



## **Service Plan Template for 2007/08 (covering April 2007 – March 2010)**

**Service Plan for:** Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

**Directorate:** Chief Executive's

**Service Plan Holder:** Suzan Hemingway

**Workplans:** Electoral and Civic Services, Democratic Service, Legal Services and Scrutiny Services.

**Director:** Director of People and Improvement - Heather Rice

*Signed off* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAP :** City Strategy – Cllr Steve Galloway

*Signed off* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1: The service

### **Service description**

#### **Electoral Services:**

We have a wide range of customers, including elected Members, parish councils, election candidates & agents, and over 146,000 electors. Our main areas of delivery are:

- Maintaining and publishing 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.
- Providing advice and assistance in connection with the registration of declaration voters, including service voters, voluntary mental patients, overseas electors and European Union citizens. One of our duties is to ensure that the legislation for Parliamentary, European Parliamentary, City Council, Parish Council. Parish Polls and Referenda to meet the Council's statutory duty.
- Providing advice on electoral matters to Members, electors, election candidates, elections agents and parish councils. We also provide polling places and equipment suitable for all electors, including the elderly and disabled.
- Processing Freedom of the City applications and organising the annual Freedom Court.
- Maintain a system of rolling registration in accordance with the Representation of the People Regulations 2001

#### **Civic Services:**

We provide a large number of services to different customers, including citizens of York, Civic Party, hirers of the Guildhall/ Mansion House and council staff. Our areas of delivery include:

- Providing support services to the Lord Mayor and Civic Party including, hospitality, housekeeping, chauffeuring and secretarial.
- Planning and co-ordination of official engagements and special events. We also provide caretaking and facilities management for the Guildhall and Mansion House
- Providing a reliable messenger service corporately and to external city partners
- Providing front line customer service for the Guildhall and Chief Executive's department

#### **Democratic Services:**

This service encompasses Democracy and Member Support Groups, whose work is interlinked in that they support the decision-making process and Members' roles within it. Our main customers are Elected Members, Council Officers and the public.

The **Democracy Support Group** specifically undertake the following:

- The preparation and dispatch of agendas for Council meetings held throughout the municipal year, including the administration of procedures for Appeals and Licensing hearings.
- Attendance at formal & informal meetings involving Members, advise Members and Officers on the decision-making process, procedure and Constitution, and to take minutes.
- Production of minutes of all decision-making meetings attended, and to produce decision letters in respect of Appeals and Licensing hearings. We also convene meetings and business in accordance with legal requirements.
- The provision of information to residents relating to decisions to be made and maximize opportunities for public participation at Council meetings.

- The maintenance and periodic review of the Council's Constitution.
- The monitoring of the Officer Decision Log to ensure its proper and effective use and compliance with the deadlines set for recording decisions

The **Member Support Group** provides the following services:

- Publication of the Council's Forward Plan
- Verification and payment of members allowances and expenses
- Support services for Members, including the provision of IT equipment and other facilities
- Induction and development framework and programme for new and existing Members
- Maintenance of statutory and non-statutory registers e.g. interests/gifts
- The provision of a delivery service to Members of agendas and supporting information twice weekly.
- Preparation of the council's Diary of Meetings.
- Maintaining membership and information on Council representation on outside bodies and partnerships
- Ensuring Members compliance with Data Protection requirements

#### **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 Services:**

We provide an in-house support service for Members and City of York Council staff. Our main areas of work are to provide advice on the nature and extent of the powers, duties and obligations of the Council in seeking to achieve its goals. We employ 8 solicitors, 6.5 legal assistants and 4 support staff. We currently have 'Lexcel accreditation', which is awarded by the Law Society

#### **Service objectives**

- To ensure well informed decisions are made transparently and in a professional manner, including Appeal processes and statutory hearings involving Members
- To 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 efficient and effective delivery of scrutiny reviews, involving a wide range of participants, to better shape Council practices and services informed by the experience of others.
- To review and maintain the Constitution to ensure it continues to meet the Council's organizational needs
- To ensure a high quality legal service, responsive to clients needs, continues to be provided and reflects new legislative requirements.

