

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES, HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES – DAVID MICHAEL, AND HEAD OF ICT – STEPHEN JOHN

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

FINANCIAL SERVICES, LEGAL SERVICES AND ICT & CORPORATE PROCUREMENT BUSINESS PLANS

1. Purpose of Report

To seek endorsement from the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board to the three Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for 2015/16.

2. Background

2.1. The Council introduced a revised Performance Management Framework in 2014/15. One of the requirements within that framework is the production of business plans by heads of service. The timetable for finalising business plans covering the financial year 2015/16 is 31st May 2015.

2.2. The Finance Section plan appended at Appendix 1 covers the functions of:

- Accountancy – Revenue and Capital
- Internal Audit
- Payroll
- Payments
- Cashiering
- Financial Ledger

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Benefits
- Financial Assessments
- Income & Debt Collection
- Court Deputy Service
- Treasury Management
- Insurance

2.3. The Legal Services plan appended at Appendix 2 covers the functions of:

- Legal Property and Corporate Services
- Legal Litigation
- Legal Services Childcare
- Business Support Services including Land Charges
- Licensing
- The Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

2.4. The ICT plan appended at Appendix 3 covers the functions of:

- Information and Infrastructure Security
- School and Curriculum Support
- Corporate and Mobile Telephony
- Application Development
- Desktop Provision and Support
- Fixed and Wireless Networking
- Database Management and Support
- Server and Storage Infrastructure
- Corporate Procurement and Centralised Purchasing

2.5. **Forward Financial Plan Impacts**

The Business Plans have been constructed on the basis of reduced budget allocations to be made available to the Directorate for 2015/16 as agreed by Council in February 2015.

3. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Board endorses the Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for the financial year 2015/16 attached at Appendix 1 to 3 to this report.

4. Reason for Proposed Decision

To authorise the Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for 2015/16.

5. Background Papers

- Business Plans 2014/15
- Council – February 4th 2015 – report of the Corporate Directors’ Group “Budget 2015/16”

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Services Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 2 – Legal Services Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 3 – ICT & Corporate Procurement Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 4 - ICT and Corporate Procurement Service Report Card
2014/2015 and 2015/2016

7. Officer Reporting:

Mr David Rees, Head of Financial Services,
Tel: 01639 763634 or e-mail: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Mr David Michael, Head of Legal Services
Tel: 01639 763368 or e-mail d.michael@npt.gov.uk

Mr Stephen John, Head of ICT & Corporate Procurement
Tel: 01639 686218 or email s.john@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

FINANCIAL SERVICES, LEGAL SERVICES

AND ICT BUSINESS PLANS

(a) Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation following the three day call in period.

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

Economic Prosperity	-	Neutral
Education and Lifelong Learning		Neutral
Better Health and Wellbeing	-	Neutral
Environment and Transport	-	Neutral
Crime and Disorder	-	Neutral

Other Impacts

Welsh Language	-	Neutral
Sustainable Development	-	Neutral
Equalities	-	Neutral
Social Inclusion	-	Neutral

There have been both positive and negative impacts arising from the reduced number of employees working within each of the service areas following ER/VR during 2014/15 which has been taken into account in preparing the business plans for each section. The overall impact above is assessed as neutral given the new capacity within the service areas.

(c) Consultation

This item has been subject to external consultation as part of the wider budget proposals for the financial year 2015/16 and the outcome of that consultation has informed this report.

Financial Services Division

Business Plan 2015/16

Head of Service: David Rees

Area of Responsibility: Financial Services

Sponsor (Cabinet Member): Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

This is the 2015/16 business plan for the Financial Services Division of the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate. It sets out a summary of achievements in 2014/15, performance against the 2014/15 action plan plus details of the priorities and actions for the division for 2015/16.

Key Achievements Summary for 2014/15

The 2015/16 budget settlement for Welsh local authorities meant a real terms budget reduction of £18m or 6.6%. Such a reduction meant that significant budget reductions were required in the Authority's budget for that year. The division worked closely with service directorates during 2014/15 in order to develop an updated forward financial plan (FFP) and a balanced budget to take us into the new financial year.

A revised budget monitoring process was also developed during the year allowing senior officers and members to have more accurate and more frequent information on which to monitor actual spend against budget. This process will be further enhanced in 2015/16.

The 2013/14 Annual Statement of Accounts was produced in line with the legislative timetable, and showed further improvement in terms of quality over recent years.

Management and funding for the capital programme enabled the delivery of a number of significant achievements through 2014/15.

The collection rate achieved on council tax was 97.5 an increase on the rate achieved in the previous year.

Work has continued in supporting the requirements of the welfare benefit changes and in meeting the needs of those citizens currently in receipt of welfare benefits.

The Internal Audit plan was once again delivered to the satisfaction of the Wales Audit Office.

Budget savings for 2015/16 of £521k were achieved primarily through staff reductions via the Voluntary Redundancy (VR) process. Whilst work has been carried out on systems and processes to absorb these staff reductions they will inevitably result in increased pressure on the staff remaining and ultimately an adverse effect on performance.

Principle 1 – What are the most important things for the service to achieve in 15/16?

Given the nature of the services provided through the division the key priority areas will tend to remain the same each year:

1. To accurately monitor directorate budgets, highlighting any pressures at an early stage, and by working closely with directorates, to ensure suitable actions are put in place to mitigate the risks of not delivering overall spend within budget guidelines. This will involve further development of the new budget monitoring process implemented during 2014/15.
2. To work with directorates to produce a balanced budget for 2016/17 and updated Forward Financial Plan (FFP) in line with the timetable required by the Chief Executive.
3. To produce a Statement of Accounts that accurately reflects the Council's transactions for the financial year 2014/15, within the statutory timescales and to meet statutory requirements.
4. To maximise the collection of council tax and other income due to the Council.
5. To ensure that all who are entitled to benefits, receive the right amount and in a timely manner.
6. To help those entitled to Universal Credit to make claims effectively and manage their budget accordingly.

7. To deliver an agreed and detailed programme of work on finance based projects that will assist in the requirement to provide further reductions in expenditure over the next three to four years.
8. To ensure that assurance can be given to the Audit Committee regarding the adequacy of internal controls existing within the systems and processes operated by the Authority and to further develop the role of the Audit Committee.
9. To improve the effectiveness of the debtors IT system and to develop the debt recovery processes in order to reduce the value of outstanding debts.
10. To manage the significant reduction in the staffing level of the Financial Assessments team in order to maintain a high level of service provision.
11. To manage the reduction of staffing hours available to the Cashiering Service in order to maintain a high level of service provision.

Principle 2 – Why have we prioritised these achievements?

Broadly speaking, because these form the core ‘business’ functions of the division that are essential to the efficient running of the Authority. More specifically:

1. To satisfy statutory requirements particularly around budget setting and the production of the statement of accounts.
2. To help ensure that the Authority maintains its expenditure and income levels within budget and doesn’t require the use of reserves.
3. To maximise the amount of income available to the Council to help fund the services it provides.
4. To ensure that citizens who are in receipt of benefits receive the best possible service and are not disadvantaged financially.
5. To continue to provide high quality financial advice and support to all directorates.
6. To minimise the risk of fraud and/or errors occurring within the systems operated by the Authority that could damage its financial and/or reputational standing.
7. To continue to provide the best possible level of service whilst managing significant levels of staff reductions.

Principle 3 – How are we going to secure these achievements?

