

DRAFT SERVICE PLAN FOR FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES 2009/10 TO 2011/12

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This document sets out the detailed plan for the delivery and improvement of Finance and Support Services over the 2009/10 financial year.

Finance and Support Services comprises of six distinct service areas (listed below). The range of services is diverse in terms of functionality and their customers, which presents challenges in developing one integrated operational and improvement plan. The plan is therefore categorised by service area. However, the service plan overview takes account of key cross-cutting priorities for the Council such as delivering the equalities policy and improving customer service.

Service Areas;

- Accountancy
- Democratic Services
- Risk, Efficiency and Procurement
- Internal Audit
- Information and Communication Technology
- Revenues and Benefits

A private sector company - RSM Bentley Jennison - provides the internal audit service.

Corporate Aims, Approaches and Actions

The actions set out in this plan underpin the achievement of corporate Aims with each specific action link to one or more aims.

Cross Cutting Themes

During 2009/10 the Finance and Support Services will work to;

- Support the Housing Futures process
- Know our customers better and to improve customer engagement and customer service
- Improve financial management and use of resources
- Improve performance management
- Improve understanding of the value for money provided by the service
- Improve accessibility to services and ensure services meet the needs of all residents
- Help safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Assist the local community through the economic downturn
- Promote sustainable travel for work

Workforce Overview

Finance and Support Services employ 97 people. The key workforce issues for the service in 2009/10 will be working towards the higher level Investors in People accreditation and the roll out of the management competencies development programme.

Maintaining performance during periods of maternity leave will again be a challenge for the service with four maternity absences already expected. Reducing time lost due to sickness through effective sickness absence management will be important in maximising resources.

Performance Targets

Performance targets are set out in the operation plan for each service area. The targets will be reviewed once the final outturn for 2008/09 is known and where appropriate revised targets will be considered.

Where significant changes are proposed to targets the changes are highlighted under the appropriate service area below.

Service Planning Bids

A number of proposed service improvements were dependent on unsuccessful bids for additional resources during the service planning process. Wherever possible improvements will continue to be made in these areas, but progress will inevitably be limited. These items are shown shaded in grey in the service improvement plans.

Key Issues for Finance and Support Services in 2009/10

Accountancy

The key issues for the Accountancy Services in 2009/10 will be:

- Promoting and supporting effective use of resources to underpin the Council's Use of Resources assessment score
- Ensuring investments are secure and achieve the best possible rate of return
- Preparing budgets and accounts to required timescales
- Improving financial management across the Council through training and supporting cost centre managers
- Promoting the use of eBis to improve commitment accounting and streamline purchase ordering and invoice payment processes

The Use of Resources assessment for 2008/09 will be more challenging than in previous years, therefore, maintaining current scores will be an improvement in the use of resources. Improvement targets have allowed for the more stringent assessment.

Democratic Services

The key issues for Democratic Services in 2009/10 will be:

- Implementation of the Member Development Strategy
- Ensuring the Council's democratic processes meet the requirements of legislative changes
- Improving public participation in the democratic process
- Improving officer and Member understanding of the decision making processes
- Facilitation of the Constitution Review Working Party to ensure the Council's Constitution remains current and relevant

Internal Audit

The key issues for the Internal Audit service in 2009/10 will be:

- Completion of the agreed programme of audits
- Promoting an organisational culture where appropriate controls are understood and embedded in the delivery of services
- Provide reassurance to the Corporate Governance Committee that resources are utilised in a controlled and measured manner

Risk, Efficiency and Procurement (Finance Project Team)

The key issues for the Finance Project Team in 2009/10 will be:

- Co-ordinating the collection of evidence to support the Council's Use of Resources assessment
- Co-ordinating implementation of the risk management strategy, including the strategic risk register and service area risk registers
- Delivering training, advice and guidance on risk management
- Promoting and supporting effective procurement that complies with regulation and policy and provides good value for money
- Ensuring local businesses are aware of, and can bid for, Council contracts
- Co-ordinating the efficiencies saving project team and promoting the efficiency agenda throughout the organisation

Information and Communications Technology Service

The key issues for the Information and Communications Technology Service in 2009/10 will be:

- Completing the review of the service and implementing the findings
- Completing the migration of servers and data storage facilities to new hardware
- Improving the security of data through the Government Connect programme
- Supporting flexible working
- Improve the ability to share data across the organisation
- Continue to improve systems integration

Revenues Service

The key issues for Revenues Services in 2009/10 will be:

- Maintaining collection performance during a period of economic recession
- Improving customer engagement and our understanding of customers' needs and expectations
- Promoting benefit take-up and maintaining performance during a period of increasing demand
- Developing a stakeholder strategy for maximising benefit take-up in growth communities
- Ensuring services meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Equalities Policy
- Supporting the Housing Futures process

It is proposed to reduce two performance targets for 2009/10;

1. NNDR Collection – it is proposed this should be reduced from 99.8% to 99.0% in view of the current economic situation.
2. Sanctions Imposed per 1,000 Benefit Claims – whilst it is anticipated the total number of sanctions will be maintained, an increasing caseload is expected to result in a reduction in this performance measure therefore the target is reduced from 10 to 8..

SERVICE PLAN OVERVIEW

1. Key Functions and Responsibilities

Finance and Support Services underpin the Council's overall delivery of corporate objectives and services to the taxpayers of South Cambridgeshire District Council in an accessible, effective and efficient manner. This service covers a wide range of disciplines and ensures that elected members and staff are able to deliver their responsibilities and members of the public receive their services.

The service covers the following areas delivering statutory and non-statutory functions.

Accountancy

- Statement of accounts
- Budget planning
- Financial monitoring
- Treasury management
- Training to council staff on finance
- Payment of invoices
- Financial advice to budget holders
- Tax returns
- Council tax and housing rent determination
- Insurance

Democratic Services

- Facilitate Council's decision making process
- Support scrutiny processes
- Lead on new legislation relating to decision making structures
- Support and develop Members of the Council
- Support political management structure and lead reviews of the Constitution
- Communications between Members and Officers as first points of contact for enquiries
- Help maintain high standards of Corporate Governance through support for the Standards Committee, Corporate Governance Committee and Member Toolkit
- Administer Members' allowance scheme

Risk, Efficiency and Procurement (Finance Project Team)

- Co-ordinates and advises on risk management
- Co-ordinates use of Resources assessment
- Promotes efficiencies
- Undertakes ad hoc Financial Projects
- Provides procurement advice and support

Information and Communication Technology Service (ICT)

- Support the effective use of ICT systems
- Development, implementation and management of technologies
- Manages voice communication technology
- Provide operational computing service to staff and Members
- Geographic Information Systems
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Local Land Property Gazetteer
- Systems Support
- Application Support
- Contact Centre contract management
- Office Services
 - Printing / Stationary
 - Graphics

Internal Audit

- Independent, objective assurance and consultancy activity to improve organisation's operations
- Evaluate and improve effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes
- Annual reviews of key systems and controls

Revenues Collection and Benefits

- Collects
 - Council tax
 - Non-domestic rates
 - Housing rents
 - Sundry debts
 - Overpayments of housing benefit
- Administers
 - Housing benefit
 - Council tax benefit
 - Concessionary travel passes
- Investigates
 - Fraudulent claims for benefit

2. Context

a) External Drivers

The following external factors will influence the service.

- Statutory requirements to set the Council's budget and Council Tax and Housing Rent levels
- Statutory requirement to produce a statement of accounts
- Poor three year financial settlement
- Unpredictable grants, e.g. supporting people
- Current economic climate
- New LABGI scheme
- Growth within the District impacting on service delivery and supporting other services within the Council
- Local Area Agreement changing the way the Council receives funding and prioritises expenditure

- New Comprehensive Area Assessment from April 2009
- New Use of Resources assessment
- National Indicators (especially NI14, NI179, N180 and N181)
- Expected efficiencies
- Local Government and Public Health Act 2007
- Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill
- 'Communities in Control' government white papers
- Increased access to and use of technology by residents of South Cambridgeshire
- Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Benefit Services
- Change in external audit service provider

b) Internal Drivers

The Council continues to undergo a period of substantial change. A number of corporate initiatives will have a substantial bearing on the way the service is delivered. These will include;

- The Corporate Governance Improvement Plan
- Service First customer service initiatives
- Investors in People Accreditation
- The Comprehensive Equalities Policy
- New performance reporting and management arrangements
- The medium term financial strategy, efficiencies targets and achieving value for money
- The Communication Strategy
- The service review programme
- Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee Finance Task and Finish Group
- Need to improve financial management across the Council
- Travel for Work
- Member Development Strategy 2008-2011

The Housing Futures project is likely to have a very significant effect on Finance and Support Services during 2009/10, particularly if tenants vote in favour of a transfer to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes.

Finance and Support Services will be subsumed within the new Corporate Services directorate during 2009/10. The service will continue to underpin the delivery the Council's new Aims, Approaches and Actions and further key issues across the Council.

c) Key Partners and Service Providers

- Cambridgeshire Direct
- RSM Bentley Jenison
- Zurich Commercial & Municipal
- Cambridgeshire Procurement Group – working with:
 - Cambridgeshire County Council
 - ESPO
 - Office of Government Commerce
 - Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- New technology/Enterprise Ltd (Modern.Gov committee management system)
- IDeA
- ICT suppliers
- Bailiff service providers

d) Strengths and Weaknesses

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team work • Mutual respect • Enthusiasm • Professional workforce • Commitment and motivated workforce • Highly skilled and experienced workforce across all services • Excellent performance in service areas • Good working relationship with Members of the Council • Accounts have been produced to the statutory timetable and are unqualified • Efficient services with low costs 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge on organisation to meet statutory deadlines • Ownership of forward plans • Communication • Age profile of staff in some services areas • Challenge on organisation to follow risk management processes • Ability to arrange meetings in a timely manner due to member and officer availability • Lower staff satisfaction in comparison to other services • Lack of capacity for business support and service development • Limited corporate understanding of the role support services play in underpinning the delivery of the Council's 3A's
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved public access to services and meetings • Action plan in place to improve direct communication with staff and Members • Carrying out an integrated Member Training and development programme. • Efficiency review across Council • Co-operation / co-ordination between services • Focus on corporate Aims, Approaches and Actions • Embedding financial and performance management culture across Council • Partnership working • Improve communication • Improve customer focus • Improving accessibility to services • Maximising use of financial management system across Council • Shared services with neighbouring authorities and joint working • Improve use and exploitation of ICT initiatives • To further improve policies and procedures relating to procurement • Work with partners to change perception of non District Council services • Work with other services on decisions which could impact support services 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and other saving requirements • Age profile of staff in some services areas leading to loss of expertise and knowledge • Resource levels could impact the attainment of Corporate Aims and / or services plans • Resources available for Member development may be inadequate • Challenge to demonstrate and evidence Comprehensive Area Assessment and Use of Resources requirements and to meet the harder test for Use of Resources in 2008/09 • Tougher national standards for benefit services with introduction of Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry • Increased demands on the benefits and collection services due the economic downturn

3. Service Objectives

Council's Aims

1. *We are committed to being a listening council providing first class services accessible to all;*
2. *We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family;*
3. *We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live;*
4. *We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family;*
5. *We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.*

Finance and Support Services Objectives and links to Corporate Aims

Finance and Support Services will (number in brackets indicates the Aim):

1. Provide efficient, effective and accessible support services to the Council and its residents underpinning the Council's Corporate Aims, Approaches and Actions (1);
2. Enable the Council to manage its risks effectively (cross cutting);
3. Identify areas for potential efficiency savings, rationalisation of products or suppliers through proactive procurement initiatives (1);
4. Manage an effective, efficient, open and transparent decision-making process, which meets statutory requirements, enables the Council to make informed decisions, develop its community leadership role and promotes public awareness and involvement in the democratic decision making process (cross cutting);
5. Support the training and development of Members (cross cutting);
6. Ensure residents get the correct bills and all benefits and discounts that they are entitled to and take prompt and effective action against those who do not pay (cross cutting);
7. Detect fraud and identify and punish those who commit fraud (cross cutting);
8. Contribute to maintaining an appropriate Use of Resources score for the Council (cross cutting);
9. Contribute to arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs (cross cutting);
10. Effectively support the management of Council's revenue and capital budgets supporting the achievement of value for money and improved audit assessments (cross cutting);
11. Through the use of effective ICT:
 - i. Support the delivery of services in the Council (cross cutting);
 - ii. Provide an efficient customer focussed contact centre (1);
 - iii. Provide members with the means to discharge their duties (cross cutting);
 - iv. To support new and challenging initiatives (cross cutting).
 - v. Facilitate an informative and accessible web site

4. Your Customers

The Finance and Support Service provides services to both internal and external customers.

