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1st June 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above mentioned Committee has been arranged to take place on **THURSDAY 9th JUNE 2016 at 6.00 pm** in the **Committee Room**, District Council House, Lichfield, to consider the following business.

Access to the Committee Room is via the Members' Entrance.

Yours faithfully



Strategic Director

To: Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee

Councillors Strachan (Chairman), Tittley (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Baker, Mrs Barnett, Constable, Drinkwater, Marshall, Matthews, Powell, Rayner, Mrs Stanhope MBE, White and Mrs Woodward.



AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd February 2016 (copy attached)
4. Work Programme and Forward Plan (copy attached)
5. Terms of Reference (copy attached)
6. Fit for the Future Revenue and Benefits Service Review (copy attached)
7. End of Year Performance Overview 2015/16 for the Finance, Revenues & Benefits and Democratic & Legal Directorates (copy attached)

Briefing Papers to be issued separately:

*Briefing Papers were introduced after the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-ordinating Group requested that the length and volume of agendas be addressed. Briefing papers, which are intended to provide Members with information on relevant issues, are an alternative to placing items on the Agenda. If Members wish a paper to be discussed it can be included on the Work Programme and scheduled for a future meeting.



STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

2nd FEBRUARY 2016

PRESENT:

Councillors Strachan (Chairman) Tittley (Vice-Chairman) Mrs Barnett, Drinkwater, Miss Hassall, Marshall, Matthews, White, and Mrs Woodward.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Eadie, Mrs H. Fisher, Pritchard, Pullen, A. Smith, Spruce and Wilcox attended the meeting)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors Constable, Humphreys and Powell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor White declared an interest as the County Council Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th November 2015 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th November 2015 be approved as a correct record.

FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Work Programme and Forward Plan and it was asked why a decision had been made to send the Committee's recommendations regarding the Civic Function straight to Council instead of Cabinet. It was reported by the Deputy Leader of the Council that he would discuss the matter with the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Forward plan and Work Programme was noted and the outcome of questions raised would be forwarded to the Committee.

MONEY MATTERS 2015/16: REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE FINANCIAL STRATEGY

A report was submitted on the Council's financial performance against the Financial Strategy for the period of April to November 2015 (eight months) for the year 2015/16.

It was reported that the position had not changed dramatically from the previous report in November 2015. It was reported that the Council tax collection fund was projected to be in surplus and the business rates collection Fund in deficit. It was noted that these would be accounted for in 2016/17.

It was asked whether coming in under budget again was deemed a KPI fail or had an audit implication and it was reported that it did not however was still not a good situation to be repeatedly in.

Further details of the two liability orders were requested which were given to the Committee

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted and comments from the Committee be noted by the Cabinet; and

(2) That the Leadership Team and Cabinet Member closely monitor and manage the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2015-18 (MTFS) (R&C) 2015-18.)

THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (REVENUE AND CAPITAL) 2016-20 (MTFS (R&C) 2016-20)

The Committee received a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Revenue and Capital (R&C) for 2016-20. It was reported that Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement from the Government had now been received and would create many more challenges for the District Council. It was noted that a total of £1.9m saving would be required by 2019.

The Committee asked what the impact was from the continued underspend. It was reported that there had been a history of being under budget over the past three years for a variety of reasons including the staff focussing on reducing spend and getting in more income in, timing issues for F4F savings, vacant posts and estimating on a worst case scenario. It was reported that budgeting was being carried out in a rigorous manner now and an extra line had been added to the budget to show these efficiency items. It was noted that an independent Peer review would be taking place to ensure that budgeting was carried out in the most effective ways.

The Committee asked whether the minimum amount of General Reserves needed to be increased and it was reported that the level of reserves was calculated on the known risks at that time but would be re considered when financial challenges arose.

It was asked if the time frame for Business Rate appeals was barred and it was reported that it was however specialist companies were becoming creative at finding other ways to appeal. It was reported that this matter was being considered by authorities collectively as a County. When asked, it was noted that matters relating to NHS Trust Business rates had not been factored into the MTFS as had only recently been known. The issue of the decision from Burntwood Town Council not to have open spaces and parks transferred to them will not lead to amendment of the MTFS as this possibility had not been factored in though it would increase budgetary pressure as alternative savings would need to be found.

Members asked if there were plans or ideas from Cabinet as yet on how to address the deficit and it was reported that it was hoped that no services would be cut although they may be delivered in a different manner. It was noted that options for both increasing income and reducing expenditure would be investigated.

The Committee had the opinion that more radical thinking was required including investigating different models of Local Government. It was asked if thoughts had been given to joining other authorities and it was reported that there had been discussions at both county Chief Executive meetings and Cabinet Leader meetings. For both instances, it was reported that there had not been a big desire from other areas to move down this route. It was noted that not all authorities had been affected as much by the Settlement. It was reported that all Staffordshire Authorities were in discussions about a Devolution Deal for the area but nothing had been agreed to. The Committee felt that the status quo was not sustainable and all options needed to be considered with Lichfield District Council leading the way.

The Committee thanked Officers from the finance department for their hard work in producing the MTFS.

RESOLVED: That the comments made by the Committee be considered and Cabinet be recommended to request Council to approve the following:

- 1) The 2016/17 Revenue Budget, including the Amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxpayers of **£10,403,700**, forecasts a proposed level of Council Tax (the District Council element) for 2016/17 of **£158.08** for a Band D equivalent property.
- 2) The MTFS (R&C) 2016-20 set out in APPENDIX A of the report.
- 3) The Capital Strategy, outlined in APPENDICES B & C of the report.
- 4) Notes the requirements and duties that the Local Government Act 2003 places on the Authority on how it sets and monitors its Budgets, including the CFO's report on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of Reserves shown in APPENDIX D of the report.
- 5) Balance Sheet Projections and Borrowing Requirement and Strategy 2016-20, contained within APPENDIX E of the report.
- 6) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2016/17, contained within APPENDIX F of the report, which sets out the Council's policy of using the asset life method as the basis for making prudent provision for debt redemption.
- 7) Treasury Management Policy Statement and The Annual Investment Strategy 2016/17 and the detailed criteria.
- 8) The use of Specified and Non-Specified Investments.
- 9) The amendment of the following Specified Investment Limits:
 - The introduction of a limit for UK Local Authorities of **£2m** per Authority.
 - Negotiable Instruments held in a broker's nominee account - an increase from **£10m** to **£12m** for the total investment.
 - Money Market Funds - an increase from **£10m** to **£12m** for the total investment with these instruments.
- 10) The investment of **£2m** during 2016/17 in a pooled property investment fund.
- 11) The Prudential Indicators and limits for 2016-20 contained within APPENDIX I of the report.
- 12) The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator shown within APPENDIX I of the report.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-20

Detailed consideration was given to the final draft of the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. It was reported that the Plan gave a clear vision whilst still being deliverable and there was measures to demonstrate its delivery.

It was reported that amendments had been made following the Committee's feedback that was given at its last meeting along with other responses received. The Chief Executive gave an update on the now completed Equality Impact Assessment and reported that further amendments had been made to address matters as a result including layout and page colours to aid the visually impaired.

The Committee were pleased at the level of Member involvement in all stages of the drafting of the Plan and satisfied that their comments had been considered and acted upon. It was noted

that the Plan should remain as a strategy led one and not opportunity driven and the Cabinet should not lose sight of that strategy.

It was asked how it was intended to get more people involved in voluntary work and it was reported that the District already had a high number of volunteers and the Council needed to capture that power and be proactive.

It was then asked how it was intended to address obesity figures in the District and it was reported that it would be done through encouraging the use of parks and open spaces in the District and other leisure facilities.

Members thanked the Officers for their work in producing the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Plan 2016-20 endorsed and it be noted that the Committee's previous comments had been considered.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020: ANNUAL ACTION PLAN – 2016/17

The Committee received a report on the top ten activities that the Council would be focusing on during the 2016/17 financial year.

The Committee discussed issues connected to activity reference AAP4 of the plan specifically the closure of Lichfield Foyer. There were concerns for the short term cost to the District Council if required to find emergency accommodation. There were also concerns for the impact of the closure to the residents of the service as it gave them stable accommodation and its closure would be causing distress for the young adults living there currently. It was reported that the Council has working closely with partners to find the best solution and give the greatest amount of help.

Members were pleased to see the progression for retail offerings in Burntwood.

The Committee noted that the activities were deliverable whilst remaining challenging and were satisfied that the Cabinet Members had sufficient resources available to carry out the tasks.

RESOLVED: That the comments made by the Committee on the Annual Action Plan 2016-2020 be taken on board by the Cabinet and Officers.

DIRECTORATE TOP 10 – 2016/17

The Committee received a report on the Top 10 issues that the Democratic and Legal and the Finance, Revenues and Benefits Directorates would be focusing on during 2016/17. It was noted that this included less Annual Action Plan tasks as there had been changes on the overall strategy of the Council.

Section 106 agreements were discussed in respect of what checks and balances were in place to reassure the public during developer renegotiations. It was reported that there would still be a democratic influence as it would go through the Planning Committee.

The Revised Discretionary Housing Payments were then discussed and assumed that the amount available would not change from the previous year. It was reported that not all the available money had been allocated in the previous year so the criteria would be looked at again. It was also noted that although there had been recent publicity following a court challenge to the Government regarding disabled residents, at Lichfield District Council, that was automatically eligible.

RESOLVED: That the comments made by the Committee on Directorate Top 10 – 2016/17 be taken on board by the Cabinet and Officers.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE (F4F): CREATING A CORPORATE COUNCIL

Members received a report on the key findings and proposals to date regarding the Fit for the Future: Creating a Corporate Council project. It was reported that there were five strands of work to the project.

The Committee discussed the review of employee terms and conditions and it was reported that the objectives of this review was to put forward a package that was fair, equal and consistent across the whole Council as well as practical for Lichfield District Council.

It was asked why there had not been greater Member involvement in the review and it was reported that it had happened and continues to happen during the individual strands of the project including the Strategic Plan and review of the Overview & Scrutiny function.

The Chief Executive wished to record, on behalf of the Council, her thanks to Mr Paul Clarke for all his work leading the project during his secondment from the LGA.

RESOLVED: That the next steps for the Creating a Corporate Council project as stated in the report be agreed.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY REVIEW

Members received a report updating them on progress made in the review of the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) function. It was reported that following a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Group, a Member Task Group was set up consisting of all the O&S Chairmen and Leader of the Opposition. It was reported that there had been one meeting of the Task Group so far which had been valuable and produced many actions including a revision in providing briefings to Members, emphasis in breaking down political lines and a future visit to another Authority to observe other approaches to the function.

The Committee felt that training should be continued especially around questioning skills as it would aid confidence in Members and bring out a more curious mind which is beneficial for effective O&S. It was also suggested that focus should be given to remembering what the value of O&S truly is as once this was understood it aided identifying problems and stimulated creative thinking on how best to solve them.

It was discussed that the important role of the Chairman should be considered greater with remuneration aligned with Cabinet Members to reflect this.

It was then discussed whether there was any merit in the O&S Chairmen observing Cabinet meetings and some felt that the independence of the O&S function should be observed whilst other felt it could be of help.

RESOLVED: it was agreed that the Member Task Group reconvene in April to evaluate progress so far.

VOTE OF THANKS

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the sincere thanks of the Committee be recorded to all the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for their work during the past year.

(The Meeting finished at 7.49 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016-17 (v1)

Item	9 June 2016	7 Sept 2016	15 Nov 2016	30 Jan 2017	Details/Reasons	Link to 2016/17 One Year Action Plan	Officer	Member Lead
Policy Development								
Terms of Reference	✓				To remind the Committee of the terms of reference and suggest any amendments		RK	
Fit for the Future Revenue and Benefits Service Review	✓				To seek comments on the draft report including findings and recommendations from this Review prior to consideration by Cabinet	One of the top ten priorities is a Council that is Fit for the Future; the target is to develop and implement a Delivery Plan for the Revenues and Benefits review by March 2017	JK/PL/ YW	Councillors Spruce and Pullen
Fit for the Future Programme: Programme update and overview				✓	To note progress of the Programme to date, approve the next phase of reviews, and endorse changes to programme governance arrangements		DT	
End of Year Performance Overview for 2015/2016	✓				Scrutinise performance against the projects and activities set out in the One Year Action Plan 15/16 which fall within the remit of the Strategic O&S Committee	A Well Managed Council - We'll maximise the council's performance, innovation and efficiency, so we use our resources well and deliver good quality and better value services	RK	Councillor Spruce

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016-17 (v1)

Item	9 June 2016	7 Sept 2016	15 Nov 2016	30 Jan 2017	Details/Reasons	Link to 2016/17 One Year Action Plan	Officer	Member Lead
Overview & Scrutiny Review				✓	Update		RK	
Money Matters 2015/16 : Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy		✓			Scrutinise the Council's performance against the Medium Term Financial Strategy Scrutinise performance of the Treasury Management Strategy	A Well Managed Council - We'll keep a tight control and management of the council's finances	JK/AT	
Statement of Accounts 2015/16		✓			Scrutinise the Statement of Accounts	A Well Managed Council - We'll maximise the council's performance, innovation and efficiency, so we use our resources well and deliver good quality and better value services	JK/AT	
Money Matters 2016/17 : Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy - April to September 2016			✓		Monitor the position in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/2016 Monitor Treasury Management activities and Prudential Indicators	A Well Managed Council - We'll maximise the council's performance, innovation and efficiency, so we use our resources well and deliver good quality and better value services	RK/JK	
Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2017-21				✓	Scrutinise the Council's resource plans in relation to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities	A Well Managed Council - We'll keep a tight control and management of the council's finances	JK/AT	

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

Published: 16.05.2016

Effective for the Period 01.06.2016 – 30.09.2016

Representations in respect of all the matters shown should be sent in writing to the contact officer indicated at Lichfield District Council, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 6YU no later than one week before the decision is due to be made. Copies of documents can also be obtained by contacting the relevant Officer. Facsimile: 01543 309899; Telephone: 01543 308000

- Key decisions are:
1. A decision made in connection with setting the Council Tax
 2. Expenditure or savings if they exceed £50,000
 3. A decision which significantly affects the community in two or more wards

MATTER FOR CABINET DECISION (PLEASE MARK KEY DECISIONS WITH AN ASTERIX) ^{(1) (*)}	CONFIDENTIAL YES/NO ⁽⁸⁾	DECISION EXPECTED TO UNDERTAKE ⁽²⁾	DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY AND DATE ⁽³⁾⁽⁶⁾	CONSULTATION ⁽⁴⁾ INCLUDING CONSULTATION WITH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (If no consultation has been undertaken please briefly explain why)	DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ⁽⁵⁾	CONTACT OFFICER/CABINET MEMBER ⁽⁷⁾
*Management restructure – outcome of consultation and recommendations	No	Consideration of result of consultation and whether to implement a new management structure.	Cabinet 19/05/2016		Consultation - summary of submissions	OFFICER: Ms D Tilley 01543 308001 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor M J Wilcox (01283) 543289

