents and remove the requirement for paper registers to be held.¹²⁰ Further regulations are pending, which under the Coronavirus Act 2020, allowed for death registrations over the telephone. Pending the outcome of the legislation, the service would hope for greater flexibility regarding death registration, so that the customer has a choice of options at a difficult time. Death

registration in person will remain an option for customers who wish to attend in person.

In April 2022, the **Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2022** came into force.¹²¹ This meant that outdoor weddings – which had been permitted on a temporary basis during the pandemic – were now made permanent.

As at July 2022 the Law Commission for England and Wales recommended reform to weddings law and asked the government to review the law to reflect its recommendations.¹²² If the recommendations become law, then the focus of regulation will shift from a registered building to a marriage officiant. This will open up a broad range of locations for couples to get married, including parks, gardens, beaches, woods, cruise ships and village halls. With the cost of living pressures, this may also make weddings more affordable.

The service are responding to these changes in several ways. Discussions are taking place with the Council's Parks Service, with a view to obtaining licences at some of our city parks so that Registrars can offer a broader service, beyond Milldam House. Further licensing for wedding ceremonies is also being considered for the Lord Mayor's Parlour. Additional licensing will involve liaison with the General Registrar's Office as accountable body, together with the Council's Licensing team.

Concurrently, the service are also taking the opportunity to increase appeal to customers. This will include consideration of a hosted website to include 360 virtual tours, showcasing of venues and suppliers. Open Days will also be planned.

120 [CBP-9606.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#) Data Protection and Digital Information Bill, House of Commons Library August 2022.

121 Outdoor civil weddings and civil partnerships made permanent - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

122 Outdated weddings laws to be overhauled under new reforms - Law Commission

The restructure of the service in 2023, under one senior manager, combining the Registration Service, Events, Civic and Lord Mayor's teams also provides an opportunity to focus social media communications under one platform.

Improving the customer offer may also include a review of service opening times, to accommodate one late evening and weekend opening for all types of registrations, following a benchmarking and customer feedback exercise. Improvements are also scheduled for the planting scheme in the garden of Milldam House, together with path resurfacing works.

Citizenship Ceremonies

As a coastal city port, many communities seek to settle in Portsmouth and in recent years numbers of residents applying for citizenship has been increasing. Following a successful application, the Home Office will notify the applicant to attend a citizenship ceremony, via their local authority, usually within 3 months. The applicant has a choice of attending a group ceremony, or a private ceremony, with a higher fee scale for a private ceremony.

Due to increasing numbers, the service are looking at accommodating larger group ceremonies, which will also take account of the demands on the Lord Mayor's diary. Currently, group ceremonies can accommodate a maximum of 20 persons and guests. If larger ceremonies can be accommodated in the Banqueting Room, then it may be possible to incorporate up to 50 persons at group ceremonies.

Staff training and development

Following the restructure of the service, training will be rolled out for Deputy Registrars to also undertake notices of marriage (foreign nationals and British citizens), registrations of still births and group citizenship ceremonies (previously undertaken by Senior Registrars and Superintendent Registrar only).

2.14 Emergency Planning

The Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Team (EPRR) is a formal shared service between Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council. It ensures that the two authorities and their local communities can effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies in accordance with the authorities' statutory obligations, including the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 and Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001.

In accordance with the CCA and supporting non-statutory guidance, the EPRR service undertake training, exercises and provision throughout incidents that occur / affect the city, contributing directly to a healthy and happy city.

Emergency Planning deliver training and exercising both internally and with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure mutual understanding, best practice and testing of plans, and clarity on roles and reasonability when an incident structure is stood up.

During emergencies the EPRR team collaborate with directorates across our organisation to support people and the wider community, as well as external agencies including Blue Lights and Voluntary Services. This working structure allows the team **to ensure people feel safe and supported in their homes and communities**, respecting each other's differences and making sure everyone feels informed and safe during times of uncertainty and disruption.

It is important that the work undertaken by the Emergency Planning team centres around the needs of the community, taking pride in supporting Portsmouth's community, bringing those communities together and ensuring everyone feels they belong.

