

Towards the very best...

Corporate Services

2011 – 2014 Service Plan



Aberdeenshire 
COUNCIL

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

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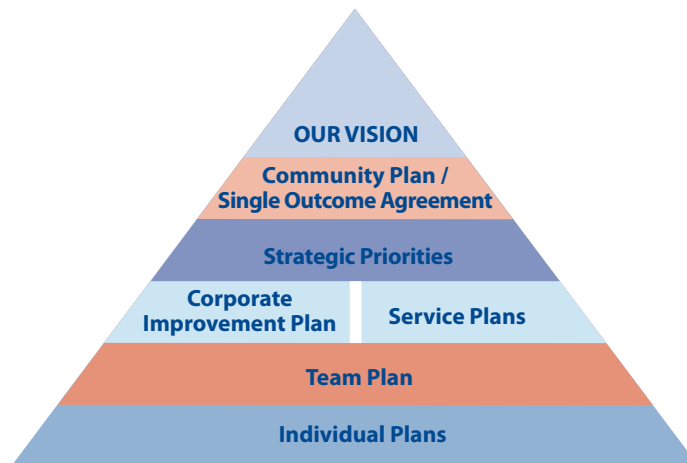
1. Introduction

Aberdeenshire Council has a clear vision for the area and expects Council Services collectively to support people in Aberdeenshire to enjoy the best quality of life in safe, friendly and lively communities. A detailed profile of Aberdeenshire is available in our Single Outcome Agreement available on our Community Planning website at:

www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/images/media/docs/soa/aberdeenshiresoa2009-10.pdf

Corporate Services was formed in July 2009 and comprised of six divisions (Central Procurement, Customer Services, Finance, ICT, Internal Audit and Legal & Governance). In January 2011, Corporate Services was further strengthened with the addition of Corporate Communications and Human Resources & Organisational Development. The Corporate Improvement & Performance team has also been incorporated into Corporate Services from March of this year.

The purpose of the Service Plan is to show how Corporate Services contributes to the Council's overall vision for Aberdeenshire and sets out what we intend to achieve based on the financial and other resources available to us. The Service Plan is the anchor to the Community Plan and SOA through the Council's Strategic Priorities and Service Plan to Section/Team/Individual Work Plans.



Corporate Services helps ensure the legal and financial probity of all Council activities and services, transforming operations through the delivery of effective and efficient services that make best use of our skills, resources and technology. The Service is also responsible for managing the reputation of the Council and delivering a safe, healthy and motivated workforce to contribute to the Council's vision to be the best. We also deliver a range of statutory functions and services direct to the public.

The Service is committed to developing shared and partnership working arrangements and is already involved with a number of external organisations including Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Grampian Valuation Joint Board, Northern Community Justice Authority, Moray Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, NHS Grampian, ACSEF, SDPA (Strategic Development Planning Authority), Cosla, CIPFA, Society of Personnel Directors Scotland, North East Public Sector Development Group, North East Public Sector Health & Safety Group, North East Public Sector Wellbeing Group, North of Scotland Local Authority Health & Safety Group, Trade Unions and Nestrans, working together to share knowledge and make more efficient use of resources.

2. Service Role and Main Activities

Corporate Services is responsible for ensuring the good governance and financial probity of the council as well as ensuring that there is a well motivated and competent workforce focussed on delivering excellent services. It provides a range of essential services to Aberdeenshire residents and other stakeholders, the Council and its services. These services cover legal and financial advice; operation and maintenance of financial systems; information and communications technology (ICT); customer service; procurement; corporate communications; human resources & organisation development; internal audit; and the corporate improvement and performance team. All divisions receive administrative and clerical support from the Support Services team.

In addressing its corporate role, Corporate Services works at a number of levels. At the most basic level we seek to ensure the legal and financial probity of all activities of the Council. Building on that, we assist the Council and its Services to operate in the most economic, efficient and effective way in all activities, with a particular focus on the delivery of a competent and motivated workforce. We contribute to the achievement of the Council's vision to be the best in Scotland by using our skills and resources to help transform the way the Council works.

