Finance & Corporate Development

Service Plan 2005/06









DRAFT

'Working with and on behalf of local people'



1. SERVICE SUMMARY & OBJECTIVES

Service Summary

- The service unit ensures that all financial and performance information (statutory and non-statutory) is provided in a timely, accurate and consistent manner to help facilitate the effective and efficient use of resources by the Organisation.
- The unit assists other service units to have effective monitoring and control procedures in place and also assists service units with reviewing and continuously improving performance.
- The service unit comprises the following operational areas:
 - a) Accountancy
 - b) Performance Improvement
 - c) Internal Audit

Key Service Aims:

The key service aims of the service unit are:

Key Commitment Service aim	Improving the quality of life	Protecting & improving the	Economic regeneration	Local involvement in decision	Equality of opportunity	Integrity and best use of
To ensure that appropriate mechanisms and practices are in place to deliver sound financial management across the Council and to meet all statutory financial responsibilities						√
To promote the efficient, effective and economic use of the Council's financial resources at all times						√
To support the delivery of continuous performance improvement across all services	√	✓	√	✓	✓	✓



Key Service Objectives:

	Aims / Objectives	Term
1	Ensure that the new structure is implemented and supported properly and is subject to a short post implementation review after 6 to 9 months.	Short
2	Facilitate the delivery of Gershon Efficiencies across the organisation, monitor impact and refine approach	Short
3	Ensure organisation is ready for CPA 2005	Short
4	Review and refresh the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy.	Short, Medium
5	Undertake FMS development to ensure maximum value is added to the organisation from the new system	Short, Medium
6	Further develop risk management and project management arrangements	Short, Medium
7	Meet all statutory reporting requirements as laid down in the 2003 Accounts & Audit Regulations (or other guidance) for financial and performance management	Short, Medium & Long
8	Continue to review, strengthen and promote improved Corporate Governance arrangements within the Authority in relation to:	
	 a) Financial Management (Budget Control / Reconciliation / Internal Controls / Working Papers / Use of resources) 	Medium
	 b) Strategies / Policies – ensure all financially based strategies and policies are current and relevant. 	
	 c) Corporate Planning – ensure that the organisation effectively prioritises its resources, and approve a Corporate Plan in line with legislative requirements 	
9	Ensure achievement of the 2005/06 Audit Plan	Medium
10	Ensure organisational alignment with the National Procurement Strategy and that effective procurement practice is in operation (including e-procurement)	Medium
11	Undertake key lobbying activity / national profile to attract external funding and freedoms	Medium
12	Continue the development of performance management arrangements across the Council with the aim of further improving the quality and timeliness of performance data.	Medium
13	Support the delivery of the organisational improvement programme, providing support to projects and reality checking progress delivery	Medium



Links to cross cutting themes:

Community Plan:

The Community Plan for 2005 to 2008 is being consulted on with a view to strengthen the partnership working of organisations within the Borough, and to clarify the Local Strategic Partnership's overall strategic aims. The Council's commitments to the Community Plan are delivered via the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Corporate Improvement Plan:

The Corporate Improvement Plan will be updated in the spring 2005. The Finance and Corporate Development Unit will facilitate the review of the improvement plan in conjunction with Senior Management Team and the Executive. This plan will act as a driver for prioritised improvement across the organisation over the next three years.

Next Steps Programme and organisational improvement:

The Council's next steps and organisational improvement programme activity will be intensified during 2005/06 including: the delivery of efficiency savings, the development of procurement, the establishment of systems that improve the delivery of services and supporting the implementation of major change initiatives.

Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy:

The Council attained 'good' ratings for both The Asset Management Plan, and The Capital Strategy last time they were subject to external validation. The Capital Strategy will be reviewed / refreshed during 2005 with the overarching aim of continuing to identify opportunities for making best use of the Council's resources. Due to the strategic importance of the Council's asset portfolio and its links with the delivery of key priorities, such as economic development, all decisions that impact on the future use of the Council's land and buildings will be given strategic consideration, including discussion at SMT.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS):

At the outset of each annual service planning and budget process, the Council's MTFS is reviewed and refreshed (as appropriate). The service unit plays a leading role in facilitating this and providing impartial professional advice to members. The Finance and Corporate Development Unit will continue to act as a catalyst in identifying opportunities for maximising the long term stability and predictability of the MTFS, including maximising external funding and making the most efficient use of resources available.