The EPRR team deliver to **stand up for Portsmouth** by holding utility companies to account for their actions in the city and challenging them to make improvements.

Plans are reviewed and revised with directorates to ensure the ability to adapt and continue service delivery to our communities. This work includes assessing the risk of emergencies and disruptive events, developing emergency plans and business continuity arrangements.

Section 3:

Risks and mitigations

Risk no.	Risk	Mitigation
1	Cost of Living Crisis	Free and low cost services
2	Rising costs	Value engineering Energy use Generating income
3	Workforce pressures	Review team structures Apprenticeships
4	Legislative changes	Connection with sector bodies

3.1 Risk 1

Risk 1 – Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis, covering rising costs of fuel, food and living essentials puts many households at risk who are already under economic disadvantage and facing hardship, reduced opportunities and impact to their health and wellbeing. It also contributes to increased demand for services and support.

Consultation with residents found that living costs had increased for the majority, with over half of residents planning to spend less on non-essentials, which would impact spending on culture and leisure activities.¹²³

Mitigation 1 – Free and low cost services

The directorate provides many free or low cost services and activities for the wellbeing of residents. The cost of living survey also found that a high number of residents felt that introducing cultural experiences and free events were important.

The majority of our museums are free to enter with additional activities and workshops kept at low cost. The directorate also engages with the Holiday Activity and Food Programme which provides free holiday activities and healthy food from reception to year 11 to those in receipt of benefits related free school meals.

The libraries are also a critical service to the communities of the city and provide many free activities, clubs and workshops for adults and children throughout the year, in many ways offering an early intervention service.

The directorate continues to offer the Leisure Card together with a commitment by partner organisations, to offer free and discounted

culture and leisure activity to individuals in receipt of means tested benefits or under corporate parenting.

To support families, the HIVE Portsmouth Uniform Shop enables direct support to families in need.

Many of our events are free to take part with an offer including family friendly events. Our smaller scale events often involve collaboration between our Libraries, Museums, Parks and Countryside Services.

Some of our statutory services include a commercial element where, if a service is outside statutory provision, then it can be offered on a chargeable basis. For example, pest control falls as a statutory responsibility for rats and mice on local authority property only. Where private clients request a service, this can be offered on a pay as you use basis, with customers in receipt of qualifying benefit receiving a reduced rate charge.

3.2 Risk 2

Risk 2 – Rising costs

The financial impact of the global economic crises continue to have a bearing upon the UK and consequently onto local authorities, creating challenges for the revenue budget and for new (capital) developments. The Council faces key pressures in its areas of statutory delivery and subsequent demands are placed on discretionary services, as it seeks to deliver services of quality and value to its residents over and above statutory services.

Local government is a significant commissioner and purchaser across procurement spend and inflation, rising energy costs and supply chain costs materially impact all departments of the Council.¹²⁴ External costs then impact on budgets and lead to higher costs for delivery of services.

Mitigation 2

Value engineering

Value engineering is key for major projects; once designs and specifications have been developed, the project manager and surveyor consider the elimination of unnecessary costs from a project or components and processes associated with it, which is aimed at improving the ratio between cost and benefit. This will include liaison with Financial Services to consider the life cycle costing as part of the value engineering exercise. Lifecycle modelling plays a significant part in considering the economic value of the design proposals for a project.¹²⁵

The directorate also uses local suppliers as far as possible; this helps the local economy and aligns with the Council's social value policy.¹²⁶

Energy use

All services with building assets are reviewing their energy use to minimise unnecessary spend, e.g. when buildings are vacant. Where property is under lease from the Council, services are working with the energy team to ensure that the occupier is paying for their utility use.

Generating income to support our services

The directorate looks to work creatively and innovatively to pursue income generating activity to support front line services. Examples of income generation include: museums retail and café offering, event sponsorship (sliding scale), event (land) hire, advertising stream, room/venue hire, wedding venue hire and concession operations.