Corporate Services also provides the tools and acts as a catalyst to ensure that we are effectively delivering best value services across Aberdeenshire, through provision of drive and leadership on corporate improvement and organisational development as well as championing major initiatives including Worksmart and Kaizen for Daily Improvement (KDI). The service also leads on Best Value and the Shared Risk Assessment process with Audit Scotland and other regulatory bodies.

In summary the above approach can be described as probity, people, reputation and transformation. These cannot exist without a sound base of probity in all the areas of work across the Council.

Corporate Services' annual budget for 2011/12 is £53.8m. During 2011/12, 711 full time equivalent employees are budgeted for.

Central Procurement Unit

The Central Procurement Unit is a shared service with Aberdeen City Council which has responsibility for purchasing goods and services across both authorities using its expertise to achieve best value in terms of cost, quality and services by improving procurement activities and generating cost savings. The CPU has achieved £2.8m of net savings during the financial year 2010/11.

Corporate Communications

The team's vision is to enhance and support effective communications across Aberdeenshire and beyond. This is achieved by ensuring that employees and residents in Aberdeenshire feel informed and engaged in the work of the Council. The Communications team's work is guided by a three year communications strategy which sets the direction for all internal and external communications, community engagement and reputation management. On average, the team responds to around 2,000 media enquiries a year and produces around 700 press releases to help support the positive reputation of Aberdeenshire Council

locally and nationally. The team co-ordinates consultation activity and supports a range of community engagement events. The Graphic Design team produce over 1,000 pieces of design work and around 5,000 jobs printed. In addition, the Communications team plays a vital role in providing a crisis communication service if there are any incidents that could affect the safety of residents of Aberdeenshire.

Corporate Improvement & Performance

Corporate Improvement & Performance aim to enable the delivery of accessible, high quality, continuously improving and best value council services to satisfy the needs of our residents. This is achieved by the implementation of Aberdeenshire Performs, the Council's Continuous Improvement and Performance Management Framework and providing support to the Council's response to Best Value Audits and other external inspections as necessary. The team also provides leadership and programme management for the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP).

Customer Services

The primary role of Customer Services is to make it easy for our customers to contact and interact with the Council. The Contact Centre is consistently dealing with 15,000 phone calls, 1,000 e-mails and text messaging contacts every month. During 2010 the first of our Service Points was introduced replicating the work of the Contact Centre from a face-to-face perspective, and this approach will be extended throughout Aberdeenshire between 2011 and 2014.

Finance

The primary role and purpose of Finance is to ensure the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council. Aberdeenshire Council has a Revenue Budget of £543m and a Capital Budget of £74m per year.

Finance is responsible for the preparation and monitoring of Revenue Budgets, Finance Annual Accounts and the Capital Plan and works closely with Services providing financial support, advice and expertise. The Revenues and Benefits teams carry out an essential role in the administration and collection of Council Tax and Business Rates and the calculation and payment of Housing and Council Tax Benefits. The Council Tax budgeted collection rate is 98.5% from around 108,000 Council Tax customers (properties) of which 18% claim Council Tax Benefit and the in-year collection rate is 96% of the total billed. Finance receive and process around 15,000 Housing Benefit claims totalling £32m in payouts. Business Rates of around £60m are collected from some 10,500 customers with over 97% collected per year.

Human Resources & Organisational Development

HR&OD aim to deliver a safe, healthy, well led, motivated and competent workforce to provide the best services to the residents of Aberdeenshire, working in partnership with our internal and external colleagues to identify and mitigate the risks we face as a Council. This is achieved by supporting services and working in partnership with Trade Unions to maintain compliance with Employment and Health & Safety legislation, at all time reflecting the professional best practice and ensuring people feel informed and engaged in the work of the Council.

ICT

ICT underpins the achievement of excellence in a modern organisation. By identifying and realising technological opportunities, it supports and influences continuous improvement, transformational change, innovation and flexible working.

