

Legal & Democratic Services

Service Action Plan

2012/13

This plan is an active document that will be reported against every six months via the Service Delivery Programme performance report. All staff that are part of the Service should have an opportunity to contribute to its creation and any new staff joining the Service should be made aware of this document as part of their induction.

Introduction

Divisional Director	Legal & Democratic Services
Lead Portfolio Holder	Cllr Paul Crossley
Staffing Establishment (2012/13)	

Scope of Service (size, proportions and activities)

Key Objectives of Service :

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1. Legal Services

- Protecting the Council and its reputation by prompt action and advice, and ensuring that its actions and policies are within the law.
- Providing corporate legal advice, including advice on new legislation
- Supporting the Divisional Director in fulfilling the statutory role of monitoring officer and promoting good standards of probity and conduct throughout the Council and
- Providing legal services and advice on the full range of the Council's functions

2. Democratic Services

- Ensure the management and administration of the democratic process and formal meetings to meet legal and constitutional requirements.
- Champion and enable effective Member-led Overview and Scrutiny, ensuring democratic and community involvement and accountability
- The registration of electors and conduct of elections.
- Provision of support for elected members of the Council.

3. Registration Services

- The conduct of civil marriages and a wide range of civil ceremonies including civil partnerships, naming ceremonies

and citizenship ceremonies.

- The registration of births and deaths.

4.

Monitoring Officer

- Undertaking the duties and responsibilities imposed by law and the Council's Constitution on the role of Monitoring Officer to ensure and improve the probity propriety and cost-effectiveness of the conduct of Council's business and support members of the Council and Town and Parish Councils in achieving high standards of ethical conduct.

Management Structure of Service

John Everitt
Chief Executive

Vernon Hitchman
Monitoring Officer &
Divisional Director
(Legal & Democratic
Services)

Amanda
Brookes
Corporate &
Community
Law Manager

Andrew Reed
Property Law
Manager

Maggie Horrill
Planning &
Environmental
Law Manager

Jo Morrison
Democratic
Services
Manager

Donna Vercoe
Policy
Development
and Scrutiny
Officer

Aurora Loi
Wright
Electoral
Services
Officer

Alison Manning
Superintendent
Registrar

Lyneve Thyer
Administration Officer
Member &
Directorate Support

Service Manager Functions

Name of Manager	
Amanda Brookes Deputy Monitoring Officer	Legal advice on corporate issues, children's and adult services, employment, contracts and member conduct
Andrew Reed Property Law Manager	Letting, disposal, acquisition of real property
M Horrill Planning & Environmental Law Manager	Legal advice on planning, licensing, highways and transport issues
Jo Morrison Democratic Services Manager	Management of Council's decision-making process and support for all aspects of member-level meetings

Donna Vercoe Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer	Development of and support for the policy development and scrutiny function, including the statutory role of scrutiny officer
Aurora Loi Wright Electoral Services Officer	Maintenance and update of electoral register and management of elections/referenda/polls
Alison Manning Superintendent Registrar	Registration of births deaths and marriages, conduct of civil partnership, marriage and other ceremonies
Lyneve Thyer Administration Officer Member & Directorate Support	Support for elected members, political groups and financial business management

Customer Profile

Outline who your main customers are, e.g., service users, residents, other council services, officers, members, partners etc

Registration and Electoral Services provide services to the whole community. The legal teams provide advice and support to most officers and all members.

Democratic Services, Development & Scrutiny and Member and Directorate Support provide to members and officers and members of the public and organisation who wish to use/understand and participate in the democratic process and work with partner organisations.

Are there any specific customer needs that require your service to change?

The Registration and Electoral Services' service will need to change to respond to the proposals for individual voter registration and changes in the law concerning marriages and citizenship entitlement.

Service Delivery

Planned improvements to service delivery in 2012/13

It is hoped that greater joint working with other authorities will at least maintain existing provision at reduced cost.

Areas of the Service that are to be stopped or reduced in 2012/13 (due to budget pressures / change in focus etc)

As a result of budget reductions, there will be less ability to provide legal advice and support.

External influences / pressures that could impact on service delivery during 2012/13 (excluding budget pressures)

Responding to new legislation – particularly the Localism Act.

