



Corporate Service Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting – Quarter One July 2023

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Version 2 – 24 July 2023	Updated to reflect comments made at Service Panel meeting	
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1 Service Overview

Corporate Services covers a broad range of both front and back-office functions for the council including:

- Audit and performance
- Communications and website
- Elections, electoral registration and data governance,
- Committee services
- Climate change
- IT, digitalisation and change
- Contracts* and procurement
- Finance including treasury
- Human resources and payroll
- Delivering government schemes of financial assistance to residents

*A range of outsourced services are contract managed by the corporate team including

- Revenues and Benefit Services (Capita)
- Reception and some elements of IT (Capita)
- Leisure Centre operation (Everyone Active)
- Waste and recycling collection (through the joint client team hosted by Basingstoke and Deane Council)
- Contact Centre (hosted by Basingstoke and Deane Council)

2: Service Priorities (taken from approved Service Plan)

The table in the Service Plan sets out the approved service priorities for 2023/24, over and above day to day service delivery.

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
1	Review Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure the Council's financial resources and commitments are aligned with its strategic priorities, underpinned by robust financial controls and effective monitoring	<p>Produce budget strategy to address forecast MTFS shortfall 2024/25 and beyond, and to strengthen resources to priority areas, developed in conjunction service managers and councillors</p> <p>Detailed budget review and rebase, including staff and central cost allocations</p> <p>Review reserves, including SANGs, as per Council approval Feb 2023</p> <p>Revised MTFP including risk and sensitivities, submit for Council approval</p> <p>Strengthen staff cost budgeting and monitoring</p>	<p>Oct 2023</p> <p>Aug 2023</p> <p>Aug 2023</p> <p>Feb 2024</p> <p>Nov 2023</p>	<p>Underway informed by 22/23 outturn</p> <p>Report to O&S 18 July, Cabinet August</p> <p>Underway, reconciliation undertaken and revised establishment controls in place</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
2	Update the Commercial Strategy to ensure it supports the MTFS and reflects the latest statutory framework	Restated priorities and actions with associated savings/income targets, linked to overall MTFS	August 2023 Cabinet	Reflected in the reserves review – to be addressed further in MTFS report in October. The business efficiency and income generation themes continue, the commercial property acquisition aim of the strategy has been scaled back due to government restrictions and current economic conditions
3	Ensure an effective transition from the Mendip/Capita outsourced arrangement and the production of high-quality statutory Accounts	<p>Smooth transition and knowledge transfer</p> <p>22/23 pre-audit Accounts published</p> <p>Ensure adequate skills and experience in the HDC finance team</p> <p>Effective forward planning for technical accounting changes, including new lease accounting standards</p>	<p>July 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2024</p>	<p>Complete – one post vacant but filled with experienced agency</p> <p>Achieved 31 May deadline</p> <p>Building through training. Senior post revised to increase technical requirement</p> <p>Technical training forward plan in place</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
4	Plan and implement changes as a result of the Elections Act 2022 for May 2024	<p>Elections team fully trained and aware.</p> <p>All IT and procedural changes implemented and tested.</p> <p>Staff, councillors, T&P councils and the public informed through effective comms strategy</p>	Throughout the 23/24 year	<p>Tranche 2 changes will come into force in advance of the May 2024 polls Details of the changes are still to be confirmed, more details to follow from September 2023</p> <p>Training will be provided as and when required and supplied</p> <p>Elections team will plan the implementation of the changes as more details are provided</p>
5	Successfully deliver May 2023 local elections	<p>Implementation of all new statutory requirements</p> <p>Achievement of full staff recruitment for election duties</p> <p>Smooth running on the day with positive feedback from candidates, agents and voters</p>	May 2023	Completed – lessons learned session and staff feedback exercise held
6	Improving external communication	<p>Deliver phase two of website development – outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form enhancements • integrated payments 	March 2024	Underway. Accessibility, form enhancements, media library all in flight.