Primarily the services to secure these achievements will be provided in-house. Some elements of service or advice however will be commissioned externally. Examples of these are in debt recovery arrangements and treasury management strategy advice.

Principle 4 – How will any risks be managed?

The following are the identified risks to achieving the priorities set above along with the measures being taken to mitigate those risks:

1. The risk that service and financial pressures through the year will not allow elements of the FFP to be achieved and/or will put pressure on other budget heads. This will be mitigated through the new budget monitoring process the aim of which is to highlight pressures at the earliest possible stage and require managers to find solutions to those pressures and therefore retain net spending within the budget guidelines.
2. That a balanced budget is not produced in time that is sufficiently robust to meet the requirements of external audit scrutiny. This is mitigated by a rigid and robust process involving at a minimum, Directors, Heads of Service and Members. The process is timetabled with clear deadlines and required outcomes.
3. That the Statement of Accounts will not be produced in line with the statutory deadlines, and will have an unacceptable number of audit qualifications. This is partly mitigated by detailed staff training which has taken place in the requirements of the process and in lessons learnt from previous years. Furthermore, a detailed closure programme has been produced which outlines all the requirements of the process along with appropriate timescales and deadlines. Finally, detailed monitoring of the process is in place which includes regular meetings with the Wales Audit Office (WAO).
4. That the Council Tax collection rate will fall below the average of the previous five years, particularly given the fact that the required budget reductions have meant a reduction in staffing levels. This will be mitigated by regular monitoring of the council tax collection rate and immediate remedial action being taken by the experienced Council Tax staff. In addition, the new Council Tax Recovery Policy which is now fully operational should assist significantly with the recovery process.

5. That there is a drop in performance in terms of the time taken to process benefits and in terms of the number of write offs required due to authority error. This risk is mitigated by the regular training that all benefits' staff receive particularly with regard to changes in the rules and regulations surrounding benefits.
6. That citizens in receipt of benefits do not receive their full entitlement. This will be mitigated in part by the training referred to in 5 above but also by working collaboratively with the third sector to ensure that citizens are fully aware of what they are entitled to.
7. That there is a failure to deliver agreed projects on time and with the required outcomes. This is mitigated by the regular monitoring of a work programme for the project team. This work programme has, for each project, detailed timescales, target dates and expected outcomes, which are allocated against individual members of staff. The work programme is monitored on a six weekly basis.
8. That the WAO cannot give assurance regarding the quality of audit work. This is mitigated via a number of methods. Firstly, an annual audit plan is produced by the section which is approved by Audit Committee and agreed by the WAO. Secondly, all audit work is reviewed by a senior auditor/audit manager, and further quality control checks will be carried out by the Head of Financial Services. All Internal Audit work is reported to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis, and finally the work of Internal Audit is subject to an annual review by WAO.
9. That the level of service provided will be affected in areas where significant staff reductions have taken place. This will be mitigated by reviewing and where appropriate re-designing the service provided and on-going monitoring of the effects of the reductions in staff.
10. Further mitigation of the above risks will be achieved by the following generic actions:
 - Provide appropriate and timely training for all staff, both work based and external, to ensure that staff maintain the required skills and keep up to date with changes in regulations and legislation.
 - Provide the opportunity to achieve relevant professional qualifications to encourage staff progression and retain a high level of professional expertise within the division.

- To maintain low levels of sickness absence in the division through strict adherence to the absence management policy and regular sickness monitoring.
- To carry out personal development reviews for all staff members within the division and to ensure that issues that arise from the reviews are acted upon.
- To retain staff morale at as high a level as possible through good communication, and through the other factors detailed in this section.

Principle 5 – What is our current performance in these priority areas?

1. The outturn position is currently being prepared for 2014/15, but it is expected to show that the net expenditure for the year for the Authority as a whole will be retained within budget.
2. A balanced budget for 2015/16 and an updated FFP were produced to the required standard by the end of January 2015.
3. The Statement of Accounts for 2013/14 was produced within the legislative timescale and to a standard acceptable to the WAO.
4. The Council Tax collection rate for 2014/15 was 97.5% which was an improvement on the previous year. Whilst the Welsh average figure is not currently available, the figure for the Authority for the previous year was better than the Welsh average.
5. In 2014/15 out of a total of 13,300 Housing Benefit awards made there were a total of 31 authority errors. As a result of these errors the amount overpaid (and hence not recoverable) was only 0.09% of the total money paid out.
6. There are currently 15 finance based projects in progress.
7. In 2014/15, the Internal Audit plan was delivered with a total of 71 formal reports issued. The annual WAO assurance statement is not yet available for 14/15 but was received for 2013/14.
8. In 2013/14, 41,204 invoices were raised with a value of £39.3m. Income related to all outstanding debts of £40.1m was received.

Principle 6 – Action Plan:

2014/15

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Achievements
1.	Enhance and strengthen the role of Audit Committee in the areas of risk management and Treasury Management	Work with WAO and Audit Committee Chair to agree what steps are required	D. Rees	March 2015	Agreement has been reached on the role of Audit Committee in terms of risk management and Treasury Management. Audit Committee also has a greater scrutiny role now in special investigation reports.
2.	Improve risk management arrangements in the Authority	Review current arrangements, the current policy and the risk management register	D Rees	March 2015	The new arrangements are due to be available for the governance group in May 2015.
3.	Ensure completion of the monthly pay project	Lead project team to get everyone on to monthly pay	D Rees	March 2015	The project was fully completed ahead of time in February 2015.
4.	Implement a new budget monitoring process	Work closely with group accountants	S. Gorman	From May 2014	The new process was in place from May 2014 and further development is due during 2015/16.
5.	Support the budget setting process for 2015/16 and the FFP	Provide detailed financial support primarily to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services	S. Gorman	February 2015	A balanced budget was set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.

6.	Provide support to two new directorate group accountants	The two new accountants will require greater levels of support during their first year in the posts	S. Gorman	March 2015	The two new directorate accountants have very successfully adapted to their new role and will not require greater levels of support going forward.
7.	Co-ordinate the work required for the Statement of Accounts process	To produce a Statement of Accounts within the prescribed timescales	J. North	June 2014	The Statement of Accounts was produced in accordance with the required timescales.
8.	Prepare updated closure programme for the 2014/15 accounts	To ensure that we build in any lessons learned from the current year's process	J. North	September/October 2014	Wales Audit Office formally recognised the further improvements made in the Statement of Accounts process and document.
9.	Identify insurance management information and its use to influence service delivery	Provide relevant data for monitoring of service requirements regarding insurance	J. North	October 2014	Some improvements have been made regarding the provision of monitoring data and further work in this area is on-going.
10.	Prepare a detailed work programme for the project team for 2014/15	Agree a work programme with the Head of Financial Services to include timescales and work outlines	H. Jones	June 2014	A detailed work plan is in place that is monitored on a regular basis.

11.	Review and where appropriate revise the treasury management strategy for the Authority	This should be based on the current financial climate and latest information from the Authority's Treasury Management advisers	H. Jones	September 2014	The strategy was updated in line with the required timescale.
12.	Continue to provide FIS team support to the e-procurement project	Manage the workload of the team so that support can be provided when necessary and appropriate	H. Jones	March 2015	The team has continued to support the e-procurement project.
13.	Implement the new council tax recovery policy	As recently approved by Members	A. Hinder	March 2015	The new recovery process has proved successful and has been reported to members.
14.	Monitor and report on council tax collection rates	For monitoring by members	A. Hinder	December 2014	Council Tax collection reports will be reported to members on a regular basis in 2015/16.
15.	Support the budget process in terms of council tax details and requirements	Council tax base information in particular	A. Hinder	January 2015	All information/support was provided and a balanced budget was set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.

