



Service Plan 2007/08 (Stage 1)

Service Plan for: Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Directorate: Chief Executive's

Service Plan Holder: Suzan Hemingway

Workplans: Electoral and Civic Services, Democratic Services, Legal Services and Scrutiny Services

Director: Chief Executive - David Atkinson

EMAP : City Strategy – Cllr. Steve Galloway

1. Service description & objectives

Electoral :

Customers – 140,000 electors, elected Members, candidates, election agents and parish councils

To maintain and publish an accurate Register of Electors and associated lists. The registration of electors is a statutory duty. The Representation of the People Act 2000 and the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 introduced a system of rolling registration from February 2001. This is supplemented by an annual canvass and the publication of an annual register of electors.

To provide advice and assistance in connection with the registration of declaration voters, including service voters, voluntary mental patients, overseas electors and European Union citizens.

To ensure that the legislation for Parliamentary, European Parliamentary, City Council, Parish Council, Parish Polls and Referenda to meet the Council's statutory duty.

Provide advice on electoral matters to Members, electors, election candidates, elections agents and parish councils.

Provide as far as possible polling places and equipment suitable for all electors including the elderly and disabled.

To process Freedom of the City applications and organise the annual Freedom Court.

To maintain a system of rolling registration in accordance with the Representation of the People Regulations 2001

To maintain absent voting on demand in respect of all elections.

Civic:-

Customers – citizens of York, Civic Party, hirers of the Guildhall/ Mansion House, City of York Council staff

To provide support services to the Lord Mayor and Civic Party including, hospitality, housekeeping, chauffeuring and secretarial.

The planning and co-ordination of official engagements and special events

Caretaking and facilities management of the Guildhall and Mansion House

To provide a reliable messenger service corporately and to external city partners

To provide an effective front line customer service for the Guildhall and Chief Executive's department

Democratic Services:-

Customers - Elected Members, Council Officers and the public.

Democratic Services encompasses Democracy and Member Support Groups, whose work is interlinked in that they support the decision-making process and Members' roles within it.

Democracy Support Group

To prepare and dispatch agendas for Council meetings held throughout the municipal year.

To administer procedures for Appeals and Licensing hearings.

To attend formal & informal meetings involving Members, advise Members and Officers on the decision-making process, procedure and Constitution, and to take minutes.

To produce minutes of all decision-making meetings attended, and to produce decision letters in respect of Appeals and Licensing hearings.

To convene meetings and business in accordance with legal requirements.

To ensure provision of information to residents relating to decisions to be made and maximize opportunities for public participation at Council meetings.

To maintain and contribute to periodic reviews of the Council's Constitution.

To monitor the Officer Decision Log to ensure its proper and effective use and compliance with the deadlines set for recording decisions

Member Support Group:

To administer the Council's Forward Plan

To process Members allowances, salaries and expenses for payment and provide a range of IT and support equipment and facilities for Members.

To produce an induction framework and a structured programme of development for elected Members.

To administer Decisions on Line and produce corporate Diary of Meetings.

To maintain statutory and non-statutory registers.

To organise school appeals panels

To publish bound minutes of Council meetings

To provide a delivery service to Members of agendas and supporting information twice weekly.

Scrutiny Services:

Scrutiny Services provides non-executive members and co-optees with practical support and advice to fulfill their scrutiny roles according to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. Scrutiny Officers attend and advise members and co-optees at meetings of the various Scrutiny Committees, including Ad-Hocs and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Scrutiny Officers:

- manage allocated scrutiny reviews, supporting Members (elected and co-opted) in researching projects and analysing information for those reviews;
- assist with the compilation and production of clear reports, summarising effective scrutiny recommendations for the Executive and local NHS bodies, as applicable

Legal:

Customers – Members and City of York Council staff

To provide advice on the nature and extent of the powers and duties and obligations of the Council in seeking to achieve its goals and to carry out its objectives.

Employs 8 solicitors, 7 legal assistants and 4.5 FTE support staff

Has Lexcel accreditation by the Law Society

Service objectives

Ensure well informed decisions are made transparently and in a professional manner, including Appeal processes and Licensing hearings involving Members
maximise opportunities to contribute to decision-making through the promotion and provision of open information, having particular regard to meeting the requirements of the Equalities Standard.