Internal Customers

The Accountancy, ICT, Finance Project Team, and Internal Audit service mainly provide services to internal customers

Over the last year the ICT and Accountancy services have conducted surveys with our internal customers. The results of the surveys have identified areas for improvement and resulting actions are contained in this service plan.

The ICT Service conducted a customer satisfaction survey in 2008 of ICT service users. 175 users responded to the survey and in general were satisfied with the service received. The results of the survey will inform the review of the ICT service.

The ICT service is being reviewed during 2008/09 and customers and stakeholders of the service have been consulted on the service. The review will make recommendations on potential changes and improvements to the service, which will ensure ICT delivers the right service to all of its customers.

External Customers

Our external customers are mainly through Revenues Services and Democratic Services. For both of these areas, customer service standards have been established and are followed and monitored.

Democratic Services undertook a detailed survey of Members' communication needs in 2008 and actions arising from this survey are detailed in the service plan. A further survey of Members' training and development needs was conducted resulting in the development of a co-ordinated and needs-based annual training and development programme. These surveys will be conducted on an annual basis in future years.

Democratic Services continues to explore ways in which to extend and increase public participation in democracy. This will include reviewing its successful scheme for public speaking at Planning Committee and the planned introduction of facility for the on-line submission of petitions from April 2009.

For the Revenues Service customers include all householders, most businesses, all Council tenants and all housing benefit recipients. The customer base has grown by around 1,000 households each year due to new developments. Whilst the rate of growth was projected to increase over the next few years, following the economic downturn in the building industry it is now anticipated that new properties will be completed at a much slower rate than previously estimated. The Service recognises the need for greater engagement with customers to ensure that the differing needs of diverse customer groups are fully understood and help to shape future service delivery. A survey of residents receiving Housing or Council Tax benefit will be conducted in late 2008/09 to assist in shaping future service plans.

Cambridgeshire Direct provides a contact centre service for Revenues customers between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday handling in the region of 55,000 calls per year. Customers wishing to make a payment are also to pay 24 hours per day seven days per week by automated telephone payment or through the Council's website. Quarterly satisfaction surveys are conducted by Cambridgeshire Direct and report a very high level of customer satisfaction.

The table below shows the approximate numbers of customers for the range of Revenues Services

Council Taxpayers	60,000
Non-Domestic ratepayers	4,200
Council tenants	5,500
Concession travel pass holders	24,000
Recipients of housing benefit	6,400
Recipients of council tax benefit	5,800

Customer Complaints

The formal complaints process is publicised by the Service and the Revenues Service monitors complaints from customers in order to identify service failings and to take corrective actions to minimise future complaints. The Revenues Service seeks to minimise complaints through good customer service and aims to experience less than 20 justified complaints each year.

In the period from April 2008 to February 2009 fourteen complaints were received about the Revenues Service, of which five were found to be partly or fully justified. The Local Government Ombudsman has considered three complaints in respect of Revenues Services during the 2008/09 financial year to date. One complaint was successfully resolved by mutual agreement with the complainant and in the other two cases the Ombudsman found in the Council's favour.

More information about customers is contained under the Equalities Section of this service plan.

5. Progress/Performance Overview

Overall the performance of the service during the year has been positive and the direction of travel is in the right direction. However there have also been areas that need to be improved further to enhance and improve the services offered.

In the last year a number of achievements have been made against the 2008/09 service plans. However there are also areas where limited progress has been made and actions are still outstanding. The key issues are summarised in the table below:

Achievements

- Statement of Accounts produced and unqualified within statutory timeframe
- Integrated financial information with performance
- Improved Use of Resources score from level 2 to level 3
- Member training and development programme on track for implementation and strategy adopted by Council
- Embedded risk management process across Council with regular review and robust challenge
- Contributed to improved performance in Contact Centre so contract requirements

Areas needing action

- Further development of income management and e-billing
- Gaining further ownership from cost centre managers for their budgets
- Integration of CRM and back office systems
- Deployment of new desktop system
- Further improvements to the Constitution to increase its accessibility to the user
- Improvements to the Council's business planning mechanisms to improve the quality and transparency of decision-making
- Progress on ICT projects
- Better customer engagement particularly in respect of the Housing and Council Tax

- met
 - Updated financial regulations and contract regulations
 - Procurement procedures and flowchart available on Council's intranet
 - Implementation of findings from the survey of Council tenants
 - Procurement efficiencies and savings
 - Introduction and operation of standards local assessment framework
 - Efficiency target exceeded
 - Collection rates comparable to previous year despite the economic downturn
 - Benefit performance maintained despite increasing caseload
- benefits service
 - Targeted benefit take-up initiatives to ensure residents do not miss out on benefits they are entitled too
 - Meeting the increased demand on services resulting from the economic downturn (e.g. increasing benefits caseload)

In addition, the service has performed well in its performance indicators. The key indicators are summarised below:

Functions performed well	Functions performed adequately	Functions performed poorly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days Average days to process new claims Percentage of Council Tax collected Percentage of non-domestic rates received Percentage of rent collected Percentage tenants evicted due to arrears Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered Percentage of key decisions taken by Cabinet which were previously published on the Forward Plan. Percentage of Council and Cabinet decisions published within two working days of the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget outturn forecast Percentage of Councillors attending at least one skills development training session Percentage of Contact Centre calls dealt with at first contact Percentage satisfied with Council website Average days to process notifications of changes of circumstance No: prosecutions / sanctions per 1,000 caseload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No functions have been identified as performing poorly

This demonstrates that most aspects of the service are performing on average or above, however all services are striving for continuous improvement and maintaining levels of performance.

6. Resources

Your budget and outturn for 2008/09 and budget for 2009/10 summarised. To be added into final service plan in March with info supplied by Finance

7. Value for Money Overview

Accountancy

The Accountancy Service currently undertakes benchmarking with the CIPFA Benchmarking club for Accountancy, Creditors and Treasury Management. This data demonstrates that the cost of the Accountancy and Creditors Services was marginally above the average compared to other shire district councils due to the average staff cost per FTE being higher than other districts. This is believed to be due to the length of service of employees and a higher number of qualified accountancy staff compared to the average.

The Accountancy Service has continued to meet all statutory requirements and contributes to the overall use of resources score. The Treasury Management performance of the service, for 2007/08 showed that South Cambridgeshire achieved another creditable performance for the fifth year running, with a return of 5.75% on combined investments (less than and more than 365 days) compared to 5.65% for its comparator group, and 5.78% for the overall group. South Cambridgeshire was fifth highest in the comparator group of 12 other organisations and ninety-second highest in the overall group of 134 other organisations. The service will continue to use this benchmarking information to improve value for money in this area.

Democratic Services

Democratic Services has undertaken benchmarking work with all shire district councils around the country. This process has demonstrated that the service provides value for money in terms of the number of meetings serviced per officer on an annual basis; it will be repeated to ensure continuing value-for-money in future years.

Revenues Service

The Revenues Service monitors the unit cost of a number of activities, including cost of council tax collection, cost of non-domestic rates collection and cost of administering benefit claims, over time. Key income streams for the service such as housing and council tax benefit subsidy and income from legal costs are monitored on a monthly basis. The links between performance and cost are generally understood and an improvement in performance in the recovery of overpaid benefits has led to an increase in income and reduction in the cost of providing the service. Efficiency improvements have been made in 2008/09 as performance has been maintained with the same resources at a time of increasing caseload due to the economic recession.

An analysis of the service's value for money performance has been conducted using the Audit Commission's Value for Money tool. This analysis indicates that the Council performs well in comparison to geographical neighbours, but less well in comparison to the recommended 'family grouping' of similar authorities. However, it is recognised that the VFM tool utilises very broad data and further benchmarking is required to establish the reason for differences between costs at different authorities.

The Council is a member of the SPARSE benchmarking group, which provides annual benchmarking information on performance and value for money amongst rural district Councils. The annual performance profile for Benefit Services for 2007/08 indicates that the Council provides good value for money in comparison to other SPARSE members.

ICT

The ongoing review of the ICT service is scheduled to be concluded in early 2009/10 and value for money will be considered as part of the remit of the review.

General

Over the coming year services all Finance and Support Services will be obtaining benchmarking data to evaluate the value for money provided by the services and to identifying areas.

8. Workforce Overview

The service employs the following numbers of employees:

	Number of Employees	Full Time Equivalents
Accountancy	13	12.5
Democratic Services	6	5.6
Risk, Efficiency & Procurement	2	2
ICT	22	21
Revenues and Benefits	54	48.5
Total	97	89.6

A key workforce planning issue facing the service is the age profile of staff. In some service areas there are concentrations of employees of similar ages with key knowledge and experience. This creates a risk that several key staff could retire within a short period of time, which could affect the delivery of key activities. A further risk may arise if it proves difficult to recruit employees of the appropriate calibre, qualification and experience. A review of this risk to the service will be undertaken as part of the Council's wider succession planning project.

There were periods of maternity leave across the service during 2008/09 and it can be anticipated that further maternity leave will be taken during 2009/10. Maintaining service levels is likely to require the employment of temporary staff, which can create budgetary pressures where rates for experienced or qualified temporary staff are higher than savings accruing due to maternity leave.

The Service is committed to staff development and has contributed to the corporate bid for Investors in People accreditation. Representatives from the Service have participated in the Management Competencies Development project and the resulting pilot programme. Staff development will continue to be a core aspect of the delivery of the Finance and Support Service and it is anticipated that further improvements will be implemented as part of the Investors in People improvement plan

Minimising productive time lost through sickness absence is key to maximising the human resources available to the service. Managers have received training in managing sickness absence and managers ensure that employees suffering serious illness are given help and support in returning to work. In the first three quarters of 2008/09 3.2% of working days have been lost through sickness – equivalent to more than 2.5 FTE posts – and an increase on previous years. Exactly half of the time lost due to sickness resulted from long-term sickness and half from short-term sickness in this period. The effective management of sickness absence will continue to be a priority for the service.

