



South  
Derbyshire  
District Council



# Service Plan 2016/2017

## Corporate Services

South Derbyshire Changing for the better

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All information presented in this Service Plan was correct at the time of publication.

# Introduction

The Corporate Plan 2016-2021 forms an important part of planning for the future and leads our performance management. As well as enabling effective monitoring, it links strategic priorities and objectives directly to the activities of service areas.

As part of this, Service Plans are created for our four directorates - Housing and Environmental Services, Community and Planning, Finance and Corporate Services and the Chief Executive's department.

Covering the 2016-2017 financial year, the Service Plans (which are updated annually) align current delivery arrangements with changing patterns of demand, making the most effective use of available and future resources.

## Key aims

All priorities and activities undertaken by Corporate Services complement our collective vision of making 'South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit'.

We will:

- positively contribute towards Council policies and procedures
- deliver continuous improvements in performance
- ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- maintain a strong customer focus
- ensure a widespread understanding of core values, key aims and performance measures and encourage participation in their development
- ensure that data quality principles are applied
- Encourage a positive health and safety culture

All of these contribute to the main themes running through the Corporate Plan of People, Place, Progress and Outcomes.

## The importance of service planning

Delivery of public services occurs in an increasingly dynamic environment, with high community expectations, government priorities and technological advances.

While the budgetary setting is constrained, there are ever increasing pressures and demands to do more with less.

In this context, it is essential that services are well planned, with the capability to evolve in order to meet community needs.

This allows us to identify requirements and associated enabling services such as technology, workforce, funding, capital infrastructure, together with information management.

# Scene setting

## Overview of the directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate plays a key role in meeting our strategic objectives for supporting People, Place and Progress. The main focus of the Directorate is to help the Council secure successful outcomes and manage the core principles which underpin all service delivery. In particular the aims of the Directorate are to ensure:

- Financial Health
- Good Governance
- Customer Focus
- Equality and Diversity
- A Skilled Workforce

Much of the work undertaken by the Directorate has a statutory base. The non-statutory services also have a fundamental role in ensuring that the Council operates within statutory powers and regulations. Here is a breakdown of statutory and non-statutory duties undertaken.

### **Statutory Services**

- Financial Services
- Administration of Housing Benefits
- Revenues Collection
- Internal Audit

### **Non-Statutory Services**

- Client Services
- Prevention and Detection of Fraud
- Property Management
- HR
- Policy and Communications
- ICT
- Customer Services
- Secretarial Support
- Procurement

# Service Operations

The Directorate is now relatively mature following a Council restructure in May 2013, which established the current functions of the Directorate.

The Directorate is responsible for:

- Financial Services - accounting, budgets and medium term financial planning
- Internal Audit
- Asset and Estate Management
- Contract Management for out-sourced Corporate Services
- The Strategic Corporate Services Partnership
- Detecting and Investigating Fraud
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Co-ordinating the resolution of Complaints against the Council
- Secretarial Support

The Directorate has overall responsibility for monitoring service performance within the Corporate Services Strategic Partnership. The main aims of the Partnership are job growth through a Regional Business Centre, together with investment in services, capacity and resilience.

As part of the arrangement, the Council transferred a range of back office support services to the private sector partner in August 2010.

Under the responsibility of the Director of Finance and in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department is also responsible for Internal Audit. Since January 2012, this has been delivered through the Central Midlands Audit Partnership, of which the Council was a founding Member and remains a constituent partner.

## Corporate Services Strategic Partnership

The Council signed a contract with Northgate Public Services (NPS) on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010 to deliver a range of back office, support and professional services. This includes

- Organisational Development, including HR, Policy and Communications
- ICT
- Procurement
- Revenues and Benefits
- Customer Services

Direct service provision is the responsibility of NPS and performance is monitored through a series of Key Performance Indicators. The services provided feed into the overall outcomes for Corporate Services.

Overall strategy and policy in these areas, such as workforce development, ICT, procurement and corporate planning remains the responsibility of the Council; these are co-ordinated within the Department and NPS' role is to support this.

This contract is due to expire in July 2017 when the services will transfer back to the Council. The transition is due to commence during 2016.



## **The Main Functions of the Directorate**

Through the Director of Finance, the Council is responsible for setting and monitoring budgets, reviewing and advising on the Council's medium term spending plans and its financial strategy

The Directorate has a key role in securing the Council's outcomes that underpin the Corporate Plan.