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resident newsletter • mapping capabilities • media library • accessibility • pdf pages into publications • microsite scoping <p>Development of marketing and advertising policy</p> <p>Hart News review and re-launch</p> <p>Social media policy development</p> <p>Achieve accessibility standards across internal and external channels</p>		<p>Resident newsletter launched with ongoing improvement around design scheduled for next edition</p> <p>Scheduled to commence in Q3</p> <p>Refreshed Hart News due for publication and distribution by end of July</p> <p>To commence in Q2</p> <p>Policy approved with audit regime now in place. Training ongoing across staff body</p>
7	Committee services	<p>Ongoing rollout of ModGov Report Manager for Portfolio Holders and Shared services</p> <p>Review effectiveness of ModGov at Hart</p>	<p>July 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>	<p>Review in progress although hampered by Civica's Product Manager out of action</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
8	Refresh Hart's Digital Strategy and customer offer	<p>2019 Digital Strategy review measuring the outcomes delivered as part of the original programme of activity.</p> <p>Draft, consult and deliver new Digital Strategy across service areas setting out new focus for the next three years</p>	March 2024	Work due to start in Q2/3
9	Improve customer offer and access to services and council information	<p>Review of current customer offer across all channels in preparation for contract review for outsourced services with BDBC</p> <p>Review of current telephone choices for customers accessing 01252 622122 with proposal for new IVR</p>	March 2024	<p>Scheduled for Q3</p> <p>Dependency on "implement cloud based telephony system". Now scheduled for Q3</p>
10	IT - On-premises server upgrade/ move to cloud - Windows 2012 support ends in Oct 2023	Full supported IT infrastructure	September 2023	Server usage analysis has been carried out and designs and costs are being evaluated.

