



# **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

## **Corporate Services**

### **SERVICE PLAN**

#### **2011/12 to 2013/14**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



**Approved by:**

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## 1. About Our Services

Corporate Services covers a wide range of disciplines and supports South Cambridgeshire District Council in achieving its corporate objectives and providing services to the customers of the Council in an accessible, effective and efficient manner.

The service covers the following areas:

### ***Accountancy***

The service includes accountancy, treasury management, creditors, insurance, risk management and procurement and it aims to provide both a proactive and responsive service to its internal and external customers whilst complying with statutory and recommended best practice financial requirements.

- Statement of accounts
- Budget planning
- Financial monitoring
- Treasury management
- Training to council staff on finance
- Payment of invoices
- Financial advice to budget holders, management, Portfolio holders, Cabinet, etc
- Tax returns
- Recommendation to Council on council tax and housing rent levels
- Insurance
- Co-ordinate and advise on risk management
- Provide procurement advice and support
- Promote efficiencies and savings
- Undertake ad hoc financial projects

### ***Human Resources (HR) / Payroll***

The purpose of the HR/Payroll Service is to facilitate organisational people development; support the Council in attracting and retaining the right people, provide an environment to maximise performance, influence and support organisational change and to achieve equality and diversity within the workforce. The service ensures that the Council implements employment best practice and meets statutory requirements in the various employment, health & safety and equalities acts. The team ensures the timely and accurate payment of salaries, wages and travel claims to all employees and Members in line with financial and audit requirements and the provision of statutory information to Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

- Recruitment and retention of employees – ensuring policies, practices and processes conform to relevant employment and equalities legislation and follow best practice.
- Payment of salary and allowances to employees and elected Members.
- Development of policies and practices to support organisational development in particular, the identification of corporate learning opportunities and effective training provision so that employees can perform to their full potential.
- Management of
- Performance management – ensuring policies and processes follow industry best practice and conform to relevant employment legislation
- Provision of pay and allowance information in accordance with HMRC and statutory requirements.



sickness absence and capability issues.

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

ICT is a centralised function providing a variety of services for all areas of the Council and supporting the customer interaction requirements. It underpins the technology used to provide and support the business functions and leads to opportunities for improved efficiencies, work practices and cost saving initiatives.

- Support the effective use of ICT systems
- Development, implementation and management of technologies
- Manages voice communication technology
- Web site and Intranet
- Provide operational computing service to staff and Members
- Geographic Information Systems
- Address Management including Street Naming and Numbering
- Local Land Property Gazetteer
- Infrastructure Support
- Systems Support
- Application Support
- Information Governance and data asset management
- Office Services
  - Printing / Stationery
  - Graphics

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

- The Legal team provides legal advice to the whole Council and legal support for the Council's regulatory committees and Council meetings and ensures that all Council decisions are lawful.
- The team provides expert support in all aspects of the Council's service delivery and prioritises work accordingly to achieve and support the Council's aims, approaches and actions.
- Team members advise and advocate on an extensive range of local government legal matters and where necessary, due to capacity or expertise, procure specialist external legal support.
- The team ensures the Council is represented at all levels before courts and tribunals and negotiates on behalf of the Council when necessary and as informed by instructions and/or policy.
- The Legal & Democratic Services Manager also acts as Deputy Monitoring Officer to the Council, discharging a statutory role under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Supported by the legal team, the Deputy Monitoring Officer provides advice and training to Members and Parish Councillors and supports the Standards Committee and liaises with Standards for England on the Code of Conduct and ethical governance. She also helps maintain high standards of Corporate Governance through support for the Corporate Governance Committee.
- The team provides support and advice on the legal issues in respect of Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act responses.



- The Legal team actively works with the Council's procurement team on all major procurement projects.
- The Land Charges team aims to provide an efficient Local Land Charges Service in response to applications for searches and Conveyancing Form 29 (CON 29) enquiries.
- The Council's Property Surveyor is a member of the legal team - she undertakes survey work for all corporate areas and plays a key role in the management of the Council's Land Terrier (an internal mapping record of the Council's land holdings) and land and property asset register.
- Democratic Services strives 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. The team will assist the Council in putting in place further improvements in political processes, conduct and leadership through proactive involvement in corporate governance reviews of the Constitution and decision-making mechanisms. Our greatest challenges in 2011/12 will be supporting the Council in its response to the Localism Bill and in its achievement of Charter Status for Elected Member Development.
- We administer the highest number of public meetings of all our Nearest Neighbour Comparison Group (134 meetings in 2009/10), and have the fourth highest number of public meetings per officer. We have maintained a consistently high level of performance against targets since a reduction in team size from 6 full-time officers to 4.8 (full-time equivalent).

### ***Revenues & Benefits***

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collects               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Council tax</li> <li>○ Non-domestic rates</li> <li>○ Housing rents</li> <li>○ Sundry debts</li> <li>○ Overpayments of housing benefit</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing benefit</li> <li>○ Council tax benefit</li> <li>○ Concessionary travel passes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigates               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fraudulent claims for benefit</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

We aim to match targets from 2010/11. This will be challenging for the section due mainly to the changes being imposed regarding eligibility to Housing Benefit, the work involved in implementing the changes, managing the effect on the claimants themselves and dealing with any impact on collection.

This is over and above the current increase in Benefit caseload and the ongoing effects of the Economic Climate on our collection rates.



## 2. Our Performance and Plans to Improve

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.

Linked to the corporate Customer Service Excellence project action plan, during 2011/12 Corporate Services' service areas will put in place a programme of internal and external customer satisfaction surveys, to complement those already in place in the service areas. Corporate Services' service areas will also research and publish service standards, in consultation with and to improve service to customers – in most cases this will involve reviewing and formalising protocols etc already in place.

In the last year a number of achievements have been made against the 2010/11 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 sections below.

### **Accountancy**

#### *Achievements*

- Accounts completed on time, receiving an unqualified audit opinion, with marked improvements to the asset register and response to audit queries
- Provided financial training for Members to improve understanding of financial procedures and estimates
- Integrated the accounting system with the trade waste and income management systems
- Treasury Management - excellent performance on rate of return on investments (target achieved over 5 year rolling period)
- Supported local businesses by prompt payment of invoices (percentage of invoices [the value of which is not disputed] paid within 10 and 30 days of receipt)
- Total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains since the start of the 2008/09 financial year (National Indicator (NI) 179) - better than forecast
- Support of Refuse and Recycling contract tender - helped to ensure robust process
- Financial monitoring (outturn: forecast)
  - General Fund: target 3%; achieved 1.80%
  - Housing Revenue Account

#### *Areas needing action*

- Would like to have achieved more on making full use of the FMS, but hampered by staffing restructures in other departments
- Summary of Accounts published (target date June 2010; published November 2010)



- (HRA): target 3%; achieved 1.36%
  - Capital: target 3%; achieved 1.92%
- Further rollout of the financial management system (FMS) and purchase ordering (“e-Bis”)
- Annual review of Risk Management Strategy (completed by due date)
- Quarterly review of Strategic Risk register (achieved)

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.

Service objectives for 2011/12:

- Approval of statement of accounts 2010/11 by 30th June on basis of international financial reporting standards and receipt of unqualified audit opinion by 30th September
- Preparation for reform of the housing revenue account with the abolition of the subsidy system, the imposition of substantial debt, the need for a robust long term financial strategy and the consequences for treasury management
- Budget monitoring and prediction of financial outturn, including monitoring the achievement of any required savings
- Financial advice to cost centre managers on budgets, budget monitoring, achievement of savings and value for money/benchmarking/unit costs, and to others on participatory budgeting, freedom of information requests and responses to publication of invoices over £500
- Continued rollout of financial training and use of purchase ordering system; introduction of electronic approval of invoices including changes to workflow of documents
- Ongoing support to cost centre managers on compliance with contract regulations, European Union (EU) requirements, etc., with procurement generally and with achievement of further efficiencies/savings by, for example, collaborative contracts and e-auctions

### ***HR / Payroll***

1. Recruitment and retention of employees – ensuring policies, practices and processes conform to relevant employment and equalities legislation and follow best practice:
  - Policies updated in line with review timetable and employment legislation – Maternity policy, flexible working, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

Plans to improve – Review key policies and procedures in the light of the new Equality Act and complete Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) as part of each review



2. Performance management – ensuring policies and processes follow industry best practice and conform to relevant employment legislation:
  - Review of managing sickness absence procedures, performance & development review process

Plans to improve – Continue to monitor the quality and completion rates of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs). Provide development to managers and supervisors in areas such as motivation, leadership and performance management

3. Development of policies and practices to support organisational development in particular, improve levels of staff satisfaction and engagement; the identification of corporate learning opportunities and effective training provision so that the Council maximises employee performance and staff can perform to their full potential:
  - Review of corporate training by Executive Management Team (EMT) – April 2011
  - Employee Engagement Strategy actions

Trade union membership is 47% of the total workforce however, feedback from the staff survey indicated that 41% of employees did not feel consulted on decisions that affect them and their work.

Plans to improve – Develop a framework for wider engagement of staff

4. Payment of salary and allowances to employees and elected Members:
  - Consistently achieving assurance of controls from audit inspections
  - Implementation of pay award and increases to allowances
  - Improvements to the management of the relocation scheme

Plans to improve – continue to maintain high standards of customer service and audit assurance.

5. Provision of pay and allowance information in accordance with HMRC and statutory requirements:
  - Year end returns provided to HMRC by deadlines
  - Provision of data on pension scheme contributions to the County Council

Plans to improve - continue to maintain high standards of customer service and audit assurance.

6. Management of sickness absence and capability issues:
  - Active case management
  - Improvements to absence information for managers
  - Capability dismissals for frequent short term absence
  - Sustained return to work

Plans to improve - Improve attendance rates by delivering absence management training to managers and continue to improve absence reporting. Best Value (BV) indicator 12 measurement to be used as comparator.