124 National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2022 | Local Government Association

125 value_management_and_value_engineering_1st_edition_rics.pdf

126 Social Value Policy March 2021 (portsmouth.gov.uk)

3.3 Risk 3

Risk 3 – Workforce pressures

The LGA Local Government Workforce Survey 2022 found that 94% of councils were experiencing recruitment and retention challenges.¹²⁷

Workforce pressures in the wider market have led to challenges in recruiting to posts across the local authority. This has led to increased dependency on key staff and capacity of those staff to deliver complex work projects, where there is a capability, skills and/or capacity gap.

Mitigation 3

Options taken by the directorate to ease workforce pressures include:

The **review of team structures** as opportunities have arisen. The service managers have worked with the directorate performance and change officer to identify circumstances for building further resilience into team structures. This has included entering into a shared service agreement with another local authority to provide Modern Records management, combining parts of the Licensing and Regulatory departments to provide a unified resources team and the unification of Events, Civic Management and Registrars under one senior manager.

Departments have also made use of the apprenticeship levy where possible to grow further skills and specialist knowledge in teams. This has included both existing employees and new employees. The Regulatory Services department have provided the Regulatory Compliance Level 4 apprenticeship which has been invaluable to the resilience of the department. The profession has now also launched the Level 6 apprenticeship which will allow the further upskilling of competencies and knowledge.

Library and Archive Service have also engaged two new apprentices on a Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship to support the Council with regard to security and accessibility of document records.

The Parks Service engaged a horticulture apprentice as part of the Victoria Park project, and the post (upon successful completion of the apprenticeship) will transfer to a permanent grounds maintenance role as part of the long term resilience building of the project.

Accommodating apprenticeships depends on the staffing establishment of the team in question. Where teams are small, accommodation of apprenticeships is more challenging due to the requirement for 20% 'off the job' learning, removing officers from operational delivery.

3.4 Risk 4

Risk 4 – Legislative change and new regulations

*'Local government exists to lead delivery of many public services, and to represent the interests of those areas in the availability and quality of those services.'*¹²⁸

The capacity of the directorate is increasingly stretched to accommodate an increasing demand and remit of legislation. As referred in the earlier section of this document, the range of legislation either recently enacted or due in the next period encompasses many services in the directorate, including: Parks, Sports and Recreation, Events, Libraries, Museums, Licensing, Registration and Regulatory Services.

Mitigation 4 – Connection with sector bodies

The directorate's connection, via its individual services, to sector organisations ensures horizon scanning to identify important upcoming developments.

The departments referenced above in many instances are required to provide regular updates and data to their sector bodies. For Regulatory Services, this includes reporting to DEFRA regarding air quality and submitting trends data to National Trading Standards. For the Registration service, this means filing regularly with the General Register Office, a national government department. For our Parks and Countryside service, this means staying up to date with updates from DEFRA, for example

regarding the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (in collaboration with the county).¹²⁹ The reciprocal nature of these relationships allows the sector bodies to update their contact organisations on pending changes.

Many departments are also accredited, such as the Library and Archive service with the National Archives, the Museums service with Arts Council England and the Parks Service with RPII.¹³⁰

Relevant sector organisations such as the Museums Association, CILIP,¹³¹ Libraries Connected, Sport England and the Arts Council also lobby central government and keep up to date with pending legislation.

Accountability via funded projects, such as the Victoria Park 'People's Park' project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, also ensure that we meet new regulations via our project evaluation returns.

128 Local Government: Reinvigorating Local Democracy - Hansard - UK Parliament

129 Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

130 Register of Play Inspectors International

131 Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals

Section 4:

Major projects

4.1 Victoria Park

Following an initial funding bid for Victoria Park in 2018 which did not proceed, a further, successful funding bid was resubmitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in 2019. The bid was very much connected to the original vision for the park in the nineteenth century, to address concerns around health and wellbeing for the underprivileged and encourage outdoor recreation. The project bid also kept continuity with the original layout of the park by Victorian landscape architect Alexander Mackenzie.

The objectives of the project proposal were to restore Mackenzie's design and to utilise the heritage of the park sympathetically to deliver a range of activities for the benefit of the community. The initial round 1 grant from NLHF enabled a project manager and community engagement officer to develop the round 2 bid, together with consultant teams which were tendered and awarded.

