Service Area Plan 2015/16

Part 1 - Service Information/links to policy
Part 2 – Managing Service Delivery
Part 3 – Managing and Improving People
Part 4 – Budget
Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes/Projects

Service Area :	Finance
Service Area Manager:	Mike Snow – Head of Finance
Deputy Chief Executive:	Andrew Jones
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Peter Whiting

1 Purpose of the Services Provided

- To seek to ensure that the Council's finances to be well managed, in accordance with best practice whilst ensuring best value for money is always obtained.
- To ensure that suppliers can do business with the Council and be able to tender fairly on an equal basis along with all other prospective businesses.
- To provide sound and understandable financial advice and a responsive support service to enable me to make the right decisions and to ensure the Council's services are properly managed.
- To seek to provide assurance that all risks are being properly managed and controls are in place.
- To provide the right benefits that claimants are due at the right time.

1.1 Linkages to Sustainable Community Strategy

	Direct Contribution	**Indirect Contribution**	
All Themes		The support services within Finance (Accountancy, Audit/Risk, Procurement, FSTeam),	

	Direct Contribution	Indirect Contribution	
		and Council Tax/Business Rates indirectly contribute to all the themes by providing finance and support services for the Council's services.	
Prosperity		Benefits and Procurement assist in providing funding which will circulate in the local economy.	
Health and Well Being	By assisting tenants with their housing, Benefits is contributing to the health and well-being of those households.		
Sustainability			
Housing	Benefits service assists tenants afford their homes		
Safer Communities			

2 Managing Service Delivery

2.1 Service Overview

(NB – Specify main aspects of service delivery during the year)

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
Accountancy	**Budget/Council Tax Setting**	Ensure council tax and budget setting complies with legislation, meets Council priorities and is within available resources.		Statutory Requirement

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
	Budget Review	To monitor income and expenditure on an on-going basis and assess implications for medium term financial strategy, reporting regularly to SMT and members.		11 Budget Review Reports to SMT, 5 Reports to Executive
	Final Accounts	Ensure annual accounts closed down correctly and promptly. Production of Annual Statement of Accounts. Liaison with external auditors.		
	Treasury Management	Manage the Council's investments to minimise risk whilst securing the optimum return. Manage the Council's borrowing. Funding the Council's Capital Programme.		£55m invested as at 31/3/2015
	Financial advice	Advice officers and members of the financial implications of proposed actions and decisions and provide appropriate challenge.		
	Financial Planning	Forecast the Council's income and expenditure for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and HRA Business Plan.		
	Parish/town council support	Arrange payments to parish/town council in respect of concurrent services and grants in respect of council tax.		
Audit & Risk	**Internal Audit**	Provision of comprehensive internal audit service for management in line with the Internal Audit Strategic Plan.		Statutory requirement.
	Risk Management	Promote and advise on good risk management across the authority.		Statutory requirement. Effective corporate governance.
	Insurances	Ensure that the Council is appropriately insured in the provision of its services and manage any resulting claims.		Effective corporate governance.
	Investigations	Undertake ad-hoc internal investigations on behalf of management.		Effective corporate governance.
Benefits & Fraud	**Housing Benefits**	Assessment and payment of claims for housing benefit in line with DWP scheme.	25,500 2,100	Changes processed p.a New claims determined p.a
	Council Tax Reduction	Assessment of council tax reduction claims in line with Council's scheme.	18,000 2,200	Changes processed p.a New claims determined p.a
	Fraud investigation	Undertake investigations into fraud against the council in respect of services such as council tax, business rates, house lettings. Promotion of fraud awareness.		New post not known as yet

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
Exchequer	**Collection of Council Tax**	Maintenance of council tax records, award of reliefs, calculation of tax due, billing and recovery thereof.	61,000 22,500	Council tax payers Reliefs & discounts
	Collection of Business Rates	Maintenance of business rates records, award of reliefs, calculation of rates due, billing and recovery thereof.	4,700 2,500	Business Rate payers Reliefs & discounts
	Recovery of CT, BR and Benefit overpayments	Take appropriate action to recover sums due to the Council, including use of magistrates courts.	6,000 25,000 150 million	Summonses Reminder notices Collectible per annum
	Payment of suppliers	Arrange payment to suppliers for goods ordered.	10,000 48 million	Transactions Paid to suppliers
	Recovery of sundry debts	Raise sundry debt accounts for sums due to the Council, and recovery thereof.	17,200 7.7	Transactions Million collected
	Rural and Urban Capital Initiatives Scheme	Manage the Council's RUCI scheme, making recommendations to Executive on grant awards, payment and monitoring of awards agreed.	150,000 10-12	Budget Applications per annum
Procurement	**Lead/advise on procurement and tenders**	Advise and assist officers in the procurement of goods and services in line with the Council's Code of Procurement Practice and EU Regulations.		
	Maintain contracts registers	Work with officers across the Council to ensure that the Council's contract register is correct, is duly published, and contracts within the register are appropriately managed.		Approx 250 contracts on Contracts Register
	Manage corporate procurement	Review and develop the Council's approach to procurement, management of the Council's Procurement Strategy and completion of the Procurement Action Plan.		

2.2 Measures

Key Corporate Measures – (Do we include trend data?)