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11	Implement Cloud based telephony system	Migrate away from on-premises based telephony system	December 2023	<p>Suppliers and potential solutions have been evaluated and a preferred solution has been chosen.</p> <p>The project will deliver year on year savings on the current telephony spend with a reduction in the use of mobile phones throughout the authority.</p> <p>Currently work is taking place on the design of the new system with the implementation and go live to take place in the autumn</p>
12	Rationalise/ decommission on-premises IT equipment	<p>Complete final stage of the server room refresh</p> <p>The Council controls its overhead costs for direct dial telephony whilst expanding the flexibility for staff via a non desk-based solution</p>	July 2023	<p>A total of 18 appliances and switches have been decommissioned from the server room to take. Staff are also unpicking the historic cabling to ensure that the council has a simple and clear physical network in place.</p> <p>This work is still underway due to the complex nature of removing an internal firewall, which has been more problematic than first thought. Hart is working with Capita and Firewall engineers to re-</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
				<p>engineer the network structure so that this device can be removed without impact on end users.</p> <p>The final pieces in this work will be completed prior to the end of the Capita IT contract</p>
13	Review and develop a strategy for key outsourced and shared services	<p>Cabinet approval for options appraisal and direction to ensure lead-in times are adequately prepared for and a pathway to secure value for money and robust services is agreed – to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capita services contract • Council provided outsourced contracts including legal, licensing and building control <p>Forward plan for new financial systems currently part of Capita contract</p>	<p>Sept 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>	<p>Outsourced and Shared Services options appraisal to be drafted. Capita options being assessed with Client team for feasibility and timing in conjunction with other Councils.</p>
14	Waste and recycling - develop options for new	<p>Cabinet approval for options appraisal and direction to ensure lead-in times are adequately prepared for and a pathway to</p>	Ongoing	<p>Client management in Q1 saw the agreement with Serco on missed bin figure reporting and an agreed route forward for</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
	legislation and contract renewal, and ensure robust contract monitoring through the client management arrangement	<p>secure value for money and robust services is agreed</p> <p>Implement new legislation in the most cost-effective way possible</p> <p>Reduce carbon impact of service</p> <p>Review performance monitoring of the contract and the client team</p>		<p>alternative HVO fuel. Action to be progressed for servicing both Waste and Grounds Maintenance vehicles. Report on Food Waste Options Appraisal reviewed by HDC and BDBC.</p> <p>Awaiting more details from Government on impact and funding of Environment Act</p> <p>In discussion with HCC regarding new arrangements included in revised Inter-Authority Agreement across all Hampshire councils including the operational and financial arrangements of the new waste disposal infrastructure</p>
15	Robust and effective procurement process and practice across the council that secures value for money and is legally compliant	Prepare for Procurement Bill and update guidance and rules as required Guidance and the Contract Procurement Rules (CPRs) are up to date and in line with the updated legislation expected to be passed in 23/24	Feb 2024	<p>Guidance on Sharepoint has been updated to reflect new CPRs.</p> <p>Procurement Bill entering Final Stages before Royal Consent.</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
16	Achieve the Council's Climate change aspirations and targets through a strengthened staff resource and robust action plan	<p>New appointments made to complete the revised sustainability team</p> <p>Present a revised climate change action plan, including financial implications, to Cabinet via O&S</p>	<p>May 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p>	<p>Appointment made with Climate Change and sustainability officer in place. Recruitment commenced for 0.5 project support officer</p> <p>Action plan consulted with Members working group and O&S in June, and approved by Cabinet on 6 July</p> <p>Officer group active and coordinating the programme of work with Project Board having high level oversight</p>
17	Ensure effective Internal audit provision that adds value to services, gives assurance about controls and governance and confidence to the Audit Committee	<p>Implement the new service provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) and quickly embed the new arrangements</p> <p>Service managers and Audit Committee receive clear reports with high level of buy-in to recommendations</p>	<p>Sept 2023</p>	<p>New service in place, SIAP to report to Audit Cttee July on Q1 progress</p>
18	Highly effective, skilled and well-motivated staff at the Council	<p>Review HR policies and procedures to ensure all are current and effective and support staff recruitment and retention</p>	<p>Dec 2023</p>	<p>Underway</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q1
	supported by an excellent HR service	<p>Undertake audit of JDs to ensure a full set of up-to-date documents is held with good controls on access and revisions</p> <p>Improve staffing management information including FTEs, turnover and pay and conditions</p>	<p>Aug 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>	<p>Audit complete – very small number missing and being addressed, most reflect current role</p> <p>Underway – exit interviews reported to SLT July, with sickness and turnover information to follow</p>
19	To have strong, effective and transparent governance for corporate and service projects, with adequate skills and capacity in project resources	<p>Consolidating project resource and strengthen reporting lines</p> <p>Implement actions arising from audit reports and lessons learned analysis from closed projects</p> <p>Implement new Terms of Reference for corporate Project Board and improve report back to Cabinet and O&S</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2023</p>	<p>Strengthened Job Descriptions and new 'Task Group' of project managers being created to ensure consistency and provide support</p> <p>Closed project lessons learned reported to Project Board</p> <p>New Terms of reference approved by Board April 2023 and increased oversight of portfolio holders</p>

3: Corporate Services Risk Register

A detailed service risk assessment has been completed and is reviewed on a quarterly basis (minimum). This helps inform the Hart District Council Corporate Risk Register which is reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Top 5 risks from Corporate Risk Register – impact on achieving corporate objectives, assessment at 10 July 2023

Description	Residual rating	Potential Impact	Source of Risk	Controls in place
Waste and recycling service facing significant change in next 3 years due to new legislation, new disposal arrangements with HCC and Serco contract end-date	12	Potential material financial impact on budget – uncertain costs and government funding Potential impact on residents from changes to collection arrangements	Uncertainty in government funding and timing of new arrangements HCC cabinet report for 18 July Serco contract end date Sept 2026	Governance with B&D and HCC Watching brief with government changes, timing and funding
Risk of a Cyber-attack on the Council's systems and data	12	Reputational damage Data loss or ransom could use significant staff and other resources and have major financial impact	Constant threat of attacks directly and via third party data holders	Insurance policy in place for financial consequences Secured grant funding and have put in a range of measures to strengthen resilience Undertaken training and awareness for staff and planned for councillors