## Section 2: The Drivers

Driver type	How might this affect our service	Sources
<b>External drivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government initiatives to increase electronic access to Council information.</li> <li>• Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities</li> <li>• Local Election 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes for recording information will need to be improved and properly monitored. The implementation of the electronic Committee Management System will need to be completed throughout the Council, including applicable upgrades.</li> <li>• Consideration will need to be given as to how any of the reforms proposed by the White Paper are to be implemented constitutionally.</li> <li>• The election itself will require administration in accordance with statutory requirements. The election turnout may require a programme of improvement. The election of new Members will require an induction programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National E Democracy Project.</li> <li>• White Paper</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate drivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the new Council's Constitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the implementation of the new Council Constitution is needed to ensure it meets corporate governance requirements.</li> </ul>	
<b>Directorate drivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary Savings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget savings for 2007/08 will require a review of service delivery to ensure that quality services are maintained in light of potential financial constraints.</li> </ul>	
<b>Service drivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ensure information continues to be provided to customers in a convenient and accessible way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of information to internal and external customers must be reviewed to identify levels of satisfaction. Systems and services should reflect customer needs wherever possible.</li> </ul>	Equalities Strategy

### Section 3: Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

CSFs for 2007/08	Why a CSF?
Complete the review of the implementation of the new Constitution.	Need to ensure the corporate governance arrangements are operating effectively.
Continue the development of the electronic forward plan within the authority and ensure compliance with constitutional requirements regarding the recording of officer decisions	Need to improve transparency and openness in public awareness of business transacted within the authority and in relation to the recording of officer decisions.
Complete administration of Local Government combined elections.	To ensure that the outcome is a robust legally compliant process.
Develop induction and training package for newly elected councilors, in conjunction with establishing a framework more generally to acknowledge the development needs of Members	To ensure new members understand their roles and responsibilities at an early stage and existing Members are kept properly informed with changes in policy, legislation and working practices..
Enhance new scrutiny work planning and monitoring processes by maximizing IT facilities available through the Committee Management System to track progress with reviews and recommendations.	Need to improve corporate effectiveness of scrutiny function.
Review the operation of the Mansion House.	To ensure that budgets are managed efficiently and that the Business Plan monitored.
Monitor the implementation of the Legal Services framework contract(s) with external providers.	To help support delivery of Gershon efficiencies.

### Section 4: Links to corporate priorities

Improvement Statement (IS)	Contribution
Improve leadership at all levels to provide clear, consistent direction to the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve leadership at member level by encouraging them to adopt the IDeA Members Charter and political skills framework</li> <li>• Ensure priorities are properly highlighted in Executive business.</li> </ul>
Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop community leadership skills at member level. Use “community leadership” capacity building funding.</li> <li>• Review governance and effectiveness of all partnership arrangements, including their relationship with scrutiny.</li> </ul>
Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure decisions taken by Ward Committees are made available electronically through the Committee Management System.</li> </ul>
Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of city’s streets, housing estates & publicly accessible spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive review of the legal powers available to manage street use as part of a strategy for legal action.</li> </ul>
Reduce actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive review of the legal enforcement powers available to the Council, the Police and Safer York Partnerships to inform a strategy for action.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other plans</b> List the higher level plans and strategies that your service area supports (i.e. a partnership strategy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Constitution</li> <li>• The Forward Plan</li> <li>• The Delivery and Improvement Plans for the Corporate Priorities.</li> </ul>	

## Section 5: Balanced Scorecard of outcomes and measures

### Customer based improvement

Outcomes	Measures					Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high level of service to all our customers</li> <li>• We understand and meet the diverse needs of all our customers by providing more accessible and tailored services</li> <li>• Increased public awareness &amp; participation</li> </ul>	Measure	Current	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To carry out a review of customer engagement with a view to improving participation and access to information.</li> <li>• Undertake research through RESOP in relation to telephone calls/correspondence</li> <li>• Complete review of Constitution and amend to meet changes in customer needs.</li> <li>• Attach reminder slips to Legal Services Quality Monitoring questionnaires to encourage customers to return.</li> <li>• Provide new Members with appropriate skills and knowledge helping them to contribute confidently to the Council and residents, in their role as Councillors</li> </ul>
	C1: (Democracy) % of residents satisfied with the public participation scheme	75%	80%	85%	90 %	
	C2: (Democracy) % of customers accessing information on new Committee Management System via the Council website.	75 %	80%	85%	90%	
	C3: (Legal Services) % of Quality Monitoring questionnaires rated good or very good.	75%	80%	80%	80%	
	C4: Telephone calls are answered within 20 seconds (CG2)	Qtr 3 94% (Cex's)	96% (Cex's)	96% (Cex's)	96% (Cex's)	
	C5: % of letters replied to within 10 working days (CG3)	Qtr 3 95% (Cex's)	99% (Cex's)	99% (Cex's)	99% (Cex's)	
	C6: % of stage 2 & stage 3 complaints responded to within 10 days (CM10 & CM11)	Qtr 3 100% (Cex's)	95%	95%	95%	
	C7: % of visitors seen by an officer within 10 minutes (CG4)	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	C8: % of visitors referred to the correct officer within a further 10 minutes (CG5)	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	C9: (Democracy) Number of new Members who received all of their identified training during their first Municipal Year	0	20	23	24	

