HUMAN RESOURCES
SERVICE PLAN 2004/2007

HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The aim of the Division is to provide professional advice and support for the Council in the effective management, deployment and continuous improvement of its workforce for the achievement of its stated aims and objectives. We ensure that people are treated fairly and value equality and diversity in employment and in services provided to the community. The Division will provide a range of services broadly under the following areas;

- Organisational strategy and development
- Recruitment and Selection
- Pay and rewards
- Learning, training and development
- Employee relations
- Equalities
- Human resources advice and guidance

THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

The majority of the service related challenges faced by the Division have been the significant corporate related ones, arising out of the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan gives a clear acknowledgement that the Council's employees and the essential role they play in service provision are recognised as being a valuable asset. The plan also identifies the importance of managing all our resources efficiently and effectively, including our employees. The Division has also been moved under the Council restructure into the Corporate Services Directorate.

Over the past 6 months work has been focused on

- The outcomes arising for 2004 national pay settlement that requires the completion of pay and grading reviews within a defined timescale.
- Developing and reviewing employment policies and practices in line with Employment Act 2002 and other legislation
- Supporting the senior management review and restructuring of the councils establishment
- Reviewing the Performance and Development Review Scheme (PDR) to continue its contribution to the overall performance management framework of the council
- Completing a review of training needs identified at a corporate, service or individual level and proposing a range of solutions to address these needs
- Supporting Elected Member Development training
- Rolling out a corporate programme on Equality & Diversity training
- Reducing sickness absence levels and the further development of management information
- Supporting organisational development through advising on revised structures, market testing posts and consultation with employees and their representatives
- Supporting the recruitment for two senior managers posts

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION	OUTCOMES
Implementing Single Status	➤ Overview of key issues arising from settlement produced ➤ Review of work already completed agreed with trades unions ➤ Meeting of Steering Group in November
Senior Management Review	➤ Completion of consultation with all stakeholders and review of senior manager salaries ➤ Implementation of revised council structure ➤ Appointments completed into new structure ➤ Proposals made for assessing the impact of the changes
Code of Practice on workforce matters	➤ Code adopted by the Council and forms part of the Corporate Procurement Strategy ➤ Ongoing work with the trades unions to develop local protocols of the impact of the new Code
Corporate Training Plan	➤ Completed review of training needs across the Council ➤ Proposals for addressing training needs and allocation of resources approved by Council ➤ Development of training activities in line with the priorities have commenced (Project management)
Employee Survey	➤ Survey developed and agreed with all trades unions and approved by Joint Consultative Committee ➤ Survey to be undertaken during November with final analysis available in New Year
Flexible Working/Worklife Balance	➤ Homeworking policy approved and initial pilot of scheme being undertaken ➤ Agreed with trades unions to further publicise availability of employment policies through core brief ➤ Ongoing review of further options being discussed with trades unions
Workforce planning	➤ Pilot area has been identified ➤ Ongoing progress with the development of a competency based framework
Human Resources Strategy	➤ Initial work undertaken to start the development of a framework for further discussions with trades unions
Employee Relations	➤ Draft Facilities Agreement approved by the trades unions ➤ Further consideration to be made at the Joint Consultative Committee
Equality & Diversity	➤ Completed training programme for all staff and Elected Members ➤ Training for LSP members is planned ➤ Reviewed Council's recruitment website and developed links with other dedicated sites

Raise profile of service	➤ Human Resources bulletins produced for managers
Employment Policies	➤ Redrafted Grievance Procedure to comply with revised legislation ➤ Introduced procedures for the appointment and dismissal of Senior Officers ➤ Implemented Assimilation Procedure
Elected Member Development Training	➤ Provided a range of training programmes for Members working with the Head of L & D S ➤ Supporting the development of a Members Charter

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
Investors in People – re-accreditation	The IIP award is valid for 3 years. The Council has to therefore apply for accreditation by April 2006. Due to other priorities during the year, it is now planned to start the re-application process early in 2005.
Achievement of two ticks disability symbol	Due to other priorities during the year it is planned to commence the application process for this award early in the New Year.
Personnel Computer System	Initial progress to upgrade the existing system has commenced. It is expected that resources should be available to fund the upgrade although the implementation plan may then continue into the next financial year.

2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Best Value Performance Indicators

BVPI No.	Title	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Estimate 2004/05
11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	16.67%	22%	16.67%
11b	% of top earners from black & ethnic minority communities	0.0%	5.5%	0%
12	No. of working days lost due to sickness	8.95 days	8.5 days	8.5 days
14	% of employees retiring early excluding ill health retirements	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
15	% of employees retiring early due to ill health	0.35%	0.3%	0%
16a	% of employees who are disabled	3.48%	3.8%	3.8%
17a	% of employees who are from ethnic minority communities	0.32%	0.9 %	1.0%

Local Performance Indicators

Local Indicator	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Estimate 2004/05
Number of employees who have an individual training plan, following a PDR interview	46%	95%	95%
Labour Turnover – voluntary leavers only	8.23%	8%	8%
% of internal appointments	N/a	3%	3%
Number of learning days per employee	N/a	3	3

EMERGING ISSUES

The review of the Local Government Pension Scheme will have issues that need to considered in terms of employment and finance.