7. Equalities
  - Job Evaluation Project – demonstrate evidence of closing the gender pay gap, Job Description Questionnaires (JDQs) completed for all job roles, evaluations completed
  - Flexible working policies



- Improved monitoring of job applicants via the Jobs in Cambs portal
- Improved percentage of females in the top 5% of the workforce
- Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) completed

Plans to improve - Review key policies and procedures in the light of the new Equality Act and complete EqIAs as part of each review. EqIA to be completed on the new pay and grading scheme

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

Service objectives for 2011 / 2012 include:

- Improved process and procedure management leading to better customer perception, provision and satisfaction with service provided.
- Support for the Council's business systems including upgrades, improvements/procurement i.e. Housing, Revenues & Benefits, Planning, Building Control
- Improved systems reporting capabilities
- Improved public access facilities including wireless connectivity and internet @ Cambourne offices
- Shared services, including jointly commissioned disaster recovery, in support of exploring opportunities for joint working
- Information Governance and Records management
- Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) driven process and procedures for greater clarity, transparency and efficiency
- Increase use of Multi Function Devices - high volume printers; auto-direct large print jobs to the Print Room
- Improved website with transactional capabilities, personalisation and opportunities for improved intranet (InSite) use
- Resilient and secure services in support of mobile, home and remote working for both staff and Members
- Expansion of 'virtual infrastructure' and introduction of 'thin client computing' in support of improved and value for money services
- Upgraded desktop productivity software and email services providing greater opportunities for the re-use of data and systems integration
- Stationery savings e.g. not hoarding supplies; not buying off-contract; sending docs as non-printable pdf
- Timely and cost effective graphics and design services
- Comprehensive address management and street naming/numbering services through the use of the nationally accredited Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) functions
- Reliable and robust Information Management ensuring the Council's data and information assets add value to our services and meet the requirements of legislation

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

- The Legal team aims to provide consistently high quality advice to all services, senior management and parish and district Members and has responded well to increasing demands on it due to a reduction in team members and an expansion of area of work (e.g. employment and procurement advice). In the inaugural Legal Services customer satisfaction survey in November 2010, 55.3% of respondents said that the quality of advice given was excellent and 36.8% said it was good; the remaining 7.9% said it was satisfactory, no-one said it was poor.



- The handling of complaints of breaches of the code of conduct have been very well managed by Legal, working in conjunction with Democratic Services, and the target timescales set by Standards for England have been met comfortably by the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) local assessment process.
- The Deputy Monitoring Officer has been working closely with the Standards Committee to raise the profile of the Committee's work and the Council was a finalist in the Standards and Ethics category at the 2010 Local Government Chronicle awards.
- The Legal team is meeting its performance standards in council house and equity share conveyancing.
- The Legal team has created a set of Service Standards which have been published on the team's Intranet page in order to improve our service to our client departments. Continuous monitoring will take place via a Client Feedback form which is now issued to those instructing us on the closure of a file. The team is working hard on improving customer insight and awareness as part of the Customer Service Excellence project.
- The Land Charges Team aims to provide an excellent service with high levels of customer satisfaction with good turnaround times.
- The public, Councillors, officers and our partners can rely on having access to the information leading to decisions, and having sufficient notice of when any major (key) decisions will be made: in 2010/11, we ensured that all key decisions were advertised in our forward plan (SX039). We've also kept the focus on decisions rather than information items, keeping the average number of information items on Cabinet agendas at 0.5 (SX038) and the average number of items considered by Cabinet each meeting at 6 (SX037).
- In late 2010/11 we introduced a Reports Management feature to allow officers to use the Council's existing modern.gov intranet site to submit new items to the forward plan, collaborate on report writing and upload reports directly to the forward plan. Completing the implementation of this feature in 2011/12 will allow improved senior management oversight of report development, and an audit of strengths and weaknesses meeting statutory publication deadlines to provide Members and the public with the information they need before decisions are taken.
- On 11 November 2010 the leaders of the two main political groups signed the East of England Charter for Elected Member Development, confirming that the Council will be working to achieve Charter Status for Elected Member Development, one of the key corporate actions for 2010/11. This year we will be supporting Councillors in the achievement of Charter Status and have already taken steps to demonstrate our commitment to this action by appointing the Senior Democratic Services Officer as strategic lead for Member Training and Development, and a Member Services Officer who will collaborate with Councillors to develop their individual annual training programmes.
- We have conducted a survey of Members' communications needs to identify areas for improving internal communications with Members and Members' communications with their residents, and have developed an action plan to improve communications to ensure that Members receive timely, accurate information in a



manner accessible to them. We have also undertaken to deliver training to help Members improve their communications with residents, including assisting our Councillors and senior managers to improve their internet presence by introducing the existing personalised webpages and blogging features of the Democratic Services part of the Council's website. We will update information for any Members who do not feel confident enough or do not have time to maintain their own webpage.

- We aim to introduce a Council-wide policy on setting meetings, with supporting guidance on how meetings should be conducted, to improve for all our customers awareness of the operation of the decision-making process. We will improve the annual meetings calendar so meetings are scheduled at regular intervals to make them easier to remember, and which meet the recommendations of the Equality Impact Assessment of meeting dates and times.

#### *Achievements*

- Signing of the East of England Charter for Elected Member Development, confirming that the Council will be working to achieve Charter Status for Elected Member Development
- Operation of standards local framework – initial assessment of cases completed in an average of 11 working days from receipt of complaint, continuing to be well within national target of 20 working days
- Meeting targets in respect of Cabinet agenda, key decisions on forward plan, publication of decisions
- Annual meetings calendar agreed before start of municipal year, including Portfolio Holder meeting dates
- Introduction of Part 2 Forward Plan to improve administration of Portfolio Holders' decision-making process
- Responding to all Members' enquiries quickly and within target of two working days

#### *Areas needing action*

- Reports to Democratic Services on time and in the correct template; quality of reports and recommendations
- Improved response rate to internal surveys, particularly training needs
- Advice / guidance to Parish Councils on Code of Conduct, particularly about identifying and declaring personal and prejudicial interests in planning matters

### ***Revenues & Benefits***

#### **Revenues Performance**

In 2009/10 we set collection rate targets as follows:

- Council Tax = 99.1%
- Non-Domestic Rates = 99.2%
- Housing Rents = 98.4%

These were achieved and are on course to be matched in 2010/11 (Quarter 3 [Q3] figures:



- Council Tax = 88.4%; (compared to Q3 in 2009/10, 88.4%)
- Non-Domestic Rates = 90.4%; (Q3 2009/10, 90.4%)
- Housing Rents = 98.1%; (Q3 2009/10, 97.9%)

Due to the economic climate and the Housing Benefit changes, these are expected to remain constant for 2011/12.

The Council Tax & National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) collection statistics published nationally show that South Cambridgeshire District Council's performance compares favourably with all other Councils (4th and 26th, respectively, out of 363 authorities).

### Benefits Performance

NI 181 - Days to process new claims and change of circumstances: Performance was excellent in 2009/10 (9 days against a target of 13 days) and despite increase in workload this figure is on target to be achieved in 2010/11: Q3, 10.95 days (Q3 2009/10, 11.40 days).

It expected for targets to remain constant due to welfare reform changes and increases in work due to current climate.

Efficiency improvements have been made in 2009/10 and performance has been maintained with the same resources at a time of increasing caseload due to the economic recession.

There were no areas of under performance in the service. In fact due to the external factors affecting our targets the section performed excellently. We continue to face the challenges of embedding our projects due for completion on 31 March 2011 and also embedding the new processes and improvements driven by Customer Service Excellence.



### 3. The Context for Our Plan

#### a) External Drivers

##### **Accountancy**

The following external factors will influence the services:

- Statutory requirements to set the Council's budget and levels of council tax and housing rents incorporating the effects of the Spending Review such as a cash reduction in general grant, abolition of housing and planning delivery grant and growth area funding and the introduction of new homes and business increase bonuses, together with the current economic climate and restricted increases in council tax and rents, resulting in the need to find substantial efficiencies and cuts in service;
- Statutory requirement to produce the statement of accounts based on regularly changing accounting standards;
- Reform of the housing revenue account bringing the need for more strategic financial and treasury management expertise;
- Other requirements and expectations such as publishing spending over £500 together and dealing with the consequent enquiries, participatory and community budgeting, changing external auditors, etc.

In addition, the services have a number of internal drivers. The Council continues to undergo substantial change. A number of corporate initiatives will have a significant bearing on the way the services are delivered. These will include:

- The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan both indicate the need for further substantial efficiency savings and cuts in addition to the substantial savings and cuts already achieved (e.g. £1.1 million on the General Fund from 2013/14, but beginning in 2011/12) which will impact on both front line and corporate services
- Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee Finance Task and Finish Group
- Need to improve financial management across the Council
- Aims, Approaches, Actions (3 A's):
  - A iii: making SCDC more open and accessible
  - A iv: achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
  - A v: ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works
- e-Bis
- Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

##### **HR / Payroll**

<i>Political</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to employment legislation – extension to flexible working rights, extension to maternity /paternity leave, Equality Act 2010, Agency workers</li><li>• Comprehensive Spending Review</li><li>• Review of the proposed vetting &amp; barring scheme</li></ul>	<i>Economic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council budgets and financial position</li><li>• Changing economy/credit crunch</li><li>• Downturn in private industry</li><li>• Issues with the housing market – making it more difficult for individuals to relocate</li></ul>
<i>Social</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to lifestyle trends</li><li>• Abolition of the default retirement age</li><li>• Housing costs and availability</li></ul>	<i>Technological</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technology for improved homeworking options</li></ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport issues</li> <li>• Ageing workforce</li> <li>• Migrant workforce</li> </ul>	
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### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

Supporting the needs and aspirations of all our users, ICT underpins all service delivery at South Cambs. The ICT service continually looks for efficiencies and opportunities to provide best value through the use of appropriate technology.

