

REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2019–2022

This Business Plan details the projects and activity undertaken in support of the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 priorities.

The Corporate Plan prioritises local community needs and resources are directed toward the things they think are most important. These needs are aligned with other local, regional and national plans to ensure the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan are realistic and achievable.

The Business Plan covers a three-year period but will be revised and updated annually. Detailed monitoring of progress against key tasks and outcome measures is undertaken twice-yearly by the Finance and Resources Committee. The Policy and Performance Committee also receives a high level report of progress against Corporate Plan priorities on a quarterly basis.

The Council's Vision for Broxtowe is 'a great place where people enjoy living, working and spending leisure time'.

The Council's Values are:

- **Going the extra mile: a strong, caring focus on the needs of communities**
- **Ready for change: innovation and readiness for change**
- **Employees: valuing our employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone**
- **Always improving: continuous improvement and delivering value for money**
- **Transparent: integrity and professional competence**

Broxtowe Borough Council's Priorities and Objectives are as follows:

Housing – A good quality affordable home for all residents of Broxtowe

Business Growth – New and growing businesses providing more jobs for people in Broxtowe and improved town centres

Environment – The environment in Broxtowe will be protected and enhanced for future generations

Health – People in Broxtowe enjoy longer, active and healthy lives

Community Safety – Broxtowe will be a place where people feel safe and secure in their communities

1. PUBLISHED STRATEGY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Strategy/Policy Document	Purpose of Document	Renewal Date	Responsible Officer/Contact
Corporate Plan 2016-2020	The Council's overarching plan for its priorities, targets and objectives. The plan sets out priorities to achieve the vision to make "Broxtowe a great place where people enjoy living, working and spending leisure time" with focus on the priorities of Housing, Business Growth, Community Safety, Health and Environment.	April 2020	Chief Executive
Business Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22	Deigned to ensure that the Council is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean and fit in its assets, systems and processes • Customer focused in all its activities • Commercially minded and financially viable • Making best use of technology. 	Updated annually	Deputy Chief Executive
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22	The Council's key financial planning document. In detailing the financial implications of the Corporate Plan, the MTFS provides a reference point for corporate decision-making and helps to ensure that the Council can optimise the balance between its financial resources and the delivery of its priorities. The MTFS informs the annual budget-setting process, ensuring that each year's budget is considered within the context of the Council's ongoing sustainability over the entirety of the planning period.	Updated annually	Deputy Chief Executive Head of Finance Services
Commercial Strategy 2017-2020	Promote and support a change in organisational culture towards a more business-like approach to the delivery of services. Overall, commercialism will enable departments to adopt a business-like approach with the focus firmly on delivering the best services possible for residents and businesses within the Borough whilst at the same time maximising income generation.	April 2020	Deputy Chief Executive Commercial Manager

Strategy/Policy Document	Purpose of Document	Renewal Date	Responsible Officer/Contact
Capital Strategy	An overarching summary document which encompasses all capital and treasury activity including the capital programme, financing planning, accounting policies and asset management.	Updated annually	Deputy Chief Executive Head of Finance Services
Corporate Debt Policy	Provides a statement of fairness and intent	On changes to relevant legislation	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Benefit Overpayments and Recovery Policy	Explains the service intentions when an overpayment of benefit has been made and the subsequent processes of recovery	On changes to relevant legislation	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Discretionary Rate Relief policy guidelines	Highlights the priorities for supporting business through discretionary rate relief and hardships relief. Provides guidance on the award of relief in the Enterprise Zone.	On changes to relevant legislation	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Sets out the rules governing the calculation and award of local council tax support.	Each year in January	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Council Tax Discretionary Discounts S13A Policy	Provides a set of guidelines for the creation of discretionary council tax discounts.	On changes to relevant legislation	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Service Level Agreement with Ashfield District Council	Sets out NNDR partnership agreement with Ashfield.	Reviewed five annually	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Customer Access Strategy	Summarise and set out the detail of the Customer Access Strategy.	September 2019	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