The final decision on Age Discrimination legislation expected in October 2006 will need the Council to review its existing employment practices.

Potential for a single 'Equality Forum' to lead on legislation and best practice to promote equality and eradicate all forms of discrimination. This could lead to changes in legislation and new standards for employers to achieve in these areas.

Further local determination of pay and rewards structure has the potential to create recruitment and retention issues within the Council.

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DIVISION
SERVICE PLAN 2004/2007

HALF-YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Division is responsible for:-

- **Legal Services** - To advise the Council on all legal matters e.g. contractual arrangements, housing, planning, environmental health, conveyancing, employment matters and to represent the Council in courts and tribunals. It also advises on human rights issues, the provision of information to Members, Officers and the public and ensuring that the Constitution is adhered to by Members and Officers and kept up to date.
- **Democratic Services** -The management and administration of the committee process, including support for the Chief Executive, Members and the civic functions of the Council, particularly the Chair.
- **The Elections Service** - Maintains and updates the register of electors annually and on a rolling basis and administers Parish, District, County, Parliamentary and European elections and referenda.
- **Land Charges** - Ensures that the Local Land Charges Register is maintained and provides searches on payment of a fee for residents of the District when they purchase new property.
- **Public Relations** - To oversee the public and media relation functions of the Council.

THE HALF-YEAR IN CONTEXT

The main challenges faced by the Division were:-

- **Members' Training** - The need for a structured training programme following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Report was recognised and is being progressed in line with Members' requirements.
- **European Election** - Undertaking a pilot all postal ballot in conjunction with the other Authorities in the East Midlands.
- **Upgrade of Local Land Charges software** - The recently installed upgrade of the SX3 system was the first of its kind in the county, which resulted in a number of challenges to ensure the continued delivery of the service on a day to day basis.
- **Members' Laptops** - The initial stages involved in this project were being progressed in line with Members' requirements.

The main opportunities faced were:-

- **Ethical Framework** - Section 66 Regulations relating to local determinations have recently been introduced and we have worked with neighbouring authorities to produce a joint procedure for hearings which can be implemented county-wide. Regulations relating to the investigation of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by Members of District and Parish Councils were introduced within the last few days and they require such investigations to be undertaken by the Monitoring Officer or her nominated representative and determined by the Standards Committee.
- **Regional Assemblies** - A referendum may be necessary on an elected assembly for the region.
- **Transfer of Liquor Licensing** - This function is to be transferred from the Magistrates' Courts, which will increase the Division's workload considerably due to the high number of public houses, restaurants and off-licences which are currently outside the Council's control. Objections to premises and personal licences will need to be determined by Licensing Panels which will be serviced and legally advised by the Division.
- **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)** - The implementation of the Action Plan to ensure continuous development.
- **Land Charges** - National Land Information Service (NLIS) Stage 3 requirements – the need to transfer all land and property information and registrations onto a national database to provide, by electronic means, a one-stop shop for conveyancing transactions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past 6 months, the Division's main achievements have been:-

