



Corporate Service Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting – Quarter Three January 2024

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Version 2 – 9 Feb 2024	Has been updated to reflect comments made at Service Panel meeting held 17 Jan 24, prior to submission to main O&S meeting on 20 February 2024	
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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 and shared 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)
- Shared legal service with 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 Q3 Green = complete/on track Amber = not started/further work to do Red = behind schedule
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>Included in published budget report - informed by 22/23 outturn and Q3 monitoring 23/24</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Cabinet and Council approved realignment of reserves to meet priorities and pressures and reset minimum working balance</p> <p>Interim report considered by O&S November and Cabinet Dec – revised report included in published budget report</p> <p>Complete - reconciliation undertaken and revised establishment controls in place</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q3 Green = complete/on track Amber = not started/further work to do Red = behind schedule
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 November. 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	<p style="text-align: center;">Update Q3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Green = complete/on track</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amber = not started/further work to do</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Red = behind schedule</p>
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.</p> <p>Details are now available on the new postal and proxy voting procedures which go live on 31 October 2023.</p> <p>Details on future changes will be provided when ready, these include but are not limited to voting and candidacy rights for EU citizens, life votes for overseas electors.</p> <p>Training will be provided as and when required and supplied. First training session Thursday 12 October provided by the AEA.</p> <p>Elections team will plan the implementation of the changes as more details are provided</p>

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5	Successfully deliver May 2023 local elections	Implementation of all new statutory requirements Achievement of full staff recruitment for election duties Smooth running on the day with positive feedback from candidates, agents and voters	May 2023	Completed – lessons learned session and staff feedback exercise held

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6	Improving external communication	<p>Deliver phase two of website development – outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form enhancements • integrated payments • 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>	March 2024	<p>Phase 2 website development progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form enhancements – in flight • Integrated payments – moved to phase 3, now due Q1 2024 • Resident newsletter – complete • Mapping capabilities – due Q4 • media library – complete • Accessibility - complete • Pdf into publication – scoping phase Q4 • Microsite – in flight with launch scheduled end of November <p>Marketing & advertising – scheduled for Q4</p> <p>Hart News – winter edition issued Dec 23</p> <p>Social media – scheduled Q4</p> <p>Underway, training completed</p>

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7	Committee services	Ongoing rollout of ModGov Report Manager for Portfolio Holders and Shared services Review effectiveness of ModGov at Hart	July 2023 March 2024	Report Manager for Portfolio Holders to be agreed – Q4 Review completed and Civica audit undertaken on current system configuration scheduled
8	Refresh Hart's Digital Strategy and customer offer	2019 Digital Strategy review measuring the outcomes delivered as part of the original programme of activity. Draft, consult and deliver new Digital Strategy across service areas setting out new focus for the next three years	March 2024	Work started in Dec 23 Consultant engaged and completed staff survey and interviews. Outcome to inform refresh of Digital Strategy which will be produced in March 24
9	Improve customer offer and access to services and council information	Review of current customer offer across all channels in preparation for contract review for outsourced services with BDBC Review of current telephone choices for customers accessing 01252 622122 with proposal for new IVR	March 2024	Scheduled for Q4 All staff now using Teams calls. Contact centre being reviewed for residual calls, in conjunction with reception project

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q3 Green = complete/on track Amber = not started/further work to do Red = behind schedule
10	IT - On-premises server upgrade/ move to cloud - Windows 2012 support ends in Oct 2023	Full supported IT infrastructure	September 2023	Completed – All servers on Windows 2016 or above. Plan now to upgrade estate to Windows Server 2022, will be completed by March 24
11	Implement Cloud based telephony system	Migrate away from on-premises based telephony system	December 2023	Completed – Telephony system has migrated to Microsoft Teams. Mobile phone use reduced by more than half
12	Rationalise/ decommission on-premises IT equipment	Complete final stage of the server room refresh The Council controls its overhead costs for direct dial telephony whilst expanding the flexibility for staff via a non desk-based solution	July 2023	Complete - All hardware – switches and firewalls have been decommissioned –the old unused cabling from the racks and the old Capita hardware removed
13	Review and develop a strategy	Cabinet approval for options appraisal and direction to ensure lead-in times are	Sept 2023	Largely on track:

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	for key outsourced and shared services	<p>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>	March 2024	<p>-New finance system project launched</p> <p>-Reception transfer project in advanced stage</p> <p>-IT transfer completed</p> <p>-Legal shared service continuation agreed and new Deed being drafted</p> <p>-Land charges has agreed way forward, subject to government timescales and securing new 'host' council</p> <p>-revenues and benefits has agreed way forward with the partners and client team, subject to legal advice on contract/procurement</p>
14	Waste and recycling - develop options for new legislation and contract renewal, and ensure robust contract monitoring through	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	Ongoing	Awaiting more details from Government on impact and funding of Environment Act. HCC are revisiting recycling infrastructure for the County to reflect government announcements including food waste