External drivers:

- Current economic climate resulting in the need to find substantial efficiencies and cuts in services
- Growth within the District impacting on service delivery and supporting other services within the Council
- Cost cutting 'shared service' initiatives
- Peer Council sharing of resources
- Expected efficiencies
- Increased customer interaction and perceptions
- Changes in the use of technology
- Future plans for the use of Ordnance Survey data
- The continuance and possible development of Government Connect related services

Internal drivers:

- Increased efficiencies in the face of reducing budgets
- Delivering support to the back office function thus ensuring the front office function can continue to provide excellent services to the public
- Continuing to improve engagement with service areas and meeting their needs for service delivery.
- Staff access to systems and services in support of remote/mobile and home working
- Network security and compliance with accepted standards inc Gov Connect
- The need to reduce the support overhead of the Councils ICT infrastructure and reduce costs
- Recognition that there is a need to get more out of existing technology and provide even greater value for money wherever possible
- Ensure a staffing compliment that has the right skills and resources to support the Council's aims.

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

External drivers:

- New legislation especially the forthcoming Localism Bill
- Potential changes to the ethical framework in local government including a possible new Code of Conduct for Members will necessitate training for all district and parish councillors when the details become known
- The need to ensure timely responses to legal or other legally related challenges against the Council from external sources, e.g. members of the public, media, legal firms, central government, parish councils and other public bodies.
- Potential for legal shared services (in whatever format may be agreed) across county or even wider afield
- Budgets already stretched and outcome of Comprehensive Spending Review and the Local Government Finance Settlement likely to have knock-on effect on service provision across the Council. Specific issues for this service are how to find



additional efficiencies within existing resources, particularly introducing improved uses of existing technology.

- Uncertainty about specifics of the Localism Bill – in particular for this service area, “abolition of Standards Board regime” and “give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases”
- Increased access to and use of technology by residents of South Cambridgeshire and the Government Connect project

#### Internal drivers:

- Customer Service Excellence project
- Equalities agenda
- The potential need to secure further reduction in budget to contribute towards corporate targets for efficiency savings.
- Potential further restructuring in teams as a result of spending review implications
- The legal team and the property surveyor are subject to variable levels of instructions in some areas and are, in the main, a responsive service.
- The legal team need to be able to balance legal constraints against corporate ambitions.
- The need to respond quickly to give clear and unambiguous legal advice to all client departments, Senior Management Team, Cabinet and other Members.
- The need to improve corporate awareness of legal implications of decisions by getting involved at an early stage.
- Land Charges is reliant on support from other departments to maintain its turnaround time on searches
- Members’ Communication Needs Survey results and action plan
- Member Development Strategy 2008-2011 and Charter for Elected Member Development
- Improve corporate awareness of legal implications of decisions through enhanced senior management oversight of report production and officer training
- Possible change of local political balance
- Increased working from home provision through IT enhancements
- Positive sustainability implications of fewer meetings, shorter agenda, increased home working

#### ***Revenues & Benefits***

As stated the main external influence on performance will be the changes to Housing Benefit. This will be challenging for the section due mainly to the changes being imposed regarding eligibility to Housing Benefit, the work involved in implementing the changes, managing the effect on the claimants themselves and dealing with any impact on collection.

But with the projected growth in the area of up to 25% of benefit claimants and 15% Council Tax chargepayers the challenges continue to mount up. We hope to minimise the impact by embedding the projects that have already been set up to minimise the impact of the savings that had to be made in 2009/10.



## **b) Our Key Partners**

### ***Accountancy***

- Audit Commission
- RSM Tenon
- Zurich Commercial & Municipal
- Cambridgeshire Procurement Group – working with other public authorities across Cambridgeshire, including police, fire and rescue, and health
- Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)
- Office of Government Commerce
- Buying Solutions
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
- Internal customers
- Cambridgeshire Horizons
- Parish councils

### ***HR / Payroll***

- Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire Horizons – Growth Agenda and shared Urban Design team.
- Addenbrookes Occupational Health team for the provision of occupational health advice & ill health retirement cases.
- Cambridgeshire County Council and other county partners in the joint procurement of advertising, agency staff and independent medical advisor service contracts, which deliver cost savings and improved services.
- Trade Unions – General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMB) and UNISON are formally recognised

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

- Peer authorities and Cambridgeshire County Council
- Central government partners
- Communications / network providers
- ICT suppliers and vendors
- System maintainers
- Staff and Members
- Users of systems

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

- Colleagues in the Council;
- District councillors;
- Parish councillors
- Communities in Local Government (CLG);
- Ministry of Justice;
- Land Registry;
- Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC);
- Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Information Commissioner's Office;
- Standards for England (SfE);
- Local Government Ombudsman;



- Local MPs;
- Ordnance Survey.
- Cambridgeshire Legal Partnership
- Cambridgeshire Direct
- Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership
- Modern Mindset Ltd (Modern.Gov committee management system)
- Local Government Improvement and Development
- East of England Employers' Association

### ***Revenues & Benefits***

- Bailiff Service Providers
- Ministry of Justice
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- Local Government Office (LGO)
- District Valuation Office
- Valuation Tribunal
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)



## c) Our Strengths and Weaknesses

### **Accountancy**

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual respect within team, with colleagues across the authority and with Members</li> <li>• Professionalism, commitment and motivation</li> <li>• Highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable staff</li> <li>• Responsive, able to prioritise competing demands and accommodate periods of peak workload</li> </ul>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise use of accounting system by continued rollout of purchase ordering system and electronic approval of invoices</li> <li>• Improved budgeting and financial information by continuing with financial training</li> </ul>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing and increasing challenges and workload on the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to meet statutory and internal reporting deadlines;</li> <li>○ to deal with new developments such as new accounting standards and HRA reform;</li> <li>○ to meet increased public information and consultation requirements; and</li> <li>○ to provide timely financial advice on forecasts, required savings and the effect of Government initiatives</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Age profile and specialised knowledge of individual staff, leading to possible loss of expertise and knowledge on retirement, etc. (e.g. if outcome of job evaluation exercise is detrimental to these staff)</li> </ul>

### **HR / Payroll**

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payroll knowledge and experience</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Customer focussed</li> <li>• Professional and committed workforce</li> <li>• Breadth of knowledge</li> <li>• Achievement of Investor in People standard</li> </ul>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of complex corporate projects and initiatives to support</li> <li>• Lack of technical systems expertise to enable better use, support and develop Resourcelink system</li> </ul>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Development programme</li> <li>• Workforce Planning</li> <li>• Equalities agenda/EqlA's</li> </ul>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential equal pay claims</li> <li>• Loss of key staff/turnover</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint working with other Councils</li> <li>• Opportunities to develop policies and practices to drive culture change</li> </ul>	
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### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

<b><i>Strengths</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive</li> <li>• Self motivated</li> <li>• Quality standards</li> <li>• Professional, highly trained and skilled workforce</li> <li>• Diverse skills set</li> <li>• Dedicated and flexible staff</li> <li>• Enthusiastic about partnership working</li> <li>• Technically aware</li> </ul>	<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b><i>Opportunities</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• Technology and ICT advances</li> <li>• Increased efficiency</li> <li>• Automation</li> <li>• Customer expectations</li> <li>• Customer education</li> </ul>	<b><i>Threats</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Political balance</li> <li>• Government targets</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• Technological change</li> <li>• Increasing system complexity</li> </ul>

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

<b><i>Strengths</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a wide range of experience and knowledge base within the team</li> <li>• A high level of workload is constantly maintained</li> <li>• Work well as friendly, approachable, unified team with mutual respect and trust</li> <li>• Trusted by Members</li> <li>• Successful prosecution record (rarely defeated!)</li> <li>• Ability to multi-task and juggle work according to priorities</li> <li>• Land Charges have excellent rapport with customers and clear customer focus</li> <li>• Skilled, efficient, highly organised, professional, motivated and happy workforce able to provide consistent and accurate advice.</li> <li>• Mutual respect, within team, with colleagues across the authority and with Members</li> <li>• Enthusiasm and positive attitude</li> <li>• Breadth of knowledge</li> <li>• Excellent performance in service areas</li> </ul>	<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management system no longer meeting needs of legal service</li> <li>• Lack of technical systems expertise to enable better use, support and development of existing systems</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good working relationship with Members</li> <li>• Efficient services with low costs</li> <li>• Adept at balancing priorities in the face of competing demands</li> <li>• Strive for continuous improvement and proactive in identifying and implementing solutions</li> <li>• Senior management ownership of forward plans</li> <li>• Commitment to improve communication with and for Members</li> <li>• Annual meetings calendar produced to assist forward planning and time management</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan in place to improve direct communication with staff and Members, and Members' communication with residents</li> <li>• Targeted and co-ordinated work programme for Member Development, with dedicated Member Support Officer</li> <li>• Enthusiasm shown by some Members for training and for driving forward the Council's quest for Member Development Charter Status</li> <li>• Using space in modern.gov system to host minutes, agendas and other material for those parish councils without their own websites</li> <li>• Further enhanced opportunities for public involvement in local democracy through launch of e-Petition system</li> <li>• Increased flexible / home-working from technological advances</li> <li>• Streamline processes to reduce the cost of meetings</li> <li>• Wider use of social media tools to improve public participation in the decision making process</li> <li>• Development of a meetings protocol on setting and conducting meetings</li> <li>• Action plan based on Members' Communications Needs survey to ensure that necessary information is being received in a timely manner, improved use of Weekly Bulletin for publication of information items to maximise meeting time spent on decision items, and appointment of Member Services Officer to act as first point of contact to correctly direct</li> </ul>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political change / balance of authority</li> <li>• Land Charges dependent on other service areas within council to provide information for searches which affects team's response times</li> <li>• Conflicting priorities puts pressure on the organisation to meet report deadlines</li> </ul>