ACTION	OUTCOMES
E-government	The Division has made a significant contribution to the development of the Council's website involving the availability of Agendas, Minutes and information about the services available throughout the Division. Work towards achieving the Electronic Service Delivery targets is currently being undertaken.
Elections and Electoral Administration	The annual canvass of over 30,000 properties started in August, with the personal canvass of properties taking place in October and the Register being published on 1st December.
European Elections	The successful undertaking of the 2004 Elections, in which we formed part of the East Midlands Pilot for an all postal vote election, resulted in the appointment of 6 Members of the European Parliament to represent the region.
Debt Recovery	An ongoing review of current sundry debt cases, with appropriate action being undertaken to pursue outstanding matters.
Prosecutions	Successful prosecutions were carried out for a number of offences, including health and safety, environmental health and planning enforcement.
Planning Agreements	A number of agreements have been drafted and completed pursuant to Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Also, a standard Section 106 agreement has been prepared, in conjunction with the Planners, to regularise documentation.
Conveyancing	Land sales, leases, easements and Deeds of Variation have been drafted and finalised.
Public Open Space	The adoption of various Public Open Spaces from developers has resulted in payments of commuted sums by the developers for the future maintenance of the land.
Sale of Council Houses	38 council houses have been sold under the Housing Act 1985.
Training of Staff	Staff throughout the Division have attended various external training courses, seminars and conferences to enhance their professional skills.
Electronic Communications Policy	Assisting IT Services in the total revision of the former Telecommunications Policy.
Ombudsman	There have been no complaints over the past 6 months resulting in a finding of maladministration by the Council.
Internal Communications	Weekly production of the Core Brief document.
Implementation of Absence Management Policy	The Division's sickness absence for the half-year is below the government target for absence.
Training for Members	All Members have attended a specific training session on the Planning function. This has been followed by an invitation to attend various courses on the Modern Members Development Programme, run by the East Midlands Regional Local Government Association. Further training courses identified by Members have also been conducted in relation to Equalities and Diversity, Finance, the transfer of the Liquor Licensing function, Implementing Electronic Government and Council Policies.
Training for Parish Councillors	The Monitoring Officer has provided a separate training session for Parish Councillors, which included a discussion on her role and that of the District Council's Standards Committee in relation to the Code of Conduct, Personal and Prejudicial Interests, together with the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Arrangements for Good Corporate Governance	Planning Code of Good Practice – The Council has adopted a Planning Code of Good Practice designed to assist and protect Members during their involvement in the various stages of the planning process. Members' Laptop Protocol – A draft Protocol for the Use of Information Technology by Members of the Council has been prepared in readiness for the distribution of the IT equipment early in the New Year. 2002 Constitution Action Plan – Working Panels for the 3 Policy Committees and Development Control Committee have met and put forward proposals to streamline decision making to enable them to perform a more strategic, policy-oriented role.
Standards Committee	The Standards Committee has appointed independent Members to act as Chair and Vice-Chair to ensure transparency. They have appointed a Sub-Committee which will deal with any local determinations referred to the Council by the Standards Board for England. The Committee has also adopted a joint procedure with other Derbyshire Authorities to deal with such matters and a protocol to deal with written requests for dispensations from Members of the District and Parish Councils.
Constitution	The Constitution has been reviewed in light of Member and Employee changes to the Council since its introduction in 2001.
Land Charges	The Land Charges software has recently been upgraded. Unfortunately, the upgrade encountered a number of problems which involved the system being unoperational for a time which resulted in an unavoidable drop in performance to 97% of searches being completed within the 10 working day period.
Public Relations	The Public Relations Officer has been instrumental in the development of the District Guide and the publicity for the Local Strategic Partnership, as well as creation of various advertisements for departments.
Democratic Services	The servicing of an increasing number of meetings, following the introduction of Alternative Arrangements, has represented an additional workload in the Section. This has led to a new temporary part-time post being approved with the successful applicant commencing employment in April 2004.
Local Strategic Partnership	Formed to represent the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and involve them in the choices about services, local priorities and the preparation of a Community Strategy. The Constitution has been prepared in consultation with Legal Services and the LSP is serviced by Democratic Services.
Parish Councils	An inaugural meeting between the Council and its Parish Councils/Meetings occurred in September. Regular meetings are to be established, with the next joint meeting being held in October and thereafter on a quarterly basis, to deal with issues affecting both tiers of government.

TASKS AT RISK OF NON-DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

The following table outlines tasks that were not delivered during the year, along with an explanation:-

ACTION	EXPLANATION
Departmental and Service Planning Framework	Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires to service users for Legal, Democratic Services, Public Relations and Land Charges will be followed up by use of Focus Groups and regular update meetings to improve on current service delivery.
Legal Services – Right to Buy Function	A review of the current Right to Buy procedure, part of which is currently undertaken by external Solicitors, is to be undertaken. It is anticipated that the function will be returned in-house provided there are adequate staffing resources.

2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The table below shows the Best Value and Local Performance Indicators that relate to the services provided within this Division:-

No.	INDICATOR	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Estimate 2004/05
	Best Value Performance Indicators % of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	100	97	97
	Local Performance Indicators **Democratic Services**			
L.1	% of agendas despatched 5 clear days before meeting	100	100	100
L.2	% of decisions that are recorded accurately in Minutes	99	100	100
L.3	To provide public notice of all Council Meetings and make available agendas for the public	100	100	100
L.4	% of decision/action sheets issued within deadlines	100	100	100
L.5	To make Tree Preservation Orders within 5 working days of receipt	95	95	90
L.6	% of events where the Chair arrives punctually	100	100	100
L.7	% of civic invitations responded to within 5 working days	95	95	95
	Elections and Electoral Administration			
L.8	% of households returning the Electoral Registration Form	99	100	99
L.9	Compliance with prescribed election timetables	100	100	100
L.10	User satisfaction – lack of election petitions/complaints	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Legal Services			
L.11	% of draft contracts sent out within 15 working days of receipt of proper detailed instructions	90	90	90
L.12	% of draft shop leases sent out to prospective tenants or their solicitors within 15 working days of receipt of proper detailed instructions	90	90	90
L.13	Within 25 working days of receipt of an initial instructing memorandum requesting the initiation of prosecution proceedings, to confirm to the instructing officer that their instructions are adequate or to advise what further information or action is required	75	90	80
L.14	% of written communications responded to within 10 working days	85	97	90
	Public Relations			
L.	Increase press/media coverage of the services/functions undertaken by the Council to average 4 press releases per week while bearing in mind that preventing adverse publicity cannot always be measured	6	6	6

EMERGING ISSUES

- Members' Laptops – development of protocol and amendment to current working practices.

