

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 15th October 2009

Subject: Business Planning 2010

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive (Performance)
City Treasurer

Summary

The report provides an update on the Council's Business and Budget Planning Process for 2010-13

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Consider the early drafts provided of Business Plans identified by the committee for scrutiny during this year's business plan.
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Wards Affected:

All

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Business Planning is a key part of the Council's performance management framework. Its purpose is to align service priorities and resource with the aims and objectives of the Council. Through their business plans, all services should demonstrate and evidence their contribution to the delivery of the Community Strategy.
- 1.2 The process has been revised and strengthened for the current planning cycle. The changes reflect the need for greater scrutiny and challenge of service priorities and resources, in the light of more difficult financial challenges and policy drivers. The revised business planning process is intended to provide additional assurance that all Council resources are focussed on improving outcomes and delivering the vision for the City and improve the way in which the Council considers the entirety of its expenditure, rather than simply growth and reduction at the margins.

2. Draft Plans

- 2.1 At its September meeting, the Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified plans for early review. The plans identified were as follows:
- Legal Services
 - Democratic Services
 - Communications
 - Leisure
- 2.2 The 'Self Assessment' element of the business plan documents are now complete and are attached for consideration by the committee in respect of the above services

3. Next Steps in the Business Planning and Budget setting process

- 3.1 Following completion of the Self Assessments Stage, designed as an assessment of current capability and capacity to improve, services are currently drafting Delivery Plans as part of the Business Planning process. Using the Self Assessments as the evidence base, the Delivery Plans will set out the objectives and performance expectations of the service in an action plan format, and articulate the activities that services will undertake to deliver on the Council's Corporate Priorities and Policy Objectives.
- 3.2 In addition, work is currently underway to assess the overall budget situation which will feed into the completion of final draft business plans during October and November. This will enable us to report on the overall budget situation coming through from business plans and in light of the provisional announcement of the financial settlement for local authorities for 2010/11.
- 3.3 Key milestones for the remainder of this year's business planning and budget setting process are set out below.

Timeframe	Activity	Who	Detail
Oct - Dec	Business Plan and Budget Development	Council wide	Council budgets and individual services delivery plans finalised, feeding into the Budget Report for December Executive.
15 October	Report to RAGOS on progress of business planning process	RAGOS	Reporting to other Scrutiny Committees as required.
October – November	Refinement and revision of Business Plans	Heads of Service / Performance / DoT / Finance	Informed by further support and challenge from SMT / Executive Members and performance and finance teams
18 November	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Committee	Executive Committee	This will help set the framework for budget consultation
30 November	Finalise final drafts of full business plans and budget	Heads of Service	Final drafts of business plans will feed into the Overview and Scrutiny process. These will need to be approved by Executive Members
December	Budget Consultation	Council-wide	As with previous years there will a period of public consultation on the budget proposals made by the Executive.
10 December	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to RAGOS	RAGOS	For consideration and input
January 2010	Final drafts of business plans to Overview and Scrutiny	O&S	
February	Budget and MTFFS Approved	Council wide	Council budgets approved by full Council, following consideration by O&S, and Executive Members

4. Recommendations

4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Consider the early drafts provided of Business Plans identified by the committee for scrutiny during this year's business plan.



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Eamonn O'Rourke
Leisure Services
Business Plan

The Impact of the Service

1. Business Overview

Vision Statement

Leisure Services contributes to the City's priorities through the delivery of a Sports and Physical Activity strategy that gives every person the opportunity to become involved in sport activity and healthy lifestyles, a portfolio of world class sporting events that benefit the economy through international profile and increased sports tourism, and a strategy for parks that strives to provide safer, high quality and attractive open spaces for people to enjoy, creating sustainable neighbourhoods of choice.

Overview of the Service:

Positioned within the directorate of Neighbourhood Services, Leisure Services is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the Parks and Outdoor Leisure Service, Sports Development, Community Activity, Sports Events and the Manchester Sport & Leisure Trust, Velodrome Trust and Wythenshawe Forum Trust. Leisure works in close partnership with the health service, private sector, government agencies, the voluntary sector and local communities to ensure that we maximise the budget available for managing and developing the service and ensuring that where possible services are delivered locally.

Service Priorities:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity by adults and children through investment that responds to community needs and aspirations
- Maximise world class sporting event opportunities that benefit Manchester's communities and contribute to the economy through a raised international profile and increased tourism.
- Delivery of community sport and physical activity interventions which tackle crime and disorder, facilitate healthier lifestyles, prevent social exclusion and promote community cohesion.
- Continue improving the quality of parks, and maximising VFM from Outdoor Leisure facilities
- Improve the community indoor leisure offer by working closely with the Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust, Wythenshawe Forum Trust and Velodrome Trust
- Increase investment at Sportcity and establish the site as an international leisure destination
- Encourage the production of healthy organic food by working with the Allotment Societies to improve allotment sites and plant cultivation

Mission and Purpose

- To operate leisure facilities and deliver leisure programmes through commissioning of partners
- Provide high quality indoor and outdoor leisure facilities that improve neighbourhoods

The Impact of the Service

- Deliver activity programmes that support residents in leading healthy and productive lifestyles
- Promoting and supporting community cohesion through leisure activity

Target Customers

Leisure is tailoring activities to meet the differing needs of communities, and is focused on delivering targeted interventions that support vulnerable residents and help communities of interest access leisure provision and opportunities e.g. 10-19 year olds including girls at risk, inactive adults, BMEs, older people, obese people, Looked After Children, people with disabilities. This includes targeting services in areas of highest deprivation to reduce inequalities and the effects experienced from high poverty.

Size (Customer Base and Workforce)

- Manchester's population is currently estimated at 458,136, and the service delivers to all residents.
- Leisure Services composition of the workforce is currently 506 employees including full time, part time and job share posts.

Service/Business Model

Leisure Services provides cross-departmental solutions to challenges faced by Manchester's communities. A thematic approach to service delivery is being embraced by the workforce and interdepartmental working has been encouraged to optimise the use of City Council resources. The service has very strong and sustainable links with local groups, and is increasingly facilitating and supporting local groups on service delivery, directly delivering only when needed to ensure future sustainable services.

Outdoor Leisure

Manchester's Parks and Outdoor Leisure facilities are managed directly by Leisure Services. The provision comprises of 135 formal parks, community parks, and playing fields, plus Provision comprises of formal parks, community parks, playing fields, play areas, river valleys and 41 allotments covering 1,316 hectares. Amongst the wealth of facilities are 40 allotment sites, 2 horticultural centres, 2 community farms, 89 play areas and 61 multi-sports courts. Heaton Park is one of the largest municipal parks in Europe and a key visitor attraction for the city. The service aims to increase residents' satisfaction and happiness with their local area as a place to live by delivering high quality local parks and spaces that are safe, welcoming and visually attractive and used for enjoyment, volunteering, training, community celebration and creating a sense of place.

Sports Development

The Sports Development team is seeking to create a world-class community sports network and to continue increase participation in sport. Work is underpinned by a strong partnership approach that fully engages government agencies, sports governing bodies and commercial organisations to establish a sustainable structure for sport, which supports residents to participate in sport and reach their full potential.

The Impact of the Service

Community Activity

The Community Activity team works to create the conditions to enable all of the community to improve their health, self-esteem and economic prospects. Officers work to strengthen the strategic and operational links in partnership with other City Council departments, local leisure providers and external agencies to deliver coordinated and inclusive physical activity programmes which support Government agendas to increase participation, prevent ill health, influence lifestyle change and promote and encourage active ageing.

Sports Events

Manchester's Sports Events programme delivers diverse events reflecting existing partnerships in place with leading national governing bodies and national and regional agencies (UK Sport, Northwest Regional Development Agency). The major sports event strategy is under constant review to achieve a balance between key objectives relating to economic impact, international profile and local community and sports development benefits.

We are now responding to the challenges and opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games which bring an increased focus on legacy initiatives and mass participation sports events. In addition, the service is responding to longer term opportunities arising from the Decade of Sport which will bring international sports events to the City which will include the Olympic football competition in 2012, the Rugby World Cup 2015 and potentially the FIFA World Cup in 2018.

Indoor Leisure

Manchester's Indoor Leisure provision has a strong infrastructure of facilities including community leisure centres, swimming pools, sports halls and centres of excellence for the development of sport. Diverse activities are offered including health and fitness, sport activities and key educational programmes such as school swimming. Indoor Leisure seeks to provide high quality leisure opportunities, which engage Manchester's communities in healthy activity. The facilities have significant national, regional, district and community impact and are managed through a number of trust arrangements to maximise outcomes and efficiency for the City.

Any relevant History/Context

Prior to 2002, Leisure's Indoor facilities were directly managed and operated by Leisure Services. The Wythenshawe Forum Trust have a lease agreement with Leisure and the operation of the leisure centre known as the Wythenshawe Forum has been transferred to the Wythenshawe Forum Trust. For its remaining Leisure Centres the Council has a lease agreement with the Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust and has transferred the operation of these facilities to the Trust.

Parks and outdoor Leisure facilities are managed directly by Leisure Services. Sports Development, Events and Community Activity are primarily operated and managed in-house, and works closely with and commissions various partners to deliver and manage elements of the service.

The Impact of the Service

The journey of partnership working and neighbourhood delivery has been at the core of the service for a number of years. As other services and Departments now begin to embrace similar strategies, it will be ever important for Leisure to build on our experience and learning to support the neighbourhood approach that delivers the greatest outcomes to Manchester residents.

The Impact of the Service

2. Strategic Impact

Key Messages

- Leisure Services is well placed to deliver to the Neighbourhood Focus Strategy, in that our facilities and the programmes within them are at the heart of Community Activity
- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and Major Event Strategy must be aligned to the national policy for sport and the national and regional strategies for major events up to and beyond 2012, so that the City can maximise and gain economic and social benefits for residents and neighbourhoods and maintain the City's international sporting profile.
- An increased number of young people are moving on to further education opportunities or employment as a result of participation in volunteering, sport and education training programmes.

Analysis

Policy Objective: Neighbourhoods of Choice (Corporate Plan Priority 4)

Leisure Services recognises that high quality recreational facilities - leisure centres, parks and green spaces, play areas, river valleys and allotments – which offer diverse and effective community leisure activity programmes are key to creating neighbourhoods of choice. Parks and open spaces are key resources to sustain a quality physical environment.

- Deliver equitable service and greater choice of activities, particularly in areas of highest deprivation where residents have most to gain from participating in activity.
- Increased opportunities for children and young people to enjoy and stay safe
- More adults participating in sport and physical activity and community exercise and health related activities
- Olympic legacy programmes such as free swimming for under 16's and the over 60's
- Improved visual and built quality of green spaces, Leisure buildings, services and sports clubs
- Further developed and promoted world-class and community leisure facilities
- Reduced youth nuisance and antisocial behaviour through targeted development programmes in crime hotspots
- More young people who are considered 'at risk' engaged in structured Leisure activity programmes
- Developing Manchester's status as a sporting capital with Sportcity as a

The Impact of the Service

- leading international sports destination.
- Sense of place delivered through localised community leisure programmes
- Active conservation management for locally important sites

Policy Objective: 0-5 years (Reaching full potential in education skills & employment - Corporate Plan Priority 2)

In line with the early intervention policy agenda, the service is increasing a focus on offering family orientated leisure opportunities that improve the Every Child Matters life outcomes of young children. Particular strengths of the service are providing outdoor play facilities and activities (Enjoy and Achieve) and physical activity programmes which tackle childhood obesity (Be Healthy).

- Develop physical activity programmes appropriate to 0-5s and the family through partners to tackle childhood obesity
- Continued partnership work with Childrens' Services to develop Sure Start Centres in parks
- Improve play areas and play activity in parks
- Continued development of healthy eating and environmental projects in parks and allotments

Policy Objective: Skills (Reaching full potential in education skills & employment - Corporate Plan Priority 2)

By improving key skills and outcomes for children and young people through participation in the training, education and volunteer programmes delivered by Leisure Services and its partners, we will ensure 14-19 year olds have the widest possible pathway to work and career options in the industry. Training and employment opportunities for businesses and residents through the provision of volunteering opportunities through partnerships and events will improve skills and create routes into work.

- Participation by young people in education opportunities and training linked to service delivery and partnership arrangements e.g. apprenticeship schemes
- Volunteering, training and employment opportunities for businesses and residents linked to major events and associated 'legacy' initiatives
- Volunteering, training and employment opportunities for businesses and residents linked to sports development e.g. Coach Education Training Programme
- Improved school attendance by pupils engaged in Community Activity truancy programme.

Policy Objective: Promoting Economic Development (Corporate Plan Priority 1)

Sports Events bring significant economic gain to Manchester e.g. Manchester World Sport 2008 programme attracted 317,000 visitors, created nearly 500 jobs and generated approximately £23m of net economic impact for Manchester. Continuing to increase productivity, grow our market and labour force, attract investment, improve skills and provide partners with the right support are key focuses of the service.

- Sustain and improve leisure provision across the City

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- Increase investment at Sportcity and the establishment of the site as an International Leisure Destination
- Deliver world class sporting events that benefit the economy through local procurement opportunities, externally funded activities and sports tourism
- Promote Manchester as an attractive business location for National Governing Bodies
- Leverage investment to maintain the number of full time or equivalent jobs created or safeguarded in the leisure sector.
- Deliver high quality green spaces that enhance the attractiveness of business locations and increase premiums on residential properties
- Build social capital through civic participation, volunteering and involvement in local decision-making and community life
- Maximise economic and social benefits arising from the London Olympics and the Decade of Sport, whilst profiling Manchester as a global sporting hub.

Policy Objective: Worklessness (Reaching full potential in education skills & employment - Corporate Plan Priority 2 and Individual & collective self esteem/mutual respect - Corporate Plan Priority 3)

The Leisure sector makes a significant contribution to employment within the city, and reducing worklessness through the service's education and training programmes for Manchester's communities is a key focus of Leisure's Business Plan.