9. Equalities Overview

The South Cambridgeshire District is very rural in nature, with 101 villages, no urban centres, and an area of approximately 90,000 hectares. The population is approximately 140,000 and population density is low at 1.6 persons per hectare. There are 60,000 households in the District, of which 16,000 are single adult households. 308 households received council tax reductions due to a resident's disability.

There is little deprivation in South Cambridgeshire with the area ranked 5th least deprived in England using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. 5,800 (9.7%) of households receive Council Tax benefit and 60% of recipients are of pensionable age. Employment prospects are good with unemployment at half the regional average and a third of the national average, however unemployment levels are expected to increase due to the current economic recession leading to increased numbers of residents claiming welfare benefits.

Educational attainment is high resulting in generally knowledgeable and well-informed customers who expect a high standard of service.

The population of South Cambridgeshire is predominantly white British (93 per cent). The largest ethnic minority population in the district is the fluctuating traveller population, estimated at 1,300 people (1 per cent of the population of the district) in the sub-regional Travellers Need Assessment survey published in 2006.

The Council's offices are located in Cambourne, which is towards the geographical the centre of the District, and are fully accessible to persons with a disability. Cambourne is easily accessible by road and is well served by public transport by bus from Cambridge. However, unless residents live on the Cambridge – Cambourne –St Neots bus route they will need to take two bus journeys to reach the offices. There is little call for residents to visit the village of Cambourne other than to attend to business with the Council and consequently most residents prefer to transact their business by telephone. The Contact Centre is open for calls 72 hours per weeks from 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday providing a high level of accessibility. Callers may use type-talk, language line or text-phone to contact the Centre. The Revenues Service employs a Welfare Visiting Officer to visit at home those residents wishing to claim benefits that have difficulty in access the service through other channels.

The Revenues Service is evaluating the take-up of benefits in growth communities and will develop a formal strategy in 2009 to ensure the Council is equipped to maximise take-up of welfare benefits in new communities. In particular the Service wishes to evaluate the differences between new growth communities and established communities to ensure the service adapts to meet the needs of those new communities.

The Council has recently achieved Level 1 of the national Equality Standard and has made a commitment to progress to Level 2. All services are reviewing policies and procedures so they can be prioritised and impact assessed over the next couple of years as part of the overall Council programme. Staff have been involved in equalities training and will be supported by the Equalities team to conduct equality impact assessments during the year. A Comprehensive Equalities Policy has been approved to give direction to the Council's equalities work for the period 2009 to 2012.

During 2008/09 the Services Website and Procurement Strategy have been impact assessed. It is planned that the Revenues and Benefits service and policies will be assessed during 2009/10 with support from the Equalities team.

10. Risk Overview

Finance & Support Services have compiled a risk register for the whole service that summarises the major risks that could affect the service over the next 12 months. The greatest risks revolve around staffing issues such as capacity and workload, limited financial resources, attainment of Government Connect and data transfer security. Actions have been

included in operational and improvement plans to manage these risks, as referenced in the table below:

Risk No.	Short title/description	Action/Improvement proposed
1	Inadequate resources allocated to business support	This continues to be an area of considerable concern for the service. The use of staff resources within the service will be kept under review and where possible will be used to assist in the business support functions. The service is developing links with a neighbouring authority that use the same ICT system with a view to sharing knowledge and expertise in this specialist area.
2	Failure to deliver Government Connect on time	The Government Connect programme has identified a number of network security issues that require attention. The current infrastructure is 5 years old; a programme of replacement for the critical elements has been identified and is in progress. Additionally, a programme of change is required to ensure the education of staff and introduction of revised policy and process.
3	Data Transfer Security	As above, the Government Connect programme has identified a number of areas that require attention, ensuring appropriate data security. A programme of work has been identified and is in progress. All service areas are aware of the need to maintain security whilst transferring data to third parties.
4	Loss of connectivity to 'outside world'	Combined with the infrastructure changes identified above, upgrades to the Cambridgeshire Community Network and the implementation of a new data link to serve the Government Connect requirements will provide the Council with increased resilience and reduce the risk of total loss of total connectivity to the 'outside world'.
5	System upgrades	Associated with the infrastructure changes mentioned above, a programme is in place to enable system upgrades to be implemented.
6	3 rd party dependencies	Associated with the infrastructure changes already mentioned, 3 rd party dependencies will be reviewed early in 2009/10 and a programme implemented to refresh these where necessary.
7	System hardware failure	A programme is in place to ensure system resilience while the above infrastructure changes are being implemented.
8	Benefits Service does not fully meet the needs of local residents	The Benefits service is in the process of completing a self-assessment against the Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Benefits Services and will develop an action plan based on the findings. See the improvement plan for more information.
9	Lack of resources to properly investigate fraud	There has been a growth in both benefit claims and reports of suspicions of fraud in this service area. The situation will be closely monitored and a business case will be investigated to establish the feasibility and cost benefit of allocating additional resources to this function.

11. Safeguarding Vulnerable People

The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults. Finance and Support Services will ensure:

1. Safer recruitment and employment practices are followed
2. Relevant officers are aware of safeguarding reporting policies
3. Appropriate safeguarding training is given

The majority of the service interaction with the public is conducted by Revenues Services and two employees from that service area are the designated officers for Finance and Support Services for the purpose of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All visiting officers have already received safeguarding training and specific actions are included in service improvement plans where appropriate.

12. Travel for Work

The service is committed to encouraging sustainable transport choices for commuting to work and whilst travelling on Council business. The Service aims to take advantage of changing technology to reduce the need for both employees and customers to travel in connection with Council business through, for example, initiatives such as home-working.

Accountancy Service

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Accountancy Service					
Relevant Council Aim: We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all					
Relevant Council Approaches: listening to and engaging with our local community making South Cambridgeshire open and accessible achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works					
Service Objective: Contribute to arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs					
Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Enable the Council to maximise resources and achieve value for money by contributing to maintaining score of 2 on the harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (understanding costs and achieving efficiencies) subject to available resources	Produce, benchmark and investigate unit costs of key services	Benchmark unit costs of key services and include in estimates reports to Portfolio Holders each year starting in January 2009			Adrian Burns / Graham Smith
	Achieve rate of return on investments greater than benchmark average over a five year rolling period	Rate of return greater than benchmark			Sally Smart
	Continue rolling out the eBis electronic ordering system	10% of all invoices paid dependent on uptake by departments	15% of all invoices paid dependent on uptake by departments	20% of all invoices paid dependent on uptake by departments	Sally Smart
	Achieve target for BV8 payment of undisputed invoices within 30 days	97%	97%	97%	Sally Smart
Assist business during the economic downturn	Payment of undisputed invoices within 10 days	80%	80%	80%	Sally Smart

Produce budgets, management accounts and the Statement of Accounts in accordance with statutory requirements and in a way which provides clear financial information to the Council and the public in order to maintain performance with a score of 2 on harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (financial reporting) subject to available resources	Prepare accounts and the Statement of Accounts in accordance with statutory requirements and SORP and receive unqualified audit opinion	Approval by Corporate Governance Committee before 30 th June			Adrian Burns / Sally Smart
	Maintain detailed service charge accounts and produce detailed financial statements on service costs and charges for around 450 individual leaseholders	By statutory deadline of 30 th September			Gywnn Thomas
	Publish Statement of Accounts and summary of accounts in a way which provides clear financial information to the Council and the public	Publish Statement and summary by end of July , subject to audit			Adrian Burns
Provide proactively timely financial advice, information and training to cost centre managers to enable them to use resources to provide first class services and achieve the objectives of the Council thereby contributing to maintaining scores of 2 on harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (plans finances effectively) subject to available resources	Achieve targets for SF707 General Fund, SF748 Housing Revenue Account and SF749 capital outturn within 3% of original budget	Within 3%	Within 3%	Within 3%	Adrian Burns
	Make available financial management reports to cost centre managers and Portfolio Holders on a timely basis	Relevant information on financial system within 10 working days of month end; quarterly reports to Portfolio Holders dependent on dates of meetings			Adrian Burns and service accountants
	Carry out customer satisfaction survey with the Accountancy Service	Triennially starting October/ November 2008			Adrian Burns

<p>Administer, maintain and enhance the integrated accounting system and ensure the integrity of information on the system and in other financial records and systems to enable financial resources to be managed effectively evidenced by no internal control issues being raised in the Annual Governance Statement</p>	<p>On a regular and timely basis, carry out reconciliations including key feeder systems to the general ledger and checks on the completeness of information on other financial systems</p>	<p>Monthly reconciliations to be completed by end of following month</p>	<p>Adrian Burns</p>
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IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Accountancy Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

Relevant Council Aim: We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all

**Relevant Council Approaches: listening to and engaging with our local community
making South Cambridgeshire open and accessible
achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works**

Service Objective: Contribute to arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs

Improvement or Change Objective	Actions	Supporting Information	Completion by Month	Responsible Officer
Implement the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee Finance Task and Finish Group Report	As per the recommendations made in the report to Scrutiny March 09	<p>Additional Resources Required: To be met from existing resources</p> <p>Outputs: Recommendation made in the report are implemented</p> <p>Outcomes: improved financial management across the organisations</p> <p>Risks: Additional resources may be required to implement recommendations</p> <p>Other services affected: All</p>	Mar 10	Adrian Burn