To ensure the implementation of the Mansion House Business Plan

To improve performance monitoring for scrutiny

To learn from best practice in scrutiny in other local authorities and to aim to make York a model of best practice in its scrutiny processes

To implement the review of the Council's Constitution – CPA Improvement Plan Key Task 8

To maintain Lexcel accreditation by the Law Society to ensure that a high quality service which is responsive to clients is provided and compliance with new legislation.

2. Significant drivers for change and improvement

Driver	Affect on service delivery
Government initiatives to increase electronic access to Council information.	Processes for recording information will need to be improved and properly monitored. The Electronic Committee Management System will need to be implemented across the Council.
Changes to the Council's Constitution	A review of the implementation of the new Council Constitution is needed to ensure it meets corporate governance requirements.
Local Election 2007	The election itself will require administration in accordance with statutory requirements. The election turnout may require a programme of improvement. The outcome of the election will determine a programme of induction for new members.
Budgetary Savings	The ability to deliver quality services with reduced resources will need to be reviewed. Budget savings for 2007/08 will need to be addressed.
Achieving high levels of customer satisfaction with all services.	Performance and methods of communication with internal and external customers must be reviewed to identify improvements.

3. Priority improvement for 2007/08 & beyond

Performance improvement	Reason why improvement is required
<p>Following introduction of the new Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution more decisions are now delegated to officers.</p> <p>Therefore there ought to be a target to ensure officer decisions which are entered on the decision logs are done so within the agreed timeframe. Target 75%</p>	<p>This is to ensure that officer decisions meet the requirements of public accountability and is in line with initiatives to ensure Council information on decisions taken is available electronically.</p>

Other comments to note

Members should note that achievement of our priority improvement for 2007/08 is largely dependent on the performance of officers who are not line managed by Head of Civic Democratic & Legal Services. However, it is felt important that this target is set and monitored and reported upon by Democratic Services as part the wider role of the Head of CDLS as "guardian" of the Constitution who will ensure that action is taken to inform officers of what is required to meet this target.

4. New or changed actions for 2007/08 and beyond				
Action	Service plan outcome	New? / Change?	Links to note	Comments
Embed the new electronic arrangements for the forward plan and officer decision log within the Authority	Improved on-line provision of information to residents relating to decisions to be made Improved decision tracking and communication process	New. Falls out of former action to implement the Committee Management System. <u>Deadline:</u> by December 2007	Links to departmental performance improvement priority on logging officer decisions	
Develop electronic action tracking facility available as part of Committee Management System	Improved decision tracking and communication process	New. Falls out of former action to implement the Committee Management System. <u>Deadline:</u> by April 2008		
Maximise availability on-line of Outside Body minutes with facility for Member contact	Improve information held about Outside Bodies and provide facility for Member contact outside of formal Council meetings	New. <u>Deadline:</u> by May 2007		
Develop Induction package for election candidates and newly elected councillors in 07/08	Developing effective Councillors	New. Specific to election year. For Election Candidates: <u>Deadline:</u> Prior to May 2007 For Newly Elected councillors: <u>Deadline:</u> By March 2007	Successful Member Development and PDPs for Councillors	
Develop public leaflet on rights to access information relating to decision-making process, incorporating a repackaged Public Participation Scheme	Implementing the new Constitution in terms of raising public awareness.	New, arising from new Constitution and public response to existing Participation Scheme. <u>Deadline:</u> by May 2007		
Implement approved new scrutiny work planning and monitoring processes	Improve corporate effectiveness of scrutiny function	New Improve corporate effectiveness of scrutiny function <u>Deadline:</u> by December 2007		

Annex 4

Introduce new scrutiny database to track and monitor progress with scrutiny reviews and recommendations	Improve corporate effectiveness of scrutiny function	New Improve corporate effectiveness of scrutiny function. <u>Deadline:</u> by December 2007		
Carry out a review of fees and charges.	To ensure these are set at a fair level.	New <u>Deadline:</u> By October 2007	None	This should result in an increase in income.
Review admin support in legal services.	To improve efficiency.	New <u>Deadline:</u> By October 2007	None	This will enable us to provide a more efficient service to our clients.
Monitor legal services framework agreements with external firms.	To increase procurement efficiency and cost savings.	New <u>Deadline:</u> By March 2008		This is part of the work being undertaken by the Framework Agreement Steering Group.
Complete administration of Local Government combined elections.	To ensure a robust and legally compliant process is achieved.	On-going <u>Deadline:</u> By July 2007	None	
Review the operation of the Mansion House	To ensure that budgets are managed efficiently and the Mansion House Business Plan is properly monitored.	New <u>Deadline:</u> By August 2007	None	