- Introduction of further regulations to empower the Monitoring Officer to undertake investigations into allegations of misconduct by Members of District Council/Parish Councils referred by the Standards Board for England.

FINANCE SERVICES DIVISION

SERVICE PLAN 2004 - 2007
HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

1. SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Division provides Accountancy and Exchequer Services for the Council. This covers statutory financial management and control, together with the provision of internal support to service departments.

2. THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

Financial Management System

The main development during this period was in implementing the new Financial Management System. The core financial modules (Phase 1) went live in April 2004 as planned. Bedding the system in, changing procedures and rolling it out to key users across the Council has been problematic and slower than anticipated.

However, due to the commitment and hard work of Finance (and I.T. staff), this has largely been overcome and the system is beginning to settle down. There has been a substantial learning requirement for all involved. Making the most effective use of the system and in particular its reporting, is the next challenge for Phase 1.

Final Accounts

Once again, earlier closure of the Council's accounts was achieved as planned, even though the Division was also implementing the FMS. The financial statements were signed on 19th July 2004, ahead of the statutory target of 31st August.

Risk Management and Insurance

The Division has also been co-ordinating the development of a Risk Management Strategy in line with recommendations of the District Auditor. A proposed strategy is planned to be reported to Finance and Management Committee in November.

In addition, officers have been working with the Council's insurers to improve loss ratios on the public and motor vehicle policies. Insurance premiums for 2004/05 were negotiated and settled within budget.

Payroll

This section has successfully implemented an earlier payment date for monthly paid staff. The pay date has been brought forward from 25th to 18th of the month.

FINANCE SERVICES DIVISION

Housing Stock Options Review

The Division completed and reported the financial appraisal for this review in accordance with Government guidelines.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS

The key tasks as set out in the approved service plan that have been completed as planned are detailed below.

ACTION	OUTCOMES
Closure of Accounts in accordance with statutory time scales.	• Completed – ahead of Government target. • The Council's overall financial position and resources available were known earlier than previously. This enabled decisions to be made on additional spending in the year.
Implement Financial Management System	Phase 1 completed – initial developments included: • New accounting coding structure • Payments to suppliers by BACS • Collection of sundry debts by Direct Debit
Develop a Risk Management Strategy	The proposed strategy will: • Consolidate the Council's risks • Set out plans for dealing with risks • Implement a monitoring and review mechanism • Fully integrate risk management into service and financial planning
Consider the feasibility of an Insurance Fund	Reported to Finance and Management Committee in September 2004. • Not considered cost effective for the Council at this stage. • Would require dedicated resources together with expertise in risk management and claims handling.
Reduce the Council's insurance loss ratio's	Actions/work on-going as follows: • Workshop with Council's insurer's to raise awareness and highlight issues. • Fitting of vehicle tracking system into vehicles (funded from risk management budget). • Insurer's to undertake a motor vehicle audit. • Risk assessment procedures and documentation being reviewed in certain areas.

FINANCE SERVICES DIVISION

4. TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

Two key tasks associated with the FMS, i.e. profiling budgets and overhead costing still need to be developed. However, it is envisaged at this stage, that they will be completed during the remainder of the year.

Two other key tasks are currently slipping and these are detailed below.

ACTION	EXPLANATION
Implement Document Management	This was scheduled for September 2004, but in reality is not achievable. This is now planned to be implemented as part of Phase 2 of the FMS (See section on Emerging Issues).
Review Strategy for Debt Collection	This was scheduled for December 2004 but is likely to be delayed due to higher priorities.

5. 2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Best Value Performance Indicators

Indicator	Actual 2003/04	Govt. Target 2004/05	Probable 2004/005
BVPI 8 Proportion of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	93%	100%	95%

Local Performance Indicators

Indicator	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Probable 2004/005
FSLI 1 Proportion of payments made to suppliers electronically	N/A	75%	75%
FSLI 2 Production of Annual Statement of Accounts	31st July 2003	15th July 2004	15th July 2004
FSLI 3 Proportion of new sundry debts for goods and services raised in the year collected	N/A	95%	95%

FINANCE SERVICES DIVISION

FSLI 4 Proportion of financial & management reports that meet user requirements	N/A	75%	75%
FSLI 5 Proportion of service users agreeing Service Level Recharge	N/A	95%	95%
FSLI 6 Proportion of service users satisfied with system processing	N/A	95%	95%
FSLI 7 Return on short-term investments (bank deposits and money market funds)	Local Authority 7-Day Rate	Local Authority 7-Day Rate	Local Authority 7-Day Rate
FSLI 8 Partial exemption limit for VAT does not exceed 5%	1.85%	<5%	2.5%

6. EMERGING ISSUES

Implementation of FMS - Phase 2

This involves the development of E-procurement, i.e., electronic ordering of, and payment for goods and services. This is due to be rolled out across the Council from April 2005 on a phased basis. This will include Document Management.