Strategy/Policy Document	Purpose of Document	Renewal Date	Responsible Officer/Contact
Customer Services Training Strategy	Set out the Department's vision for maintaining and enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff.	Reviewed regularly	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Pre-eviction protocol for rent arrears	Ensures that the Council is able to properly collect rent in an efficient and effective way and discharge its legal duties while doing so	Reviewed annually January	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Counter-fraud policy documents	Sets out the Council's approach to protecting its assets from fraud.	On changes to relevant legislation	Deputy Chief Executive Chief Audit and Control Officer
Council Tax Care Leavers Discretionary Discount	Sets out the Council's guidelines to assisting care leavers within the Borough through Council Tax reductions.	On changes to relevant legislation	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

2. SERVICE LEVEL OBJECTIVES LINKED TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Service Areas covered by this Plan	Service Objectives
Revenues	
Revenue Collection	<p>Billing, collection and recovery of all the Council's locally raised revenues - Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates, Council Housing Rents and Sundry Debts.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Housing Officers to support tenancy sustainment while ensuring timely recovery of all rents due.</p> <p>Accurate and timely completion of the key government and pool returns: NNDR, CTB and QRC.</p> <p>Provide accurate financial and statistical data to the Council and Government.</p> <p>Canvass, inspect and process correspondence to maintain accurate records to support accurate and timely billing and recovery processes.</p>
Benefits	
Benefits	<p>Assessing and paying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (CTS) in an accurate and timely manner.</p> <p>Provide benefit advice to members of the public.</p> <p>Calculating Housing benefit and CTS overpayments.</p> <p>Accurate and timely completion of the relevant Housing Benefit subsidy returns.</p> <p>Lead the Council's approach to welfare reform providing information training and technical briefings to members and senior management.</p> <p>Provide the single point of contact for liaison with the DWP's single fraud investigation service</p>

Service Areas covered by this Plan	Service Objectives
Quality and Control	
Quality and Control	<p>Bill, collect and recover all Sundry Debts owed to the Council.</p> <p>Manage the claim and assessment process for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).</p> <p>Prepare and represent the council at Appeal Tribunals and DHP member panels.</p> <p>Provide key relevant financial reconciliations.</p>
Customer Services	
Customer Services	<p>Be the Council's first point of contact for face-to-face and telephone contact</p> <p>The provision of effective customer access channels, with emphasis on channel shift through automation and enabling of online self-service</p> <p>The provision of inbound telephony services and face to face interviews for a range of high volume services</p> <p>Improving the quality of transactions by increasing the percentage of enquiries answered at first point of contact, reducing queuing and average handling times and increasing the range of services provided.</p>

3. MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DATA

Context – Baseline Service Data

Pentana Code	Service Data Description	Actual 2015/16	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Comments including benchmarking data
Revenues and Benefits					
FRData_01	Total revenues collected	£102.3m	£106.0m	£107.4m	Revenue continues to increase in line with charges
FRData_31	Court cases	2,946	2,856	2,710	Climate for revenue collection remains difficult
FRData_32	Evictions	4	13	13	Now distinct from abandonments
FRData_36	NoSP's served	421	244	223	Working to the new Rent Arrears Policy has seen a reduction in the number of NoSP's served
FBDData_01	Total support/benefit paid	£29.48m	£28.41m	£27.38m	Reduction is related to a reduction in Council tenant rents of 1% and the gradual introduction of Universal Credit
FBDData_03	Benefit claims received	3,899	3,705	3,288	With the roll out of Universal Credit, the Council expects to see this reduction continue
FBDData_11	Changes of Circumstances received	40,696	37,572	37,361	With the roll out of Universal Credit, the Council expects to see this reduction continue
FBDData_07	Applications for DHP	307	335	397	Proactively targeting customers that would benefit from Discretionary Housing Payments
FBDData_09	Appeals received	39	31	16	Reduction as a result of greater clarity over decisions.