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

MATTER FOR CABINET DECISION (PLEASE MARK KEY DECISIONS WITH AN ASTERIX) ^{(1) (*)}	CONFIDENTIAL YES/NO ⁽⁸⁾	DECISION EXPECTED TO UNDERTAKE ⁽²⁾	DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY AND DATE ⁽³⁾⁽⁶⁾	CONSULTATION ⁽⁴⁾ INCLUDING CONSULTATION WITH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (If no consultation has been undertaken please briefly explain why)	DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ⁽⁵⁾	CONTACT OFFICER/CABINET MEMBER ⁽⁷⁾
*Management restructure – outcome of consultation and recommendations	No	Consideration of result of consultation and whether to implement a new management structure.	Council 07/06/2016	Cabinet - 19 th May 2016 Employment Committee – 24 th May 2016	Consultation – summary of submissions	OFFICER: Ms D Tilley 01543 308001 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor M J Wilcox (01283) 543289
*Acceptance of External Funds – Better Care Fund	No	To accept funding to support expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants and amend the capital programme accordingly.	Cabinet 14/06/2016	None	Notification of funding allocation	OFFICER: Mr C Gibbins (01543) 308702 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor C. Greatorex (01543) 416677
Proposed Revised Charges for Street Naming and Numbering	No	Approval of new street naming and numbering fees	Cabinet 14/06/2016	Consultation has been undertaken with Financial Services and stakeholders of the service		OFFICER: Mr G Thomas (01543) 308131 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor C J Spruce (01543) 258120

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

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Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Governance arrangements	No	Approve Governance arrangements	Cabinet 05/07/2016	Consultation on the proposed governance arrangements has taken place with the EGED (O&S) Committee	Proposed CIL Governance arrangements document	OFFICER: Mr C Jordan (01543) 308202 MEMBER: Councillor I Pritchard (01543) 472232
End of Year Performance Report – Annual Action Plan 2015/16	No	To approve the report	Cabinet 05/07/2016	An outturn report from each of the Directorate Top 10s will be considered at the June 2016 round of O&S meetings.	Performance Outturn report	OFFICER: Mrs H Titterton (01543) 308700 CABINET MEMBERS: Leader – Mike Wilcox (01543) 543289 Councillor D Pullen (01532) 300075

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

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Governance arrangements Community Infrastructure Levy	No	Adoption of governance arrangements for Community Infrastructure Levy	Cabinet 05/07/2016	CIL Infrastructure Officer Working Group. CIL Task and Finish Group	Report Governance arrangements	OFFICER: Ms M Turley (01543) 308206 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor I Pritchard (01543) 472232
Lichfield District Community Safety Partnership Prevent Delivery Plan 2016-2018	No	To consider and comment on the draft Prevent Delivery Plan produced in response to the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015	Cabinet 05/07/2016	Report to be considered by CHH (O&S) 08/06/16	Final Draft Delivery Plan	OFFICER: Ms J Coleman (01543) 308005 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor D Pullen (01532) 300075
*To accept the offer of grant funding of £2.4 million from GBSLEP towards the Friarsgate scheme and approve the legal documentation to allow the Council to receive the funding	No	To accept the offer of grant funding and agree the grant agreement between Birmingham City Council and Lichfield District Council	Cabinet 05/07/2016			OFFICER: Mrs H Bielby (01543) 308252 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor I Pritchard (01543) 472232

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

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*Physical Activity & Sport Strategy	No	Adoption of Strategy	Cabinet 05/07/2016	O&S Committee Clubs National Governing Bodes Sports England Public Consultation	Draft Strategy	OFFICER: Mr N Turner (01543) 308761 MEMBER: Councillor Smith (01543) 410685
*Procurement of Professional Advisors for Leisure Outsourcing	Yes	To agree appointment of Key Professional Advisors	Cabinet 05/07/2016		Brief for Advisors	OFFICER: Mr N Turner (01543) 308761 MEMBER: Councillor Smith (01543) 410685
*Fit for the Future Review of Community Transport	No	To approve recommendations arising from the F4F review	Cabinet 06/09/2016	Report to Community, Housing and Health O&S Committee in June 2016	F4F report	OFFICER: Mr C Gibbins (01543) 308702 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor D Pullen (01532) 300075

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

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*To accept the offer of grant funding of £2.66 million from SSLEP towards the Friarsgate Scheme and approve the legal documentation to allow the Council to receive the funding.	No	To accept the offer of grant funding and agree the grant agreement between Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council.	Cabinet 06/09/2016			OFFICER: Mrs H Bielby (01543) 308252 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor I Pritchard (01543) 472232
Amendments to the Constitution regarding the dismissal of Statutory Officers	No		Council 27/09/2016	Full Council		OFFICER: Mr R King (01543) 308060 CABINET MEMBER: Councillor C J Spruce (01543) 258120

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

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Mid Year Performance Report – Annual Action Plan 2016/17	No	To approve the report	Cabinet 01/11/2016	A mid year performance report for the Directorate Top 10s will be considered by Strategic O&S in November and the other three O&S Committees in January 2017	Mid year Performance Outturn report	OFFICER: Mrs H Titterton (01543) 308700 CABINET MEMBER Leader – Mike Wilcox (01543) 543289 Councillor D Pullen (01532) 300075
Annual Action Plan 2017/18	No	To approve the Annual Action Plan	Cabinet 07/02/2017 Council 21/02/2017	The AAP is comprised from the Directorate Top 10s for 2017/18; these will be considered during the January 2017 round of O&S Committees	Annual Action Plan	OFFICER: Mrs H Titterton (01543) 308700 CABINET MEMBER Leader – Mike Wilcox (01543) 543289 Councillor D Pullen (01532) 300075

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

1. The matter in respect of which the decision is to be made
 2. What decision the Council will be asked to make
 3. A date on which, or period within which, the decision will be made
 4. What groups of people and/or organisations will be consulted before the decision is made and how the consultation will be carried out.
 5. What background documents will be available to the person or Committee making the decision
 6. Who will make the decision, i.e. the Cabinet, Council a Cabinet Member alone, an Officer under Delegated Powers
 7. The Officer or Member who should be contacted regarding the matter under consideration.
 8. Indicate whether the report will be confidential.
- * Denotes Key Decision

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Leader of Cabinet
Deputy Leader of Cabinet and
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Development and Environment
Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks
Cabinet Member for Housing & Health
Cabinet Member for Waste Management
Cabinet Member for Finance and Democracy
Cabinet Member for Tourism and Communications
Cabinet Member for Community

Councillor M. J. Wilcox

Councillor I. M. P. Pritchard
Councillor A. F. Smith
Councillor C. Greatorex
Councillor I. M. Eadie
Councillor C. J. Spruce
Councillor Mrs H. E. Fisher
Councillor D. R. Pullen

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Allsopp, Mrs J A
 Awty, R J
 Bacon, Mrs N.
 Baker, Mrs D F
 Bamborough, R. A. J.
 Banevicius, Mrs S W
 Barnett, Mrs S A
 Boyle, Mrs M G
 Constable, Mrs B L
 Constable, D H J
 Cox, R E
 Drinkwater, E N
 Eadie, I M

England, Mrs J M
 Evans, Mrs C D
 Fisher, Miss B
 Fisher, Mrs H E
 Greatorex, C
 Hassall, Miss E A
 Humphreys, K P
 Leytham, D J
 Marshall, T
 Matthews, T R
 Mills, J
 Mosson, R C
 O'Hagan, J P
 Powell, J J R

Pritchard, I M P
 Pullen, D R
 Pullen, Mrs N I
 Ray, P
 Rayner, B L
 Salter, D F
 Shepherd, Miss O J
 Smedley, D
 Smith, A F
 Spruce, C. J.
 Stanhope MBE, Mrs M
 Strachan, R W
 Tittley, M C
 Tranter, Mrs H

Warfield, M A
 White, A G
 Wilcox, M. J.
 Woodward, Mrs S E
 Yeates, A
 Yeates, B W

* DENOTES KEY DECISION

14. STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

DELEGATED TO THE STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

- 14.1 To be responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the work of the Cabinet and the Council in relation to its policy objectives, strategies, performance targets and provision relating to:
- a. Council's policies (including monitoring and reviewing the Strategic Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, and Performance.)
 - b. Assets and premises maintenance
 - c. Communications
 - d. Local democracy and the achievement of effective, transparent and accountable decision making by the Council
 - e. Delivery of value for money, Best Value and the efficient use of resources
 - f. Any matter affecting the Lichfield District area or its inhabitants relating to matters not dealt with by the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees; and
 - g. The roles and decisions undertaken by the Leader, Finance, Democratic and Legal Services, Community, Housing and Health & I.T. Portfolio Holders
- 14.2 To assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework to align resources with the Council's priorities
- 14.3 To conduct research to support the analysis of policy issues and the identification and appraisal of possible options
- 14.4 To question members of the Cabinet and/ or Committees and Chief Officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area and/or about their decisions and performance whether generally or in comparison with plans and targets over a period of time or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects

- 14.5 To liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
- 14.6 To review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance
- 14.7 To set up Task Groups to support the Committee in the exercise of its functions.
- 14.8 To question and gather evidence from any person, with their consent in relation to the matter being scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 14.9 To review the development of relevant policies and strategies.
- 14.10 To consider the corporate requirements on value for money issues, such as Service Reviews, change management; Business Process Reengineering and scrutinising their outcomes and the internal control systems relating to continuous improvement and efficiency.
- 14.11 To consider any issue arising from the various external inspection regimes.
- 14.12 To exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to the Committee
- 14.13 To report annually to Full Council on the work of the Committee and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate
- 14.14 To exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet relating to the Finance, Democratic and Legal Services, the Leader and any other matters or decisions not dealt with by the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- 14.15 To make recommendations to the Cabinet or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.

REVENUES AND BENEFITS FIT FOR THE FUTURE REVIEW

Councillor Spruce, Cabinet Member for Finance and Democracy and Councillor Pullen, Cabinet Member for Community



Date:	Thursday, 9 th June 2016
Agenda Item:	6
Contact Officers:	Helen Titterton, Pat Leybourne, Ysanne Williams
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Key Decision?	YES
Local Ward Members	Applicable to all wards

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In 2013, the Council embarked upon a corporate improvement programme called Fit for the Future. Phase 2 of the programme was used to initiate a number of service reviews including a review of the revenues and benefits service. This review was informed by the findings and conclusions from two externally facilitated exercises by Peopletoo and ICE Creates.
- 1.2 This report sets out the process and findings of this review and asks Members to ensure that the findings, key proposals and recommendations are robust.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested that they endorse the key proposals and recommendations of the Review which are set out in the report at **Appendix A, section 10**.

3. Background

- 3.1 This Committee received and endorsed the Project Initiation Document for the Revenues and Benefits Service (RBS) Review in January 2015.
- 3.2 The Review Team has met on 8 occasions and has commissioned various pieces of work to assist their deliberations.
 - In order to ensure that the F4F Review was robust and objective, following a competitive process, **Peopletoo** was engaged to undertake an independent assessment of the current service. The full report of their findings is available [HERE](#). Peopletoo looked in detail at the two separate areas (revenues and benefits back office and Lichfield Connects front office) and also undertook an informal market assessment including delivery models with the private sector, shared service with the public sector and other external vehicles.
 - Further work was commissioned to better understand how the in house service could drive out duplication and inefficiency whilst also delivering a better customer experience. **ICE Creates** was engaged to undertake some detailed work with the RBS team to identify a definitive list of processes, map them, improve them and identify opportunities to use all technology so that customers could access services at their convenience. The full report of their findings is available [HERE](#).

3.3 The work of the Review Team and the final report has been focused around the main revenues and benefits related functions that the Council carries out, namely:

- **Billing (council tax and business rates) and corporate recovery of debt** – responsible for administering the council tax accounts for all domestic properties and businesses throughout the year, establishing the correct liability, applying the appropriate exemptions and discounts and billing the liable party. The teams provide advice to customers regarding their liability and agree suitable payment arrangements for those experiencing financial difficulties. Also responsible for supporting other services within the Council, ensuring the maintenance of the corporate debtors system and recovering unpaid debts.
- **Benefit assessment, for the assessment of housing benefit and council tax reduction** – responsible for administering all claims for housing benefit (HB) and applications for council tax reduction (CTR), assisting tenants and home owners with their financial commitments for rent and council tax. Any changes in circumstances affecting the claims/applications are administered promptly ensuring correct entitlements. Where the council has not been notified of changes promptly, any underpayments or overpayments are calculated and paid or recovered.
- **Fairer charging / welfare benefits, for the assessment of client contribution towards the cost of residential care and non-residential care** – responsible for calculating the cost of a client's contribution towards their care, whether that care is received in the home or residential. They also help clients to maximise their benefit entitlements to assist with the cost of care.
- **Customer Services Team of Specialist Customer Service Advisers who deliver the front of house service for RBS** – responsible for scanning and indexing correspondence and incoming post and dealing with face to face and telephone enquiries including for council tax, non-domestic rates, housing benefit and council tax support including overpayment recovery, changes of circumstances for revenues and benefits, setting up direct debit payments, recovery arrangements, benefit application verification, death notifications, BID recovery, setting up instalment plans for recovery payments, single person discount, council tax and NNDR refunds, council tax occupation and vacation and claim checks.

Findings of the Review Team

3.4 The findings of the Review Team are set out in detail in the report at **Appendix A**. They can be summarised as follows:

- a) The RBS is performing well but has the potential to improve further and provide a better customer service by facilitating closer working between the front and back office teams. Following a review of the customer journey, it was found that processes can be improved and more services delivered at the first point of contact, reducing delays for the customer, improving efficiency for the officers involved and contributing towards the resilience of the teams.
- b) There is scope to make better use of technology to enable customers to access the RBS at their convenience and also to enable them to make applications for services on line. This would potentially reduce the number of calls by phone and in person to the Connects team. There is also the potential to use technology to improve the efficiency of the service (by automating manual tasks). A careful assessment would be needed to ensure that the costs of new IT are proportionate to the benefits achievable.
- c) The performance management of the RBS could be improved so that managers and their teams have a better focus on the outcomes they are achieving and there is more capacity to undertake proactive work to improve and develop the service; some changes to streamline the team structure, a more systematic approach to staff training and development and a more customer focused culture should all be addressed

- d) There is the potential to make savings from within the in house service by doing things differently. Some savings have already been made through the deletion of two posts which are no longer required. A further post was transferred to the Single Fraud Investigation Service in July 2015.
- e) A soft market testing exercise has been undertaken and there is appetite within the private sector were the Council to decide to outsource RBS. However, the review team concluded that given the small size of the service and the fluidity of the welfare reform agenda, it would be preferable to retain control of the service (and benefit from any available savings) in house

Alternative Options	<p>The review team considered three main options for the future delivery of RBS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain in house • In house with partial externalisation of niche roles • Full externalisation <p>These are options are explored in detail within the Peopletoo report although no recommendation about a preferred option is made. The ICE Creates report recommends retaining the service in house, a view which the review team shared.</p>
Consultation	<p>Some consultation was carried out face to face with customers attending the offices at Frog Lane. They were asked generally about their experience and what improvements could be made. In all cases people were very pleased with the service they had received. One person said that they could be waiting up to 30 minutes to be seen and some people said they would prefer to have an online option for updating details or claiming. There has been consultation with the RBS / Connects teams during the progress of the Review. Both externally facilitated exercises involved engagement with the staff and they were directly involved in the work to track and improve the customer journey.</p>
Financial Implications	<p>Work is underway to develop an Efficiency Plan for the Council and a provisional savings target of £100k per annum has been set against the RBS Review. To date, £79k per year has been declared as surplus to requirements associated with the deletion of two posts. Further savings may be achievable through the corporate management restructure (which proposes a single Head of Service post to manage RBS and Connects). Savings may also be possible as efficiencies are made to the customer journey and the team structure is streamlined to support these changes.</p>
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<p>The fourth priority within the Strategic Plan is to be a council that is fit for the future. The F4F Service Reviews help us to ensure that we are doing the right things for customers in the best way possible – and we use the Reviews to challenge ourselves to ensure this is the case. The Council’s Customer Promise and the organisation’s values reinforces the importance of putting customers first and this has been a very important strand of the RBS review.</p>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<p>Many of the customers of the RBS have protected characteristics (particularly age and disability) and therefore we need to be mindful of their needs when making any changes to the service. An equality impact assessment will be carried out on 16 June 2016.</p>
Crime & Safety Issues	<p>The service helps to ensure that individuals have sufficient income to maintain a secure tenancy; this will include those fleeing domestic abuse, ex-offenders and those with issues around substance misuse.</p>

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Work to deliver the proposals and recommendations of the RBS impacts on service delivery	Project management of the RBS review and close monitoring of service delivery	Yellow (material)
B	Key personnel may not be available to drive the project forward.	Plan changes to fit in with current commitments	Green
C	The welfare reform agenda may impact on the work of the service	Liaising with DWP, monitor the reforms and the timetable for implementation	Yellow
D	Under achievement of savings	Consider the process options to ensure savings are made wherever achievable	Yellow

Background documents

Fit for the Future Review of Revenues and Benefits Service (RBS) – report to Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 21st January 2015, item 9

Relevant web links

fit for the **future**

preparing us for the future

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE REVIEW

DRAFT REPORT

JUNE 2016

1. Introduction

Fit for the Future

The Fit for the Future Programme (F4F) is Lichfield District Council's (LDC) transformation programme. It was introduced in May 2013 to help make the organisation financially and functionally fit for the challenges ahead.