<p>Members' enquiries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish service standards for Legal to improve customer service (e.g. turnaround time for advice)</li> <li>• Populate the new planning computer system with the requisite information for Land Charges searches</li> </ul>	
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### **Revenues & Benefits**

<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Mutual respect, within team, with colleagues across the authority and with Members</li> <li>• Enthusiasm and positive attitude</li> <li>• Professionalism, commitment and motivation</li> <li>• Highly skilled and experienced workforce across all services</li> <li>• Breadth of knowledge</li> <li>• Excellent performance in service areas</li> <li>• Good working relationship with Members</li> <li>• Accounts have been produced to the statutory timetable and are unqualified</li> <li>• Efficient services with low costs</li> <li>• Adept at balancing priorities in the face of competing demands</li> <li>• Strive for continuous improvement and proactive in identifying and implementing solutions</li> <li>• Performance culture embedded through annual service plan targets</li> </ul>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of capacity for business support and service development</li> </ul>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve customer access to service</li> <li>• Improve use and availability of ICT systems</li> <li>• Increased flexible/home-working from technological advances</li> <li>• More structured use of innovative employment arrangements to provide cover for maternity and sickness absence</li> </ul>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welfare reform to Housing &amp; Council Tax Benefit</li> <li>• Growth in properties and Benefits claimants</li> <li>• Maternity cover</li> <li>• Economic climate</li> </ul>



**d) Are we meeting the diverse needs of all our customers and communities?**

South Cambridgeshire is very rural in nature, with over 100 villages, no urban centres and an area of approximately 90,000 hectares. The population is approximately 142,400 and population density is low at 1.6 persons per hectare. There are nearly 61,700 households in the District, of which approximately 16,900 are single adult households. Approximately 300 households received council tax reductions due to a resident's disability.

There is little deprivation in South Cambridgeshire with the area ranked 5<sup>th</sup> least deprived in England using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. 6,400 (10.4%) of households receive Council Tax benefit and approximately 60% of recipients are of pensionable age. The 2008 Place Survey showed that 47% of respondents were employed in full time work, 12% part-time and 9% self employed. 32% of respondents were not working - 20% being retired; 7% looking after the home; 3% permanently sick or disabled and the rest in education or training. Employment is above both the regional and national averages; however, unemployment levels have increased due to 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 (89.5%). The largest individual ethnic minority population in the district is the fluctuating Traveller population, estimated at 1,330 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 64 hours per week from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm Saturday, providing a high level of accessibility. Callers may use type-talk, language line or text-phone to contact the Centre. Revenues Services employ a Welfare Visiting Officer to visit at home those residents wishing to claim benefits that have difficulty in access the service through other channels.

All Corporate Services service areas considered high priority have been equality impact assessed. Remaining service areas are being equality impact assessed on a priority basis.

***Accountancy***

The division carries out surveys every two years for the accountancy service and for the payment of suppliers service as a means of consultation and to assess whether customers' needs are being met.

Financial training seminars are held for Members and staff and individual one-to-one training is provided for staff; all training includes feedback and assessment forms to check whether the requirements of trainees are being met.



## ***HR / Payroll***

The HR & Payroll service provides an internal service to staff, at all levels, and elected Members. Customer/staff satisfaction rates are used as a means of consultation and a measure of customer feedback.

External customers include Cambridgeshire County Council Pensions section, other local authorities, partners, Farmland Museum, Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs, Department of Work & Pensions.

- Internal customer information and composition is taken from the Resourcelink system
- The 2009 Staff survey provided information on staff satisfaction levels – this feedback was used to develop the Employee Engagement strategy and to revise the Council's flexible working policies.
- EqlAs were completed on 6 policies and procedures last year. Actions that were identified have been reflected in the revised policies, an example of this is the review of the Redundancy policy in October 2010. Staff survey levels indicated that 73% felt that the Council is an equal opportunities employer.
- The service plans to undertake a customer survey during 2011 both for internal customers and external job applicants.

## ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

ICT is a centralised function providing a variety of services for all areas of the Council and supporting the customer interaction requirements. It provides an internal service to staff in support of the business functions and leads to opportunities for improved efficiencies, work practices and cost saving initiatives.

Online customer/staff satisfaction surveys and Helpdesk call feedback are used as a means of consultation and a measure of customer experience.

## ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

The Legal team has created a set of draft service standards to improve the service offered to our internal customers. A Customer Satisfaction Survey was issued in November 2010 to gain feedback on performance and areas for improvement and the results were considered to be very positive about current levels of satisfaction with the service. Headline results from the survey have been published on the Legal team's intranet page.

By working on the Customer Service Excellence project the Legal team is exploring how to gain customer insight and awareness and has a plan in place for improving customer service. Land Charges has surveyed its customer base and received very positive feedback and have plans to improve its customer interface on the Council's website.

It is planned to carry out an equality impact assessment on the legal/land charges service area during 2010/11. The team is considered to be a low risk service in this area.

## ***Internal Customers: Democratic Services***

Democratic Services provides services to internal customers, including 57 Members and officers at all levels. A customer services survey of Members and officers was



undertaken in October 2010, leading to an action plan to address issues raised and build on our strengths.

#### *External Customers: Democratic Services*

Customer service standards have been established and are followed and continue to be publicised and monitored. New areas of the website and intranet relating to how decisions are made, how to prepare a petition, how to use the modern.gov system and what the Democratic Services team does launched in autumn 2010.

A customer services survey of Parish Councils was undertaken in October 2010, leading to an action plan to address issues raised and promote strengths, and to raise awareness of services the Democratic Services Team could provide to help Parish Councils promote local events.

#### *Equality Impact Assessment: Democratic Services*

The provisional findings of a Partial EqlA completed in August 2010 indicated that the nature of impacts was largely neutral/positive. (The final outcome of the EqlA has been delayed due to focus on the Peer Review and other priorities.)

#### **Revenues & Benefits**

The section continually tries to meet the diverse needs of our customers. We regularly engage with hard to reach groups like the gypsy and traveller community. We are also constantly aware of the needs of the old and migrant workers when assessing their eligibility for Benefits.

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

Council Taxpayers	61,400
Non-Domestic ratepayers	4,300
Council tenants	5,500
Recipients of housing benefit	5,450
Recipients of council tax benefit	6,400



## e) Our Resources

The following figures show the overall budget under the control of the Corporate Services managers; the figures exclude recharges between cost centres and capital charges.

	Original 2010/11 £'000	Revised 2010/11 £'000	Estimate 2011/12 £'000
Capital	284	318	504
Revenue			
Expenditure			
Employees	4,496	4,521	4,394
Premises	3	3	3
Transport	43	40	34
Supplies & services	578	554	539
Supplies	49	78	53
Communications & computing	526	579	533
Expenses	444	467	456
Grants & subscriptions	11	18	12
Miscellaneous	83	77	79
Agency & contracted services	5	5	5
	6,238	6,342	6,108
Income	(569)	(489)	(511)
	5,669	5,853	5,597

The Council's budget is set to meet the Council's Corporate Plans including the proposed improvement plans. The Council plans to make further savings as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy but, at this stage, does not expect these to have a negative impact on services to its residents.

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

ICT is the means by which all Council systems are provisioned and is required to work effectively. Increasing pressure on budgets has to be matched with increasing demand on services. Complexity and diversity are an ongoing challenge, aspiration and expectation a constant demand.

The increasing cost of ICT can be offset through the recognition of 'Invest to Save' initiatives. Upfront capital investment can often lead to improved cost efficiencies over the longer term with the prospect of reduced revenue expenditure. Robust business cases and return on investment models will be key to future assessments of 'ICT value'.

Moves to introduce 'thin client computing' for the majority of desktop users will provide long term cost savings and contribute to the CO<sub>2</sub> reductions targets.

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

Legal Services has been involved with comparing relevant data with all the other councils in Cambridgeshire as part of work undertaken by consultants (funded by the



Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) for the Cambridgeshire Legal Partnership. The data collected makes it clear that the South Cambridgeshire Legal team compares well with its neighbouring councils in terms of the number of staff currently employed and the overall cost and expenditure of the section, although the figures are not on a like for like basis due to the disparity between the councils, e.g. some have retained their housing stock and others have not.

Democratic Services has undertaken benchmarking work with all Nearest Neighbour Comparison Group authorities around the country and other Cambridgeshire district councils. This process has demonstrated that the service continues to provide value for money in terms of the number of meetings serviced per officer on an annual basis even with the reduction in team size. Benchmarking will be repeated annually to demonstrate continuing value-for-money.

We aim to deliver all our 2011/12 improvements within existing budgets, staffing and technology.

### ***Revenues & Benefits***

The challenge for Revenues and Benefits is to continue to provide a good service within the current resource; the Budget was cut by £200,000 in 2010/11 and performance has continued to be good despite an increase in workload following the growth of properties and benefit claims. There is a significant challenge in 2011/12 when 4 members of team will be on maternity leave.

The cost of providing Revenues and Benefit service can be affected by the growth in caseload; to date the benefit and council tax caseloads continue to rise.

Additional resources of £50,000 have been made available from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to enable electronic forms integration with back office systems, which should enable a large part of the growth to be absorbed within current resource.