- Training and employment opportunities for businesses and residents through provision of volunteering opportunities through partnerships
 - Expansion of workforce education to include specialised courses and workshops relating to new service growth areas
 - Training and skill attainment opportunities for 14-16 year olds
 - Placements allocated for Apprenticeship Scheme
 - Increased number of participants, volunteers, and spectators involved in Leisure activity
 - Opportunities for residents to find their talents and express themselves
 - Engaging young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in leisure activity as a pathway to training opportunities
- *What is your contribution to the CAA Organisation and Area assessments?*

Manchester's priorities are being delivered through tailored Leisure activity at a ward level, with the differing needs of differing localities being identified through consultation and appropriate leisure programmes targeted. The service has provided evidence to the Audit omission of its delivery within 4 case study wards of Woodhouse Park, Ancoats & Clayton, Baguley and Bradford, and the contribution of parks to the Quality Sustainable Physical Environment area of focus within Neighbourhoods of Choice,

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3. Cost & efficiency

Key Messages

- Recreation and Sport - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £16.48 (=£2.59 less than Core City average).
 - 3rd highest satisfaction out of 16 nearest neighbours and highest satisfaction out of Core Cities - 61%¹ satisfaction at £16.48 spend per head
- Sport and recreation
- 29% of residents think that sport and leisure facilities have got better over the last three years (highest percentage out of Core cities) compared to Core City average of 21%².
 - Lower spend per head than average of Core Cities, Metropolitan LAs, nearest neighbours and similarly deprived authorities.
 - 3rd highest satisfaction out of 16 nearest neighbours and highest satisfaction out of Core Cities - 61%³ satisfaction at £16.48 spend per head

Parks and outdoor leisure

- Higher spend per head than averages of Core Cities, Metropolitan LAs and nearest neighbours, but higher than average investment into parks than similarly deprived authorities
- 31% of residents think that parks and open spaces have got better over the last three years (highest percentage out of Core cities) compared to Core City average of 24%

Leisure Services budget, spend and variation 2008/9:

	Budget £	Actual Income £	Actual Spend £	Variation £	% variation
Indoor Leisure	4,543,140	4,740,414	10,338,171	-1,054,617	-23.21%
Outdoor Leisure	6,712,650	1,048,272	7,841,548	-80,626	-1.20%
Management and Support	574,970	47,889	590,421	32,438	5.64%
Policy, Perf and Contracts	1,038,910	327,451	1,308,861	57,500	5.53%
Sports Development	406,570	1,692,126	2,082,185	16,511	4.06%
Community Activity	708,350	2,399,349	3,121,452	-13,753	-1.94%
Events	2,189,250	1,973,519	4,727,414	-564,645	-25.79%
Central Services	235,530	0	230,703	4,827	2.05%
Total	16,409,370	12,229,019	30,240,754	-1,602,365	-9.76%

Staff costs:

Cost of Employees £	Actual spend £	% variation
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¹ BVPI119a 2006/7

² 2006/07 User Survey data and quartiles from the General survey: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/BVPIs/Pages/200607bvpidataquartiles.aspx>

³ BVPI119a 2006/7

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Indoor Leisure	872,565	10,338,171	8.44%
Outdoor Leisure	2,034,191	7,841,548	25.94%
Management and Support	207,279	590,421	35.11%
Policy, Performance & Contracts	706,431	1,308,861	53.97%
Sports Development	1,082,937	2,082,185	52.01%
Community Activity	1,484,566	3,121,451	47.56%
Events	304,460	4,727,414	6.44%
Central Services	230,703	230,703	100.00%
Total	6,923,132	30,240,754	22.89%

Request For Service costs 2008/9:

	Annual visits	Balance (Actual spend – actual income) £	Cost per request for service £
Indoor Leisure	3,023,479	5,597,756	1.85
Outdoor Leisure	28,370,768	6,793,276	0.24
Management and Support	Back office		
Policy, Performance & Contracts	Back office		
Sports Development & Community Activity	524,886	1,112,162	2.12
Events	187,119	2,753,895	14.72
Central Services	Back office		
Total	32,106,252	16,257,089	0.51

Comparison with other public authorities using CIPFA 2007/8 data⁴:

Recreation and Sport - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £16.48 (=£2.59 less than Core City average). Data comprised of:

- Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £13.45 (= £0.87 more than Core City average)
- Sports Development and Community Recreation - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £3.25 (= £0.75 less than Core City average)
- Open Spaces - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £19.48 (£3.33 more than Core City average). Data comprised of:
- Community Parks and Open Spaces - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £18.86 (£4.85 more than Core City average)
- Countryside Recreation and Management - Net Expenditure per Head of Population: £0.63 (£1.36 less than Core City average)

Comparison using Audit Commission VFM tool:

Parks and outdoor leisure

- Higher spend per head than averages of Core Cities, Metropolitan LAs and nearest neighbours, but higher than average investment into parks than similarly deprived authorities

⁴ CIPFA Culture, Sport and Recreation Statistics 2007-08

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- 7th highest satisfaction out of 16 nearest neighbours and 4th highest satisfaction out of Core Cities (average) - 73% satisfaction for £19.48 spend per head⁵
- 31% of residents think that parks and open spaces have got better over the last three years (highest percentage out of Core cities) compared to Core City average of 24%⁶.

NB.

1. CIPFA data has to date included data on all open spaces in Manchester within its reporting i.e. amenity land and land outside of parks and countryside services in Manchester. The data is therefore not reflective of Leisure Service's land management. Data which only reflects parks and countryside services within Leisure's management has been reported to CIPFA for 2009/10.

2. The VFM tool does not take into account number of visits to parks and open spaces (circa 28 million per year).

Sport and recreation

- 29% of residents think that sport and leisure facilities have got better over the last three years (highest percentage out of Core cities) compared to Core City average of 21%⁷.
- Lower spend per head than average of Core Cities, Metropolitan LAs, nearest neighbours and similarly deprived authorities.
- 3rd highest satisfaction out of 16 nearest neighbours and highest satisfaction out of Core Cities - 61%⁸ satisfaction at £16.48 spend per head

⁵ BVP1119e 2006/7

⁶ 2006/07 User Survey data and quartiles from the General survey: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/BVPs/Pages/200607bvpidataquartiles.aspx>

⁷ 2006/07 User Survey data and quartiles from the General survey: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/BVPs/Pages/200607bvpidataquartiles.aspx>

⁸ BVP1119a 2006/7

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4. Performance

Key Messages

High performance:

- CYP participation in sport and leisure activities
- Healthy weight management
- Targeted equality strand activities – gender, disability, age, race
- Participation in ASB diversionary
- activities
- Visits to Leisure facilities and programmes
- VFM
- Quality of parks

Low performance:

- Volunteering
- Satisfaction with sports provision

Analysis

Analysis

LAA and National:

NI 8: Participation in sport and active recreation - Percentage of adults (16+) who have participated in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and active recreation on three or more days in the past week. Measured by Sport England Active People Survey

2009 (data available from Dec 2009)

2008: 18.18%

NI8 - Adult participation in 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport: Local Authorities (Post 1 April 2009 Structure)	APS 2 2008		Change from APS1
Birmingham	16.9%	5,212	No Change
Bristol, City of UA	23.1%	752	No Change
Leeds	26.0%	492	Increase
Liverpool	20.2%	2,564	No Change
Manchester	18.2%	748	No Change
Newcastle upon Tyne	21.6%	506	No Change
Nottingham UA	20.4%	989	No Change
Sheffield	20.2%	493	No Change
<i>Average</i>	<i>20.8%</i>	<i>1470</i>	

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Local:

Indicator	Performance 2008-9	Performance 2007-8	Performance
PI 2: Number of attendees to sessions arranged for schools or other educational establishments	326,327	Not available	
PI 3: Number of children attending activity sessions organised by Leisure Services	702,446	623,299	13%
PI 4: Number of adult visits made to a Leisure facility for more than 30 minutes of exercise	2,175,339	1,988,734	9%
PI 5: Number of visits made by overweight or obese people to targeted Leisure activities	31,440	21,071	49%
PI 6: Number of volunteers assisting in the delivery of Leisure Services	9,584	9,522	1%
PI 7: Number of visits made by BMEs to targeted Leisure activities or events	71,160	68,088	5%
PI 8: Number of visits made by people aged 50+ to targeted Leisure activities or events	61,977	42,490	46%
PI 9: Number of visits made by women to targeted Leisure activities or events	26,901	19,602	37%
PI 10: Number of visits made by disabled people to targeted Leisure activities or events	43,043	36,679	17%
PI 11: No of children & young people engaged in targeted ASB deterrent activities in Leisure facilities	29,413	20,019	47%
PI 13: Number of visits to Leisure's facilities	32,106,252	29,959,254	7%
PI 16: Percentage of the population living within a 20 min walk (1.6km) of a quality-accredited leisure facility	99%	92%	7%

Place Survey 2009

Data from the first national Place Survey was release on 24 September 2009. Data for satisfaction with parks and sports will be analysed in the next revised version of this business plan.

5. Outcomes & Customer Satisfaction

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Key Messages

- *Enter here in bullet format the key strengths and weaknesses in this area*
- Strengths: health promotion activity, high quality parks in neighbourhoods, sporting profile of Manchester, targeted skill attainment, consultation to inform service delivery, use of data outputs to inform service delivery, working with partners
- Weaknesses: satisfaction with sports provision, feedback mechanisms regarding local sports provision

Analysis

Outcomes delivered by Leisure Services are:

Neighbourhoods

- Improved visual, physical and built quality of green spaces, Leisure buildings, services and sports clubs
- Integrated working with partner departments delivering to Neighbourhood Focus Strategy
- Community Activity programmes for Communities of Interest e.g. BME, women, older people affected by social exclusion
- World class community sports facilities
- Reduced youth nuisance and antisocial behaviour through targeted

Worklessness

- An increased number of young people moving on to further education opportunities or employment following Leisure Services training
- Targeted skill attainment work with young people not in Education, Employment or Training
- Development of modern apprenticeships within the growing leisure sector

0-5 years

- Development of Sure Start Centres in parks that function as community hubs
- Partnership work with Childrens Services on the Playbuilder Project
- Improved play areas in parks through partnership with Sure Start and Early Years service
- Family oriented play and physical health activities and events in safe, challenging and stimulating environments
- Healthy eating and environmental projects in parks and allotments in partnership with Sure Start Centres and primary schools

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Skills

- Participation by young people in education opportunities and onsite training and skill attainment opportunities
- Training and employment opportunities for businesses and residents through provision of volunteering opportunities through partnerships
- Improved school attendance by pupils engaged in Truancy programme
- Targeted skill attainment work with excluded young people e.g. 10-19 year old girls
- Leveraged investment to deliver health programmes, promote healthy weight management and tackle health inequalities

Housing

- Improved quality and functionality of parks within housing areas, creating desirable neighbourhoods

Economic growth

- Increased investment at Sportcity and the establishment of the site as an international Leisure destination
- Sustained and improved leisure provision across the City.
- World class sporting events that benefit the economy through international profile, sports tourism and event delivery
- Manchester as an attractive business location for National Governing Bodies
- Leveraged investment for jobs
- High quality green spaces that enhance attractiveness of business locations and increase premiums on residential properties
- Improved commercial activity in Outdoor Leisure
- Stimulated regeneration and reduced deprivation through the provision of high quality leisure provision
- Maximised opportunities to gain both the economic and social benefits arising from the London Olympics and the Decade of Sport, whilst profiling Manchester as a global sporting hub.

Customer satisfaction:

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Parks	72%	73%	77%	81%
Sports provision	59%	70%	66%	61%

How are you improving on this?

- 31% residents perceive parks to be improving and 29% perceive sports/leisure facilities to be improving⁹
- Undertaking focused consultation with young people of the design of 22 play areas, and ensuring their expressed play aspirations are delivered within installations
- Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust are due to undertake research on the impact of current indoor provision on local communities, and development aspirations held by

⁹ 2006/07 User Survey data and quartiles from the General survey: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/BVPIs/Pages/200607bvpidataquartiles.aspx>

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local communities for future indoor leisure service delivery.

- Feedback from regular attendance at meetings with key stakeholders and monitoring, evaluation and review of Community Activity sessions is used to determine the best ways of delivering a service to meet to communities needs.
- Customer Service in Excellence Accreditation
- Research to be undertaken on customer satisfaction with events as part of existing studies on economic impact and visitor profile.

Do you reach your entire customer base? What are you doing to engage those who are not accessing your service?

- 90% of residents use Manchester's parks, with 68% of users accessing parks at least once a month in 2006, rising to 80% in 2008. Consultation has been undertaken with non-users and identifies the perception of living too far from a park, not feeling safe and not having enough free time as the main reasons for non-use of service.
- 66% of residents use Manchester's sports/leisure facilities, with 44% of users accessing sports/leisure facilities at least once a month in 2006.
- Engagement with residents on sports and community activity provision is undertaken through the national Active People Survey (targets adults) and the biannual local Year 9 sports Activity survey (targets young people) commissioned by Leisure Services. This surveys all levels of engagement within sporting activity including satisfaction with provision.
- A more targeted neighbourhood approach to event-related communications is being adopted for sports events.
- Engagement of communities at neighbourhood level through public facing park wardens and community activity officers

What feedback do you have from other stakeholders e.g. members and partner agencies?

- Quarterly feedback received on local parks through engagement with 52 voluntary Friends of Parks Groups
- Online survey of 1000 residents on Parks in October 2008
- Quarterly feedback received through Sports Clubs
- Feedback from event stakeholders is that more can be done to communicate with residents in neighbourhoods where events are actually being hosted.
- Feedback received from Indoor Trusts through quarterly Trust Board meetings, JVC meetings with Serco, regular meetings with sport England, UK Sport and NGBs.
- Feedback received from Play England on all play area designs
- Regular feedback on parks development received through engagement with GreenSpace, AGMA Parks Services and Core Cities Parks Services.
- Engagement of partner agencies through ward coordination framework and Neighbourhood Funding Strategy requests regarding programmes in parks and for sports and community activities.
- Annual output reviews from external funders
- Children and young people plan consultation
- Feedback from programmes and initiatives i.e free swim

How have you acted on the feedback?

- Utilising national data and research for the Manchester Children and Young People's Plan on latent demand for sports we have introduced the following new activities in 2008/09: BMX,

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Boxing, taekwondo, free swimming for u16's and over 60's and dance.

- Continued use of qualitative and quantitative feedback from Friends of Parks groups to improve physical infrastructure, safety and basic facilities within community parks as part of an ongoing investment programme, which has resulted in continually increasing satisfaction with parks over a 5 year period.
- Restructuring of Community Activities service to a district delivery model to provide citywide coverage and level additional resources to deliver more outcomes.

6. Capacity to Deliver

Corporate Values

Key Messages

Delivering high quality local parks and spaces that are safe, welcoming and visually attractive and used for enjoyment, community celebration and creating a sense of place in neighbourhoods

Attainment of Investors in People

Staff Awards & Recognition

Analysis

How do you ensure the Corporate Values are embedded in your service?

Pride in our city

- Sense of place delivered through localised community leisure programmes
- Parks that help define the identity of an area and that function as outdoor community hubs
- Improved quality of parks and green spaces
- Active conservation management for locally important sites
- National and international recognition of the city's sporting prowess (e.g. 2008 world's leading sport city).