Planning and mapping out the Council's requirements has recently commenced. Unlike Phase 1, this will have more of a direct impact upon many parts of the organisation and may well entail changing current working practices. It will be a key factor in the Council meeting the Government's E-Procurement target of December 2005.

REVENUE DIVISION
SERVICE PLAN 2004/2007

HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Division is responsible for the collection and recovery of Council Tax and the National Non-Domestic Rate, the administration of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Scheme along with the provision of remittance processing facilities and the administration of the Concessionary Fares Scheme.

THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

The following items reflect the main achievements so far during 2004/05:

- Work has progressed, albeit at a very slow pace, on the introduction of the replacement Revenues and Benefits computer system.
- The Housing and Council Tax Benefit function has continued without a backlog and high performance has been sustained as a direct result of the joint approach taken by members, management, staff and claimants. We continue to offer a high level of service to our claimants with complete applications being dealt within very short timescales.
- A number of initiatives have been taken to help with the take-up of benefits.
- The use of debit/credit card payments throughout the authority has continued to increase and facilities are available on the web-site and a "touchtone" telephone payment service has been introduced.
- The maintenance of performance indicators giving favourable comparison with top performing councils.

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION	OUTCOMES
Continue to develop the joint working arrangements with other authorities for the production of benefit leaflets and standards along with revenue leaflets	The benefit leaflet group has continued to develop the range of leaflets available and has investigated the production of tapes and leaflets in other languages
Enhance the fraud investigation function as a result of the CPA inspection and the HB/CTB Performance Standards	The fraud function has been enhanced and the Unit is pursuing cases in accordance with the Business Plan.
Introduce the provisions of the Verification Framework	Work is continuing with a view to the introduction of this scheme during this financial year.
Prepare for and Implement the National Non-Domestic Rate revaluation	Work is on target to implement the new changes for 1 April 2005
Prepare for and Implement the Council Tax re-banding	Work will not commence until 2006/07
Introduce e-billing facilities for Council Tax and the National Non-Domestic Rate	Completed

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Investigate and make bids (either as an individual authority, or jointly with other authorities and organisations) for funding for various projects	Joint bid with other Derbyshire authorities for the provision of software to trace absconded benefit overpayment cases. Work in progress to secure funding for the introduction of the Verification Framework
Crime and disorder - Section 17: • Audit existing services and policies • Implement action plan	Completed
Equal Opportunities and Diversity • Annual Audit of services and policies in the light of the Race Equality Scheme • Implement the Race Equality Scheme Action plan	Completed

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
Implement the new Revenues and Benefit Software	The transfer of data to the new system has been more difficult than anticipated and has lead to continuing delays in the implementation of this major project
Plan developments to follow the introduction of the new software (eg. Further joint working arrangements)	Follows on from above
Implementation Plan following the work carried out on the HB/CTB Performance Standards (as part of the BFI inspection for the CPA)	Progress has been slower than anticipated due to resources being concentrated on the conversion to the new computer system and staff changes.

2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2003/04 (actual)	2004/05 (target)	2004/05 (estimate)
9- Percentage Council Tax Collected in year	98.94%	97%	98.50%
10- Percentage NNDR collected in year	99.87%	97%	99%
76 Security			
76a- No. of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload	76.72	80	60
76b- No. of fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload	0.40	0.60	0.50
76c- No. of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload	34.79	40	50
76d- No of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	0.80	1.50	2.50

78a- Average number of days to process new benefit claims	14 days	19 days	16 days
78b- Average number of days to process changes of circumstances	4 days	10 days	4 days
78c- Percentage of renewals processed on time	100%	indicator	removed
79a- Accuracy of processing calculations)	99%	96%	98%
79b- Accuracy of processing (percentage of overpayments recovered)	Unable to measure due to software limitations	Unable to measure due to software limitations	Unable to measure due to software limitations

EMERGING ISSUES

The major area of development remains the implementation of the new Revenue and Benefit computer system. This involved working with four other authorities and a private sector provider requiring a wide range of skills to achieve the desired outcome. The project continued to meet a number of delays, and it is difficult to predict the future of this project in the short/medium term.

However, there are a number of challenges yet to be met, not at least the updating of current systems to meeting legislation changes and maintaining a service to our customers during the period of conversion. The amount of resource required to manage the project should not be under-estimated and a sharp focus on the project has to be maintained at all times.

The National Non-Domestic Rate revaluation will be effective from 1 April 2005 and a scheme of relief for small businesses will be introduced at that time.

The implementation of the amendments to the current Housing and Council Tax Benefit computer system for the introduction of the Benefit Verification Framework is in progress.

