

## REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2020–2023

This Business Plan details the projects and activity undertaken in support of the Council's Corporate Plan 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 is revised and updated annually. Detailed monitoring of progress against key tasks and outcome measures is undertaken quarterly 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 greener, safer, healthier Broxtowe where everyone prospers'.**

**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**

**The Council's Priorities and Objectives for REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES are 'provide an excellent customer focused service whilst maximising the Council's income collection':**

- **Assist residents to be financially secure through advice or signposting**
- **Provide payment options to customers while further developing our preferred online options**
- **Ensure strong income collection is maintained**

## 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	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	Deigned to ensure that the Council is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean and fit in its assets, systems and processes</li> <li>• Customer focused in all its activities</li> <li>• Commercially minded and financially viable</li> <li>• Making best use of technology.</li> </ul>	Updated annually	Deputy Chief Executive
Medium Term Financial Strategy	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	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
Capital Strategy	An overarching summary document which encompasses all capital and treasury activity including the capital programme,	Updated annually	Deputy Chief Executive

<b>Strategy/Policy Document</b>	<b>Purpose of Document</b>	<b>Renewal Date</b>	<b>Responsible Officer/Contact</b>
	financing planning, accounting policies and asset management.		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 Services Strategy	Summarise and set out the detail of the Customer Services Strategy.	September 2021	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
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
Counter-fraud policy documents	Sets out the Council's approach to protecting its assets from	On changes to relevant	Deputy Chief

Strategy/Policy Document	Purpose of Document	Renewal Date	Responsible Officer/Contact
	fraud.	legislation	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
Service Level Agreement with Newark and Sherwood District Council	Sets out the Partnership in relation to Business Rates Property Inspectors.	Reviewed every two years.	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

## 2. SERVICE LEVEL OBJECTIVES LINKED TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Service Areas covered by this Plan	Service Objectives
<b>Revenues</b>	
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> <p>Partner with the Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure the effective implementation of Universal Credit and support residents with debt issues.</p> <p>In line with the digital strategy deliver on line payment facilities that customers consider payment channels of choice.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	
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
<b>Quality and Control</b>	
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>
<b>Customer Services</b>	
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>
Legal Services	Provide support with resolving debt collection where the legal process is required to be followed to recover debt
Housing	Assist tenants to remain in their homes working together with the Financial Inclusion Team to ensure financial stability.
Rent	Work with the Tenants Sustainability and Inclusion Officer to enable tenants to remain in their home and manage rent payments.

### 3. MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DATA

#### Context – Baseline Service Data

Pentana Code	Service Data Description	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Comments including benchmarking data
<b>Revenues and Benefits</b>					
FRLocal_10 NEW	Total Council Tax Collected	£56.7m	£59.4m	£62.6m	Expected collection falls in line with the increase in charge
FRLocal_11 NEW	Total Business Rates Collected	£25.5m	£26.0m	£26.5m	Expected collection falls in line with the increase in charge
FRLocal_12 NEW	Total Sundry Debtors Collected	£3.0m	£4.1m	£4.2	Expected collection falls in line with the increase in charge
FRLocal_13 NEW	Total Council Tax Liability Orders granted	2,646	2,507	2,437	The continued reduction in Liability Orders granted shows the improved work on collection before court action.
FRLocal_14 NEW	Total Business Rates Liability Orders granted	134	139	115	The continued reduction in Liability Orders granted shows the improved work on collection before court action.
FBDData_01	Total support/benefit paid	£28.41m	£27.38m	£26.3m	Reduction is related to a reduction in Council tenant rents of 1% and the gradual introduction of Universal Credit
FBDData_03	Benefit claims received	3,705	3,288	2,586	With the roll out of Universal Credit, the Council expects to see this reduction continue
FBDData_11	Changes of Circumstances received	37,572	37,361	32,657	With the roll out of Universal Credit, the Council expects to see this reduction continue