16.	Provide support on the welfare reform requirements	Support to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Members	K. Davies	March 2015	Welfare reform requirements to date are being met in full; regular updates provided to the Leadership and members via seminars etc.
17.	Monitor performance on housing benefit write offs	Produce performance information for monitoring by members	K. Davies	December 2014	A formal report was produced for members during 2014/15.
18.	Maintain the level of in-house benefit training for benefit staff	To ensure that staff are kept up to date with changes to regulations, allowances etc.	K. Davies	March 2015	Training is on-going.
19.	Prepare a detailed audit plan for 2015/16	To ensure that audit coverage of the Authority's systems is adequate	A.M. O'Donnell	March 2015	The audit plan was approved by Audit Committee in March 2015.
20.	Prepare quarterly reports for Audit Committee	To ensure Member scrutiny of audit work	A.M. O'Donnell	From June 2014	Quarterly Audit Manager reports which covered all reports published by Internal Audit were scrutinised by Audit Committee Members.
21	Ensure that the Internal Audit Service meets the new auditing standards	This is required in order to receive an adequate assurance from the WAO	A.M. O'Donnell	March 2015	Assurance was received from WAO following their annual review.

22.	Manage resources within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	The Finance Division's budget was delivered within agreed cash limits and showed a small underspend.
23.	Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	Staff sickness levels were successfully monitored and acted upon through the year.
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	PDR's completed for all section heads in the division.
25	Each financial year measure employee satisfaction levels	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	There has been a delay in implementing this within the Authority.
26.	Each financial year measure customer satisfaction levels	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	There has been a delay in implementing this within the Authority.

Action Plan 2015/16

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Outcomes
1.	Deliver budget saving proposals for the division for the period 2016/17 – 2017/18.	In response to expected budget pressures facing the Authority for that period.	D. Rees	September 2015	A series of proposals that enable the budget of the division to be reduced in line with the target set.
2.	Introduce and monitor the new risk management proposals.	To respond to the comments of the corporate assessment.	D Rees	October 2015	The establishment of a new risk register and a more robust authority wide risk management process.
3.	Represent the Authority on a Welsh Treasurer's group looking at income generation.	To link in with the Authority's internal project on income generation.	D Rees	On-going	Proposals to increase the income generated by the Authority as a contribution to the budget.
4.	Further develop the new budget monitoring process.	Work closely with group accountants.	S. Gorman	Throughout 2015/16	Further enhanced budget monitoring process for the Authority.
5.	Support the budget setting process for 2016/17 and the FFP	Provide detailed financial support primarily to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services	S. Gorman	February 2016	A balanced budget set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.
6.	Undertake a review of the internal charging process.	To simplify the current process.	S. Gorman	March 2016	A clearer and less resource intensive process for internal charging.

7.	Co-ordinate the work required for the 2014/15 Statement of Accounts process.	To produce a Statement of Accounts within the prescribed timescales.	J. North	June 2014	A Statement of Accounts produced in accordance with the required timescales.
8.	Monitor and review the impact of the reduced budget for cashiering services.	Reduced staffing levels and reduced opening hours.	J. North	Throughout 2015/16	A reduced service that still meets the needs of the public.
9.	Further develop the change in emphasis in terms of the work of the Debtors' team to that of debt recovery.	Moving away from debt raising to debt recovery.	J. North	Throughout 2015/16	Reduced levels of debt outstanding at year end.
10.	Complete the priority projects of grants management and income generation.	Income generation is a key project in terms of the 2016/17 budget process.	H. Jones	End September 2015	Options for members / senior officers to decide upon regarding increasing income and a more efficient grants management process.
11.	Continue to review, monitor and where appropriate revise the Treasury Management strategy for the Authority.	A critical area in terms of the Authority's finances.	H. Jones	Throughout 2015/16	The strategy is revised as appropriate to reflect current information.
12.	Setting the capital programme.	A review group is being established.	H. Jones	February 2016	A capital programme that maximises use of the funding available.
13.	Monitor and report on council tax collection rates.	For monitoring by members.	A. Hinder	Throughout 2015/16	Improved information for members.

14.	Fully implement the new council tax recovery policy.	Approved during 2014/15.	A. Hinder	Throughout 2015/16	Improved council tax recovery processes.
15.	Implement the new Business Improvement District (BIDS) initiative.	For businesses in designated BID areas	A. Hinder	March 2016	Fully implemented BID scheme.
16.	Continue to provide support on the welfare reform requirements and universal credit.	Support to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and members.	K. Davies	Throughout 2015/16	Welfare reform and universal credit requirements are met in full.
17.	Monitor performance on housing benefit write offs and overpayment recovery.	Produce performance information for monitoring by members.	K. Davies	Throughout 2015/16	Improved information for members.
18.	Evaluate the changes to systems and processes within the Financial Assessments Team.	Following the reduction in staff numbers through VR.	K. Davies	30 th September 2015	Service provision is satisfactory despite the reduction in staffing resources.
19.	Deliver the work contained in the audit plan for 2015/16.	The plan was approved in the Audit Committee meeting in March 2015.	A.M. O'Donnell	31 st March 2016	Assurances given to members regarding the internal controls in place throughout the Authority.
20.	Assist with the implementation of the enhanced role of the Audit Committee	In particular with regard to risk management scrutiny, treasury management information and scrutiny of special investigations.	A.M. O'Donnell	Throughout 2015/16	Audit Committee plays a greater role in the scrutiny arrangements of the Authority.

21.	Ensure that the work of the Internal Audit Service continues to meet the auditing standards.	An independent review will be required within the next three years.	A.M. O'Donnell	Throughout 2015/16	Assurance received from WAO following their annual review.
22.	Manage resources within 2015/16 budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	Budget delivered within agreed guidelines.
23.	Maintain staff sickness at as low a level as possible.	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	Staff sickness levels no higher than those experienced in 2014/15.
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	PDR's completed for all staff in the division.

Legal Services Division

Business Plan 2015/16

Head of Service: David Michael

Area of Responsibility: Legal Services

Sponsor (Cabinet Member): Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

This is the Business Plan for the Legal Services in 2015/16. It sets out a summary of achievements in 2014/15, describes the context within which the department will need to operate in 2015/16 and provides details of the priorities and activities that will be the focus of the department's work in that year.

Key Achievements and Performance Summary 2014/15

1. Delivered the scheduled Forward Financial Plan ("FFP") savings in year and the additional "procurement" headed savings. We have now incorporated the business support staff in one unit whilst losing posts.
2. The Head of Legal Services led a group which has negotiated a contract to substantially reduce newspaper advertising costs for public notices. This represents a saving for other sections and directorates rather than Legal Services.
3. The Business Support Unit has produced a web based guide for reducing postal costs for the local authority as a whole.
4. The Section has continued to provide advice to other directorates in relation to decision making on Forward Financial Plan issues and other changes in the service provision of the local authority. The Section has successfully defended on judicial review actions against the local authority.
5. The Section has provided advice and assistance through the year on Data Protection. We have together with ICT in putting measures in place to comply with the Information Commissioner's Audit.
6. Work has continued on arrangements with Bridgend, Swansea and the Local Health Board on the Social Services/Health collaboration known as Western Bay and collaboration agreements executed.
7. In terms of the Shared Legal Services Project, the joint commercial unit has continued to provide services during the year but has been scaled down due to reduction in grant. Work has commenced with the Welsh Procurement Unit to replicate the South West Wales procurement exercise for Legal Services on an all Wales basis.
8. Support for waste disposal and recycling has been provided by a mix of the section's own staff and Messrs. Geldards with our staff being substituted for private practice where possible. Services have been provided to the South West Wales Regional Waste Joint Committee.

