

Service Area Plan 2018/19

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 are well managed, in accordance with best practice whilst ensuring best value and 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 members and officers 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 Fit For the Future Strategy

External	Direct	Indirect
Service (Green, Clean and Safe)		Finance provides the funds to provide services, and seeks to ensure that funds are correctly used, whilst presenting value for money.
People (Health, Homes and Communities)	Benefits service assists tenants afford their homes, by awarding housing benefits and council tax reduction. Administration of the discretionary housing payments scheme for claimants receiving housing benefit to prevent homelessness. RUCIS grants.	
Money (Infrastructure, Enterprise and Employment)	Benefits and Procurement assist in providing funding which will circulate in the local economy. Using our discretionary powers in Business Rates enables businesses to get assistance by way of discounts	Procurement joined Better Business for all group (BBFA) to support local businesses in procuring council contracts to help build the local economy

Internal	Direct	Indirect
Service (Maintain or Improve services)	Customer services telephones and face to face are aiming to encourage and support customers to self serve in line with the digital by default policy.	The Audit and Risk service provides an assurance framework to ensure all resources are correctly deployed, whilst providing value for money. The Procurement service provides a contract management framework to ensure contracts achieve value for money and best performance.
People (Effective Staff)	Procurement are partnering with other services to empower them to carry out best procurement practices effectively.	

Money (Firm Financial Footing over long term)	Ensuring the Council's finances are on a firm footing is a key priority for Finance.	
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	Direct	Indirect
All Themes	The support services within Finance (Accountancy, Audit/Risk, Procurement, FSTeam), and Council Tax/Business Rates directly and indirectly contribute to all the themes by providing finance and support services for the Council's services.	

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	
	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, 6 Reports to Executive	
	Final Accounts	Ensure annual accounts closed down correctly and promptly. Production of Annual Statement of Accounts within statutory deadlines. Liaison with external auditors.	Statutory Requirement	
	Treasury Management	Manage the Council's investments to minimise risk whilst securing the optimum return. Manage the Council's cashflow and borrowing. Funding the Council's Capital Programme.		£90m investment peak as at 1 February 2018

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
	Financial advice	Advise 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 precepts and grants in respect of council tax (2018/19 final year).		
Audit & Risk	Internal Audit	Provision of comprehensive internal audit service for management in line with the Internal Audit Strategic Plan.	Statutory requirement.	Approx.38 audits completed p.a.
	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.	Changes processed p.a New claims determined p.a	22,000 1,900

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
	Council Tax Reduction	Assessment of council tax reduction claims in line with Council's scheme. Including administering discretionary housing payments to housing benefit and universal credit customers.	Changes processed p.a	17,600
			New claims determined p.a	2,240
	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.		
	Customer Service Team	Take Revenues, Benefits and Switchboard telephone calls	Service calls pa	46,000
			Switchboard calls	12,000
	Reception/One Stop Shops	To work with WCC to ensure customers can obtain the services they need efficiently and effectively as possible.	No of District face to face enquiries pa	30,000
Exchequer	Collection of Council Tax	Maintenance of council tax records, award of reliefs, calculation of tax due, billing and recovery thereof.	Council tax payers	63,500
			Reliefs & discounts	23,000
	Collection of Business Rates	Maintenance of business rates records, award of reliefs, calculation of rates due, billing and recovery thereof.	Business Rate payers	5,100
			Reliefs & discounts	2,,750
	Recovery of CT, BR and Benefit overpayments	Take appropriate action to recover sums due to the Council, including use of magistrates courts.	Summonses	6,000
			Reminder notices	26,500
			Collectible per annum	£180m
	Payment of suppliers	Arrange payment to suppliers for goods ordered.	Transactions	10,000
			Paid to suppliers	£48m

	Service Being Delivered	Priorities (with Justification)	Service Demand	
	Recovery of sundry debts	Raise sundry debt accounts for sums due to the Council, and recovery thereof.	Transactions Collected pa	13,000 £7.0m
	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.	Budget Applications per annum	£150,000 10-12
Procurement	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.		
	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 260 contracts on Contracts Register	
	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.		

2.2 Measures

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

	Qtr. 1	2	3	4
Average number of days from receipt of all information to determine new benefit/reduction claims.				
Number of new benefit/reduction claims awaiting processing				

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.				
Timely and informed Budget and Financial Forecasts				
Number of Benefits/Revenues calls to Customer Service Centre.				
Efficient & timely CTax processing (Age of oldest item) - Days				
Number of CTax correspondence awaiting processing				
Efficient & timely NNDR processing (Age of oldest item) - Days				
Number of NNDR correspondence awaiting processing				
Number of formal legal challenges received and upheld against the total number of tenders				
Number of local suppliers actively registered on CSWJETS E Portal				
% Percentage of suppliers on CSWJETS for contracts awarded for the period located within Warwick District				
Number of local suppliers that submitted a tender				
Operational Measures – other (non customer) measures essential to ensure that “purpose” can be achieved.				
Note: this section will not be used by most service areas 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.				
	Qtr. 1	2	3	4
Sundry Debt balance outstanding over 90 days				
Numbers of transactions – orders, creditor invoices, sundry debtor invoices				
Value cashable and non-cashable fraud savings				

detected.				
Council tax collection rate				
NNDR collection rate				
Business Rate Growth (Rateable Value)				
Completion of Internal Audit Plan (percentage variation to profiled plan)				
No of Outstanding appeals (Business Rates)				
% Private Sector suppliers with a formal contract agreement				
Number of Approved Exemptions below £20k				
Number of Approved Exemptions above £25k				

2.3 Managing Risk

Risk	Planned Actions during year	Comments
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular budget monitoring Achievement of savings target for 2018/19, and other FFF savings agreed by members. 	
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of corporate procurement Continue provision of Procurement training. Attendance of key officers at in-house training. Maintenance of Finance and Council Contract Register	
Contract Management	Attendance of appropriate officers on Contract Management training.	
Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks reviewed at management team meeting and on on-going basis Quarterly risk register review with portfolio holder. 	