Following initial community engagement, site investigations and feasibility studies, the Council secured the round 2 grant of £2.27 million from the NLHF to deliver the project between 2022 and 2026. The Council applied for further funding to cover inflationary costs in 2022, bringing the total round 2 grant award to £2.43 million.

Following completion of designs for restoration, improvement works and interpretation, a main contractor was appointed. The contractor is working collaboratively with the Friends of Victoria Park, volunteers and residents and this has included a public exhibition of art about the park. Capital works include restoration of the old boiler house, the aviary, below groundworks, a new community building and canopy.

Volunteers are an essential part of the project's envisioning as they form part of the NLHF project evaluation process and value accounting. Volunteer engagement opportunities are open and include roles such as

event stewardship, historical research, community gardening, website design and social media.

As part of the project, the park will be more inclusive and accessible to local communities, which will mean that users of the park match with the catchment area. The project includes a new educational programme and classroom community space 'The Green House', which will deliver learning opportunities for children and young people (including SEND), together with wider health and wellbeing opportunities for the community, as reflected in the activity programme. Opportunities in the park have been established for Creative Advances, in collaboration with Adult Services.¹³² The Green House will incorporate modern facilities, which 60% of respondents had requested during consultation.

There is a small area of the park set aside for the Shaheed Minar memorial, which is being funded by the Portsmouth Bangladeshi community.

Health and wellbeing activities scheduled for the park include wellbeing walks in connection with the Council's Independence and Wellbeing Team and yoga in the park. Community gardening is also a regular weekly event.

As part of the educational outcomes, the project includes restoration of the park's memorials (as part of the capital works) together with accompanying interpretation to provide context to the park for visitors. Other educational programmes include walks in the park focusing on the ecology of the site. Childrens trails have been developed for the park and working with the Libraries Service, events have included 'Shark In the Park' community reading event and Teddy Bears picnic.

The long term sustainability of the project outcomes are supported by staff, volunteers, a new Friends Group and a horticultural apprenticeship which will transition to a grounds maintenance position.

132 Home - Creative Advances (creative-advances.co.uk)

4.2 Bransbury Park

The project team are working with partners in the city such as Shaping Portsmouth, Portsmouth Ambassadors, RSPB, Make Aldingbourne Trust and Trash Arts to co-create a free events and activities programme for the park, as part of health and wellbeing outcomes. The event and activity offer includes festivals, fairs and music.

The design of the park includes increasing biodiversity through improved wildlife habitats, graduated planting schemes, further wildlife areas and new trees planted along the central avenue.

For further information, please reference the Council's committee reports on the project.¹³³

The basis for this major project is to replace Eastney Swimming Pool and Devonshire Avenue GP Surgery with one modern community facility. The alternative, to rebuild Eastney Swimming Pool, would incur significant capital costs without the provision of a wet and dry facility in one location.

Independent financial modelling indicates that the facility at Bransbury Park would produce an operating surplus of over £104,000 each year for the first ten years. This is significant as the facilities that Bransbury Park is replacing required an ongoing operational subsidy. Eastney Swimming Pool was making an operational loss of £65,000 before the pandemic. Accounting for the rise in energy prices this would now equate to around £123,000 per year. In addition, combining wet leisure and dry leisure in one facility minimises the potential for any operational losses, as the dry facilities subsidise the wet.

The design of the new leisure centre has included extensive consultation with sector bodies. This includes the support of the Football Foundation, Lawn Tennis Association, Swim England and England Netball. Discussions have looked at both the provision intended for Bransbury together with the wider provision of sports facilities across all sites in the city. As such, the Bransbury project forms part of the Strategic Outcomes Plan for sport and physical activity in Portsmouth, which sets out the strategic evidential basis for capital investment decisions.¹³⁴

Consultation also took place with local groups in the city, including BH Live, Portsmouth Netball, Pompey in the Community, Portsmouth Northsea Swimming Club, local community groups, schools, businesses and ward councillors.