**Process based improvement**

Outcomes	Measures				Actions	
	Measure	Current	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target		2009/10 Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voter registration increased</li> <li>• Decisions made at the right level, in accordance with constitutional requirements.</li> <li>• Improved working practices in relation to the full decision making process.</li> </ul>	P1: (Electoral) Return of registration forms	93%	95%	95%	95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote telephone registration for voters.</li> <li>• Introduce internet registration for voters.</li> <li>• Continue to review processes within the canvass</li> <li>• Monitor new Committee Management System to integrate document availability and further develop available facilities.</li> <li>• Introduce process for the tracking of approved recommendations and provide reminders and outstanding actions reports to Directorates.</li> <li>• Collate information from Outside Bodies and introduce Directorate Support Arrangements</li> <li>• Provide more support to staff dealing with outside body appointments</li> <li>• Link consultation with members on Outside Bodies to the PDP process</li> <li>• Provide targeted number of PDPs for Members focusing on newly elected members as part of induction process.</li> <li>• Monitor the Forward Plan and Officer Decision Log to ensure decisions are taken at the right level and at the right time.</li> </ul>
	P2: (Democracy) % of reports received after the receipt deadline	NEW	10%	5%	0%	
	P3: (Democracy) % of actions implemented in relation to meeting actions database within timeframe set (full council only)	75%	80%	80%	85%	
	P4: % of invoices paid within 30 days (BVPI 8)	Qtr 3 91% (Cex's)	94% (Cex's)	95% (Cex's)	96% (Cex's)	

**Finance based improvement**

Outcomes	Measures				Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff resources in the teams are adequate to deliver the service</li> <li>Ongoing budgetary pressures met</li> <li>Continued reduction in printing costs</li> <li>IT provisions meet the needs of the Electoral Administration Bill</li> </ul>	Measure	Current	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To finalise staffing arrangements</li> <li>To liaise with IT &amp; T to ensure IT equipment and software are capable of implementing changes</li> </ul>
	F1: % Budget Spent	Qtr 3 99.8%	<100%	<100%	<100%	