<b>Pentana Code</b>	<b>Service Data Description</b>	<b>Actual 2016/17</b>	<b>Actual 2017/18</b>	<b>Actual 2018/19</b>	<b>Comments including benchmarking data</b>
FBDData_07	Applications for DHP	335	397	381	Proactively targeting customers that would benefit from Discretionary Housing Payments
FBDData_09	Appeals received	31	16	3	Reduction as a result of greater clarity over decisions.
<b>Customer Services</b>					
CSDData_01	<i>Calls offered (Total demand for calls, i.e. those answered and abandoned in both the Contact Centre and in the back offices).</i>	118,403	118,218	115,816	There is a reduction in demand in line with the anticipated demand in calls for Council Tax, Housing Rents and Refuse collection services and the introduction of on online forms.
CSDData_02	Calls Answered	81,809	90,192	79,800	Calls in to the Contact Centre have increased in line with the services provided. There was a staffing issue during 2018/19 that contributed to this.
CSDData_06	Calls de-queued to the back office	29,056	28,117	27,306	New procedures will see a significant reduction in this in the coming years.
CSDData_07	Calls de-queued to the back office abandoned	18,228	15,954	19,927	During 2018/19 a significant change was made to queuing arrangement between the front and back office from Nov18 performance has improved and is expected to continue to improve.
CSDData_08	Face-to-face visits offered	5,330	4,504	3,049	Increased Customer Service Officer presence on reception has resulted in less enquiries being passed through to the Contact Centre to deal with.

## 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)
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Future Years	
Council Tax collected in year %	BV9	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	98.55%	98.55%	98.55%	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Performance is in line with target
Non-domestic rates collected in the year %	BV10	98.7%	98.8%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Performance is in line with target
% of DHP contribution compared to DWP grant	FRLocal_15 NEW	97.2%	95.4%	95.3%	100%	100%	100%	The value of DHP has increased since 2016/17 but is expected to reduce in future years.
Number of online payment transactions to the Council	CSLocal_ NEW	62,262	64,387	67,541	69,000	70,000	71,000	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Online transactions continue to increase in line with customer expectation.

## 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)
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Future Years	
<b>Key Performance Indicators (KPI)</b>								
Average time to process Benefit claims (days)	BV78a	14	13	11.4	10	9	9	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Performance continues to improve reflected in the 2018/19 average of 11.4 days
Average time to process Benefit change of circumstances	BV78b	5.9	5.0	3.9	4	4	4	Performance continues to improve reflected in the 2018/19 average of 3.9 days
HB Overpayments (HBO) recovered as a percentage of the total amount of HBO outstanding	BV79b(ii)	27.8%	29.3%	29.0%	30%	30%	30%	Significant improvements have been made in this area which is reflected in the percentage performance improvement.
Calls handled ( <i>Answered in Contact Centre</i> )	CSDData02	81,809	84,068	79,800	79,000	78,000	77,000	With an increase in online capability, it is expected that demand will reduce in future.

Indicator Description	Pentana Code	Achieved			Target			Indicator Owner and Comments (incl. benchmarking)
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Future Years	
<b>Management Performance Indicators (MPI)</b>								
Council tax payers paying by Direct Debit %	FRLocal_01	70%	71%	71%	72%	73%	73%	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	0.24%	0.35%	0.36%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off.
NNDR written off as not collectable as a proportion of the gross debit %	FRLocal_07	0.30%	0.5%	1.0%	0.50%	0.50%	0.45%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off
Housing Benefit Overpayments written off %	BV79Biii	5.30%	6.56%	7.46%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	All possible recovery options attempted before writing off
Recoverable HB Overpayments that are recovered during period %	BV79Bi	79.8%	84.1%	106.0%	85%	87%	89%	Recovery is based on the total amount recovered during the year, and includes amounts carried forward from previous years, leading to the improved figure of 106% for 2018/19
Outstanding sundry debtors at year end	FPLocal_10	£1.58m	£1.46m	£698k	£670k	£650k	£650k	Significant work undertaken in this area to actively manage the outstanding debt since Debtors were transferred to the Quality and Control Team,
Sundry debtors collected in year as a proportion of the annual debit	FPLocal_02	80.5%	83.2%	83.5%	85.0%	87.0%	87.0%	Challenging targets have been set to ensure this performance continues to improve.