## f) Workforce Overview

Corporate Services employs the following numbers of employees:

	<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalents</b>
Accountancy	17	14.42
Human Resources / Payroll	9	6.70
ICT	24	22.40
Legal & Democratic Services (inc. Land Charges)	16	14.73
Revenues Services	50	43.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>101.63</b>

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 2010/11 and it can be anticipated that further maternity leave will be taken during 2011/12. 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 led the successful corporate bid for Investors in People accreditation. Representatives from the Service have participated in the Management Competencies Development project and the resulting programme. Staff development will continue to be a core aspect of the delivery of Corporate Services 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 2010/11, 0.39% of working days have been lost through sickness, equivalent to 0.4 full time equivalent (FTE) posts. All of the time lost due to sickness in this period resulted from short-term sickness. The effective management of sickness absence will continue to be a priority for the service.

### **HR / Payroll**

A key HR Officer post was held vacant whilst other service options were explored, the post was finally filled on 25 October 2010. A part time payroll vacancy arose in May 2010, this post was filled in November 2010.

Sickness hours lost = 364.8 (01.01.2010 – date). Two team members had surgery and post operative recovery = 172 hours



Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 12 = 8.3 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (sickness days lost per FTE)

One part time HR Co-ordinator has resigned and will be leaving in March 2011.

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

The ICT team comprises 22 FTE but delivers more than just IT services. Its remit extends into Information Management, Address Management and Graphics/Printing & Stationery.

ICT skills are a valuable commodity and fully trained staff are always in demand, workforce planning and skills development to ensure the ICT team are able to adequately service the demands is an ongoing challenge.

### ***Legal & Democratic Services (including Land Charges & Property Surveyor)***

The legal team has had to manage on one full-time member of staff less since September 2009 following the departure of the Principal Solicitor. Acting-up arrangements were in place until November 2010 for the newly created Legal and Democratic Services Officer position. A member of staff has also been on maternity leave from January 2010 until January 2011 and a part-time maternity cover staff member recruited.

The team has managed well with reduced capacity whilst covering the same level of workload.

We strive to identify periods of lowered capacity well in advance through fortnightly team meetings at which workloads are reviewed and re-assigned to ensure that no team member is overburdened or underused.

### ***Revenues & Benefits***

The workforce within Revenues is fairly static and is made up with very experienced staff. The staffing levels are lean and the absence of staff can have a significant impact. The team is made up of mixed sex and ages although there are a significant number of women who are under 40; the service has had to manage significant absences due to maternity leave.

A number of staff who will be leaving during the next 5 years due to retirement, which will leave some teams with a skills shortage.

The current projects within Revenues will be completed at 31 March 2011. These projects will embed Customer Service Excellence within 2011/12 as well as improving the capacity of staff and providing customers with different access channels.



## g) Risk Overview

Corporate Services have compiled a risk register (as at October 2010) for the whole service that summarises the major risks that could affect the service over the next 12 months:

- **Welfare Reform:** Proposed radical changes to benefits.
- **Maternity Leave:** The impact of maternity leave is significant: staff levels are reduced and temporary staff cover is needed; the cost of temporary staff is considerable.
- **Job Evaluation and Equal Pay project:** Insufficient resources or slippage against project plan affect the Job Evaluation and Equal Pay project.
- **Limited staffing resources:** Increasing workload due to economic downturn / resignation / sickness / difficulty in recruitment / corporate savings targets.
- **Inadequate resources allocated to business support:** Workload demands / resignation / sickness / difficulty in recruitment.
- **Failure to produce / late approval of 2010/11 accounts on International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) basis (including 2009/10 reconciliations from United Kingdom (UK) Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to IFRS) and later years' accounts,** arising from significant changes in accounting requirements increasing the length and complexity of the Statement of Accounts, together with tight deadlines.
- **Knowledge / experience:** Retirement / resignation / restructuring and redundancy / long term sickness of key senior staff / difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified staff.
- **Recruitment and selection:** Non conformance with recruitment and selection legislation and best practice, including safeguarding checks.
- **Data Management and Security:** Loss of residents' confidential data due to inadequate security for transfer of data.
- **System upgrades,** leading to degraded service.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> party dependencies:** 3<sup>rd</sup> party does not deliver to timetable.
- **Limited management capacity:** Increasing demands from corporate core / increasing demands from customers.
- **Failure to meet Revenues and Benefits Project deadlines:** 5 projects are being implemented in order to lessen the impact of the savings made on the staff and manage the impact of anticipated growth in caseload.
- **HR/Payroll system:** Lack of system administration and development skills and expertise.
- **Sickness absence:** Risk of failure to reduce levels of sickness.
- **Significant changes to regulations:** Government introduces significant changes to legislation.



# Corporate Services – Accountancy

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Summary

Direction of Travel Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment
		Not applicable	Not applicable		

#### How well do the Council's Corporate Services costs compare with others ?

Current level of service costs	<p>Treasury management</p> <p>The results for 2009/10 show that South Cambridgeshire achieved a return of 2.68% on combined investments (less than and more than 365 days) compared to 2.21% for its comparator group and 1.87% for the overall group. South Cambridgeshire was fifth highest in the comparator group of 14 other organisations and twenty third highest in the overall group of 137 other organisations.</p>	Cost Comparison
		Cost Trend
		Not applicable

#### To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved ?

Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.	<p>Financial monitoring (2009/10 outturn: variance of actual net expenditure against budget)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Fund: target within 3%; achieved 1.80% underspend</li> <li>Housing Revenue Account (HRA): target within 3%; achieved 1.36% underspend</li> <li>Capital: target within 3%; achieved 1.92% underspend</li> </ul> <p>Support for local businesses by prompt payment of invoices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within 30 days 98% (end of year estimate 2010/11; target 97%)</li> <li>Within 10 working days 78% (end of year estimate 2010/11; target 70%)</li> </ul> <p>Feedback from financial seminars and one to one training generally indicates a good / excellent assessment.</p>	Performance Comparison
		Not applicable
		Performance Trend



Results of service inspections	•
Awards / Accreditations	
Range of discretionary services provided.	•

<b>Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs ?</b>	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	• Procurement savings of £366,113 were quoted in the annual report for 2009/10 presented to the Planning Portfolio Holder.
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	•



# Corporate Services – HR / Payroll

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Summary

Direction of Travel Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment

This assessment is based upon a survey of SPARSE Group members for 2010.

How well do the Council's Corporate Services costs compare with others ?		
Current level of service costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of a sample of 27 local authorities, SCDC's combined HR &amp; Payroll service was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> overall in terms of value for money</li> <li>The Payroll service was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in terms of cost (i.e. 'cost per payslip')</li> <li>Ratio of HR staff to FTE staff is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> – top quartile</li> </ul>	Cost Comparison
		Cost Trend

To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved ?		
Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investor in People Bronze standard accreditation</li> <li>Equality Framework for Local Government - achieving authority</li> <li>Stonewall</li> </ul> <p>SCDC was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of the 27 SPARSE local authorities for these areas (top quartile).</p>	Performance Comparison
		Performance Trend



Results of service inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding audit – adequate assurance</li> <li>• Payroll audit – adequate assurance</li> </ul>
Awards / Accreditations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR audit - adequate assurance</li> <li>• Staff satisfaction survey</li> <li>• Investor in People Bronze standard accreditation</li> <li>• Equality Framework for Local Government - achieving authority</li> <li>• Stonewall</li> </ul>
Range of discretionary services provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payroll service to the Farmland Museum</li> <li>• Advice to Parish Councils on HR / employment matters</li> </ul>

<b>Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs ?</b>	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for management development Chartered Management Institute (CMI) programme through external training provider</li> <li>• Improvement East funding for Savings projects</li> </ul>



# Corporate Services – ICT

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Summary

Direction of Travel Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment

The service costs information below is based upon figures from like authorities in Cambridgeshire.

How well do the Council's Corporate Services costs compare with others ?						
Current level of service costs		<u>2010/11 gross salary costs</u>	<u>IT Staff (FTE)</u>	<u>No. of PC's/ Laptops</u>	<u>Number of users</u>	<u>Cost per user</u>
	SCDC	£366k	11.4	508	510	£718
	East Cambs	£240k	7.5	232	260	£923
	Huntingdonshire	£***k	17.0	720	850	£***
	Fenland DC	£***k	**.*	***	***	£***
<p>Comparison is based on basic gross salaries for IT services only.  Cambridge City not included as it is an outsourced support service, Cambridgeshire County not included as the remit is different from a district council.  The current cost of ICT provision is upper quartile @ £718 per user and is below the national average (circa £800) for an authority of our size; compared to our near neighbours we provide a substantially lower cost service (<i>based on currently available data</i>).</p> <p>Current workstation acquisition cost (inc setup) is £460 per unit, this is substantially below the national average of £570.</p>						
						Cost Comparison



	Overall budget profile (inc salaries for ICT, Information & GIS, Printing/Graphics/Stationery)				Cost Trend	
		<u>2007/08</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2009/10</u>		<u>2010/11 (revised)</u>
	Capital	£294k	£330k	£199k		£94k
	Revenue	£1,506k	£1,636k	£1,574k		£1,550k

To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved ?		
Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.	Current costs are aligned to meet current needs and deliverables as described in service plans.	Performance Comparison
		Performance Trend
Results of service inspections	The Government Connect ‘Code of Connection’ assessment was successfully passed and the Council remains connected to the Government Secure Extranet until it’s next inspection (Sept 2011). Recent internal audit reports have indicated some areas of required improvement (process and procedure), this is in line with low costs and associated levels of resource.	
Awards / Accreditations		
	The Address Management team have been recognised for their excellent work in providing the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) with the Gold exemplar award.	
Range of discretionary services provided.	Apart from the Street Naming and Numbering service, ICT provision is in itself discretionary but supports all statutory functions of the Council.	

Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs ?	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	The project to provide 'thin client computing' to desktops will reduce expenditure on ICT provision over the next 5 years. An Invest To Save initiative with upfront capital investment that will offer significant reductions in revenue expenditure and provide system support efficiencies leading to a freeing up of skilled resources to improve service delivery in other areas.
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	The project is to be supported by the provision of £150k from Improvement East, will contribute to the Council's priorities and CO <sub>2</sub> reductions target.