Service Costs

Explanation of Service costs (including areas of high spend and growth / investment)

Value for Money improvements - planned efficiencies / savings to be made during 2012/13

Increased joint working and economies of scale. Review of support for democratic process/members.

Summary from Medium Term Service & Resource Plan

MTS&RP Items	2011/12 (for comparison) £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000
Opening Budget	2411	1962	1862	1802
Removal of one-offs	0	0		

Service Proposed Base Reductions to Balance Budgets	-169	-105	-85	-95
Service Proposed Growth	27	5	25	25
Proposed Base Budget	2269	1862	1802	1732
Target Budget	2081			
Deficit / (Surplus)	188			
Additional Stretch Reductions	-195			
In Year Adjustments	-112			
Proposed Overall Budget	1962	1862	1802	1732

Workforce Planning

It is important that the Council continues to maintain and develop the workforce necessary to meet its future needs both in terms of the numbers employed and skills & competency required of those employees. To inform the forward Organisational Development and Workforce Planning Strategy, please complete the section below with details of actions you have taken or plan to address your service needs. The list of questions is neither exclusive or exhaustive but intended to assist you in considering the broader issues which may relate to either your service or Change Programme Workstreams.

Please also outline any identified needs that you cannot address/think will be more difficult to address.

Alternatively, if you service has developed a specific workforce plan, attach as an appendix to this Service Plan.

Organisational Development: Implementation of 'future organisational model':

- *How are you developing new workforce structures/ways of working to support the 'future council' organisational model?*
- *What alternative service delivery arrangements are planned/anticipated?*

Are you considering job redesign? If so how/what

Will look at joint provision. Already in place for panels of solicitors and barristers with reductions in normal costs.

<p>Leadership and Management Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What plans do you have for developing leaders in the new context?</i> • <i>Do you have a programme to assess and develop manager competency and meet gaps?</i> <p><i>Have you identified new manager skills that will be necessary in the 'future council'</i></p>	<p>To be addressed as part of the PDR process.</p>
<p>Skills & Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have you identified new skills/competencies that will be necessary for success in the new working environment/context?</i> • <i>Do you think you have a significant skills gap, if so what and how might it be addressed?</i> • <i>Have you identified that these skills might be missing/in short supply in the workforce as a whole?</i> 	<p>No. There is some deficit in experienced legal staff. We hope to train more junior/younger staff to be able to undertake some of the work.</p>
<p>Recruitment & Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you anticipate any recruitment difficulties in the current financial climate?</i> • <i>Are you undertaking any activity with partner organisations etc to address current/future skills shortages</i> <p><i>Is removal of the default retirement age likely to impact on you workforce?</i></p>	<p>No. Yes – see earlier.</p>
<p>Identified needs that cannot be addressed at service level/may be more difficult to address at this level</p>	

Equalities

We are committed to the Council's core value of ensuring there is equality of opportunity through employment and service delivery. We are committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, faith/religion or belief, gender including transgender, marital / civil partnership status, race, colour, ethnic or national origin and sexual orientation. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are carried out on all service changes and actions to mitigate impacts.

Please follow the link to the appropriate EIA .[equality impact assessment: financial plan](#)

Key Service Priorities 2012/13

It is important to show how each service priority links to the new Corporate Plan, in particular the four strategic objectives and high level outcomes set out in the table below. At the end of each priority, services **must** indicate whether it will contribute to an objective and add the reference letter for each outcome it will help to deliver.

Objectives	Outcomes	Ref
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	Children and young people enjoy their childhood and are prepared for adult life.	A
	Schools develop and extend their role in the local community	B
	Youth Service works with the community to provide opportunities to support and develop young people	C
	Older people are supported to live independently.	D
	The people most in need are supported to live full active lives.	E
2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	Where people feel safe	A
	There are decent affordable homes in private and social sector	B
	Clean streets and open spaces	C
	Where people are able to travel easily with reduced traffic congestion and pollution	D
	Where local people actively lead the delivery of improvements in their community	E
	Where there are opportunities to participate in sports, leisure and cultural activities	F
3. Building a stronger economy	With a broad range of job and employment opportunities	A
	With a strong local business sector, tourism, and local shopping	B
	Key development sites are delivered to increase the number of local businesses.	C
	A diverse economy with growth in the low carbon, knowledge creative, and ICT industries	D
4. Developing resilient communities	Where local people have developed their skills and use them to improve their community	A
	Where decisions are made as locally as possible	B
	Where there is easy access to public services and local amenities.	C
	Communities have adapted to changes in our climate and are not dependent on high carbon energy	D

