

SERVICE PLAN 2009/10 – LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

NOW ANALYSIS

THE SERVICE

Objective: To provide efficient and cost effective services which are responsive to Client needs and embrace the Council's core values and objectives.

Budget: Gross Expenditure £2,400,540; Net Expenditure £1,380,910

Staffing: Legal 14(13.6 FTE). Democratic and Elections 13(12.1 FTE)

The Service Teams:

Legal - Provision of legal services and Monitoring Officer role

Member - Support to Mayoral and Member services

Electoral - Maintenance of Electoral registers and management of elections

Standards

Legal - Compliance with Law Society standards and standards agreed with clients in relation to particular cases

Member - Production and despatch of agendas and minutes etc in accordance with legislation and local indicators.

Electoral - Compliance with statutory requirements.

PERFORMANCE

Legal - Achieve 100% of Income against target
 . Percentage of planning enforcement served:
 Within 3 working days – Cat 1 cases
 Within 3 weeks – Cat 2 cases
 Within 5 weeks – Cat 3 cases

Member - Production of Executive minutes within 3 days Production of non-Exec minutes within 5 days

Electoral - Compliance with statutory requirements

WHERE ANALYSIS

GOALS FOR 2009/10

ELECTORAL	MEMBER	LEGAL
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete implementation of the approved restructure of electoral services with a view to securing not only capacity to deliver existing services but the resilience to safeguard this position in the longer term including ensuring that new staff recruited to the Electoral Services Team are conversant with the Electoral arrangements that apply within the Borough and that appropriate training programmes are developed for those staff including training on use of the new electoral management system. - GQS1 2. Identify and finalise arrangements with an outside print company for the production of poll cards and postal vote packs for the 2009 Kent County Council, European and possibly a General Parliamentary Election. - GQS1 3. Manage the said elections in accordance with an agreed project plan. - GQS1 4. Progress the Parish Council and Polling District Review and scope the deliverability of holding elections for any new parishes in 2011. - LL3 5. Actively promote electoral registration and elections turn out in accordance with the new requirements within the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and to reclaim the costs thereof in accordance with the MoJ funding arrangements. - LL3 6. Ensure that the methodology adopted to compile the Electoral Register and the conduct of elections is compatible with the requirement to submit performance data to the Electoral Commission and that the existing accounting regime for this service is adapted as appropriate so as to enable financial information to be easily identified for those indicators. - GQS1 7. Complete an Equalities Impact Assessment for Electoral Services and implement any action plan in relation thereto in 2009. - GQS1 8. Complete a Polling Places review in 2009/10. - GQS1 9. Produce a procedure note/plan to deal with absent voter applications as recommended by Electoral Commission Performance Standard 4. - GQS1 10. Produce a written public awareness strategy on electoral participation in accordance with Performance Standard 6. - GQS1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet statutory and adopted Local Performance Indicator targets for agendas/minute production. - GQS2 2. Continue to monitor the availability of training courses for elected Members to enable them to meet their training needs. - GQS1 3. Ensure the Members Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel is convened during 2009 to consider and review the Travel and Subsistence allowance payable to Members (in particular a review of the list of approved duties for the claiming of such allowances). - GQS1 4. Publish during 2009 an updated version of the Constitution incorporating all amendments made since it was last issued in July 2008. - GQS1 5. To manage the process and make all necessary arrangements for the granting of the Freedom of the Borough to the 133 Field Workshop Company in late spring/early summer 2009. - GQS1 6. To produce a protocol for the handling of 'Community Calls for Action' by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the publication of detailed guidance and/or regulations. - GQS1 7. In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree and implement a Scrutiny Programme for 2009/10. - GQS1 8. Provide effective liaison with the Ombudsman and all the relevant Council Services on maladministration complaints and seek to resolve such complaints in the best interests of the Council and ensure management data is made available as required. - GQS2 9. Complete an Equalities Impact Assessment for Member Services and implement any action plan in relation thereto in 2009. GQS1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To lead, in partnership with appointed external lawyers, on the development and implementation of a cost recovery strategy in relation to the Stour Centre refurbishment project. - GQS1 2. Complete all land assembly and compensation claims in relation to Victoria Road. - GQS1 3. Assist with Stanhope PFI and the proposed new Housing PFI project/development agreements and all post-completion legal issues. - H2 4. Provide strategic and legal advice and support to ensure successful consolidation of new charitable trusts including the Ashford Leisure Trust. - GQS1 5. To advise/support provision of Park and Ride. - GQS1 6. Advice on all LDF related policy documents including any Examinations and development of Tariff and infrastructure funding. - GQS1 7. Establish the Strategic Sites Legal Group to support the work of the Strategic Sites Team in Planning and operate to the performance standards agreed. - GQS/AF2 8. Provide or procure strategic, tactical and legal advice in relation to all major planning appeal work. - GQS/AF2 9. If resources permit (taking account of all the above corporate priorities) to implement any outstanding higher priority recommendations from the audit report. - GQS1 10. Meet Local Pls in relation to planning enforcement actions. - GQS1 11. Provide timely advice and support to the ongoing Land Evaluation Studies in order to maximise capital receipts from assets. - GQS1 <p>MONITORING OFFICER - 1. Ensuring full compliance with KLOE in relation to Code of Conduct and Monitoring Officer duties. - GQS1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Ensure satisfactory implementation and maintenance of revised Code of Conduct complaint procedures, including 'local filtering' and provision of regular management data to SBE and Standards Committee. - GQS1 3. Management of Ombudsman Complaint processes and provision of regular monitoring data as required. - GQS1

IMPROVEMENT PLAN/STRATEGIES

People & Finance	Technology	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise receipt of legal fee income from external sources including developers and government project and other funding streams. • Address service issues arising from staff survey • Develop a strategy to maximise legal service capacity and resilience including addressing senior lawyer succession planning and exploiting opportunities for shared expertise. • Manage overall budget to achieve agreed savings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to utilise and manage electronic time recording and case management data to maximise legal service efficiency and cost recovery. • See electoral services management system goals above • Maintain quality and accessibility of "Democracy" webpages. • Continue to identify opportunities to improve communications and efficiencies through better use of and training in IT via the officer-member working group 	