Community Focused/People Focused

- Tailored leisure activities that meet the differing needs of communities and communities engaged in ways that do not exclude or alienate
- Promotion of diversity, community celebration and community cohesion through a wide programme of sports events and activity programmes in which residents can participate as well as spectate (e.g. Great Manchester Run).
- Family oriented activities and events
- Introduced a sports awards for the voluntary sector to value their contribution

Valuing Employees

- A motivated and skilled workforce from building upon the strengths and addressing the weaknesses identified within the recent Investors in People Inspections and staff surveys.
- An employee training programme that is practical and academic in content, customer focused and fit for purpose
- Empowering staff to represent city interests in regional, national and international arenas.
- Conducting Staff Appraisals
- Staff conferences, engagement events and Awards

Responsive and Accountable

- A frontline staffing resource that is a key interface with residents and which plays an active role in neighbourhood and ward meetings and associated action planning

Leading and Managing People

Key Messages

- *Culture of investment in Staff*
- *Appraisals and performance management*
- *Pace of Change management to be quickened*

Analysis

How far are the Manchester Standards for this area embedded in your service?

- Service developed to achieve excellence in people and performance management via partnerships working, equality and diversity and the efficient delivery of services
- Appraisals
- Staff involved in development of the Business Plan
- Responsibility to make decisions
- Responsibility to lever in investment

What more needs to be done?

- Developing Leadership and Capacity – including developing middle management and attracting effective leaders into the service from the outside.
- Developing a culture of high achievement, high support and high challenge should be promoted

Managing Performance

Key Messages

- *Key strengths and weaknesses*
- *Monitoring and recording of service use, engagement with residents on Outdoor Leisure*
- *Better data collection methodology*
- *Need to widen the use of relevant ICT*

Analysis

How far are the Manchester Standards for this area embedded in your service?

- Strong and consistent service-wide performance recording and reporting for local service indicators

What more needs to be done?

- Improve feedback mechanisms for residents on Sports development services and sports provision
- Develop framework to better assess social and sporting benefits arising from major sports events.
- Strengthen allocation of financial resources to delivery of outcomes

Better use ICT to monitor and measure service performance

Managing Finances and Resources

Key Messages

- *Key strengths and weaknesses*
- *Strengths: attracting funding for Community Activities, efficient use of resources*
- *Need to attract more external revenue funding streams into parks*

Analysis

How far are the Manchester Standards for this area embedded in your service?

- Very efficient use of resources available to deliver a very diverse service that meets a significant range of City council priorities
- Use of SAP and monitoring procedures
- Delivery of Finance SIP
- Attracting external funding, particularly for Community Activity programmes and major event delivery
- Capital delivery

What more needs to be done?

- Improve adherence to essential budget monitoring processes by operational budget managers
- Provide greater impetus for managers to achieve income targets
- Attract greater external funding for parks
- Secured external funding for major events post 2012

Managing Risk

Key Messages

- *Key strengths and weaknesses*
- *Strengths: History & experience of delivering high profile projects and associated risk.*
- *Comprehensive Risk Register in place*
- *Risk management Training*
- *Weaknesses: Regular working with partners on Risk*

Analysis

How far are the Manchester Standards for this area embedded in your service?

- Management of risks experienced in the operation of the service through a comprehensive risk register framework that focuses on mitigating risk and escalating high risks where posed
- Risk Register is monitored on regular basis by DMT

- All grade 7 and above Managers on training programme

What more needs to be done?

- *Improved working with partners to ensure Risk Analysis is firmly embedded in their Business Plans*

Understanding Customers, Communities and Neighbourhoods

Key Messages

- *Key strengths and weaknesses*
- *Strengths: Local engagement of communities through surveying, project monitoring and engagement with voluntary groups*
- *Weaknesses: Feedback mechanisms for satisfaction with sports provision*

Analysis

- Strong consultation with residents on Parks and Outdoor Leisure through general survey and frequent regular engagement with dedicated voluntary groups (Friends of Parks and Allotment Societies)
- Regular use of up-to-date quantitative datasets within service planning
- Engagement of communities by frontline service officers through ward coordination framework
- Regular feedback from participants on Community Activity programmes to determine future service delivery needs
- Strong understanding of customers sporting needs and requirements at a neighbourhood level

What more needs to be done?

Implement regular feedback mechanisms from residents on Sports and Indoor Leisure services particularly regarding satisfaction with sports provision

Improve awareness of opportunities for residents at a local level to spectate and participate in major sports events.

Self Assessment Conclusion

1. Overall, the service measures its performance and monitors monitor the delivery of objectives and outcomes strongly and consistently, with regular engagement of residents and communities through local and national surveying, project monitoring, regular scheduled consultation with voluntary groups, and feedback from partner agencies. Localised feedback on sports provision and insight into satisfaction ratings with sports provision is the particular area of performance on which the service needs to prioritise improvement effort.

2. How robust are the comparisons the service uses to identify and drive improvement?

Comparisons used are predominantly with Core Cities and nearest neighbour authorities as the sheer diversity of the service lends itself most closely to these agencies. Comparisons used are based on national measurement methods where available across these agencies meaning comparison is robust (e.g. through Active People Survey). Some areas of service such as Parks and Community Activities do not have any national measures, but for Parks, work is undertaken with Core Cities to develop shared measures within comparator groups, meaning comparison is as robust as possible. Further work needs to be undertaken to identify or drive an increased number of shared measures for comparison across comparator groups., as overall measures are limited in quantity.

3. How robust are the existing improvement plans for the service? How confident is the service that it has the capacity to deliver them?

The continued improvement to Manchester parks in terms of infrastructure and visual environment is underpinned by our capital programme and levered in partnership funding. We are working with the three Trusts to continue to improve usage and participation in Indoor Leisure. The delivery of our Major Events Strategy to 2014 and beyond is well underway.

4. What are the key successes that have been achieved?

- Health promotion activity including healthy weight management
- High quality parks in neighbourhoods
- Attracting external funding for investment in park infrastructure and programmes
- International sporting profile of Manchester
- Targeted skill attainment
- Engagement with local communities through surveying, project monitoring and engagement with voluntary groups to inform service delivery and consequent application of data outputs to inform service delivery
- Working with partners
- Attracting external funding for Community Activity programmes
- Efficient use of resources
- Participation by children and young people in sport and leisure activities
- Increased number of participation-based sports events targeting young people and families

5. What are the key improvements that are required?

- Insight regarding satisfaction with sports and indoor leisure provision
- Income generation in parks
- Better use of ICT to monitor and measure service performance
- Improved communication with residents at a neighbourhood level concerning major events

6. What are the key risks to the service area?

- Economic Downturn – The less disposable income of citizens could result in reduced participation in fee-paying Leisure Services activities e.g., park activities, catering, swimming. Less disposable income could also result in reduced Lottery spending by consumers, resulting in reduced available grant funding, upon which Leisure is reliant for infrastructure, revenue related improvements and its Major Events programme.
- Continuation of funding from WNF (Working Neighbourhood Fund) - Unable to fund salaries resulting in officer redeployment. As a consequence there would be less workforce to co-ordinate and deliver community sport and physical activity provision. Opportunities would also be forgone to lever in further growth, which will have a significant consequential impact on LAA and CAA indicators and rating.
- Loss of Service - This will lead to a significant reduction in the provision of community sport and physical activity, many of which address and tackle inequalities including increased levels of obesity and reduced life expectancy, increased youth offending and fear of crime.
- Reducing budgets, reduces the ability to respond to changing service needs

7. Does the service provide Value for Money? How can impact of service investment be demonstrated?

Parks provide high value for money with more than 28 million annual visits being received (delivering at £0.24 per visit) and 27 Green Flag Awards achieved, placing Manchester as the lead authority in England for parks quality. Whilst delivery of Sports Events equates to and visibly appears a high spend service at £14.72 per head, the Manchester World Sport 08 series of events generated £23 million of net economic impact for the city, provided social and participatory benefits for community and youth groups across the city and the Northwest, and earned Manchester the SportBusiness Sports City 'Gold' Award in 2008 ahead of other leading world sport destinations. This undoubtedly has contributed positively to Manchester's goal of being a world class city.



MANCHESTER

CITY COUNCIL

Communications

Business Plan
DRAFT

The Impact of the Service

1. Business Overview

Vision Statement

“Manchester City Council communications should underpin the Council vision and strategies in one or multiple ways. Communication should be accountable and demonstrate our values, have a positive impact and/or generate costs savings and it will reflect our vision for a world-class city.”

The Communications Services comprises four key teams.

- The Press Office
- the Events team
- Mfour – the internal design, media buying, print and translations service
- Internal and External communications.

Communications provides a range of support services to the organisation and partners as well as some external customers. Immediate customers include predominantly Manchester City Council departments and services, members, partners or third party organisations and our end customer is predominantly residents of Manchester, businesses of Manchester, some visitors to Manchester or Manchester City council employees.

The four services have only recently been grouped into a single integrated service which was constructed when the Director of Communications was appointed at the end of January 2009.

A Blueprint Communications Strategy was been presented in June to SMT and EMG and Resource and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. This strategy alters the shape and direction of the communications across the council and starts to look at the improvements needed in the short term as well as the long term. This paper predominantly identifies the immediate changes (6 mths) and the ambition for the next three years as part of the business planning objective.

The Press Office

- The press office is there to promote and protect the City Council using the appropriate media channels
- Enhance awareness of services, information, activity and events using media endorsement
- Reputation management of Manchester and the City Council
- Immediate service improvement planned this year will involve enhanced monitoring and evaluation of press coverage, including a more comprehensive online service, which will accurately measure the value of the teams activity based on advertising equivalent on positive and less so positive coverage, rather than just measuring the number of press releases issued and calls managed. Ultimately, delivering in-depth

The Impact of the Service

performance measurement that will assess the team and services performance against positive and negative media and value for money criteria.

- Also, utilising a vacant position within the team to bring in Social Media PR skill sets and an online media centre that will help position the team to be more in tune with the changing media landscape and enable it to target broader new media and a growing, diverse audience of news gatherers.
- Under the new leadership the team will also become more strategic and will formulate planned PR campaigns against the corporate priorities to ensure focus and attention is placed on key messages as well as reactively servicing the media needs.

The Events Team

- To support and deliver an annual calendar of events in line with the objectives of the Community Strategy, which embodies the sense of ‘there is always something happening in Manchester’ and offers people experiences and enrichment in their local area and within the city environment.
- Key festivals and events include Christmas festivities, Food and Drink, Comedy Festivals etc., Sports events, local celebrations like Diwali Mela as well as supporting long term City prospects like the World Cup 2018 and 2022 bid.
- The events team also have a role to play in driving economic impact for the city through tourism as well as supporting the vision of a World Class City, often attracting national and international events that help put Manchester on the map and work to change perceptions or reinforce Manchester’s qualities. Two examples would be the success of MIF with an economic impact of £35.7m and over 230,000 visitors and Manchester World of Sport valued at £23m.
- Initial priorities in the short-term are to support the Communications Blueprint to help join up the events activity across the council and make it more cohesive for the customer. The marketing arm of events will be embedded into the new and enhanced central communications team to support this holistic vision. Initial service improvement will support the construction of one events database including events, leisure, galleries etc that can be utilised across services to provide synergy for residents. Another key step will be to provide clarity of all the activity happening within the city at ward level and across the city so ‘what’s on guides’ can be fully comprehensive and cross cutting.

Internal and External Communications

- The central team will be responsible for providing a more expert, holistic and supportive centre that acts as a buffer between services and departments to help shape and formulate communication requirement and ensure it is inline with corporate strategy and remove duplication and inefficiencies.
- This team will plan and manage the communications requirements and the organisations key messages in order to prioritise and utilise the corporate tools effectively, efficiently and will improve the process to measure the outcomes and address value for money objectives for communications.
- The central team will also support the changing communication environment and aims to bolster the expertise to support web based communications.

The Impact of the Service

- In general Manchester City Council communications, with the help of the Blueprint Strategy will become a more strategic, hard working support service that will drive organisations business plans and objectives and help deliver awareness and behavioural change to meet the Community Strategy’s vision.
- The next 6 months will see improved visibility of communication activity, strong planning and budgeting, agreed priority messages, campaign projects, a more joined up and customer focused approach, a rejuvenation of corporate tools like Manchester People and Ward newsletters and a refresh of the corporate identity and communication templates.
- The strategy will be underpinned by the need to nurture communication expertise and knowledge. Communications skills will be enhanced at the centre and streamlined in departments to focus and raise the standards and quality of the communications process from planning, delivery of, to post evaluation to better inform a consistent and continually service improvement ethos.

Mfour

- Mfour is the service that delivers the communication activity required by the City Council and consists of design, print, media buying and translations.
- As a result of the Communications Blueprint, Mfour will also begin to adapt to the changing communication requirements of the organisation. This will help support the growth of the Corporate Communications team and ensure it is best placed to deliver the new requirements of the organisation and the changing communication landscape into a more digital world.
- Mfour needs to integrate its service functions to adopt to a campaign requirement and facilitate the organisation communication requirements as a one stop shop with a focus on higher standards and a more performance orientated approach.

Principal Partners

- Marketing Manchester is a key principal partner to ensure the messages we communicate to residents and business in the city via the Communications directorate support and enhance the work Marketing Manchester delivers to drive tourism and the competitive world class city vision that is rooted to economic growth.
- Marketing Manchester has two dimensions, Visit Manchester which is the tourist arm and the coordination unit which acts as the hub for the marketing of Manchester. As a result there are joint projects and activities that require a true partnership approach.
- ‘Team Manchester’ thinking is also critical for the communications directorate to ensure messages to residents regarding health, safety, cohesiveness etc are managed with one voice through the partnership with other public bodies e.g. GMP, Manchester PCT, GMPTE, the Fire Service and the third sector to name a few.
- Manchester City Council communications also work supportively with City Co, the Chamber of Commerce, Pro Manchester etc to ensure the business community is well serviced with an integrated communications strategy.
- The communications remit is wide and often requires coordination with AGMA and other cities across the UK and internationally on various projects.

The Impact of the Service

2. Strategic Impact

Key Messages

The Communications directorate should always support policy and the community strategy. Communications should listen to and respond to residents and businesses to create a two-way, open dialogue. It is often reactive but should be equally committed to planning ahead and being inclusive and accessible.