ICT provides and maintains electronic information systems and an ICT infrastructure to address the needs of Aberdeenshire Council Services. The service currently supports 5,000 office PCs, 9,000 school PCs, 5,000 Lotus Notes e-mail users and 30,000 internet users (including school pupils) at over 500+ network locations. In addition, the Service Desk deals with 5,000+ calls per month. ICT also manages and supports 300+ server computers and 200+ business software systems.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit independently reviews processes put in place by management to control the Council's activities. Audits range in scale from establishment audits (e.g. Primary Schools, Social Work Homes, Temporary Accommodation Unit, Cash Office etc) to major systems or functional audits (e.g. Oracle Financials System, Northgate Revenues and Benefits System, Treasury Management, Building Cleaning, Fleet Management etc).

Internal Audit also undertakes investigations into suspected financial irregularities. These can arise through planned work, notification from Service management or through the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Legal and Governance

Legal and Governance fulfils a primarily supportive role entailing specialist knowledge of the statutes governing the Council's functions, powers and operations.

Legal Services provides advice and expertise in matters ranging from the acquisition and disposal of land and property to representing the Council's interests in planning appeals and inquiries, court actions and tribunal cases. The Licensing Service administers licences covering a broad range of activities. In excess of 5,000 licences may be current at any given time. The Registration Service gathers statutory information in order to register births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships and recorded 5,569 events during 2010. Planning Gain negotiates and collects funds from the development industry for utilisation by Council services to mitigate the impact of development on the local infrastructure. Committee Services is responsible for ensuring the effective administration of Council and Committee meetings where the business of the Council is conducted.

Support Services

The Support Services team provides a range of administrative, clerical and secretarial support to all divisions of Corporate Services. The support provided is diverse and includes: preparation and issuing of Council and Committee agendas and minutes; preparation of and compiling legal documentation; staffing and recruitment administration; budget monitoring and reporting; financial administration including purchasing goods, supplies and services and payment of supplier invoices; management and maintenance of information and records (files, title deeds, Arcadia and website information); reception and mail services. Members of the team actively participate in and contribute towards corporate and service-driven improvement projects and initiatives.

3. How Are We Doing?

As a recently created Service that has experienced management changes, Corporate Services has not yet had the opportunity to carry out self-assessment as a whole Service. Prior to Corporate Services being created, each division has undertaken a self assessment using AIM (Aberdeenshire Improvement Model). This evaluation process assists in identifying strengths and areas for improvement from which improvement plans are developed and monitored to ensure performance is improved. The use of AIM/EFQM across the Council is currently under review to ensure that it is the most appropriate self assessment tool.

Service Strengths

- 1) Top number of ICT Service Desk hours available per week at 53 hours compared to the median of 42 hours for councils as a whole (SOCITM).
- 2) First equal for ICT business systems availability; second top in terms of fault resolution, with 57% of faults resolved within 4 hours compared to the median of 44% (SOCITM).
- 3) The Council's website has obtained coveted Shaw Trust accreditation for accessibility, one of only ten local councils in the UK to achieve this.
- 4) Aberdeenshire Council website rated as second only to a London borough as the busiest site in the UK and also commends our site for its A-Z index, listing Aberdeenshire in the top ten (SOCITM).
- 5) As at 15 February 2011, 98% of recommendations made in Internal Audit reports finalised in 2010/11 had been accepted.
- 6) The Contact Centre is consistently achieving the Scottish Government set target of delivering at least 75% of our services at first point of contact.
- 7) In the most recent Housing Inspection, the Contact Centre was identified as an improved channel in the reporting of repairs with the Housing Repairs service being graded as excellent (A).
- 8) The Council has been awarded an Unqualified Audit Certificate which reflects on the financial administration of the Council.
- 9) Strong financial modelling to reflect the impact of UK and Scottish Governments on Council funding.
- 10) During 2010/11 funding of £1.47m was brought in through Planning Gain contributions for Aberdeenshire and through Service Level Agreements.



