

Corporate Management



Corporate Management reflects the combined operations of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Director of Legislative and Community Services / Clerk. In previous budget documents, these services were included under the heading of Administrative and Financial Services which also included the Office of the Director of Financial Services / Treasurer. Given the increasing complexity of these service areas, the prior year's budget and projections have been restated to remove Financial Services and the 2023 budget estimates have been separated into two distinct sections.

The CAO is responsible for the strategic leadership of the Corporation as well as fulfilling the role of key advisor to Council and the Senior Management Team. The Director of Legislative and Community Services / Clerk is responsible for the legislated duties of the Clerk which are focused on serving as the secretariat and official communicator for Council. By establishing systems of records and information management (RIM), freedom of information and protection of privacy and communications, the department ensures access to County of Essex business is open and transparent. As well, other divisions working in the Legislative and Community Services Department include: Legal Services, Communications and Organizational Development, and Community Services. For the purposes

of the budget, Community Services is established as a separate service area and excluded from the Corporate Management budget estimates.

Level of Service Statement

Corporate Management provides support to all service areas of the Corporation. By providing strategic, legislative, legal, and communication advice and supports, these service areas act as the administrative backbone for the Corporation. In the two-tier municipal system, County staff in Corporate Management also strive to be a regional resource to peers at the local level, strengthening intergovernmental relations and sharing ideas and best practices.

2022 Achievements and Challenges

In the first full year of leadership under a new CAO, the Corporation has continued to see reviews of existing service levels and procedures, which will lead into the development of a Corporate Strategic Planning exercise in 2023.

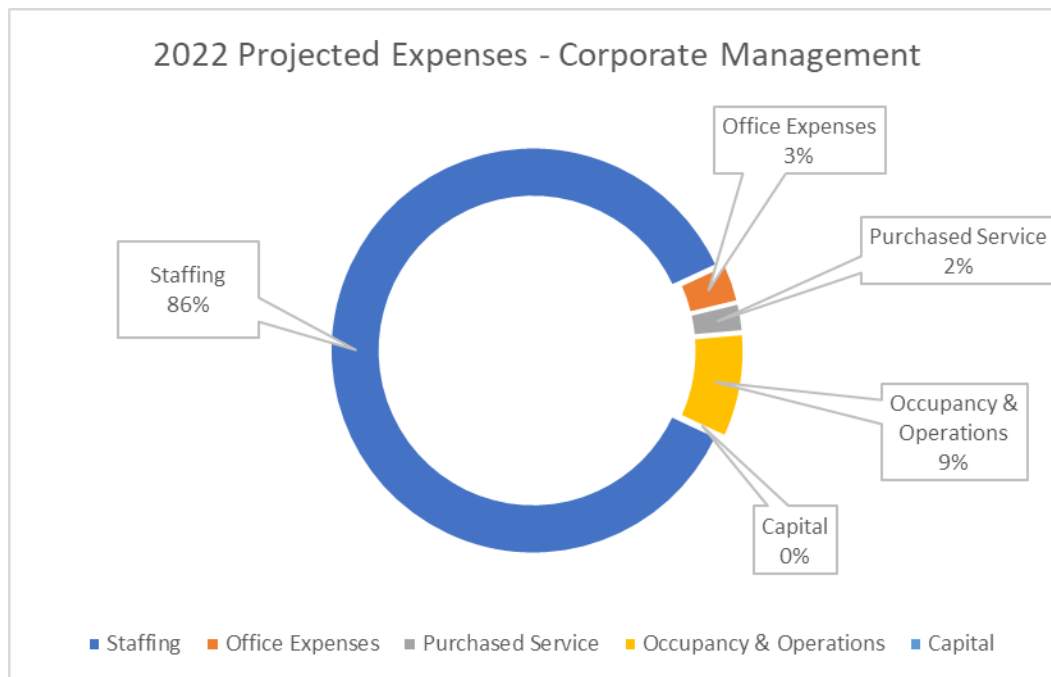
For the first time commencing in January 2022, County Council employed the services of an internal County Solicitor. Given the magnitude of projects requiring legal oversight including property acquisitions, expropriations, contract management, procurement, planning matters, labour relations, review of ever-changing legislation, as well as the need to manage insurance claims, it was deemed necessary to employ full time legal counsel and a Legal and Records Administrative Assistant for the Corporation. Benefits in reduced external legal fees and the efficiency in obtaining legal advice from internal legal counsel were quickly realized.