In general terms the service supports the realisation of the community strategy and the delivery of all the spines and the LAA priorities. Obviously, as a service to the organisation communication should be related to the services strategies and support awareness, take up, behaviour changes and perception challenges. Some examples are:

- Supporting worklessness, skill enhancement, helping people keep a roof over their heads in relation to the impact of the recession with the Helping Hands campaign
- Improving educational outcomes by supporting children's services in promoting new academies, enrolment and attendance activity
- Neighbourhoods of choice with facilitation of communications such as ward newsletters and be proud activity and working on reducing crime and disorder with media support and specific communications hinge on prevent activity
- Facilitating consultation activity to empower residents informing and contributing their views and ideas and supporting initiatives to help residents and businesses access funding to support actions that helps contribute to the city we want e.g. CO2mmunity challenge or in bloom initiatives.
- Working with departments to help promote healthy eating and driving events that encourage active lifestyles such as the Sky Ride and Usain Bolt's sprint along Deansgate

Moving forward, the Blueprint Communications strategy highlights its ambition to drive a sharper focus for all communication to be more inline with corporate strategies and visions in order to tackle problems and achieve the biggest impacts on people's lives. Often the benefits not only meet the criteria but also support a cost saving for example encouraging foster care helps fulfil multiple spines but also reduce the cost of social care. More recycling meets our greener city pledge as well as reducing the cost of waste management. This principal is also at the heart of LAA communication activity by working smarter as a partnership we can reduce duplication, mixed messages and target communication more effectively and drive the return on the investment to deliver better value for money.

3. Cost & efficiency

Key Messages

- The City Council spends considerable sums of money informing the public of its services and on general communications related activity. Further analysis is being undertaken to confirm in more depth the source and nature of all communications activity, however initial findings show that this can be more efficient and can contribute to the Council's overall efficiency targets.
- Return on investment for communication spend at present could also be clearer with process improvements to help track and evaluate communications issued from the City Council.
- Process mapping on the whole, highlighted planning and budgeting issues; inter departmental communication gaps and inconsistent sign off and quality control. Not all processes in the mapping exercise were shown to be weak, but almost half showed room for improvement.
- The volume of work the City Council communicates is high (3,966 jobs) with low average spend leading to a disparate approach – too many messages with no clear focus. The communications are also based on service objectives not corporate priorities.
- Budgets can be better managed and planned and have more efficient processes and resource development.

In line with all services, communications needs to review spend and look for savings – more for less. Improved processes will drive efficiencies and the departmental commissioning and management of budgets needs to be reviewed against business priorities. Further work is proposed to take place on this, in conjunction with the City Treasurer.

At present the communication services are funded through a combination of central recharges to departments and a number of cross department recharges via a service delivery charge for activity. The budget position of expenditure on communications as a whole is under review at present as all budgets are being scrutinised inline with the blueprint recommendations.

The communication budget should be planned annually and managed within the new framework, at the same time leaving some capacity for unforeseeable issues arising mid-year. A clear process will be followed that addresses activity throughout the year.

4. Performance

Key Messages

Performance and outcomes are often measured by quantity rather than quality or the results of the output. This needs to radically change to ensure every pound spent on communications is justified and a measured value can be attached to the return on that investment. Addressing the issue of performance being central to the planning will be key and at the start of each communication activity a target will be set based on the value expected. Post delivery this expectation will be compared to the real outcome and lessons learnt.

As already highlighted measurement following the construction of the newly integrated service, consistent processes for measuring performance are currently being developed. There is evidence of good practice across the previously separate service areas, which will provide a sound basis for the development of shared managerial standards across the respective management teams over the coming year.

The service has just started to undertake comparison activity on its processes and cost structures to benchmark however this is early days.

Performance improvement of the service will be underpinned by the Communications Blueprint.

5. Outcomes & Customer Satisfaction

Key Messages

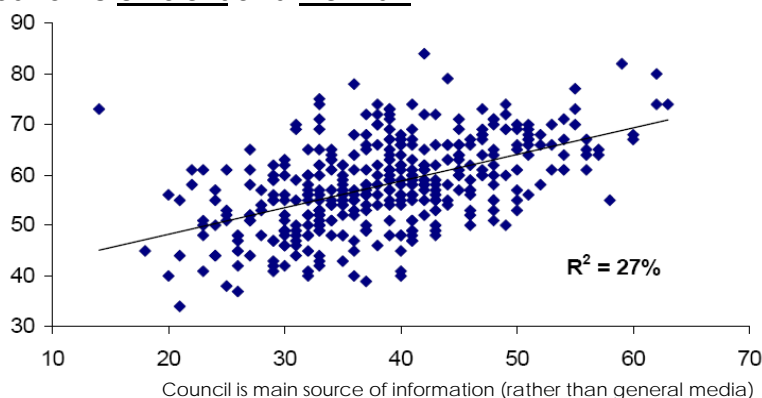
Recent customer focus groups have highlighted some positive feedback on communications outputs and areas for improvement. Internal communications and Mfour regularly ask for feedback on customer satisfaction and events do measure satisfaction.

In order to fulfil the Blueprint objectives a more robust measurement and evaluation process has been identified.

The service has measured customer satisfaction to help formulate the 'to be' of the strategy. The recent focus group activity compared current communications to other public and private sector outputs. The service has demonstrated improved customer satisfaction in some areas but this is not consistent and the Blueprint framework identifies further improvement opportunities.

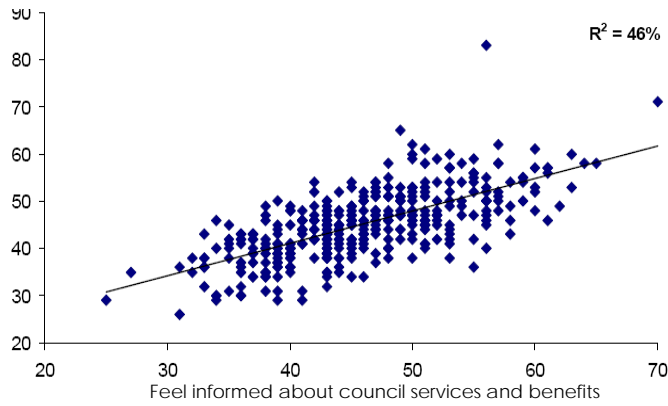
Communications has a critical role to play with customers directly or indirectly via the media using a variety of communications tools. Communication can help shape the perception of the council by how well residents feel informed. Historical BVPI* survey results have proved that council communications can have a significant effect on resident and worker perceptions of a council. As a result, it is critical that every opportunity to communicate is maximised. Only 38% of the public feel well informed about public services and with on average over 800 services that a council offers, communication of these key activities will help shape customers perception and value for money.

Council is efficient and well-run



Source: 387 local authorities General BVPI survey Oct 06-Mar 07

Agree council provides value for money



Source: 387 local authorities General BVPI survey Oct 06-Mar 07

*Best Value Performance Indicators

The service can often be the first and only point of contact with the council, it is crucial that customer experience is positive and there is a clear commitment within the communication team to ensure that the principles of the corporate Customer Services Strategy are applied. We also have to abide by guidelines to help the communications be understood whether that be accessibility and legibility or work on translations, Braille or large print for example.

Again, there are examples of good practice in measuring customer satisfaction from across the service, though it is recognised that these examples should sit within a more coherent approach to provide a fuller picture to inform future decision-making.

6. Capacity to Deliver

Corporate Values

Key Messages

- The values are new and more work is required to fully embed them.

The managers complete the 1-2-1's performance measures annually and often use 360 degree feedback to shape this process.

Since the new director has been in place and along with the new strategy development there have been several away days for Mfour, an away day for the Press Office, an 'as is' and 'to be' workshop with staff from across the communications teams as well as non communications staff and external input.

Leading and Managing People

Key Messages

- Good use of Appraisals, 1:1 and team meetings & staff development
- Staff from across all the areas of the communications services have been engaged and involved in the Blueprint strategy and given regularly briefings on its progress and development.
- Workforce development is critical at the moment and there is significant focus on planning the appropriate structures and skill sets to deliver the new strategy.

Analysis

Whilst we are confident that the Manchester Standards are embedded across all areas, there are areas for improvement, including ensuring consistency across the service and aligning all communication representatives to the new strategy. However, there is good evidence of regular team meetings and cascading of relevant information from managers to staff.

The Service is fully committed to the principles of effective leadership and people management and there is evidence of good practice across the service. Leadership will be critical to the delivery of the new strategy.

Measures in place to monitor time recording, sickness absence and evidence of regular one to one meetings between managers and staff and appraisals are completed in accordance with corporate guidelines.

The team is committed to do better and has clear direction and steps are underway to synchronise good practice and integrate teams to delivery more effectively.

Managing

Key Messages

Performance

previously separate service areas, in line with the changes outlined in the Communications Blueprint.

Analysis

The service now has clear direction with the new strategy yet there is still significant work to be done to deliver and fully embed the strategy into a way of working.

Key performance indicators and improved performance measures need to be adopted quickly to gain a base line that can be enhanced and bettered.

Management meetings are held regularly, one to ones are well established and there is evidence of regular communication and meetings with the partnership.

Managing Finances and Resources

Key Messages

- There is good evidence across the services of regular budget monitoring and financial trend analysis. These processes will now be developed further in line with the Communications Blueprint and the integration of previously separate service areas.

Analysis

Following the construction of the newly integrated service, financial processes are currently being developed. There is evidence of good practice in budget and financial management across the previously separate service areas, which will provide a sound basis for the development of shared managerial standards for budget and performance management across the respective management teams over the coming year.

Managing Risk

Key Messages

- Risk Management undertaken across the service but better documentation is needed to evidence this

Analysis

Risk management is variable across the service and although it is an integral part of service delivery especially in areas like Events where it is undertaken on a daily basis and often heightened around specific issues like the flu pandemic planning, more can be done.

Understanding Customers, Communities and Neighbourhoods

Key Messages

- The service is aware and responsive to the needs of customers, communities and neighbourhoods and services and the strategy is designing a clear focus on neighbourhood communications

Analysis

The service has multiple customers and in most cases is clear of their customers needs. Qualitative information regularly indicates levels of customer satisfaction measured by Chartermark or customer surveys but this always needs to be adapted and improved.

Self-Assessment Conclusion

The aim of the Blueprint activity was to review communications across the whole of Manchester City Council. This highlighted significant areas of improvement and the journey to deliver these step changes is now underway.

Key findings:

The City Council spends considerable sums of money informing the public of its services and on general communications related activity. Further analysis is being undertaken to confirm in more depth the source and nature of all communications activity, however initial findings show that this can be more efficient and can contribute to the Council's overall efficiency targets.

The following principals will underpin a strategic move to integrate communications going forward.

- A strategic customer-centric, campaign approach to communications to focus messages should be developed - greater success will come from doing fewer things better to really support services e.g. an issues such as reduce teenage drinking has a positive impact on education, children's health and crime and disorder. If a focus is on 'common areas of interest', pooled resources with a commitment to change behaviour or attitudes can actually influence costs.
- All communications will relate to the Council's corporate vision and support the values, spines and annual corporate priorities. Supported by an agreed process framework (similar to the gateway process) that provides relevant stakeholders with an opportunity for input and scrutiny. The framework will ensure corporate priorities are aligned with communication needs and will have the flexibility to handle both planned and reactive activity.
- The communication budget should be planned annually and managed within the new framework, at the same time leaving some capacity for unforeseeable issues arising mid-year. A clear process will be followed that addresses activity throughout the year.
- All communications will be planned, researched and implemented to provide fiscal benefits, greater reach and relevance to target audiences. Agreed KPI's will be measured and behavioural change and awareness monitored and developed for best practice.

- Service Heads will appoint ‘communication commissioners’ to act on the brief to coordinate service priorities and activities, led by the Director of Communications, to ensure best practice for communications activity and to ensure activity is planned and executed in accordance with priorities delivered by the Council. Additional resourcing will be achieved at no additional cost to the Council. Proposals for achieving this will be bought forward in due course.
- An officers project Board and regular meetings will ensure good internal communication practice.
- Clear brand guidelines will be developed and implemented to ensure the Council brand is appropriately recognised.
- Specific recommendations for Mfour include support for digital growth e.g. filming as well as photography services, a one contact strategy and a more integrated service across design, translations, media etc. based on a campaign model, process improvement, skills support, pricing review and transparency and a look at service improvement such as image banks.
- Financial impacts. In line with all services, communications need to review spend and look for savings – more for less. Improved processes will drive efficiencies and the departmental commissioning and management of budgets needs to be reviewed against business priorities. Further work is proposed in conjunction with the City Treasurer.

Conclusion

The proposals described above are designed to provide a strong framework for developing an integrated communications strategy and service delivery focus, which will not only deliver high quality outcomes capable of monitoring but also improvement in efficiencies. The focus over the 2010-13 business plan period will be to fully establish Communications as a single integrated service within the council.



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Head of Legal Services Business Plan

DRAFT
OCTOBER 2009

1. Business Overview

Vision Statement

To be acknowledged first choice provider of all legal services to Manchester City Council by maintaining our: –

- **excellent technical expertise;**
- **solution focused work;**
- **unique ability to provide innovative work in a local authority legal context;**
- **commitment to being an integral and pro active partner in Team Manchester**

To ensure a first class, value for money legal service for the Council wherever sourced

Description

The core business of the Legal Service is to:

- Ensure legality and probity in the Council's administration
- Provide a comprehensive legal service to the Council which includes advice, representation, documentation and negotiation
- Carry out statutory functions on behalf of the Council and
- Take a strategic role in the formulation of the Council's policies and procedures

The Service also carries out other non-core functions that include acting for third parties and external bodies, representing the Council on outside bodies and providing training and briefings to enable client departments to provide a better service.

The Service employs 168 staff of whom 55 are solicitors, 76 legal executives and para legals and 37 support staff. The support staff includes finance and research and information officers as well as administrative and word processing staff.

The structure of the Service reflects that of the Council as a whole. There are three groups

- Neighbourhood Services
- Regeneration Services
- Children's Services.

The Children's Group provides support to the Children's Services Directorate and Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services to all other Council directorates

Legal Services has legal partners to provide regeneration and child care legal work when required. Those relationships are managed through Framework arrangements.

Legal Services also provides advice and assistance to the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board, the Adoption Panel and the Commercial Board.

2. Strategic Impact

Key Messages

- **Legal Services operates at the central core of the City Council's functions. It supports both the delivery of Council's strategic priorities and the legal and democratic decision making processes.**
- **As a core central service working across the whole of the Council it is well placed to identify and support cross cutting initiatives.**
- **As a support service we work with client departments to prioritise and support their front line work in meeting the Council's priorities.**

Legal Services strategic priorities are to provide proactive, innovative legal advice and assistance to front line departments and the corporate centre to meet the Council's strategic priorities.

The Service also supports the democratic and decision making process in ensuring that all Executive and Committee decisions meet legal requirements.

There are a number of common strands and cross cutting areas evident in departmental business plans where Legal Services work with service areas to identify priorities and new issues. The Heads of the 3 Groups in Legal Services meet on a regular basis with senior staff across the Council to identify priorities and to receive feedback on quality.