11) In 2010/11 the Central Procurement Unit expects to be rated third across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities following a rigorous national Procurement Capability Assessment.

12) Marketing of Ancestral Tourism and Genealogy resulting in an increase in family history research activities and income generation.



13) The Council's Communications team were highly commended in the UK Customer Satisfaction Awards for its work in the delivery of a comprehensive communications strategy for budget savings.

14) The Graphic Design team were commended by the Scottish Government for their design of the Local Development Plan. It was described as "the benchmark that other Councils should follow".

15) Development and implementation of a workforce planning toolkit to support the Council. The Improvement Service has provided £13,000 of financial support with the finalised toolkit to be made available for use by all Scottish local authorities by April 2011.

16) In the Draft 2011/12 Assurance and Improvement Plan Update (issued 31 January 2011), the external auditor stated that the Council has an effective Internal Audit Section.

17) Healthy Working Lives Bronze Award achieved and are now working towards Silver.



18) Business Continuity Plans are in place for all critical activities, as is a testing, reviewing and reporting framework.

19) Total Campaign Management Strategy for recruitment to senior and hard to fill posts. This in-house service has reduced spend considerably whilst increasing the success of appointments.

Areas for Improvement

- 1) The Contact Centre requires to address call handling response times and unanswered call targets. Additionally, the Contact Centre needs to address current recruitment issues including the shortfall between an employee leaving and the time taken to recruit and train new employees.
- 2) Implement mobile technology for visiting Benefits and Council Tax employees in a joint project with Housing and Social Work.
- 3) Development of electronic processes to replace a number of paper based systems.
- 4) Further develop systems for monitoring and comparing performance.
- 5) Address concerns raised by Audit Scotland in relation to Benefits processing performance and business planning.
- 6) Development of medium and long-term financial planning.
- 7) Extend and develop the use of ICT systems e.g. Case Management and Committee Management systems to streamline procedures and use workflows to enable more efficient and cost effective working.
- 8) Accelerate the deployment and roll-out of available procurement technology.
- 9) Investigate the Council's cultural capacity to support transformational change, maximising the benefits of new technological developments and innovations.
- 10) Improve the development and training of ICT employees in order to achieve higher performance and job satisfaction.
- 11) Widen community participation in the Council's consultation activities.
- 12) Simplify and streamline HR&OD policies, processes and procedures and improve their presentation, accessibility and effectiveness.
- 13) Leadership and Management development needs to be undertaken to ensure effective operational performance, facilitation of change and the development of a positive and productive culture.
- 14) Introduce processes to reduce absence levels across the Council.
- 15) Further work is needed to develop Aberdeenshire Performs and realise the full potential of a 'continually improving' council.
- 16) Review the quality of our performance management information.

4. What Challenges Face Us?

In the coming year we face a number of external challenges, the most significant of which are listed below:

- 1) The Council has to deliver significant savings to balance its budget for 2011/12 and beyond, recognising the pressures placed on public sector expenditure. The Finance Service needs to support all Council services through the provision of timely and accurate information. It also needs to continue to model the impact of government decisions on local authority budgets and spending plans. Corporate Services itself needs to manage its budget within the available resources, which will continue to be a challenge for a Service whose main cost is staffing.
- 2) Reductions in budgets will generate significant additional work for Corporate Services. Public sector bodies in Aberdeenshire will be under greater pressure to work in partnership to deliver shared services, reduce costs and target resources on shared outcomes. Corporate Services will be required to play an increasing role in the management and communication of change to both employees and residents. Corporate improvement and performance management will play a key role in ensuring that the council prioritises and targets resources to key outcomes and activities. In order to meet these challenges, the Council will need to be more self-aware, understanding where we perform well and less well, delivering improvement and enabling best value.
- 3) Corporate Services needs to explore options for service delivery and demonstrate that it provides best value. The Customer First agenda has a major focus on the delivery of shared services, with expectations high on the delivery of joint customer service projects with partners.
- 4) The Customer First agenda highlights the need for Aberdeenshire to commit to numerous Scottish Government improvement projects which could have a major impact on various service delivery channels within the Council. National projects include the Citizen Account, Tell Us Once initiative, Public Information Notices initiative and the National Infrastructure Project.
- 5) Reputation – Our activities in the coming years will be largely influenced by the economic challenges facing the organisation. With the significant financial pressures that are facing the Council, the need for clear, consistent communications to residents and employees is critical. We continue to move towards generating understanding about individual and service specific implementation of budget reductions (both internally and externally). Employees will need regular information about the decision-making process and the changes to services which may affect them. All this activity will play a significant role in how the Council is viewed by customers, partners and the business community in the future and effective communications is critical to our long term reputation.