Service convergence

The service unit will continue to play an important role in assisting with the service convergence programme through the provision of financial advice and information as required.

E-government:

E-government cuts across all service areas and aims to ensure that efficiency savings are made as a result of investment in technology, maximising access channels and choice and transferability of front-line staff.

Social Inclusion:

The work of the unit aims to address issues of equality and social inclusion and comply with corporate policies and procedures regarding equality of opportunity and all legislative requirements.



2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Ac	hievement	Activity	Outcome / Accreditation
1.	Meeting of Statutory Financial and Reporting Requirements	Statement of Accounts prepared and approved 2 months earlier than previous year and 1 month before the statutory deadline.	Unqualified Audit Opinion from the Audit Commission in the Annual Audit & Inspection Letter.
2.	Structure Review	Operational review of the structure carried out during 2004 with new structure implemented by the end of the financial year.	New structure agreed, will be implemented with on-going revenue savings in the region of £40,000 per annum. Also, better structure in place re: skills and duties.
3.	Debt Free Status	The council managed to pay off its long term debts by 31/3/04 which entitled the Council to access transitional funding arrangements implemented by the Govt which could be worth up to £3m over three years to the Council.	Access to funding that would otherwise have been paid to the Government's national housing pool and would have been distributed to other areas around the Country.
4.	Lobbying Work	Offices and members undertook a number of lobbying activities in an attempt to attract more Government and other funding into the Council.	A better than expected finance settlement together with movement on a number of other areas (eg, planning fees).
5.	Final Accounts (2003/04)	The out-turn figures for 2003/04 were within a very small fraction of the budget for the year.	Positive contribution to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
6.	Performance Monitoring	Continuation of improvements in performance clinic information (both financial, projects and Pl's) as well as a new improved version of key Budgetary Control is now being used.	For the second year running, the Council had no reserved Pl's (only 1 of 8 Improved financial and project control.
7.	Development of Procurement practices	Second year of participating in the procurement consortium and development of more consistent and robust procedures.	A number of successes by way of cost savings on re-tendered contracts.
8.	Successful delivery of corporate initiatives that improve KBC's way of working and its reputation	Played key role in the delivery of the Area Profiles Pilot, Refreshed the People's Panel, assisted in the delivery of the Customer Response Centre and developed a revised project management methodology.	KBC's Area Profile's Pilot a national success, People's Panel set up, CRC going live early 2005/06, Project Management methodology being rolled out across the organisation.



3. STANDARDS OF SERVICE

Corporate customer service standards

- All our staff will be polite and helpful
- We will answer telephone calls within 15 seconds or 5 rings and answer calls professionally and courteously
- All our correspondence will be acknowledged within 3 working days and full responses provided within 12 working days. We will use plain English so that they are easy to understand
- We will return telephone messages within 1 working day
- We will acknowledge e-mails the same day providing a full response within 2 working days
- All staff will carry identification with a photograph and wear a name badge

Statutory Requirements / Deadlines:

- All statutory deadlines met as per the new requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (and other statutes) in relation to close-down, budget setting and other issues.
- All grant claims submitted in accordance with the prescribed deadlines.

Budget Monitoring:

- Provide electronic monthly budget reports to Budget Holders within 14 working days of month end
- Have on-line budget reports available for Budget Holders and Service Heads through the new Financial Management System (from June 2005).
- Provide Key Budgetary Control information to Senior Management Team on a monthly basis and to Monitoring & Audit Committee on a quarterly basis
- Invoice Payments achieve a 98% payment of Invoices within payment terms for BVPI 8.
- Bank Reconciliation's full monthly reconciliation's to be complete within 12 working days of the month end.