Of paramount importance is the ability to meet the e-government targets for 2005. This issue is under constant review in the light of the development of the Revenue and Benefit computer system.

Internal Audit
SERVICE PLAN 2004/2007

HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Internal audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on the degree to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the organisations objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

The Council's elected members look to the Director of Corporate Services for assurance that the integrity of the Council's financial and other systems is not compromised. The service undertakes a systematic programme of audits to give that assurance.

THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

- ❏ The Authority has commenced a period of substantial change involving the replacement of the financial suite of computer systems. Our plans had been designed to undertake an extensive programme documenting and evaluating the ledger, expenditure and revenue systems. The first phase of the FMS accounting and expenditure system is in place and we have recently commenced evaluation.
- ❏ Continual delays with the revenue system have seen our current year audit plan amended. This system is unlikely to be implemented in the current year but some work may be necessary this year.
- ❏ The managed audit programme for the 2003/04 financial year has been completed The core processes, namely Main Accounting and Budgetary Control, were undertaken to the satisfaction of the District Auditor.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ref. No.	Actions	Outcome
Aud 1	Internal Audit Procedures - An Audit Manual has been produced based on the CIPFA model. The audit team requires training to use the manual.	Training has been given on the general audit sections of the manual. The specialist areas are to be covered later in the year.
Aud 2	Good Corporate Governance - Integrate the implications of the Procurement Strategy into the Financial Regulations	Progress limited pending the implementation of the Corporate Procurement Strategy
Aud 3	Joint Working - Derbyshire Audit Group. Develop both the Computer Audit and Training sub groups	The Computer Audit and Training sub-groups are fully established.

Aud 4	Audit Plan - document and evaluate replacement systems. Budgetary Control, Ledger, Debtors, Creditors, Ctax, NNDR, Benefits and all other systems on the Reality X database.	The service has commenced documenting and evaluating the replacement systems for Creditors and Debtors. The evaluation of the replacement Rent Accounting system has been brought forward All these systems are classed as high risk pending evaluation of their levels of internal control.
Aud 5	Audit Plan - Introduce control check lists for local systems during period of evaluating new financial systems	Delays in implementing systems have again affected our audit plans.

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

Ref. No.	ACTION	EXPLANATION
Aud 4	Audit Plan - document and evaluate replacement systems. Budgetary Control, Ledger, Debtors, Creditors, Ctax, NNDR, Benefits and all other systems presently on the Reality X database.	The Revenue and Benefits system is unlikely to be in place this financial year. Concern exists that this new system will not be as operationally effective as our present one or as e-enabled as anticipated. This system has only been implemented on the supplier's existing VME sites and that has not been without problems.
Aud 5	Audit Plan - Introduce control check lists for local systems during period of evaluating new financial systems	The Audit Planning process, over the next few years, will be affected by a significant amount of change within the Authority and in particular in the financial system arena. To undertake the necessary documentation and evaluation of these systems and any resultant changes in working practices, it was therefore necessary to significantly restrict the local audits programme over the next two years. Again our annual plan was developed on the basis that these systems would have commenced implementation early in the current year. Delays in their implementation mean our work cannot commence on the Revenue and Benefits systems. The risk levels on the Ctax, Benefits and NNDR areas has been lowered from high to medium as the current systems are established proven systems with a high level of internal control.

2003/2004 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Local Indicator	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Estimate 2004/05
Net total cost of Internal Audit per audit day	£198	£215	£222
External Audit Opinion of the Internal Audit function	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Percentage of the Annual Audit Plan completed in the year	88%	90%	90%
Percentage of agreed audit recommendations implemented	100%	100%	100%

EMERGING ISSUES

The Local Government Act 2003 has far reaching implications across many aspects of a Local Authority's responsibilities. The implication on the fundamental accounting and financial systems will require consideration.

The CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit 2003 will have an effect on the service, further work is required on the more detailed elements of the code. The Service had met all the main requirements of the new code (independence, status, objectivity etc) but the recent restructure has affected our compliance to some degree.

IT DIVISION
SERVICE PLAN 2003/2004

HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The IT Division has a corporate role providing Information Technology (IT) services to all departments within South Derbyshire District Council.

The IT Division is responsible for:
- Co-ordinating the use of IT and guiding the Council towards the corporate achievement of e-Government Targets
- Support and Maintenance of Council IT systems
- Support and Maintenance of Council Computer Infrastructure (e.g. servers, network, PC's, etc..)
- Telecommunications systems (including mobiles)

The IT Division is very active in Partnership working (e.g. Derbyshire Partnership, Derbyshire Consortium, etc.) as this enables results to be achieved that would not be possible if we worked alone. This gives us access to a wider range of expertise and helps to spread the risk of implementing new projects.

THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

The past half-year has presented many challenges for the IT Division, mainly because of the target of replacing all our major IT systems during this year and the next. We have started to make use of eGovernment projects, implemented via the Derbyshire Partnership, across the Council.

All councils have been given a challenging target to make 100% of their services available electronically by the end of 2005. The ODPM now requires all Council's to measure this in a standard way through the ESD (Electronic Service Delivery) Toolkit. The services that the OPDM expects the Council to deliver electronically have been broken down to a Divisional level, each Heads of Service is now working with Customer Services and the eGovernment Manager to meet their respective targets.

As part of the senior management review the IT and Customer Services divisions have been merged together. Subsequently the Customer Services Manager now reports into the Head of IT and Customer Services (previously the IT Manager).

Because of limitations on the required IT resources (for officers and equipment) to implement an ever growing wide range of tasks, projects have had to be prioritised and some of the lower priority items have not been achieved. Two additional officers have been appointed, on 2 year contracts using Implementing Electronic Government funding, to overcome some resource issues and meet the ODPM's targets.

Some projects have been delayed because of issues outside of our control (e.g. Revenues and Benefits system – note this has effected all members of the Consortium).

The following points describe the progress, opportunities and challenges faced during the half year:

- The highest priority of the IT Division is to make sure that South Derbyshire District Council has a stable IT infrastructure and working functional helpdesk, so enabling other divisions to focus on their objectives. The infrastructure and helpdesk have again performed to a high standard and no major issues have arisen. Evidently while providing such a service peaks and troughs will occur. The annual user satisfaction survey will be carried out later in the year.
- The IT Division promotes partnership working positively, seeing the benefits of working together with other Council's to achieve specific joint targets.
- Within the Derbyshire partnership we continue to be the lead partner in the Customer Relationship Management area.
- A very beneficial visit from the ODPM, concerning priority services in eGovernment, which was well attended by Council staff.
- Planning web site upgraded, making us second in the country for available planning functionality.
- Enabled ePayments via our website.
- Infrastructure replacement has progressed as required (e.g. planning for Windows 2003 migration).
- We now chair the East Midlands Partnership, so opening up access to wider partnership resources.

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION	OUTCOMES
Derbyshire Partnership	
IT2, IT3, IT4 and IT5 A to Z, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Eforms and Geographical Information systems	After the initial implementation of these partnership projects the Council has started to use them to enhance our service delivery, concentrating mainly in the A to Z and CRM areas. The projects closely align with the ESD Toolkit targets of electronic delivery of services. The CRM system will replace some functionality of the current DSO system.
South Derbyshire District Council	
IT8 Financial Management System	Phase 1 of the Agresso System went live on the 1st of April 2004. Required interfaces are in place. Phase 2 of the Agresso system will replace some functionality of the current DSO system.
IT11 Telecoms system	The Telecoms system has run without any major problems. Detailed reports on phone statistics are available. Telephone moves and changes are handled efficiently (at no cost).
IT12 and IT13 Planning and Building Control, Land Charges	The Oracle migrations took place in May 2004.
IT14 ePayments	The next phase of ePayments project is ready to live. A migration plan to move from the existing Credit Card database to ePayments is in place.
IT15 Planning Portal	The Planning Portal was ready to go live in September 2004. The Planning Web site was upgraded in order to meet requirements.
IT16 Year End	Year End processes have been carried out successfully.
IT26 Housing System	Project plan on target for phase 1 of Housing Orchard system to be implemented in November 2004.
IT	
IT19 Mobile Phones	Replacement mobile phones issued in June 2004, utilising reduced local government tariffs.
IT21 IT security	No major security issues have occurred. Even so security is an ongoing issue and needs to be continuously monitored.
SD1 Crime and Disorder	Ongoing.
SD2 Equal Opportunities and diversity	All members of staff have received equal opportunities and diversity training.
Key Aims – Improving Services KA1 Achieve targets set in the 2003 IEG Statement for electronic service delivery	Covered in above tasks. Our 4th IEG statement will be submitted in December 2004.
KA2 Continue to develop and implement plans for electronic service delivery	Covered in above tasks.

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
South Derbyshire District Council	
IT6 Web Site – Content Management System	Derbyshire County Council has purchased a Content Management System, which has been offered to the Derbyshire Partnership at a reduced rate. The investigation and evaluation of this offer has caused an initial delay in implementation.
IT9 Revenues and Benefits System (via a consortium of 5 District Councils)	The consortium replacement of our existing legacy Revenues and Benefits system, with the Anite Pericles product, has run into critical problems. The main issues being in the data conversion and product functionality. The Council is currently reviewing our position on how to proceed with this project.
IT10 Document Image Processing	The resources required to move the project forward are currently unavailable. In tandem with Environmental Health we are trying to receive national project funding to overcome resource issues.
IT17 Freedom of Information and Data protection	The Freedom of Information act does not commence until Jan 1st 2005. The Publication scheme has been reviewed and plans are in place to inform Members and Officers of the implications and required action.