With regard to the identified strategic priorities -

Economic Growth

The Legal Services Regeneration Group works closely with the Regeneration and Policy Sections of Chief Executive's. It has delivered a number of high profile complex projects in the past 12 months including the Spinningfields and Piccadilly Place projects and the acquisition of strategic sites in East Manchester to support the regeneration work of New East Manchester. The team also works closely with partners in the City including Manchester Airport, Manchester Central and Marketing Manchester in relation to their activities. In the past year Legal Services has also played a major part in the development of the Manchester Academies programme which has seen the establishment of 7 new Academy Trusts and the commencement of work on 5 of the new schools, in addition to the delivery of a further 4 new schools under the Building Schools for the Future Programme which is also supported by the Regeneration team.

The Head of Regeneration (Legal) will continue to service the Commercial Board. We anticipate an increase in legal work to provide expertise and advice on partnerships, joint ventures and alternative legal structures to promote economic growth in the City and support the development of options identified by departments.

The team works closely with Corporate Procurement to secure value for money and increased efficiency through competitive tendering. The team also supports the City Council's work supporting the North West procurement hub.

The team continues to support the City Council in connection with major projects such as the Sportcity and Co-operative Quarter projects which seek to deliver significant economic growth in the City. This support includes procurement and commercial advice, the acquisition of land, including where necessary CPO proceedings and work to support the delivery of new infrastructure to support such developments. The team also supports the planning functions of the City Council both in relation to development control, enforcement and the development of the strategy framework that underpins the planning function.

The Regulatory and Enforcement Group work in the development of strategic policies relating to gambling and liquor licensing, these policies ensure that the City remains attractive to prospective businesses and supports the City's regeneration and economic growth.

Worklessness and Skills

We will support Corporate Personnel and departments in developing policies to provide leadership for the skills and worklessness agenda.

The Head of Legal Services meets regularly with the Head of Corporate Personnel to discuss major areas of work or complex cases and will prioritise such work in those meetings.

We are currently carrying out a skills audit of all staff below Grade 6 in Legal Services. It is intended that all staff will be encouraged to take up the Council's offer of a skills pledge to ensure that all staff have the minimum qualifications. The skills audit will then be extended to all staff to ensure that staff have, or can acquire the necessary skills to meet the future legal requirements of the Council.

All managers have been asked to consider the use of apprenticeships across the service and this is also being considered by the Legal Services' Workforce Development Group. The Workforce Development Group is a sub group of the Legal Management Team (LMT) and reports to it. It is made up of staff representatives from across the Division and a representative from the Service Development Team.

Year on year we have expanded our in house training service i.e. training for our staff, clients and partners delivered by in house staff or commissioned from external sources, such as Barristers Chambers. From January to August 2009 we provided 11 courses covering a broad range of work areas. 234 people attended, 98 from Legal Services and 134 clients and partners. There is no charge for this training.

Lawyers in the Children's Services (Legal) Group have either directly delivered or have commissioned at no cost from Barristers Chambers, a number of training courses for officers in Children's Services and partner agencies. Due to the difficulties around recruitment and retention of Social Workers over the last 12 months particular emphasis has been given to prioritising and supporting newly qualified and "new to Manchester" social workers.

The Regulatory & Enforcement team have delivered two bespoke training courses to ASBAT to enable them to issue noise abatement notices to assist in the prevention of nuisances in communities. The team have commissioned at no cost training from Barristers Chambers for Trading Standards officers to assist in the prosecution of new regulatory offences.

The litigation team have an ongoing programme of providing training to surveyors to assist the efficient and effective response to disrepair claims.

0-5

The Head of Children's Services (Legal) works closely with Senior Officers in Children's Services on Safeguarding and other policy matters. She is a member of the Looked After Children Improvement Group, is legal adviser to the Safeguarding Board, Chairs the Greater Manchester Senior Child Care Lawyers Group and Chairs the multi disciplinary Group which includes Family Court Judges tasked with implementing and monitoring the new case management protocol for children cases in the Courts. The Service is therefore well placed to identify strategic issues and work with Children's Services on prioritising legal work in this area.

Housing

We have dedicated staff working on the LSVT transfers and Collyhurst and Brunswick PFI projects and will continue to provide this service.

We have prioritised HMO licensing work and will continue to do so. We support the strategic determination of selective licensing areas and work with Manchester Housing to present applications for CLG authorisation.

We provide a Legal Service for a range of registered social landlords and Northwards ALMO to support them in carrying out their estate management and housing functions. We have also established procedures with Northwards and several RSLs for delivery of Building Contracts in support of the Decent Homes programme of work and other capital work they undertake.

We operate an out of hours service each evening, weekends and Bank Holidays to ensure that any anti-social behaviour injunctions are dealt with expeditiously and those that breach orders are dealt with by the Out of Hours Court service.

NeighbourhoodsWe work closely with all sections of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate. The Housing Team provides comprehensive anti social behaviour legal services, including out of hours.

We are currently working with Housing to redraft the allocations policy for the City Council. This work is of strategic importance as it will determine how we as an authority with our strategic partners provide social housing in Manchester. We provide support to the officers' Respect agenda group and assisted in the development of Manchester Traveller Policy.

The Regulatory team provides advice and assistance on licensing and gambling policies. The gambling policy review ensured that there were sufficient safeguards to ensure the wellbeing of Manchester residents.

The tri annual licensing policy review will commence shortly.

The Team support the blue badge prosecutions and issue and advocates on all cases. Manchester has now been designated as a Country wide centre of excellence for Blue Badge Prosecutions and Legal will in conjunction with Environmental Services, provide national training to other local authorities and the Department of Transport.

Going forward we anticipate prioritising work to support the acceleration of progress towards a low carbon city such as the policy of emissions from Hackney carriages and enforcement of building control regulations in respect of conservation of fuel and power.

3. Cost & efficiency

Key Messages

- **The main cost of the Service is staffing and associated costs**
- **The main example of high cost/low productivity is the use of locum solicitors where the fees paid are in excess of in house salaries. This is balanced by the benefit of employing locums for short term pieces of work or projects**
- **The main example of low cost/high productivity is the development of in house advocates and specialist lawyers to do work that might otherwise be done by barristers and external solicitors**
- **The Service also promotes flexibility in working across teams and disciplines to reduce costs and retain staff**

Costs

Legal Services is funded through a combination of a central recharge to departments and a number of different income targets. The total budget for 2008/9 is £4.8m made up of £2.2m central funding and £2.6m income. Of the income target £500k is a target for income from Land Charges which is currently under review due to less movement in the housing market, a change in the regulations and an Information Commissioner's decision which changes the Council's ability to retain its existing charging processes.

The net mainstream funding is calculated on a percentage basis based on the percentage of time Legal Services spend working for a department. At the end of the year the time recorded is converted into total time spent for each department and they contribute a proportion of the £2.2m.

Of the budget of £4.8m, £4.4 m is staffing costs including employee on costs. (91.7%).

The annual cost to the Division for compulsory Practising Certificates for Solicitors and membership of the Institute of Legal Executives is £59550. All qualified legal staff have a compulsory annual training requirement of 16 hours for solicitors and legal Executives.

The hourly rates for the in house service are less than external providers. We currently operate 2 Legal Frameworks – one for Commercial Work and one for Child Care work. The average cost of the legal work on a care case dealt with by private practice is £6690. The average cost of a case dealt with by an in house lawyer is £2350. Feedback from Social Workers confirms that in house child care cases are dealt with to a consistently high quality.

In the case of commercial work it is not possible to compare costs on a project basis as the work is varied in volume and complexity but a comparison of hourly rates shows that the in house service is considerably less costly.

Recently information in the public domain following a national FOI request shows the following spend on highway trip claims across the country. It is not clear if these figures include legal costs or just refer to compensation.

Leeds - £10,259,125.00

Birmingham - £7,551,840.00

Liverpool - £5,500,000.00

Stockport - £3,957,897.00

Southampton - £2,994,100.00

Oldham MBC -£2,258,879.00

Spend in Manchester for the same period was - £1,402,532.00 (departmental and insurance fund spend on compensation and costs).

Legal Services has consistently kept within budget. Any additional income generated has been used to contribute to the deficit in Land Charges income.

Quality

Benchmarking has proved to be difficult across the service but Legal Services is working with other Greater Manchester Legal Departments to progress this area.

The Service uses performance indicators in the areas where they provide useful and measurable information. The Legal Management Team receives monthly management information reports on critical areas around performance e.g. caseloads, spend on Barristers, time recording.

Legal Services has Service Level Agreements that are regularly monitored and most teams have caseload targets. Legal Services operates an electronic time recording system with required targets. All legal staff are required to record time spent on files.

Legal Services has had Lexcel accreditation since 2007 which is the Law Society's Practice Management Standards and Quality Mark. The service is inspected by independent assessors every year. Compliance with Legal Services procedures to ensure continued accreditation is regularly monitored e.g. file reviews.

Efficiencies

In terms of efficiencies, Legal Services has worked hard to increase its income from external public sector bodies to reduce the pressure on the Council's budget. The Service also now operates on a traded basis on some capital projects where the real cost can be claimed from central government funding.

In addition, the Service has reduced spend in real terms on child care advocacy although an increase in casework has led to more work being put out to private practice. Plans are in place to manage this work more cost effectively.

The Service will explore IT options to improve efficiency and quality and make savings. For example we are investigating the development of a knowledge management system which will aim to reduce duplication and make more standard advices available on the intranet. We are also pursuing electronic document management which will reduce costs and staff time in preparing paper bundles of documents and reduce the use of paper.

Early indications are that the efficiencies that can be realised far outweigh the costs of implementation and ongoing support

4. Performance

Key Messages

- **Retained LEXCEL accreditation in September 2009 – an independently annually assessed Law Society Quality Mark**
- **Evidence from annual customer survey shows increase in good and excellent performance**
- **Regular file reviews and supervision show improved performance and fewer areas for correction**
- **Timely responses and keeping clients informed has room for improvement**

Legal Services operates a comprehensive and robust performance management framework to ensure that all its staff members consistently perform to the required standards. The framework is independently assessed on an annual basis.

The framework has a number of elements which are mandatory across the Division. In addition, individual teams within the Division have specific requirements dependent upon the needs of the team and the nature of the work they do.

The key components of the framework are

- A regularly reviewed and updated Office Manual available on the Intranet containing all relevant policies e.g. quality, client care etc and procedures such as case management, complaints etc . The manual sets out the standards that staff members are required to comply with.
- Compliance with standards is independently assessed by the Law Society on a yearly basis. Any areas for improvement are identified and acted on. We received an extremely positive inspection in September 2009. 2 minor areas for improvement and 7 areas of good practice. File management described as excellent.
- One of the Senior Managers, who is also a member of the Legal Management Team (LMT), has been designated Quality Manager for the Division. This role has a number of functions but the main one is to have oversight of the quality of Divisional practice ensuring compliance with standards, supporting and challenging as required. The Quality Manager produces six monthly quality review reports for LMT with recommendations for improvement. Actions taken are monitored for impact on improvement.
- LMT receives detailed performance information on a monthly basis. The reports contain information on caseloads, activity around opening and closing of files, budget information, time recording, spend on external legal services and staff attendance levels. Issues, themes and trends are identified and action taken.
- Monitoring of performance against targets required in Service Level Agreements with action taken if improvements identified.

- File Reviews/Audits – trained and experienced supervisors review randomly selected files on a quarterly basis against a checklist for compliance with standards. Any action identified must be completed within 28 days and signed off by the supervisor. Supervisors are required to review and monitor file reviews in order to identify any themes and trends and take action as appropriate. The Quality Manager reviews all file reviews for the Division and reports to LMT.
- Managers receive reports on files where there has been no time recording activity for defined periods of time. The manager will discuss these files with the staff member to establish the reasons for this and take action as appropriate.
- Supervisions and 1 : 1's – Legal Services operates a comprehensive supervision network with the dual objectives of supporting and developing staff but also facilitating early identification of risk to performance and the business
- Central Registers of Complaints, Ombudsman's matters and MP and member queries are maintained. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that responses are timely and appropriate. Under the Legal Services complaints procedure managers who deal with complaints that are upheld are required to analyse what went wrong and identify action to avoid it happening again. The Quality Manager has recently identified areas for improvement when dealing with complaints.

5. Outcomes & Customer Satisfaction

Key Messages

- **Key strengths are indicated by our 2009 Annual Client Survey. In relation to over all satisfaction with the service, “excellent” responses increased from 31% to 41%, and “good” responses from 45% to 55%. There was a corresponding decrease in adequate responses from 24% to 3%.**
- **Satisfaction with outcomes was 83% good and excellent in 2008 and 90% in 2009**
- **Responses to client feedback on individual cases are consistently good.**
- **Weaknesses identified by clients have focused on the timeliness of advice which clients have put down to capacity issues and the workloads carried by staff**

Legal Services obtains the views of its clients on its performance from various sources. The main ones are

- An annual client survey – outcomes are reported to staff by team meeting and staff briefings. Areas for improvement identified by LMT and acted upon by Group Heads.
- Case specific feedback forms - Any areas of concern are followed up by the manager with the client and the staff member. Children’s Services produce an annual report.
- There exists an extensive network of regular meetings between senior managers in Legal Services and clients.

Examples of responses to questions on performance from the Annual Customer Survey for 2008/09 (259 questionnaires, 25% response rate, completed July 09) has shown the following results when compared to the 2008 survey:

- an increase in excellent and good representation in Court from 73% to 89%,
- an increase in excellent and good in meeting deadlines from 65% to 84%,
- an increase in excellent and good in providing a helpful, proactive, can do approach from 83% to 95%.
- an increase in excellent and good overall satisfaction with the service from 76% to 96%

Some comments from the customer survey are

Strengths

- The legal expertise you would expect, matched with a wealth of practical knowledge about the Council’s business, governance and processes: much of this comes from many years of in house experience across the team. Also, an understanding of the Council as a political organisation.
- Good understanding of balancing commercial requirements with the need to protect the Council from undue risk

- Understand the business. Committed to and focused on delivering outcomes for Manchester and our residents. Approachable/proactive – willing to take part in wider discussion/working towards a practical solution
- A much improved service

Weaknesses

- Delays in resolving issues. Sometimes response times are good but on some other issues take a while to respond
- Too little value given to the service and as a consequence they are sometimes unnoticed and weak at portraying a service that is strong and not to be taken lightly
- The only areas I consider may need further development is consistency of approach by legal officers in sub committee meetings. Some officers appear to provide more direction/advice whereas others take a more passive role
- Capacity Issues

Specific instances where we have acted on feedback from the previous twelve months include

- Increase in in house advocacy in Child Care which provides a better quality service at a lower cost to the department. This pilot has received very positive feedback from clients.
- Re-organisation of work, for example in moving HMO license prosecutions and education to the Regulatory and Enforcement Team who carry out all other prosecutions;
- Increase in formal meetings with senior officers to monitor workloads and feedback and share Legal Services Risk Register such as in Planning and Adult Social Care
- Identified client contact officers to deal with specific client work areas

We have provided feedback to staff on the results of the staff survey through staff briefings and team meetings and will continue to do so.