4. WHAT CUSTOMERS SAY

The Finance and Corporate Development Unit leads on and co-ordinates statutory and key consultation activity within the council. A major consultation activity carried out this year (2004/05) was the refresh of the council's long standing People's Panel. Following a rigorous tender process, QA Research – an independent research company was appointed to recruit to the panel and undertake bi-annual surveys. The first of these was carried out in autumn of 2004.

A. Findings of People's Panel Survey

The recent *People's Panel* autumn 2004 survey asked respondents about their perception of Kettering Borough Council's services and their experience of what other people think about the services.

In total 63% of respondents are happy with the way Kettering Borough Council is dealing with the issues that matter to residents. The survey also found that the top most popular information respondents would like to receive is *'how the council spends its money'* (67%) which is currently provided through the annual Council Tax leaflet and budget book.

B. Customer comments, complaints and compliments

During the year, the unit received five service, information requests and suggestions which were dealt with satisfactorily and within customer standard deadlines.

C. Quality of service standards

Two 'mystery shopper' exercises were carried out in the year. The findings highlighted that standards were high on all categories as follows. The analysis shows that areas where improvements need to be made are 'impact on initial contact' and 'knowledge':

Categories	Score
Knowledge	30 out of 30 in both cases
Telephone answering	15 out of 15 in both cases
Impact on initial contact	5 out of 10 in both cases
Politeness of service	15 out of 15 in both cases
Follow up service	10 out of 10 in both cases
Overall impression	20 out of 20 and 15 out of 20
Total	95 and 85 respectively



5. HOW WE PERFORM & HOW OUR PERFORMANCE COMPARES

The table below provides an overview of the performance of the unit as measured by relevant Best Value Performance Indicators.

Best Value Indicators

Ref No	Description	Year End 2003/04	2004/05 To Date		2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target
BV8	Invoices paid on time	93.8%	98%	97.3%	98%	98.25%	98.5%

A break down of BV8 has been provided in the table below:

Breakdown of Invoice processing performance

Month	Target 04/05	Top quartile 03/04	00/01	01/02	02/03	Cumulative 03/04	Cumulative 2004/05	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08
Apr	98%	96.6%			91.16%	97.51%	98.3%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
May	98%	96.6%			93.67%	96.82%	98.2%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Jun	98%	96.6%	96.50%	75.00%	94.26%	96.60%	97.6%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Jul	98%	96.6%			94.33%	96.42%	97.6%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Aug	98%	96.6%			94.57%	96.64%	97.8%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Sep	98%	96.6%	95.60%	82.10%	94.74%	96.28%	97.6%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Oct	98%	96.6%			94.73%	96.21%	97.5%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Nov	98%	96.6%			94.74%	94.95%	97.3%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Dec	98%	96.6%	95.55%	88.50%	94.72%	94.29%	97.3%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Jan	98%	96.6%			94.24%	92.77%	97.3%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Feb	98%	96.6%			94.39%	93.30%	97.3%	98%	98.25%	98.50%
Mar	98%	96.6%	95.00%	90.09%	94.59%	93.80%		98%	98.25%	98.50%

Sickness / Absence management

The Council has set a target of achieving no more than 8.5 days lost per employee in 2004/05. The Council is currently achieving an annualised rate of 10.85 days, which although off target, is an improvement on the previous year at 13.05 days for 2003/04.

The Finance and Corporate Development Unit has a history of low staff sickness, during 2003/04 the service unit had the lowest level of days lost due to sickness within the Council. So far during 2004/05, only 16.5 days have been lost in total, which represents less than 3% of the total days off due to sickness for the Council as a whole.



6. OUR PLAN FOR PROGRESSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT (WITH RISK ASSESSMENT)

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE PERFORMANCE ISSUE				ACTION		WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY	
1	Audit Statuto	Commission and ary Requirements	Meet Statutory Requirements in relation to Close-down and Budget Preparation		all statutory rec ancial and reporti		Various Dates	Graham Soulsby / Paul Sutton	6B	
CUST	OMER F	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT						
Impac	ct .	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action			
Mediu	edium Information available on the Council's financial position (close-down) / Service Budgets (and provisions) determined along with Council Tax levels.		Low	High	High	Careful planning and coordination be essential to meeting this issue.				