Pentana Code	Service Data Description	Actual 2015/16	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Comments including benchmarking data
Customer Services					
CSDData_01	Calls offered (<i>Total demand for calls, i.e. those answered and abandoned in both the Contact Centre and in the back offices</i>).	103,215	118,403	118,218	Significant increase in demand for the Council Tax, Housing Rents and Refuse collection services
CSDData_02	Calls handled (<i>Answered in Contact Centre</i>)	78,923	81,809	90,192	Calls in to the Contract Centre have increased in line with the services provided.
CSDData_06	Calls de-queued	18,802	29,056	28,117	Calls dealt with in the back office remains higher than expected. New procedures have been introduced to ensure the contact centre is the area that most calls will be deal with.
CSDData_07	Calls de-queued abandoned	10,390	18,228	15,954	Capacity within some back offices fell so resources were not available to handle increased demand
CSDData_03	Calls abandoned (<i>Abandoned in the Contact Centre</i>)	5,490	7,538	6,124	Whilst the calls answered increased, the calls abandoned in the contact centre reduced.
CSDData_04	Average telephone handle time	8:05	8:25	7:42	Staff development is highlighted in the reduction in time spent handling calls.
CSDData_05	Average telephone speed of answer (seconds)	79	81	78	Improvement in speed of answering.
CSDData_08	Face-to-face visits offered	6,070	5,330	4,504	Increased Customer Service Officer presence on reception has resulted in less enquiries being passed through to the Contact Centre to deal with.

Pentana Code	Service Data Description	Actual 2015/16	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Comments including benchmarking data
CSDData_09	Average face-to-face handle time	21:30	24.31	21.30	Staff development is highlighted in the reduction in time spent handling face to face enquiries
CSDData_10	Average face-to-face speed of answer	8:37	7:50	10:33	There has been an increase in the time to answer face to face enquiries. Steps have been taken to reduce this going forward.

Critical Success Indicators (CSI)

Priority leaders should work corporately to **define** the **outcome objective** for each priority area and **identify an outcome indicator** or indicators which will be **Critical Success Indicators**. There will be a maximum of two CSI for each corporate priority.

Indicator Description	Pentana Code	Achieved			Target			Indicator Owner and Comments (incl. benchmarking)
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Future Years	
Critical Success Indicators (CSI)								
Council Tax collected in year %	BV9	98.4%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services The Council achieved its highest ever collection rate in 2017/18
Non-domestic rates collected in the year %	BV10	98.7%	98.7%	98.8%	98.8%	98.8%	98.8%	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Performance is in line with target

Performance Indicators

Priority leaders are to identify two sets of performance indicators namely **Key Performance Indicators (KPI)** for reporting to GMT/Members and **Management Performance Indicators (MPI)** for use in business planning and performance monitoring purposes at a service level.

Indicator Description	Pentana Code	Achieved			Target			Indicator Owner and Comments (incl. benchmarking)
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Future Years	
Key Performance Indicators (KPI)								
Average time to process Benefit claims (days)	BV78a	18	14	13	12	12	12	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Performance continues to improve reflected in the 2017/18 average of 13 days
Average time to process Benefit change of circumstances	BV78b	8.3	5.9	5.0	5	5	5	Performance continues to improve reflected in the 2017/18 average of 5.0 days
HB Overpayments (HBO) recovered as a percentage of the total amount of HBO outstanding	BV79b(ii)	27.4%	27.8%	29.3%	29%	29%	29%	Significant improvements have been made in this area which is reflected in the percentage performance improvement.
Calls handled	CSDData02	78,923	81,809	84,068	84,000	80,000	78,000	With an increase in online capability, it is expected that demand will reduce in future.
Overall abandonment rate	CSDData03	15.4%	21.8%	18.7%	18.0%	15%	14%	Expected increase in electronic transactions will help to reduce abandonment levels.

Indicator Description	Pentana Code	Achieved			Target			Indicator Owner and Comments (incl. benchmarking)
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Future Years	
Management Performance Indicators (MPI)								
Council tax payers paying by Direct Debit %	FRLocal_01	70%	70%	71%	71%	72%	72%	This continues to increase and is currently above 70%
Council tax written off as 'not collectable' as a proportion of the gross debit	FRLocal_06	0.01%	0.24%	0.35%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off.
NNDR written off as not collectable as a proportion of the gross debit %	FRLocal_07	0.92%	0.30%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off
Housing Benefit Overpayments written off %	BV79Biii	5.11%	5.30%	6.56%	5%	5%	5%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off
Recoverable HB Overpayments that are recovered during period %	BV79Bi	68.3%	79.8%	84.1%	80%	80%	80%	Performance will continue to be monitored in view of improvement
Outstanding sundry debtors at year end	FPLocal_10	£1.35m	£1.58m	£1.46m	£1.30m	£1.20m	£1.10m	In 2016/17 Sundry Debts was transferred to the Quality and Control team. This is being developed and improvement is expected in future
Sundry debtors collected in year as a proportion of the annual debit	FPLocal_02	88.5%	80.5%	83.2%	90%	90%	90%	The improvement made during 2017/18 is expected to continue through 2018/19 and be closer to the 90% target.