9. It is to the Council's benefit that almost all of the equality claims have been dealt with from the FFP point of view. Our own staff have worked with other Authorities on a Wales wide basis in trying to tie up that part of the remainder of the claims which have merit and can be settled
10. The Margam Discovery Centre went through adjudication in year. Enforcement proceedings were taken for the adjudication award (together with the costs of enforcement). The total amount of £60,129.75 was to be paid in five monthly instalments all of which have been received.
11. Child Care Legal Services have continued to provide support for Social Services over the year and the Social Services Child Care Team have now been taken out of special measures. An in-house advocate has been engaged on behalf of Social Services. Exhaustive training has been provided to staff.
12. Along with other partners in the Shared Legal Services collaboration, the Section has implemented a secure electronic portal for the exchange of information, files, court papers etc. in relation to Child Care matters. This will enhance data security and reduce printing costs.
13. The Licensing Officer has led on the calculation of fees on a regional basis. Court judgements have limited the costs which can be recovered by way of fees and Licensing at NPT have formulated a tool for calculation of fees which is available to all Welsh local authorities.

What are the most important things for the department to achieve in the next year (15/16)?

Directorate Aims and Objectives

The Directorate aims and objectives adopted some years ago were:-

“To maintain and continually strive to improve our courteous and efficient professional services to the public and all our clients.”

Section's Aims

The aims which appear below were agreed for Legal Services some years ago with Members. These do not include Licensing and the Register Service.

- LO1. To enable Neath Port Talbot to achieve high standards of legality and probity in the conduct of its business.

- LO2 To develop a stronger corporate role for Legal Services in
- Identifying and advising on forthcoming legal developments;
 - Adapting the service to meet anticipated needs;
 - Taking a more proactive role in the development of corporate policy, and
 - Supporting Corporate initiatives and policies such as Welsh Language, Equalities, Sustainability and Social Inclusion
- LO3 To ensure that priority is given to the provision of Legal Services which will assist in the achievement of Corporate Aims and Values together with those contained in the Community Plan.
- LO4 To support clients fully by the provision of prompt accessible services operating to agreed timescales and to keep them apprised of progress at all times.
- LO5 By providing the right legal framework to assist Neath Port Talbot in being a modern, outward looking local authority with good communications with the Members, the public and other partners in the provision of services.
- LO6 To provide a service which is financially transparent and gives service users an accurate account of the cost of the provision of Legal Services.
- LO7 To embrace the principles of “E-Government” and to maximise the use of Information Technology in the provision of Legal Services.
- LO8 To provide and maintain a quality legal service by staff development, training and the application of the Quality System.”
- LO9 To provide the services at a moderate financial charge commensurate with the level of service provided facilitating the agreed prioritisation of matters and to fully account to internal clients for work done measured by a time recording system.
- LO10 To ensure that other parties are treated in an appropriate and courteous manner and to facilitate the prompt completion of transactions measured by a record of complaints, internal client satisfaction surveys and to avoid service of notices to complete on the Council.
- LO11 To provide the best and timely advice to Members and to client departments.

- LO12 To have a well-trained and motivated staff, with ready access to latest developments in their area of work.
- LO13 To raise awareness of developments within the law with client departments affected.
- LO14 To focus on and to progress the aims of the Community Plan by the provision of proactive advice and in the taking of legal action to support same.
- LO15 To make greater use of IT in the provision of the service to support the Council's modernisation strategy for the provision of services.
- LO16 Deleted. This Aim related to ISO 9001 from which we have now withdrawn as a cost cutting measure.
- LO17 To make best use of the restricted accommodation in the interest of the staff and to seek to group the teams appropriately.

The aims and objectives of the Property and Corporate Team are:-

- PCT1 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in its dealings with its land and with other land owners measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- PCT2 To ensure that the Council complies with all rules of Local Government and Public Law relevant to the property function measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the County Borough where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- PCT3 The provision of well-informed advice to the Council on rights and liabilities relating to its present and prospective land holdings and those of others measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the Council or adverse rulings of the Land Registry.

- PCT4 To effectively pursue the policy objectives of the Council especially those relating to development, job creation and provision of housing by the provision of an effective legal property service measured by the achievement of agreed targets in service provision.
- PCT5 To ensure that Council's interests are properly protected in any transaction.
- PCT6 To maximise Council's income measured by the achievement of agreed targets for income generation.
- PCT7 To record properly all transactions and ensure that deeds and other papers are safeguarded measured by the maintenance of proper deed records.
- PCT8 To ensure propriety in contract tendering.
- PCT9 To protect the Council's interests in the drawing up of Contracts.

The Aims and Objectives of The Litigation Team are:-

- LT1 To provide an effective dispute resolution service, to include effective and competent advocacy, only using Counsel as and when necessary.
- LT2 To ensure the Council complies with the law in exercising the planning, licensing, highways and housing functions.
- LT3 To assist the Council in attaining the aims and objectives of the Community Plan in the drafting and service of appropriate notices and the taking of action through the courts
- LT4 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in connection with its planning, housing, highways and licensing functions as measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.

- LT5 To ensure that the Directorate of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning and all Schools are provided with appropriate levels of advice and legal support in the carrying out of educational functions.
- LT6 To provide the Data Protection Officer Service as required and advice on Freedom of Information.

The Aims and Objectives of the Childcare Team are:-

- LCT1 To provide accurate, well informed and relevant legal advice to the Council through all phases of its involvement with children in need and/or at risk of harm.
- LCT2 To conduct child protection and other child related litigation on behalf of the Council, including providing the vast majority of advocacy in the family Court.
- LCT3 To support the Council's Children's Services directorate in its function as an adoption agency and panel, whether alone or acting jointly, and its permanency planning function.
- LCT4 To support the development and improvement of social work competence and capability, through the provision of/contribution to training and development.
- LCT5 To support the Children's Services Directorate in its statutory complaints process

It is necessary and desirable to review and update these aims over the next year and develop aims and objectives for the Licensing and Registrar Teams. Margam Crematorium will be subject to separate arrangements.

Key Objectives in 2015/16

These have been agreed with the Chief Executive, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services:

General

1. To deliver the savings allocated within the Council's Forward Financial Plan to the department and contain overall expenditure within the cash limit set for the department;
2. To maintain high levels of attendance in the Section;
3. To ensure departmental performance management arrangements are effective and in line with the Council's revised corporate framework;
4. To further develop staff communications, engagement and development arrangements across the department;
5. To maintain high standards of health and safety at work, ensuring all risk assessments are up to date and operational; and
6. To maintain an effective business continuity and emergency incident response across the functions and services within the portfolio and in particular to review business continuity arrangements at Margam Crematorium.
7. To ensure Directorate service changes and improvements in FFP are delivered.
8. To support and ensure proper governance arrangements are in place re collaboration work.

All of which will be delivered through the activities listed in Appendix A.

Why have these priorities been set?