Background and scope of the Review

In January 2015, the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the Revenues and Benefits (RBS) Service Review was endorsed by the Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The scope of the review included:

- The 'front end' customer interface on behalf of the service which is delivered by the Lichfield Connects team specialist advisors.
- All aspects of the Revenues Service including billing for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) and Council Tax.
- Civil Enforcement for Single Person Discount (SPD) and Local Council Tax Support (LCTS).
- Assessments for Housing Benefits (HB), Social Care for Residential and Non Residential Services.
- Provision of information for Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) requirements¹.
- Debt Recovery.

The outcomes the Review was seeking to achieve included:

- To ensure that RBS is organised and delivered in the most cost efficient and effective way to meet current and future customer needs within the context of changing legislative requirements.
- To reduce the overall cost of RBS.
- To maximise income generation from NDR, Council Tax and fees and charges through appropriate and robust policies and procedures.
- To ensure that RBS complies with its statutory duties to an acceptable level and meets all contractual requirements.
- To ensure that RBS continues to be able deliver LDC's strategic priorities.

Key statistical background as to what the service delivers is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

¹ Note that the investigation of potentially fraudulent HB claims was transferred from local government to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in July 2015 under the newly formed Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS). One full time member of staff was TUPE'd to DWP as a result.

Methodology and Approach

A cross-departmental Review Team was established with representation from Revenues and Benefits, Connects, IBSS, ICT, Human Resources and a representative from Bromford Housing to provide external challenge and insight. The Strategic Director Community, Housing and Health carried out the role of 'Challenge Director' (see **Appendix 2** for a list of Review Team members).

The Review Team agreed the following objectives:

1. To assess the level and nature of future customer need/demand for each part of RBS taking account of demographic, legislative and technological changes.
2. To identify opportunities to improve the service and achieve better outcomes for customers; to assess these opportunities and deliver changes. This will include an end to end review of all of the processes used by RBS and proposals for their redesign where appropriate.
3. To significantly increase the number of self-service customer transactions achieved through the web; this review is a key component of our channel shift agenda and we aim to redirect the preferred method of customer access from face to face and phone contacts to electronic means.
4. To explore and assess a range of delivery options for each area of RBS including shared services with other Local Authorities, contracting out or ceasing activities that are no longer required, creating trusts or mutual arrangements and working with the private sector.
5. To identify the best/preferred option(s) for service delivery to ensure it meets statutory requirements and delivers the priorities identified in accordance with LDC's Plan for the District.
6. To produce an action plan which will underpin the delivery of the preferred option(s).
7. To produce a workforce plan to underpin the delivery of the preferred option(s).
8. To implement cost savings and encourage income generation as part of the F4F programme.

Once objectives had been identified a series of work streams were agreed and pursued. This included a range of activity undertaken or commissioned to provide evidence and analysis to inform the Review Team's considerations, such as:

- Externally facilitated diagnostic exercise to independently assess the in-house services in scope, identify potential improvements and explore options for externalisation where this could add further value to the service; this was undertaken by Peopletoo.
- Externally facilitated exercise to better understand the customer journey and the underpinning processes as well as identifying opportunities for improvement such as resolving more customer requests at first point of contact; this was undertaken by ICE Creates and included a consultation exercise with service users.

- Models of delivery – three members of the Review Team visited the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Service in Wychavon which is based on a partnership with Civica; Worcester City Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council joined together and achieved significant savings by having one base at Wychavon, combining back office systems and contracts (all on the same IT platform) and reducing headcount through natural wastage. At this point the service was outsourced to Capita.

2. Summary of key findings

As with all F4F Service Reviews, this review has not been solely about reducing costs of service delivery. It has provided an opportunity to fundamentally consider and challenge what the whole service does, what it has a statutory duty to provide, how it is provided and consider if it meets the needs of the customers and community that it is provided for. The Review Team, assisted through the externally facilitated exercises, has considered opportunities to do things differently, more efficiently, or at less cost.

The **Peopletoo report** summarised their key findings as follows:

The RBS performance is good and the service is operating satisfactorily. It is meeting its obligations from a performance and legislative perspective. We consider that there is potential to move from a good service to an ambition of an excellent performing service that also enhances the customer experience and delivers financial improvement.

Staff are committed and motivated and want to do a good job. Managers have a good understanding of their budgets and financial performance. The service is generally on top of workloads.

Lichfield Connects by its nature and in practice is customer focused and committed to improving the service to customers.

From a customer perspective, Lichfield provides a good service based on national standards of performance.

As with many District Councils, the service is relatively small and as such has real challenges in achieving efficiency, ensuring resilience and maintaining performance in an environment of financial challenges and external change in Universal Credit but also Council Tax and NDRs. The service has done well to maintain performance within this context.

However, the service has opportunities for improvement and potential challenges:

1. *The relatively small size of the service reduces the opportunity for efficiencies given the lack of economies of scale and results in **management costs** being proportionately high.*
2. *The **lack of integration** between Lichfield Connects and RBS (front and back office) creates inefficiencies and hinders improvements in customer experience.*
3. *Service **resilience, capacity for change and ability to innovate** are limited.*
4. ***Performance management** of teams and individuals is not robust, partly due to management time constraints.*
5. *The service needs to strengthen its operational management through an improved **culture of performance and customer focus**. There is a potential risk that LDC could lose skills and experience due to the age profile of the workforce. This risk could be mitigated by setting up an apprentice scheme and/or moving some work off-site to the private sector.*

6. **Technology** is not fully utilised either in terms of channel shift to customer 'self-service' models or across the front and back office in automating manual transactions and workload. Given the size of the service, the return on investment in technology is challenging.
7. The current trend in **income collection** is marginally downwards. LDC is not maximising reviews of exemptions and discounts.
8. There are a number of small opportunities for **productivity improvement** that together can support increased efficiency.

Peopletoo identified in excess of 60 observations/recommendations within their report. The Review Team recognised that there are many opportunities to improve the in house service; these are set out in detail in **Section 10 Key Proposals and Recommendations**.

The review has also been an opportunity to focus on the emerging and future challenges faced by the service (and the related risks to LDC).

In considering the potential models for delivery of RBS (retain in house, partial or full externalisation), the Review Team has had regard to the dynamic environment within which the service operates. It is subject to changes in national policy/legislation which are outside the direct control or influence of LDC, the impact of which can sometimes be hard to predict. For example, the introduction of the under occupation surcharge, benefit cap and universal credit have so far had limited impact on RBS. However, proposals to further reduce the benefit cap, limit housing benefit for social landlord tenants to and reduce access to housing benefit for young people along with some other minor changes to the housing benefit scheme may all have significant implications for LDC, both directly upon RBS and Connects teams and indirectly on other services such as housing. In October 2015, Government announced that, by the end of this Parliament, local authorities will be able to keep 100% of the business rates they raise locally. This is a fundamental change to LDC's finances and will put greater emphasis on billing and collection. Given this degree of uncertainty (which may pose difficulties in developing a tender specification), the risks in relation to contract management of an outsourced service and the potential to improve the existing service, **the Review Team concluded that the RBS should be retained in house and an Improvement Plan be developed to bring about the customer service improvements that have been identified.**

3. Baseline assessment of current service provision

In order to ensure that the F4F Review was robust and objective, following a competitive process, Peopletoo was engaged to undertake an independent assessment of the current service. The full report of their findings is available [HERE](#).

The Review Team looked in detail at the two separate areas (Revenues and Benefits back office and Lichfield Connects front office) and also undertook an informal market assessment including delivery models with the private sector, shared service with the public sector and other external vehicles.

The key findings for each area is set out below:

3.1 Revenues and Benefits

	Budget 2015/16
Direct Costs	£000
Employees	893
Transport	22
Supplies and Services	335
Payments of Housing benefit	19,970
Central Support	1,048
Total	22,268
External Income	20,891
Recharges to other services	261
Total Net Direct Costs	1,116

The RBS consists of 23.6 full time equivalent staff and is split into four teams as follows:

- Billing, for Council Tax and business rates (5 FTEs)
- Corporate Recovery, for Council Tax, business rates and corporate debt (5 FTEs)
- Benefit Assessment, for the assessment of housing benefit and Council Tax reduction (8.6 FTEs)
- Fairer charging/welfare benefits, for the assessment of client contribution towards the cost of residential and non-residential care (4 FTEs)

The teams are required to undertake the following statutory duties:

- **Levy and collect Council Tax :**

The Billing and Corporate Recovery Teams administer Council Tax accounts for all domestic properties throughout the year, establishing the correct liability, applying the appropriate exemptions and discounts and billing the liable party. They pursue non-payment of Council Tax to ensure the income to LDC and the other precepting bodies is maintained, enabling the provision of services to our citizens. The teams provide advice to customers regarding their liability and agreeing suitable payment arrangements for those experiencing financial difficulties. The team also support Lichfield Connects, providing guidance as required to assist customers.

- **Levy and collect NDR (business rates) :**

The Billing and Corporate Recovery Teams administer business rates accounts throughout the year, establishing the correct liability, applying the appropriate exemptions and reliefs and billing the liable party. They pursue non-payment of business rates to ensure the income to LDC and Government is maintained, enabling the provision of services to our citizens. The teams provide advice to customers regarding their liability and agreeing suitable payment arrangements for those experiencing financial difficulties. The teams also support Lichfield Connects providing guidance as required to assist customers.

In addition to the above, the Corporate Recovery Team support other services within LDC, ensuring the maintenance of the corporate debtors system and recovering unpaid debts in 33 separate areas.

- **Assess and Award Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction :**

The Benefit Assessment team administer all claims for housing benefit (HB) and applications for Council Tax Reduction (CTR), assisting tenants and home owners with their financial commitments for rent and Council Tax. Any changes in circumstances affecting the claims/applications are administered promptly ensuring correct entitlements. Where LDC has not been notified of changes promptly, any underpayments or overpayments are calculated and paid or recovered. Claimants are made aware of their rights and duties when claiming/applying for HB and CTR. In accordance with the regulations all recoverable overpayments are pursued to ensure that there is no loss of income to LDC. Any potentially fraudulent claims for HB are referred to the Department for Work and Pensions for investigation.

- **Calculate contributions towards care and provide welfare benefit advice on behalf of Staffordshire County Council :**

The Fairer Charging/Welfare Benefits team calculate the cost of a client's contribution towards their care, whether that care is received in the home or residential. They also help clients to maximise their benefit entitlements to assist with the cost of care.

Findings of Peopletoo:

*In general, we have found that **performance is good** and the service is operating satisfactorily. The service has the opportunity to move from good to excellent and become more customer focused, as well as delivering financial improvement. The commitment of staff has supported the service to achieve its current level of performance but the service recognises the challenges and increasing pressures of operating within the current environment.*

*Staff **productivity levels are good** as measured against the caseload based on our benchmarking experience. This was endorsed by the external market.*

*Staff are well paid and the **majority are motivated** and want to make a difference. Salary levels across the service are competitive when compared to similar District Councils but well above the private sector and staff morale is reasonable bearing in mind the current uncertainties.*

***Sickness absence** is good with 2014/15 average short term sickness absence for the team being 4.07 days, which is slightly above District Council's average of 2.83 days. Long term sickness absence at 4.33 days is slightly lower than District Council's average of 6.03 days. Budget monitoring is also good with the Revenues and Benefits expenditure for 2014/15 and current year to date being well within budget.*

*There are, however, a number of areas for improvement with regard to the lack of **investment in new technology** accepting the need for a viable return on investment. There are a considerable number of manual tasks that could be automated with the right technology in place. Senior managers have expressed a desire to move towards customer self-service and we fully support this as the technology is well tested and proven in other District Councils.*

***Performance Management** needs to be more robust across the service with more individual performance data available in an appropriate format. All of the managers had access to appropriate data sources to enable them to manage performance effectively, but cited pressure of work as the main reason they did not maintain this data. As part of the Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) completed over summer 2015, all individual team members in RBS have been set targets.*

*We feel that the current service structure is not `fit for purpose` and does not fully meet current and future business needs. The service needs to be more customer focussed and create a culture of excellence, customer focus and celebrating success at the same time dealing with performance and training needs. The **integration and working arrangements** between the front and back office needs to be addressed as a priority as there is at times a “disconnect” between front and back office in terms of what they are each trying to achieve to enhance the customer’s journey. There are also opportunities to improve efficiencies, increase resilience and improve customer service.*

*There is minimal **procedural written guidance** for staff to refer to when they have a query, most of the knowledge and expertise is `in the heads` of managers and more experienced staff. In addition there is no Training Plan or Training Needs Analysis for the service, and there is minimal `on the job` training to help with individual and service development. **Quality checking** is not carried out by managers on a regular basis and errors made by staff are not fed back into the system, so that effective training can be identified and needs met*

The overall effect of the above is that the daily workloads of managers and staff tend to be mainly reactive leaving little time for any pro-active work to improve and further develop the service. In addition, there is minimal resilience built into the service, with managers having to `do the work` to keep on top of things and there is a general lack of cover for some key areas of work. Again, the small size of the teams contributes to this.

Many staff expressed the view that more staff were required to do a proper job, however, it is apparent that significant productivity gains can be achieved by re-structuring the service; implementation of new technology; effective performance management; extending current levels of generic working; better training; and other `simple tweaks` such as the more effective utilisation of staff in some areas.

3.2 Customer Services

	Budget 2015/16
Direct Costs	£
Employees	248,060
Premises	0
Transport	900
Supplies and Services	6,820
Total	255,780
Direct Income	0
Total Net Direct Costs	255,780

The Customer Service team of Specialist Customer Service Advisers (the front office for the RBS service) consists of 5.9 full time equivalents and is managed by 2 Senior Customer Service Advisers and a Service Manager (all of whom have additional duties outside of RBS.)

The team is required to undertake the following duties to support RBS:

- **Scanning and indexing** correspondence and incoming post.
- **Face to Face and telephone enquiries** including for Council Tax, NDR, housing benefit and Council Tax reduction including overpayment recovery, changes of circumstances for revenues and benefits, setting up direct debit payments, recovery arrangements, benefit application verification, death notifications, BID recovery, setting up instalment plans for recovery payments, single person

discount, Council Tax and NDR refunds, Council Tax occupation and vacation, claim checks.

