



Service Planning 2012/15

Finance

Extract Submission

April 2012 – March 2013

Head of Service/Corporate Manager: Simon Davey

Portfolio holder: David Cox

Current net budget (excludes Internal support charges and capital budget)	Revenues & Benefits
	2011/2012 Budget: £800,290 2012/2013 Draft Budget £866,580 (main variation is a reduction in admin grant from DWP)
	Customer Services
	2011/2012 Budget: £270,220 2012/2013 Draft Budget £239,430
	Accountancy
	2011/2012 Budget: £312,380 2012/2013 Draft Budget £339,100 (additional costs to be charged to HRA for extra involved with self financing)
	Income & Payments
	2011/2012 Budget: £213,630 2012/2013 Draft Budget £244,020 (post for insurance & admin duties moved to this team)
	Procurement
	2011/2012 Budget: £29,830 2012/2013 Draft Budget £32,830
	Land Charges
2011/2012 Budget: (£65,800) 2012/2013 Draft Budget (£85,140)	

Section 3 – Looking forward : what we will do in 2012/13				
Key Service Objectives (please include consultation or procurement activity required)	Financial/corporate resource	Lead Officer	Start date	End date
Revenues & Benefits - Outstanding Council				
The difficult economic climate is causing customers difficulty in meeting financial commitments; against this background the service is concentrating on delivering its purpose for Council tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits and ensuring a value for money service is being given.	No additional costs	Libby Jarrett	Ongoing	Review March 2013
Implementing welfare changes – to ensure customers are kept informed of changes and are aware of the various implications. That the service operates in proactive manner to help prevent homelessness and debt problems occurring.	No additional costs	Libby Jarrett	Next stage: April 2012	October 2013
Business Rates System conversion	In draft budget 12/13	Libby Jarrett	April 2012	August 2012

A number of ICT improvements to provide better service for the customer service and to save costs are awaiting ICT resources or business plans to be refreshed for consideration – see section 3b of service plan (Customer refunds to be paid direct to bank, E-billing, use of texting etc)				
Customer Services - Outstanding Council				
Investigating the possibility of introducing a successful method of routing calls through to service areas quicker which should result in a higher satisfaction of customer service.	No additional costs	Cherise Foster	Next stage: April 2012	March 2013
To continue to work with the systems thinking reviews and to then embed this within the CSC as business as usual.	No additional costs	Cherise Foster	Ongoing	March 2013
Financial Services (Accountancy and Income & Payments) - Outstanding Council				
To produce Statement of Accounts for 2011/12 with no additional auditing work required by External Auditor.	No additional costs	Laurelie Gifford	March 2012	June 2013
Implement CEDAR 4.1	Costs included in draft 2012/13 budget	Phillip Grover	June 2012	Sept 2012
More proactive accountancy service – To add more value to the organisation in project work and working more closely with services to help look at initiatives that will help the Council balance its budgets going forward.	No additional costs – full establishment in place for 2012/13	Laurelie Gifford	April 2012	Reviewed March 2013
Review of TM strategy and provision of investment advice	Monies for external Advice agreed by Cabinet	Claire Read	January 2012	August 2012
Implementation of new HRA financial regime including new accounting regulations	No additional costs	Mandy White	January 2012	June 2013
Continued roll out of E-Procurement module of Cedar	No additional	Glenn	Started	March 2013

	costs	Foord		
Roll out of new procurement cards	No additional costs	Glenn Foord	February 2012	September 2012
Procurement				
Living in an outstanding place				
Introduce a sustainable procurement strategy – buying products which are produced, delivered, used, and disposed of, in ways which avoid or minimise negative effects on the environment and society. Revised Strategy to be produced.	No additional costs	Colin Slater	Started	April 2013
Working in an outstanding place				
Endeavour to increase the proportion of our spend with Small Medium Enterprises/local suppliers – location now measurable through ProSpend.	No additional costs	Colin Slater; working with services	April 2012	March 2013
Outstanding Council				
We will fully introduce an eTendering portal, ProContract, to streamline supplier adoption, tendering, and contract monitoring.	Costs included in draft 2012/13 budget. Majority funded through SWRIEP	Colin Slater; working with services	April 2012	March 2013
Local Land Charges - Outstanding Council				
Implementation of new Land Charges system	Budget approved; self funded project	Nick Wright	April 2012	December 2012
Review and preparation of ICT business plan to allow customers to pay through the internet or telephone (currently cheque payments only)	To be determined	Nick Wright	April 2012	September 2012

Section 3 a – Looking forward: any Service challenges or pressures for the next three years? (Revenue/Capital)

Revenues & Benefits

<p>Benefits – Welfare reforms which includes the introduction of Universal Credit.</p> <p>Currently there are significant cuts to Housing and Council tax Benefit which are being implemented. This will mean that customers will have far less disposable income and may also be at risk of homelessness. This creates issues as customers may be forced to move to cheaper areas which potentially could be outside of East Devon. There is also an impact on Housing services.</p> <p>There will also be pressure on the Council to issue Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) with limited funds available.</p> <p>Universal credit – This amalgamates a number of welfare benefits including HB which is to be administered by DWP. This is likely to lead to job cuts in local authorities through a reduction in jobs at front line and support services.</p> <p>Majority of customers will be required to access UC on-line and therefore less face-to face support.</p> <p>A lot of these welfare cuts will impact on Housing Service.</p> <p>The transition period from current to UC with possible reduction in admin grant and uncertainty for staff will cause significant challenges/pressures in managing this.</p> <p><i>Note. Need to cover transition for staff and customers.</i></p>
<p>Localisation of Council Tax Benefit – to have designed, scoped, consulted, and implemented a local scheme by April 2013 will be a massive significant challenge. Current proposed timescale appear unrealistic. Additional resources would be needed for any chance of meeting proposed deadlines. Financial risk being transferred to local authority.</p>
<p>Office relocation – With the uncertainty surrounding the future roles of Housing and Council tax Benefit it makes planning for office relocation extremely difficult.</p>
<p>NNDR system conversion – Planned to start next April. With any conversion there is always associated risk that collection rates will be adversely affected. Resources are currently stretched in dealing with the welfare reform changes.</p>
<p>Maintaining Collection levels in time of recession – This is a significant pressure as individuals and customers find it difficult to meet their financial commitments.</p>
<p>6. Atlas Phase 2 – This is a Department for Works and Pensions initiative which updates notifies customers changes to the Council direct, however this has caused the benefits team additional work and there are problems in the number of amendments being passed to us which do not flow in logical order when the customer only wants the net effect of any adjustments.</p>
<p>Customer Services</p>
<p>Budget restrictions in the ability to make customer service improvements. (New and more updated Telephone system)</p>
<p>Financial Services (Accountancy and Income & Payments)</p>
<p>To work with services to find initiatives to set balanced budgets going forward with less Government funding being available</p>
<p>Further technical amendments to implement with the production of the Statement of</p>

Account.

Roll out of E-procurement module of Cedar and working with each service to determine their requirements and linking in the use of purchase cards.

Procurement

Need to make more in cash and efficiency savings – the tools to help this process are being implemented through eProcurement and ProSpend.

Local Land Charges

The question over the legality of Local land charges fees is a significant pressure on the Council's finances and for the team themselves. The Council has joined with other council's and the Local Government Association to prepare for possible litigation against the Government.

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