Risk	Planned Actions during year	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Action plan being formulated for 2017/18 based on external review of Risk Management. 	
Service Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions arising out of Annual Service Assurance Statement include: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of Procurement training ○ Update of Business Continuity Plan 	
Corporate Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of H&S Assessments. 	
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New WDC/WCC Procurement Partnership. • Shared Services for Business Rates and Fraud Investigation. 	

Part 3 – Managing and Improving People

3.1 Staff Resource

There are currently 71 FTE posts in the department.

3.2 Workforce Planning

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on other Service Areas	Milestones
1. Workforce Planning	Head of Service and Divisional Managers	Encourage training, coaching, mentoring etc of staff; assist them to maximise their potential and roles within the organisation.		Support from HR	On-going
	Divisional Managers	Employment of apprentices.	Funded from corporate budget and Levy	Support from HR	Appointment and subsequent completion of apprenticeship.

Category	Sponsor	Activity	Budget Impact	Impact on other Service Areas	Milestones
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.
	Divisional Managers	On-going CPD training for staff.	Met out of existing budgets.		On-going, March 2019
3. Service Changes -	Head of Service	Complete recruitment to new Procurement Business Partner post.		Support from HR	
	Head of Benefits and Fraud	Review OSS/Front Line staff and interaction with Customer Service Team and Back Office.		Potentially all service areas.	
4. Determining the need for additional resource					

Part 4 BUDGET – Main budgetary pressures and changes

Activity	Budgetary Impact	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Corporate savings requirements accommodated within 2018/19 Budget.				

Activity	Budgetary Impact	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Support Service savings included within Budget as part of FFF review.				
Court fees income continuing to be volatile.	Budget overstated. Budget reduced from 2018/19	£20,000 recurring reduction		
Reduction in Benefits Admin Subsidy	Reduced subsidy included in 2018/19 Budget	£41,000 reduction.		
Cost of new Financial Management System			TBC	

Part 5 – Managing Planned Changes, Major Work streams and Projects

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Investigate feasibility of using of Meta Training for improving employee awareness of risk management.	Audit and Risk Manager			Compilation of mini report on feasibility of using Meta Training for improving employee awareness of risk management.	March 2019.
Customer Service Team – review telephony enhancements to improve customer service.	Benefits and Fraud Manager	Potential request for Service Transformation Reserve funding		Reduction in calls received.	March 2019
Universal Credit – prepare for October 2018 rollout to new working age housing benefits claimants.	Benefits and Fraud Manager			Appropriate online and budgetary support is in place. Training provided to all relevant people.	October 2018
Customer service team face to face. Review service delivery.	Benefits and Fraud Manager				March 2019
Review Discretionary	Benefits and Fraud		Housing		March

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
Housing Payments policy in view of new Homelessness legislation.	Manager				2019
Review options for Council Tax Reduction Banded Scheme	Benefits and Fraud Manager			Draft options to Executive	July 2018
Visiting Team – improve efficiency and affectiveness of working practices.	Exchequer Manager		Development Services, Street Naming/Numbering, ICT	Fill vacant admin role/consider current working arrangements/review JDs/	June 2018
Auto-matching for Creditor invoices – implement across Council	Exchequer Manager		All.	System live across Council	May 2018
Explore local discount/relief schemes for council tax and business rates.	Exchequer Manager	Potential cost on collection fund. Possible long term gains from local business investment.		Paper on options for 2 schemes including pros and cons of policy	July 2018
Council Tax “Self Serve” (Open Channel) module	Exchequer Manager			Moving out form Moving within form Single person discount form	May 2018 July 2018 Aug 2018
Production of Spend Analysis	Exchequer Manager/Senior Procurement Business Partner.	Potential for future savings from improved collaborative procurement.	Potentially all.	Agreement on what data to be analysed	September 2018

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date
WDC/WCC Procurement Partnership – progress new arrangements. Review of success to Executive	Head of Finance		Potentially all.	Report to Executive	March 2019.
Contract Register – review with ICT format held, how shared and accessed.	Senior Procurement Business Partner.		Potentially all.		March 2019
Early Closure of Accounts – for 2017/18 inc improved electronic WPs, planning for 2018/19 closedown.	Strategic Finance Manager				July 2018
New Financial Management System	Strategic Finance Manager	One of Capital Cost, potentially additional revenue support costs (but not in 2018/19)	All service areas are stakeholders who will need to be consulted and involved throughout the process.	Soft Market testing. Production of specification.	31 March 2018
Budget Review – increase accuracy of process and year end projections.	Strategic Finance Manager		All		On-going