#### 4. KEY TASKS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2020/21 – 2022/23 INCLUDING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Priority leaders are asked to consider potential **commercial activities** in their priority areas when setting the key tasks and priorities for the next three years. 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 2022	The roll out of UC continues and will reduce the amount paid out by Broxtowe Borough Council. This will impact on the Subsidy amounts that can be claimed.
RBCS 1620_06	Update the Council's face to face customer contact experience	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 April 2020	Implementation is partly dependent on progress of the New Ways of Working Project and the availability of finance to make physical changes to reception

<b>Pentana Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Targeted Outcome</b>	<b>Partnership/ Procurement Arrangement</b>	<b>Officers Responsible/ Target Date</b>	<b>Budget Implications/ Efficiencies/Other comments</b>
RBCS 1922_03	Single Person Discount Review	To review cases of SPD where it is considered the discount is no longer applicable	A Countywide project using the National Fraud Investigation Premium Service	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services  December 2020	The Single Person Discount Review will cost the Council approximately £4,600 with 92% of the charge being paid by the other precepting authorities. It is expected to generate approximately £35,000 additional charge of which Broxtowe receive 8%.
NEW	Business Rates Review	To review the relevant Rateable Value of Businesses.	Working with Newark and Sherwood Analyse Local to review the Rateable Values	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services  November 2021	<p>The contract with Newark and Sherwood District Council will cost £20k per annum.</p> <p>Analyse Local will charge a 10% of any Rateable Value that they identify as an increase. Any amounts payable will be linked to an increase in the Business rates collectable.</p> <p>Analyse Local will also provide software that will allow greater analysis of the Business Rates data at a cost of £2k per annum</p>
NEW	Institute for Customer	Become a member of the Institute for Customer	Work with the institute to	Head of Revenues,	Working with the institute to develop improved and greater

<b>Pentana Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Targeted Outcome</b>	<b>Partnership/ Procurement Arrangement</b>	<b>Officers Responsible/ Target Date</b>	<b>Budget Implications/ Efficiencies/Other comments</b>
	Services	Services	become a corporate member	Benefits and Customer Services April 2021	efficiency on working practices.
NEW	Reduce telephone abandonment	Reduce the number of calls that are abandoned in the Contact Centre and in the back Office.	Working with all relevant departments to ensure telephones are answered in a timely manner	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services March 2021	Identify aspects of unavoidable contact and develop strategies to reduce the number of calls received.
NEW	Civica OpenPortal	Purchase and implement the Civica OpenPortal allowing greater online functionality for Revenues and Benefits Customers	Working with Civica	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services November 2020	The cost of the OpenPortal will be £10k and is required to replace the unsupported OpenAccess package that the Council has been using for Customer self-service.

## 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	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	2022/23 Budget £
<b>Budget Implications</b>				
Single Person Discount Review	RBCS1922_03	£390	0	£390
Analyse Local (Business Rates Review)		*	*	*
Analyse Local (Analyse 9)		£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Civica OpenPortal		£21,000	£2,000	£2,000
Institute of Customer Services Membership		£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
Reinvest savings from Customer Service system in VR				
<b>Efficiencies Generated</b>				
OpenAccess removal	xx	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Review processes in Customer Services to identify processes that could reduce calls				
<b>New business/increased income</b>				
Increase In Business Rates Rateable Values	xx	£200,000	£250,000	£300,000
Increase in Council Tax Charge as a result of Single Person Discount Review		£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
<b>Net Change in Revenue Budgets</b>		<b>£176,610</b>	<b>248,000</b>	<b>276,610</b>

\* One off cost subject to businesses being identified in the business analysis identified for rate increase. Reward will be a percentage of the increase

## 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 - 16 - Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda	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 - 18 - Corporate and/or political leadership adversely impacting upon service delivery	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
RBCS 1620_01	Universal Credit introduction	DWP will remove significant resources despite the Council still administering CTS and HB for pension age	16 – 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
RBCS 1620_01	Universal Credit introduction	Paying claimant direct will impact on rent and council tax collection.	16 – Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's	More time, effort and money will have to be spent on collecting Council Tax and

<b>Code</b>	<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Risk or Threat to Key Task</b>	<b>Covered by an existing Strategic Risk?</b>	<b>Action taken/required to mitigate/minimise the risk or threat</b>
			welfare reform agenda	Housing Rents
RBCS 1620_06	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	Risk 2 - Failure to obtain adequate resources to achieve service objectives	Involvement of key stakeholders in development of reception area
NEW	Business Rates Review	Conduct a thorough review of the Business Rates properties within the Borough	Risk 9 - Failure to maximise collection of income due to the Council	Working with Newark and Sherwood to provide Property Inspectors