

Service Plan 22/23

Service Area :	Finance
Service Area Manager:	Andrew Rollins - Head of Finance
Deputy Chief Executive:	Darren Knight
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
PABS	N/A

Sections:

Links to council vision & corporate business plan
Service Delivery and Major Workstreams
Performance
Risk Management

Linkages to Council Strategy - Warwick 2030

Theme and Strategic Goals		Direct	Indirect
Delivering Valued, Sustainable Services			
Ensure sustainability is at the heart of our decision making	We will develop climate and sustainability impact tool to help inform, shape and improve our decision making.		
Continue to ensure the council's finances remain on a firm and sustainable footing	Our medium-term financial strategy will set out the steps we will take to ensure we continue to be financially sustainable and can continue to invest across the district – this will include making better use of existing resources and consider how we can increase income generating opportunities.	Ensuring the Council's finances are on a firm footing is a key priority for Finance. Procurement works with Accountancy to ensure any budgetary savings made through a Procurement activity are recorded and removed from budgets to making Corporate savings.	Finance provides the funds to enable service provision, and seeks to ensure that funds are correctly used, whilst presenting value for money. The Audit and Risk service provides an assurance framework to ensure all resources are correctly deployed, whilst providing value for money.
	Our change programme will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how the Council delivers services to ensure they remain responsive and accessible to customer needs.	Finance work closely with service areas to ensure staff are trained and understand their requirements in service delivery within agreed budgets through the use of the Finance Management System, established financial processes and effective budget monitoring.	
Achieve and demonstrate delivery of high quality services	By reviewing how Council services are delivered and measuring performance will help ensure high quality services are being delivered across the Council.	Procurement are partnering with other services to empower them to carry out best procurement practices effectively	
	The Digital and Customer Strategy and Change Management Programme will make it easier for customers to contact the Council 24/7, 365 days a year and enable our customer service team to help more customers at the first point of contact through different communication channels.		
	We will measure our performance and develop how we use data, benchmarking and customer insight to ensure we continuously learn and improve how we deliver services		The Procurement service provides a contract management framework to ensure contracts achieve value for money and best performance. It has also introduced a new approach to raising purchase orders and monitor contract spend to create greater spend transparency for the council and reduce the risk of non-compliant procurement; and will be helping services make informed decisions on spend by developing and launching a live spend analysis tool
	We will further develop our approach to commissioning and contract management across the Council to continue to ensure residents receive the best service possible and value for the taxpayer.		The procurement strategy and Code of Procurement practice is instrumental in ensuring the decarbonisation through contracted services to help meet the Councils target of being a net-zero carbon district by 2030. The Procurement Team is tasked with ensuring the strategy and consideration of sustainability in award criteria is considered during all sourcing activity for contracts above £50,000. Procurement is also tasked with reviewing and updating the Procurement policies regarding Social Value and Sourcing to aid service areas in taking green, clean, safe and carbon neutral objectives into account during all procurement activities
	Ensure Council homes are safe and meet the Decent Homes standard for all our tenants including improving the energy efficiency of their homes and meeting all new social housing regulatory requirements.		Ensure appropriate budget is approved to support the required delivery through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), for current year, future years (via the HRA Business Plan) and the Housing Investment Plan. Compliance demonstrated through internal audit via the agreed programme.

We want to attract and retain the best talent to deliver our ambitions	Our People Strategy will help to attract the right people with the right skills the Council needs and are recognised locally, regionally and nationally as an employer of choice.		
Ensure the best use of the council's assets and resources to deliver the council wider corporate aims and support the circular economy	A new Asset Strategy and Management Plan will set out how we will best use our assets to drive sustainability, enable regeneration, and commercial value to contribute to our long-term financial position and place <u>shaping ambitions</u> .		
	We will continue to develop our approach for maximising social value through our place shaping initiatives and investments, to recycle the Warwick District Pound		
Low cost, low carbon energy across the District			
Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from the council's public buildings	Significantly improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings and introduce renewable energy generation capacity <u>where possible</u> .		Support delivery of services with performance and monitoring data, and professional advice.
	Assess the creation of an investment fund for energy conservation and energy generation projects.		
Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from existing Council Housing Stock	Develop a Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency Strategy, for existing Council homes to reach a minimum of EPC C by 2030. Aim to go further to reduce carbon emissions and energy bills for Council tenants by exploring how we can maximise the impact and prioritisation of our maintenance programme and any external funding opportunities. This will include developing the toolkit to measure and <u>assess impact</u> .	Delivery of grant funded work against agreed criteria.	
Provide homes which are safe and meet the decent homes standard for all our tenant including improving energy efficiency of their homes.	Working with tenants and using sector best practice to ensure that our homes are safe, energy efficient, free from damp and mould and, as a minimum, meet decent home standards.		
Ensure new housing developments led by the Council are exemplars of planning and construction to meet the climate emergency and other challenges	New Council homes are net zero carbon in operation. To support this, we will set out our aspirations relating to carbon performance and for WDC-led developments recognising that there may be times when these aspirations cannot be fully achieved in light of viability.		
Explore multiple, innovative approaches to make it easier for others in the district	By working in partnership locally, regionally and nationally, we will identify, evaluate and undertake initiatives to help local people reduce their energy needs		
Creating Vibrant, Safe and Healthy Communities of the Future			