The Communications and Organizational Development team continued to build on employee engagement activities and staff training, improving internal communications and refining the County's marketing strategy. New opportunities for diversity and inclusion training were introduced. Communication with all staff was paramount during the many changes that occurred during the year as we were still dealing with COVID-19 information and resources to support the mental wellness of our workforce. The employee engagement committee resumed meeting and beginning in the summer, were able to plan in-person employee events.

In 2022 the Clerk's Department began to implement the recommendations of the 2021 corporate-wide records and information management (RIM) review which involved a consulting firm conducting an exhaustive inspection of information assets, internal competency levels, policies, and procedures.

To address the human resource need in the corporate records and information management program, one full-time Records and Information Management professional was approved in the 2022 budget.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of spending in Corporate Management for this past year (projected to December 31, 2022).



Opportunities and Challenges for 2023

As is prevalent within many service areas, recruitment and retention of staff are an ongoing concern. Ensuring our workforce is engaged and informed is a continuous challenge for our Communications team.

Ongoing property acquisitions for capacity expansion projects, claims administration and procurement contract review are some of the issues anticipated to impact the workload of Legal Services in the coming year.

The continued implementation of the RIM review recommendations relies on the recruitment of RIM professionals with the identified skillsets.

Proposed 2023 Budget Plan

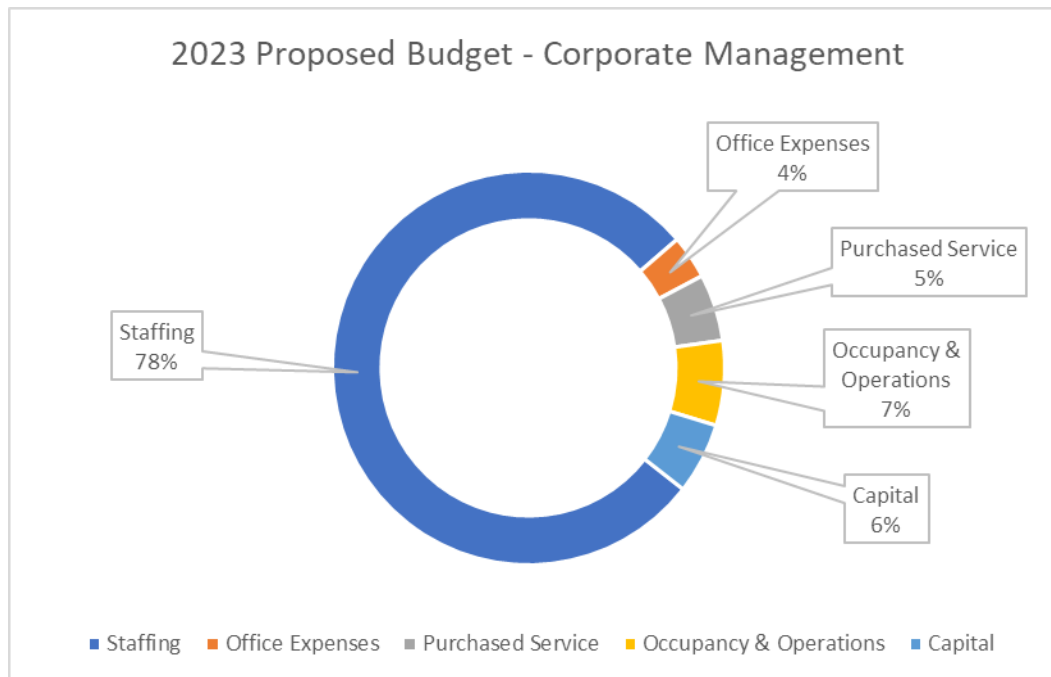
The start of a new Term of Council presents an opportune time to conduct a strategic planning exercise for the County of Essex. Leveraging the results of departmental service delivery reviews and combining information obtained through facility and resource rationalization, and a plan can be created that

delineates Council's vision and priorities for the future. The strategic plan will form the foundation for guiding principles that influence long range asset planning, allocation of resources, regional priorities and performance management.

Effective communication and data analytics are key success factors for this department. New opportunities will be explored for employee engagement and training opportunities. Additionally, priorities for 2023 include continuation of the plan to modernize the records management systems through the addition of one full-time position and a summer student as well as the move to cloud-based software. Implementation of software to improve the efficiency of managing formal information requests is also included in the proposed budget.

Legal Services will supplement their resources, through the services of a summer student, to commence a complete Corporate by-law review.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of proposed 2023 Budget spending in Corporate Management.



Overall, the 2023 Budget for Corporate Management, net of recoveries, totals \$2,088,060 (an increase of \$182,060 (9.55%) over the 2022 Budget of \$1,906,000).