

Service Plan 2020-2023

Head of Service:	Peter Vickers
Strategic Director:	Graeme Clark
Portfolio Holders:	Cllr Mark Merryweather

Service: **Finance and Property Services**

Service Profile 2020-23

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

Asset Management Team (was Estates and Valuations). The Team manage the property investment portfolio and seek to increase and enhance this by further acquisitions. (This team moved to finance service remit March 2019). Also provide professional asset management advice to council services and support the management of the wider diverse operational asset base.

Service Team: Housing Benefit Service

Team Leader: Nicky Harvey - Revenues and Benefits Manager

Business As Usual - Annual

Outcome 1.	Waverley residents receive an efficient and accessible Housing Benefit Service.					
	Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future					
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
SP20/21F1.1	All new housing benefit claims are responded to and provisionally assessed on the day of receipt.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Delay in entitlement assessment will negatively impact on claimants housing security
SP20/21F1.2	Service performance standards (new claims and changes in circumstances processing) are within target turnaround days.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Delay in entitlement assessment will negatively impact on claimants housing security

SP20/21F1.3	Weekly review of service performance data with the Housing Benefits team and Head of Finance and Property to inform service delivery planning.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Service performance is not understood, corrective action cannot be taken.
SP20/21F1.4	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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Gap in service resulting in a detrimental impact on claimants moving over the Universal Credit
SP20/21F1.5	Housing benefit subsidy financial performance will be reviewed monthly to maintain benefit calculation accuracy rate within the DWP performance parameters.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Financial impact on the council.

Team Projects - Multi-year

Outcome 2. Support the Corporate Channel Shift project objectives.						
Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
PR20F2.1	Collaborate with the Channel Shift initiative to develop customer self service functionality.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Failure to deliver the full outcomes and objectives of channel shift.

Service Team: Revenues Service

Team Leader: Nicky Harvey - Revenues and Benefits Manager

Business As Usual - Annual

Outcome 3. Achieve 99% collection for local taxation.						
Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
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 and Property to inform service delivery planning.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Poor customer service, negative impact on tax base and collection rates

F3.2	Implement processes within the Revenue service to ensure all incoming correspondence is cleared in one working day from receipt.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and 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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and 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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Tax base will be eroded, inaccurate data, Civica system not compliant.

Team Projects - Multi-year

Outcome 4. Service is redesigned and integrated with the Benefit Service						
Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F4.1	Integrate the Revenues Service and Benefits service into a single service.	none, will be contained within the revenue budget.	01/04/20	31/03/21	Revenues and 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 - Annual

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: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F5.1	Ensure the monthly management reporting is accurate, risk based and tailored to specific audiences.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	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	01/04/20	31/03/21	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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Accountant Manager (RP)	Services carrying higher financial risk will not be adequately managed leading to potential financial loss.
F5.4	Roll out the Income and Debt Management policy to services supported by recovery procedures appropriate to clientele.	none	01/03/19	01/06/20	Senior Accountant (FH)	Debt will not be ineffectively managed resulting in under recovery and inefficient processes.

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: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Head of Finance and Property (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	01/06/20	31/12/20	Head of Finance and Property (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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Head of Finance and Property (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	01/04/20	31/03/21	Head of Finance and Property (PV)	Unsound financial situation
F6.5	Lead on risk and governance management ensuring sound financial decision making.	none	01/04/20	31/03/21	Head of Finance and Property (PV)	Unsound financial situation

Service Team: Asset Management (formerly Estate and Valuation) | Team Leader: Caroline Wallis - Asset Manager

Business As Usual - Annual

Outcome 7. Increase revenue from the commercial portfolio						
Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F7.1	Acquire new properties generating revenue to increase overall income in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan.	Significant additional resource will be needed from reserves or from borrowing	01/04/20	31/03/21	Asset Manager (CW)	This will impact negatively of budget projections
F7.2	Effectively manage the investment property portfolio to ensure income levels match or exceed budget targets	Within existing budgets	01/04/20	31/03/21	Asset Manager (CW)	This will impact negatively of budget projections
F7.3	Ensure skilled staff recruited and/or retained	Within existing budgets	01/04/20	31/03/21	Head of Finance and Property	Insufficient skilled resource will negatively impact on our ability to meet this objective

Team Projects - Multi-year

Outcome 8. Service is redesigned and integrated with the Benefit Service						
Corporate Priority: Promote and sustain a financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and services fit for the future						
Ref. No.	Actions / Outputs	Reference any additional resources needed	Start Date	End Date	Lead Officer	Impact of not completing the action
F8.1	Review the function of the Asset Management team and align the service to the councils asset management priorities. Structure the team capacity and operational procedures appropriately to match the needs of the business.	none, will be contained within the revenue budget.	01/07/19	01/03/20	Head of Finance and Property	Service capacity will not be focused on delivering outcomes such as the MTFP target of £900k.