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Accountancy Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Enable the Council to maximise resources and achieve value for money by contributing to achieving score of 3 on harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (understanding costs and achieving efficiencies) subject to available resources</p> <p><i>This objective was dependent on additional resource being made available through the service planning processes. Whilst action will continue as far as possible the ability to improved performance in this area will be limited.</i></p>	<p>To be specified in Use of Resources action plan to be agreed with external auditors</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: additional staff resources Outputs: unit cost comparisons Outcomes: improved use of resources score; identification of high cost / low performing services Risks: misallocation of resources Other services affected: all major services (by expenditure)</p>	<p>As specified in action plan</p>	<p>Adrian Burns / Graham Smith</p>
<p>Assist businesses during the economic downturn</p>	<p>Achieve local target for payment of invoices</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: Outputs: 80% of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days Outcomes: financial support to businesses during economic downturn Risks: less rigorous checks on invoices Other services affected: financial administration staff in other services</p>	<p>Ongoing during 2008/09 and 2009/10</p>	<p>Sally Smart</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Accountancy Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Produce budgets, management accounts and the Statement of Accounts in accordance with statutory requirements and in a way which provides clear financial information to the Council and the public in order to maintain a score of 3 on harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (financial reporting) subject to available resources</p>	<p>To be specified in Use of Resources action plan to be agreed with external auditors</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: seminars and courses on international accounting standards Outputs: audited accounts free from material misstatement Outcomes: improved use of resources score Risks: qualified accounts, increased audit fees, reduced use of resources score Other services affected:</p>	<p>As specified in action plan</p>	<p>Adrian Burns</p>
<p>Provide proactively timely financial advice, information and training to cost centre managers to enable them to use resources to provide first class services and achieve the objectives of the Council thereby contributing to achieving scores of 3 on harder test Use of Resources Managing Finances (plans finances effectively) subject to available resources</p>	<p>To be specified in Use of Resources action plan to be agreed with external auditors</p> <p>Continued integration of financial planning with strategic and service planning processes</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: To be met from existing resources Outputs: redirection of any underspendings to poorly performing services Outcomes: improved use of resources score Risks: Other services affected: policy & performance</p>	<p>As specified in action plan</p>	<p>Adrian Burns</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Accountancy Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Maintain detailed service charge accounts and produce detailed financial statements on service costs and charges for around 450 individual leaseholders.</p>	<p>Continuation of system set up with input from temporary staff</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: staff resources – part person (HRA) Outputs: accurate accounts and year end statements Outcomes: comply with statutory requirements and meet customers' expectations and queries Risks: failure to comply with statutory requirements Other services affected: housing</p>	<p>Ongoing with production of annual statements by 30th September each year</p>	<p>Gwynn Thomas</p>
<p>Use present financial systems to full potential</p> <p><i>This objective was dependent on additional resource being made available through the service planning processes. Whilst action will continue as far as possible the ability to improved performance in this area will be limited.</i></p>	<p>Production of appropriate reports from other services' financial systems and development of integration of financial accounting system with those systems, e.g. revenues, rents, Whitespace, AIM, Anite@work</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: staff resources – part person Outputs: integrated systems Outcomes: up to date information Risks: inconsistent information; time consuming reconciliations Other services affected: revenues, rents, refuse</p>	<p>Ongoing due to new requirements and new software releases and versions</p>	<p>Sally Smart / Gwynn Thomas</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Accountancy Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

Continue rolling out the eBis electronic ordering system

This objective was dependent on additional resource being made available through the service planning processes. Whilst action will continue as far as possible the ability to improved performance in this area will be limited.

Training of staff in department, setting up product codes and ongoing administration of system

Additional Resources Required: staff resources – part person
Outputs: reduced administration in other departments processing invoices
Outcomes: more financial information on commitments and improved financial forecasting
Risks:
Other services affected: all departments

Dependent on take-up by departments
Training ongoing due to staff turnover

Sally Smart

Democratic Services

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Democratic Services
Relevant Council Aim: (A) Committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.
Relevant Council Approach/es: (Ai) Listening to and engaging with our local community (Aiv) Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services (Av) Ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works
Service Objective A: To Manage an Effective, Efficient, Open and Transparent Decision-Making Process, which meets Statutory Requirements and enables the Council to make informed decisions and develop its community leadership role, whilst providing the required support and first point-of-contact with elected Members to enable them to carry out their roles. To assist the Council in meeting the recommendation from the CGI re-inspection report to sustain, deepen and broaden improvements in political conduct and leadership.
Key: RM – Richard May, PA – Patrick Adams, HA – Holly Adams, MJ – Maggie Jennings, GM – Guy Moody, IS – Ian Senior

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
(A1a) Oversee the operation and monitoring of the Constitution to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose and a document which enables rather than restricts accountable local democracy (2b, 2d).	(i) Constitution Review Working Party (CRWP) agrees its annual schedule and work programme.	June 09	June 10	June 11	RM
(A1b) Improve access to, and quality of, Council information in pursuance of the Council's commitment to equalities	(ii) Reports brought forward in accordance with programme, containing soundly argued recommendations for changes: - % of recommendations to CRWP agreed - % of CRWP recommendations agreed by Council.	75% annual	80% annual	85% annual	RM
	(iii) Produce annual report to CRWP evaluating changes made over a rolling 12-month period.	Apr 10	Apr 11	Apr 12	RM
	<i>Contribute to National Indicators 3 (Civic</i>				

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
	<i>participation in the local area) and 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality)</i>				
(A2) Remain at the forefront of developing improvements to the Council's decision-making processes. (2a, 2b, 2d)	(i) Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny and Overview Committee dates for the following year are agreed and published	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	RM/MJ/PA
	(ii) Subject to SMT and Cabinet support, proposals to revise and improve the business planning cycle for Cabinet reports are implemented, and their effectiveness reviewed by EMT and Cabinet	Jun 09	-	-	RM/MJ
		Mar 10	-	-	RM/MJ
	(iii) Portfolio Holders' meeting dates are agreed for the year ¹	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	All
	(iv) Portfolio Holders' meetings' operating guidelines are reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective and fit-for-purpose, bringing forward recommendations to Cabinet for changes as necessary.	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	RM
	(v) Ensure the Scrutiny and Overview Committee agrees an annual programme of meetings at outside venues.	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	PA
	<i>Contribute to National Indicators 3 (Civic participation in the local area) and 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality)</i>				

¹ Excluding Portfolio Holders whose work patterns mean they cannot agree meeting dates in advance.

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
(A3) Provide an efficient and effective secretariat, ensuring that the right items are considered in the right places at the right time. (2d)	(i) Number of information items on the Cabinet Agenda	1.5 average	1.5 average	1.5 average	MJ
	(ii) Average number of substantive business items on the Cabinet Agenda	7	6.5	6	MJ
	(iii) Percentage of key decisions previously published on the Forward Plan	90	90	90	MJ
(A4) Ensure Agenda and Minutes are produced in a timely and accurate manner (2c, 2d)	(i) % of Cabinet meetings for which decisions are published within one working day of the meeting.	100%	100%	100%	HA
	(ii) % of meetings for which decisions and actions are notified by the DSO within 2 working days of the meeting.	100%	100%	100%	All
	(iii) % of meetings for which draft minutes are produced within 10 working days and the final draft published within 20 working days	85%	90%	95%	All
	(iv) % of Member meetings serviced for which the agenda is published 5 clear working days before the meeting	95%	95%	95%	All
	(v) % of Member meetings for which Agenda and FULL REPORTS are published 5 clear working days before the meeting.	80%	85%	90%	All
	(vi) Agenda for SMT ² and EMT ³ to be published 6 calendar days before the meeting	85%	90%	95%	GM
	(vii) Percentage of SMT and EMT reports published with the Agenda.	85%	90%	95%	GM

² Senior Management Team

³ Executive Management Team

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
	(viii) Average time between submission of misconduct complaints and panel assessment	60%	65%	70%	GM
	(ix) % of misconduct complaints assessed within 30 working days of receipt	20 working days	20 working days	20 working days	HA
	(x) Average time between request for review and consideration by Review Panel	100	100	100	HA
	(xi) Percentage of assessment and review decision notices published within five working days	20 working days	20 working days	20 working days	HA
	<i>Contribute to National Indicator 3 (Civic Participation)</i>	100%	100%	100%	HA
(A5) Ensure the highest quality of support for elected Members (2c, 2d)	(i) % of Member enquiries responded to within 2 working days, to be monitored at quarterly intervals during the year.	100%	100%	100%	All
	(ii) % of Members' expense claims processed accurately in the payroll month in which they are received.	100%	100%	100%	GM
	(iii) Percentage of updates to databases and Modern.gov completed within 2 working days of notification of changes.	100%	100%	100%	HA / IS
	(iv) Complete annual review of allowance levels by the Independent Remuneration Panel, with recommendations considered by Council	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	MJ
	(v) Make arrangements for Council to reappoint continuing, and recruit new, panellists in accordance with rolling retirement programme	Nov 09	Sept 10	Sept 11	MJ

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
(A6) Regularly monitor and review performance, using appraisals and team briefings to develop individual and team skills and seek continuous improvements to the services provided. (2d)	(i) Hold quarterly one-to-ones, interim and full appraisals with all team members	May 09 (app) Oct 09 (int)	May 10 (app) Oct 10 (app)	May 11 (app) Oct 11 (app)	RM
	(ii) Schedule fortnightly team meetings for the year.	Apr 09	Apr 10	Apr 11	RM
	(iii) Non-disputed invoices passed to Accountancy for payment within seven days of receipt within the team.	100%	100%	100%	All
(A7) Assist officers through the provision of appropriate training and support to enable decision-making structures and processes to be properly understood and operated. (2d)	(i) % of Officer induction sessions at which 'working in a political environment' presentation given, reviewing and updating presentation as required.	100	100	100	RM/PA
	(ii) % of participants on induction who found our talk 'excellent' or 'good'	75	80	85	RM/PA
	(iii) Offer two 'drop-in' sessions per year aimed at updating and enhancing knowledge of the Modern.gov system	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	HA
	(iv) Offer 1:1 briefings with all new middle and senior managers on the decision-making structure at SCDC.	100%	100%	100%	RM
	(v) Report annually to EMT on the effectiveness of decision-making structures, including recommendations for improvements and further training.	Dec 09	Dec 10	Dec 11	RM
(A8) Be proactive in meeting new challenges presented by changes in	(i) Council implements new executive arrangements and other Constitutional changes	May 09	-	-	RM

Supporting Objectives (SCDC Service Priority)	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
legislation and organisational practice.(2d)	required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.				
	(ii) Council adopts revised Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct	Oct 09	-	-	RM/HA
	(iii) Council adopts protocol for Councillor Call for Action	Apr 09	-	-	RM/PA
	(iv) Council implements constitutional and other relevant changes which may be brought about by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill.	TBC once Bill becomes Law and subject to regulations	-	-	RM
	<i>Contribute to National Indicators 3 (Civic participation in the local area) and 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality)</i>				

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Democratic Services

Relevant Council Aim(s): Achieving service objectives relating to Member training and development is necessary to enable the Council to meet all its strategic aims and approaches through the development of a pool of elected Members with the skills necessary to take the Council forward and meet the needs of the community.

Relevant Council Approaches: As above

Service Objective B: To support and evaluate the training and development of Members, enabling effective training and development to contribute to the Council meeting its strategic aims.

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
(B1) To oversee the implementation of the Member Development Strategy through the development, approval and carrying out of annual training and development programmes and measures to evaluate the effectiveness of training and development activities. An effective and inclusive programme will benefit all Members in their representational roles, regardless of their political affiliation, age or experience.	(i) Annual training and development programme is agreed by the Portfolio Holder	Feb 10	Feb 11	Feb 12	RM
	(ii) Training and development programme is completed within the timescales set out within it	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	RM/GM
	(iii) 2008-2011 Member Development Strategy is reviewed and updated and a revised version adopted by the Council	-	-	Apr 11	RM
	(iv) Number of Councillors attending a training session.	45 (78.9%)	48 (84.2%)	50 (87.7%)	RM/GM
	(v) Percentage of training and development events/initiatives meeting the aims identified on the evaluation form	75	80	85	RM
	(vi) The average score rating of Member	2	1.75	1.5	RM

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART milestone	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
	training events across all training factors, where 1=excellent and 2=good				
	(vii) Distribute induction packs to all Members newly- and re-elected at local elections	-	May 10	May 11	PA
	(viii) Percentage of new Members attending the induction day	-	80	90	GM
	(ix) Number of councillors completing and returning annual survey of training and development needs	35	38	42	RM
	(x) % of councillors' whose responses show enhanced levels of knowledge from previous survey from red-amber or amber-green in at least three areas	50	55	60	RM
(B2) Ensure ongoing effective communication with Members to meet the objectives and actions within the Communications Strategy (2c, 2d)	(i) Carry out annual survey of members' communication needs	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 11	RM
	(ii) Use the results of (i) to draft action plans for agreement by the Portfolio Holder, in order to improve continuously member comms	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	RM
	(iii) Implement actions within action plans in response to annual surveys of Members communication needs	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	RM

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Democratic Services

**Relevant Council aim(s): (A) Committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.
(E) Committed to providing a voice for rural life**

**Relevant Council approach(es): (Ai) Listening to and engaging with our local community
(Aiv) Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
(Av) Ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works
(Eii) Working more closely with parish councils and local groups**

Service Objective C: To Promote Public Awareness and Involvement in the Democratic Decision-Making Process. To ensure information is clear and accessible to all the Council's partners and customers.