- 6) The 2011 Holyrood elections and the Local Government 2012 elections will significantly increase workloads and present challenges with regards to prioritisation and allocation of resources.
- 7) Compliance with Information Security and Data Protection legislation, policy, codes of practice and guidance. Particularly, meeting the needs of Government and financial security rules in relation to “Codes of Connection” for the [Scottish] National Infrastructure, the Government Secure Extranet (GSx) and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS).
- 8) Suppliers now have the opportunity through the Public Contracts Scotland Regulations 2006 (as amended) to challenge procurement decisions in a manner that was not previously open to them. The Council’s procurement process must be transparent, non-discriminatory and robust in order to minimise its exposure to significant financial and reputational risk.
- 9) Implement the required new format of accounts to comply with International Financial Accounting Standards for 2010/11 (with comparable figures for 2009/10).



5. Service Objectives

The Council has clear aspirations for the future of Aberdeenshire and these are reflected in the Aberdeenshire Council vision:

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea, the very best of Scotland

Corporate Services' vision supports the aspirations of the organisation to be the Best Council and states that we:

"... are committed to upholding the principles of good governance throughout Aberdeenshire Council. We aim to provide excellent services for all, across the themes of Corporate Improvement & Performance; Corporate Communications; Customer Service; Finance; Human Resources and Organisational Development; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); Internal Audit; Legal and Governance, and Procurement."

As a Service we aim to achieve this by:

- Delivering high quality customer services by ensuring we are accessible and that customers are treated fairly and considerately.
- Using financial resources to deliver policies and objectives economically, efficiently and effectively.
- Supporting the Council to be the best in Scotland by providing our customers with ICT systems and services that enable greater efficiency, higher performance, improved customer service and innovation.
- Independently reviewing processes put in place by management to control the Council's activities, providing assurance that controls are in place, and reporting on non-compliance and areas for improvement.
- Supporting the corporate need to ensure legality, regulatory and democratic propriety and good governance.
- Using collaborative procurement practices to ensure the delivery of efficiency savings and high quality services to the people of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City.
- Delivering public facing and statutory services, including Registration, Licensing, Council Tax collection and payment of Benefits, to the citizens of Aberdeenshire in a considerate and efficient way.
- Ensuring that residents and employees are informed and engaged in the work of the Council.
- Supporting cultural change and organisational development in the challenging climate now faced by many public sector organisations.
- Embedding a culture of continuous improvement throughout all Council services; ensuring performance is managed and reported effectively.
- Ensuring all aspects of our Service are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to people's needs.

6. Service Priorities for 2011/12

- 1) Achievement of a balanced and sustainable budget for 2012-2015.
- 2) Implement and manage an effective system of monitoring to ensure that savings targets are achieved.
- 3) Maximising the potential to achieve savings corporately through effective and efficient use of procurement. Ensure savings target of £3m is met.
- 4) Complete a review of ICT to ensure that the potential for productivity and efficiency savings through the effective use of technology is maximised.
- 5) Continued implementation of the Service Point Strategy and further expansion of the Contact Centre facility.
- 6) Communications support for service budget implementation.
- 7) Lead the process of change throughout the Council and support the achievement of budget savings.
- 8) Lead the implementation of the Corporate Improvement Plan.
- 9) Develop an effective performance management framework, 'Aberdeenshire Performs', that further involves employees delivering the council's objectives and priorities.
- 10) Lead the development of improvements to policies, processes and procedures to support the modernisation and efficiency agendas.
- 11) Support cultural change and organisational development.
- 12) Implement Employee Relationship Management.