<p>Support all our communities, rural and urban to be economically ready for the future, with the right infrastructure and protect community identify with a focus on people and the environment</p>	<p>Enhance our town centres by working with businesses in place making initiatives, events and active travel to support the daytime and nighttime economy. This will include taking forward the future high street fund and the progression of the creative quarter.</p>	<p>Direct involvement in the Council's work on the Investment Zone, focusing on the delivery to 'no detriment', and assessing the opportunities and benefits from inclusion.</p> <p>The Governance framework in place for Milverton Homes has the Section 151 Officer as the shareholder representative, with effect from 1st August 2023</p>	<p>The Finance Service links with wider strategies and policies guidelines across the Council, supporting enabling of such strategies through the provision of financial resourcing, systems training, financial performance monitoring and forecasting</p>
	<p>Any opportunities for an investment zone will focus on the transition to a green economy, protect against unsuitable development and deliver for biodiversity, sustainable transport, and job creation.</p>		
	<p>Promote the district as a location for advanced manufacturing, "green" industries, creative games and hi-tech based companies, building on our national reputation. Work with educational establishments to inspire people to learn new skills, help local people access jobs and opportunities.</p>		
	<p>Increase the volume of high quality, low carbon, affordable and social housing including increasing the Council's and Milverton Homes' home building activity. This will help meet demand for housing and help tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.</p>		
<p>Promote vibrant communities, a welcoming atmosphere and good mental and physical health and wellbeing within all our towns and villages.</p>	<p>Support our creative community, including local artists, dancers, actors, musicians and history and heritage organisations through a revised Creative Framework and a programme of support through UKSPF projects.</p>		
	<p>Build on our reputation as a home for national and international sporting events.</p>		
	<p>Encourage everyone to have a more active lifestyle via use of our leisure centres, parks and open spaces, other sports facilities, and the provision of other outreach activities.</p>		
	<p>Review, update and continue to take forward initiatives in the Climate Emergency Action Programme and evaluate their impact</p>		
	<p>Using our joint WDC/SDC new Local Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritise housing development on brownfield sites. • minimize use of greenfield sites where possible. • promote new developments using 20-minute neighbourhood/settlement designs. • ensuring convenient access to services and shop. • protect existing community identities. • ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure is available to support new and existing development. 		

	In partnership with Warwickshire County Council, promote and implement active travel choices as a priority – public transport, walking and cycling.		
	Adopt a Net Zero Carbon DPD and provide supplementary guidance, training and support to ensure that new homes and other building in the district are net zero carbon.		
Enhance the Biodiversity of the District	Increase the level of biodiversity on Council owned land and create a network of accessible linked biodiversity rich spaces.		
	Encourage residents, communities and businesses to enhance the biodiversity of the district using the planning system, the Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and other opportunities		
To champion new and innovative ways of working together to improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities – focussing on prevention and building resilience in communities	Reduce health inequalities within the district and develop a series of health and community wellbeing hubs.		
	Develop and implement an asset based community development strategy where the Council and partners will work with communities to build capacity to help address their own health, safety and wellbeing needs, especially those with a more deprived socioeconomic or isolated backgrounds.		
	Working with partners to deliver community safety interventions to address ASB and fear of crime.		