Supporting objective	PI or SMART milestone	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Lead Officer
(C1) Improve flow of information to raise awareness of the decision-making process and ways residents can get involved. (3a)	(i) Review annually relevant web pages explaining local democratic processes, making updates and introducing improvements where necessary	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	HA/IS
	(ii) Undertake investigations and bring forward a report on potential improvements to the Council meeting as a forum for meaningful public participation as a 'community event' <i>Contribute to National Indicators 3 (Civic participation in the local area) and 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality)</i>	Dec 09	-	-	RM
(C2) Maintain and enhance opportunities for public involvement (3a, 3f)	(i) Investigate webcasting of Council / other public meetings / events to increase accessibility to Council services.	-	Sept 10	-	HA/IS
	(iii) Keep planning committee speaking scheme under annual review, taking account of feedback received to bring forward proposals for improvement as required.	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	IS
	(iv) Average number of non-SCDC Members and officers				

	attending scrutiny and overview committee meetings at venues around the district	10	15	20	PA
	(v) Subject to SMT and Member approval for the project, the number of petitions submitted using the e-petitions facility	3	5	7	IS

Risk, Efficiency and Procurement (Finance Project Team)

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Risk, Efficiency and Procurement - Finance Project Team

Relevant Council Aim/s:

- A. We are committed to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
- C. We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
- D. We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family.

Relevant Council Approach/es:

We will do this by:

- A.
 - i. listening to and engaging with our local community (e.g. Meet the Buyer events);
 - ii. working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership (e.g. CPG, framework contracts, joint procurement projects, etc);
 - iii. making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible (e.g. equalities, website info re procurement);
 - v. ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works (e.g. risk management achievements and procurement savings - including re all the other Aims - and sustainability).
- C.
 - vii. taking account of climate change in all the services that we deliver (and see A. v. above).
- D.
 - i. working closely with local businesses (and see A. i. and iii. above).

Service Objective:

Risk management:

- To enable the Council to manage its risks effectively.

Procurement:

- To identify areas for potential cost savings, or rationalisation of products and suppliers
- To contribute towards achieving the Council's efficiency savings forecasts; and
- To assist colleagues with implementing procurement practices and systems (including e-procurement) in line with the Council's policies and procedures and with EU and other procurement legislation..

Efficiency savings:

- To coordinate the corporate project to identify and implement efficiency savings across the authority.

Use of Resources:

- To coordinate the corporate arrangements to maintain an appropriate Use of Resources overall score.

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Risk Management					
The risk management strategy remains relevant and effective.	Risk management strategy reviewed annually by EMT and Corporate Governance Committee.	Sep 2009	Sep 2010	Sep 2011	Finance Project Officer (FPO)
The strategic risk register is up to date and drives mitigating action.	Strategic risk register reviewed quarterly by EMT and Corporate Governance Committee.	Jun, Sep, Dec 2009, Mar 2010	Jun, Sep, Dec 2010, Mar 2011	Jun, Sep, Dec 2011, Mar 2012	FPO
Service area risk management is an integral part of service plans.	Service area risk registers cross-referenced to service plans.	Mar 2010 (for 2010/11)	Mar 2011 (for 2011/12)	Mar 2012 (for 2012/13)	FPO
Service area risk registers, project and partnership risk logs are up to date and drive mitigating action.	(a) Service area risk registers, project and partnership risk logs reviewed quarterly by corporate managers, project managers and partnership lead officers.	May, Aug, Nov 2009 Feb 2010	May, Aug, Nov 2010 Feb 2011	May, Aug, Nov 2011 Feb 2012	FPO
- ditto -	(b) Service area risk registers, collated by corporate area, reviewed periodically by EMT.	Per EMT forward plan.	Per EMT forward plan.	Per EMT forward plan.	Corporate Manager, Finance & Support Services
All appropriate officers and Members trained; up to date guidance provided.	Relevant training provided to appropriate officers and Members as and when necessary.	Measured as part of annual review of risk management strategy.	Measured as part of annual review of risk management strategy.	Measured as part of annual review of risk management strategy.	FPO
Members consider risk management implications in making decisions.	Update guidance to report writers on clearly identifying risks, their likelihood and potential impact, and mitigating actions, in reports to Members.	Email to staff and guidance on In-Site in Oct 2009	Email to staff and guidance on In-Site in Oct 2010	Email to staff and guidance on In-Site in Oct 2011	FPO
Procurement					
Cash savings identified and the achievement of these facilitated.	Savings target achieved.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Procurement Officer (PO)

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
The Procurement team supports effective and compliant procurement	Appropriate staff trained in procurement procedures and contract management Award/Exemption Notices exist for every contract over Level 2. No breaches of procurement legislation have occurred.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	PO
Listen to and engage with the Council's local business community - and work closely with local businesses - to explain the Council's procurement process and contracting opportunities. [A. i. and D. i.]	(a) Attend 2 "Meet the Buyer" events per year. (b) Ensure that procurement procedures and documentation do not disadvantage local businesses.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	PO
Work with other local authorities and public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire to improve procurement through partnership. [A. ii.]	Assist relevant service managers to (a) implement appropriate Cambridgeshire Procurement Group initiatives; (b) join appropriate framework contracts; (c) engage in appropriate joint procurement projects.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	PO
Make the Council's procurement activities more open and accessible - and work closely with local businesses. [A. iii. and D. i.]	(a) Incorporate appropriate equalities considerations within the Council's Procurement Strategy, Contract Regulations and procurement processes; review procurement checklists annually. (b) Ensure that the Council's website information re procurement is complete and current.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	PO
Ensure that the Council's procurement activities demonstrate value for money. [A. v.]	Report procurement savings to Finance Portfolio holder annually.	Jul 2009 (re 2008/09)	Jul 2010 (re 2009/10)	Jul 2011 (re 2010/11)	FPO

Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Take account of climate change considerations in procurement activities. [C. vii.]	Incorporate appropriate sustainability considerations within the Council's Procurement Strategy, Contract Regulations and procurement processes; review procurement checklists annually.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	PO
Efficiency savings					
Continue to identify areas for potential savings, implement proposals and report savings achieved.	Efficiency savings project team meetings reported monthly to SMT.	Per SMT, PFH and Cabinet forward plans.	Per SMT, PFH and Cabinet forward plans.	Per SMT, PFH and Cabinet forward plans.	Executive Director - Corporate Services (ED-CS)
Take savings into account in the Council's budgeting processes.	Savings built in to Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).	Per MTFS reporting timetable.	Per MTFS reporting timetable.	Per MTFS reporting timetable.	ED-CS
Report forecast savings and savings actually achieved, to Department for Communities and Local Government.	Savings forecast and achieved, reported against NI 179.	Jul 2009: 2008/09 Actual; Oct 2009: 2009/10 Forecast.	Jul 2010: 2009/10 Actual; Oct 2010: 2010/11 Forecast.	Jul 2011: 2010/11 Actual; Oct 2011: 2011/12 Forecast.	FPO
Use of Resources					
Coordinate compilation of schedule to ensure attainment of KLOE's and availability of supporting evidence.	Schedule reported to ED-CS periodically.	Ongoing throughout the year	Ongoing throughout the year	Ongoing throughout the year	FPO
Coordinate compilation of schedule to demonstrate attainment of KLOE's and supporting evidence to external auditors.	Schedule and supporting evidence provided to external audit.	Jul 2009 (for 2008/09)	Jul 2010 (for 2009/10)	Jul 2011 (for 2010/11)	FPO

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Risk, Efficiency and Procurement - Finance Project Team

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

Relevant Council Aim/s:

- A. We are committed to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.**
- C. We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.**
- D. We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family.**

Relevant Council Approach/es:

We will do this by:

- A. i. listening to and engaging with our local community;**
- ii. working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through**
- iii. partnership;**
- v. making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible;**
ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works.
- C. vii. taking account of climate change in all the services that we deliver (and see A. v. above).**
- D. i. working closely with local businesses (and see A. i. and iii. above).**

Service Objective:

Risk management:

- **To enable the Council to manage its risks effectively.**

Procurement:

- **To identify areas for potential cost savings, or rationalisation of products and suppliers**
- **To contribute towards achieving the Council's efficiency savings forecasts; and**
- **To assist colleagues with implementing procurement practices and systems (including e-procurement) in line with the Council's policies and procedures and with EU and other procurement legislation.**

Efficiency savings:

- **To coordinate the corporate project to identify and implement efficiency savings across the authority.**

Use of Resources:

- **To coordinate the corporate arrangements to maintain an appropriate Use of Resources overall score.**

Improvement or Change Objective	Actions	Supporting Information	Completion by Month	Responsible Officer
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Improvement or Change Objective	Actions	Supporting Information	Completion by Month	Responsible Officer
<p>Analyse the Council's own expenditure and across a range of public sector organisations. (Note: This item depended on additional funding being available.)</p>	<p>Subscription to Spikes Cavell "Observatory" tool.</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: PO time in implementation Outputs: Analysis tool utilised Outcomes: Suppliers identified where procurement savings could be obtained; and areas identified where collaboration with other organisations could provide procurement savings (and see initial financial bid for further benefits) Risks: Funding bid (£5,100 p.a. (R)) not approved; desired outcomes not obtained Other services affected: None</p>	<p>June 2009</p>	<p>Procurement Officer (PO)</p>
<p>To ensure that the contractors/ suppliers the Council uses are meeting their equalities obligations.</p>	<p>Procurement team to assist service managers to review existing contracts in a phased, prioritised programme, to assess the extent to which equalities issues are already met and discuss with contractors/ suppliers how any gaps can be addressed.</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: Advice and guidance. Outputs: Programme. Outcomes: Procurement projects will take equalities issues into account. Risks: Limited capacity to provide support; staff and/or contractors/suppliers do not comply with the requirements; lack of resources within SCDC to handle any issues arising. Other services affected: Those included in the programme.</p>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>PO</p>
<p>Risk management fully embedded in Council management processes. (Note: This item depends on the implementation of CorVu and CorRisk with the assistance of the Policy and Performance Team.)</p>	<p>Implement risk management module of new performance management system.</p>	<p>Additional Resources Required: JG implementation time; possible service manager, EMT and Member briefing time. Outputs: Module implemented and utilised. Outcomes: All corporate managers and service managers integrated into risk management. Risks: Lack of buy in from management (SMT, EMT or service managers). Other services affected: All officers involved in risk management, in receiving training on the new module and updating risks and actions periodically.</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>	<p>FPO</p>