To support health and wellbeing, the leisure centre will be co-located with a GP practice, so that visitors can combine multiple uses. This is an

133 Microsoft Word - Victoria Park Project Report (portsmouth.gov.uk), Reviving Victoria Park.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk), Victoria Park Project 2023 Q1 Update Report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

134 SOPG report to CLED 06 Oct 2023.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

important principle, as co-location of health and leisure forms part of the strategic approach of Sport England, as set out in their strategy, Uniting the Movement.¹³⁵ This is fully supported by local and regional bodies, including Portsmouth Property and Estates Forum, Portsmouth Primary Care Operational Group, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board, District Valuer Services and Primary Care Committee.

Specialist design confirmed the following facility mix:

Leisure Centre

- 25m 4-lane main pool
- 8.5m x 10m learner pool
- Changing village
- 70 station gym
- Group exercise studio
- Spin studio
- Reception, office
- Seating for pool viewing
- Accessible toilets (available to centre and park users).

GP surgery

- 5 consultation rooms
- 3 treatment rooms
- Primary Care Network joint working office
- Waiting room
- Administration office

Outdoor facilities

- Astro-turf football court
- Multi-use games area
- Play area
- Extended car park

The existing community centre has been kept as part of the design consultation in response to residents' preferences, together with the formal landscaping and miniature railway.

The pool that replaces Eastney Swimming Pool is 25% larger than the Eastney provision. The learner pool increases the city's capacity for learn-to-swim classes, where the old Eastney swimming pool had no shallow end and could therefore not be utilised for early stage swimming, which is an important part of the Council's sports and leisure offer towards improved health outcomes, including free swimming for under 12s.

Specialist designers have included architects, engineers, landscape designers, planning, traffic and parking consultants, biodiversity net gain assessors, BREEAM¹³⁶ assessors, arboriculture experts and noise impact assessors.

Via a procurement exercise, Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd have been identified as the preferred contractor. This contractor has extensive experience in constructing leisure centres, including where primary care facilities have been incorporated. Following planning determination, works will be undertaken with an estimated completion date of late 2026.

Further information on the project can be found in the background papers available via the Council's website.¹³⁷

The Bransbury Park Leisure Centre had initially included a sports hall, which was intended to replace the ageing facility at Wimbledon Park Sports Centre. Following discussions with Sport England, and in line with the council's Sports Facility Strategy, the sports hall was removed from the facility mix. An alternative new indoor sports hall has become available at Priory School which will provide more than twice the indoor sports hall space that Wimbledon Park Sports Centre could offer. The conversion of the little-used tennis centre at Priory School into a new sports hall took place over the 2024 school summer holidays. This project has been supported by grant funding from the Council and a Community Use Agreement is now in place.

135 Connecting with health and wellbeing | Sport England

136 This refers to a sustainability assessment methodology for projects.

137 Bransbury report to CLED 06 Oct 2023.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk) , Bransbury report to CLED 10 Feb 2023.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

4.3 Portsmouth Port Health Authority – Border Control Post

Following the UK's formal exit from the EU in January 2020 there is a requirement on the Portsmouth Port Health Authority (PPHA) to:

- Deliver the government's legislative requirements to protect and maintain the biosecurity of imported goods;
- Prevent friction at the border and maintain the UK's food supply;
- Deliver against the expectations of the Portsmouth International Port and food importer / exporter customers.

Biosecurity includes the responsibility to protect the public, environmental and animal health of the UK by preventing dangerous diseases from entering the country via shipping activity, whilst at the same time, preventing unnecessary disruption to commercial trading activity.

The government delayed the introduction of controls several times following the UK's departure from the EU in 2020. Considerable expenditure, comprising staffing costs and a purpose-built Border Control Post (BCP), was incurred as the Council prepared for the implementation of checks in 2022. This was reversed by the government and a new Target Operating Model (TOM) was published in August 2023.

The provisional official designation of the BCP took place in February 2024, with formal designation following 6 weeks later. The Council commenced recruitment and preparation to deliver against the new TOM to deliver against biosecurity risks, at a time when it had already committed significant levels of expenditure. The government have provided alternative interim measures to be utilised, should the TOM not be fully operational in accordance with the timeline. The interim measures include a 'trusted trader' scheme for 2024–2025¹³⁸ and an automatic clearance process (Timed Out Decision Contingency Feature), for low risk and medium risk consignments for the initial period of the new controls.