We are aware that we need to continually improve and will work with staff and customers during the year to identify and monitor further areas for improvement.

6. Capacity to Deliver

Corporate Values

Key Messages

- **The work carried out by the Service meets and supports the Corporate Values**
- **We have re-organised to include two posts to support the delivery of the legal work in the employment and commercial teams and one post of business support officer to support the management of the service**

Strengths

We embed the Corporate Values in a number of ways throughout the service;

- All new staff members receive a Service induction which includes the Service Vision and introduction to the Business Plan. This emphasises the public sector and Manchester context in which we work. A finding from the 2009 Lexcel inspection (which included interviews with staff at all levels) was that the service provides : “Regular updates of the Business Plan to comply with corporate requirements. Evidence of communication through staffing to allow all to impact positively to Business Plan Objectives”.
- Two annual all service staff briefings inform staff of Service and Council priorities. Previous staff briefings have linked specific priorities in the Corporate Plan to identified legal work. e.g. Respect agenda and ASBAT work, economic regeneration and commercial project work.
- At the staff briefings in October 2009 we will re-iterate the Council’s strategic priorities and hold facilitated workshop sessions where staff will be asked for their views on how they can most effectively contribute to them.

Areas for Improvement/further work

- As Legal Services is primarily a support service the links between Corporate values/Council priorities and the work done for departments is not always apparent and links need to be enforced.

Leading and Managing People

Key Messages

- **Robust performance management framework**
- **Communicate with staff through regular all service staff briefings, Group and team away days, team meetings**
- **Need to ensure all teams are brought up to high standard and consistency across the Division.**

Strengths

- Staff members are regularly involved in discussions on business planning and options appraisals through regular management meetings, team meetings and cross group meetings. Managers in the Groups have this year had group away days to assess group strengths and weaknesses, business planning, team plans and forward planning.
- We have an active Workforce Development Group with representatives from across the Service. The Group consults on, plans and implements an Annual Training Programme, will be carrying out a skills audit and is currently considering options for apprenticeships.
- We have a good track record of developing and supporting our staff e.g. admin officer to Solicitor, typist to Legal Executive, Summer Placement Student to Trainee Solicitor under the City Council's Manchester Scholarship Scheme. We are also participating in the Law Society's Workplace Pilot scheme that provides a way for legal officers with relevant qualifications to qualify as solicitors.
- Staff members throughout the Division meet with officers in client departments to provide the legal lead on specific projects dependent on skills and not status.
- Two managerial posts have been advertised and filled internally on act up basis to assist with succession planning.
- We have stable and experienced management teams throughout the Service.
- We offer staff flexible working options such as home working and reduced hours where it also meets the needs of the business.
- Action is taken on attendance, discipline and capability where appropriate.
- A consistent and proactive approach to monitoring sickness, together with seeking to address discrepancies in departmental records, has revealed a reduction in average sickness to 6.7 days per person per year which compares favourably to departmental targets (10.5 corporately)

Areas for Improvement/further work

We will

- ensure that leadership and communication are embedded consistently across all Groups
- plan more consistent management training for team leaders.
- Further develop our middle managers

Managing Performance

Key Messages

- **Good staff involvement in formulation of Business Plan which is reviewed quarterly by the Legal Management Team (LMT).**
- **More regular and improved management information reporting to LMT.**
- **LEXCEL accreditation, file reviews, supervision etc**
- **Appraisals completed with improved objectives**
- **Need to embed LMT management reports**
- **We need to deal with complaints more efficiently**

Strengths

- Legal Services involves all staff in the production of the Business Plan which is looked at twice yearly all service staff briefings. Any specific issues are taken to individual team meetings.
- Identified gaps in good quality management information have been addressed by the creation of a Business Support Assistant post who supports the Head of Legal Services, the Quality Manager and LMT. We are developing a suite of relevant and user friendly performance information for monthly consideration at LMT.
- Lexcel standards are embedded and met to ensure performance standards in individual casework and client care. The standards are implemented by all staff and managers. Managers check individual compliance and the Quality Manager provides an overall review.
- 87% of appraisals completed on time. The Chair of the Workforce Development Group provides six monthly reports to LMT on appraisal performance including quality of objective setting and linkages with the objectives in the Business Plan.

Areas for Improvement/further work

We will

- Identify and implement more measurable KPIs where possible to ensure VFM and to refine management reports to group and team levels.
- Improve our responding to and monitoring of replies to complaints as some are not completed within the corporate timeframe.
- Continue to improve the monitoring of file reviews to ensure consistency throughout the service.

Managing Finances and Resources

Key Messages

- **The complex structure of the budget has been a weakness but work is now completed on disaggregating costs and spend to group level to provide Heads of Groups with clearer picture**

Strengths

- We have a 3 year financial plan in the Business Plan.
- LMT receives monthly monitoring reports. The quality of these is improving.
- Risks to budget are identified and acted on.
- Use of assets considered across the Division
- Framework agreements with external partners are in place and monitored via Framework Management Meetings
- Consistently no overspend on Legal Services budget (excluding Land Charges)

Areas for Improvement/further work

- Further work is required to continue to disaggregate some costs. The system needs to be embedded to ensure Heads of Groups can exercise responsibility for their spend
- Additional work is being progressed within Greater Manchester on VFM
- Increasing reliance on external income and funded posts will add risks to the achievement of a balanced budget
- We will need to monitor income very closely over the period of this plan particularly given the possibility of future cuts in public expenditure

Managing Risk

Key Messages

- **The Service is increasingly strong in the operation of risk registers on a Divisional and Group basis**

Strengths

- There is a well embedded Legal Services Risk Register and three Group risk registers. All are reviewed six weekly and amended more regularly as appropriate. Amendments are reported to the Head of Legal Services and the Legal Services Risk Manager who is a member of the Legal Management Team.
- The Risk Register is discussed with the City Solicitor and client departments.
- The Risk Manager reports quarterly to LMT
- All managers have been trained on risk management.
- All files have an individual risk rating which is kept under review.
- All complex cases (as defined in procedures) have a project plan to manage and mitigate risk.
- Senior officers from Legal Services meet with clients about their risk registers.

Areas for Improvement/further work

- The Groups are moving towards a workshop based approach involving the wider management team within the Group in order to identify, review and manage risks.
- A separate risk register is created and maintained to reflect the risks associated with the achievement of objectives in the Business Plan

Understanding Customers, Communities and Neighbourhoods

Key Messages

- **The key customers of the Service are in house departments and external clients**
- **The service responds to the requirements and priorities of front facing departments**

Strengths

See section 5 on customer satisfaction

Areas for Improvement

The service will continue to work with the workforce in ensuring that the links between the Council's priorities and objectives and the supporting and back office nature of some of the work is maintained.

Self Assessment Conclusion

In conclusion, Legal Services has a clear and important role within the Council and with front line services. It delivers the Corporate Objectives and supports the Corporate Values. It is well placed to provide valuable support to cross cutting initiatives.

We effectively manage our budget, people, resources and risk.

We operate to high quality standards that are independently, objectively measured on an annual basis. Our customer feedback shows us to be a hard working, valued, proactive, "can do" service that identifies with the needs of our customers and this is seen as the key to our success.

The Service is also successful in consistently delivering high quality complex legal work to a standard and pace that meets the demanding requirements of an ambitious world class City.

The service recognises that its people are its biggest and best asset and we are committed to providing training and development opportunities to all our staff to ensure that they reach their full potential. We aim to develop an effective value for money training strategy for Legal Services, which is not only driven by compulsory professional requirements for solicitors and FILEXs, but to recognise the training needs of all staff across the division.

There are areas where the Service can and will improve. More work needs to be done to improve and further develop in a number of areas. The key areas are:

- to further develop an evidence base on value for money
- use of IT solutions to further improve efficiency
- developing appropriate KPI's
- consistency across the Division
- embed any ongoing improvements in provision of monitoring and performance information
- act on weaknesses identified in customer survey

We are confident that we have the skills and capacity to deliver further service improvements and that the systems we have in place combined with improved management information will enable us to monitor the impact of the improvements on budget and quality more effectively.

Risks

The key risks going forward for the service are –

- inability to obtain relevant and useful benchmarking information
- increasing reliance on external income
- ensuring that staff have the skills and knowledge required by client departments



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Democratic and Statutory Services Business Plan

DRAFT
OCTOBER 2009

The Impact of the Service

1. Business Overview

Vision Statement

The primary function of Democratic and Statutory Services is to discharge the council's statutory obligations as they relate to elections, registration and coroners service, access to information and decision-making but where possible in a way that contributes to the delivery of the council's strategic priorities and is consistent with the Council's corporate values. The service also supports other sections of the council in meeting the Council's strategic priorities by the provision of professional legal and other advice and effectively administers the varied democratic processes and governance arrangements which are key to the successful operation of the Council.

Democratic and Statutory Services comprises of a number of teams handling diverse and discrete areas of work often involving particular professional specialisms but which all support delivery of the statutory framework within which the Council operates. Democratic and Statutory Services provides a range of frontline and professional support services and so our target customers therefore include residents of Manchester, those born, married and bereaved in the city, elected members, Council officers, external organisations (for example the Information Commissioner), government departments and anybody with an interest in the decision-making process and the operation of Manchester City Council. These teams, their core functions and customers are set out below.

Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit (GSSU) (10FTE)

- facilitates the decision-making process by elected members and officers and clear, open communication about our decisions, actions and the reasons for them.
- provides advice and support to elected members and council officers about the decision-making process and makes all necessary arrangements for full council, the Executive, regulatory and Overview and Scrutiny committees and their sub-groups. The Unit serviced 239 such meetings in 2008.
- Incorporates the Independent School Appeals Service, which administers school admission and exclusion appeals (1787 admission appeals and 15 exclusion appeals for the 2008/9 academic year).
- principal customers for GSSU are elected members, senior officers and others with an interest in the City Council's decision-making process, including residents and interested parties interested in the outcome of specific planning and licensing applications and those partner organisations subject to Overview and Scrutiny. The School Appeals Service also provides a service to families during challenging circumstances, particularly in the case of unsuccessful admission appeals and exclusion appeals, and to families coming into the city within the year seeking admissions to schools that may often be oversubscribed.

Electoral Services Unit (9.5FTE)

The Impact of the Service

- promotes representative democracy and participation in the democratic process.
- responsible for the administration of local and national elections and referenda and for compiling the register of electors.
- In 2008/9 217,468 households were canvassed, of which 88.14% responded
- Principal customers include registered electors and potential electors within the city, Councillors, MPs, MEPs and political parties, as well as the Electoral Commission and Ministry of Justice. Due to the high level of transience and deprivation within the city, the Electoral Services Unit is proactive in maintaining high levels of electoral registration and regularly undertakes specific projects aimed to promote electoral participation across underegistered groups (as identified nationally by the Electoral Commission and funded by the Electoral Participation Fund) and within schools to raise awareness of registration and voting.

Democratic Services Legal and Project Team (6.5FTE)

- advises on corporate governance and constitutional issues and provides support to senior managers to enable them to discharge their duties in accordance with the law and best practice
- provides specialist advice and support to the Electoral Services Unit on all aspects of electoral law
- supports the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in discharging the statutory functions associated with this role, including ethical governance and member Code of Conduct matters
- provides legal advice to Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
- specific project work of a complex or sensitive nature e.g. led on the development of the Greater Manchester Transport referendum and on statutory consultations
- Provides legal advice on a range of issues including the Independent School Appeals Panel, information governance and compliance, the use of covert surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and corporate finance issues

Information Compliance and Records Management (3.5 FTE)

- provides strategic support and advice on information compliance and records management issues arising from new and existing corporate initiatives
- deals with information governance and compliance particularly in relation to the Freedom of Information Act / Environmental Information Regulations / Data Subject Access (FOIA/EIR/DSAR).
- provides FOIA/DP advice to Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority, New East Manchester Ltd and PATROL

The Impact of the Service

- The Corporate Records Manager is responsible for supporting the City Council to discharge its statutory responsibilities regarding the correct retention and disposal of its records. This includes the development of best practice guidance and procedures on records management and provides direct support to service areas based on service needs. The Corporate Records Manager is currently providing strategic support to project managers on the Town Hall Complex Transformation project.

Registration Service (29FTE)

- The Registration Service carries out a number of statutory functions:
 - Registration of births deaths and still births.
 - Registration of marriages and civil partnerships
 - Care and management of all historic and current records for the registration district
 - Provision of copy certificates
 - Citizenship Ceremonies
- In addition to these statutory functions, the Registration Service has developed a range of non-statutory services to meet the needs of Manchester's residents. This includes the Nationality Checking Service as well as other non-statutory ceremonies such as baby naming and renewal of vows.
- In 2008-2009 the Manchester Registration Service registered 11,173 births and nearly 4914 deaths (approximately 40% of these registrations took place in the community); took nearly 4,472 notices for marriage and 302 notices for Civil partnerships; conducted 1413 civil marriages and 154 civil partnerships; 2,162 new citizens attended 115 Citizenship Ceremonies; 1,965 individuals had their applications checked through the Nationality Checking service, and 26,996 copy certificates were provided from the historic records – approximately 22% of these are Family History related.
- The service deals with a high proportion of customers who live in other residential areas outside Manchester. Trend information is collected annually, as are any changes to the provision of local services (for example, the opening of the new Manchester Children's hospital is likely to increase the number of births registered in the city). The City Centre location also makes the service a popular venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships and the city's demographic and history of welcoming new citizens also contributes to a higher number of citizenship ceremonies within the city than in surrounding areas/comparable authorities.

Coroner Services (9FTE - excluding Deputy Coroners)

- The Coroner Service supports the activities of the Coroner. The Coroner is an independent judicial officer appointed by, but not employed by, the local authority to investigate any death which is unnatural, sudden, unexplained or violent or occurs in prison. The Council is however responsible for the provision of support to the Coroner by way of staff and must meet the expenses that the Coroner incurs.

The Impact of the Service

- The Coroners Service deals with approximately 3,000 cases per year. In 2008: 2972 deaths were reported to the Coroner. Of these cases, the Coroner required a post mortem in 59%. The Coroner also required an inquest in 25% of these cases
- The Coroner has jurisdiction over any death which occurs within the city boundaries and therefore regularly investigates deaths of non-residents. It is therefore difficult to predict with any accuracy the number of inquests that will be undertaken within a particular year.