Internal Audit

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Internal Audit					
Relevant Council Aim: We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all					
Relevant Council Approaches: listening to and engaging with our local community making South Cambridgeshire open and accessible achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works					
Service Objective: Systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes					
Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Annual audit plan agreed with Corporate Governance Committee	Agreed at annual meeting	Plan agreed	Plan agreed	Plan agreed	Internal Audit Manager
Audit plan delivered	Percentage of annual audit plan completed	100%	100%	100%	Internal Audit Manager
Audit report recommendations accepted by management	Percentage of recommendations agreed	95%	95%	95%	Internal Audit Manager
	Percentage of recommendations implemented by agreed implementation date	100%	100%	100%	Internal Audit Manager
Council staff satisfaction with Internal Audit service	Percentage of customers satisfied with service	100%	100%	100%	Internal Audit Manager

Information and Communications Technology

OPERATIONAL PLAN: ICT Service					
Relevant Council Aim/s: A. We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.					
Relevant Council Approach/es: iii. Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible. iv. Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services					
Service Objective: Enable the Council to make effective use of ICT systems and achieve its service objectives through the implementation, development and management of appropriate technologies. Ensuring best value for money options for service delivery. Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services.					
Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
1. Migration of ICT server and data storage facilities.	Reduced management overheads, reduced energy consumption. More efficient working and better able to respond to demands. Reduced energy demands and carbon footprint. SF 725	March 2010	--	--	AW
2. Monitor the web site for usage and satisfaction.	More efficient working and better information management . Improve corporate working and management information SF 704 NI 14	Report Jun 2009, Sep 2009, Dec 2009, Mar 2010	Report Jun 2010, Sep 2010, Dec 2010, Mar 2011	Report Jun 2011, Sep 2011, Dec 2011, Mar 2012	GS

3. Maintain the availability of Contact Centre operational requirements by ensuring the requirements of the Contract are met. Ensure that technical feedback from Contact Centre service level reviews are addressed	More efficient working and better information management. Improve corporate working and management information SF 701 SF 703 SF 731 SF 746 SF 747 NI 14	Review Jun 2009 Dec 2009	Review Jun 2010 Dec 2010	Review Jun 2011 Dec 2011	SR
4. Completion of the M3 (or other) system in support of the CRM integration and Environmental Health systems.	More efficient working and better information management. Improve corporate working and management information SF 701 NI 14	Apr 2010	Apr 2011		GS
5. Support and development of service initiatives and systems	More efficient working and better information management. Improve corporate working and management information	Review Dec 2009	Review Dec 2010	Review Dec 2011	SR
6. Implementation of SharePoint Portal server to provide a more functional and more manageable data sharing facility as an alternative to the use of shared drives.	More efficient working and better information management. Improve corporate working and management information	Mar 2010	Review Mar 2011	Review Mar 2012	GS
7. Review / revise ICT Strategy	More efficient working, better information management and best value. Revised policies better able to address issues of today.	Mar 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	SR
8. Review / revise ICT Security Policy	More efficient working, better information management and best value. Revised policies better able to address issues of today.	Oct 2009	Oct 2010	Oct 2011	AW

9. Implementation of Government Connect – Secure Gateway	More efficient working, secure access to SCDC system. Revised arrangements for accessing systems in a more secure manner. Reduced reliance on ‘strong’ passwords, more reliable service for users.	Aug 2009	Review Apr 2010	Review Apr 2011	SR
10. Refresh corporate network infrastructure	More efficient working and best value. Improved customer service. Improve corporate working	Mar 2010	Mar 2011		AW
11. Completion of MS Windows XP roll out to officers and members.	More efficient working and best value. Officers better able to use applications and systems, easier ongoing support. SF 725	Sep 2009			AW
12. Maintain the Graphics and Printing services to ensure cost effective and efficient delivery of requirements (to include review of technologies and systems utilised).	More efficient working and best value. Better able to prioritise workload and identification of statutory requirements. More efficient use of existing resource. SF 725	Review Dec 2009	Review Dec 2010	Review Dec 2011	PG AW
13. Support initiatives for flexible working	More efficient working, better information management and best value. Officers better able to use applications and systems. Reduced travelling requirements means improved officer efficiencies and contributes to the ‘green agenda’.	Mar 2010			SR

14. Data Capture of existing paper records for GIS related data	More efficient working, better information management. Improve corporate working and management information	Review Dec 2009	Review Dec 2010	Review Dec 2011	PG
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IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

Relevant Council Aim/s:

B. We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.

Relevant Council Approach/es:

- v. **Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible.**
- vi. **Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services**

Service Objective:

Enable the Council to make effective use of ICT systems and achieve its service objectives through the implementation, development and management of appropriate technologies.
Ensuring best value for money options for service delivery.
Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services.

Improvement or Change Objective	Actions	Supporting Information	Completion by Month	Responsible Officer
1. More efficient working and better information management	Introduction of Government Connect – secure gateway connectivity.	<p>Additional Resources: Departmental staff, external consultants. Linked to 2009/10 bid.</p> <p>Outputs: More efficient working and improved information management. Continued connectivity with central government departments.</p> <p>Outcomes: Improved customer service</p> <p>Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p> <p>Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.</p>	Aug 2009	SR

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

2. More efficient working and better information management	Further Back Office systems integration with the CRM where a viable business case is demonstrated.	Additional Resources: Departmental staff, external consultants. Existing budgets in place. Outputs: More efficient working and improved information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	March 2010	SR
3. More efficient working and better information management	Further integration of the LLPG (Land and Property Gazetteer) with other applications and services to provide a common property database.	Additional Resources: Departmental staff. Existing budgets in place Outputs: More efficient electronic working and improved information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources overstretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Mar 2010 for full integration where other applications cater for it.	PG

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

4. More efficient working and better information management	Continue to develop transactional services on the Councils web site where a viable business case is demonstrated.	Additional Resources: Departmental staff. Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: Existing budgets may not be able to fully support the action requirements. ICT or user resources may not be available when they are required. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Dec 2009	GS
5. More efficient working and better information management	Continued development of the CMS (Content Management System) to further integrate the website and intranet and improve the creation and management of content.	Additional Resources: Departmental staff. Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: Existing budgets may not be able to fully support the action requirements. ICT or user resources may not be available when they are required. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Oct 2009	GS

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

6. More efficient working and better information management	Development of the BizTalk environment to support further systems integration.	Additional Resources: County DIT, System Suppliers. Outputs: Maintain access to systems and services. Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3 rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Dec 2009	GS
7. More efficient working and better information management	Further development of existing DIP & workflow system (Anite@Work) to add new file systems, document types and workflow processes.	Additional Resources: Departmental Staff, Service Users. Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3 rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Dec 2009	GS

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

8. More efficient working and better information management	Introduce a more functional and more manageable data sharing facility as an alternative to the use of shared drives (Share Point Portal Server).	Additional Resources: External Consultants, Departmental Staff, Service Users Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3 rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Mar 2010	GS
9. More efficient working and better information management	Implement interfaces between Performance Management System and other business applications, where possible and practical, to avoid duplicate data input	Additional Resources: Service Users, Application suppliers Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3 rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Mar 2010	GS

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: ICT Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

10. More efficient working and better information management	Develop GIS partnerships with other local authorities and possibly the emergency services, building on the successful 'proof of concept' project of 2008. Improved public access to GIS property related information.	Additional Resources: Service Users, Application suppliers, LA peers. Outputs: More efficient working and better information management Outcomes: Improved customer service Risks: 3 rd parties unable to meet council aspirations / expectations. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3 rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above. Other services affected: Potential to affect all services especially those involved with delivery of front-line services.	Mar 2010	PG
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Revenues Services

The Revenue Service's objectives are:

- 1) To work in partnership with stakeholders to provide an efficient and customer focused Revenues Service.
- 2) To provide good value through the use of efficient processes and effective service delivery.
- 3) To ensure residents promptly receive the correct bills and all benefits and discounts they are entitled to.
- 4) To prevent fraud and to identify and punish those who commit fraud.
- 5) To take prompt and effective action against those who do not pay, whilst recognising and assisting those customers with genuine financial difficulties.
- 6) To ensure residents entitled to free bus travel are informed of their entitlement and to make it easy for them to take up their entitlement.

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Revenues Service					
Relevant Council Aims: We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all					
Relevant Council Approaches: listening to and engaging with our local community making South Cambridgeshire open and accessible achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works					
Service Objective: To work in partnership with stakeholders to provide an efficient and customer focused Revenues Service.					
Supporting Objective	Performance Indicator or SMART Milestone	PI target or deadline (month) for action			Lead Officer
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Provide a service that meets customers' expectations	Number of complaints found to be justified	<20	<20	<20	Head of Revenues
Service performing to agreed and measurable standards	Service delivered to the standard set out in the Council's Customer Service Standards	Various – refer to published Service Standards			Head of Revenues
Continue to improve links with local advice agencies	Number of joint meetings per year	4	4	4	Head of Revenues
Ensure there is a high level of awareness of equality and diversity issues amongst Revenues Employees	% Revenues employees who feel they have a good understanding of equalities and diversity issues	100%	100%	100%	Head of Revenues

Service Objective: To ensure residents promptly receive the correct bills and all benefits and discounts they are entitled to.					
Issue accurate and timely bills with correct discounts and benefits	NI 180 Changes in Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit entitlements within the year per 1,000 cases	1,650	1,700	1,750	Benefits Manager
	NI 181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	13 days	12 days	11 days	Benefits Manager
Professional and well trained employees	Number of Revenues staff undertaking professional training	3	3	3	Head of Revenues
Raise awareness of financial rights and responsibilities in the local community	Raise awareness within the community of the responsibility to pay bills on time - Number of press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting action taken to recover unpaid monies	4	4	4	Revenues Manager
	Raise awareness within the community of the right to discounts and benefits - Number of press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting availability of discounts and benefits	4	4	4	Revenues Manager
Service Objective: To prevent fraud and to identify and punish those who commit fraud.					
Raise public awareness of fraud and the sanctions imposed against those found to have committed fraud	Number press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting action taken to punish fraudsters	12	12	12	Fraud Manager
	Number of fraud referrals from the public - Encourage the public to report suspicions through publicity.	130	140	150	Fraud Manager
Impose sanctions against those committing benefit fraud in accordance with the Council's policy	BVPI 76d Number of sanctions imposed per 1,000 benefit claims.	8	8	8	Fraud Manager
Service Objective: To take prompt and effective action against those who do not pay, whilst recognising and assisting those customers with genuine financial difficulties.					
Effective debt recovery processes and procedures, setting challenging targets, and monitoring and managing performance against target.	BVPI 9 Council Tax collection rate	99.3%	99.4%	99.5%	Revenues Manager
	SF743 % Council Tax previous years arrears collected	32.0%	33.0%	34.0%	Revenues Manager