Service Overview

	Service Being Delivered	Main aspects of service delivery	Service Demand/Service Requests		
			Estimated Expected Workload	Notes	
Accountancy	Accountancy	Budget / Council Tax Setting		Ensure council tax and budget setting complies with legislation, meets Council priorities and is within available resources.	
		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.	
		Final Accounts		Ensure annual accounts closed down correctly and promptly. Production of Annual Statement of Accounts within statutory deadlines. Liaison with external auditors.	
		Fees and Charges		Ensure fees and charges are set through liaison with service areas and reported to members	
		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.	
	Treasury Management	Investments		Manage the Council's investments to minimise risk whilst securing the optimum return.	
		Cashflow		Manage the Council's banking, cashflow and borrowing requirements.	
		Capital		Funding the Council's Capital Programme.	
		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.	
	Audit, Risk & insurance	Audit, Risk & Insurance	Internal Audit		Provision of comprehensive internal audit service for management in line with the Internal Audit Strategic Plan.
			Risk Management		Promote and advise on good risk management across the authority.
Insurances				Ensure that the Council is appropriately insured in the provision of its services and manage any resulting claims.	
Investigations				Undertake ad-hoc internal investigations on behalf of management.	
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.	
Revenues	Revenues	Collection of Council Tax		Maintenance of council tax records, award of reliefs, calculation of tax due, billing and recovery thereof.	
		Collection of Business Rates		Maintenance of business rates records, award of reliefs, calculation of rates due, billing and recovery thereof.	
		Recovery of CT, BR and benefit overpayments		Take appropriate action to recover sums due to the Council, including use of magistrates courts.	

Procurement	Procurement Team	Lead / 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 register		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.
		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 UK Regulations.
		Lead / advise on Corporate purchasing and spend		Manage, maintain and improve the purchasing and contracts functionality of the Finance Management Solution.
		Lead / advise on Contract Management		Advise and assist officers on good contract management practices in line with the Council's Code of Procurement Practice and UK Regulations.
	Financial Services Team	Payment of suppliers		Arrange payment to suppliers for goods ordered.
		Recovery of sundry debts		Raise sundry debt accounts for sums due to the Council, and recovery thereof.
Service Management	Budget	Regular budget monitoring		
		Delivering services within budget		
	Procurement	Attendance of key officers at in-house Ongoing training		Ongoing training of officers and those participating in procurement
		Regular meetings with procurement officers		
		Procurement project meetings for major projects including - Back office system procurement.		
		Planned Procurement exercises in year:		Scheduled procurement exercises and review of long term service level agreements.
		Electronic payment system		
		Revenues & Benefits system		
		Service level Agreements		
		AMS T1 Support		
	Bristol & Suitor - Enforcement agent			
	Oxford City Council			
	Contract Management	No. Contracts due for renewal during the year (as identified above)		Ongoing training
		Training in relation to contract monitoring		
		Quarterly update of the contract register		
Audits	External Audit programme 2022/23			
	Statement of Accounts 2021/22, including VFM			
	Statement of Accounts 2022/23, including VFM			
	Housing Benefits			
	Internal audit programme 2023/2024			
	Financial Strategy, Planning and Budgetary Control			
	Main Accounting System			
	Treasury Management			
Sundry Debtors				
Payment of creditors				
Risk Register	Regular review at departmental management meetings			
	Annual review			
	Quarterly PH review			
	Peer Review at SMT, by Risk Manager and Insurance Officer			

	Implementation of mitigation and control		
Service Assurance	Actions arising out of Annual SA document include: -		
	Monitoring of customer measures		
	Refresher training in procurement and finance procedures, where appropriate		
	Update of Business Continuity Plan		
	Completion of the statutory returns.		
Corporate Health and Safety	Ongoing reviews of risk assessment (Covid and standard)		
Workforce Planning and Development	Establishment		
	Vacancies		
	Recruitment to vacant posts.		
	Continuing development of post holders		