4. KEY TASKS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2019/20 – 2021/22 INCLUDING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Priority leaders are to consider potential **commercial activities** in their priority areas when setting the key tasks and priorities for 2019/20 to 2021/22. In doing so priority leaders should consider:

- In which service areas could new commercial activities be undertaken?
- How much additional income could be generated from the new commercial activities?
- Would additional resources (employees, equipment, systems etc.) be needed to undertake the new commercial activities? If yes, outline these with estimates of costs.
- How will these new commercial activities link into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme, Business Strategy and Commercial Strategy?
- Will the new commercial activities affect existing Revenue and Capital budgets? If yes, then remember to include the net income or costs to Section 5 'Link Key Tasks and Priorities for Improvement to the Financial Budgets'.
- Please identify new '**commercial activities**' in the comments column.

Pentana Code	Description	Targeted Outcome	Partnership/ Procurement Arrangement	Officers Responsible/ Target Date	Budget Implications/ Efficiencies/Other comments
RBCS 1620_01	Manage the introduction of Universal Credit (UC)	Transfer of working age HB claims to UC will be administered by the DWP	Other Council Departments, system suppliers and DWP	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services March 2020	No effect on benefit costs but subsidy income could fall by 40% by 2020/21
RBCS 1620_02	Replace the current CRM system (Meritec)	More effective system to record and refer customer contact.	Work with e-form supplier to develop new system.	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services May 2019	Develop system for implementation in May 2019

Pentana Code	Description	Targeted Outcome	Partnership/ Procurement Arrangement	Officers Responsible/ Target Date	Budget Implications/ Efficiencies/Other comments
RBCS 1620_03	Widen the use of e-forms	Aim for the public to self-serve, reducing costs to the Council	Work with e-form supplier to develop more self-serve forms	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services May 2019	This project will be linked to the implementation of the replacement CRM system.
RBCS 1620_04	Update the Council's face to face customer contact	Devise appropriate ways to handle visitors to the new reception in the council offices	Work with partners and other council departments.	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services March 2019	Implementation is partly dependent on progress of the New Ways of Working Project and the availability of finance to make physical changes to reception
RBCS 1620_05	Implement Analyse Local	Allow the Council to estimate their NNDR appeals provision timely and consistently with other Nottinghamshire Councils.	Work with Analyse Local	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services September 2019	The software will cost an additional £6,000 per annum but work will be carried out to see if the Nottinghamshire NNDR pool will cover the cost.
RBCS_06	Property Inspector	Review the rateable value of Business premises within the area to ensure fair and accurate billing	Joint venture between 5 Nottinghamshire Authorities	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services March 2020	The 5 Authorities will look to split the cost evenly meaning an approximate additional cost of £20,000 for each Council. The project will allow the inspector to identify properties that are not correctly being charged generating additional income of approximately

Pentana Code	Description	Targeted Outcome	Partnership/ Procurement Arrangement	Officers Responsible/ Target Date	Budget Implications/ Efficiencies/Other comments
					£100,000 to Broxtowe Borough Council
RBCS_07	Single Person Discount Review	To review cases of SPD where it is considered the discount is no longer applicable	The Council will have to carry out a procurement exercise.	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services March 2019	Initial estimates consider the cost to be approximately £19,000. Return is based on the number of discounts removed, which is unknown. Due to the Council's share of the Council Tax being 9%, then the return might be limited. Discussions could take place with Nottinghamshire County Council to see if they will contribute as they will be the greatest beneficiaries.

5. LINK KEY TASKS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT TO THE FINANCIAL BUDGETS

Priority leaders should ensure that key tasks and priorities (including commercial activities) that have a financial implication are included in the analysis below.