Priority 1:		
Details of Service Priority	Implementation of Localism Act/legislative changes	
Impact on local community		
Groups of service users affected	Potentially all/any groups as aspects of health, policing, neighbourhood planning	
Key Activities (add more lines as appropriate)	Timescales	Performance Measures
Contribute to transition to Health & Wellbeing Board (through shadow phase) by advising on membership, reporting links and terms of reference	Ongoing until April 2013 when HWBB goes 'live'	
Consider Cabinet's role in Community Right to Challenge and Community Right to bid and how this will fit with the executive decision making process		
Engage with Academies to service school appeals on their behalf	Ongoing as requests come in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals carried out on time and to high standard • Positive feedback from Academies
Ensure Constitution and other resources are updated to reflect new arrangements		
Contribution to Strategic Objectives – please indicate which of the Corporate Plan objectives and outcomes this priority will contribute to:		
Strategic Objective	Contributes – Y/N?	Relevant Outcomes
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	N	
2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	Y	B,E
3. Building a stronger economy	N	

4. Developing resilient communities	Y	A,B
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Priority 2:		
Details of Service Priority	Implement all necessary actions regarding the new Standards regime	
Impact on local community		
Groups of service users affected	Members, staff, public	
Key Activities	Timescales	Performance Measures
Adopt new Code of Conduct	April/May 2012?	
Establish governance arrangements regarding Standards Committee in terms of role of Committee/Monitoring Officer, membership, Terms of Reference, relevant delegations etc	“	
Determine new arrangements regarding declaration of interests, register of interests, predetermination	“	
Arrange appropriate training for Members and staff	“	
Ensure all the above is amended in Constitution and on web	“	
Contribution to Strategic Objectives – please indicate which of the Corporate Plan objectives and outcomes this priority will contribute to:		
Strategic Objective	Contributes – Y/N?	Relevant Outcomes
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	N	
2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	N	

3. Building a stronger economy	N	
4. Developing resilient communities	N	

Priority 3:		
Details of Service Priority	Development of “Tell us once” service	
Impact on local community	Better service for public	
Groups of service users affected	Those dealing with bereavement and, in due course, births	
Key Activities	Timescales	Performance Measures
Working with customer services	June 2012	Public satisfaction
Contribution to Strategic Objectives – please indicate which of the Corporate Plan objectives and outcomes this priority will contribute to:		
Strategic Objective	Contributes – Y/N?	Relevant Outcomes
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	Y	
2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live		

3. Building a stronger economy		
4. Developing resilient communities	Y	

Priority 4:		
Details of Service Priority	Review of support for democratic process	
Impact on local community	Easier access to knowledge of decision made/planned	
Groups of service users affected	Interested parties	
Key Activities	Timescales	Performance Measures
Review of current arrangements	June 2012	
Implementation of recommendations	September 2012	
Contribution to Strategic Objectives – please indicate which of the Corporate Plan objectives and outcomes this priority will contribute to:		
Strategic Objective	Contributes – Y/N?	Relevant Outcomes
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	N	
2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	N	

3. Building a stronger economy	N	
4. Developing resilient communities	Y	

Priority 5:		
Details of Service Priority	Preparation for Police Commissioner role	
Impact on local community		
Groups of service users affected		
Key Activities	Timescales	Performance Measures
Support joint working on preparing for November 2012 election	ongoing	
Facilitate creation of the Police and Crime Panel in shadow and final form	By July 2012	
Contribution to Strategic Objectives – please indicate which of the Corporate Plan objectives and outcomes this priority will contribute to:		
Strategic Objective	Contributes – Y/N?	Relevant Outcomes
1. Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone	N	

2. Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live	Y	
3. Building a stronger economy	N	
4. Developing resilient communities	Y	