Findings of Peopletoo:

*The service **performs well** and understands the challenges and opportunities to build upon the current customer service levels. There is a strong customer focus and willingness to innovate.*

*Staff are rotated between face-to-face, telephone and scanning duties. A limited flexi time system is in place which appears to be well managed. Restrictions on when leave can be taken are in place. Generally, staff appear to be **well managed** and comfortable with the current workload, with low turnover.*

***Sickness absence** is below District Council average at 7.5 days lost per FTE. This level is reasonable for a front office team although there is room for improvement within existing sickness management processes which would improve resilience.*

*It is a relatively small team with limited resilience and is split between RBS and other LDC services with the majority of management and supervisory support directed towards the RBS elements (estimated 75%). **Management and supervision levels** look high at a 1:5 ratio, with best in class being between 1:10 and 1:15. However, the two senior staff spend the majority of their time on direct customer activities bringing the actual level to around 1:10 and given the overall size of the team and breadth of services, management resourcing appears to just be in balance, although at a cost premium given around half the management capacity is carrying out operational duties.*

*The **staffing budget** for the service appears well managed and there does not appear to be any budgetary issues. The cost of services carried out on behalf of other District Councils is fully recovered.*

*There are a number of areas for improvement including the **front and back office communication** and liaison with RBS particularly with regard to Council Tax recovery. There is scope to deepen integration with the back office with the transfer of further work to the front office and re-engineer key processes from the customer's perspective. LDC needs to consider other options to increase economies of such as utilising services of external organisations, for example, in scanning and indexing and overflow call taking*

*Limited **digitalisation and self-service** (e-forms and end-to-end automation) technology is deployed. There is moderate scope for efficiency gains from bar coding, self-service/channel shift and better use of technology, although it is unlikely, given the small scale, that a reasonable return on investment will be achieved*

4. The Customer Journey

One of the key themes to emerge from the Peopletoo report was the opportunity to improve customer service through better integration of the front and back office teams and by reviewing and streamlining the processes used to underpin service delivery. Consequently, further work was commissioned to better understand how the in house service could drive out duplication and inefficiency whilst also delivering a better customer experience. ICE Creates was engaged to undertake some detailed work with the RBS team to identify a definitive list of processes, map them, improve them and identify opportunities to use all technology so that customers could access services at their convenience. The full report of their findings is available [HERE](#).

The scope of this exercise included:

- Billing and collection of Council Tax and business rates.
- Assessment and award of housing benefit.
- Recovery of corporate debt.
- Assessment of client contribution towards residential or domiciliary care, known as Fairer Charging.

Working alongside the RBS and Connects teams, 9 processes were mapped in their current state ('as is') and in their future state ('to be').

Customers who visited the office were asked why they had visited the office and what they thought of their experience. In all cases customers responded positively being pleased with the service, one describing it as 'brilliant' and another commented that they were given 'thorough and clear advice'. When asked how they thought we might improve the service there comments around the waiting times and that an online option would be preferable.

ICE Creates made a range of detailed recommendations for improvement some of which can be summarised as follows:

First point of contact (revenues) – our view is that it would be possible for the Connects staff to undertake and deal with to completion much of the revenues demand received at first point of contact including single person discounts, setting up direct debits, inputting special arrangements and creating refunds. This would reduce the duplication and double handling currently taking place. Single person discount on line forms have been tested and are now in use; further forms should be developed to remove the need for manual scanning and indexing

First point of contact (benefits) – we recommend putting the benefits assessor expertise at the front line for face-to-face enquiries. The data has shown that all claims are double handled at present and that in some cases information that is not required is asked for. However, in the case of 47% of new claims, insufficient information is present for the back office to process the claim and these claimants have to be written to in order to gain further information

Indexing of emails – we recommended moving indexing of incoming emails into the Connects team as this function would align logically to their current experience and expertise in this area

Better use of IT – improvements can be made through better use of the Northgate system for reviews; if entered for all new claims the reviews could be run by date and undertaken in a co-ordinated way and release capacity

Recovery – special arrangements should be directly input onto the Northgate system by the officer who agrees the arrangement with the customer

ICE Creates also provided some general observations and conclusions from their time working with LDC:

*It is evident that staff are fully committed to doing a good job and show passion and dedication to their roles. There are some factors that make this difficult at times including the fact that the end-to-end customer experience is delivered across **multiple services managed across separate Directorates**.*

*There are opportunities to **enhance the use of technology** in the service and we believe that this again requires greater insight and intelligence to understand the needs of the business. Initially the move to put all current forms on line is step one but we also believe that there is the capacity to move applications for housing benefit and Council Tax reduction to an online*

solution. There is also an option to implement an on line pre claim system which would allow customers to self-assess their initial eligibility to entitlement before submitting an actual claim.

5. Informal Market Assessment

As part of the externally facilitated exercise carried out by Peopletoo, an informal market assessment was undertaken to consider the relative merits for LDC to partner with the private sector for either discrete elements of the service or full externalisation. Peopletoo did not engage with other District Councils given the limited appetite for a shared service and given that no other neighbouring LDCs use the same core software systems. However, they undertook an informal market assessment with four proven private sector providers as agreed with LDC.

Findings of Peopletoo:

All organisations consider substantial savings can be made through fully outsourcing the services with a wide range of savings in staffing costs from 15% to 40%. It would be prudent to use the median / lower end of this range at this early stage, 15% to 20% of direct costs ranging from £210,000 to £280,000 on total direct costs of £1,400,000 for 2015/16. This indicative saving makes no account of client management costs for a fully outsourced service. LDC has a fully outsourced IT support service with a client management function at a cost of £95,000 for 2015/16. By using the same level of client side cost for RBS, it would offset any potential savings from a fully outsourced RBS ranging from £115,000 to £185,000. This saving does not include any redundancy costs, these costs would be considered as part of awarding any contract. The savings, together with client management and redundancy costs, would have to be validated in more detail at the next stage if LDC makes the decision to proceed with further market consultation.

The market was consistent in wanting the front and back office to be included to maximise efficiencies and income generation. However, this creates a difficulty in that the remainder of Lichfield Connects would be very small (circa 8 FTE) and therefore the market would be keen to take that a step further and include all of Lichfield Connects. All providers expressed an interest in the outsourced IT contract when it is renewed, which would provide further efficiencies for LDC.

Clearly, Northgate has an advantage in terms of being the existing service software provider and being the current corporate IT contract provider. Northgate would offer a further efficiency if LDC combined all aspects and extended the current IT contract for a period of 3 years beyond the current 2 years remaining.

Numerous areas of the service could be provided as a partial externalisation option individually or from any group of those listed below and would provide both financial, quality and resilience benefits to LDC, for example:

- *Customer telephone call handling and call management including overflow.*
- *Back office benefits processing.*
- *ICT operation and strategic technology developments.*
- *Income collection and debt recovery including automation tools.*
- *Scanning and indexing.*

LDC could also consider a phased approach - improve in-house first (with partial externalisation of services where appropriate) and then test the market potentially when the IT contract is due for renewal as well as assessing the appetite from neighbouring LDCs for shared services.

A further opportunity in externalisation would be securing investment in technology on a longer return on investment basis.

There is a risk that following a period of in-house transformation alongside partial externalisation, the market may not be able to make a full externalisation viable.

We do not consider that customer service would be impaired by externalising services.

The visit to Wychavon confirmed that savings and efficiencies could be made by Authorities combining, subject to certain criteria, such as the same IT platform. Outsourcing to Capita did not add any significant savings, but did bring in commercial opportunities to open up as a processing centre for other sites.

Although ICE Creates were not asked to specifically comment on possible delivery options, they did offer the following opinion in the conclusion of their report:

*There are options for the future of the service to be outsourced to a third party, enter into a shared service arrangement with other Local Authorities; retain the service in house. Having undertaken this review, it is our opinion that with the implementation of the recommendations and the development of a continuous improvement methodology that the **service would be best delivered as a retained in house service**. Greater control through this option allows the service to have the flexibility to react to changes in the characteristics of demand which will inevitably happen in future. However, the organisation has the skills and capability within its own establishment to meet these challenges and react accordingly with specialist support where required.*

6. Activity, Performance and Benchmarking

ICE Creates undertook an analysis of the volumes of service requests dealt with by RBS. As at March 2016, there are 44,039 Council Tax properties listed on the Valuation List for LDC with a further 21 hereditaments currently banded with a provisional banding as new properties awaiting official valuation. There are 2,888 non-domestic properties subject to business rates. For the 2015/16 financial year, approximately 189 new Council Tax properties have been added to the list and 4 non-domestic assessments.

Annual bills for 2016/17 issued in March have total liabilities amounting to:

- Council Tax £56,721,555²
- Non-Domestic Rates £36,567,673³

The benefits/Council Tax reduction caseload consists of approximately:

- 4,392 housing benefit claims
- 5,465 Council Tax reduction claims

The number of new housing benefit claims has been slowly reducing. The average between April 2014 and July 2014 was 37 new claims received per week, which has reduced to 30 per week between November 2015 and February 2016.

For the period April 2015 to February 2016 the team has dealt with:

- 13,276 change of circumstances service requests equating to an average of 282 per week

² Income to LDC from Council Tax is 10% of the income collected.

³ Income to LDC from Non-Domestic Rates is 40% of the income collected.

- 15,715 Council Tax processes equating to an average of 334 per week
- 1,461 non-domestic rates processes equating to an average of 31 per week
- 4,146 recovery processes equating to an average of 88 per week

Information has been extracted from various LG Futures⁴ reports from the last three years – attached at **Appendix 3**. This has been separated into two categories:

6.1 Wider measures impacting on RBS – such as growth in Council Tax properties and Business Rate Rateable Value and Council Tax rates which highlights the following:

Growth in LDC's tax base is higher than both the national average and our near neighbours. The higher the tax base, the more able LDC is to fund local services; however the tax base is impacted upon by LDC's Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Whilst growth in the tax base is positive, the band D property charge is lower than the England average, whilst slightly higher than our near neighbours.

The growth in business rates is higher than the national average and our near neighbours. Growth in business rates is based on the aggregate rateable value in an area and includes increases due to new or changed business premises and the type of new business premise.

6.2 Specific RBS performance information – such as unit costs for Housing Benefit administration and Local Council Tax collection plus collection rates which highlights the following:

The average unit costs from the administration are higher than the national average and our near neighbours and have increased further in the last year. The increase does take account of the reduction in the benefits administration grant and the additional spend for new burdens.

Local taxation costs are lower than the national average and that of our near neighbours and collection rates are higher.

7. Future Challenges

7.1 Welfare Reform

The benefit cap is likely to be reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 for families with children (and there will be a commensurate reduction for single people) from Autumn 2016. It is estimated that between 149 and 199 households within the District will be affected. This will limit the amount of money that a household can receive through benefits; this will change is likely to impact on the teams dealing with changes to

⁴ LG futures are a bespoke consultancy firm for the public sector specialising in financial management and funding

housing benefit and Council Tax reduction entitlement, discretionary housing payments, collection of Council Tax and customer contact. Information about who is affected by the benefit cap is not available via existing HB records and is only held by the DWP. This makes it difficult for the service to predict with any accuracy how many people will be affected and as a consequence provide the correct resources.

7.2 Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Government are conducting a review of the principles of local schemes and the success or failure of them. This in addition to the reduction in government grants, may prompt an in depth review of LDC's scheme. Whilst the actual scheme is devised locally, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) require that once a scheme is set and approved it cannot be revised in year. DCLG also require that schemes are subject to formal consultation and that the results of any consultation are properly considered with any amendments made to the scheme prior to approval by full LDC. In these circumstances, work on the scheme must be started early in the year to achieve the timescales. It is a resource intensive project as consideration must be given to the ability of people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax and the affordability of the scheme by LDC.

7.3 Universal Credit

Although the numbers are minimal at the present time and apply to single people only, it is Government's intention to roll this out to couples and families. LDC may be affected early in 2017. However, the administration and payment of HB for pensioners and for working age people in supported accommodation will remain with LDC. Due to the demographics of Lichfield District approximately 60% of claimants for housing benefit and/or applicants for LCTS are pensioners. DWP require ongoing support from LDC for claimants of universal credit, including assistance with claiming and personal budgeting support. At the present time there is some limited funding for this but this is likely to be cut.

7.4 Demographic change

Based on the Local Plan, there will be a growth in households of circa 10,000 new houses and potentially more having regard to the housing needs of Birmingham. This will impact on the resources of LDC's billing and recovery teams. LDC is required to ascertain the liable parties, bill correctly as soon as practicable and recover all debts. Failure to collect Council Tax has an impact on income for all the precepting authorities but most notably the county LDC.

The Friarsgate development will also put additional pressure on the resources of the revenues teams. As LDC keep 40% of the business rates, it forms a significant income stream.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) are becoming a popular system for local businesses to raise income to improve custom. LDC provides a billing and collection service for the BIDS. At the present time there is just one BID but it is anticipated that there will be more, adding further pressures to resources.

Both of the above would need to be factored into forward plans.

8. Expenditure and Reserves

8.1 Income Generation

The Peopletoo report provided several recommendations about the potential to generate additional income including the following:

- Discussion with Staffordshire County Council and other Staffordshire Councils with regard to reviewing discounts and exemptions needs to be pursued, as LDC could be losing income. These exercises needs to be repeated on a regular basis.
- LDC needs to consider imposing penalties for discounts and exemptions using this sanction as both a deterrent and additional source of income.
- The 2 months exemption currently granted when a domestic property becomes unoccupied and unfurnished needs to be stopped with LDC charging full Council Tax from the date the property becomes empty.
- Wider use of the full range of recovery sanctions, including prosecutions, for failing to provide financial information.

8.2 Cost Savings

As stated above and as with all F4F Service Reviews, this review has not been solely about reducing costs of service delivery. However, a provisional target cost saving of £100,000 has recently been set for the review as part of the development of LDC's Efficiency Plan. Peopletoo described the savings they considered quantifiable as follows:

Financial Improvements	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£	£	£	£
Savings				
• Merge Head of Services	0	0	52,590	52,590
• Billing Manager	0	45,140	45,140	45,140
• Visiting Officer	6,450	25,780	25,780	25,780
• Investigations Manager	0	54,110	54,110	54,110
• Benefits Assistant	0	5,170	26,000	26,000
• Grade E to H posts - 2 FTEs per annum from 2017/18	0	0	61,590	123,180
Total Savings	£6,450	£130,200	£262,510	£326,800
Income Generation				
• Court costs - summons and liability order	0	27,090	27,090	27,090
• Empty property exemption	0	30,350	30,350	30,350
• Improved collection of aged debt (bad debts)	0	15,400	30,400	44,700
• Penalties	0	7,000	7,000	7,000
• Failure to provide prosecutions	0	18,000	18,000	18,000
Total Income Generation	£0	£97,840	£112,840	£127,140
Total Savings	£6,450	£228,040	£375,350	£453,940

8.3 Savings already made

The Investigations Manager and Visiting Officer posts have already been offered up as a permanent saving of £79,000 from April 2016 (saving £242,000 between 2016/17 and 2018/19).

8.4 Savings identified

The corporate management restructure (subject to approval by Council) will create further opportunities to reduce management costs. Although it is too soon to quantify the value of reducing operational inefficiencies, Peopletoo considered there could be further productivity gains.

8.5 Reserves

For several years LDC has received New Burdens Grant to assist with the adoption of new practices within RBS. The unspent grant has been allocated to an earmarked reserve which is to the value of £185,380. Additional earmarked reserves are also available to progress channel shift. This can be seen as an invest to save measure with savings and service improvements being possible through the investment of these earmarked reserves now to improve processes, customer experience and opportunities for digitalisation.

9. Emerging themes.

Having regard to the findings from the two externally facilitated diagnostics, there are some key themes which are consistent between them and reflect feedback from customers and staff.