	BVPI10 Non-Domestic Rates Collection Rate	99.4%	99.5%	99.6%	Revenues Manager
	BVPI 66a % current tenants rent collected	98.7%	98.8%	98.9%	Revenues Manager
	BVPI 66b % tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	Revenues Manager
	BVPI79bii % of benefit overpayments recovered	37.0%	38.0%	39.0%	Revenues Manager
	SF739 % of sundry debts that are due collected	96.2%	96.3%	96.4%	Revenues Manager
	% of sundry debts over 3 months overdue	0.55%	0.50%	0.45%	Revenues Manager
Provide advice and assistance to residents with financial difficulties including signposting to independent advice agencies.	Develop links with local advice agencies to facilitate partnership approach to debt management and benefit advice services - Number of people referred to advice agencies	120	140	150	Head of Revenues
	BVPI 66d % of tenants in arrears evicted	0%	0%	0%	Revenues Manager
	SF740 % of discretionary housing payment grant paid to customers	100%	100%	100%	Benefits Manager
	BVPI 66b % tenants in arrears receiving notices seeking possession	19%	18%	15%	Revenues Manager
Service Objective: To provide good value through the use of efficient processes and effective service delivery.					
Make it easier for our customer to access services by telephone	Customers able to report benefit change events by telephone	1,500	2,000	3,000	Benefits Manager
Increase the number of electronic payment transactions	SF738 % benefit payments made by BACS	91%	94%	98%	Benefits Manager
	SF741 Increase in the number of accounts paid by direct debit	700	700	700	Revenues Manager

Effective management of service budgets, ensuring income opportunities are realised.	Overpayments due to local authority errors below the threshold required to attract maximum subsidy - Maintain current high level of staff training and sample checking	Less than 0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	Less than 0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	Less than 0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	Benefits Manager
Ensure processes are conducted in a controlled environment	Number of statutory returns qualified by the auditors	0	0	0	Head of Revenues
	% of agreed audit recommendations implemented	100%	100%	100%	Head of Revenues
Service Objective: To ensure residents entitled to free bus travel are informed of their entitlement and to make it easy for them to take up their entitlement.					
Applications forms easily available and application for new passes processed promptly.	% passes despatched to applicants within 21 days of receipt of the application.	98%	98%	98%	Benefits Manager
	Application form incorporated into pensioner Housing Benefit application form.	N/a	N/a	N/a	

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

Relevant Council Aim/s: We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all**Relevant Council Approach/es: listening to and engaging with our local community
making South Cambridgeshire open and accessible
achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works****Service Objective: To work in partnership with stakeholders to provide an efficient and customer focused Revenues Service.**

Improvement or Change Objective	Actions	Supporting Information	Completion by Month	Responsible Officer
Develop a strategy for ensuring that residents in growth areas take-up their entitlement to housing and council tax benefit	<p>Commission research into take-up in growth communities including statistical analyses, customer and stakeholder consultation, demographic profiling etc</p> <p>Received report detailing research findings</p> <p>Develop draft strategy</p> <p>Consult with stakeholders on draft strategy</p> <p>Agreed Final strategy</p>	<p>Resources: £20,000 for external consultancy funded by Cambridgeshire Horizons (in 2008/09).</p> <p>Outputs: Report from consultants on research conducted. Findings incorporated into a formal strategy. Strategy and findings shared with partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Outcomes: Residents in growth communities, including hard to reach groups, receive all the benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Risks: None</p> <p>Other services affected: New Communities</p>	<p>Mar 09</p> <p>Apr 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jul 09</p> <p>Oct 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Create a landlords forum (for those landlords with tenants in receipt of housing benefit) to meet with the Benefits service to improve engagement and to discuss satisfaction and improvement</p>	<p>Invite landlords to a forum meeting</p> <p>Facilitate the forum discussion</p> <p>Identify areas for improvement and incorporate actions into the 2010/11 service plan.</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources. Outputs: Annual forum meetings held Outcomes: Improved service for landlords and tenants leading to increased customer satisfaction Risks: It may not be possible to implement all the improvements identified by landlords due to resource constraints Other services affected: Housing</p>	<p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jul 09</p> <p>Mar 09</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p>
<p>Evaluate the level of value for money provided by the service through benchmarking with comparable organisations.</p>	<p>Contact comparable organisations to seek information on quality or services and costs</p> <p>Evaluate benchmarking information to determine the value for money provided by the Revenues Service</p> <p>Incorporate actions to improve any aspects of the service identified as providing poor value for money into the 2010/11 service plan</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources. Outputs: Analysis of value for money in comparison to comparable organisations Outcomes: Greater understanding of the value for money provided by the service with areas of poor VFM identified and appropriate actions identified to improve VFM Risks: Limited resources may affect the services ability to collate and analyse robust benchmarking Other services affected: none</p>	<p>Aug 09</p> <p>Oct 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Head of Revenues / Benefits Manager / Revenues Manager</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Identify aspects of the Benefits service that service users are not satisfied with and take appropriate action to improve satisfaction.</p>	<p>Conduct a postal survey of current benefit recipients</p> <p>Analyse result</p> <p>Publish results in South Cambs magazine</p> <p>Develop action plan to implement any immediate improvements</p> <p>Incorporate the survey findings into the improvement plan in the 2010/11 service plan</p>	<p>Resources: Expected to be met from existing resources.</p> <p>Outputs: Completed survey result analyses and published with action plan developed to implement those improvements possible within current resources.</p> <p>Outcomes: Improved service for residents and increased customer satisfaction</p> <p>Risks: It may not be possible to implement all the improvements identified by residents through the survey due to resource constraints</p> <p>Other services affected: to be quantified</p>	<p>Apr 09</p> <p>May 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jul 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p>
<p>Utilise the Audit Commission's published Key Lines of Enquiry for Benefit Service inspection's to identify any weaknesses in the service provided in order to inform a strategic decision on the standard of service provision for the next 3 to 5 years.</p>	<p>Complete an assisted self-assessment against KLOE statements</p> <p>Evaluate likely level of performance based on self-assessment</p> <p>Report to SMT / Portfolio holder and gain agreement on the desired level of performance for the service.</p> <p>Develop and implement action plan to improve the likely score</p> <p>Incorporate appropriate actions into the improvement plan in the 2010/11 service plan</p>	<p>Resources: Self-assessment and report to be met from existing resources. Improvements may require additional resources</p> <p>Outputs: Likely level of performance established and reported to SMT / Portfolio Holder. Agreement reach on desired level of performance and action plan implemented to improve performance</p> <p>Outcomes: Strategic direction for the Benefits Service established for the next 3-5 years</p> <p>Risks: Limited resources may affect the services ability to deliver improvements.</p> <p>Other services affected: Housing</p>	<p>Apr 09</p> <p>Apr 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>May 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Head of Revenues / Benefits Manager</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Ensure the Revenues Service does not discriminate against any groups or individual either deliberately or inadvertently, and ensure that service delivery meets the needs of minority groups</p>	<p>Complete equalities impact assessment for A) Benefits Service B) Revenues Service</p> <p>Develop and implement action plan to address immediate areas for improvement</p> <p>Incorporate further requirements into the service plan process for 2010/11</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources Outputs: completed equalities impact assessments identifying any aspects of the service requiring improvements Outcomes: Service delivery takes account of the requirements of all residents improving accessibility and customer satisfaction. Risks: Assessments may identify the requirement for additional resources to meet equalities requirements Other services affected: none</p>	<p>Bens May 09 Revs Nov 09</p> <p>Bens Jun 09 Revs Jul 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p> <p>Revenues Manager</p>
<p>Facilitate awards of non-domestic rate relief on the grounds of hardship to ensure the Council is able to assist business suffering hardship as a result of the economic situation</p>	<p>Review policy and submit to Cabinet for approval</p>	<p>Resources: Up to £25,000 to be made available to facilitates awards of up to £100,000 as agreed by Council Outputs: Cabinet report with recommendation for revised policy Outcomes: Business suffering hardship are assisted in remaining viable helping to maintain the local economy and employment prospects Risks: It will be necessary to ensure the policy balances the cost of providing rate relief with budgetary restrictions and the benefits to local residents. Other services affected: none</p>	<p>Apr 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Evaluate the level of satisfaction with the rent collection and payment options for residents of council managed traveller</p>	<p>Conduct a face to face survey of residents</p> <p>Analyse survey results</p> <p>If appropriate develop action plan to improve customer satisfaction and incorporate actions into the 2010/11 service plan</p>	<p>Resources: Survey to be met from existing resources. Any potential improvements may require additional resources</p> <p>Outputs: Improved understanding of the requirement of site residents in respect o a rent service</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>Risks: It may not be possible to provide the level of service residents would like to receive with existing resources.</p> <p>Other services affected: Housing</p>	<p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jul 09</p> <p>Aug 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Revenues Manager</p>
<p>Improve Councillors' understanding of the services provided by Revenues Services and raise the profile of the service amongst Councillors</p>	<p>Develop a training programme</p> <p>Deliver training to Member</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources.</p> <p>Outputs: Members of the Council attend training sessions</p> <p>Outcomes: Members have a greater understanding of the Council's Revenue Service and are therefore able to better answer residents enquiries</p> <p>Risks: None</p> <p>Other services affected: None</p>	<p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jul 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Facilitate home-working to improve employees work/life balance and to reduce carbon emissions</p>	<p>Develop a policy for 'full-time' home-working (in conjunction with HR / ICT)</p> <p>Implement a pilot scheme (in conjunction with HR / ICT)</p> <p>Evaluate results of the pilot project</p> <p>Make recommendations for further actions to SMT</p>	<p>Resources: Pilot scheme requirements to be met from existing resources and resource requirements of a wider scheme to be quantified.</p> <p>Outputs: Employees of the Revenues Service working from home on a full-time basis whilst maintaining performance levels</p> <p>Outcomes: Employees more satisfied with working for the Council. Reduced carbon emissions. Potential improved productivity and reduced sickness absence.</p> <p>Risks: Establishing a pilot project will require considerable management resources and will place additional demands in the ICT and HR services. Unrealistic expectations may be raised amongst staff should the pilot project nor lead to a permanent home-working option.</p> <p>Other services affected: ICT, Human Resources</p>	<p>Sep 09</p> <p>Dec 09</p> <p>Mar 10</p> <p>Apr 11</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>
<p>Achieve best value for money from service supply contracts</p>	<p>Procure new contract for provision of payment facilities at post offices and other high street outlets exploring opportunities for joint procurement with neighbouring authorities.</p>	<p>Resources: Contract expected to be cost neutral. Staff resource input required from Revenues and Procurement</p> <p>Outputs: Completed tender and appointment payment network contractor</p> <p>Outcomes: Residents able to pay bills at High Street outlets</p> <p>Risks: Inadequate resources within Revenues and Procurement may delay the procurement.</p> <p>Other services affected: Procurement</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>
<p>Improve processes for of reconciling Revenues property database to the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG).</p>	<p>Identify all properties with data discrepancies</p> <p>Evaluate most effective method for updating incorrect records.</p> <p>Develop controls to ensure future amendments to LLPG are reflected on Revenues property records</p>	<p>Resources: A small amount of financial resources (<£1,000) may be required for software enhancements.</p> <p>Outputs: Consistency of property data across the Council.</p> <p>Outcomes: Communication with customers delivered promptly to residents and postal discounts maximised.</p> <p>Risks: Other demands on Revenues and ICT staffing resources may delay implementation.</p> <p>Other services affected: ICT.</p>	<p>Sep 09</p>	<p>Revenues Manager / Senior Business Support Officer</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Introduce facility to issue Council Tax and Business Rates Refunds by BACS</p>	<p>Test BACS processes to ensure software functioning correctly</p> <p>Review refund procedures to ensure existing audit controls are not compromised by the introduction of new processes</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources Outputs: Refunds paid by BACS where information is held about the customer's bank account details. Outcomes: Improved customer service for residents (i.e. no need to visit the bank to pay in a cheque). Reduced administration and small cost reduction for the Council. Reduced risk of fraud. Risks: None identified. Other services affected: Accountancy</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>	<p>Revenues Manager / Senior Business Support Officer</p>
<p>Introduce on-line access for customers to view their Council Tax and Business Rate account information</p>	<p>Implement software module</p> <p>Test output to ensure accuracy</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing staff resources Outputs: Customers have on-line access to a range of Revenues and Benefit service Outcomes: Greater accessibility, improved customer satisfaction. Risks: Risk of failure of project due to limited business support resources. Other services affected: ICT</p>	<p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Head of Revenues / Head of ICT</p>
<p>Contribute to the Housing Futures project as required</p>	<p>To be identified</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing staff resources Outputs: To be identified through the Housing Futures project plan Outcomes: Successful completion of Housing Futures objectives Risks: Time spent on Housing Futures will divert staff from key tasks leading to a downturn in performance Other services affected: Housing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Revenues / Revenues Manager / Benefits Manager</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Evaluate options for the future administration of supporting people charges</p>	<p>Evaluate the feasibility of implementing supporting people module for IBS Open Revenues application</p>	<p>Resources: Feasibility study to be met from existing resources Outputs: Report on the feasibility of supporting people charges being recorded on IBS Open Housing Rent Accounting module Outcomes: More efficient administration of charges, improved efficiency and financial control. Risks: Any system or software module implementation and data transfer is likely to require considerable staff resources from the Revenues teams. Given other priorities and the limited business support resources the available resources may prove inadequate to complete the project. Other services affected: ICT and Housing (NB the Housing Futures decision may affect this improvement action)</p>	<p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>
<p>Facilitate internet payments for additional services through the Council's website.</p>	<p>Implement the Capita Axis payment portal (initially for staff to use to pay mobile telephone charges on-line with a view to rolling out to other services)</p>	<p>Resources: Requires staff resources – to be met through existing resources Outputs: Facility available to link web based information pages directly to the on-line payment facility (e.g. on-line mobile telephone bill will connect with one click to on-line payment facility) Outcomes: More efficient payments processes reducing the need for manual cashiering processes Risks: There is a high risk that current staffing resources will be insufficient to achieve this objective Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Senior Business Support Officer</p>
<p>Encourage sustainable travel for work</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the Travel for Work plan amongst Revenues Services Employees Encourage and promote the use of more sustainable transport for work related travel (e.g. use of public transport)</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources Outputs: Reduced business travel by non-sustainable methods, in particular lone car journeys. Outcomes: Increase sustainability in the District. Encourage other local employers to improve sustainability in travel for work Risks: There is a high risk that current staffing resources will be insufficient to achieve this objective Other services affected: ICT and Housing</p>	<p>Mar 10</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>