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	the client management arrangement	<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>Officers and client team looking at options and impact using specialist consultants – draft report expected in Q4</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</p> <p>Move to HVO fuel agreed and will be in place 1/4/24</p> <p>Performance improved in Q2 and Q3 across most KPIs</p>
15	Robust and effective procurement process and practice across the	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	Feb 2024	<p>Guidance on Sharepoint has been updated to reflect new CPRs.</p> <p>Procurement officer to train managers in Q4</p>

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	council that secures value for money and is legally compliant	updated legislation expected to be passed in 23/24		
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>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> <p>Budget allocations approved by Cabinet September and January</p> <p>New stakeholder group met in September</p> <p>Energy audits underway and funding bids for key buildings submitted for PSDS on 10 Oct</p> <p>HVO fuel project for waste vehicles underway, to start April 24</p> <p>Update report to O&S and Cabinet in Dec/Jan</p>

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q3 Green = complete/on track Amber = not started/further work to do Red = behind schedule
				In Q4 develop costing and refine timelines of the Action Plan delivery
17	Ensure effective Internal audit provision that adds value to services, gives assurance about controls and governance and confidence to the Audit Committee	Implement the new service provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) and quickly embed the new arrangements Service managers and Audit Committee receive clear reports with high level of buy-in to recommendations	Sept 2023	New service in place, SIAP report to Audit Cttee July and Oct on progress
18	Highly effective, skilled and well-motivated staff at the Council supported by an excellent HR service	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure all are current and effective and support staff recruitment and retention Undertake audit of JDs to ensure a full set of up-to-date documents is held with good controls on access and revisions	Dec 2023 Aug 2023	Underway Audit complete – very small number missing and being addressed, most reflect current role. In light of Staffing Committee and Cabinet approval to move to new Job Evaluation framework, all JDs will need to be reviewed. This project will be included in 24/25 Service Plan

	Service Priority	Expected Outcomes	Target Completion date	Update Q3 Green = complete/on track Amber = not started/further work to do Red = behind schedule
		Improve staffing management information including FTEs, turnover and pay and conditions	March 2024	Underway – exit interviews reported to SLT July, with sickness and turnover information to follow
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> <p>Internal Audit of project management completed December – found high level of assurance about arrangements</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 28 Dec 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	16 (likely 4 x critical 4) Increased likelihood from possible to likely since Q1	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 agreed new IAA and default financial mechanism on 18 July Serco contract end date Sept 2026	Governance with B&D and HCC Watching brief with government changes, timing and funding. More clarity received in January from government about new burdens for waste/recycling funding including food waste Options appraisal commissioned jointly with B&D BC from external specialist consultants. This will help assess options for service in the future and reducing costs
Risk of a successful Cyber-attack impacting on the Council's systems and data	12 (likelihood possible 3 x impact critical 4)	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

				<p>Undertaken training and awareness for staff and planned for councillors</p> <p>Facilitated council-wide exercise undertaken in late 2023 to test emergency plan. Action plan and lessons learned being considered by SLT</p>
<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget – unable to deliver sustainable balanced budget over the medium term</p>	<p>9 (likelihood possible 3 x major impact 3) Return to 9 in Q3 due to setting a balanced budget for 24/25 and</p>	<p>MTFS currently shows a budget shortfall from 2024/25</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Uncertainty around timing and impact of government funding</p> <p>Volatile economic conditions including inflation and interest rates making accurate forecasting difficult</p> <p>Government restrictions on commercial property deals</p>	<p>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</p> <p>MTFS emerging pressures was assessed and reported to O&S and Cabinet in Nov/Dec ahead of budget setting in February</p> <p>More clarity received from government about new burdens for waste/recycling funding including food waste</p>
<p>Delivery of climate change action plan objectives and achievement of zero carbon aims</p>	<p>9 (likelihood possible 3 x major impact 3)</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Funding resourcing</p> <p>Engagement from staff, councillors and the community (residents and businesses)</p>	<p>Refreshed Action Plan approved by Cabinet following scrutiny. 6-month report to O&S and Cabinet Dec/Jan</p> <p>Strengthened staff resource in place and new officer group active.</p> <p>The Council has approved a further £300k budget in 2023/24 to progress the climate change programme</p>

				<p>Reserves review has identified the funding need to deliver the action plan.</p> <p>Local Partnerships are supporting as a critical friend including signposting external funding and sharing good practice and success from other councils</p> <p>Good progress with energy audits and submitting grant funding applications. £800k funding approved by Cabinet towards PSDS boiler replacement schemes at 3 large Hart properties</p>
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4 Performance indicators and targets