9.1 Structural and cultural issues

The split between the front office and back office functions means that the customer experience of the service is not as good as it could be. The lack of integration between the teams is resulting in a demarcation of responsibilities, too much focus on 'the process' and not enough on 'customer need'. Also, backlogs in the back office result in more customer contacts, especially in the front office which can lead to delays, more abandoned phone calls and general customer dissatisfaction.

The skills and experience of the front of house staff could be developed further to enable them to process simple transactions at the first point of contact, therefore providing a better service both to the customer and to the back office team. Confining the back office teams to just processing claims has resulted in less customer interaction.

The split is reinforced by having separate Service Managers for the front and back office functions (although the individual officers work collaboratively and co-operatively together). These Managers report into different Directorates which could also be perceived as mitigating against process improvement (parts of a single process fall within different line management arrangements). This issue is recognised and dealt with in the proposed management restructure by the establishment of a new Head of Service post reporting to a single Director.

There is also an issue of the resilience of the teams and the reduced capacity of small teams to deal with peaks and troughs in demand, leave and sickness absence. There are also some specialist roles in the RBS service which are occupied by a single individual which risks continuity during periods of absence.

The current RBS team has several temporary arrangements in place pending the outcome of this Review. Agency cover has been used extensively and this is not sustainable (from a practical or financial perspective). A review of the structure to address the resilience issues and enable more permanent arrangements to be established needs to be undertaken to meet the needs of the service.

9.2 Customer Journey

Both of the externally facilitated exercises highlighted the opportunity to make service delivery improvements which would benefit customers and these are described in detail above. Recommendations were also made about other changes which could be made to assist the customer including:

- Offering more direct debit payment dates.
- Consideration needs to be given to staggering the posting of reminders and summonses, to alleviate pressure on the Customer Contact Centre and enable more customers to get through at the first attempt.
- The use of bulk SMS texting needs to also be considered as this will help to reduce the number of paper documents currently being issued and smooth out customer response.

Improving our communications, letters and web content could reduce service demand and allow customers to help themselves⁵; thinking about what we write and how we write it could reduce the impact of face to face enquiries and telephone calls and contribute towards the achievement of our Customer Promise

9.3 Information Technology

A common theme running through the review has been the need to make better use of existing technology and to facilitate 'channel shift' for customers so that they can have more control about when and how they access RBS. This would also help to reduce the number of calls and visits to LDC House and the Connects team thus releasing capacity for other service areas to migrate in and thereby in turn releasing capacity in those service areas. There is a commitment in our Strategic Plan setting out LDC's intention to maximise the opportunities of digitalisation, channel shift and improve customer focus and there is a separate Channel Shift F4F Review underway which is considering a range of initiatives to promote new ways of engaging with LDC.

Peopletoo concluded there is moderate scope for efficiency gains from improving ICT as follows:

- The indexing of post is carried out manually. Bar coding could be considered as a way of automating the process.

⁵ Note that as the welfare reform agenda continues to be implemented, although more customers will deal exclusively with the Department of Works and Pensions (for Universal Credit), those customers who continue to access their benefits through LDC often have more complex needs and require more time to support.

- There is no self-service in place. An investment in e-forms and automating through to service delivery could present the opportunity to reduce resources or release capacity. This could benefit other services delivered to customers through the front office if channel shift takes place and a resulting reduction in face to face and phone volumes occurs.

It should be noted that the small scale of the customer service team will make fully realising savings through reduced staffing difficult as the operation is already close to minimum staffing levels.

- If self-service was implemented then a review of the current CRM systems (Lagan and Comino) needs to be undertaken as moving the face to face and phone processes over to replicate the self-service processes may make one or both of these systems redundant providing ICT systems savings.

However, Peopletoo cautioned that any ICT improvements and developments made would need to be carefully considered in terms of the return on investment achieved. Owing to the small scale of the customer service operation the pay-back period may be prohibitive. In addition, the Lagan CRM is 3 years into a 7 year contract which is likely to be cost prohibitive to break and the CRM has replaced some other back office systems and is integrated with the joint waste system so may pose challenges to extricate.

9.4 Performance Management

Performance management needs to be more robust and embedded across RBS with more individual performance data available and utilised. The data collected needs to be meaningful for the staff and managers, thus incentivising its collation and active use in reallocation of resources to underperforming areas and at peak times. Peopletoo acknowledged high level monitoring with regard to the number of documents completed by teams but some of this was not up to date and had not been populated for some months. All of the managers have access to appropriate data sources to enable them to manage performance effectively, but cited pressure of work as the main reason they did not maintain this data. Managing individual performance is a basic requirement in any service and this issue needs to be addressed.

9.5 Delivery Options

The report from Peopletoo was received in Autumn 2015; this did not provide a conclusive recommendation for a preferred option for the future delivery of RBS but did indicate that there are opportunities to achieve savings from externalisation as well as to improve and achieve savings from the in house service if a financial Improvement Plan is developed and delivered. So there is an opportunity for the District LDC to make and retain savings in house (as a contribution towards the Efficiency Plan) as an alternative to enabling a contractor to do likewise.

Peopletoo concluded that further work would be required to better quantify the opportunities and risks of an outsourcing option. The externalisation option offers a transfer of risk from LDC and would negate the need to undertake operational management such as sickness absence and peaks in demand. However, there would

continue to be certain statutory functions⁶ that LDC would be required to undertake directly and would therefore need to retain the necessary capacity and expertise in house. Although a transfer of risk may be beneficial, there would be a reduction in the extent to which LDC could exert its control over an outsourced service eg reduced ability to influence demand management and reduced strategic capacity for channel shift and service improvement across other service areas.

In addition, the legislative framework around RBS is subject to regular change and this could present contractual challenges (and costs) in relation to an outsourced service (ie if Government were to introduce a new statutory duty upon local authorities which is not part of the outsourced contract). LDC has limited experience and skills in contract management and therefore some investment would be needed to enhance in house capabilities in this area.

Peopletoo considered that there would be more interest from potential contractors if the whole of RBS and the Connects team (not just the Specialist Advisers who focus on RBS front office duties) were to be externalised. However, the outsourcing of the residual front office function (dealing with all other phone and face to face enquiries) is not considered desirable; the loss of control on the front face of LDC could have significant reputational risks. In addition, Connects will play a significant role in achieving our aspirations for digitalisation and improved customer service under the Strategic Plan.

A full review of the potential benefits of the service to both LDC and the wider Staffordshire local government family, through public sector reform, has not been carried out and it would be inadvisable to make a decision impacting the service to this extent without undertaking such a review. There is the potential now to improve services and save money through an in house Improvement Plan, and this opportunity should not be further delayed by undertaking further reviews. However, we could look again at the potential for shared service delivery once the improvements are realised locally.

⁶ LDC are still required to represent at Court; complete the benefit subsidy claim; a minimum quality check of benefit decisions. They are also still responsible for any changes to their local Council Tax reduction scheme.

10. Key proposals and recommendations

10.1 Service improvement and development

- Develop a vision for the service which captures our aspirations.
- Develop a plan for integration of the front and back office functions with a particular emphasis on:
 - a) Connects team to undertake more of the revenues functions at first point of contact; this would include the following transactions for example the application of mandatory discounts, exemptions and reliefs to existing accounts; setting up direct debits and making agreeing and inputting appropriate payment arrangements.
 - b) Benefits assessor expertise to be delivered as a front office function.
- Roll out the new 'as is' processes identified by ICE Creates.
- Review the standard letters used in the RBS team from the perspective of the customer and ensure they are clear and transparent for the recipient.
- Identify options to amalgamate the RBS and Connects services into a unified team under a single Head of Service post⁷.
- Make better use of technological solutions in improving customer access and the customer journey including:
 - a) Bar codes to be introduced on letters and emails
 - b) Introduce on line forms for all RBS functions and integrate these into existing systems (Lagan CRM)
 - c) Run a procurement exercise for the document management system and commence conversion of paper files
 - d) Run a procurement exercise for the RBS software and integrate with the CRM
- Review opportunities to generate additional income and develop and implement a plan to deliver these
- Develop a performance management plan for the new unified team
- Reconsider the benefits of shared service and/or outsourcing in 2 – 3 years when in-house improvements have been achieved and the legislative landscape on RBS can be better assessed, and the role of the Customer Services team both locally and across the local government family in Staffordshire is clearer.

⁷ Note that the brief of the Connects team is far wider than just the front end of the RBS service and therefore a single Head of Service post holder would need an understanding of the breadth of functions undertaken by the team.

10.2 Alternative provision and service delivery

- Maintain an in house RBS service and seek to introduce improvements and cost savings having regard to the findings of the external diagnostic exercises.
- Consider whether there are opportunities to externalise niche services such as overflow calls, scanning and indexing post, off site processing, training and systems support.

10.3 Financial savings and investment

- Confirm the release of savings from the deletion of the Investigation Manager and Visiting Officer posts.
- Use New Burdens earmarked reserve to facilitate changes and improvements within the team.
- Maintain agency cover (one officer) within the Revenues Team whilst the new approach to service delivery is adopted⁸.

⁸ This will require Cabinet approval as the cost of Agency cover is soon likely to exceed the £50,000 expenditure limit.

KEY STATISTICS

Revenues and Benefits Service Key Statistics	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	Value	Value	Value
Number of domestic properties paying Council Tax (CT)	43609	43843	44,057
Council Tax (CT) Collection Rate	98.9	98.7	
Number of businesses paying business rates	2881	2881	2,884
Non Domestic Rate (NDR) Collection Rate	99%	98.5%	
Number of Housing Benefit (HB) claimants snapshot @ March 2016	4680	4479*	4377*
Number of Local Council Tax Relief (LCTR) claimants snapshot @ March 2016	Not held	5644**	5444**
Number of new HB claims/ LCTS application received during the financial year	1,934	1,775	1,578
Processing time (days) for new HB claims	26	19	20
Processing time (days) for new LCTS applications.		22	20
Number of HB changes received during the year	27514	16,238	16,019
Number of LCTS changes received during the year		13,367	13,546
Processing time (days) for changes in circumstances for HB claims	9	7	7
Processing time (days) for changes in circumstances for LCTS applications		7	8
Number of referral received for fairer charging assessments	Not held	Not held	385
Number of referral for help claiming welfare benefits	Not held	Not held	489
Number of referrals for residential care assessments Lichfield/Tamworth	Not held	Not held	268/224
Number of applications received for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP); % successful	254 46%	305 49%	231 55%
% of DHP budget spent	29%	40%	51%
Number of recovery actions taken on behalf of other services within LDC	Not held	33	32
Amount of outstanding corporate debt	£1,291,784	£1,234,446	£1,336,157
Amount of outstanding housing benefit overpayments	£487,671	£503,336	503,634
Number of compliments	2	2	19
Number of complaints	40	36	10

- * This figure includes LCTS and HB in addition to HB only claims.
- **This figures includes claims with HB and LCTS

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Lichfield Connects Service Key Statistics	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	Value	Value	Value
Number of contacts made in person	21,030	26,610	24,218
Number of phone calls received in the contact centre	137,582	138,963	124,820
Lichfield Connects - Average waiting time in minutes for Revenues & Benefits (face to face enquiries)	13.83	12.67	10.50
Number of calls received for RBS during the period in the contact centre	57,405	61,078	45,194
Percentage (%) of telephone calls not answered	8.04	6.82	9.17
Contact made in person relating to Revenues & Benefits	14,172	13,509	12,100
Number of compliments	1	2	55
Number of complaints	6	5	4

Appendix 2

Members of the original Review Team¹:

*Jane Kitchen	Director Finance, Revenues and Benefits (Project Executive)
*Helen Titterton	Strategic Director Community, Housing and Health (Challenge Director)
Nicola Begley	Income Recovery Manager
Debbie Ebdon	Assessment Officer
Martin Hunt	Assessment Manager
*Pat Leybourne	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Cathy Pepper	Human Resources Manager
Toni Sayce	Senior Customer Service Adviser
*Kevin Sleeman	Information Systems and Strategy Manager
*Ysanne Williams	Customer Services Manager
Nicola Woolridge	Administration Assistant

External Challenge

Julie Walker	Head of Neighbourhoods Bromford (until summer 2015) replaced by Wendy Phillips Bromford
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Supported by:

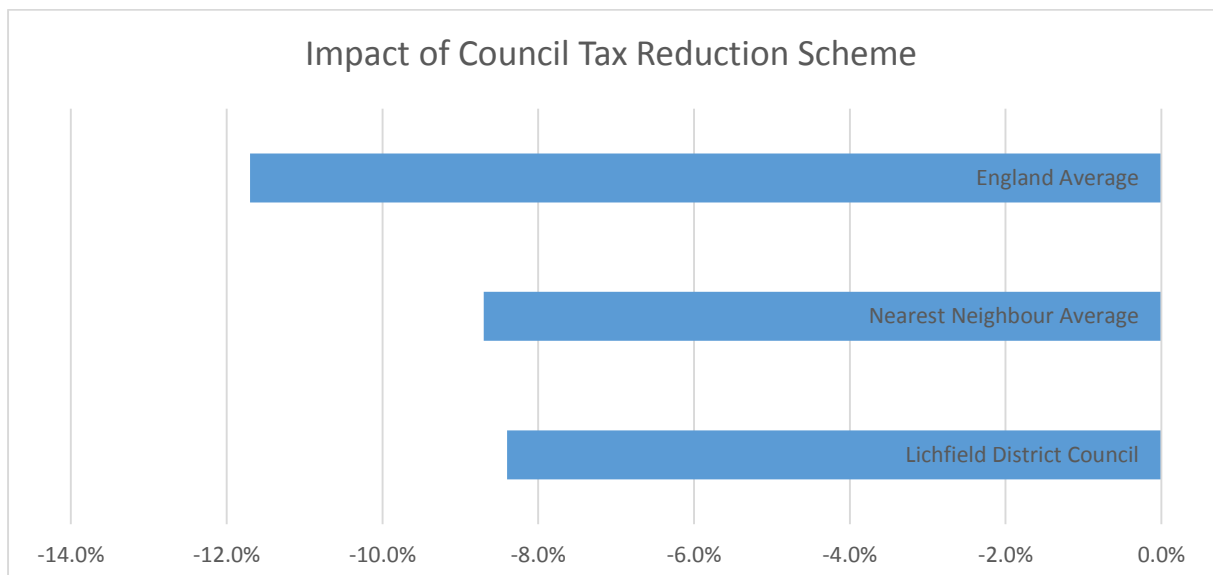
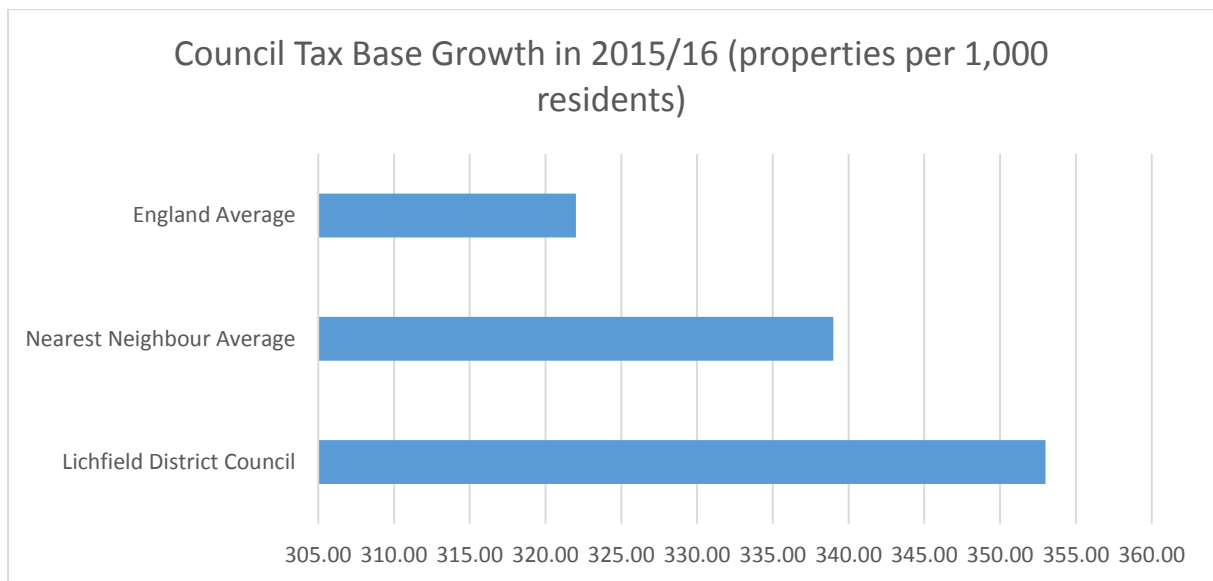
Sue Roberts	Systems/Quality Monitoring Manager
Janet Spencer	Benefits Training and Liaison Manager
Debbie Green	PA to the Director of Finance, Revenues and Benefits