REF:	SOURC	PERFORMANCE ISSUE		ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
2		Commission and y Requirements	Meet statutory requirements in relation to Grant Claims	Ensure that relation to the are adhered to	e submission of	deadlines in grant claims	Various Dates	Graham Soulsby / Paul Sutton	ALL, 6B
CUST	OMER FO	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	it	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		
Low No immediate impact on the customer.		on the customer.	Low	High	High		planning and ontial to meeting	coordination will this issue.	

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
3	Audit Commission / Head of Service	Implementation and nurturing a new service unit structure	during 2004 and new staff will be in place during March – May 2005. Accordingly, the new structure (and staff) will require diligent monitoring and support to ensure that it is a success.		April – July 2005	Graham Soulsby / Paul Sutton	6B	
CUST	OMER FOCUS		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	Impact Measurable customer outcomes			Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		
High	Improved service service delivery	provision and continuity of	Low	High	High		1 0,	research and in a successful w.

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION				WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
4	Head of Service / Required system replacement	Implementation of the new Financial Management System	procured duri beginning of require furth	cial management ng 2004 and will 2005/06. The er roll-out and t year including co	go live at the system will development	April – Sept 2005	Graham Soulsby / Paul Sutton	ALL
CUST	OMER FOCUS		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	Measurable custome	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		d action
High	provide quality finance	m, it would not be possible to cial information to users and I may not be able to meet it's ponsibilities.	Medium	High	High	and rev		g, management ntial to making

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE		ACTION		WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
5	Head of Service /Statutory requirements	Ensuring that the Council has appropriate Corporate Governance arrangements in operation in relation to:						
		Financial Mgt		improvements onciliation's / wor		During 2005	Graham Soulsby	ALL
		Risk Mgt / Corp Gov Strategy	04/05 was de		actione dearly	April – June 2005	Graham Soulsby	ALL
		Strategies & Policies	Review of fir relevant and	nancial strategies correct.	to ensure all	During 2005	Graham Soulsby	ALL
CUST	OMER FOCUS		RISK ASSES	SMENT				
Impac	Impact Measurable customer outcomes			Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		
Mediu	M Appropriate risk man help other service ur relation to the busines	Medium	um Medium Medium Formalised re programme is re				and rollout I.	

REF:	SOUR	CE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
6	SMT Improv	/ Performance ement Manager	Performance Management	Continued development and enhancement of the Performance Management Framework including improving the links to budget monitoring			2005	Guy Holloway	All
CUST	OMER F	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	Impact Measurable customer outcomes		Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		d action	
Medium		Better management better quality informa	and decision making through tion.	Low	Medium	Medium	Establishment of a project plan key dates will help ensure that task is achieved.		

REF:	SOUR	CE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
7		of Service / Statutory ements	Review / Refresh the Corporate Improvement Plan	Review the Corporate Improvement Plan			June 2005	Guy Holloway	All
CUSTO	OMER F	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	t	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		d action
Mediur	Outcomes that deliver the Council's ambitions		LOW	Medium	Medium	Establishment of a project pla key dates will help ensure that task is achieved.		roject plan with ensure that this	

REF:	SOUR	CE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION		WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY	
8	stren		Continue to review and strengthen the Budget Process	5		Summer 2005	Graham Soulsby / Paul Sutton	ALL, 6B	
CUSTO	OMER F	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	t	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of Consequence failure of failure		Risk Priority	Recommended action		action
Medium		Options identified to budget process.	strengthen and improve the	Low	Medium	Medium		will need to ta of stakeholders	ake into account

REF:	SOUR	CE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
9	Head o	of Service	Achievement of 2005/06 Audit Plan	Ensure that the 2005/06 Audit Plan is met and is delivered to the appropriate standards			By March 2006	Graham Soulsby	ALL
CUSTO	OMER F	ocus		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impac	t	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of Consequence Risk Recommended failure Priority			ed action		
Mediun	n	The work of internal a	audit is used to help e the services they deliver	Medium	Medium	Medium		with effective i	olan is formulated n-year