There are three risk levels concerning the biosecurity of imports through Portsmouth Port BCP. If the risk is considered low, the importer is required to provide documentation only by way of the check required. If the risk of the commodity is designated medium, in addition to the documentary checks, a further identity check is required for 30% of consignments. For high-risk consignments, documentary, identity and physical checks must take place. Furthermore, a sample of consignments will require specific biosecurity checks, such as product sampling. Importers will be able to use the government platform to see the information and checks required as to the types of consignments they are looking to bring through Portsmouth Port.

The Council has been in constant communication with the government throughout this project and articulated its concerns regularly, with particular regard to recruitment and funding challenges. Whilst the costs of operating the PPHA under the new TOM have been calculated at £2.7 million, the government have not confirmed financial indemnity against these costs beyond an initial 3 month period in 2024. However, the Council have committed to prepare for the TOM as, whilst this is a significant risk to the Council, not taking this commitment would mean risk to UK biosecurity and reputational risk regarding the Port's operational competency. Whilst the government have provided the interim measures set out above, when these are discontinued, it is important that the Port's staffing model is in place to ensure that demand can be met. Failure to do so would cause supply chain difficulties and risk to border biosecurity. This could impact importers choice to use other UK ports, with significant commercial and reputational risk to Portsmouth International Port.

Whilst the Council are taking all measures to satisfy recruitment requirements, due to the level of specialism required it has purchased official veterinarians via a professional agency model. This will enable the

Council to be able to satisfy the staffing quota required to provide the service within the necessitated timescale.

The Council continue to lobby the government regarding the funding model whilst being fully cognisant of the legal and reputational implications of failing to meet the statutory requirements of the TOM at the Port.



Section 5:

Delivery of the plan

5.1 Delivery via the democratic process

The Business Plan is taken to Culture, Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio for formal approval.

Aspects of the plan where applicable will be considered at several other Cabinet Member (Portfolio) decision meetings including:

- Community Safety, Leisure and Sport
- Central Services
- Climate Change and Greening the City

Our Licensing Service report into the regulatory framework and decisions are taken by Licensing Committee.

The directorate engages fully with the scrutiny process. Recent scrutiny reports include:

- Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel
 - Engagement with Culture and Leisure – widening social participation in Portsmouth¹³⁹
 - Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy focussing on High Street direction (2023 /2024)¹⁴⁰
- Traffic Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
 - Reducing the use of pesticides on council land¹⁴¹
 - Review into the enhancement of biodiversity in urban Portsmouth¹⁴²

The business plan is held accountable by the following:

- Cascade of Council plan and directorate business plan objectives – each service in the business plan is considered in further detail in the service operational plans
- Corporate performance monitoring is reported regularly to Governance and Audit and Standards Committee (regulatory committee)
- Key project and strategy developments are added to the Members Projected Work Programme
- Budget management, forecast outturn and savings as related to the directorate are reported regularly to the relevant committee

The directorate works collaboratively with portfolio holders and opposition spokespersons, including regular briefings. All Members are encouraged to take an interest in the work of our directorate and Members are welcome to have site visits with us at any time. We provide a comprehensive introduction to the directorate to new Members following each electoral cycle.

Major projects and strategies are developed in hand with consultation with the community, to engage customer feedback into the process. There is a strong culture of public focus throughout the directorate with customers able to make contact via a variety of channels. The strong presence of volunteer participation across the directorate also provides a further opportunity for feedback.

139 EDCL Scrutiny Panel Report 2023.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

140 Scrutiny Report EDCL 2023 2024 - Final.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

141 pesticides report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

142 Review into biodiversity enhancement

5.2 Audit, governance and risk

Audit forms an integral part of the local authority landscape, by ensuring transparency and accountability to the city's taxpayers and councillors. It provides precise and dependable information which enables the council to plan and manage its services.¹⁴³ Under the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice, the requirements of public sector auditors are set out for local authorities' statutory responsibilities to be met, under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Code of Practice is reviewed on a five yearly cycle.