IMPROVEMENT PLAN: Revenues Service

(To be used to set out plans of the service to address inescapable requirements and service developments or improvements)

<p>Participate in Council actions to safeguard children and young people</p>	<p>Train appropriate Revenues staff, particularly visiting officers, to be alert to signs that children or young persons' safety or wellbeing is at risk.</p> <p>Train a minimum of two mangers within revenues Service to act as first point of referral for any concerns raised by employees, and to ensure that appropriate action is taken.</p>	<p>Resources: To be met from existing resources Outputs: Staff trained in how to deal with concerns regarding the of children and young people Outcomes: Concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children and young people referred to the appropriate agency, leading to greater safeguarding of children and young people. Risks: Young persons' safety or wellbeing is at risk if the Council does not fully participate in a multi-agency approach to identify and collate all concerns about safety and wellbeing. Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Sep 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>
<p>Make it easier for residents to inform both SCDC and the County Council about life events.</p>	<p>Work in conjunction with the Contact Centre and other SCDC Services to pilot a 'tell us once' service for customers suffering bereavement</p> <p>Identify instances where similar information is provided or collected more than once (e.g. information about a new occupier).</p> <p>Develop procedures to facilitates collection once and onward distributions to multiple recipients.</p> <p>Train back office and front office staff to implement new processes.</p>	<p>Resources: Expected to be met from existing resources. Outputs: Reduction in the number of times a customer needs to call the Council. (reduction in avoidable contacts as measured by NI14) Outcomes: Residents enjoy improved of customer service and are able to complete transactions with the Council more efficiently leading to improved customer satisfaction. More efficient working Risks: The complexity of service may proving to be challenging in redesigning information gathering processes Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>

Deferred Improvements

The following improvements were proposed as part of the service planning processes in mid 2008, but were subject to additional resources becoming available. Resources were not allocated to these actions and the proposed improvements are therefore deferred pending the availability of additional resources. Wherever possible improvement actions will be undertaken with existing resources, but due to resource limitations the improvements cannot be guaranteed.

<p>Consider options for rolling out responsibility for verification of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims to Housing Officers Registered Social Landlords (including the new Housing Association should housing stock be transferred)</p>	<p>Identify RSL willing to operate as partners for verification processes</p> <p>Work jointly with Housing Department to encourage participation by Housing Officers</p> <p>Provided training to RSLs and Housing Officers</p> <p>Review procedures to reflect the new processes and to ensure current verification standards are maintained.</p>	<p>Resources: Customer Service Development Officer – 2 Year fixed term cost of £30,000 per year.</p> <p>Outputs: RSLs and Housing Department accredited to perform verification of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims. Number of days required to process claims reduced</p> <p>Outcomes: Customers receive their benefits faster.</p> <p>Risks: There is a risk verification of claims could be weakened is responsibility is more diffuse. Appropriate management processes will need to be put in place to prevent this</p> <p>Other services affected: Housing</p>		<p>Benefits Manager</p>
<p>Improve the Service's Business Support function, particularly the management and administration of ICT applications: IBS Open Revenues; Capita Axis Income Management; Anite@work; LoCTA; Concessionary Fares Card Management System.</p>	<p>Develop job specification and recruit to post.</p>	<p>Resources: Additional Business Support Assistant post required - £24,000 per annum.</p> <p>Outputs: Business Support Officer undertaking routine management of ICT applications. Senior Business Support Officer able to undertake project work to improve service delivery, efficiency and outcomes for customers.</p> <p>Outcomes: Improved resilience in a key area; Better project management to improve service deliver and use of ICT. Efficiency gains. Transactional services added to web site.</p> <p>Risks: The significant risks associated with current staffing arrangement in this vital area of the service are reflected in the Finance and Support Service Risk Register.</p> <p>Other services affected: ICT</p>		<p>Head of Revenues / Senior Business Support Officer / Revenues Manager / Benefits Manager</p>

<p>Provide tenants of properties on managed traveller sites with the same level of service in respect of rent collection as provided to other Council tenants.</p>	<p>Engage specialist consultants from ICT supplier for 2 days to quantify requirements and software enhancement.</p> <p>Test and implement software enhancements ensuring that existing accounting and reporting requirements continue to be met.</p> <p>Add rent accounts for managed traveller sites onto existing rent accounting and collection ICT application.</p>	<p>Resources: Consultancy – 2 days = £2,000 Temporary project employee for 10 weeks = £25,000 Software enhancement = £10,000 Ongoing software maintenance = £1,000 per annum Outputs: Rent accounts will be recorded and managed in the same way as rent accounts for council housing. Outcomes: Tenants of traveller site will have access to the same range of services in respect of rent payment as other council tenants (e.g. able to pay by direct debit or at post offices). Improved audit control of income stream. Risks: There is a high risk that current staffing resources will be insufficient to achieve this objective Other services affected: ICT and Housing</p>		<p>Head of Revenues</p>
<p>Make it easier for customers to pay their bills by enable customers to receive SMS text alerts to their mobile phone when a bill is due for payment, and enable them to make a debit card payment by SMS text.</p>	<p>Implement additional module to the existing managed payment service provided by Capita.</p>	<p>Resources: £10,000 one off expenditure £2,000 per year maintenance charge Existing staffing resources Outputs: SMS text alert and payment system operational Outcomes: Improved customer service with customers notified of payments being due, and making payment, by SMS text. Council maintains its reputation as being at the forefront of new ways of delivering transactional services. Risks: None Other services affected: All services that receive income from customers</p>	<p>Jul 09</p>	<p>Senior Business Support Officer</p>

<p>Reduce the risk of fraud being perpetrated against the Council by employees, suppliers and customers, and increase the detection of benefit fraud.</p>	<p>Develop job specification and recruit to post.</p> <p>Analyse existing statistical information on fraud and develop a risk based proactive programme to identify fraud.</p> <p>Develop a proactive approach to counter-fraud work using an intelligence and risk assessment based approach.</p> <p>Extend the remit of the Fraud Investigation team to include all areas of fraud against the Council</p>	<p>Resources: Counter Fraud Intelligence Officer Post £28,000 per annum Outputs: Proactive counter-fraud programme in place Consolidate Use of Resources score in respect of counter fraud activity. Increased number of sanctions imposed against benefit fraudsters. Outcomes: Reduced risk of fraud against the council going undetected. Prevention of financial losses due to fraud Risks: There is a risk of financial loss through fraud if the proposal is not implemented. Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Jul 09</p>	<p>Fraud Manager</p>
<p>Enhance and extend the service offered to vulnerable residents to provide advice in their own home about benefit entitlement and managing money in order to reduce poverty in the district</p>	<p>Recruit to Outreach Worker post</p> <p>Supplement the work of the Welfare Benefits Visiting Officer</p> <p>Deliver advice on benefit entitlement and money management to vulnerable residents in their own home or at drop in sessions.</p>	<p>Resources: Outreach Worker Post £30,000 per annum Outputs: Increased number of visits to vulnerable residents to provide advice on benefit entitlement and managing money and debts. Outcomes: Vulnerable residents, including hard to reach groups, offered assistance and advice in their own homes leading to a reduction in poverty. Risks: Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Apr 09</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p>
<p>Improve the level of take-up of Housing and Council Tax benefit by joint-working with neighbouring Councils.</p>	<p>Contribute toward the cost of employing a benefits take-up worker with one or two neighbouring authorities</p> <p>Develop joint strategies to encourage the take-up of entitlement to Housing and Council Tax benefit</p>	<p>Resources: £15,000 Outputs: Proactive and intelligence-led benefit take-up work in the district. Greater understand of the local demographics in relation to deprivation and benefit take-up Outcomes: More residents on low income applying for an receiving housing and council tax benefit reducing poverty in the district. Risks: Other services affected: All</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>	<p>Head of Revenues</p>