Managing Planned Changes, Major Work streams, Projects and Budget Pressures

Change/Project	Sponsor/Lead Officer	Budget Impact	Impact on other Services	Milestones	Date	RAG	Comments
Budget Pressures							
Following Corporate Decisions	Head of Finance - Andrew Rollins	TBC	Unknown	Qtrly Budget Reviews	Feb-24	Green	Presenting a balanced budget and ongoing sustainable position through the Medium Term Financial Strategy will require delivery of existing budgetary proposals, delivery within already agreed budgets and for further schemes to be developed.
Change Management programme	Head of Finance - Andrew Rollins	TBC	All services contribute to the change process and will need to outline areas for	Qtrly Budget Reviews	Feb-24	Green	
New Financial Management System - Phase 2	Principal Accountant (Systems) - Tony Sidhu	£30k support contract agreed in place currently for 23/24	Delivery of phase will focus on tailored reporting and refining information to		Jun-24	Green	
Production of audited 2021/22 Accounts, including VFM	Strategic Finance Manager - Steven Leathley	Additional budget required due to additional work required. Report in Q1 and Q2 budget reports 23/24	All services contribute to the closure process and need to adhere to internally set deadlines to ensure delivery to statutory deadlines	Draft Accounts Published 1 August. Audited Accounts signed and published December	Dec-23	Amber	
Production of audited 2022/23 Accounts, including VFM	Strategic Finance Manager - Steven Leathley	Within agreed budget	All services contribute to the closure process and need to adhere to internally set deadlines to ensure delivery to statutory deadlines	Draft Accounts Published Jan Audited Accounts signed and published 31 March	Mar-24	Amber	
Production of audited 2023/24 Accounts, including VFM	Strategic Finance Manager - Steven Leathley	Within agreed budget	All services contribute to the closure process and need to adhere to internally set deadlines to ensure delivery to statutory deadlines	Draft Accounts Published 31 May Audited Accounts signed and published 30 September	Sep-24	Green	
Transforming Public Procurement	Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager - Rebecca Reading	TBC	All services contribute to effective procurement	Monthly procurement board meeting	Oct-24	Green	New procurement bill redefined the procurement principles and objectives for the UK as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Delivering value for money •Maximising public benefit •Sharing info to allow suppliers and others to understand the Authority's procurement policies and decisions •Acting and being seen to act with integrity

Performance Measures

Ref	Corporate Plan Links	Corporate Plan Measure	Measure	Target	Progress should be	Progress	Comments	Current Status	Lead Officer	April-23
F1	Maintain or Improve services	No	Prompt payment of invoices within 30 day payment terms	0.95	Higher	0	0		Rebecca Reading	Full Year
F2	Firm Financial Footing over long term	Yes	Unqualified audit statement on Statement of Accounts by 30th November	0	Higher	0	0		Andrew Rollins	Full Year
F3	Firm Financial Footing over long term	Yes	Timely and informed Budget and Financial Forecasts	1	Higher	0	0		Steven Leathley	As Heading
F4	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Efficient and timely council tax processing (Age of oldest item) - Days	30	Lower	42	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F5	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of Council Tax correspondence awaiting processing	1000	Lower	1784	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F6	Maintain or Improve services	No	Efficient and timely NNDR processing (Age of oldest item) - Days	30	Lower	30	0	green	Paul Town	As Heading
F7	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of formal legal challenges received and upheld against the total number of tenders	0	Lower	0	0		Rebecca Reading	Q1 Apr - Jun
F8	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Number of local suppliers actively registered on CSWJETS E Portal	0	Higher	0	0		Rebecca Reading	As Heading
F9	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Sundry Debt balance outstanding over 90 days	0	Higher	0	0		Rebecca Reading	As Heading
F10	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Number of transactions - orders, creditor invoices, Supplier Credit Notes, sundry debtor Credit notes & invoices AND Write Offs (This excludes Non-order transactions and receipting/income cash transactions, Direct Debit, rejections etc)	0	Higher	0	0		Rebecca Reading	Q1 Apr - Jun
F11	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Value cashable and non-cashable fraud savings detected	0	Higher	69010	0		Richard Barr	Q1 Apr - Jun
F12	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Council tax collection rate	24.6%	Higher	0.2865	0	green	Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F13	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	NNDR collection rate	24.3%	Higher	0.2716	0	green	Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F14	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Business Rate Growth (Rateable value)	0	Higher	292910	0		Paul Town	As Heading
F15	Maintain or Improve services	Yes	Completion of Internal Audit Plan (% variation to profiled plan)	4	Higher	5	0	green	Richard Barr	Q1 Apr - Jun
F16	Firm Financial Footing over long term	No	Number of outstanding appeals (Business Rates)	0	Lower	45	This is all in the hands of the VOA - nothing WDC can do to change this		Paul Town	Q1 Apr - Jun
F17	Maintain or Improve services	No	Number of new collaborative projects	0	Higher	4	Hybrid Mail, Debt collection, Built environment software, Mapping software		Rebecca Reading	As Heading