The current financial cut backs and the Forward Financial Plan which documents the Council's method of dealing with those cut backs, remain the central operational facts to be dealt with over the next few years.

This is so for two reasons:-

First, services must be delivered using fewer and fewer resources but Legal Services does not control the level of activity that it is asked to address. The Section must do what it can to make service delivery more efficient whilst managing expectations in the continuing financial environment. Some teams such as that dealing with Licensing are not so affected by these changes.

Second, the Forward Financial Plan is likely to increase rather than lessen the requirement for provision of Legal Services. Some simple examples will explain the point. As the Council examines its expenditure and reduces or reallocates funding it becomes vulnerable to actions in judicial review. Also, where services are no longer provided directly in-house, legal relationships with other bodies (together with the need for documentation and advice) increase remarkably. For example, with some local library services being provided by Community Councils or volunteer groups, documentation is needed for each of them. Likewise, many leases were granted at the end of the last financial year so that sports clubs will manage their own facilities in future. Another factor which has increased the call upon Legal Services is the extension in inter-Authority and cross boundary working. The Section has provided support for joint working in the fields of – Waste, Education, Social Services, Housing, Health and Wellbeing.

The Section co-operates with the ICT and Procurement Sections in dealing with data protection issues. The Council co-operated in a voluntary audit conducted by the Office of the Information Commissioner. This gave rise to a report taken to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board. The report identified a number of areas for improvement which have been included in the Improvement Plan.

Risks that have been identified and how risk will be managed

1. **Service quality and availability may be compromised** due to the reduction in financial resources - mitigated by prioritisation of available resources and appropriate staff training and supervision. Also, communication and agreement of revised service expectations with key stakeholders. Unavoidable staff absence has caused difficulty in certain areas. It is only as a result of staff willingness to act beyond job description that we have avoided using agency legal staff. On certain days typing services have not been available.
2. The **cost of services and functions** may not be delivered within the cash limit and **savings** may not be achieved for workload reasons – mitigated by concrete plans in place at the commencement of the financial year. Further savings will need to be identified in a review of the FFP.

3. **Demands on the service** will rise due to unforeseen external changes. Efforts will be made to mitigate this by developing greater efficiency and early identification of new developments. Staff have had to review extensive documentation at very short notice.
4. **Demands on the service** increase as a consequence of changes elsewhere within the council – mitigated by early and ongoing dialogue with colleagues to identify and agree where support needs to be prioritised.
5. **Service quality and availability** is compromised due to strain on staff – continue to build on staff communication and engagement activities and ensure all staff are receiving suitable support.
6. Risk that **statutory requirements** are not met – mitigated by clearly prioritising the statutory work.
7. Often instructions are received at the last moment. Reports to Cabinet and other Committees are often only available for review shortly before Committee deadlines and it is therefore difficult to give anything other than basic advice.
8. Combination of factors will lead to a depletion of staff in the Register Office during the year which will have an effect on service delivery.

How will we deliver the priorities we have identified?

Action Plans for each business unit within the service area

(note: action plans will be continuously reviewed and updated during the year)

Action Plan of Head of Legal Services

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
Mandatory Corporate Measures				
1	Manage resources within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	<p>Monthly monitoring of financial data, with prompt action to address pressures.</p> <p>Ensure accurate and full time recording to permit analysis of efficiency and value for money.</p>	Whole Section management through financial year.	Hitting financial targets
2	Reduce sickness absence levels by at least 5% on 2014/15 levels	Ensure compliance with corporate policy, in particular the conduct of RTWIs and timely seeking of OH advice/services as appropriate	Whole Section management through financial year.	Compliance with target reduction
3	Ensure all staff EDRs are completed by 30.9.15 and implement identified learning and development requirements	Completion of staff EDRs with all staff	Head of Service and Accountable Managers	Completion of EDR

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
4.	Improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after.	<p>4.1. Updating and delivering training to social workers on issues of quality and format of evidence and assessment, new developments in child protection cases in the new Unified Family Court and revision of the Public Law outline, and court skills</p> <p>4.2. Senior or Principal Solicitor attending twice weekly legal surgeries with principal officers and social workers to improve decision making on individual cases; identifying cases where protective action is appropriate and reducing “drift.”.</p>	<p>Child Care March 2016</p> <p>Child Care June 2016</p>	<p>Training session notes</p> <p>Surgery notes</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		<p>4.3. Piloting an in house advocate to increase the availability of early advice upon cases, consistency of approach, and to deliver savings on the cost of using external counsel. Assessment in conjunction with Social Services</p> <p>4.4. Provision of accurate and timely data to the Head of Children and Young People Services to enable him to monitor and control his legal spend, and to enhance the ability to benchmark.</p> <p>4.5. Continuation of development of contracts and service level agreements for provision of early intervention and preventative services and execution of agreements both with external organisations and internal departments. Advice to be given on development of further tender exercises for remaining areas of Early Intervention and Preventative Services</p> <p>4.6. In light of success of development Early Intervention and Preventative Services, advice to be provided on further tendering opportunities in children's services including those for advocacy services</p>	<p>Assessment September 2015</p> <p>Child Care Continue to March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016</p>	<p>Have in-house advocate in place</p> <p>Provision of expenditure information</p> <p>Contract conditions and tender documentation produced and Contracts executed</p> <p>Contract conditions and tender documentation produced and Contracts executed</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		4.7. Ongoing advice to be provided on contractual arrangements for children's services	Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016	Advice provided
5.	Raise educational standards and attainment.	<p>5.1. Contract for new Baglan Bay School and other 21st Century School Programme</p> <p>5.2 General Legal Support for schools and Directorate of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning on contractual matters</p> <p>5.3 Advice on contract conditions for Transport Tender, which shall include the provision of transport services school children with the aim of development of a Dynamic Purchasing System for Transport Services</p> <p>5.4 Development of contracts with providers for placement of children with educational needs</p> <p>5.5. General Legal Support for schools and Directorate of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2015</p> <p>Litigation Ongoing by March 2016</p>	<p>Executed Agreement</p> <p>Executed Agreements in place</p> <p>Executed Agreements in place</p> <p>Monitoring of advice given</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
6.	<p>Maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently And</p> <p>The provision of housing related support for the Supporting People Programme</p>	<p>6.1. Section.33 and related agreements (between ABMU and NPT, Swansea and Bridgend Councils) for Western Bay.</p> <p>6.2. Agreements to cover the provision and receipt of services to and from Gwalia until the decant of the care homes: 1. Receipt of meals service from Gwalia to NPT 2. Provision of transport services to Gwalia 3. Provision of certain buildings and maintenance services to Gwalia</p> <p>6.3. Supporting People Contract Extensions April 2015</p> <p>6.4. Arranging contracts for execution of extension of services for Supporting People Grant Programme for 2015/2016.</p> <p>6.5. Wallich Project Inter Authority Agreement Swansea. An inter authority agreement to cover payment and the administration of the contract between Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend is to be entered into to cover the contract period of 2015-2016.</p>	<p>Property and Corporate/Litigation By end March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of May 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of May 2015</p>	<p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		<p>6.6 Agreement to be entered into with ABMU to cover training services that NPT will provide to ABMU between 2015/2016. Agreement presently with ABMU for approval.</p> <p>6.7 Consolidation of Transport Contracts</p> <p>6.8 Development of a Service Level Agreement with Cyfle i Dyfu for occupation of Vocational Skills Centre and training opportunities</p> <p>6.9 Initial advice on new procurement methods (i.e. dynamic purchasing systems) for Direct Payments and Domiciliary Care Arrangements</p>	<p>Property and Corporate By end of June 2014</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing – completion of two stage Tender March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of July 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate March 2016</p>	<p>Agreement in place</p> <p>Provision of advice</p> <p>Agreements in place.</p> <p>Provision of advice.</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
7	<p>Support and promote economic growth regeneration etc.</p> <p>Renewal Area Contracts</p>	<p>7.1. Contracts entered into on an adhoc basis for Renewal Area construction work.</p> <p>7.2 Work in execution of Neath Town Centre Development documentation</p> <p>7.3 Advice on redevelopment of former Afan Lido Site</p> <p>7.4 Advice on operators agreement for Afan Valley Forest Centre</p> <p>7.5. Work on acquisition of property and payment of compensation for the PDR</p> <p>7.6. Advice and assistance on the Viable and Vibrant project at Port Talbot Town Centre including grant agreements and land acquisition.</p>	<p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate To end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate End of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate End of March 2016</p>	<p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Execution of Agreements</p> <p>Tender process completed and agreements in place</p> <p>Tender process completed and agreement in place</p> <p>Acquisition as instructed</p> <p>Development Agreements and leases in place.</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		7.7. Coed Darcy southern access compensation and construction agreements.	Property and Corporate to end of March 2016	Agreements in place
		7.8. Leasing playing Fields and Community Centres throughout the County Borough.	Property and Corporate to end of March 2016	Leases in place
8.	Increase percentage of waste recycled	8.1. Provide legal advice and assistance for the tendering of waste services and the leasing of the MREC facility.	Property and Corporate To end of March 2016	Advice provided and Agreements in place
		8.2. Prosecutions for unauthorised waste disposal.	Litigation Ongoing to end of March 2016	Monitoring of prosecution numbers
		8.3 Provide legal services to South West Wales Regional Waste Committee and assist in review.	Property and Corporate To end of March 2016	Provision of Legal Services at meetings