Performance Indicator	Target	Q3
<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 24 October
<p>CP2 - Percentage customer satisfaction with Internal Audit. (Southern Internal Audit Partnership SIAP)</p>	90%	<p>N/A - New service, will be reported at year-end</p> <p>99% achieved across other SIAP contracts</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%

CP4 - Implementation of savings schemes targets to meet MTFS requirements.	100%	Annual PI
CP5 - Percentage of telephone calls answered by the Contact Centre in 30 seconds. <i>Percentage value given is as at end of the quarter (higher is better)</i>	70%	86%
CP6 - Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected. <i>Year to date figures, values are cumulative (higher is better)</i>	98%	As at Dec 84.65% (Dec 22/23 was 82.38% outturn 95.09%)
CP7 - Percentage of Council Tax collected. <i>Year to date figures, values are cumulative (higher is better)</i>	98%	As at Dec 85.23% (Nov 22/23 was 85.13% outturn 98.52%)
CP8 - Percentage uptime of key systems <i>Percentage value given is for the quarter and rounded to one decimal place (higher is better)</i>	99%	100%
CP9 - Percentage of uptime of Hart's website <i>Percentage value given is for the quarter and rounded to one decimal place (higher is better)</i>	99.5%	100%
CP10 - Number of missed collections excluding garden waste (per 100,000) <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>		Oct: 197* Nov:84 Dec: 68 (22/23 figures Oct:319 Nov: 372 Dec: 4219) *fire at Rushmoor transfer station impacted performance in October

<p>CP11 - Number of missed garden waste collections (per 100,000) <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>Oct: 38 Nov: 26 Dec: 20 (22/23 figures Oct:248 Nov: 138 Dec: 101)</p>
<p>CP12 - Overall cost of waste per household <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 Annual PI</p>
<p>CP13 - Total recycling rate <i>Percentage value given is for the quarter (higher is better)</i></p>	<p>46% Q1 figures: 48.54% (outturn 22/23 42.6%)</p>

5 Quarter three 2023/24: Key Challenges and Achievements

Finance

- Q3 forecast to be reported to O&S and Cabinet in Feb 24 - highlighting overall favourable variance from budget – on track overall with good cost control in key areas including staff
- New treasury management policy and financial thresholds approved by Council in February are helping us to benefit from higher interest rates on offer
- Full team now in place including strengthened permanent project finance officer

Elections

- Training in the new requirements continued in Oct, Dec and more planned for Feb.
- Completion of Winchfield neighbourhood plan referendum, polling district and polling station review underway
- The team will monitor the workload going forward/leading up to the May election as the processing on paper postal application forms could be time consuming depending on volume – contingency resource being put in place.
- Recruitment of polling station and count staff 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. Recruitment process has started

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.
- staff survey results being analysed, action plan to be developed and report to Staffing Committee in Q4

IT

- Completed phase one of the phones project to move to a Teams-based environment, giving more flexibility and reducing mobile phones by half
- Completed termination of Capita service, replaced by new role and server infrastructure contract

Comms/Committee/Climate/Digital

- Accessibility project is almost completed 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.
- New structure and appointment in committee team
- second new format Hart News published/distributed in December

Contracts and Procurement

- Progressing the early exit aim for some aspects of the Capita contract, with IT completed 30 September. Good progress with reception, contact centre and preparing for land charges and revs and bens. Close working with the Waste/recycling client team to achieve service performance improvements in key aspects of the contract including missed bins.
- Supporting the Climate Change Action Plan through procurement processes and engagement on major contracts in preparation for various parts of the plan have been a focus in Q3

Internal Audit

- The new outsourced Internal Audit provider started work in March and has reported to the March, July and Oct meetings of Audit Committee. 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.
- A number of audits completed in Q3, these have been well received by service managers.

6 Looking forward to Q4 of 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. The officer group and external stakeholders group will meet in Q4 to help influence the direction of our efforts and completion of agreed actions.
- MTFS and detailed budgets will be debated and agreed in Q4
- bring reception in house and complete the contact centre transfer.
- Developing the waste service option appraisal will be a significant piece of work in Q4 and close engagement with HCC and the other district and boroughs to determine the future of the IAA and recycling disposal arrangements
- Continue the exit strategy for the future of revenue and benefit service under the Capita 5 'C's contract

- Project for replacement of the finance and HR IT systems will commence and need to make significant progress in Q4, particularly on the procurement options
- Digital Strategy preparatory work
- continued elections prep and recruitment of poll station and count teams
- preparation for closing of accounts 23/24 and completion of the external audit of 22/23