Secure future provision of legal services that delivers the Council's needs and provide good value for money	9	Potentially less cost effective and disjointed provision of legal services Service delays	Failure to	Active dialogue in place under the partnership governance arrangements with Basingstoke and Deane Council who provide the current shared service
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget – unable to deliver sustainable balanced budget over the medium term	9	MTFS currently shows a budget shortfall from 2024/25 Savings and efficiency programmes will be needed if income and external funding remain static or decline in future. New Homes Bonus, retained business rates and planning income are key risk areas	Uncertainty around timing and impact of government funding Volatile economic conditions including inflation and interest rates making accurate forecasting difficult Government restrictions on commercial property deals	Outturn and reserves review provide an opportunity to assess current risks and financial pressures and take steps to alleviate these in the medium term including base budget alignment MTFS emerging pressures will be assessed and reported to O&S and Cabinet in the Autumn ahead of budget setting in February
Delivery of climate change action plan objectives and achievement of zero carbon aims	9	If staff capacity and focus is not sufficient and funding (external and internal) is not secured, this will impact on the speed and extent of achieving the agreed plan and consequent carbon reduction	Funding resourcing Engagement from staff, councillors and the community (residents and businesses)	Refreshed Action Plan approved by Cabinet following scrutiny. Strengthened staff resource in place and new officer group active. The Council has approved a further £300k budget in 2023/24 to progress the climate change programme Reserves review has identified the funding need to deliver the action plan. Local Partnerships are supporting as a critical friend including signposting external funding and sharing good practice and success from other councils

4 Performance indicators and targets

Performance Indicator	Target	Q1
<p>CP1 - Percentage of the Internal Audit Plan completed during the year</p> <p><i>Year to date figures, values are cumulative (higher is better)</i></p>	100% by year end	See Audit Cttee report 25 July
<p>CP2 - Percentage customer satisfaction with Internal Audit. (Southern Internal Audit Partnership SIAP)</p>	90%	<p>N/A - New service</p> <p>99% achieved across other SIAP contracts Apr 23</p>
<p>CP3 - Quality of customer service call handling</p> <p><i>This indicator is measured from the scoring of a recorded call against quality standards from a monitoring sample (higher is better)</i></p>	90%	99%
<p>CP4 - Implementation of savings schemes targets to meet MTFS requirements.</p>	100%	Annual PI
<p>CP5 - Percentage of telephone calls answered by the Contact Centre in 30 seconds.</p> <p><i>Percentage value given is as at end of the quarter (higher is better)</i></p>	70%	90%
<p>CP6 - Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected.</p> <p><i>Year to date figures, values are cumulative (higher is better)</i></p>	98%	As at May: 20.1% (May 22/23 was 21.4%)

<p>CP7 - Percentage of Council Tax collected.</p> <p><i>Year to date figures, values are cumulative (higher is better)</i></p>	<p>98%</p>	<p>As at May: 20.2% (May 22/23 was 19.9%)</p>
<p>CP8 - Percentage uptime of key systems</p> <p><i>Percentage value given is for the quarter and rounded to one decimal place (higher is better)</i></p>	<p>99%</p>	<p>99%</p>
<p>CP9 - Percentage of uptime of Hart's website</p> <p><i>Percentage value given is for the quarter and rounded to one decimal place (higher is better)</i></p>	<p>99.5%</p>	<p>99.1% (first quarter included go live)</p>
<p>CP10 - Number of missed collections excluding garden waste (per 100,000)</p> <p><i>Target aims to miss no more than 65 bins per 100,000 collected for all bin collection types except garden waste. A missed collection is where a round has taken place and a bin (or bins) has been missed, this excludes any mutually pre-agreed suspension of service, usually applied where events are beyond the control of either the authorities' or their contractor. (lower is better)</i></p>		<p>April: 28 May: 25 June: 22 (22/23 figures April: 3126 May: 3860)</p>
<p>CP11 - Number of missed garden waste collections (per 100,000)</p> <p><i>Target aims to miss no more than 250 bins for garden waste services during the summer, and 150 during the winter. A missed collection is where a round has taken place and a bin (or bins) has been missed, this excludes any mutually pre-agreed suspension of service, usually applied where events are beyond the control of either the authorities' or their contractor. (lower is better)</i></p>		<p>April: 56 May: 89 June: 124 (22/23 figures April: 357 May: 13208)</p>