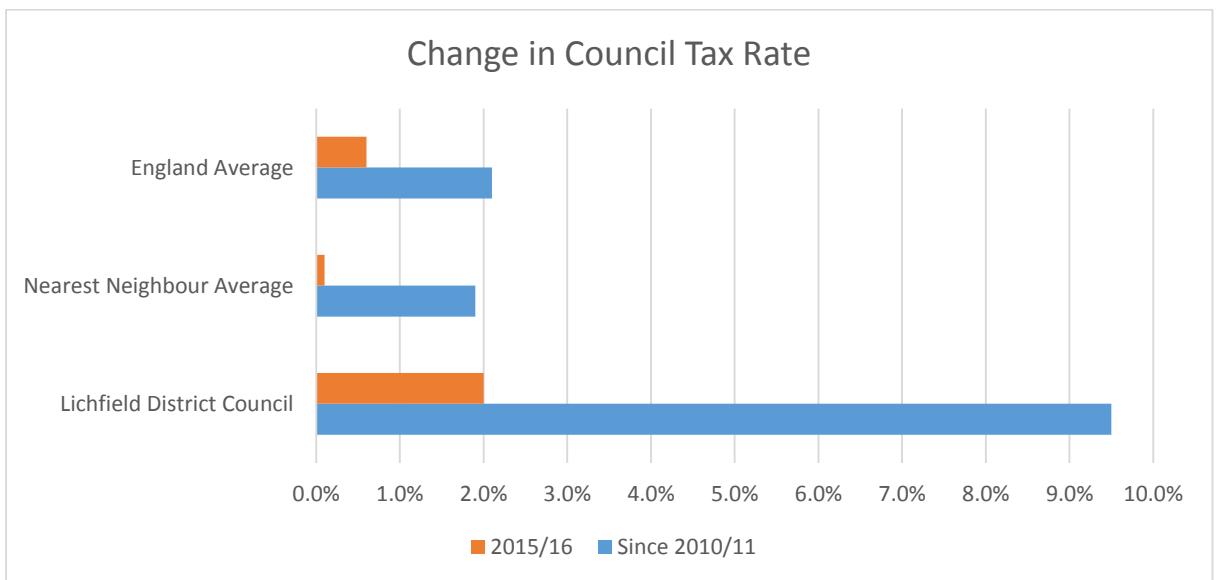
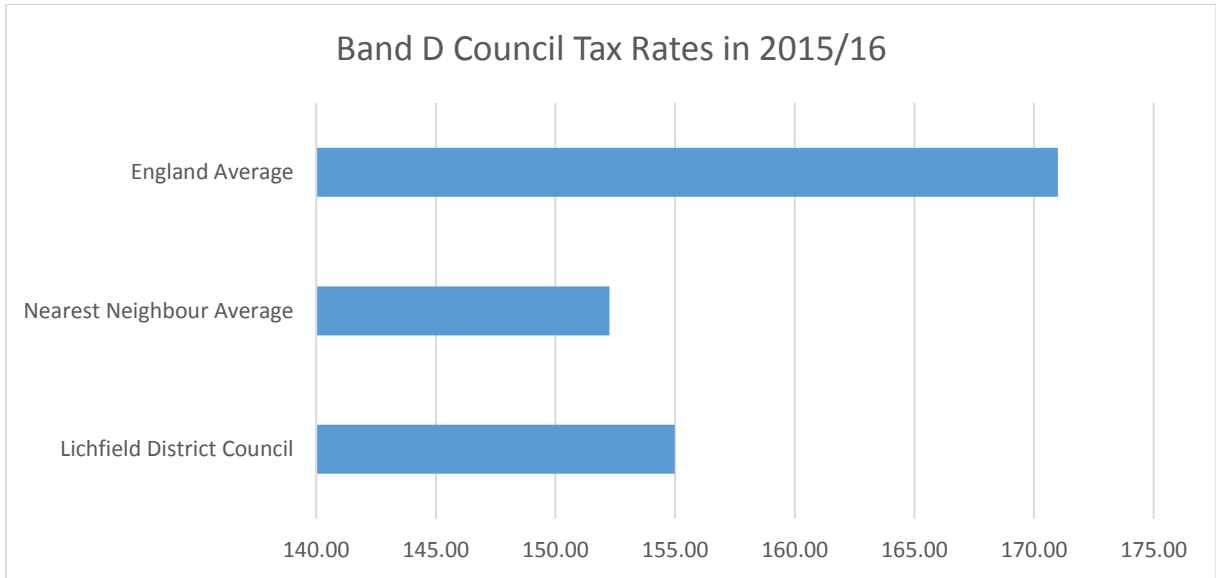
¹ Note that the composition of the team was reviewed following the production of the Peopletoo report and reduced to the officers marked with an asterisk (*)

Benchmarking RBS – Extracts from LG Futures Reports

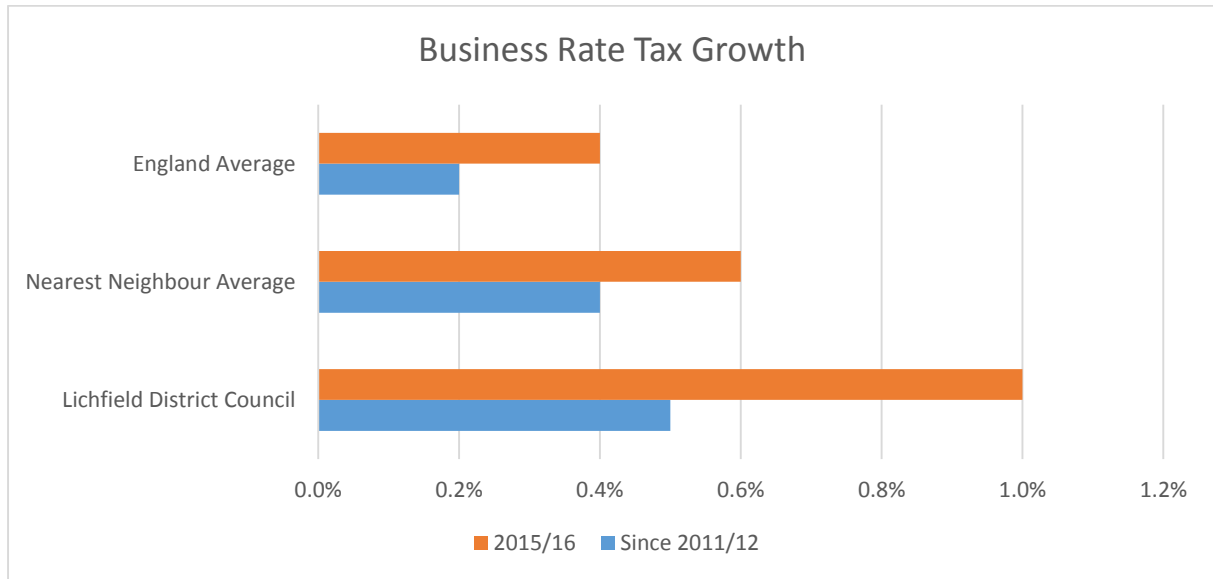
- **Wider Measures impacting on the Revenues and Benefits Team**

Council Tax Growth and Rates

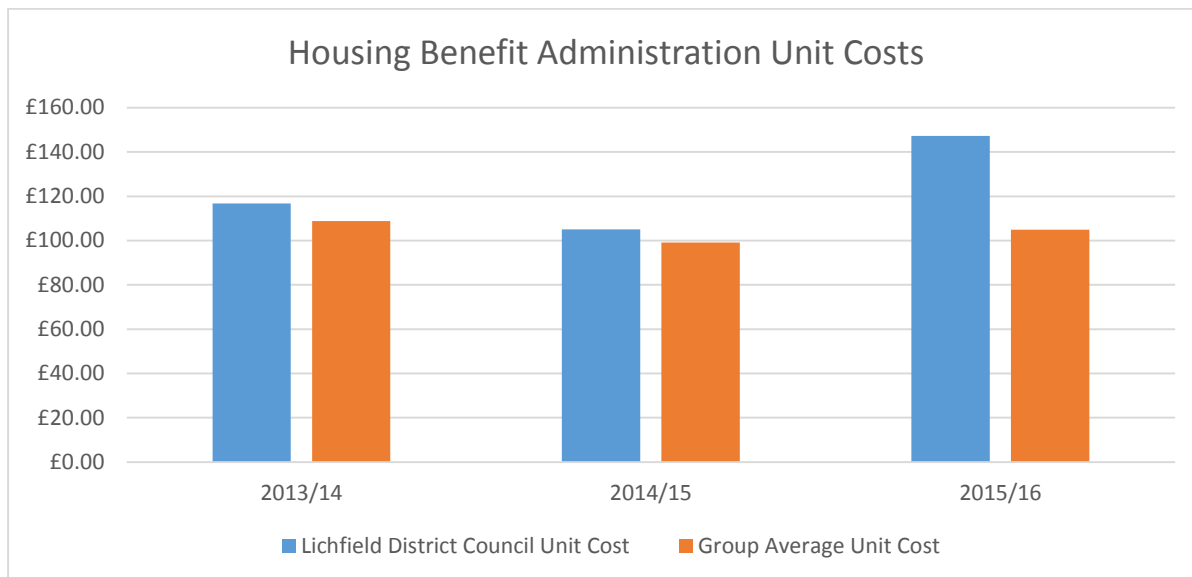




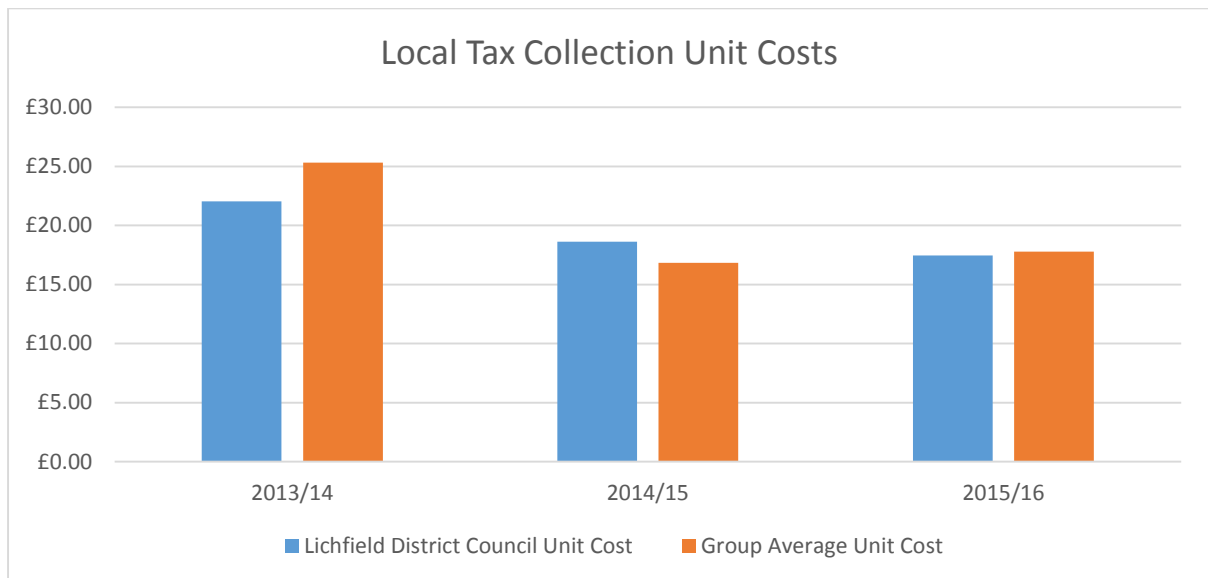
Business Rate Growth



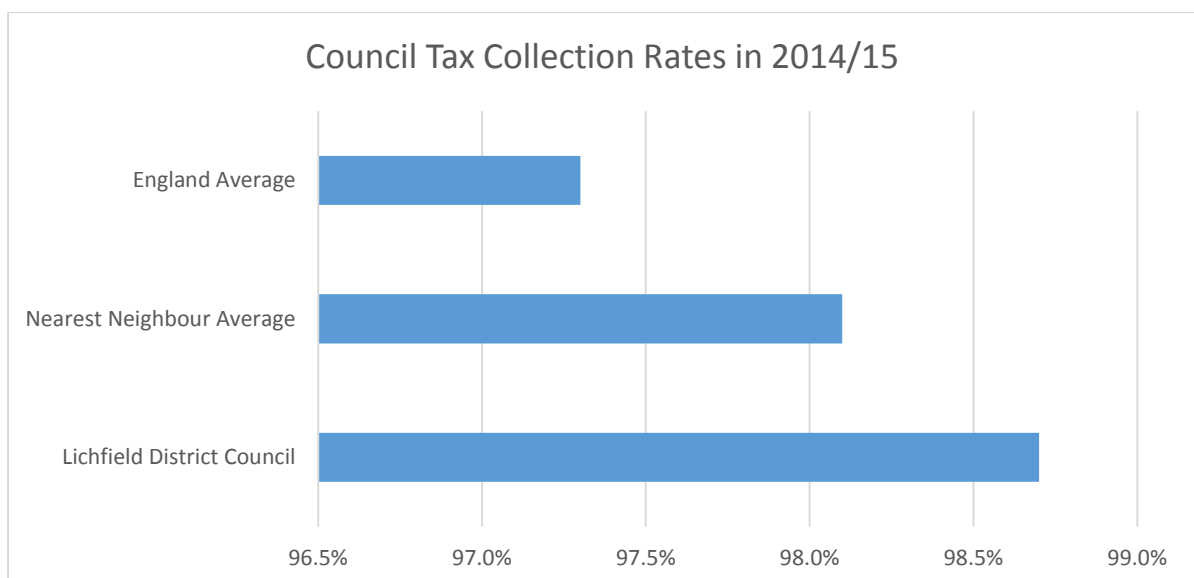
Specific Revenues and Benefits Team Performance Information



<u>Housing Benefits Administration</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Budget	£566,000	£495,000	£664,000
Housing Benefit Claimants	4,846	4,710	4,511
Unit Cost	£116.80	£105.11	£147.21
Group Average	£108.73	£99.06	£104.91
Difference from Average	7.4%	6.1%	40.3%
Rank in Nearest Neighbour Group (1=high)	6th out of 16	6th out of 16	4th out of 16



Local Tax Collection	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Budget	£777,000	£853,000	£806,000
Band D Properties	35,270		
Taxable Properties		45,786	46,163
Unit Cost	£22.03	£18.63	£17.46
Group Average	£25.32	£16.83	£17.78
Difference from Average	(13.0%)	10.7%	(1.8%)
Rank in Nearest Neighbour Group (1=high)	11th out of 16	5th out of 16	9th out of 16



END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW 2015/16 FOR THE DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES AND FINANCE, REVENUES AND BENEFITS DIRECTORATES



Report of the Cabinet Members for Democratic and Legal Services & Finance, Revenues and Benefits

Date:	8th June 2016
Agenda Item:	7
Contact Officer:	Richard King
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Key Decision?	NO
Local Ward Members	Relevant to all ward Members

**DEMOCRATIC AND
LEGAL SERVICES &
FINANCE, REVENUES
AND BENEFITS**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To advise Members of progress against the activities and projects set out in the Directorate's Top Ten / One Year Action Plan for 15/16. The report also includes statistical information (key performance indicators) relating to activity delivered by the Directorates during the last financial year. Both the narrative report and the related statistics reflect performance as at 31st March 2016.
- 1.2 To advise Members of the targets which have been proposed for the activity and performance indicators for the Directorate for 2016/17.
- 1.3 Members are invited to raise questions and comment (or where appropriate, request a more detailed report).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider and comment on the performance report overview for 15/16 which is attached at **Appendix A**, the statistical analysis attached at **Appendix B** and the targets for the 2016/17 performance indicators at **Appendix C**.

