

Service Plan 2019-2022

Head of Service:	Peter Vickers
Strategic Director:	Graeme Clark
Portfolio Holders:	Cllr Ged Hall

Service:	Finance
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Service Profile 2019-2022

The Revenues and Benefits Service is responsible for the collection of council tax and business rates, the payment of housing benefit and council tax support. 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.

The Finance Service 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

Service Team: Housing Benefit Service

Team Leader: Nicky Harvey - Benefits Manager

Business As Usual

Outcome 1. Waverley residents receive an efficient and accessible Housing Benefit Service.						
Corporate Priority: <i>Prosperity and People</i>						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F1.1	All new housing benefit claims are responded to and provisionally assessed on the day of receipt.	none	in place	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Delay in entitlement assessment will negatively impact on claimants housing security
F1.2	Service performance standards (new claims and changes in circumstances processing) are within target turnaround days.	none	in place	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Delay in entitlement assessment will negatively impact on claimants housing security
F1.3	Weekly review of service performance data with the Housing Benefits team and Head of Finance to inform service delivery planning.	none	in place	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Service performance is not understood, corrective action cannot be taken.

F1.4	Maintain dialogue with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to comply with their requirements for the implementation of Full Universal Credit (UC) (for all new working age claimants) from October 2018.	none	in place	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Gap in service resulting in a detrimental impact on claimants moving over the Universal Credit
F1.5	Housing benefit subsidy financial performance will be reviewed monthly to maintain benefit calculation accuracy rate within the DWP Local Authority 100% subsidy threshold.	none	in place	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Financial impact on the council.

Team Projects

Outcome 2. Support the Corporate Channel Shift project objectives.						
Corporate Priority: <i>Prosperity and Place</i>						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F2.1	Collaborate with the Channel Shift initiative to develop customer self service functionality.	none	on going	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Failure to deliver the full outcomes and objectives of channel shift.

Service Team: Revenues Service **Team Leader: Nicky Harvey - Benefits Manager**

Business As Usual

Outcome 3. Exceed 99% collection for local taxation.						
Corporate Priority: <i>Prosperity, People and Place</i>						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F3.1	Weekly review of service performance data with the service manager and Head of Finance to inform service delivery planning.	none	on going	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Poor customer service, negative impact on tax base and collection rates
F3.2	Redesign processes within the Revenue service to ensure all incoming correspondence is cleared in one working day from receipt.	none	01/04/19	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Poor customer service, negative impact on tax base and collection rates
F3.3	Ensure effective risk based processes are in place to maximise the tax base.	none	01/04/19	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Tax base will be eroded

F3.4	Develop a centralised systems and processes controls team to ensure an accurate tax base administration, government returns, financial controls and maintain Civica system integrity.	none	01/04/19	on going	Benefits Manager (NH)	Tax base will be eroded, inaccurate data, Civica system not compliant.
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Team Projects

Outcome 4. Service is redesigned and integrated with the Benefit Service						
Corporate Priority: <i>Choose from Prosperity, People, Place</i>						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F4.1	Complete the Revenues Service redesign, cutting out inefficiency and refocus the service on the customer.	none, funded from DCLG service improvement grant.	01/02/18	30/06/19	Head of Finance (PV)	Revenues service will not have any capacity for improvement, resulting in inadequate customer service.
F4.2	Implement and establish the redesigned service processes.	none, will be contained within existing revenue budget	01/04/19	ongoing	Benefits Manager (NH)	Team will not benefit from the efficiencies identified in the review.
F4.3	Integrate the Revenues Service and Benefits service into a single service.	none, will be contained within the revenue budget.	01/04/19	ongoing	Benefits Manager (NH)	Economies of scale and improved efficiencies will not be realised.

Service Team: Finance (Accountancy & Exchequer) Team Leader: Walter Stockdale - Financial Services Manager

Business As Usual

Outcome 5. Robust budget monitoring arrangements are in place that is commensurate with the size, risk, complexity and volatility associated with particular revenue budgets and capital schemes.	
Corporate Priority: <i>Prosperity, People and Place</i>	

Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F5.1	Develop a monthly management reporting format, tailored to specific audiences.	none	on going	on going	Accountant Manager (RP)	Inappropriate management information will impact decision making and governance.
F5.2	Develop the online budget monitoring process to incorporate forecast updates actioned by service managers.	none	on going	on going	Accountant Manager (RP)	Process will be cumbersome and inaccurate, wasting significant time.
F5.3	Ensure all services are supported with proactive financial management and support.	none	on going	on going	Accountant Manager (RP)	Services carrying higher financial risk will not be adequately managed leading to potential financial loss.

Outcome 6. An effective process is in place to ensure the Council has a balanced General Fund annual budget and robust Medium Term Financial Plan.						
Corporate Priority: Prosperity, People and Place						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F6.1	Ensure management are engaged in effective service planning and review processes.	none	on going	on going	Head of Finance (PV)	Lack of understanding and buy-in to the current and future financial situation.
F6.2	Review previous year annual outturn against current year performance and future budget requirements with Heads of Service.	none	01/06/19	31/07/19	Head of Finance (PV)	Mis-aligned and uninformed management decisions.
F6.3	Ensure the Value for Money Scrutiny committee and Executive are briefed on the all decisions that impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan.	none	on going	on going	Head of Finance (PV)	Decisions are taken out of line with the Medium Term Financial Plan.
F6.4	Lead on developing and implementing actions plans to ensure a balanced annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.	none	on going	on going	Head of Finance (PV)	Unsound financial situation

Team Projects

Outcome 7.	The Agresso financial IT system and supporting financial administrative processes provide an efficient and cost effective solution to front line service administration to facilitate a reduction in administration capacity and transaction costs.					
	Corporate Priority: <i>Prosperity, People and Place</i>					
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F7.1	Develop a work programme of service reviews(interventions) to identify the required Agresso configuration, including cost benefit analysis for each intervention.	To be identified within the programme on an invest to save basis.	01/11/18	31/03/19	Financial Services Manager (WS)	Services use inadequate IT solutions for managing large volume client bases, in bespoke and ad hoc systems.

Service wide or cross cutting projects

Outcome 8.						
	Corporate Priority: <i>Choose from Prosperity, People, Place</i>					
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F8.1	Participatory Budget Group ? To be confirmed					