# Corporate Services – Legal & Democratic Services

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Summary

Direction of Travel Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment

The service costs information below is based upon figures compiled for the outline business case for a potential shared legal services partnership between authorities in Cambridgeshire.

How well do the Council's Corporate Services costs compare with others ?						
Current level of service costs						Cost Comparison
		<u>Costs</u> <u>(net of income)</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>External solicitors</u>	<u>External barristers</u>	
	SCDC	£407,634	7	£23,869	£102,813	
	Cambridge City	£955,672	19	£138,110	£23,510	
	Cambs County	£1,923,596	42	£979,841	£644,500	
	East Cambs	£248,428	7	£16,122	£10,590	
	Huntingdonshire	£430,517	9	£38,111	£95,838	
	Peterborough	£1,552,802	35	£941,675	£32,975	
	The inaugural SCDC Legal Services customer satisfaction survey in November 2010 gave the following result on value for money:					
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	
The value for money the Legal Service provides		54.3%	34.3%	5.7%	5.7%	



		Cost Trend

To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved ?					
Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCDC Legal Services received very high customer satisfaction levels in its inaugural Customer Satisfaction Survey in November 2010</li> </ul>				Performance Comparison
	How you rate our work ...	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
	The friendliness and helpfulness of the legal staff you dealt with	65.8%	31.6%	2.6%	0.0%
	The accessibility of Legal Services	35.1%	45.9%	16.2%	2.7%
	The professionalism and attitude of the legal staff you dealt with	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	0.0%
	Our understanding of your requirements for advice	43.2%	51.4%	5.4%	0.0%
	The quality of the advice given to you	55.3%	36.8%	7.9%	0.0%
	The clarity of the advice given to you	51.4%	43.2%	5.4%	0.0%
	The communication of advice to you or fulfilment of your instructions	45.9%	40.5%	13.5%	0.0%
	The speed of our response to your instructions	29.7%	37.8%	27.0%	5.4%
	Our performance in keeping you informed of progress on your instructions	29.7%	21.6%	37.8%	10.8%
		Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
	The quality of our service	52.6%	42.1%	2.6%	2.6%
		Complete	A lot	Some	None
	The level of confidence you have in us to delivery a high quality legal service	45.9%	45.9%	5.4%	2.7%



		Getting better	Staying about the same	Getting worse	Performance Trend
	The level of our performance is	47.2%	50.0%	2.8%	
Results of service inspections					
Awards / Accreditations					
Range of discretionary services provided.					

<b>Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs ?</b>	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCDC Legal Services is in the process of signing up to the East of England Counsel Database which will provide costing information for different types of legal work currently sent to barristers according to their years of experience to enable better value for money in procuring counsel's advice. Examples from the database indicate that some barristers chambers are charging up to six times more than other chambers for the same type of work based on the same level of experience so it is anticipated that considerable savings can be made in negotiations with barrister's clerks on the level of fees payable armed with this knowledge.</li> </ul>
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	



# Corporate Services – Revenues and Benefits

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Summary

Direction of Travel Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment

This assessment is based upon Cipfa data for the Nearest Neighbour Comparison Group for 2010.  
This group comprises sixteen non-Metropolitan District Councils

How well do the Council's Corporate Services costs compare with others ?		
Current level of service costs	<p>The costs per head of population compared to sixteen other local authorities which are our nearest statistical neighbours in terms of population, age profile of population, density, sparsity, etc are used for Housing and Council Tax Benefit</p> <p>There may be alternate unit costs; for example, unit costs per benefit claim for council tax benefits administration and unit costs per hereditament for council tax collection that may be more appropriate but the costs per head shown below give indication of services where further understanding of our costs, combined with performance, may be needed.</p> <p>£ per head 2009/10, ranking against nearest neighbour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax Benefits administration £3.66 - 4th lowest out of 16</li> <li>• Housing Benefit administration £4.37 - 3rd lowest out of 16</li> </ul> <p>The Revenues and Benefits Service have reduced staffing cost by £200,000 during 2010/11 and although number of properties and benefit claimants continue to increase performance has still improved.</p>	Cost Comparison
		Cost Trend



To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved ?			
Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.	<b>Council Tax and Business Rate Collection Rates 2009/10</b>		Performance Comparison
	Authority	Council Tax Collection	Business Rate Collection
	South Cambridgeshire	99.3%	99.2%
	Cambridge	96.8%	99.2%
	Huntingdon	98.2%	98.4%
	Fenland	98.1%	99.1%
	East Cambs	98.3%	99.2%
	Peterborough	96.1%	95.7%
	<p>Collection rates have continued to improve and 2009/10 saw South Cambridgeshire performance for Council Tax Collection as joint 1<sup>st</sup> District Council in England and top performer in Cambridgeshire. There are no comparisons available at present for this year however performance for 2010/11 is currently 98.0% Council tax Collection and 98.5% Business Rate Collection.</p> <p><b>Rent Collection</b></p> <p>There are currently no comparisons with other local authorities but performance is improving</p>		Performance Trend
	2008/09	98.36% Collected	
	2009/10	98.55% Collected	
	2010/11	98.36% Collected as at 31.1.2011	



	<b>Housing and Council Tax Benefit</b>  Processing times for New Claims and Change of Circumstances (Number of Days)													
	<table> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>New Claims</th><th>Change Of Circumstances</th></tr> <tr> <td>2008/09</td><td>21.09 days</td><td>9.94 days</td></tr> <tr> <td>2009/10</td><td>19.42 days</td><td>9.75 days</td></tr> <tr> <td>2010/11</td><td>19.00 days as at 31.1.2011</td><td>9.00 days as at 31.1.2011</td></tr> </table>	Year	New Claims	Change Of Circumstances	2008/09	21.09 days	9.94 days	2009/10	19.42 days	9.75 days	2010/11	19.00 days as at 31.1.2011	9.00 days as at 31.1.2011	
Year	New Claims	Change Of Circumstances												
2008/09	21.09 days	9.94 days												
2009/10	19.42 days	9.75 days												
2010/11	19.00 days as at 31.1.2011	9.00 days as at 31.1.2011												
Results of service inspections														
Awards / Accreditations														
Range of discretionary services provided.														

<b>Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs ?</b>	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	Joint procurement of E-forms with Central Bedfordshire Council will ensure that procurement costs are reduced.
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	Improvement East have awarded the Council a grant of £50,000 towards the introduction of electronic forms; this will enable the service to cope with growth in properties and benefit claims within current staffing resource.








# Guidance Notes






## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Direction of Travel Indicator




	Extremely unlikely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Unlikely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Some concerns
	Likely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Extremely likely that VfM will be demonstrated/best practice in the future

### Cost Trend




	Costs rising faster than inflation by more than 2%
	Costs rising more than inflation by between 1% and 2%
	Costs +/-1% of inflation
	Costs lower than inflation by between 1% and 2%
	Costs lower than inflation by more than 2%

(For inflation rate – assume rate of 2.5%)





### Cost comparison

	Top Quartile
	2nd/3rd Quartile
	Bottom Quartile

### Performance comparison

	Top Quartile
	2nd/3rd Quartile
	Bottom Quartile

### Performance trend

	Performance Strongly Improving
	Performance Improving
	Performance Worsening
	Performance Strongly Worsening



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: Accountancy

### Key for Improvement Plan

#### 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.
- v) Ensuring that the council demonstrates value for money in the way it works.

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Service Objective:</b>									
A1	Approval of statement of accounts for 2010/11 before 30th June 2011 on the basis of international financial reporting standards (IFRS) and receipt of unqualified audit opinion by 30th September 2011.		Understanding and interpreting the guidance notes (available December 2010), on IFRS, restating previous year's figures and substantially changing the layout and content of the statement of accounts document.	June 2011 and September 2011	A iii A iv A v	Adrian Burns			
A2	Preparation for reform of the housing revenue account with the abolition of the subsidy system, the imposition of substantial debt, the need for a robust long term financial strategy / cash flow projection and the consequences for treasury management.		Dependent on consultation (proposals received January 2011) and final details.	With effect from 1st April 2012	A iii A iv A v	Adrian Burns			
A3	Assisting with (through understanding costs), monitoring and reporting on the achievement of substantial efficiencies to achieve the outcomes forecast in the medium term financial strategy which is currently (February 2011) predicting a cash reduction in general grant.		Be monitored and reported as part of the monthly financial position statement.	Ongoing during 2011/12	A iii A iv A v	Adrian Burns			
A4	Improve financial knowledge throughout the authority (both officers and Members) and use present financial system to full potential.		Continued rollout of financial training and use of purchase ordering; introduction of electronic approval of invoices including changes to workflow of documents.	Ongoing during 2011/12	A iii A iv A v	Adrian Burns			



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
A5	Assist businesses through the economic downturn.		Pay undisputed commercial invoices within increased targets of 98% within 30 days and 76% within 10 working days.	Ongoing during 2011/12	A iii A iv A v	Adrian Burns			
A6	Enhance the risk management process through increased transparency and accountability, thus enabling the Council to manage its risks more effectively.		Investigate the feasibility and benefits of transferring service area risk registers into CorVu.	Ongoing during 2011/12	All	John Garnham			
A7	Compliance with EU and other legislative requirements regarding procurement.		Ongoing support to cost centre managers on compliance with EU and other legislative requirements, contract regulations, etc., with procurement generally and with achievement of further efficiencies/savings by, for example, collaborative contracts and e-auctions.	Ongoing during 2011/12	A v	Sean Missin			



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: HR / Payroll

### Key for Improvement Plan

#### Relevant Council Aim/s:

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

#### Relevant Council Approach/es:

- i) By achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services will provide excellent customer service through specific actions aimed at getting it right first time.
- iii) Making South Cambridgeshire district council more open and accessible.
- iv) Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services.
- v) Ensuring that the council demonstrates value for money in the way it works.