The directorate works regularly with the council's strategy and audit teams. This involves engagement with said officers to prepare the annual return to the Council's external auditors, and to provide a comprehensive narrative statement on the activities, challenges and major projects for each year under review.

The strong relationship with the council's internal audit team enables them to progress the internal audit cycle as this affects the services of the directorate. The directorate appreciates the benefits of a good level of assurance across its departments which in turn provide positive outcomes for its customers and stakeholders.

The directorate also supports the work of the information governance team. This includes providing full responses to Freedom of Information requests, where these concern the services of the directorate. The directorate also works collaboratively with other departments across the Council, to ensure compliance with GDPR, with the directorate's own Modern Records Manager providing strategic oversight and professional advice to departments concerning this area.

Register of High Risks

The directorate keeps a risk register which forms part of its governance and submission to audit. The following is an extract of the high risks.

Activity area	Drivers	Theme	Risk type	Threats	Assurances	Triggers
Libraries and Archives	Budget pressures	Financial	Service Priority	Non delivery. Sustainability of service if further cuts to budget.	Reschedule / review opening hours.	If further cuts to budget and all libraries required to remain open
Whole directorate	Budget pressures; Recruitment challenges	Financial; reputational	Service Priority	Loss of key skills as flatter structure. Increase of absence as more pressure on fewer staff.	PDRs, 1:1s and team meetings regularly. Management training offer. Salary benchmarking. Consideration of shared services	At any time due to budget pressures and pressures in recruitment market.
Regulatory Services	Recruitment challenges	Financial; reputational	Service Priority Government specific service legislation; Project risk	Pressure on fewer staff, inability to perform statutory functions	Engagement of contract agency staff. Consideration of shared services.	Current – precipitated by Port Health Border Control Post requirements
Whole directorate	Budget pressures – buildings	Financial	Service Priority	Greater than expected deterioration of buildings; failure to adequately maintain assets	Risk crosses entire council estate. Professional advice of building surveyors	As advised by building surveyors.

Activity area	Drivers	Theme	Risk type	Threats	Assurances	Triggers
Cemeteries and Burial Services	Demographic increase	Environment	Service Priority	Availability of land for religious burials is 7–8 years based on current death rates. More space required due to different burial alignment and limited space	Identify land and set aside in existing cemeteries; identify possible new sites	Increased death rates in some communities; takes 5 years to develop a new cemetery
Regulatory Services – Port Health	Delivery of Border Target Operating Model and biosecurity checks	Regulation	Government specific service legislation	Complex uncertainty – full cost recovery mechanism insecurity	Ongoing communication with central government	Current
Regulatory Services – Trading Standards	Implementation of government legislative changes	Regulation	Government specific service legislation	Resource challenge in the short/ medium term	None	Current
Regulatory Services – all	Resources not meeting demand for services – legal statutory obligations & financial investigations (FI)	Regulation	Government specific service legislation	In all service areas of Regulatory Services	Review of services. FI are subject to failure and costs	Current
Whole directorate	Cost of living crisis Rising energy costs	Failure to deliver against income targets	Service priority	Less disposable income available Energy use in relation to Border Control Post development	Marketing of lower cost/ free events/adjustment of income targets focus on group market Full cost recovery regime	At any time

5.3 Plan on a Page

City Vision 2040

Healthy & Happy City

- Events: free to access, broad range.
- Active seafront offer.
- Green & open spaces to enjoy.
- Sports & leisure offer with BH Live.
- Wedding and citizenship ceremonies offer.

Culture & Creativity

- 6 museums on offer, 5 free to enter.
- Collaboration with a range of cultural partners including theatres & arts organisations.
- Promotion of our cultural offer via Visit Portsmouth & social channels.

Thriving Economy

- Work ongoing on Port Health BCP and 250+ statutory duties.
- Licensing process of applications under the regulatory regime.
- Emergency Planning protecting city infrastructure.
- Tourism bringing in direct and indirect spend of £600m annually.

Lifelong learning

- Libraries & archives outreach offer & free activities year round.
- Museums low cost workshops and activities and engagement with HAF.

