


## Service Plan Template 2015/16

<b>Service:</b>	<b>Head of Service:</b>	<b>Peter Vickers</b>	
<b>Financial Services</b>	<b>Director:</b>	<b>Graeme Clark</b>	
	<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	<b>Cllr Julia Potts</b>	

### 1. Service Plan Overview 2015/16

The Finance service is divided into three main sections:

The Financial Services section provides a wide range of accountancy and exchequer services to internal and external customers. The key objectives for the service are:

- to ensure robust and effective management of Waverley's financial resources with clear and transparent reporting of the Council's accounts and transactions
- to give clear advice to Members, staff and other organisations to support sound decision making and prudent financial management
- to manage all of the Council's incoming and outgoing financial transactions in accordance with good practice and Waverley's policy and control framework

The Revenues and Benefits section is responsible for the collection of council tax and business rates, the payment of housing benefit and council tax support and the prevention and detection of council tax or benefit fraud. The key objectives for the service are:

- to provide a cost-effective revenue service that achieves the maximum collection rate possible for the Council Tax and Business Rates due from residents and businesses in the Borough
- to ensure our customers' receive their entitlement to benefit to help them meet their housing costs and to make payments quickly and accurately
- to protect the public purse by providing an effective fraud investigation service that both detects and helps to prevent fraud.

Employee and Business Services provides a range of corporate services to the Council including payroll, employee support, procurement, performance, insurance and risk management. The purpose of the service is to:

- Support organisational resilience through the provision of a governance framework to deliver employee transactional and administrative

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practices.

- Support managers to manage through the provision of consistent and controlled systems and processes, providing organisational confidence and transparency.

- Support employee's learning and development through the provision of high quality, impactful learning opportunities, to improve individual and team performance and deliver a positive culture of continuous improvement and customer service.

We are committed to providing a high performing customer focused service that offers value for money to the Council and its residents.

### 2. Focus for the coming year – Action Plan

Desired outcome / Objective		Support the delivery of Waverley's corporate objectives with highly effective financial management				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Performance Measures/Targets
F/01	<p>Ensure that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) presents a sustainable and robust plan for Waverley's financial resources, anticipating the impact of future financial pressures and recognising the desire to deliver corporate plan priorities and improve services in accordance with customers' needs.</p> <p>Mid-year review to Members</p>	30 Sept 2015	Peter Vickers	£3m budget gap over 3 years	Supports all priorities	<p>Pressures and sensitivities modelled for next 5 years to support medium-term planning</p> <p>Ensure that the new funding mechanism is understood by members and senior managers</p> <p>Sound forecasting ensures that services are delivered and variations from budget are anticipated and reported to Members</p>

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2. Focus for the coming year – Action Plan						
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Performance Measures/Targets
<b>Desired outcome / Objective</b>		<b>Support the delivery of Waverley's corporate objectives with highly effective financial management</b>				
<b>F/02</b>	Ensure that funding mechanism is understood and the impact on Waverley calculated and embedded in the Financial Strategy projections	On going	Peter Vickers	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Impact of changes are anticipated and plans are in place to manage risks and opportunities  Accurate business rate and council tax base estimates set  Key sensitivities monitored
<b>F/03</b>	Improve the robustness and timeliness of budget monitoring arrangements to ensure Waverley can respond effectively to unexpected issues.	Ongoing	Peter Vickers  Brian Long	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Effective, timely, clear information on an exception basis, risk assessed showing complete picture.
<b>F/04</b>	Support the delivery of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business plan through effective financial and treasury management and robust monitoring and reporting	Ongoing	Peter Vickers  Glennis Pope  Brian Long	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Effective, timely, clear information on an exception basis, risk assessed showing complete picture
<b>F/05</b>	Building capacity within the Finance team to enable the team to focus on key priorities.	Ongoing	Peter Vickers	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Team has more logical structure aligned to the work streams and service requirements
<b>F/06</b>	Introduce new ways of working to utilise technology to increase team capacities	Ongoing	Peter Vickers  Brian Long	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Use of excel, agresso and crystal reports becomes embedded within work streams.

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Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Measures
<b>F/07</b>	Ensuring team members have adequate support	Ongoing	Peter Vickers	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Fewer direct reports to Chief Accountant, line management reports cascade down the team.
<b>F/08</b>	Introduce a more structured project management process to key activities	Ongoing	Peter Vickers	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Fully developed and consulted project plans are implemented for all significant activities.
<b>F/09</b>	Services are supported with proactive financial management and support.	Ongoing	Peter Vickers	Within existing resources	Value for Money	A significant increase in support for service managers.

