

## REVIEW OF RESOURCES DIRECTORATE SERVICE PLANS 1998/99

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and Heads of Service for Resources.

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present to the Committee the outturn reports for the Resources Directorate against the service plans for 1998/99

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The development of service planning and monitoring is an important part of the Council's move towards Best Value and its Quality Management aims. As part of this development, Committees have asked to receive, in the first quarter of each cycle, a report detailing the outturn against the previous year's service plans.
- 2.2 The various annexes detail the results for each part of the directorate with the exception of Human Resources, whose report has already been made to the Personnel Committee.

### 3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 As is probably clear from the annexes, the directorate is still developing meaningful performance indicators and some areas are more advanced than others. This process will continue during 1999/2000.

Another area that needs further development is a much stronger input into our plans from users - largely other directorates. This will become increasingly important as we move down the service level agreement route and as schools, in particular, become more able to purchase services from other users.

**LEGAL AND PROPERTY SERVICES**

Below are the objectives for last year with a comment against each detailing progress to-date.

<b>Property Service Objectives:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
1. Develop a property strategy for the Council so that it can make the most effective use of its assets.	A draft strategy is on the agenda of the Policy committee for its meeting on the 13 <sup>th</sup> July 1999.
2. Start a rolling review of property currently held by the Council. This would include looking at properties with a view to selling them or rationalising the use of the properties occupied by the Council, tasks already started in relation to youth clubs and playing fields, and looking for ways of enhancing the value of our properties (e.g. development schemes).	Limited exercise carried out in 1998/9. Further exercise anticipated following adoption of a property strategy
3. Finish development of the I.T. systems relevant to property management.	Completed but further development now being considered
4. Develop meaningful performance indicators.	Completed and included in 1999/00 Service Plan. A new combined case and time management system is currently being developed. Once in place it will provide more detailed management information.
5. Prepare for Best Value by continuing work on Benchmarking which started earlier this year, implement a quality system, an internal recharging mechanism, and liaising with clients regularly to ensure that the service meets their needs.	Benchmarking work ongoing. Liaising with clients ongoing. Quality system and internal recharging not yet implemented
6. Develop better links with the Environment Directorate and develop better links with members of the public who manage or use the properties that are available for community use.	This has been done but further work is needed.
7. Encourage appropriate involvement of valuers in Council property projects e.g. economic development, urban regeneration and lottery bids.	This has been done but further work still necessary.

<p>8. Concentrate on training valuers in property development skills by going on appropriate courses and by “on the job experience”.</p>	<p>Done. Also recruitment of experienced surveyor with relevant experience took place during this year</p>
<p><b>Legal Service Objectives:</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<p>(a) Quality System: The Law Society has produced a total quality management system for private practice firms, with a supplement for local government legal services. The system covers recruitment, financial systems, customer care, work supervision, training, post, the law library, filing, case management, health and safety and office security. The framework for some of these (e.g. recruitment, health and safety) are set for us by Council policy.</p> <p>Our efforts will concentrate on client care, work supervision and case management, with the aim of putting comprehensive auditable systems in place over the next twelve months.</p> <p>(b) C.C.T: It is vital that the Legal Service has reliable information on costs and productivity if it is to accurately price a bid for C.C.T. purposes. Proper use of the case management and time recording systems will be essential; recharges from other services must be known a minimum of twelve months in advance and accurate hourly rates and unit prices calculated for work.</p> <p>It will be necessary to calculate what value of work needs to be subject to competition and then discuss with clients their views on whether work for them should be included in the contract specification.</p>	<p>Detailed draft quality manual now produced along with a programme to implement it. Also performance indicators developed and case management system improved</p> <p>VCT exercise for majority of legal services now underway - bids received and being evaluated</p>

**CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION**

By the end of 1998/99, the Corporate Administration Division had achieved an enormous amount of work which has contributed towards developing and embedding the newly established Unitary Authority.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Strategic Aim 1 - Resource Management</b>	
To establish the Contracts Unit	Full complement of staff in post by April 1999. The Contracts Unit Annual report highlights the main achievements and constraints in 1998/99.
To manage the 1999 Council Elections	Preparations for the Local and European Elections were on schedule and were implemented to programme.
To prepare the 1999 Electoral Register	Final Register published in February.
To develop the Deeds Registry Service	New computerised index system implemented. Support from Forward Planning (Environment) employed to assist with backlog.
To improve the Land Charges Service	New Land Charges IT system introduced.
Improve Services and access for people with disabilities	Improvements to Saxon Court Reception being investigated via Saxon Court Users Group.  Audit on access to buildings by the Transport Action Group awaited.  Disability Awareness Courses attended by some Customer Service Staff.
Integrate and develop front line services for Saxon Court and Civic Offices	Reception Service at Saxon Court and Civic Offices - now fully integrated within the Corporate Admin. Division.  New Cash Receipting System installed and in use.  Switchboard Performance Indicator Monitoring Equipment to be reinstated by IT, but no time frame attached.