Green city

- Biodiversity programmes and engagement.
- Clean Air Zone supported by Licensing and Regulatory Services.
- Bathing quality supported by Seafront and Regulatory Services.

Council Plan 2024

Make our streets safer, cleaner, greener

- Look after our parks.
- Take action against flytipping.
- Take action against rogue traders.

Make the city a fun and vibrant place to be

- Bransbury leisure centre development.
- King George V football complex.
- Portsmouth city centenary.
- Museums and Libraries public engagement.

Make sure when people need help, it is there for them

- School Library Service.
- Free events and activities.
- Hive Portsmouth.

Protect the environment

- Biodiversity management.
- Air quality programme.

Support opportunity

- Education and outreach programmes through our culture revenue clients.
- Supported internships and work experience.

Efficient and effective organisation

- Engagement with corporate digital strategy.
- Resource and support partners.

Speak up for our city

- Lobby the government on the Border Control Post.

City Vision Values

Collaboration:

We work together with partners across Council, communities and stakeholders in the city

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

We offer opportunities and equity of access through Leisure Card, HAF programme, warm and welcome spaces, Doyle Detectives, and via our leisure partner's sports development programmes

Respect:

Everyone has a contribution to make, through our co-production projects such as Victoria Park

Innovation:

We welcome new ideas, such as Tuk-Tuks for libraries

Community:

We support the city through the Hive network

5.4 Key Performance Indicators

Service area	KPIs	Measure
Libraries	Support online content to broaden reach and accessibility	Exceeded target by 1.67%
Events	Ignite the city and its tourism economy	Achieved 74% against target
Licensing	Support a thriving economy through renewal of vehicle licences, within 10 working days	Exceeded target by 5%
Museums	Build a city rich in culture by encouraging visitors to our 6 museum sites	Achieved 99% against target
Trading Standards	Deliver against statutory obligations regarding food safety	Exceeded target by 8%
Registrars	Celebrating new births – registrations within 5 working days	Achieved 91% against target

5.5 Key partners, stakeholders, strategies and legislation index

Portsmouth strategies

Strategy	Link
Imagine Portsmouth City Vision	The Vision – Imagine Portsmouth
Portsmouth Health & Wellbeing Strategy	health-and-wellbeing-strategy-january-2022-accessible.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth draft Heritage Strategy	Heritage Strategy - Appendix A.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022-2038	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022-2038 (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Greening Strategy and Delivery Plan	PORTSMOUTH GREENING STRATEGY and DELIVERY PLAN
Portsmouth Social Value policy	Social Value Policy March 2021 (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Public Health Annual Director Report 2023	Director of Public Healths Annual Report – Full report.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Draft Strategy (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Sport & Physical Activity	Strategy Strategic Outcomes Plan for Sport and Physical Activity in Portsmouth.pdf
Portsmouth Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy 2023 – 2028	24.444 Tourism Strategy_appendix 1.indd (portsmouth.gov.uk)

Partners and Strategies

Strategy	Link
Local Government Association	Home Local Government Association
Arts Council England, Let's Create	Let's Create Arts Council England
Sport England, Uniting the Movement	Uniting the Movement Sport England
Energise Me (Hampshire & IOW)	Energise Me – Changing lives through physical activity and sport
BH Live	BH Live – Social Enterprise
National Lottery Heritage Fund, Heritage 2033	Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Holiday Activities and Food programme	Holiday activities and food programme 2023 – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Portsmouth Creates	Portsmouth Creates – arts, culture, industry and community.
Libraries Connected	Libraries Connected
Museums Association	Home – Museums Association

Recent and pending legislation and statutory guidance affecting the directorate

- Environment Act 2021
- Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- Food Regulation Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023
- The Cosmetic Products (Restriction of Chemical Substances) Regulations 2023
- The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) 2023
- New statutory guidance for taxis and private hire vehicles, November 2023
- Gambling reform for the digital age, 2023
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies (DEFRA) 2023
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, 'Martyn's Law'
- Data Protection and Digital Information Bill
- Tobacco and Vapes Bill
- New licensing regulatory framework for non-surgical cosmetic procedures under the Health and Care Act 2022



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