Delivery partners include Greater Manchester Police, Royal Mail and Suppliers (Electoral Service Unit), NHS organisations (Register Service) and Funeral Directors (Coroner Service) and public and third sectors partners, who are responsible for providing information to and attending Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings (Governance and Scrutiny Support).

More strategically, Manchester represents the North West on a group established to advise the Electoral Commission and Ministry of Justice on legislation and best practice in electoral services and will co-ordinate preparations for the 2010 General Election on behalf of Acting Returning Officers across the region. The Registration Service also works closely with the General Register Office and is frequently referenced as an example of good practice in providing registration services.

Following the interim management arrangements for Democratic Services and Statutory Services in late 2007 there have been informal steps to integrate the two services to maximise flexibility across the service. This has been supported by the establishment of robust management arrangements to implement restructures within the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit and Democratic Services Legal Team which have been designed to equip the services to respond to the increasing demands and expectations of target customers. This has also enabled the service to implement the considerable amount of legislative change which have come into effect such as the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and to prepare for the continuing challenges of new legislation, such as the Coroner's and Justice Bill, Local Democracy, Economic Prosperity and Construction Bill, and the Political Parties and Elections Act.

The Impact of the Service

2. Strategic Impact

Key Messages

Democratic and Statutory Services' central priority is to discharge the City Council's statutory responsibilities in accordance with the law but where there is scope to do so in a way that contributes to the delivery of our financial and policy objectives.

The service supports the development and implementation of effective governance and values across the Council and underpins the whole democratic process. The service directly contributes to the delivery of the City Council's commitment to be - responsive and accountable and to communicate clearly and openly about our decisions and actions and the reasons for them.

The Electoral Services Unit, the Registration Service, Coroners Office and GSSU provide frontline services directly to the customer, frequently as part of a major life event such as a birth, marriage or moving house, or at times of particular stress, for example a bereavement, admission or exclusion appeal; or where the council are taking a decision which is of particular interest to members of the public and/or businesses, for example in support or opposition to a planning or licensing application. Services are therefore planned in a way that recognises their importance as an initial point of contact with the Council and to ensure that access to our services is not hindered by socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, disability or sexuality.

More generally, the service supports the delivery of LAA priorities relating to Individual and Collective Self-esteem and Mutual Respect and Community Leadership by facilitating the decision-making process, which enables elected members to contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's priorities.

In addition to frontline services, the team provides professional support to other parts of the organisation to deliver their strategic priorities under the LAA and Corporate Plan. This includes the provision of support, training and professional advice on specific issues and providing a framework and infrastructure through which officers can develop knowledge and awareness of their corporate responsibilities around effective governance, decision-making and information management and security. The team also contributes to the development and implementation of key policies and procedures on governance, decision-making and information compliance that impact upon the whole organisation.

Due to the legal and statutory frameworks that govern a significant proportion of our work, it is can be difficult for both our client departments and staff to make direct links between our outputs and the Council's corporate priorities. However, both the frontline and support service aspects of Democratic and Statutory Services are aligned to council priorities and work with partner organisations on specific projects where necessary for example:

- The Registration Service, working in partnership with Sure Start and local hospitals have pioneered community-based registrations, including birth registrations in Sure Start offices and death registrations in hospitals so the service is tailored to the

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needs of Manchester's communities. This service is currently being evaluated and where appropriate will be expanded pursuant to the City Council's 0-5 agenda and commitment to developing services that are neighbourhood focused and in accordance with the needs of the customer. The Service currently hosts a member of staff from Sure Start on a full time basis to make new parents aware of the services available to them within the city.

- The Registration Service has also successfully raised the profile of the Citizenship Ceremony, offering the opportunity for new citizens to participate in a civic event celebrating the value of British citizenship and welcoming them to the city. Whilst not a statutory service, Citizenship Ceremonies have proved popular with new residents across the conurbation and Manchester offers more ceremonies than neighbouring authorities. The frequency and location of ceremonies will continue to be reviewed in accordance with demand. The Service is also seeking to further develop links with schools to contribute to the Citizenship aspect of the curriculum.
- In conjunction with Children's Services and Libraries, the Registration Service helps to deliver the Bookstart, a national programme which aims to give every baby in the UK a pack of books to encourage parents and carers to enjoy reading with children from an early age. An evaluation report completed by the Bookstart Co-ordinator showed Manchester achieving one of the highest distribution rates in the country because distribution happens when parents register their babies.
- During the annual canvass of electors, each property receives two letters and up to three visits (the statutory minimum is one) to maximise the number of eligible residents able to vote and in recognition of the high level population churn within areas of the city
- The Electoral Services Unit continues to focus on promoting voter registration across the city and has devised and delivered specific campaigns to target under-registered groups. This includes an ongoing campaign aimed to encourage voter registration amongst young people via the 'Registered' campaign, working with our partners in the city's Universities to encourage young people to register to vote.
- The Information Compliance and Records Management Team continue to contribute to the development and implementation of the Information Strategy and where appropriate to share information to enable services to respond to the needs of Manchester residents.
- The Information Compliance Team and Democratic Services Legal Team continue to review training and support for officers on Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Data Handling and Security and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. The Democratic Services Legal Team also provide briefings for elected members on the Code of Conduct.
- The Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit facilitates lawful decision-making. The Unit administer planning and licensing committees in accordance with legal requirements and facilitates the making of representations to elected members on individual applications in accordance with the law.

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- GSSU also works with key public and third-sector organisations to provide the necessary information to enable elected members, via Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to scrutinise the performance of our LAA partners and their contribution to the delivery of the Community Strategy, thus contributing to the CAA assessment. The Service currently provides support to scrutiny sub-groups on Ofsted, Engagment with young people, Housing, Community Events, Alcohol, Mental Health Governance and Human Resources and supports elected members to build work programmes that reflect and contribute to the development and delivery of Council priorities.
- The Independent School Appeals Service currently services a large number of school appeals annually with a high proportion of these being undertaken outside of normal admission cycles (known as ‘in year’ appeals) in recognition of the high level of transience within the city. The service is reviewing capacity, structure and accommodation for appeals hearings to enhance the speed and quality of service provided to parents and guardians of children and young people by developing additional capacity within the team to clerk appeals and reviewing accommodation.
- The Coroner undertakes drugs awareness campaigns with local schools to warn pupils of the risks involved in drug taking and abuse.

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3. Cost & efficiency

Key Messages

- Main costs across the service are staffing and internal recharges
- The service provides value for money but there is a need to develop more effective and consistent budget monitoring and performance management information, including benchmarking, to demonstrate this with empirical evidence
- Much of the work of the service is statutory or about the provision of corporate strategic support and therefore in certain areas individual requests for service are not easy to identify
- The Coroner's Office has historically overspent its budget as a result of the costs of post mortems and inquests required by the Coroner which are at his discretion . Work is being done with the Coroner to better predict and address budget over spends and to realise efficiencies
- High cost/low productivity around the use of temporary staff within the Democratic Services Legal Team has now been addressed by the appointment of permanent staff members, however the reduction of reliance upon temporary staff within the Coroner's Office needs to be addressed to reduce costs and raise productivity
- Areas of low cost/high productivity include the Independent School Appeals Service and Information Compliance.

Democratic and Statutory Services is funded through a combination of a central recharge to departments and a number of different income targets. The total budget for 2008/9 is £3,675,700 made up of £2,965,460 central funding and £710,240 income.

Of the total budget, £2,179,845 is staffing cost, which represent 51.2% of the services' total budget overall varying from 30.4% of the total budget of the Coroner's Office, to 90.1% of the total budget in Scrutiny Support. Other significant costs include Examination and Post Mortem Fees within the Coroner's Office and the cost of temporary staff for elections (such as polling station and count staff).

The bulk of the services overspend in 2008/9 (£317,847) is attributable to expenses incurred by the Coroner for which the authority in law must meet and which relate to post mortems, examination fees, mortuary fees and costs of inquests. This overspend has been particularly large this year as the Coroner has sought to address the significant backlog of outstanding inquests and also due to reliance on temporary staff.

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There is evidence of good practice in budget monitoring and financial management and all managers are constantly reviewing their business processes to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and to identify changes in service provision and practices. However several areas of Democratic and Statutory Services face additional challenges in terms of having a demand-led service or one which is funded by central government but where grants provided do not cover unavoidable expenditure.

Much of the evidence in support of this is qualitative or piecemeal and as noted there is need improve the current budget monitoring arrangements to ensure that managers have the necessary information to identify areas where efficiencies can be made and options for greater income generation and work is underway to address this. This will be linked to the development of a robust performance management framework and where appropriate benchmarking is underway to identify both costs and performance of services provided using core city and national comparators.

The main costs of the strategic support services provided by Democratic and Statutory Services are staff costs and internal recharges: some recharges are not considered to be good value for money but are not within our control. Apart from the School Appeals Service and a nominal charge in respect of Freedom of Information, Democratic and Statutory Services does not currently recharge any other department for the costs of our services, however options for recharges and income generation will continue to be explored wherever possible.

The Registration Service has historically exceeded its income targets, although this will be much harder to achieve over the next 2-3 years and this has been used to offset overspends in the Coroner's Service. Across the service, income exceeded target by £267,206 which is largely due to an increase in income to the Registration Service and the service consistently exceeds the expected recovery of costs set by the General Register Office. Benchmarking information against other core cities in 2007/8 places Manchester as the second best performing authority with regards to net expenditure per head of population at 0.88p, versus a maximum of 2.64p elsewhere. In customer services surveys for 2008/9, 90% of respondents rated the Register Office as either very good value or good value for money.

As noted, there are ongoing budgetary pressures in relation to the Coroner's service with expenditure within the Coroner's judicial discretion. However the support provided to the Coroner will be subject to a service review in 2009/10 to assist the Coroner to explore ways to improve performance and ensure value for money.

Recent Efficiencies that have been implemented include:

- the restoration of mortuary contracts which has significantly reduced the number of invoices, thus reducing administration costs.
- restructure of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit to align with council priorities to support decision-making by elected members
- redesign of the postal vote opening process to maximise available staffing resources and to reduce costs.

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- restructure of the Electoral Services Unit to reduce reliance upon temporary staff
- the provision of telephone and internet registration during the annual canvass of electors for those households with no change of residency
- redesign of customer service provision within the Registration Service to ensure more equitable allocation of staff time to deal with enquiries made in person, via telephone and electronically.

Ongoing and planned efficiencies include

- the introduction of flexible working across the service with more generic job descriptions in order to target resources where they are most needed at any particular time
- redesign of the Independent School Appeals Service provided by GSSU
- Digital imaging of information within the Registrars office
- Procurement of body transportation services
- Development of IT Systems and software support to help deliver more efficient services
- Procurement of software for Electoral Services
- redesign of call centre services provided during registration and elections periods

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4. Performance

Key Messages

Generally, performance and outcomes are statutory in nature and failure to meet the performance standards would give rise to legal challenge. Additionally, much of the services performance and outputs are measured externally by Ministry of Justice and other external organisations such as the General Register Officer, Electoral Commission, Office of the Surveillance Commissioner and the Interception of Communications Commissioner's Office. This is supplemented by some internal performance measures. However, as previously noted performance management and benchmarking will be developed across the service where there are not sufficient amount of performance measures to enable managers to monitor and react to performance trends more quickly in order to respond to changing customer needs.

Service outcomes are primarily statutory in nature and failure to meet the standards would give rise to legal challenges and so performance is largely self-policing, with tangible outcomes such as the successful delivery of an election in accordance with legal process or the publication of committee papers in accordance with the access to information rules.

Performance is closely measured by government departments and external organisations such as the General Register Office, Electoral Commission, Information Commissioner and Ministry of Justice. Performance Monitoring is also in operation within the service and there is a clear commitment from managers to improving information available to them to ensure that the services are as responsive as possible to changing circumstances and customer needs.

The Registration Service works to a range of statutory time limits that are met or exceeded in the majority of cases. The service will shortly be adopting a scheme of 'New Governance', which sets out a wider range of key performance indicators relating to core functions.

The Registration Service also continually reviews its performance against its published service standards and by using information gathered from the Complaints Comments and Compliments system and seeks to respond to feedback by addressing any issues raised in future service delivery. Satisfaction levels from surveys undertaken in 2008 include Citizenship Ceremonies: 93% respondents indicating that they were either happy or very happy; Ceremonies 94% of users would recommend the service and 96% of those registering a birth at a Sure Start Centre rated the service either very good or good.

A recent example of responding to concerns is the implementation of measures to improve telephone response time following criticism from customers. To support this and to increase customer choice, the service is currently developing more on-line services for example ordering certificates and booking Citizenship Ceremonies.

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The Coroner's Office submits annual statistics to the Ministry of Justice, which are collated and published nationally and against which comparisons can be made with other districts. Although the service has made significant improvements over the last 12 months in terms of the number of inquests closed, the service does not perform well against other districts although there are local circumstances which explain this to a degree. In advance of the forthcoming Coroner's Charter, the service works to nationally recognised targets for the issuing of certificates and indeed far exceeds those targets. The Service also responds to customer feedback, for example the introduction of a standard letter outlining the inquest process in response to increasing requests for information.

The Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit has developed a team quality plan covering key aspects of the Unit's work, including performance indicators on the proper administration of Member decision-making. Further work is underway to review the effectiveness of current arrangements for the Executive Forward Plan so that changes can be implemented to ensure that the forward planning process reflects and supports corporate priorities.

Whilst information on Committee meetings has been published on the Council's website for some time, in February 2009 a quality standard was established for the publication on the web of agenda, reports and minutes of all committee meetings. In April 2009 an audit of all the previously published meetings was carried out. There were then 463 meetings published on the website, but 318 (63%) did not meet the quality standard with missing information or errors in how the content had been described. An action plan has been implemented to bring the information on all meetings up to the appropriate quality standard and further quality assurance measures have been introduced with management approval and sign-off now required for publication. Additionally, the papers for scrutiny subgroup meetings are now also published on-line.

The Electoral Service Unit works to national standards for registration and elections, seven out of seven national indicators were met in relation to elections in 2008/9 and five of the seven for registration. For the two standards not met, this was because of the absence of sufficient empirical information to evidence delivery rather than a failure to meet the standards per se. In accordance with national trends, the number of postal voters continues to rise steadily each year (52851 at May 2008 to 58325 at May 2009).

The Unit also contributes to the delivery of the LAA level 3 indicator relating to increasing Electoral Turnout at local elections which recognises the importance of electoral participation in building social capital and contributing to individual and collective self esteem and mutual respect.