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
9.	Improve customer access to services and improve efficiency	<p>9.1. Drafting of legal documents compromised in the Third Sector Review</p> <p>9.2. Drafting and implementation of Contract Procedure Rules</p> <p>9.3. Fully integrate the Typing/Secretarial Service into Legal Service, thereby ensuring that full use (cost effectiveness) is made of them by all Legal Services colleagues.</p> <p>9.4. Manage the administrative integration of Rights of Way/Commons searches within current Land Charges staff.</p> <p>9.5. Create a more meaningful and understandable budget for all areas of the Legal Services family</p>	<p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of July 2015</p> <p>Business Support June/July 2014</p> <p>Litigation/Property Teams to March 2016</p> <p>Business Support Team Prior to the Revised Budget period circa October/November</p>	<p>Grant Agreements drafted and approved</p> <p>Revised Contract Procedure Rules in Place</p> <p>Monitoring of through put of work</p> <p>Assimilation of Commons work and limitation of ROW work referred externally</p> <p>Witnessed by Budget Journals in FIS</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		9.6. Use of PDF Docs software for redaction and bundling	Legal Services Child Care July 2015	Use of software on live files
		9.7. Establish access to NPT Legal Systems from Court at Civil Justice Centre (a) By use of smartphone (b) By Court wifi	Legal Services Child Care (a) July 2015 (b) December 2015	Availability of access
10.	Licensing	10.1. Review of Licensing Act 2003 Policy in accordance with Statutory requirements	December 2015	To be published following approval from Council
		10.2. Review of Gambling Act 2005 Policy in accordance with Statutory requirements	December 2015	To be published following approval from Council
		10.3. Engage with the Western Bay Safeguarding team and Swansea & Bridgend Licensing Authorities to implement taxi driver training on Child Sexual Exploitation	March 2016	Implement taxi driver conditions in respect of CSE training
		10.4. Creating a transparent and robust Licensing fee structure to contribute towards the FFP -utilising the All Wales Licensing Expert Panel's fees toolkits.	March 2016	Budget Monitoring

ICT and Corporate Procurement Division

Business Plan 2015-16

Head of Service: Stephen John

Area of Responsibility: Information & Communications Technology and Corporate Procurement

Sponsor: Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

The ICT and Corporate Procurement Division of the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate business plan follows the Corporate Performance Management Framework – Business Plan Guidance and will detail the division’s priorities and proposed action plan along with its response in relation to the Council’s six guiding principles.

Background

The Division is responsible for the provision and support of all ICT functions across the Council’s Departments including its Schools. The Division is also responsible for all Corporate Procurement activity within the Authority.

Despite continued budget and staff reductions, the Division is still perceived as one that performs well, operates strategically and is extremely flexible in adapting its work programme to meet the Council’s changing needs and priorities. Examples of this include the work generated by the Better, Simpler, Cheaper Programme which has resulted in a number of web and mobile applications being delivered which allow our citizens to access council services in a more flexible and convenient way and also the installation of the Regional Adoption Service into Port Talbot Civic Centre which required the development of a bespoke application and the delivery of flexible ICT infrastructure such that the staff involved were capable of working at a time, and from a location, that best served the service.

Principle 1 – What are the most important things for this service to achieve in the next year (15/16)

1. Software developments to support the continuing work and regional collaboration generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care programme. (*Improving Outcomes, Improving Lives*)
2. Software developments supporting the continuing work in Children's Services which are underpinning the improvements mandated by the CSSiW (Care and Social Services Inspection Wales) inspection. (*Safer, Brighter, Futures*).
3. Replace the current CMS (Content Management System) third party system with an open source solution. This solution will underpin all the Council's customer facing web sites providing a more flexible and functional system at a reduced cost. (*All*).
4. Continue to produce flexible applications that support the ICE (Improve Customer Experience) programme including the expansion of map based reporting facilities for the public via the internet. The requirements identified by the Digital by Design programme will be amalgamated into this work stream. (*Better, Simpler, Cheaper*).
5. iDOCS – a rewrite and rationalisation of the existing EDRMS (Electronic Document and Record Management System) solutions leading to an improved document storage and retrieval facility that will reduce on-going costs, rationalise the storage required and increase public availability (*All*).
6. To support the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information. This may be through an increased integration of the Vision system with other applications or by replacing the existing Vision system with a different facility. The programme will also be supported by improving the quality of services to users of the iProcurement and FIS (Financial Information System) Systems (*Better, Simpler, Cheaper*).

7. To replace Mentor, the Council's job costing system, maintaining service at a reduced cost. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
8. Modern Government System – support the introduction of a third party solution, delivering Members and staff access to secure committee document storage and administration. Mobile applications will be deployed to augment the exercise and pilot “paperless” meetings. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
9. Continued rationalisation of server estate, and the introduction of an enterprise back-up service, across a fully secure and facilitated two site deployment ensuring the necessary infrastructure to satisfy the Council's Business Continuity plans. *(All)*
10. ICT Service Provision for NPT schools – modernising the schools ICT service to underpin the changes in teaching and learning mandated by the schools themselves, the regional body ERW (Education through Regional Working) and the initiatives and demands introduced by the national curriculum. *(Brighter Schools, Brighter Prospects)*
11. Review of telephony including mobile devices. This review to include the need for staff and customer video conferencing, automated call answering, increased self-service and reduced costs. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
12. Ensure value for money and compliance through the application of the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations and EU Procurement Legislation. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
13. To collaborate, where appropriate, with other public sector organisations such as the National Procurement Service and The Welsh Purchasing Consortium to deliver increased value for money. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
14. To modernise the Procurement function through the use of electronic tools and software including E-sourcing, E-tendering and the continued roll out of e-Procurement across the Council. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*

- 15.** To encourage and support local suppliers to bid for and win Council contracts thus ensuring the Council's procurement activity has a positive effect on the local economy. (Prosperity for All)

Principle 2 – Why have we prioritized these achievements:

1. These areas have been prioritised after in-depth consultation with Chief Officers and their service managers with a aim of helping services meet their financial objectives and Council priorities.
2. The priorities will aid services in helping to maximise their potential whilst ensuring that staff and members work from a resilient and available IT infrastructure.
3. To ensure that the Authority has value for money in its expenditure and that local business collaboration is prioritised.
4. To ensure that the Council has a modernised and supported infrastructure that will remain valid for the next four to six years.