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
10	Performance Improvement Manager / SMT	Review of Fees and Charges	As part of the budget process 2005/06, a new set of 'guiding principles' was agreed for application to the Council's fees and charges. A few immediate changes were effected as part of the budget process but a review of the remaining areas will be done.			March – April 2005	Guy Holloway / Service Heads	ALL, 6B
CUSTO	MER FOCUS		RISK ASSES	SMENT				
Impact	Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action		daction
Medium	More appropriate an charges	d fairer system for fees and	Low	Medium	Medium	at the e	nd of 2004/09 so that cha	review happens 5, beginning of anges can be

REF:	SOUR	CE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION			WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
11	Nation Legisla		Procurement Strategy (local alignment with the National Strategy)	Develop, approve and implement a revised Procurement Strategy that ensures that the Council meets the requirements of the National Procurement Strategy.			March – August 2005 & ongoing	Guy Holloway / Service Heads	ALL, 6B
CUSTO	MER FC	CUS		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impact		Measurable custom	er outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	R	Recommended	action
High			through the more economic ees and higher quality inputs.	Medium	High	Medium	the Nati		Council meets ment Strategy rers efficiency

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE	ACTION TWHEN WHO			CORPORATE PRIORITY			
12	Government Corporate Assessment Framework for local government		2005 and that coherent se	the Council is re at it receives an a rvice assessment gement, and prog	Guy Holloway / Service Heads	ALL, 6B			
CUSTO	MER FOCUS		RISK ASSESSMENT						
Impact	Measurable customer	r outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	Recommended action			
High	Council's performance	thful assessment of their . Also, the Council can use Iriver for further accelerated	Medium	High	Medium	effectively ensure th and freed that a true	for CPA 20 at it maximise om opportunitie and accurate	council prepares 05 in order to s future funding es and ensures assessment of ce is portrayed.	

REF:	SOURCE OF ISSUE	PERFORMANCE ISSUE		ACTION		WHEN	WHO	CORPORATE PRIORITY
13	Senior Management Team	Need for service improvement	Coordinate activity to activities		sources and service area	2005 & ongoing	Perf Impr Team	ALL, 6B
CUSTO	MER FOCUS		RISK ASSESSMENT					
Impact	Measurable custo	mer outcomes	Risk of failure	Consequence of failure	Risk Priority	F	Recommended	daction
High	Improvement in so and better value for	ervices provided by the Council money.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Service intensified careful m	improvement d across the onitoring of ou	Council with

7. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

A financial summary for 2005/06 for the service unit has been provided below.

	Budget 05/06
	£000
EXPENDITURE	
Employees	753,800
Premises	0
Transport	4,000
Supplies & Services	322,200
Third Party Payments	0
Transfer Payments	0
Support Services	173,300
Capital Charges	92,000
GROSS EXPENDITURE	1,345,300
INCOME	
Grants, Fees & Charges	5,000
Recharges	1,130,000
GROSS INCOME	1,135,000
NET EXPENDITURE	210,300

Delivering economic, efficient and effect services

Kettering Borough Council is committed to increasing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the services it provides in order to continually improve value for money in service provision.

It is the Council's aim to exceed the 2.5% efficiency target set by the Government. The Finance and Corporate Development Unit will continue to identify and deliver efficiency savings within its own operations, and also promote the delivery of efficiency through providing a range of financial and performance support service that add value to the entire organisation.

A number of actions set out in this Service Plan aim to deliver more economic, efficient and effective service delivery.

In order to comply with the requirements of the new national efficiency framework, the Council will set out more specific information relating to the delivery of efficiency savings in its Annual Efficiency Statement. This will be published in April 2005 in line with national timetable.



Resourcing the Service Unit

The Service unit is housed on the 2nd floor of the Council Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering.

The approved establishment provides for 18.5 full time equivalents for which budget has been made for 2005/06. It should be remembered that during 2004/05, a full review of the structure was undertaken which will result in on-going savings in the region of £40,000 per annum.



8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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