2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2003/04 (actual)	2004/05 (target)	2004/05 (estimate)
BVPI 157 (eGovernment implementation %)	42%	86%	86%
Local Performance Indicators			
Overall Service Rating (from survey)	75%	75%	75%
Network Availability (excluding maintenance)	95%	96%	97%
Deliver IT projects on time and in budget	70%	75%	75%

EMERGING ISSUES

The delays in the replacement of the Revenues and Benefits system will mean IT resource is required to update our legacy systems so that the Revenues and Benefits Division can still operate. The environment that the system uses will need to be updated as the current hardware lease agreement and software licences expire in March 2005.

Until a Director of Corporate Services is appointed other Officers are having to take on additional tasks. This may result in resource issues.

CUSTOMER SERVICES DIVISION
SERVICE PLAN 2004/2007

HALF YEARLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2004)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Division has a corporate role, with a focus on developing a customer relationship strategy that provides a centralised service for both internal and external customers. The Division also provides administrative services to all departments within South Derbyshire District Council and a print room service.

THE HALF YEAR IN CONTEXT

- The telephone contact centre "went live" in April this year and is now the first point of contact for environmental services, land charges, and some of the revenues and benefits enquiries.
- The customer first project is becoming accepted as part of our culture and is having in impact on the way we manage our customers.
- The switchboards have been relocated into the contact centre, allowing the main receptionists to provide a meet and greet service and deal with face to face enquiries at the first point of contact.
- Plans have been developed and funds allocated to refurbish the main reception to reduce the number of reception points from five to one and provide a customer focused reception area. Consultation is now taking place with external partners, prior to work commencing early 2005.
- The appointment of a Business Process Analyst (funded from IEG monies) will assist in moving the project forward and enable us to improve the time frame for implementing new services in the contact centre.
- There is now a procedure in place for monitoring of racial incidents.
- The Corporate Complaints procedure has now been reviewed and identifies the need to provide more informative reports to enable service improvements.
- IT and Customer Services have been amalgamated as part of the re-structuring programme and is giving a more focused approach to joint projects.

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION	OUTCOMES
Implement Customer Relationship Management System using a phased approach	Switchboard relocated from main reception Telephone contact centre opened in April 2004 Face to face and telephone first point of contact for: • Pest Control • Noise and air pollution complaints • Land charges • Single resident discount enquiries • Council tax banding • Abandoned cars • Scrapped cars • Flooding enquiries • Lost and found dogs • General FAQ's

	Plans under consultation to refurbish main reception to reduce number of reception areas from five to one to and provide a cash handling service offering extended opening hours.
Review Complaints procedure Monitor of customer complaints	Complaints review group set up and first meeting held. Draft revised complaints procedure now produced for consultation. Review recognised the need to provide more informative reports to enable service improvements. Complaints report to F&M Committee bi-annually
Equal Opportunities and Diversity	All members of staff have received equal opportunities and diversity training. Audit carried out resulting in changes to all newly produced external publications.
Review Corporate Image	Proposals for new corporate image incorporating style and use of logo and strapline, corporate colours, visual communications and corporate identity, design and layout, under consultation with members and external partners
Review Support services including postroom, handling of post, distribution of post and verification framework.	Plans in place to provide a verification framework services in line with the refurbishment of main reception.

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
Write business and marketing plan for print room and work towards financial break even.	The provision of documents electronically may affect the demand for print room services. Consideration needs to be given to ways of generating new business to replace this loss.
Establish service standards for key service areas	Service standards are closely linked with the process mapping procedure which supports the integration of a service into the customer relationship management software. (see below) Work is underway with the Derbyshire Partnership to set services standards that are consistent throughout the County. This means the project is moving at a slower pace.
Deliver revenues and benefits, direct services and planning services at the first point of contact through the customer relationship management system.	The volume of processes and complexity of some of these services has proved to be very time consuming. There is a risk that we will not meet the deadlines for implementation and will need to re-schedule more realistically. Resistance to change and the absence of a replacement for the Director of Corporate services is also a threat to the timely delivery of this project.

2004/2005 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2003/04 (actual)	2004/05 (target)	2004/05 (estimate)
BVPI 174	No data available	2.0	2.0
BVPI 175	No data available	50%	50%
Number of enquiries handled at first point of contact	0%	40%	25%
Abandoned telephone calls	10%	8%	8%
Minimum % of calls answered within 20 seconds	50%	60%	70%
Deliver all print requests on time	80%	90%	95%
Make a profit on print room services	70%	80%	80%
Support services process improvements	No data available	20%	20%

EMERGING ISSUES

- The cost for refurbishment of main reception may prove to be higher than the allocated budget. This could mean that we will have to re-schedule our priorities in line with the budget restrictions.
- Until a Director of Corporate Services is appointed other Officers are having to take on additional tasks. This may result in resource issues.