Maximise income from Conferences	Marketing information printed, but the surplus income target was not achievable by 31 March 1999.
Develop a comprehensive printing and reprographics service	Business Plan due to be released in July. New Docuprint/Docutech equipment installed, but Docutech not yet been networked, due to part of budget being diverted to installation of essential air conditioning system.
Develop a comprehensive purchasing policy.	Joint Purchasing Agreement with Bucks CC terminated on 31/3/99.  Central Buying Consortium Contracts fully established on 1/4/99.  Appointment to Purchasing Officer post to facilitate marketing of Purchasing Service.  Introduction of new stationery contract with expanded range of products.
Develop an environmental purchasing policy	Policy approved in Feb 1999.
Achieve income target for Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages	Exceeded
Review Chartermark application report for the Registration Service	Literature reviewed, but application now not likely to be submitted in 1999 due to staffing difficulties and the installation of new IT equipment.
<b>Strategic Aim 2 - Information Technology Management</b>	
Introduce a Committee minute and report retrieval system which is accessible across the Council.	Funding not available
New IT systems in Elections and Electoral Registration, GIS and Land Charges.	Completed
<b>Strategic Aim 3 - Constitutional and Legal Basis of Council Services</b>	
Facilitate public access to and participation in the decision-making processes of the Council	Revised Standing Orders introduced to allow for improved access for the public to Council and Committee meetings. New scheme of delegation to officers and public scrutiny arrangements in place.
Implementation of revised Committee structure	Completed
Review of Parish boundaries	First draft prepared

Provision of Members Support Services	<p>Successful transfer of responsibility for Mayoral and Leader's office</p> <p>Support services to members under review with proposal to appoint to Member Services Support post</p> <p>Induction of new members completed (May 1998).</p> <p>Members' Handbook for 1999 drafted.</p>
<b>Strategic Aim 4 - Risk Management</b>	
Preparation of Major Incident Guide for Emergency Planning.	Completed
Preparation of First Pipeline Safety Plan	Completed
Establishment of Main and stand-by Emergency Control Centres	Completed
Provision of Emergency Planning Training Seminar for Chief Officers in the Council and Emergency Services	Mostly completed
Final report on Emergency Planning Exercise Springboard and the Easter Floods	Completed
Millennium Groups and Sub-groups	Groups have been set up and are actively working towards objectives.
Conform to regulations and requirements on fire safety at the three main Council offices	<p>Fire Evacuation procedures for Civic Offices reviewed and issued.</p> <p>Fire Evacuation procedures for Saxon Court and Lloyds Court produced and due to be issued once the full extent of office moves is confirmed.</p>
Bring the level of security in the three main admin. buildings up to the best acceptable standards based on best practice.	<p>Temporary contract with Milton Keynes Group Security extended.</p> <p>Tender documents for new contract issued and due to be awarded in August.</p>

## Resources Finance Division

Overall it was a successful year for the division. The main priority was to improve the quality and accuracy of financial information to budget managers, particularly in light of the continuing financial constraints of the authority.

Objective	Comment
Develop a formal system of budget monitoring ensuring that all accounts are monitored in conjunction with the nominated budget holder and all major variations accounted for.	Monitoring system put in place and meetings held with budget managers. Monitoring reports were taken to every scheduled meeting of Policy and Resources.
Write and implement Service Level Agreements with all our Clients	Work commenced but not completed.
Offer basic training on financial systems to staff directly involved with the monitoring and processing of the Directorates finances	Delivery of training on financial systems to all budget managers who had requested the training.
Complete the 1999/2000 budget	1999/2000 continuation budget prepared and produced in published format ahead of schedule.
Implement a recharging mechanism within the Directorate and between all clients of the Directorate	1999/2000 recharges included in published budget and 1998/99 estimates amended to include recharges for the year.
Ensure that all statutory returns are processed to time	Completed to agreed time scales
Assist divisions subject to CCT in their preparations	CCT calculations completed for services with directorate and submitted to D.A.
Implement performance measures	Some basic measures implemented but more in depth work to be done

Ensure processes in place to achieve closure of accounts quickly and efficiently	Processes put in place and accounts closed to time
Ensure all debts monitored	Debt monitoring procedures put in place but full progress hampered by long term illness of Exchequer Manager.