**Staff based improvement**

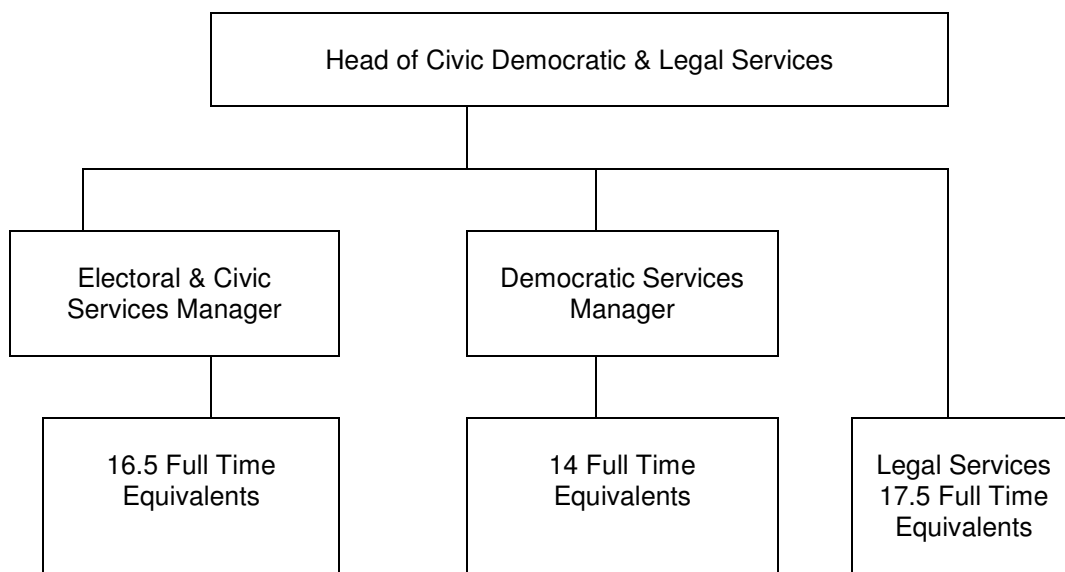
Outcomes	Measures					Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved staff skills and training in specialized areas</li> <li>Improved information to and communications with staff</li> <li>Improved understanding of staff development needs</li> </ul>	Measure	Current	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify specific training needs in appraisals and one to ones</li> <li>To hold regular team and group meetings</li> <li>Monitor sickness levels and follow Sickness Management procedures.</li> </ul>
	S1: (Democracy) % staff trained in appropriate skills to deliver specific services, as identified in PDPs.	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	S2: % staff who have had an appraisal in past 12 months (CP14)	100% (Cex's)	100%	100%	100%	
	S3: (Legal Services) Solicitors and Legal Assistants training targets met	16 hours per year	16 hours per year	16 hours per year	16 hours per year	
	S4: No. of days lost due to sickness absence (incl. Stress) (BVPI 12)	05/06 8.98 (Cex's)	<8 days (Cex's)	<8 days (Cex's)	<8 days (Cex's)	
	S5: No. of days lost for stress related illness. (CP13a)	05/06 0.45 (Cex's)	<1.4 (Cex's)	<1.3 (Cex's)	<1.2 (Cex's)	
	S6: No of RIDDOR accidents amongst council staff (CP11a)	05/06 0 (Cex's)	0 (Cex's)	0 (Cex's)	0 (Cex's)	
	S7: Overall Staff satisfaction rating from Staff Survey	57% (Cex's)	70% (Cex's)	No survey	72% (Cex's)	



## Section 6: Corporate Issues

Actions/Evidence	Deadline
<b>Equalities action/s</b>	
Improve registration of 16/17 year olds in the annual canvass to encourage participation in the electoral process.	Oct 2007
Improve access to information via the Committee Management System to reach a wider audience.	Ongoing.
<b>Operational Risk – red risk action/s</b>	
Elections officers have developed a specific business continuity plan to manage risks identified as having a potential impact on the delivery of a successful election in May 2007. Elections Manager, Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services, Director of People and Improvement and the Chief Executive have programmed meetings to monitor the election preparations and the management of risks.	May 2007
<b>Gershon – Efficiency improvement</b>	
Complete and monitor effectiveness of framework contract(s) for the provision of external legal advice.	Dec 2007
Complete relocation of legal services staff to the Guildhall. Savings in the region of £34k a year for each of the next 3 years are likely to accrue to Chief Executive's from re-siting Legal into the Guildhall (combined with re-siting Neighbourhoods into space vacated by Legal).	June 2007
<b><u>Competitiveness statement</u></b>	
Legal Services participates in benchmarking groups and compares process and costs with other local authorities. A Framework Agreement for the provision of external legal advice which will be in place on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2007 will enable comparison of private sector costs. Legal Services also has LEXCEL (Legal Excellence) accreditation from the Law Society for its efficient, effective and legally sound procedures.	

## Section 7: Resources



### CIVIC, DEMOCRATIC & LEGAL SERVICES (INCLUDING SCRUTINY, CORONERS, PROBATION & MAGISTRATES)

#### Budget

	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
	£'000	£'000
Employees	1,485	1,597
Premises	49	50
Transport	31	42
Supplies and Services	1,125	1,323
Miscellaneous		
– Recharges	230	255
– Other	23	23
Capital Financing	0	0
<b>Gross cost</b>	<b>2,943</b>	<b>3,290</b>
Less Income	(723)	(765)
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>2,525</b>

There has been a 12% increase in our gross budget excluding since last year. This is primarily due to one off growth to fund the 2007 elections.

## Section 7: Monitoring and reporting arrangements

Formal directorate reporting is carried out twice yearly through City Strategy EMAPs in September and December, with an annual out-turn report in June.

Directorate Management Team performance reviews take place quarterly.

Service area performance reviews minimum standard Quarterly.