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Service Objective:</b>									
1	Implementation of the HR aspects of the single Equality Act		Review and revise key HR policies in line with the Equality Act.  EqIA's to be completed on revised policies.	31 March 2012	Compliance with the Equality Act	HR Manager/ HR Officer	Communities and Customer Services		
2	Improve employee attendance		Absence management training for managers, team leaders and supervisors.  Leadership and motivation skills for managers.	31 May 2011	BVPI 12 – number of sickness days lost per FTE	HR Officer/ HR Coordinator	EMT		
3	Improve employee attendance and resilience		Deliver managing change and motivational leadership courses.  Deliver Absence management training for managers	31 March 2012	BVPI 12 – number of sickness days lost per FTE	HR Officer/ HR Coordinator	EMT		
4	Improve customer experience during job application process. Improve efficiency of the process and reduced paperwork and cost. Improve equality monitoring of applicants.		Complete the improvement work on the jobs portal including implementation of electronic equality monitoring.  Move to electronic applications only	30 April 2011  30 April 2011	Customer Service excellence. Reduced advert costs. Reduced printing and postage costs.	HR Manager/ HR Officer	ICT		



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
5	Improve employee engagement and satisfaction rates.		Develop framework for a staff forum  Develop an Organisational Development (OD) Strategy	30 September 2011	Staff survey	HR Manager/ SMT/ Policy & Performance Manager	ICT/ Communications		
6	Completion of single status		Introduction of new pay and grading scheme	30 June 2011	Compliance with the Equality Act and single status requirements	HR Manager/ SMT	Communications/ ICT	No	
7	Improve workforce flexibility		Review and improve the Homeworking policy	31 March 2012	Improve employee satisfaction. Customer Service excellence	HR Manager/ Head of ICT	ICT/ Communications/ Customer Service Coordinator		



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: ICT Services

### Key for Improvement Plan

#### 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

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Service Objective:</b>									
	Raise the profile of ICT within SCDC (understanding our role, expectations and deliverables) to provide a better Customer Service, including more involvement of ICT Champions with business Service areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a comprehensive and effective ICT service to support the delivery of Council aims and service initiatives.</li> <li>Wherever possible, use existing technologies and promote commitment to best value</li> <li>Get feedback from customers on service delivery and expectations</li> <li>Customer satisfaction surveys November 2011</li> </ul>	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise the importance of customer expectations and ensure a positive experience.</li> <li>Develop internal process and procedure in support of the above.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager  ICT GIS and Information Manager	All service areas	Yes (Depends on specific requirements)	
	Revised Disaster Recovery (DR) arrangements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide DR arrangements to ensure they are adequate but not over stated.</li> <li>Investigate opportunity for shared contract with other local Councils.</li> <li>New arrangements to be in place by May 2011.</li> </ul>	May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	ICT Support Services Manager	None	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Desktop virtualisation and operating system upgrade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deploy new system with Windows 7 software.</li> <li>Use ICT Champions to engage with service areas and ensure required outcomes are understood and achievable.</li> </ul>	Sep 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Desktop office productivity suite upgrade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade to MS 2010 or Open Source.</li> <li>Use ICT Champions to engage with service areas and ensure required outcomes are understood and achievable.</li> </ul>	Sep 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Upgrade / replace corporate email system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade to MS Exchange 2010</li> <li>Use ICT Champions to engage with service areas and ensure required outcomes are understood and achievable.</li> </ul>	Sep 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes  3rd party provider	
	Upgrade / replace existing anti-virus protection systems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review service requirements</li> <li>Procurement exercise</li> <li>Install and configure</li> </ul>	Nov 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	ICT Support Services Manager	None	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Support initiatives for flexible and remote working requirements means improved officer efficiencies and contributes to the 'green agenda'.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working and best value.</li> <li>Officers better able to use applications and systems.</li> <li>Reduced travelling</li> </ul>	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Support initiatives for shared and partnership working		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a comprehensive and effective ICT service to support the delivery of Council aims and service initiatives</li> </ul>	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Review corporate network infrastructure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working and best value.</li> <li>Improved customer service.</li> <li>Improve corporate working.</li> <li>Improve access security</li> </ul>	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Support and development of service initiatives and associated applications / systems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working and better information management.</li> <li>Improve corporate working and management information</li> </ul>	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager  ICT GIS and Information Manager	All service areas	Yes  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Review / revise ICT Strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> <li>Revised policies better able to address issues of today.</li> </ul>	Oct 2011 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> <li>Revised policies better able to address issues of today.</li> </ul>	H of ICT	All service areas	No	
	Review / revise ICT Security Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> <li>Revised policies better able to address issues of today.</li> </ul>	Oct 2011 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> <li>Revised policies better able to address issues of today.</li> </ul>	H of ICT	All service areas	No	
	Government Connect – Code of Connection		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of existing services.</li> <li>Ensure continued compliance with the Government Connect Code of Connection (CoCo)</li> </ul>	Aug 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT  ICT Support Services Manager	All service areas	Yes  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Tell Us Once		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the creation of the 'Tell Us Once' agenda</li> <li>Integrate communication channels and services</li> <li>Ensure easily accessed government services related to birth, bereavement and change of address.</li> </ul>	Nov 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More efficient working, better information management and best value.</li> </ul>	H of ICT	Revs and Bens	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> <li>Peer Councils</li> <li>Central government</li> </ul>	
	Improve Website/Intranet		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usability Study</li> <li>New CMS</li> <li>Redesign</li> <li>Social Media Maps</li> <li>Implement CMS</li> </ul>	June 2011 Sept 2011 Dec 2011 March 2012		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Web Services Manager	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd party provider</li> </ul>	
	Improve Graphic, Print & Web Service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess Situation/Service</li> <li>Put in place a structure</li> <li>Train Team</li> <li>Customer satisfaction surveys</li> </ul>	Sept 2011 March 2012		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Web Services Manager	All service areas	No	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Implement Council's Information Governance Strategy and Policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Handling Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• File Plan and naming Conventions Policy</li> <li>• Freedom of Information Act Policy &amp; Procedures</li> <li>• ICT Security Policy and Usage Guidelines</li> <li>• Information and Data Quality Policy</li> <li>• Information Governance Strategy</li> <li>• Information Security Incident Management Policy</li> <li>• Information Risk Policy</li> <li>• Information Sharing Policy</li> <li>• Legal Admissibility &amp; Evidential Weight of Electronic Records Policy</li> <li>• Protective Marking Policy</li> <li>• Records Management Policy and Manual</li> <li>• Remote Working Policy</li> <li>• Re-use of Public Sector information Policy</li> <li>• Website Administration Policy</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult (Information Governance Working Group [IGWG], Information and Communications Technology Information Governance Steering Group [ICT IG SG] and Service areas)</li> <li>• Implement, including developing communications and training plan</li> </ul>	March 2012		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Information Management Team	All service areas	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IGWG and ICTIG SG</li> <li>• Members</li> </ul>	
	Implement web-based FOI tracking and publishing tool/application (Disclosure Log)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with suppliers</li> <li>• Make recommendations</li> <li>• Develop implementation project plan</li> <li>• Implement</li> </ul>	Sept 2011		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Information Management Team	IGWG Legal	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider</li> </ul>	
	Publish more Council data online		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload Information Asset Register (using records survey database)</li> <li>• Update Council's Publication Scheme</li> </ul>	March 2012		ICT Information Management Team  ICT Web Services Manager	All service areas	No	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Review of Street Name Plates, manufacture and installation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procurement exercise</li> <li>Formal contract in place</li> <li>Service delivery agreements i.e. deadlines/standards</li> </ul>	March 2012 (possibly much sooner)		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Address Management Team	Procurement/Contracts Legal	No	
	Ensure Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) holds definitive postal addresses (alongside geographic address currently held)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matching exercise to resolve address anomalies.</li> <li>LLPG to hold definitive address for every property in SCDC</li> <li>Improve accessibility of LLPG data</li> </ul>	March 2012  Periodic reviews		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Address Management Team	Potential to affect all services	Yes  3 <sup>rd</sup> party provider	
	Promote the Address Management Service, extending the use of LLPG throughout SCDC, so that it becomes the master address database		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Web presence</li> <li>Audit of internal address data sets</li> <li>Internal and external marketing</li> </ul>	September 2011  Periodic reviews		ICT GIS and Information Manager  ICT Address Management Team	All service areas	No	



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: Legal and Democratic Services (including Land Charges)

### Key for Improvement Plan

#### Relevant Council Aim/s:

A – We are committed to being a listening Council, providing First Class Services accessible to all

E – We are committed to providing a voice for rural life

#### Relevant Council Approach/es:

A i – By achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services will provide excellent customer service through specific actions aimed at getting it right first time.