7. How Will We Evidence How We Are Doing?

In order to know if we are achieving our key objectives we have identified a set of performance measures that enable us to regularly assess how we are doing and identify what improvements we need to make. We have identified a range of key projects and actions that we need to deliver on that will also help us achieve our objectives. Each project has milestones identified to ensure we can monitor our progress.

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 1

Deliver high quality customer services by ensuring we are accessible and that customers are treated fairly and considerately

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority theme:

Corporate Improvement – efficiency and delivering high quality customer service

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| 1.1 – 1.3 | CI 1.1 & 3.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 1a. First point of contact resolution for service requests | 80.67% | 75% (National Target) | 75% (National Target) | 75% (National Target) | |
| 1b. Customer service delivery standard (measuring quality service delivery of Contact Centre employees against benchmark) | 86.55% | 86% | 86% | 86% | |
| 1c. Satisfaction surveys (telephone call-backs targeted to 10 customers per week covering complete service from telephone handling to service delivery) | 94.33% | 95% | 95% | 95% | |
| 1d. 20 second telephone response rate (call handling) | 62.66% | 70% | 70% | 70% | |
| 1e. Acknowledgement letters issued within 5 working days | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 1f. Investigation responses fully resolved within 20 working days | 94.51% | 95% | 95% | 95% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1.1 Identify and agree site of second Contact Centre to expand business and meet Customer demand from new incoming Services. Refurbishment/delivery plan to be set once site located and agreed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Services to discuss expansion opportunities. | Customer Services Manager |
| 1.2 CRM System upgrade – continue to transfer service processes onto new version of CRM system in a phased approach. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three services now fully live on new version of system. | Customer Services Manager |
| 1.3 Implement Service Point Strategy throughout various sites within Aberdeenshire, delivering partnership working where possible and ensuring best value. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westhill Service Point live to public. Huntly Service Point – decant plan completed in projected timescale and contractor on site. | Customer Services Manager |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 2

Use financial resources to deliver policies and objectives economically, efficiently and effectively

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority theme:

- **Corporate Improvement – efficiency and managing financial resource**

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| | CI 1.1 & 7.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 2a. Creditor days – either average time taken to pay creditors or % invoices paid within 30 days (SPI) | 87% | 90% | 90% | 90% | |
| 2b. Percentage by which actual outturn differs from budgeted outturn at half year and year end (SOA measure) | 98% | 99% | 99% | 99% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|---|------------|-----------------|
| 2.1 Embed policy-led budgeting into the Council's management of financial resources | | Head of Finance |
| 2.2 Implement and manage an effective system of monitoring to ensure that savings targets are achieved. | | Head of Finance |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 3

Support the Council to be the best in Scotland by providing our customers (including schools) with ICT systems and services that enable greater efficiency, higher performance, improved customer service and innovation

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Lifelong learning – effective targeting of resources
- Corporate Improvement – efficiency and delivering high quality customer service