Customer Measures – those important to the people/organisations who use our services Note : these measures should be used on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to identify the impact of interventions in the system and to plan future interventions. Interventions may be very small adjustments to resources, or may involve transformational change				
	Qrt 1	2	3	4
Average number of days from receipt of all information to determine new benefit/reduction claims.	7			
Prompt payment of invoices within agreed payment terms				
Unqualified audit statement on Statement of Accounts				
Average number of days from receipt of all information to determine changes to benefit/reduction claims.	13			
Timely and informed Budget and Financial Forecasts				
Number of Benefits/Revenues calls to Customer Service Centre.	12,189			
Efficient & timely CTax processing (Age of oldest item) Days	41			
Efficient & timely NNDR processing (Age of oldest item) Days	22			

Operational Measures – other (non customer) measures essential to ensure that "purpose" can be achieved. Note: <u>this section will not be used by most service areas</u> as their Customer Measures are expected to be sufficient. However, there may be cases where an operational measure is required to ensure the smooth running of a service area.				
	Qrt 1	2	3	4
Sundry Debt balance outstanding over 90 days	£208,105			
Numbers of transactions – orders, creditor invoices, sundry debtor invoices	7,370			
Council tax collection rate	29.45%			
NNDR collection rate	28.22%			
Business Rate Growth (Rateable Value)	-887,960			

Completion of Internal Audit Plan (percentage variation to profiled plan)	0%			
No of Outstanding appeals (Business Rates)	668			

2.3 Managing Risk

Risk	Planned Actions during year	Comments
Budget	• Regular budget monitoring • Achievement of 2.5% savings target for 2015/16 and plan for 2016/17+2017/18	
Procurement	• Management of corporate procurement • Provision of Procurement training workshop 1 and assist with contract management training. • Attendance of key officers at in-house training • Maintenance of Finance and Council Contract Register	Workshop 1 complete, Contract Management planned for September 2015
Contract Management	• Attendance of appropriate officers on Contract Management training.	
Audits	• Internal Audits of various Finance functions scheduled for year in accordance with Internal Audit Plan. • External Audit of Statement of Accounts and grant claims.	
Risk Register	• Risks reviewed at management team meeting and on on-going basis • Quarterly risk register review with portfolio holder.	
Service Assurance	• Actions arising out of Annual SA document include: - Provision of sundry debtor training Provision of Procurement training Update of Business Continuity Plan	
Corporate Health & Safety	• Completion of H&S Assessments.	

Part 3 – Managing and Improving People

Workforce Planning

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on other Service Areas	Milestones
1. Succession Planning (E.g. planning for leavers)	Head of Service and Divisional Managers	Encourage training, coaching etc of staff assist them to maximise their potential and roles within the organisation.		Support from HR	On-going
2. Skills, Training, Competency Needs	Head of Service and Divisional Managers	Formal staff training/professional qualifications to encourage them to maximise their potential.	Cost of professional training courses.	Support from HR	Staff commencing formal training. Staff completing formal training.
		On-going CPD training for staff.	Met out of existing budgets.		On-going, March 2016
3. Service Changes – Demands on staff resource	Benefits & Fraud Manager	Review of Benefits Team in light of Universal Credit.		Support from HR.	Staff consultation process.

Part 4 BUDGET – Main budgetary pressures and changes

Activity	Budgetary Impact	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Need to achieve 5% savings	None achieving savings will increase savings to be found across the Council, with potential impact upon services.			
Potential reductions in Government grants/subsidy above reductions currently projected.	Will increase savings requirement of Council and potential impact upon service provision.			
Court fees income continuing to be volatile.				
Benefits/Benefits Overpayments -				

Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes, Major Workstreams and Projects

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Sundry Debtor training	Strategic Finance Manager		Relevant for all services raising sundry debts	Initial pilot course and subsequent course programme.	March 2016
Review of Concurrent Services and parish support	Strategic Finance Manager	Potential savings £100k.		Paper to PFH and Leader. Potential subsequent Executive report.	To be determined by November 2015
Review of Active H/Total interface and associated working practices	Head of Housing & Property Services.		Joint project with H&PS, requiring some support from ICT.	Meeting 3 August	March 2016
On-line Returns	Strategic Finance Manager		Culture, Neighbourhood	Rollouts for Spa Centre, Leisure Centres, followed by feasibility Car Parks	March 2016

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Benefits – E-Forms	Benefits & Fraud Manager		DMC, CSC, Font Line	Initial rollout, active promotion working with CSC and Front Line	June 2015. March 2016
Review of potential changes to Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Benefits & Fraud Manager		CSC, Front line, ICT	2015/16 fact finding and analysis, and monitoring impact of UC.	Executive report Spring 2016
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for new businesses	Exchequer Manager			Report for CMT consideration	Autumn 2015
Auto-matching feasibility for Creditor invoices	Exchequer Manager		DMC, All Services	Feasibility by end of September	December 2015
Review usage being made of Procurement System with a view to its use being made across the Council in managing contracts and procuring services.	Procurement Manager		All Services	Feasibility, plan, roll-out	March 2016
Procurement Training for officers across the Council	Procurement Manager		All Services	Workshop 1 on-going, Support to contract management training	July 2015, December 2015
Prepare for 5 yearly review of Internal Audit during 2016/17	Audit & Risk Manager			Produce Plan of how to undertake it	March 2016
Promotion of Risk Management and RM initiatives.	Audit & Risk Manager		All Services	Risk Management Annual report to Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee	September 2015