This is not just about finance but encompasses other resources such as staff and property, together with ensuring that the Council undertakes its activities and responsibilities in a proper manner through good corporate governance and to equality standards.

Although many of the services provide professional support and advice across all Council functions, many others deal direct with the local community and residents contacting the Council, for example in Revenues and Benefits.

Operational requirements are largely undertaken in accordance with statute - financial management and internal audit for example, are carried out within specific points of law, together with standards contained in Codes of Practice.

The Directorate consists of a number of small, discrete service areas, although joint working and synergy exists between the individual areas. Specific units are as follows:

### **Client Services**

The Unit is responsible for monitoring the service delivery of NPS. In addition, it undertakes the statutory quality assurance checks and the exercise of discretionary functions on behalf of the Council in respect of benefits processing, together with Council Tax and debt collection.

The Unit represents the Council where enforcement action is required in matters of Council Tax and debt recovery. The Council's fraud team is also part of the Unit.

### **Secretarial Support and Corporate Administration**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is the Council's Data Protection (DP) and Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer. In accordance with this responsibility, this unit co-ordinates day to day activity associated with requests for information under DP and FOI regulations and monitors the corporate framework to ensure all services comply correctly and handle data properly.

The Unit also provide a range of administrative functions including secretarial support and co-ordinating complaints made against the Council.

### **Internal Audit**

Through the Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP) internal audit is the primary assurance that the Council maintains a sound system of internal control and this feeds into the priority outcome of strong corporate governance. Working under the terms of reference of the Council's Audit Sub Committee, CMAP undertake audits on the main systems and processes that underpin service delivery.

## Land Charges

This unit deals with all enquiries and requests for property and land searches, both commercial and residential. The unit provides both a statutory function and direct service within a commercial market.

The financial aim of the service is to “break even” including the cost of overheads. The income generated by the service is currently around £125,000 per year and is an important income stream for the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Plan to cover the costs of providing the service.

The Unit reports to the Corporate Asset Manager and is part of the Property Services function.

## Property Services

This Unit is responsible for the overall strategic management of the Council’s operational land and property holdings under the Asset Management Plan. This includes identifying and making recommendations regarding assets deemed “surplus to requirements.”

The Unit has a key role in major development/regeneration projects, in particular where the Council has a property/land interest in the project. This is to ensure that the Council maximises the use of its assets to enable service provision and through disposal, to generate capital receipts or to improve local community facilities, i.e. “sweating assets.”

The Unit is also responsible for managing the Council’s investment (property) portfolio and for land conveyancing. This includes shops, industrial units and a factory, all of which generate income of approximately £400,000 per year.

## Financial Services

This Unit is responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Council and assisting the Director on strategic financial issues. The operational aspects of the Unit are:

- **Management Accounting** - provides day to day support to Council services on managing budgets and maintaining accounts; this involves monthly reporting of financial performance.
- **Financial Accounting** - ensuring the Council complies with accounting standards and statutory financial reporting requirements. It also includes Treasury Management, Insurance, Taxation and Banking, together with the payment of invoices and the raising of sundry debtors.
- **Payroll** - payments to elected members and the workforce and accounting for the associated transactions.

## Workforce

As of March 31, 2016, 22 employees are directly employed by the Council and work in Corporate Services. A breakdown is shown in the following table.

Director of Finance and Corporate Services	1
Financial Services (including Payroll)	9
Client Services, Fraud and Compliance	4
Property Services	4
Secretarial Support	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

In addition, approximately 55 employees are employed by Northgate Public Services.

The Council's Internal Auditors are employed by Derby City Council as the Accountable Body for the Audit Partnership. The Partnership employs approximately 15 staff. These provide audit, compliance and investigatory services to 6 authorities in the Partnership.

Organisation charts, showing the structure of each service area, can be found on the Intranet.

In terms of workforce development, an annual training and development plan is produced after Performance Development Reviews are held.

Many staff are professionally qualified in accountancy, revenues and property management. This requires those staff to demonstrate to their professional institute a continuing programme of professional development (CPD). Regular attendance at external training courses takes place throughout the year to maintain standards and to keep pace with changing requirements.

Some homeworking opportunities are provided and flexible working is considered crucial to motivate and engage high performing staff.



## Budgets

The Directorate's Budget for 2016/17 is outlined in the following table. The amounts represent the **net revenue cost** to the Council of delivering these services, including staffing, supplies and services, etc.

