

Service Plan 2021-2024		Head of Service:	Peter Vickers
		Strategic Director:	Graeme Clark
Service:	Finance and Property Services	Portfolio Holders:	Cllr Mark Merryweather

This Service Plan is a rolling three year programme of both business as usual and project activity. It is reviewed annually to ensure it is consistent with and reflects the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Plan. It has also been prepared within the context of the Covid pandemic which has had an impact on the timing of some projects due to staffing and resourcing implications. From time to time Service Plans will also be subject to review by councillors and officers as a result of the need to reprioritise resources to react to changing circumstances or opportunities.

Service Profile
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>The Finance Service provides a wide range of accountancy and exchequer services to internal and external customers, corporate risk and insurance management and corporate procurement function. The key objectives for the service are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Asset Management Team manages the property investment portfolio, develops and implements the Property Investment Strategy supporting the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Also provides professional asset management advice to council services and supports the management of the wider diverse operational asset base.</p>

Service Team: Housing Benefit Service	Team Leader: Nicky Harvey - Revenues and Benefits Manager
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Business As Usual - Annual

Outcome 1.	Waverley residents receive an efficient and accessible Housing Benefit Service.					
	Corporate Priority: The value and worth of all residents, with opportunities for all, regardless of race, age, disability, religion, gender or sexual orientation, income or wealth / A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient services fit for the future / The health and wellbeing of our communities.					
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 where possible provisionally assess on the day of receipt.	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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 turn around days.	None	01/04/2020	31/03/2024	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	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Gap in service resulting in a detrimental impact on claimants moving over to Universal Credit.
SP20/21F1.5	Housing benefit subsidy financial performance will be reviewed monthly to maintain benefit calculation accuracy rate within the DWP performance	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Financial impact on the council.

Team Projects - Multi-year

Outcome 2.	Support the Business Transformation Customer Service initiative project objectives.					
	Corporate Priority: High quality public services accessible for all / A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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 Business Transformation Customer Service initiative to develop customer self service functionality.	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Failure to deliver the full outcomes and objectives of channel shift.

Business As Usual - Annual

Outcome 3. Maximise collection of local taxation.						
Corporate Priority: A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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 actioned efficiently and timely.	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2022	Revenues and Benefits Manager (NH)	Tax base will be eroded, inaccurate data, Civica system not compliant.

Team Projects - Multi-year

Outcome 4 Revenue service is integrated with the Benefit Service and ultimately the centralised Customer Service team.						
Corporate Priority: A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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	Implement the Civica self service module	People resource will be fully detailed in project plan.	01/06/2021	31/03/2023	NH and Walter Stockdate	Will negatively impact on centralised customer service development
F4.2	Develop integration of Revenues customer service into the Central Customer Service team.	People resource will be fully detailed in project plan.	01/04/2022	31/03/2024	NH and Walter Stockdate	Will negatively impact on centralised customer service development

Service Team: Finance**Team Leader: Walter Stockdale/Rosie Palistowe - Financial Services Managers****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: A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2024	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: A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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	01/04/2021	31/03/2022	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	01/06/2021	31/12/2022	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2022	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	01/04/2021	31/03/2022	Head of Finance and Property (PV)	Unsound financial situation.
F6.5	Lead on risk and governance management ensuring sound financial decision making.	None	01/04/2021	31/03/2022	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. Increased revenue from the commercial portfolio.						
Corporate Priority: A financially sound Waverley, with infrastructure and resilient 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, property Investment Strategy and HM Treasury "not for yield" guidelines.	Significant additional resource will be needed from reserves or from borrowing	01/04/2020	31/03/2024	Asset Manager (CW)	This will impact negatively of budget projections.
F7.2	Effectively manage the investment property portfolio in support of the Council's Carbon Neutrality Plan whilst ensuring income levels match or exceed budget targets.	Within existing budgets	01/04/2020	31/03/2024	Asset Manager (CW)	This will impact negatively of budget projections and failure to reduce carbon emissions.
F7.3	Ensure skilled staff recruited and/or retained. Engage external expertise as appropriate in acquisition, portfolio management and project delivery.	Within existing budgets	01/04/2020	31/03/2024	Head of Finance and Property	Insufficient skilled resource will negatively impact on our ability to meet this objective.

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