3. Background

- 3.1 During autumn 2014, Members and officers developed Service plans setting out the priorities and budget allocations for the following financial year for each of the teams which make up the totality of Council services. Approximately 14 separate Service Plans were produced and they were all reviewed via the overview and scrutiny process.
- 3.2 A top 10 was developed for each Directorate / Cabinet Member as a result of this exercise and these were reported to and endorsed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2015. The most significant and critical issues from the Directorate Top 10s were collated to form the Corporate Top 10 or Annual Action Plan which was approved by Full Council in February 2015.
- 3.3 The end of year performance report against the Directorate Top 10 for Democratic and Legal Services and Finance, Revenues and Benefits is attached at **Appendix A**. Some of the Actions set out were deemed to be so significant corporately that they were included in the Corporate Top 10 / Annual Action Plan for 2015/16. Progress on the corporate top ten actions will be reported to Cabinet in July 2016 (which will reflect any comments made by this Committee in relation to the attached report)
- 3.4 A copy of the performance report for the Democratic and Legal Services and Finance, Revenues and Benefits portfolios is attached at **Appendix A**. This Committee has contributed to several of the activities

and projects which feature in the Top Ten including: providing induction and training for Members conducting Parliamentary, District and Parish elections, reviewing assets, reviewing the Overview and Scrutiny function, monitoring of budgets, delivering savings through the Fit 4 Future Programme and maximising external funding and the computer upgrade programme.

- 3.5 Service Managers routinely monitor activity and performance delivered by their teams; progress against key performance indicators is attached at **Appendix B**. Some data is collected monthly, others quarterly.
- 3.6 At the last meeting of this Committee, Members considered the activity and performance indicators for 2016/17. These PIs have been developed having regard to the Directorate Top 10 (approved in January 2016), other service issues / policy or legislative changes and the comments and suggestions made by Members of this Committee. Targets for these PIs have been proposed having regard to performance during 2016/17. The PIs and their related targets are attached at **Appendix C**

Alternative Options	APPENDICES A and B are for noting Members could suggest alternative performance targets for 2016/17 (APPENDIX C)
Consultation	There has not been any consultation on this report. However, there has been consultation in relation to some of the specific actions set out in APPENDIX A .
Financial Implications	None arising directly from this report. A more detailed report on the Council's performance against the financial strategy will be considered by Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in September. At the year end, the Democratic and Legal Services Directorate had underspent by £23189 (excluding reserves). Finance, Revenues and Benefits Directorate had underspent by £12412.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	This report demonstrates that the Democratic and Legal Services and Finance, Revenues and Benefits made a significant contribution to achieving the aims of the Plan for Lichfield District 2012-16 including those activities referred to in paragraph 3.4 above.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	Equality and diversity implications are considered during the planning and delivery of the day to day activities of the Directorates.
Crime & Safety Issues	This Committee has considered the following issues associated with crime and Safety; review of the Council's assets.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Information provided to Members is too 'high level' and inadequate for robust scrutiny	Members can request further details or a separate report on any item referred to in the report. The Cabinet Members, Director and Service Managers are in attendance at the O&S meeting and can elaborate on the content of the report	Green

Background documents

Directorate Top 10 – reported the Strategic O&S in January 2015
Mid Year Performance report - reported to Strategic O&S in January 2016

Relevant web links

Democratic and Legal Services Directorate

✓	<i>On Target</i>
=	<i>In Progress</i>
X	<i>Behind Target</i>

Operate within the Directorate's budget and implement Fit for the Future (Phase 2) Service Reviews

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
To ensure the Directorate operates within approved budgets (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	The Service is operating within approved budgets
Complete review of Assets (Councillor Spruce)	31-Dec-2015	✓	<p>Position at June Minor changes made to asset management but further work is required. Thorough review of property portfolio completed and Industrial Units being disposed of. Marketing of Bore Street shops continuing. PSP engaged to look at asset opportunities.</p> <p>Position at September Further to the June position, the lease of the Old Mining College has been transferred to Burntwood Town Council; and the industrial Units at both Lichfield and Burntwood have been disposed of. Review of asset management arrangements is underway.</p> <p>Position at December Interest is being shown in the Bore Street shops that will hopefully lead to a firm offer being made. Condition survey of District Council House has been undertaken.</p> <p>Position at March Cabinet approval to enter into Partnership with PSP to maximise use of Council assets. Kier Property Services to provide support following departure of Property Services Manager.</p>

Deliver 2015 elections and facilitate a smooth transfer to the new Council

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Administer the Parliamentary, District and Parish Elections (Councillor Spruce)	7-May-15	✓	<p>Position at June The elections were administered on 7th May 2015, with verification and counts being completed on Friday 8th May and all results declared.</p> <p>Action completed</p>
Provide comprehensive induction pack and training for Members (Councillor Spruce)	31-May-15	✓	<p>Position at June An induction was prepared in advance of the election and provided to all elected Members and some positive feedback has been received. An induction programme is underway and has already covered a range of key topics including planning, regulatory and licensing functions and equality and diversity</p>

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
			<p>Position at September During the last quarter, Member training took place on Planning, Equality and Diversity and a tour for Members of leisure facilities took place</p> <p>Position at December Further training of Members has taken place including Probity Training, Safeguarding and Chelsea's Choice (regarding child sexual exploitation)</p> <p>Position at March Ongoing programme of training for Members in place.</p>

Implement Individual Electoral Registration

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Organise the first full household canvass under Individual Registration and publish a register of electors on 1 December 2015 (Councillor Spruce)	1-Dec-15	✓	<p>The canvass is underway, with the house-to-house enquiries stage (following up remaining 25% of non-responding households) due to commence on Friday 9th October.</p> <p>Position at December the canvass was completed with publication of the new register on 1 December 2015. The transition to IER was brought forward by Government and ended on 1 December 2015. Action completed</p>

Implement the Parliamentary Order regarding new Ward Boundaries

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Order to be implemented for May 2015 elections (Councillor Spruce)	7-May-15	✓	<p>The boundary changes were implemented and the electoral register updated prior to the administration of the District and Parish elections. Action completed</p>

Seek to dispose of Bore Street Shops and Industrial Units if reasonable offers are received

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Complete legal documentation giving effect to the transfer of the total assets (Councillor Spruce)	31-Jun-2015	X	<p>The Industrial Units have all been sold. Whilst the Bore Street shops are on the market and several expressions of interest have been received no bids have been received. Alternative options are being considered and a condition survey has been commissioned.</p> <p>Position at March PSP Partnership to explore options for disposal.</p>

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Progress Partnership Agreement to maximise the return on the Council's property portfolio

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Enter into Partnership Agreement as appropriate (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	An initial report has been received from Public Sector Plc (PSP) and a report was considered by Cabinet on 8 th March 2016 when it was decided to move towards setting up a limited liability partnership. Position at March Cabinet approval obtained to enter into Partnership with PSP
Report progress and options to Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Spruce)	31-Jun-16	✓	Report to be submitted once options have been identified. Position at March Cabinet approval obtained to enter into Partnership with PSP

Complete Section 106 Agreements

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Complete a minimum of 10 Section 106 Agreements (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	8 completed this quarter Position at March 34 Section 106 Agreements completed in 2015/16.

Consider and where appropriate implement the findings of the Peer Review

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Review purpose, structure and approach to Overview & Scrutiny (Councillor Spruce)	31-Oct-2015	✓	Position at June Following on from the Peer Review, a development session took place in May (post election) facilitated by the Office for Public Scrutiny in order to explore what the Council might need to do to further develop its approach to scrutiny. This event resulted in some proposed actions such as Triangulation Meetings between O&S Chair and Vice Chairs and Cabinet Members, fewer items on O&S Committee agendas with greater use of briefing papers that are to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group on 8 July 2015. O & S training took place for all Members on 27 May and was well attended Position at September A number of initiatives have been commenced including fewer report to O & S Committees, more briefing papers and Triangulation meetings have taken place. A Task Group has been established to monitor progress of the Overview and Scrutiny review Position at December A meeting of the O & S Improvement Task Group has taken place. Revised report template has been produced and new format for Briefing of Members has been agreed to allow more focussed O & S meetings with manageable Agendas.
Implement changes (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	=	Changes being implemented and Task Group monitoring it.

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
			Position at March Update on progress of Overview and Scrutiny review given to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Review Statement of Licensing Policy and Statement of Principles

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Review Statement of Licensing Policy and Statement of Principles (Councillor Spruce)	31-Dec-15	✓	Draft licensing policy out for consultation with closing date for comments on 18th October. Draft gambling policy (statement of principles) out for consultation with a closing date of 29th October for any comments. Relevant feedback will be incorporated into each policy and the final drafts presented at Regulatory & Licensing committee on 25th November, with a view for Members to recommend ratification at the Full Council meeting on 8th December. Position at March both policies have been through Full Council for ratification and subsequently published. Action completed

Implement proposed changes to Licensing Act

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Determine Licenses in accordance with the revised Licensing Act requirements (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-2016	✓	Changes to late night refreshment brought about by the Deregulation Act 2015 came into effect on 1st October 2015. Still awaiting changes to Community and Ancillary sellers Notices (CANs) and expect guidance towards end of 2015 from the Home Office if this is to take effect April 2016. Position at March further deregulation is expected with the introduction of the Policing and Crime Bill to parliament on 10 February 2016. This Bill includes a proposal to give Licensing Authorities the power to suspend or revoke a personal licence, updates the list of relevant offences and makes amendments to the summary review process. There appears to have been no progress on the likely implementation of CANs.

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Finance, Revenues & Benefits and ICT Directorate

✓	On Target
=	In Progress
X	Behind Target

Balancing the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014-17

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Council to operate within +/- £250k of the approved budget (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	=	<p>Position at June The Quarter 1 Money Matters report to Cabinet on 8 September 2015 and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 9 September 2015, identified a favourable projected variance of £156,490 for 2015/16.</p> <p>Position at September The Quarter 2 Money Matters report due to be reported to Cabinet on 1 December 2015 and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 17 November 2015 identified a further favourable projected variance of £424,410 for 2015/16.</p> <p>Position at December The Eight Months Money Matters Report due to be reported to Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 2 February 2016 and Cabinet on 8 February 2016 identifies a further favourable projected variance of £396,530 for 2015/16. The eight months projection will now become the Revised Estimate and it will be this Budget that the Council will use to measure the performance against the £250,000 target for the financial year.</p> <p>Position at March As part of the accelerated timetable for the Closure of Accounts and the production of the Statement of Accounts, draft outturn figures are planned to be issued to Budget Holders on 15 April 2016, with final figures available by 29 April 2016.</p>
Quarterly production of Money Matters Report accounting for financial performance of Council for revenue and capital (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	<p>Position at June The Quarter 1 Money Matters report went to Cabinet on 8 September 2015 and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 9 September 2015.</p> <p>Position at September The Quarter 2r Money Matters report will be presented to Cabinet on 1 December 2015 and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 17 November 2015.</p> <p>Position at December The Eight Months Money Matters report is scheduled to be reported to Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 2 February 2016 and Cabinet on 8 February 2016.</p> <p>Position at March The End of Year Money Matters report is scheduled for Cabinet on 6 September 2016 and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 7 September 2016.</p>
Deliver approved Fit for Future savings and increased income (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	<p>Position at June The current target reduction to the Base Budget is £818,190 by 2017/18. As at the end of Quarter 1, F4F Reviews to date have identified savings of £326,220, together with other efficiencies of £92,660; in total this amounts to £418,880. This leaves a balance of £399,310 that needs to be</p>

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
			<p>found. The F4F Reviews currently underway have a collective savings/income target of £550,000. A progress report on F4F savings will be reported to Members in September.</p> <p>Position at September F4F savings identified in the Development Services and Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Countryside Reviews have been incorporated into the MTFS and are identified in the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Money Matters reports.</p> <p>The results of the Housing Services Review approved by Cabinet on 6 October 2015 will appear in the Eight Months Money Matters report due to be presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2015.</p> <p>Position at December At this stage, apart from the Housing Services Review, no other F4F savings have been identified for inclusion in the Eight Months Money Matters report due to be presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2016.</p> <p>Position at March All F4F savings identified have now been incorporated into the Revised Estimate for 2015/16.</p> <p>In total the savings in 2015/16 were £473,770 and for 2015/16–2017/18 are £1,116,270.</p>
<p>Maximise external funding (Councillor Spruce)</p>	<p>31-Mar-16</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Retained Business Rates (£2.105m), New Homes Bonus (£1.539m) and Council Tax (£5.621m) now funds 85% of the Council’s Budgeted Net Revenue expenditure (£10.914m) in 2015/16.</p> <p>Position at December The collection performance for October to December was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax – 86.60% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 86.78% for 2014/15) • Non Domestic Rates (NDR) – 84.10% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 84.83% for 2014/15) <p>There is a slight decrease of less than 1% in both Council Tax and NDR, the latter being for the same reasons as given for the decrease in Quarter 2.</p> <p>Position at March The collection performance for January to March was as follows ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax – 98.76% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 98.83% for 2014/15). • NDR – 97.31% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 98.41% for 2014/15). <p>There is a slight decrease of less than 1% in both Council Tax and NDR, the latter being for the same reasons as given for the decrease in Quarter 2. Council Tax collection is affected by the Local Council Tax Support Scheme requirement that most people should pay 20%.</p>

Unqualified Auditor Opinion on Statement of Accounts 2014/15

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Completion of draft unaudited Statement of Accounts 2014/15 (Councillor Spruce)	30-Jun-15	✓	Position at June The draft unaudited Statement of Accounts 2014/15 was signed by the Director of Finance, Revenues and Benefits on 19 June 2015. Action completed.
Report to Council on Audited Statement of Accounts by External Auditor (Councillor Spruce)	30-Sep-15	✓	Position at September The Audit Findings Report was presented to Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 9 September 2015. The Statement of Accounts was approved by Council on 29 September 2015 and the External Auditor signed off the Accounts on the 30 September 2015 with an unqualified opinion. Action completed.
The Annual Audit Letter for Lichfield District Council presented to Audit Committee (Councillor Spruce)	31-Jan-16	✓	Position at September The Audit Letter will be presented to the Audit Committee, following the conclusion of the Audit of Accounts for 2014/15. Position at March The Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15 was reported to Audit Committee on 26 January 2016. Action completed.