A ii – We will engage proactively with parish councils and local communities through the promotion of an accessible register of developer contributions and the exploration of opportunities for local people to influence community priorities for funding by developers

E ii – By working more closely with Parish Councils and local groups

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Service Objective:</b>									
LS1	Enhanced engagement and capture of local concerns on planning issues		Increase engagement and consultation with Parish/Community Councils when formalising s106 planning obligations where representations are received as part of the consultation process which indicate concerns on the content/effect of a s106 obligation.	March 2012	E ii	Fiona McMillan	Gary Duthie/Jo Peek/Stephen Reid	None	Narrative commentary on progress
LS2	Create and publish Service Standards for the Legal Office to improve service to customers		To understand and manage customer expectations on the provision of legal services and improve customer satisfaction with service delivery. Will prepare draft service standards, consult with customer base, publish and monitor.	April 2011	A i	Fiona McMillan	Fiona McMillan	None	Narrative commentary on progress



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
LS3	Provision of total electronic delivery of land charges searches - on a recent Land Charges survey of its customer base this was top of the customer wish list.		The Land Charges team are currently accepting searches electronically via NLIS but due to a technical flaw in the Northgate system the team are unable to return attachments without the files corrupting. This can be addressed by installing an upgrade to the system and additionally the installation of an Oracle upgrade (already authorised). Currently awaiting confirmation of the date of installation.	April 2011	A i	Fiona McMillan	Denise Siwicka	Yes  IT Dept to undertake the work required to install the upgrades required –there should be no additional cost	Narrative commentary on progress
	Improved senior management oversight of report development and audit of strengths and weaknesses in adherence to statutory publication deadlines, increased opportunities for on-line collaborative working within and across service areas.		Implement modern.gov Reports Management module.	31 July 2011	A (iv)	Holly Adams	None, other than the time required for officers to attend training	No	To complete roll-out begun in Q4 2010/11.
	Continuous improvement of clarity of decision-making processes and delegation scheme; increased Member involvement at Portfolio Holder level, particularly from opposition and scrutiny monitors, improved pre-decision scrutiny of forthcoming issues.		Annual scheduling of meetings and supporting guidance on how business is conducted at meetings.	30 Sept 2011	A (iii), (iv)  E (ii)	Maggie Jennings / Ian Senior		No	
	Aiding Members to become better equipped for their role, bringing benefit to decision-making and scrutiny as well as improving their ability to represent the electorate effectively.		Achieve Charter Status for Elected Member Development.	31 March 2012	A (iv)  Council Action 2010/11, 11	Fiona McMillan / Patrick Adams / Claire Dillon		No	Charter signed by Members on 11 November 2010, committing the Council to achieve Charter Status by the end of 2011/12.
	Greater officer understanding of decision-making structures and process, report-writing skills.		Provide two 'drop-in' sessions per year aimed at updating and enhancing knowledge of decision making and the Modern.gov system.	31 March 2012	A (iv)	Holly Adams	None, other than the time required for officers to attend training	No	
	Greater officer understanding of decision-making structures and process, report-writing skills.		Offer 1:1 briefings with all new middle and senior managers on the decision-making structure at SCDC.	31 March 2012	A (iv)	Patrick Adams	None, other than the time required for officers to attend training	No	



Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
	Improved access to Parish Council information for residents, improved partnership working		<p>To increase the number of Parish Council websites hosted by SCDC to ten (tentative target: actual number of websites to be clarified following survey of Parish Councils to establish level of interest).</p> <p>[Note: Some interest has been expressed; the target will be set once the level of interest has been confirmed.]</p>	31 March 2012	A(ii) E(ii)	Holly Adams / Claire Dillon	None	No	



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: Revenues & Benefits

### Key for Improvement Plan

#### Relevant Council Aim/s:

A - We are committed to being a listening Council providing first class services accessible to all.

D - We are committed to assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family.

#### Relevant Council Approach/es:

A i - Listening and engaging with our local community

A iii - Making South Cambridgeshire more open and accessible

A iv - Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services

A v - Ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works

D i - working closely with local businesses

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Service Objective:</b>									
R1	Embed new procedures & working practices encompassing the Customer Service Excellence principles to lessen the impact of staff reductions and allow for the impending growth.		Devise and implement an improvement plan to develop the projects completed in 2010/11 further.	March 2012	A i A iii A iv A v  Council Action 2011/12, A1	Executive Director Corporate Services	Housing Benefit Manager/ Revenues Manager	Yes (Spend to Save bid).	Project Plans to be devised and milestone created within.
R2	Embed 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.		Monitor attendance and feedback from the six monthly events.  Review effectiveness of forum.	March 2012	A i A iii A iv	Executive Director Corporate Services	Housing Benefit Manager	To be met from existing resources	Progress to be monitored Q2 and Q4 following forums.
R3	Continue to 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.		Actively promote the relief and deal with applications quickly.	March 2012	A i  D i  Council Action 2011/12, D4	Executive Director Corporate Services	Revenues Manager	Subject to further Budget provision	To be monitored Quarterly
R4	Evaluate option of future administration of post room using technology.		Devise and implement a project plan.	March 2012	A i A iii A iv A v	Executive Director Corporate Services	Housing Benefit Manager/ Revenues Manager	Yes (Spend to Save bid).	Project Plans to be devised and milestone created within.



## Service Plan Proposal for New Expenditure



1. **Service:** ICT

2. **Submitted by:** Head of ICT

3. **Brief description of the proposal:** Revised anti-virus arrangements.  
The current anti-virus licence expires Nov 2011 and will require renewal. This bid assumes renewal / replacement for a further 3 or 5 year term. These costs could be amortised over the period.

4. **Costs (£000s)** (Please indicate C for capital; R for revenue):

Detail	C or R	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Corporate anti-virus solution (3 year term)	R	0	40	0	0
<b>Total Costs (Capital)</b>		0	0	0	0
<b>Total Costs (Revenue)</b>		0	40	0	0

5. **Is the proposal linked to or dependent on any other financial proposal being put forward ? If so, please give details:** No

6. **Golden Thread:** (Please specify those which apply)

Relevant Council Aim/s	<b>We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b>
Relevant Council Approach/s	<b>iii. Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible. iv. Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services</b>
Relevant Service Objective	<b>Enable the Council to make effective use of ICT systems and achieve its service objectives through</b>

7. **Reason for Proposal:**

Reason	Yes / No	Justification
Inescapable	Yes	The current anti-virus licence expires Nov 2011. Provision of Anti-Virus protection is not one of choice but of necessity. It is of paramount importance that effective protection is in place, systems outages and resultant downtime that could result from a virus or malware attack will be unacceptable.

8. **What other options have you considered for financing the proposal ?**



**9. Implications if not approved:**

Inadequate anti-virus protection will leave the Councils system open and vulnerable to external attack or even a 'walk-in' attack from staff inadvertently using peripheral devices that are already infected.

At best, a virus attack will render systems inoperable for an extended period of time – the time to fix in such circumstances is undetermined and will be dependant on the nature of the problem.

At worst, unauthorised extraction of data from the Councils systems via Trojan or hacker virus could lead to financial meltdown and the complete shut down of the Councils service.



## Service Plan Proposal for New Expenditure



1. <b>Service:</b> ICT	2. <b>Submitted by:</b> Head of ICT
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3. <b>Brief description of the proposal:</b> Government Connect – GCSx network circuit annual lease / rental
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4. <b>Costs (£000s)</b> (Please indicate C for capital; R for revenue):					
Detail	C or R	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Annual lease / rental	R	0	20	20	20
<b>Total Costs</b> (Capital)		0	0	0	0
<b>Total Costs</b> (Revenue)		0	20	20	20

5. <b>Is the proposal linked to or dependent on any other financial proposal being put forward ? If so, please give details:</b> No
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6. <b>Golden Thread:</b> (Please specify those which apply)	
Relevant Council Aim/s	<b>We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b>
Relevant Council Approach/s	<b>iii. Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible. iv. Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services</b>
Relevant Service Objective	<b>Enable the Council to make effective use of ICT systems and achieve its service objectives through</b>

7. <b>Reason for Proposal:</b>		
Reason	Yes / No	Justification
Inescapable	Yes	With effect from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011, the current network circuit connection that provides the secure links between SCDC and central government will no longer be funded by DWP. The annual rental costs of this will have to be paid by the participating local authority.

8. <b>What other options have you considered for financing the proposal ?</b> Opportunities for aggregated circuits or secure provision via the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Network (CPSN) are being considered for 2012 onwards.
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**9. Implications if not approved:**

The Council will no longer have a secure network (GCSx) or access to any partner organisations continuing to use secure networks.. This will have direct impact on all requirements to work with central government departments such as the Dept of Work and Pensions, Police and National Health. No electronic communication with partners will be allowed and access to secure sites such as the CIS will be removed. Additionally, it is highly likely that other future requirements (engagement with the Tell Us Once programme) will also be affected.



## Service Plan Proposal for New Expenditure



1. <b>Service:</b> ICT	2. <b>Submitted by:</b> Head of ICT
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3. <b>Brief description of the proposal:</b> Replacement microphone voice reinforcement system for Council Chamber
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4. <b>Costs (£000s)</b> (Please indicate C for capital; R for revenue):					
Detail	C or R	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Replacement system	C		65		
Uplift on maintenance agreement	R			2	2
<b>Total Costs (Capital)</b>		0	65	0	0
<b>Total Costs (Revenue)</b>		0	0	2	2

5. <b>Is the proposal linked to or dependent on any other financial proposal being put forward ? If so, please give details:</b>
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6. <b>Golden Thread:</b> (Please specify those which apply)	
Relevant Council Aim/s	<b>We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b>
Relevant Council Approach/s	<b>iii. Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible. iv. Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services</b>
Relevant Service Objective	<b>Enable the Council to make effective use of ICT systems and achieve its service objectives through</b>

7. <b>Reason for Proposal:</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Inescapable	No	The current sound reinforcement system is end-of-life (10 years old) and has suffered a number of problems in recent months. Although on a maintenance contract, all work is on a best efforts basis and spare parts are now only available through specialist refurbish suppliers. Additionally, due to the design of the system, the wired infrastructure requirements restrict the use of the Chamber for events that require a change to the desk / room layout. A wireless system would provide increased reliability and confidence together with additional flexibility for room use.



**8. What other options have you considered for financing the proposal ?**

No other options considered.

**9. Implications if not approved:** Current system is no longer 'officially supported, maintenance is not guaranteed and Council will continue to be dependent on a system that has shown itself to be unreliable in the past. The democratic process could be undermined and Member confidence in any decision recording affected. Options for room use would remain restricted.