Revenue and Capital Budget Implications/Efficiencies Generated	Pentana Action Code	2019/20 Budget £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £
Budget Implications				
Implementation of Analyse Local	RBCS 1620_05	(6,000)	(6,000)	(6,000)
Reduction in Housing Benefit Administration Grant	RBCS 1620_01	(10,000)	(18,000)	(23,000)
Property Inspector	RBCS_06	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)
Single Person Discount Review	RBCS_07	(19,000)	(19,000)	(19,000)
Efficiencies Generated				
Staffing reductions as a result of Universal Credit	RBCS 1620_01	20,000	30,000	30,000
New business/increased income				
Property Inspector	RBCS_06	100,000	100,000	100,000
Single Person Discount Review	RBCS_07	10,000	10,000	10,000
Net Change in Revenue Budgets		75,000	77,000	72,000

6. SUMMARY OF KEY RISKS

Priority leaders are to identify three strategic risks for the Business area and to determine whether these have been/or should be considered on the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

Key Strategic Risk	Is this already covered by an existing Strategic Risk?	What action can be taken/is required to mitigate/minimise the risk or threat
Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda	Yes -15	The Council will continue to work with the DWP, MHCLG and CAB to ensure the Welfare Reform Agenda is implemented successfully for the people of the borough.
Corporate and/or political leadership adversely impacting upon service delivery	Yes - 17	Working with GMT and political leaders to ensure that relevant guidance is given at appropriate times.

Also, the top five risks (strategic or operational) arising from the key tasks and priorities for improvement should be identified. Whilst, it will be expected that detailed risks will be considered as part of the project planning process for each key task, it is anticipated that there will be 'common themes' identified which should enable the key risks to be limited to the top five. An earlier example has been included for reference.

Code	Key Task	Risk or Threat to Key Task	Covered by an existing Strategic Risk?	Action taken/required to mitigate/minimise the risk or threat
RBCS1	Universal Credit introduction	DWP will remove significant resources despite the Council still administering CTS and HB for pension age	15 – Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda	Local Authorities must protect their interests to ensure sufficient employees and resources remain to provide service
RBCS1	Universal Credit introduction	Paying claimant direct will impact on rent and council tax collection.	15 – Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda	More time, effort and money will have to be spent on collecting Council Tax and Housing Rents

Code	Key Task	Risk or Threat to Key Task	Covered by an existing Strategic Risk?	Action taken/required to mitigate/minimise the risk or threat
RBCS4	Replace the current CRM system	Lack of resource to drive a large project.	21 - Failure to fully utilise investment in ICT infrastructure	Sound project management and senior buy in should ensure success
RBCS6	Update the Council's face-to-face customer contact	New reception arrangements do not develop as planned or do not facilitate effective operation of customer services	No	Involvement of key stakeholders in development of reception area

List of Strategic Risks (<https://intranet.broxtowe.gov.uk/media/2127/strategic-risk-register-as-at-august-2018.pdf>):

- Risk 1 - Failure to maintain effective corporate performance management
- Risk 2 - Failure to obtain adequate resources to achieve service objectives
- Risk 3 - Failure to deliver the HRA Business Plan
- Risk 4 - Failure of strategic leisure initiatives
- Risk 5 - Failure to complete the re-development of Beeston town centre
- Risk 6 - Not complying with domestic or European legislation
- Risk 7 - Failure of Financial Management and/or budgetary control
- Risk 8 - Failure to maximise collection of income due to the Council
- Risk 9 - Failure of key ICT systems
- Risk 10 - Failure to implement private sector element of Housing Strategy in accordance with Government and Council expectations
- Risk 11 - Failure to engage with partners and the community to implement Broxtowe's Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2020
- Risk 12 - Failure to implement effective Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Risk 13 - Failure to provide housing in accordance with the LDF
- Risk 14 - Natural disaster or deliberate act, which affects major part of the Authority
- Risk 15 - Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda
- Risk 16 - Failure to maximise opportunities and recognise the risks in shared services arrangements
- Risk 17 - Corporate and/or political leadership adversely impacting upon service delivery
- Risk 18 - High levels of sickness

- Risk 19 - Lack of skills and/or capacity to meet increasing initiatives and expectations.
- Risk 20 - Inability to attract or retain key individuals or groups of staff
- Risk 21 - Failure to fully utilise investment in ICT infrastructure
- Risk 22 - Processes or procedures not followed leading to ill informed decisions and/or abuse of Council facilities
- Risk 23 - Failure to comply with duty as a service provider and employer to groups such as children, the elderly, vulnerable adults etc.
- Risk 24 - Failure to ensure appropriate levels of data quality
- Risk 25 - Unauthorised access of data
- Risk 26 - High volumes of employee or client fraud
- Risk 27 - Failure to effectively communicate either externally or internally