<p>CP12 - Overall cost of waste per household</p> <p><i>Set annually based on the number of households served and reported in Q4. Calculated as net cost of HAWCLT, HAWCOM, HAWSTE for the 22/23 budget divided by the Council Tax Stock of properties produced by the VOA (lower is better)</i></p>	<p>£25</p>	<p>Annual PI</p>
<p>CP13 - Total recycling rate</p> <p><i>Percentage value given is for the quarter (higher is better)</i></p>	<p>46%</p>	<p>Figures available later in Q2</p>

5 Quarter One 2023/24: Key Challenges and Achievements

Finance

- Completion and publication of the 22/23 Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement by the new deadline of 31 May (was 31 July)
- As well as the time constraint, the above was particularly challenging as we were in transition from the Mendip contract and there was a significant knowledge transfer required, hampered by a key member of the team leaving in March.
- New treasury management policy has been implemented in Q1 with additional reporting requirements and a focus on ESG assessment. The new approach and financial thresholds approved by Council in February are helping us to benefit from higher interest rates on offer

Elections

- Successful delivery of May 2023 elections including the delivery of Voter ID. Overall a very positive experience with an excellent team effort which is particularly encouraging as two of the three members of team only started at Hart in January 2023. Extensive training and the support drafted in from an experienced Electoral Commission agency temp helped the team. Lessons learned session was held to help inform future elections.
- Whilst the recruitment of polling station and count staff was successful this year, it is getting more challenging, particularly with the new Voter ID and other procedural changes. This is a particular concern if there is a Parliamentary Election called at short notice.

HR

- Support for a number of recruitments in key roles, including senior planning officers
- Good progress reviewing HR policies and JD status.
- Leading various aspects of the corporate follow up to the staff survey results, with targeted efforts on staff welfare and engagement in initiatives to improve the working environment for staff. HR have supported the relaunch of monthly 'Tea brief' and 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, both have been well attended and well received.

Comms/Committee/Climate/Digital

- New website launched and became fully operational. Feedback and lessons learned sessions held with service editor colleagues and closing report to Project Board
- Accessibility project is underway with numerous specific and general training sessions held. Web and other content reviewed, and plans

being formulated to improve accessibility to meet required standards over time.

-Review undertaken of Committee end to end process including report creation, agenda management, role of the Committee services team and the use of ModGov. Action plan being considered by SLT.

Contracts and Procurement

-The procurement manager has supported service managers with a number of key procurements including planning policy and green space projects

-The challenge is to raise awareness and ensure compliance with Contract Procedure Rules in a consistent but proportionate way

-Progressing the early exit aim for some aspects of the Capita contract, with initial focus on IT. Close working with the Waste/recycling client team to achieve service performance improvements in key aspects of the contract including missed bins.

Internal Audit

-The new outsourced Internal Audit provider started work in March and has reported to the March and July meetings of Audit Committee.

Good feedback so far from service managers. Consistency and experience from other council audit clients will be of benefit to Hart.

-Challenge of the new arrangement is that certain core governance functions need to be resourced including risk coordination, Annual Governance statement and corporate policy reviews such as Whistleblowing and Counter Fraud work.

6 Looking forward to Quarter Two 2023/24

-Climate Change programme will develop with prioritisation and costing of the action plan and the identification of initial work through the officer group. Comms and engagement will be key both internally and externally.

-MTFS and detailed budgets will be reviewed and reported to O&S and Cabinet, along with routine monitoring of progress in year

-IT will continue the projects to internalise infrastructure and move to a more flexible cost-effective phone solution.

-Developing the waste service option appraisal will be a significant piece of work in Q2, particularly given the time pressures referred to above