Service Area	2015/16 £	2016/17 £
Financial Services	290,880	304,924
Internal Audit	103,115	103,115
ICT	651,783	656,868
HR	271,134	250,394
Policy and Communications	239,103	233,928
Customer Services	535,600	592,635
Procurement	103,437	104,126
Revenues and Benefits	358,203	400,384
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,553,255</b>	<b>2,646,374</b>

***Note:** The large increase in Revenues and Benefits from 2015/16 to 2016/17 is due to a reduction in a specific Government Grant which is a contribution towards the Council's costs in this area.*

## Capital Expenditure

The Directorate is not directly responsible for any capital projects apart from that associated with the purchase and sale of land and buildings. In addition, the Directorate is responsible for the deployment of the ICT capital reserve.

## Performance

The Performance Board details our key projects for the year. These are broken into quarters to help us monitor and manage our performance effectively.

All actions are essential if the Council is going to achieve its ambitions and aspirations. These are complemented by a set of performance measures which will help us to gauge whether we are meeting outcomes and providing excellent services.

In some instances, proxy measures will be used. These are outside of the Council's control but provide an indication of the overall health of the District.

All projects and measures for Corporate Services are listed below under the themes of People, Place, Progress and Outcomes:

## People measures

Aim	Measure	Annual target
Protect and help support the most vulnerable including those affected by financial challenges	Average time for processing new Benefit Claims	Less than 18 Days
As above	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances for Benefits	Less than 8 Days

## People projects

Aim	Project	Outcomes
<i>Not applicable</i>		

## Place measures

Aim	Measure	Annual target
<i>Not applicable</i>		

## Place projects

Aim	Project	Outcomes
<i>Not applicable</i>		

## Progress measures

Aim	Measure	Annual target
<i>Not applicable</i>		

## Progress projects

Aim	Project	Outcomes
<i>Not applicable</i>		

## Outcomes measures

Aim	Measure	Annual target 2016/17
Maintain financial health	5-year General Fund Reserve balance is a minimum of £1m by 2021	General Fund reserve Balance at £6.2m as at March 2017 in accordance with the MTFP
Maintain financial health	A balanced General Fund budget by 2018/19	A strategy and budget savings plan agreed by the Council in accordance with the MTFP
Maintain financial health	Income generated from new Homes Bonus and Business Rates	Income of £6m as at March 2017 in accordance with the MTFP
Maintain financial health	Key priority areas into which available funds may be invested in communities evaluated and agreed by the Council	Exercise to be undertaken as part of 2017/18 budget-round

## Outcomes projects

Aim	Project 2016/17	Outcomes
Maintain financial health	Exercise to be undertaken as part of 2017/18 budget-round	Key priority areas into which available funds may be invested in communities evaluated and agreed by the Council
Be aware of and plan for financial, legal and environmental risks	Update risk registers in accordance with new Corporate and Service Plans	Strategic and service risk registers reviewed, updated and reported to Policy Committees on a quarterly basis
Maintain a skilled workforce	Job competencies to be reviewed following a review of current training and development programme	Investors in People Standard for staff development maintained
Channel Shift	Design and deliver a new web site that meets the needs of service users	New web site implemented

## Partnerships

Our significant constituted partnerships are outlined below:

Partnership	Main purpose
Central Midlands Audit Partnership	To deliver the Council's Internal Audit and to share best practice with other partners to strengthen the internal control environment
Corporate Services Strategic Partnership	To deliver a range of services to the Council and to develop a Regional Business Centre (the Partnership is due to expire in July 2017)

# Key considerations

## Service transformation

In order for Corporate Services to positively meet the challenges facing the Council, it will create and develop innovative solutions which will help to deliver the outcomes communities need and want at a cost the Council can afford.

This is reflected in current partnership working (as detailed in the table above) together with joint working with other authorities, for example in the prevention and detection of fraud.

It also includes working with developers and other stakeholders in order to “sweat the assets” of the Council.

## Environmental impact

By implementing the requirements of ISO 14001 across all significant environmental aspects associated with Corporate Services this Service Plan seeks to ensure continual improvement of our environmental performance.

For example, the Directorate takes the lead on the Council’s “Paperlite” strategy which is reducing the amount of printed material and paper used in service delivery.

Further information can be found at: <http://sddcintranet/index.php/essentials/83-ems>

## Managing risks

The process set out in our Risk Management Strategy has been adhered to. The risk registers are reported back to committee on a quarterly basis.

## Monitoring and review

This Service Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis as part of our Performance Management Framework and will be used throughout the year to manage service delivery.