Principle 3 – How are we going to secure these achievements:

These achievements will be secured in-house by the ICT Division's experienced and qualified staff.

However, should a limit to available manpower be reached, for example due to the budget situation and dwindling resources, external resource may need to be procured if all the services' priorities are to be met.

For several years the service has been providing opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships and has recently increased the number on offer. Once fully trained these staff will be a further source of additional resources.

Partnership working has also been discussed with neighbouring authorities and with ever decreasing resources and budget this will continue. However, to date there has been limited interest shown by our neighbours and therefore this plan cannot rely on this process and the delivery of the priorities identified herein do not rely on this.

Principle 4 – How will any risks be managed:

Step 1 – Identification of Risks			Step 2 – Assessing the Risks			Step 3 - Mitigation	
Risk No	Risk Description	Cause of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	How Risk is to be Addressed	Linked Actions
R1	Loss of key staff from Division	ER VR scheme, job opportunities	5	5	10 (High)	Combination of better job satisfaction through System Reviews, Employee Development Review process and reduction of dependency on key individuals by sharing expert knowledge across other staff.	
R2	Workload exceeds available resources	Unrealistic expectations arising from insufficient forward planning or consultation by service users; Legislation;. Expanded use; growth and diversity of technology deployed leading to an increased support burden.	3	3	6 (Med)	Ensure that senior IT Managers are consulted for all projects that contain elements linked to ICT. Stronger ICT governance. Ensure tasks and targets published in the Business Plan are achievable by setting realistic target dates and managing resources effectively.	

R3	Loss of Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation	Submission failure	2	4	6 (Med)	Ensure that all areas of PSN Conditions of Connection are met	
R4	Loss of Exchange/Email Service.	Server and/or Application failure.	1	2	3 (Low)	Provision of resilience through implementation of high Availability redundant servers.	
R5	Significant Fabric/Infrastructure loss.	Accidental or Malicious damage.	1	2	3 (Low)	Enhanced environmental monitoring agents coupled with more robust Business Continuity processes	
R6	Unauthorised access to corporate facilities/ information.	Breach of perimeter security.	1	2	3 (Low)	Increased detection methods and better application security.	

Principle 5 – What is our current performance in these priority areas:

1. The Software Development Team has a very good relationship with the service managers within the Social Services Directorate.

Regular development meetings are held and the application itself, which covers several disciplines within the Directorate, has been developed to meet the exact needs of the service.

This relationship has been very beneficial in supporting the work undertaken in adult services and that addressing the CSSiW recommendations. (Priority items 1 & 2)

2. The Development Team is well-respected within the Authority and also with those staff who we engage with from other Councils.

Our in-house developed systems avoid the need for the purchase of third party solutions and are created to be service-specific. Increasingly these applications are in demand by other local councils and NPT staff developed DRAGON, the Joint Resilience Unit system which has been adopted regionally with a view to becoming the national offering.

We are currently in discussions with various Councils on a number of recent developments including our Registrars and Fleet Management Systems.(Priority items 3, 4, 5 & 6)

3. The ICT Division has supported Mentor for several years but as the result of key staff leaving the Authority, and the need to realise increased savings from our software budget, it has been decided to replace the system.

The staff involved will ensure that any replacement is fit for purpose, will deliver the necessary savings and plan for a seamless decommissioning of the application. (Priority item 7)

4. The initial implementation of the Modern Government System has now been in place for several months.

The next steps will see the introduction of a “sister” secure application for use by

authorised staff and Members which will enable access to private reports and papers in addition to those publically available.

A review of Member's ICT will take place in tandem with the aim of understanding changing needs and introducing the necessary facilities to meet these. This will include the devices and software which will allow Members, and staff, to access and work with documentation electronically, reducing the need for paper. (Priority item 8)

5. The ICT Division has a very experienced technical team with a proven track record of ensuring that IT infrastructure meets the organisational need, is secure and is provided with a high availability.

Recent staff losses will be offset with a combination of team mergers, a reallocation of specific duties and the merging of corporate and school specific infrastructure. All of which should combine to ensure that service levels remain at the current high standard. (Priority items 9, 10 & 11)

6. The Procurement Team has a successful track record in supporting services delivering cashable contract savings across a wide range of commodities (Social Care, Professional Services, ICT). Procurement Training for relevant Council staff has also been delivered to ensure key officers are fully aware of how the recent changes to EU Procurement law affects their operation (Priority Item 12).
7. The Council are active members of the Welsh Procurement Consortium, making use of a number of agreements across its contract portfolio and also acts as lead Authority on a variety of contracts. It also contributes to the National Procurement Service across its various customer groups and provides information as required to deliver standardised, effective all Wales arrangements (Priority Item 13).
8. Procurement Staff have led on the re-design of Purchase to Pay (P2P) processes across the Council, introducing new forms of centralised purchasing, where appropriate. This work has been supplemented by the introduction of Oracle iProcurement software and Corporate Credit Cards that underpin the new processes and models of operation. Detailed Procurement Spend information is now readily available through pre-configured reporting software (Priority Item 14).

9. Support for local businesses is in place through the joint work between the Procurement and Business Development Sections that includes various workshops, issuing general advice engagement events and hands on support for completing tenders. This has also broadened out with Community Benefit clauses now standard in major construction projects and extending into other contract areas such as Financial Services. Support is also in place for local businesses to enable them to trade electronically with the Council and others, supporting their economic growth (Priority Item 15).

Principle 6 – Action Plan

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Outcomes
1.	Software developments supporting the work generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme	Respond to demands from SSH directorate to develop in house system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Fit for purpose system
2.	Work associated with supporting continued work in Children's Services	Respond to demands from SSH directorate to modify in house system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Fit for purpose systems and IT
3.	Replace current CMS with open source solution	Cost saving by developing an open source solution	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful conversion and implementation of new solution.
4.	Continue to produce flexible applications	Develop web pages and system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful implementation of new systems
5.	Rewrite and rationalisation of EDRMS	Development of in house solution	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful conversion and implementation of new solution.