Improving Corporate Procurement

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Revised financial regulations approved by Council (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	Position at September The new Financial Procedure Rules were approved by Council on 14 July 2015. Action completed.
Managers trained on new financial regulations (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	Position at September Leadership Team received training at their meeting on 2 September 2015. Training to be provided to nominated Officers during November 2015. Action completed.

Review Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS)

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
LCTS does not have to be changed annually unless required (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	Position at September Staffordshire Local Authorities (LA's) jointly devised a framework for the scheme, with regional variations. Representatives from the LA's met in June 2015 to consider if there was any requirement to change either the framework or conditions within individual schemes and concluded no changes were necessary. Action completed.

Maximise take up of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Working with partners to identify those in difficulty/need in managing their finances six months from the start of Universal Credit (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	<p>Position at September Procedures are in place to give money advice to all UC claimants who require it, in accordance with the Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA). UC was introduced in Lichfield District on 23 March 2015 for single claimants only. To date there have only been 26 claimants of UC in Lichfield District.</p> <p>Position at March The DPA is to be renewed in April 2016 to continue the assistance to UC claimants. As at the end of March 2016 there were 51 people affected.</p>
Contact all those HB claimants who are affected by the Spare Room Subsidy and who have not made a claim for a DHP to make them aware of the scheme by the end of January 2015. With respect to new HB claims we will write to claimants advising those eligible to apply for a DHP. (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	<p>Position at September 389 cases were identified as being affected by the spare room subsidy. Of these 207 had reference to DHP in their records having requested a form. Officers wrote to the remaining 182 people and up to 31 March 2015 received 42 responses. 15 people were granted a DHP; 6 people were asked for further information but failed to provide it and 21 people did not qualify under the current scheme. Action completed.</p>

Monitor Impact of Universal Credit (UC)

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
In February 2015, Central Government was intending that UC would be available to all single people and possibly couples without children, irrespective of what benefit they will be applying for. (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	✓	<p>Position at September In March 2015, Lichfield District Council was part of the first tranche of LA's to deliver support for single people claiming UC in accordance with the DPA. Government's intention is to roll out UC to single people across the country throughout 2016. Once this is complete, the roll out will continue to couples and families with an anticipated completion date of 2017.</p> <p>Position at March The DWP have confirmed that UC to couples and families will not be rolled out in Lichfield District in 2016.</p>
We will monitor the impact of this on the workload of the Benefits Team and ensure that they have adequate training to give advice to customers. It is not anticipated that it will have a significant effect as the bulk of the work currently undertaken by the team is from	Ongoing	✓	<p>Position at September To date there have only been 26 UC claimants and as such this has not had any significant impact on the workload of the Benefits Team.</p> <p>Position at March Only 51 claimants have been affected by UC and this has not had any significant impact on the team.</p>

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
applications for Local Council Tax Support, either as owner occupiers or from tenants of rented accommodation (Councillor Spruce)			
There is no firm date as yet for the migration of existing claims for HB into UC (Councillor Spruce)	To be confirmed	=	<p>Position at September UC is continuing to roll out across the Country. In a paper published by the DWP in February 2016, it was anticipated that by Spring 2016 every Job Centre in the country will be dealing with UC. Full roll out to all customers, and as a consequence the end of HB for the eligible working people, will be in place at the end of 2017.</p> <p>Position at March The DWP have confirmed that UC to couples and families will not be rolled out in Lichfield District in 2016.</p>

Achievement of targets for Council Tax and Non Domestic

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Monitor and improve the performance of the Revenues Team (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	=	<p>Position at June Performance on collection of Council Tax and NDR is closely monitored on a monthly basis to ensure Collection Rates are maintained in accordance with the annual target of 98.5% of total income due for the financial year. The collection performance for April to June was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax – 29% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 30.1% for 2014/15; minus 1.1% reduction for the same period) • NDR – 29.6% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 28.7% for 2014/15; 0.9% increase for the same period) <p>Position at September The collection performance for July to September was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax – 58.3% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 58.3% for 2014/15) • NDR – 56.7% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 58.2% for 2014/15; minus 1.5% reduction for the same period) <p>There is a slight decrease of 1.5% in the collection of NDR in comparison with Quarter 2 for 2014/15. The reasons for this are suspension on recovery whilst outstanding appeal is resolved, several accounts with a large rateable value have been created in this quarter and the outstanding NDR will be collected within the financial year.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the outcome of the RBS Review will bring improvements to the service. All members of the team have been set individual performance targets in their performance and development reviews.</p> <p>Position at December The collection performance for September to December was as follows :</p>

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Tax – 86.6% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 86.78% for 2014/15) an increase of 0.22%. NDR – 84.1% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 84.83% for 2014/15); minus 0.73% reduction for the same period). <p>Position at March The collection performance for December to March was as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Tax – 98.76% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 98.83% for 2014/15), a reduction of 0.07%. <p>NDR – 97.31% of total income due for the year (in comparison with 98.41% for 2014/15); minus 0.1% reduction for the same period.</p>

Revenues and Benefits Service Review as part of Fit for the Future programme

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Full implementation of the review (Councillor Spruce)	31-Mar-16	X	<p>Position at September The draft report produced by the consultants People too has been presented to Leadership Team where a decision was made for further work to be carried out to map the customer journey, identify efficiencies that could be achieved in-house and then consider and assess the longer term options. Next steps will include undertaking a business process re-engineering with an ‘As is’ process map and a ‘To be’ process map. This will also map the customer journey from the start of an interaction to its completion looking at efficiencies, channels, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Position at March Consultants were appointed to carry out the process mapping; this work has been completed and a report was produced on 31 March 2016. This report will be analysed before consideration by Leadership Team.</p>

Completion of ICT upgrade project

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Complete phase 1 and initiate phase 2 of the upgrade project (Councillor Pullen)	4-Dec-15	X	<p>Position at June Phase 1 of the upgrade project has four Microsoft products that need to be upgraded: Exchange 2003, Office 2003, Windows XP and Server 2003. The upgrades to Exchange 2003 and Office 2003 have been completed. There are around 60 computers still running Windows XP with around 250 devices changed or upgraded. Some of the upgrades to Server 2003 have already happened with the remainder planned to happen after the desktop upgrades are completed. The IT project board are reviewing Phase 2 and work has already started on some of the projects.</p>

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Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
			<p>Position at September With the majority of the project completed, the critical timescales around maintaining Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance and moving to new systems will largely be completed. The conversion of some systems may slightly overrun due to the availability of suppliers to undertake the work.</p> <p>Position at December A pre-assessment of the PSN compliance has been undertaken and assurance given that the connection will be maintained. The project is still on track to be completed by the end of January 2016.</p> <p>Position at March The PSN compliance certificate was issued in January 2016 for a further year. The project has largely been completed with just three PCs running Windows XP and 17 servers still running Windows Server 2003.</p>
100% of devices converted to the new IT platform (Councillor Pullen)	4-Dec-15	X	<p>Position at June Over 80% of devices have been converted away from Windows XP to the new IT platform and work is continuing on the remaining 20%.</p> <p>Position at September 82% of devices have been converted and work is ongoing to complete for the remaining 18%.</p> <p>Position at December 90% of devices have been converted and plans are in place to complete the remaining 10% by the end of January 2016.</p> <p>Position at March 99% of devices have been converted with 3 PCs remaining. These run one particular software package which, despite the assistance of the supplier, will not run on Windows 7. This piece of software is currently being upgraded with a plan to have it upgraded by the end of June 2016.</p>
Achieve compliance with Government Security requirements (Public Sector Network) (PSN) achieved and maintained (Councillor Pullen)	5-Jan-16	✓	<p>Position at June Compliance has been achieved until 5 January 2016. The next submission needs to be made on or before 5 December 2015 and work is starting on the IT health check which forms a significant part of the requirements.</p> <p>Position at September Most systems will be upgraded to enable us to maintain compliance, some mitigation will be required as suppliers such as Civica will not have completed their upgrades by this time.</p> <p>Position at December Pre-assessment made of submission and assurance given by Cabinet Office that link would not be disconnected. PSN submission made on 4 December 2015 and initial clarification questions received on 8 December 2015. Call held with assessor on 10 December 2015 and there are still things still to fix, the assessor was happy that sufficient progress is being made to maintain connection.</p> <p>Position at March Submission made as required and certificate issued meaning that connection has been maintained until January 2017. Action completed.</p>

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Monitor performance of ICT contract

Actions	Due Date	On Target?	Progress Update
Monthly service reviews and reporting on contract performance indicators (Councillor Eadie)	31-Mar-16	✓	Position at March 2016 Monthly monitoring of the contract and the performance indicators is being carried out.

Legal & Democratic Services Performance and Activity Indicators 2015/16

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	2015/16
	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance
Occupancy (percentage) of District Council owned shops	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of occupancy of District Council House by external organisations by m ²	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Percentage of Council property data recorded electronically	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Percentage of Health and Safety required works to District Council House completed	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded		Currently being assessed in the light of the IT Server Room incident on 22 nd September 2015			
Savings achieved as a result of energy efficiency measures undertaken	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	Figures not available until base line figures are known	Figures not available until base line figures are known	Figures not available until base line figures are known	Figures not available until base line figures are known	Figures not available until base line figures are known
The percentage of people on Electoral Register before IER that have transferred to the new Register	N/A	91.5%	Not recorded	98.3%	98.3%	98.5%	99.1%	No longer recorded	No longer recorded	99.1%
Percentage of completed Section 106 Agreements (some of which are Unilateral Undertakings) achieved within required timeframe	65%	65%	65%	65%	65%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
Percentage of Committee papers dispatched 5 working days in advance of the meeting	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Finance, Revenues and Benefits, and ICT Performance and Activity Indicators

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	2015/16
	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Actual Performance
Revenue spend as a percentage (%) of net revenue budget	N/A	N/A	N/A	+£140,581 +6.53%	+/- £56,320 or +/- 2.47%	-£36,000 (-1.56%)	-£18,000 (-0.79%)	-£72,170 (-3.06%)	**	**
Financial support - % of those orders placed in advance of the invoice date	41.89%	43.98%	43.39%	44.80%	42.99%	40.55%	44.93%	51.92%	54.63%*	46.83%*
Invoice payment in 30 days	83.53%	84.07%	81.14%	78.88%	83.53%	79.38%	79.14%	80.75%	85.12%*	81.70%*
Processing time for new Housing Benefit (HB) claims and Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme application.	HB 18 days LCTS 20 days	HB 19 days LCTS 21 days	HB 19 days LCTS 21 days	HB 22 days LCTS 19 days	HB 19 days LCTS 22 days	HB 22 days LCTS 19 days	HB 21 days LCTS 19 days	HB 20 days LCTS 19 days	HB 20 days LCTS 20 days	HB 20 days LCTS 20 days
Processing time for changes in circumstances for HB claims and LCTS applications	HB 9 days LCTS 8 days	HB 9 days LCTS 8 days	HB 9 days LCTS 7 days	HB 7 days LCTS 7 days	HB & LCTS 7 days	HB & LCTS 8 days	HB 7 days LCTS 6 days	HB 8 days LCTS 7 days	HB 7 days LCTS 7 days	HB 7 days LCTS 7 days
Council Tax Collection Rate and Non Domestic Rate (NDR) Collection Rate	CT 30.1% NDR 28.7%	CT 58.3% NDR 58.2%	CT 86.78% NDR 84.83%	CT 98.83% NDR 98.41%	CT & NDR 98.5%	CT 29.0% NDR 29.6%	CT 58.3% NDR 56.7%	CT 86.6% NDR 84.1%	CT 98.76% NDR 97.31%	CT 98.79% NDR 98.31%
ICT - % of time key IT systems are available	99.78%	99.98%	99.93%	99.95%	99.91%	99.35%	99.09%	99.97%	99.99%	99.0%

* As at February 2016

** Draft Outturn figures due to be presented to Budget Holders on 15 April 2016 with final figures available by 29 April 2016

Democratic and Legal Setting Performance and Activity Indicators 2016/17: agreeing the targets

Performance Indicator (Descriptor)	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Comments
	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Target	
Number of Council Assets to dispose of	Not previously recorded	Not previously recorded	The target is to dispose of at least 5 Council assets by the end of March 2017 to achieve development	
Completion of Section 106 Agreements to enable planning consent to be issued	80% completed in 6 months	85% completed in 6 months	The target is to complete all Section 106 Agreements within six months of the date of planning committee determination	This performance is sometimes outside the Council's control if the appellants do not wish to proceed with a scheme
Enter into partnership with Public Sector Property with a view to maximising the use of the Council's assets.	Not applicable	Not applicable	To enter into a formal partnership arrangement with Public Sector Property by July 2016	
Organise and administer the Neighbourhood Planning Referendums in accordance with the statutory timescales	Not applicable	3 referendums held	5 referendums to be held	
Organise and administer the Police and Crime Commissioner election and EU Referendum	Not applicable	Not applicable	To ensure no electoral petitions are received to the administration of the elections	
To operate within 5% of approved net budgets	Variance (£73,868)	Variance £16055	To ensure Directorate expenditure is within £16,000 of approved budget	
Percentage of works undertaken to the District Council House in line with the condition survey report	Not applicable	Not applicable	To complete 80% of the priority 1 works detailed in the condition survey	
Percentage of Freedom of Information requests dealt with within statutory timescales	97.56%	95.27%	Target 99% of FOI requests dealt with within statutory timescale	
Improvements/innovations to the Overview and Scrutiny function			Reduce Overview and Scrutiny reports by 50% by providing information to Members through the Overview and Scrutiny bulletin	
To increase the number of transactions and service requests online	Not applicable	Not applicable	Reduce the number of hard copy reports by 10% through the use of web links and electronic display of Cabinet papers.	

Finance, Revenues and Benefits and ICT Setting Performance and Activity Indicators 2016/17: agreeing the targets

Performance Indicator (Descriptor)	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Comments
	Actual Performance	Actual Performance	Target	
Revenue spend as a percentage (%) of net revenue budget.	+/- £56,320 or +/- 2.47%	-£12,412 -0.54%	+/- £33,000 or +/- 1.4%	A Top Ten priority is to operate within the directorate's budget and therefore spend needs to be closely monitored.
Financial support - % of those orders placed in advance of the invoice date.	42.99%	60.34%	90.00%	Reports on the overall budgetary control. Orders needs to be placed before invoices are received to ensure there is adequate budget available.
Invoice payment in 30 days, together with the average number of days for processing payment.	83.53%	81.45%	90.00%	Measures how the Council supports the economy by prompt payment to its suppliers.
Processing time for new Housing Benefit claims and Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) applications.	HB 19 days LCTS 22 days	HB 20 days LCTS 20 days	20 days	Reports on the performance of the Housing Benefit/LCTS service and the time taken to process new applications from customers. Prompt processing ensures payments are made to support the claimant/applicant pay their rent and Council Tax.
Processing time for changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit claims and LCTS applications.	HB 7 days LCTS 7 days	HB 7 days LCTS 7 days	8 days	Measures how long it takes us to update our systems after the customer notifies us of a change in their circumstances. Prompt processing ensures payments are made to support the claimant/applicant pay their rent and Council Tax.
Council Tax collection rate.	98.5%	98.79%	98.5%	Supports the financial performance of the Authority and gives an early indication of any upcoming budget issues.
Non Domestic Rate collection rate.	98.5%	98.31%	98.5%	Supports the financial performance of the Authority and gives an early indication of any upcoming budget issues.
ICT - % of time key IT systems are available.	99.91%	99.60%	99.96%	Measures the 'health' of the Council's IT systems to ensure that staff and customers can access the systems they need, at the time they need them. It is also one of the 15 key measures of monitoring the performance of the ICT support contract.