Turnout for the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections in Manchester was 26.96% but very much in line with national turnout trends which are significantly lower in areas such as Manchester where European Parliamentary Elections are not combined with any other elections. However, this does represent a significant increase in turnout on a like for like comparison with the 1999 European Parliamentary Election (2004 was all postal and combined with all out local elections). Turnout for the last two by elections was 32.08% (Moston) and 26.14% (Didsbury West) and in the last local elections in 2008 was 28.5%. For comparison, turnout at the last General Election was between 42.9 and 56.3% depending on the constituency.

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The increase in public awareness and knowledge of information rights, data protection and security has led to massive increases in the number of Freedom of Information/Data Protection/Environmental Information Regulations requests received by the City Council (810 requests received in 2008/9, up 38.70% from the 584 received in 2007/8) and coupled with this rise is a significant increase in the percentage of FOIA requests where officers seek strategic support from the central team, reflecting the complex nature of requests that are being submitted. In 2008/9 the service responded directly to 112 requests for information (up from 55 in 2007/8) and provided advice and support to Directorates on a further 349, a percentage increase of 78.7% from 2007/8.

Whilst authorising covert surveillance activity is the responsibility of nominated senior officers across the council, the legal team provides audit and feedback to those officers on every RIPA authorisation to enable the Council to continually improve its performance in this sensitive area. The Independent Commission who monitor and inspect local authorities compliance with the RIPA regime have noted the model in Manchester as an example of national best practice. The Unit advised on 63 RIPA authorisations in 2008/9.

To maintain the quality of advice and support provided to client departments, managers within the Democratic Services Legal Team and Information Compliance section undertake regular file reviews, which are used to identify any training and development needs.

Throughout the service, appraisals are conducted regularly and employee performance is monitored and tackled in accordance with corporate standards and there is clear evidence of dealing effectively with poor performance and absence management. Training and continuous professional development is encouraged, however further improvement is needed to link this to council priorities and to assess the impact of training and development activity on the service's performance. As part of the corporate Skills Pledge, the service is currently undertaking a skills audit of all staff below Grade 6 to ensure that all staff can access corporate support to obtain Level 2 qualifications.

The Impact of the Service

5. Outcomes & Customer Satisfaction

Key Messages

- Frontline Service regularly deal with customers as a result of major life events (moving house, births, marriages and civil partnerships) and at times of anxiety and distress (bereaved people, parents and guardians using the independent School Appeals Service)
- Many outcomes are statutory and therefore prescribed by law and there may be little scope to deviate from the statutory model
- The Registration Service holds a Charter Mark for Customer Service.
- Qualitative evidence indicates customer satisfaction across all services is high but there are currently no systems to formally measure customer satisfaction by quantitative means and further work is required to measure customer satisfaction in all areas

The majority of outcomes delivered by Democratic and Statutory Services are statutory in nature and so outcomes are clearly defined and failure to deliver these outcomes would leave the Council in breach of its statutory obligations and possible legal challenge and so resources are targeted to ensure that we comply with the law by -

- Successfully delivering local, parliamentary and European elections in accordance with electoral law
- Maintaining an accurate register of electors
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- The publication of papers for council meetings and recording decisions taken by the council
- Administration of Education Admission and Exclusion Appeals
- Ensuring compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection law
- Ensuring compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

For our customers, the frontline services that are provided by Democratic and Statutory Services relate to major life events (births, marriages and moving house) or at times of distress (bereaved people and those accessing the Independent School Appeals Service). As the service can often be the first and the even the only point of contact with the Council, it is crucial that customer experience is positive and there is a clear commitment within each team to ensure that all services are designed in accordance with the principles of the corporate Customer Services Strategy. There are examples of good practice in measuring customer satisfaction from across the service, though it is recognised that this good practice needs to be embedded across the service. The service complies with corporate standards on the recording of complaints, praise and comments and over the next year this will be supported by the introduction of a customer-focused performance management framework across the whole service area.

The Registration Service holds a Charter Mark, for which it undergoes an annual assessment and whilst the Coroner's Office does not currently have any measurement of

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customer satisfaction, the forthcoming Coroners & Justice Bill will introduce a Coroners' Charter against which customer expectations can be measured, although anecdotal evidence would suggest high levels of satisfaction.

Satisfaction levels from surveys undertaken by the Registration Service in 2008 include the following: Citizenship Ceremonies - 93% respondents indicated that they were either happy or very happy; Ceremonies: 94% would recommend the service and 96% of those registering a birth at a Sure Start Centre rated the service either very good or good.

As noted, the service is currently developing more on-line services for example ordering certificates and booking Citizenship Ceremonies in response to customer feedback.

The Coroner's Office has worked closely with Manchester's Jewish and Muslim communities to pioneer the use of Magnetic Resonance Imaging to avoid invasive procedures to identify the cause of death and in conjunction with the Registration Service operates an 'out of hours' service to issue the necessary documents within 24 hours. The Registration Service also offers an out of hours service at weekends in order to ensure that the cultural and religious needs of certain faiths are met.

The Electoral Services Unit gathers information from a variety of sources to gauge customer satisfaction, including statistics and trends from calls placed to the elections call centre, feedback from polling stations, feedback from staff training sessions and a comments book placed in the reception area. There is documented evidence of high levels of satisfaction amongst North West candidates and agents for the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections received from political parties at regional and national level. Feedback from the 2007 Local Elections led to a comprehensive review of training and support for Poll Clerks and Presiding Officers, including online booking, interactive exercises, detailed information about the voting process and customer service training designed to improve the elector experience.

The Unit also consults with residents, ward Members and Members of Parliament when undertaking polling station reviews and monitors registration and turnout information to identify any barriers to accessing services that may be apparent. In line with customer comments regarding the ease of responding to the annual canvass of electors in properties where there has been no change, the Unit procured an e-registration programme which enables telephone and internet registration within less than a minute.

The Unit also undertakes a significant amount of work to promote electoral registration amongst under-registered groups and this is informed by national intelligence around registration trends, such as the most recent campaign, which focused upon raising the percentage of young people who are registered to vote. In recognition of the importance of voter registration and participation, the Electoral Services Unit is in the process of developing a public awareness strategy which will target communications and information activity to electors across the city, notably amongst recognised under registered groups such as BME communities and potential electors living in deprived areas. The strategy will incorporate ESU's ongoing campaign "Registered" and is designed to encourage voter registration amongst young people.

The Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit regularly receives feedback on its services from elected members and service areas and these comments are collated and fed into the

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development of the team's quality plan. Members of the public are also encouraged to participate in the scrutiny process by submitting suggestions for topics for scrutiny via the council's website and a suggestion form contained on the annual report, which is distributed to libraries and other contact centres across the city every year. Following the creation of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit in 2008, the team have implemented revised templates to improve the presentation and accessibility of Committee Reports and meeting agenda to develop a common look and feel. The purpose of this is to make it easier for elected Members and interested parties to identify Council committee reports and to ensure that information is consistent in providing financial and policy consequences and identifying how decisions relate to City Council priorities.

The independent School Appeals Service administers a disproportionate number of in year admission appeals from new residents and those from BME communities for whom English is not their first language. Staff are trained and experienced in recognising the potentially intimidating nature of a quasi-legal proceedings for many of our residents and are adept at explaining processes and increasing the understanding of parents and guardians about the process.

The volume of work undertaken by the Information Compliance team is monitored and customer feedback is received via a dedicated complaints facility; this feedback is used to inform service planning. Between 2007/8 and 2008/9, the number of cases with input from Democratic Services rose by 78.70% as public awareness of information rights and security increases.

FOIA is motive and applicant blind and it is not necessary for applicants to reside within city boundaries, nor provide a postal address for the purposes of requests meaning it is not possible to say with any certainty how many FOIA requests originate from Manchester residents. However, statistics do show that the majority of requests are made by individuals, followed by the media then companies.

Given the sharp rise in the number of information requests received by the City Council each year, the Service is currently considering a range of options for how the council responds to FOIA/DP/EIR requests to ensure that customers continue to receive high standards of service in the quality and timeliness of requests for information. This includes reviewing current arrangements for the provision strategic support and advice on FOIA, DP and EIR cases to build capacity within departments to respond to requests and enabling the central team to contribute to rapidly developing strategic information governance priorities, notably data-sharing.

6. Capacity to Deliver

Corporate Values

Key Messages

- Clear emphasis on making information about the Council available to customers and to support decision-making by elected members
- Corporate values govern the way in which statutory services are delivered where there is scope to do so but this needs to be more clearly documented.
- Development of Community Focus via more community based registrations of births and deaths

Democratic and Statutory Services are responsible for the administration of the democratic and decision-making processes which underpin the work of the Council and contributes directly to the core value of making the Council responsive and accountable by maintaining and publishing records of the Council's decisions and reasons for them and the administration of the electoral process.

Leading and Managing People

Key Messages

- Good use of Appraisals, 1:1 and team meetings & staff development
- Workforce development provides dual benefits of increasing skills and knowledge base amongst staff and removing dependence on temporary staff
- Emphasis is given to development of team members and to tackling poor performance
- Further work required to align training and development with council priorities

Analysis

The Manchester Standards are broadly embedded across all areas but there are areas for improvement, including ensuring consistency across the service and aligning each team plan with the Business plan. There is evidence of regular team meetings, one to one's and the cascading of relevant information from managers to staff.

A particular strength evidenced across the service is recognising and valuing people's contributions and our staff are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making. However, we can improve the way that we evaluate how people's learning and development improves performance and will work closely with the Service Development Team within the Chief Executive's Department to develop a workforce plan that reflects our skills needs and the training and development required to equip them with the ability to deliver better services.

The Service is fully committed to the principles of effective leadership and people management and there is evidence of good practice across the service.

There are measures in place to monitor time recording, sickness absence and evidence of regular one to one meetings between managers and staff and appraisals are completed in accordance with corporate guidelines. Under-performance is proactively addressed in various ways including utilising the formal capability process.

To improve and evidence the Services' practices in this area, performance information relating to staff management and training will be collated and in the future reported to monthly meetings of the Democratic and Statutory Service Management Team.

Managing Performance

Key Messages

- Delivery of key Statutory Services monitored by government departments and other external organisations
- Recognition that customer experience and satisfaction needs to be measured by qualitative means to provide a sound evidential base

Analysis

As previously noted, the performance of key elements of the service is monitored closely by the Ministry of Justice and other external organisations, such as the Information Commissioner and Electoral Commission and are supplemented by additional internal performance indicators. These internal indicators will be supplemented by outcome focused indicators that are based on customer experience and feedback.

Apart from one level three indicator relating to electoral turnout, there are no corporate LAA targets directly for Democratic and Statutory Services, however as previously indicated the service underpins the democratic process and maintains the corporate framework for decision-making and information management which supports directorates to deliver their responsibilities in accordance with statutory requirements. The professional advice and support provided also allows other council sections to meet their targets e.g. in the LAA.

As noted, whilst each team manages their priorities individually, the link between team plans and the overall business plan needs to be strengthened in the following period.

Managing Finances and Resources

Key Messages

- Overall, close attention is paid to budgets and financial trends
- Regular budget monitoring is undertaken across the service but needs to be more systematic
- Monthly budget-monitoring sessions to be introduced

Analysis

As noted, existing good practice in budget and financial management will be strengthened over the next year by embedding budget and performance management information across the service

As previously referred to, further work will also be taken with the Coroner to allow for better forecasting of expenditure and with the Ministry of Justice on electoral funding issues.

Managing Risk

Key Messages

- Risk Management widespread across the service but better documentation is needed to evidence this

Analysis

Risk management is an integral part of service delivery and is undertaken on a daily basis by all managers and is particularly strong for major projects such as elections or flu pandemic planning. Detailed risk registers are already in place within some services and each team is in the process of developing a detailed risk register which will be monitored at monthly Democratic and Statutory Services Management Team meetings.

Understanding Customers, Communities and Neighbourhoods

Key Messages

- Service is aware and responsive to the needs of customers, communities and neighbourhoods and services are designed in accordance with the unique needs of Manchester's communities
- Recognition that the whole service needs to gather customer satisfaction information via quantitative methods to inform future decision-making and that certain areas cannot continue to rely on anecdotal evidence

Analysis

As noted, the Electoral Services Unit, the Registration Service, Coroners Office and GSSU all provide frontline services directly to the customer commonly in circumstances of particular importance or stress to the individual (s) involved.

Services are therefore planned in a way that recognises their importance as an initial point of contact with the council and to ensure that they are accessible regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, disability or sexuality.

Qualitative information regularly indicates high levels of customer satisfaction amongst those using frontline services, notably the Registration Service, which holds a Chartermark for customer excellence and the Electoral Services Unit.

As noted, better information is required regarding customer needs within some of the support services and this will be addressed over the next year by the development of a performance management framework for Democratic and Statutory Services.

Self-Assessment Conclusion

Evaluation and performance measurement is undertaken across Democratic and Statutory Services and managers monitor performance and outcomes within each team. Over the next year team plans will become more clearly aligned with the Democratic and Statutory Services Business Plan to maintain focus on corporate policy and financial objectives. This will be supported by a full suite of management information reported to monthly management meetings to enable managers to monitor progress against delivering the objectives contained with the Business Plan, including benchmarking and comparator information from other local authorities and to share best practice within the service.

Key recent successes include the

- the integration of Democratic and Statutory Services to date and the development of a flexible workforce able to work across different sections when required and this will continue to develop.
- delivery of the European Parliamentary Elections across the region and in Manchester and the successful delivery of the Greater Manchester Transport Referendum on behalf of AGMA
- development of corporate governance
- Successful move from General Register Office control of the Registration Service

Over the next year, the service will focus upon the implementation of legislative changes, notably the Coroners and Justice Bill, Political Parties and Elections Act and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.

Although there may be limited discretion as to how some of these core statutory responsibilities are discharged, it is likely that there will be scope to deliver some services in accordance with the council's strategic priorities and these priorities will underpin our approach to implementing these new arrangements.

The service will also continue to identify efficiencies and improvements wherever possible. Other priorities include:

- promoting knowledge and awareness of decision-making across the organisation by way of comprehensive training and a guidance booklet for key staff
- reviewing the operation of the Independent School Appeals Service
- subject to approval by government and/or in consultation with the Transformation team, to develop a corporate approach to the implementation of the 'Tell Us Once' government pathfinder project (further details below)

- implementation of robust, customer-focused performance monitoring arrangements to compliment the existing framework

We are confident that we have the capacity to deliver forthcoming service improvements and that the development of better management information will enable us to monitor the impact of these improvements and all service activity more effectively.

The key risks facing the service area and which are contained within the risk register which forms part of the Business Plan are

- Preparing for Pandemic flu (Registration and Coroners Service)
- Delivering a combined parliamentary and local election
- Managing a significant increase in FOIA and Data Protection cases