6.	To support the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information	Identify Vision data import/export requirements. Develop and implement system interfaces. Review current technical architecture and service arrangements. Identify and implement improvements.	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Collect and analyse type and frequency of demands from users of corporate systems Collect and analyse customer views on corporate systems
7.	Work to replace Mentor System	Maintain service at a reduced cost	Ian John	Ongoing	Successful and seamless removal of system
8.	Modern Government System	Support third party installation and configuration	Ian John/Dave Giles	Ongoing	Successful implementation
9.	Rationalisation of server estate and upgrade of enterprise back up service	Replace ageing architecture and operating systems to provide a flexible, robust and responsive infrastructure; improve Disaster Recovery Capability	David Giles	Ongoing	Seamless replacement of architecture Ability to recover from system failure improved

10.	Modernisation of schools ICT service provision	Engage with schools to create an updated ICT Delivery model to reflect business needs. Emphasis on Office 365, HWB+ and Mobile access to Service	David Giles	Ongoing	Modernisation of schools ICT environment
11.	Review of telephony including mobile devices	Rationalisation of telephony across the Authority	David Giles	Ongoing	
12.	Continued desktop and Office 2010 upgrades	Refresh desktop estate across the council to provide access to latest stable operating system and office environment	David Giles	Ongoing	
13.	Ensure VFM and compliance through Contract Procedure Rules, etc	Ensure CPR, Fin Regs and procurement legislation are adhered to	Rob Type	Ongoing	
14.	Continuing Data Reviews	Reviewing staff use of information and ensuring security of the data.	Ian John	Ongoing	Surety surrounding data security and maximized information usage
15.	ICO Audit	Deliver the improvements identified during the ICO Audit	Ian John	March 2016	Completed action plan
16.	PSN Accreditation	Ensure PSN accreditation	Ian John	Nov 2016	Continued accreditation
17.	Identify and introduce meaningful service performance measures	Identify valuable measurable performance metrics for each section of the Division	Ian John	Ongoing	

18.	Engagement with National Procurement Initiatives	Contribute to the development of national procurement strategies and initiatives.	Rob Type	Ongoing	Publication and adoption of national strategies
19.	EProcurement	Redesign and streamlining of purchasing and payment processes and continued roll out of eProcurement tools	Rob Type	Ongoing	
20.	Guidance re changes in the EU Directives	Utilise Value Wales and CCS policy notes and organise procurement training and other resources for staff	Rob Type	Ongoing	Publication of guidance
21	Further develop the use of community benefits in the procurement process	Better identify opportunities for use through early involvement in the procurement process. Educate departments and members on the advantages of community benefits	Rob Type	Ongoing	
22.	Ensure that resources are managed within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandated measure	Head of Service and senior managers	Ongoing	Budget delivered within agreed guidelines

23.	Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Mandated measure		Head of Service and senior managers	Ongoing	Sickness levels managed
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandated measure	Head of Service and senior managers	March 2016	PDR's completed for all staff in the ICT Division	

ICT AND CORPORATE PROCUREMENT SERVICE REPORT CARD 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

Brief description of the service	Key priorities for 2014/2015
<p>The ICT Division is responsible for the provision and support of all ICT functions across the Council; including its schools.</p> <p>The service includes support of all servers, desktops and mobile devices and associated infrastructure, development of software including web applications, support for new council requirements, Information security and ICT training.</p> <p>The Procurement Unit is also part of the Division and is responsible for ensuring corporate spend is undertaken within the remit of the Procurement Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System development including those supporting service improvements within Children’s and Adult Services, mobile and web facing applications and map based reporting underpin the Digital by Design strategy • Completion of the desktop reprovisioning exercise • Server and storage upgrades to improve performance and resilience of the core infrastructure • Replace the aging telephone architecture with a flexible, integrated voice and data solution • Explore and exploit local and regional collaborative opportunities

Story behind the performance

The Division, as with all others in the Council, has to adhere to a very strict budget which operates under the control of the over-arching FFP. Whilst this is achievable, it does in the main direct spend against local solutions; ones which are important to our Council.

Despite the budget and staff reductions, the Division is perceived as one that performs well, operates strategically and is extremely flexible in adapting its work programme to meet the Council’s changing needs. There are good examples of this, not least the work undertaken during the last year in supporting the Council’s Children’s Service to address the findings from its inspection and also the work carried out in partnership with Welsh Government and the Authority’s Schools in providing ubiquitous wireless coverage within and across their campus’; ensuring safe broadband Internet access for their pupils wherever they are in the school.

Measure	13/14 Performanc e	14/15 Q1 Apr - June	14/15 Q2 July - Sept	14/15 Q3 Oct - Dec	14/15 Q4 Jan - Mar	14/15 Cumul.
Financial:						
FFP (agreed) savings at risk or undeliverable	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% expenditure within budget	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target strategies identified to balance budget for 2015/16	Strategies identified will realise the required savings					
Customer:						
Average customer satisfaction score	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
No of complaints received (including those received for the Welsh Language Scheme)	No service complaints have been received					
No of compliments received	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Internal:						
Average No of Support calls received per day	104	102	123	119	121	116
% of calls completed within 1 day	66%	68%	74%	71%	73%	71.5%
Number of calls that fail to get through first time (missed calls)	3.91%	2.87%	3.55%	3.71%	2.77%	3.22%
System availability	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Number of transactions through eProcurement tools	NEW	9,562	10,474	12,715	16,676	49,427

Measure	13/14 Performance	14/15 Q1 Apr - June	14/15 Q2 July - Sept	14/15 Q3 Oct - Dec	14/15 Q4 Jan - Mar	14/15 Cumul.
Employees:						
% staff satisfied or very satisfied with their job	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Average days lost due to sickness / FTE	0.45	0.23	0.43	0.74	1.45	0.71
No of staff ideas generated	Ideas generated by staff on daily basis.					
% of staff who have received a PDR/EDR in the last 12 months	NEW	NEW	NEW	10%	10%	10%
% identified learning and development needs met	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Employee turnover rate due to unplanned departures	NEW	NEW	NEW	0	0	0

Next key actions for 2015/2016		
What	Who	By When
Software developments to support the continuing work and regional collaboration generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
Software developments to supporting the continuing work in Children's Services which are underpinning the improvements mandated by the CSSiW inspection.	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
Replace the existing CMS system with an open source solution	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
Continue to produce flexible applications that support the ICE programme/Digital by Design programme	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
The rewrite and rationalisation of the existing EDRMS solutions	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
Supporting the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information. This may be through increased integration with the Vision System or the replacement of the system with a different solution	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
Replacement of the Mentor costing system	Ian John	Ongoing
Modern Government System continued deployment including the implementation of the secure document "app"	Ian John/Dave Giles	2 nd Quarter

Continued rationalisation of server estate & the introduction of an enterprise backup service	David Giles	Ongoing
Modernisation of the schools ICT service which will underpin the changes in teaching and learning mandated by the schools	David Giles	Ongoing
Review of telephony including mobile devices which will include video conferencing, automated call answering, increased self-service and reduced costs	David Giles	Ongoing
Ensure value for money and compliance through the application of the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regs, e-Tendering and EU Procurement Legislation	Rob Type	Ongoing
Collaboration with other public sector organisations such as the National Procurement Service and Welsh Purchasing Consortium to deliver increased value for money	Rob Type	Ongoing
To modernise the Procurement function through the use of e-tools and software including e-sourcing, e-tendering and the continued roll out of e-Procurement across the Council	Rob Type	Ongoing
To encourage and support local suppliers to bid for and win Council contract thus ensuring the Council's procurement activity has a positive effect on the local economy	Rob Type	Ongoing
Continued PSN accreditation	Ian John	3 rd Quarter
Continued data reviews to ensure staff are accessing, using and securing information properly	Ian John	Ongoing
Delivering the improvements identified during the ICO Audit	Ian John	Ongoing
Ensuring that resources are managed within budget	Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Ensure staff PDRs are completed	Senior Management Team	March 2016