Desired outcome / Objective		Maximise revenue base for council tax and business rates and achieve 'best in County' collection rates for all main income sources				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Measures
<b>F/10</b>	Verify that all commercial and residential properties are correctly recorded on the revenue systems and are receiving accurate bills	Ongoing	Simon Piper	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Increased tax base Achieve target collection rate
<b>F/11</b>	Issue accurate demands in March for 1st April instalment and robustly apply approved enforcement and recovery measures in all cases	Ongoing	Simon Piper	Within existing resources	Value for Money	Value for money Exceed 99% collection for council tax and achieve 99% for Business rates in 2015/16

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Desired outcome / Objective		Maximise revenue base for council tax and business rates and achieve 'best in County' collection rates for all main income sources				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Measures
<b>F/12</b>	Review past year historical debts for council tax, business rates and housing benefit overpayments and pursue or consider for write off	Ongoing	Simon Piper	Within existing resources	Value for Money	<p>Reduced outstanding debt from previous years</p> <p>Secure more payment arrangements</p> <p>Reissue debts for tracing and bailiff action</p> <p>More regular write off requests being made</p>

Desired outcome / Objective		A smooth transition of the Investigations Team to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Measures
<b>F/13</b>	Prepare and communicate a project plan for transfer of the Investigations team to Single Fraud Initiative Service, Including impact upon the service.	Develop based upon timescales set by DWP	Nicky Harvey		Value for money	Plan is in place and well communicated and understood. Time table is shared and adjusted with new information as it occurs.
<b>F/14</b>	Review impact of this transfer on Waverley's Fraud deterrent requirement for council tax.	October 2015	Nicky Harvey	Possible sharing with council tax preceptors	Value for money, securing assets	A shared need to provide a deterrent against Council Tax fraud exists, this must be balanced against the cost of deterrence.

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Desired outcome / Objective		Ensure that all of Waverley's residents that are eligible for housing benefit or council tax support claims are assessed and paid quickly and accurately				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Measures
F/15	Extend the monitoring of customer satisfaction levels with the benefits service and use results to help identify improvements	On-going	Nicky Harvey		Value for money  Customer feedback	Improvements to service implemented  Increased customer satisfaction
F/16	Monitor the speed of processing targets and take any corrective action necessary	On-going	Nicky Harvey		Value for money	Improved accuracy statistics Fewer LA overpayments New claims processed within 20 days Changes processed within 9 days
F/17	Review working practises in Benefits (particularly the counter) to further develop the service and improve speed and accuracy of claims	June 2015	Nicky Harvey		Value for money	Increased proportion of claims processed over counter rather than on phone/by post  Improved processing times
Desired outcome / Objective		Implement comprehensive project plan for the transformation of benefits to Universal Credit				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Performance Measures/Targets
F/18	Ensure a project plan is established which balances the needs of staff, the Council and claimants during and following the transition period	Potentially Universal Credit to be introduced in 2015/16 with full transfer by 2017	Nicky Harvey	Unknown currently but government admin grant could be reduced		Staff are informed and feel supported Customers have the necessary information Members are aware of implications Project Plan by December 2015

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Desired outcome / Objective		To support staff and managers across the organisation to become a high-performing resource capable of providing excellent customer service.				
Ref	Action(s)	Timescales / Deadlines	Lead Officer	Resource Implications Cap/Rev	Corporate Plan Priority?	Success Criteria/Performance Measures/Targets
F/19	Undertake a cost benefit analysis and develop a business case for further development of the iTrent HR system for the following functions:		Karen Booker	Staff time – consultancy required from MidlandHR	Value for Money - efficiencies	System offers additional functionality New developments are communicated to staff and councillors as appropriate Feedback obtained from staff and councillors about the benefits of improved online and self-service functions
	Widen the self-service function to include the learning and development module	March 2016	Karen Booker			
	Additional payroll functions including online claim forms.	March 2016	Karen Booker			
	Develop online councillors' mileage claims	March 2016	Karen Booker			
	Introduction of electronic appraisal system using new Performance Management module of iTrent	October 2015				Introduction of electronic appraisal system for 15/16 appraisal cycle
F/20	Introduction of full online recruitment functionality from Jobs Go Public	March 2016	Karen Booker	Staff Time	Value for Money	To introduce electronic recruitment management functionality to the business

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<b>F/21</b>	Establish a pool of staff who can help provide temporary cover for administrative and customer services.	March 2016	Karen Booker	Staff time	Value for Money	A list of staff who can provide temporary cover.
<b>Desired outcome / Objective</b>		<b>To support staff and managers across the organisation to become a high-performing resource capable of providing excellent customer service.</b>				
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action(s)</b>	<b>Timescales / Deadlines</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Resource Implications Cap/Rev</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Priority?</b>	<b>Success Criteria/Performance Measures/Targets</b>
<b>F/22</b>	Develop the Learning and Development Strategy further and support it with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of automated training feedback</li> <li>• Implementation of a new Manager Induction programme</li> <li>• Further develop the e-learning packages available from Learning Pool</li> <li>• Analyse training requirements from 2014 appraisals - research, procure and commission appropriate training or signpost to existing training offer (STOG).</li> </ul>	March 2016	Karen Booker	Staff Time	Value for Money	Fit for purpose induction programme for new managers in place  Training feedback being completed, returned, comments acted upon and feedback given
<b>F/23</b>	Maintain payroll relationship within the SLA with Epsom and Ewell.	March 2016	Karen Booker	Staff time	Value for Money	Monthly payroll is delivered in accordance with the terms of the SLA, minimum error rate and regular review.