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 3.1, 3.2 & 3.4 | CI 1.1 | - |
| 3.3 | CI 1.1 & 3.1 | |
| 3.5 – 3.7 | LL 1.6 | |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 3a. Customer satisfaction with ICT services | 93% | 95% | 95% | 95% | |
| 3b. Percentage of fault calls resolved within timescale | 83% | 90% | 90% | 95% | |
| 3c. Percentage of availability of core Council systems | 99% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|--|----------------------|
| 3.1 Support the Worksmart initiative to deliver new, more flexible and economic ways of working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement mobile scanning solution for Benefits and Housing services. • Initiate a corporate project for the Council wide roll out of Electronic Document and Records Management. • First three high volume forms e-enabled. | ICT Strategy Manager |
| 3.2 Support the Employee Relationship Management project to deliver better work processes and management information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting on ERM Project Steering Group to identify targets (end March 2011). | ICT Strategy Manager |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <p>3.3 Continue to support significant improvements in the ability of Services to make transactions and information available via the Council website and contact centre, including an agreed “Top Ten” of customer access facilities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop personalised Aberdeenshire web access. • Provide a version of the website for mobile phone access. • Additional of 2 new webcams in Inverurie and Banchory. • Complete next phase of programme to provide electronic forms on the website. • Implement new site search technology. • New Homepage design. | <p>ICT Strategy Manager</p> |
| <p>3.4 Continue to develop a new “virtualised” computer server environment which will allow the Council to recover more quickly from disastrous loss or damage to the Council’s centralised data centre. Improve Network and Services reliability from loss of main data centre.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement internet resilient links at Stonehaven. • Develop server workload recovery capabilities. | <p>ICT Infrastructure Manager</p> |
| <p>3.5 Continue to significantly improve the ICT environment in schools by introducing high capacity hilltop wireless broadband links, further extending wireless access facilities within primary schools and updating the underlying classroom learning and teaching system (RM CC4).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hilltop sites in place and working. • Links from hilltops to schools in place. • Complete Phase 2 wi-fi systems within schools. • Upgrade a further 18 schools to CC4. | <p>ICT Infrastructure Manager</p> |
| <p>3.6 Extend the very successful ICT Service Desk self-service “portal” facility to the Council’s schools and classroom teachers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented in all schools. | <p>ICT Services Manager</p> |
| <p>3.7 Develop SLAs for ICT services to schools, building upon the set of corporate ICT SLAs already in place.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a draft SLA for schools. • Agree service definitions and service levels. • Implementation. | <p>ICT Services Manager</p> |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 4

Independently review processes put in place by management to control the Council's activities, providing assurance that controls are in place, and reporting on non-compliance and areas of improvement

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Corporate Improvement – efficiency

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 4.1 | CI 1.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 4a. Percentage of audits where draft report issued by deadline | New measure in 2011/12 | Baseline to be set | TBC | TBC | N/A |
| 4b. Percentage of audits completed in the year that were within 110% of planned time allocated | New measure in 2011/12 | Baseline to be set | TBC | TBC | N/A |
| 4c. Percentage of current year audits completed by end of current year | New measure in 2011/12 | Baseline to be set | TBC | TBC | N/A |
| 4d. Percentage of previous year audits completed by end of current year | New measure in 2011/12 | 100% | 100% | 100% | N/A |
| 4e. Percentage of recommendations accepted by management by grading: | New measure in 2011/12 | | | | N/A |
| • Major | | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| • Significant | | 95% | 95% | 95% | |
| • Important | | 95% | 95% | 95% | |
| • Overall | | 95% | 95% | 95% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|---|------------|------------------------|
| 4.1 Work undertaken in accordance with the Internal Audit Plan contributes to the overall level of assurance that can be independently given. | | Chief Internal Auditor |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 5

Support the corporate need to ensure legality, regulatory and democratic propriety and good governance

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority theme:

- Corporate Improvement – efficiency and outcome focus

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| 5.1 – 5.3 | CI 1.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 5a. Percentage of Support for Aberdeenshire Business loan documentation issued within 14 days of full instructions being received | 100% | 90% | 92% | 95% | |
| 5b. Percentage of Recovery of Possession of Heritable Property cases where proceedings are raised within 21 days of receipt of full instructions from the Housing service | 99% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 5c. Percentage of all applications under the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 presented to the Sheriff Court within 14 days following receipt of all necessary information requested from the various partner agencies | No applications made | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 5d. Percentage of initial consultations from developers responded to within 14 days | 89% | 90% | 90% | 92% | |
| 5e. Percentage of decision sheets issued to officers within 24 hours | 91% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 5f. Percentage of Local Review Body cases concluded within 2 months of the Notice of Review being lodged | 24% | 40% | 45% | 50% | |
| 5g. Percentage of FOI appeals to the Scottish Information Commissioner where the Council's position was defended successfully | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| 5.1 Complete the Phase 2 Modernisation Review of Legal and Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing to consultation mid April 2011 | Head of Legal and Governance |
| 5.2 Develop and improve the use of Iken Case Management system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh launch 1 April 2011 | Head of Legal and Governance |
| 5.3 Roll out KDI within Legal and Governance in order to improve working practices, streamline and harmonise procedures and develop better Performance Management in all areas of the division | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing progressing to Bronze award Planning Gain team to launch 14 April 2011 | Head of Legal and Governance |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 6

Use excellent collaborative procurement practices to ensure the delivery of efficiency savings and high quality services to the people of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Developing our Partnerships – working in partnership and sharing services
 - Corporate Improvement – efficiency

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 6.1 | DP 3.1 & CI 1.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 6a. Value of efficiencies (savings) achieved through improved procurement | £2.8m | £3.0m | TBC | TBC | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|------------|---------------------|
| 6.1 Ensuring the Council is perceived as an attractive business partner across our supplier base | | Head of Procurement |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 7

Deliver public facing and statutory services, including Registration, Licensing, Council Tax collection and payment of Benefits, to the citizens of Aberdeenshire in a considerate and efficient way

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Community Wellbeing – promoting inclusiveness
- Corporate Improvement – efficiency and delivering high quality customer service

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 7.1 | CI 1.1 | - |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 7a. Annual accuracy rate with regards Registration | 97% (2010) | 97% | 97% | 97% | |
| 7b. Number of family history research units used by members of the public (1 unit = 1 hour) | 565 (2010) | 420 (2011) | 450 (2012) | 480 (2013) | |
| 7c. Percentage of occasional licences issued within 6 weeks of application | 94% | 95% | 95% | 95% | |
| 7d. Percentage income due from Council Tax for year received by year end (SPI) | 96% | 96% | 96% | 96% | |
| 7e. Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due is correct | 96% | 98% | 98% | 98% | |
| 7f. Average speed of processing: | | | | | |
| • New claims (days) | 30 days | 24 days | 22 days | 21 days | |
| • Changed claims (days) (SPI) | 10 days | 10 days | 9 days | 8.5 days | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|---|------------|--|
| 7.1 Continue working towards Bronze-level for KDI within Licensing team | | Service Manager (Licensing and Governance) |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 8

Ensuring that residents and employees are informed and engaged in the work of the Council.

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Community Wellbeing – community engagement
- Corporate Improvement – efficiency, effective corporate communications and delivering high quality customer service

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| 8.1 | CI 4.1 | - |
| 8.1 & 8.2 | CI 3.1 | |
| 8.3 | CW 5.1 & CI 1.1 | |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 8a. Percentage of people who rate the Council's communications as average, good or very good. | 82% | N/A | 90% | 92% | |
| 8b. Percentage of stakeholders who believe that the Council's consultation activity is genuine | 32% | N/A | 40% | N/A | |
| 8c. Percentage of residents who believe Aberdeenshire Live screens have improved their knowledge about their local community | 61% | 75% | TBC | TBC | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 8.1 Delivery of the Corporate Communications Strategy 2010-13, delivery of year two action plan (CIP Action 3.4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an online press office • Develop a programme of annual campaigns • Improve use of social networking | Head of Corporate Communications |
| 8.2 Delivery of an Employee Engagement Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of activity including establishing employee boards | Head of Corporate Communications |
| 8.3 Development of a clear strategy for Community Engagement Promotion of consultation activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a new community engagement strategy, making use of the knowledge gained through the budget engagement programme | Head of Corporate Communications |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 9

Supporting cultural change and organisational development in the challenging climate now faced by many public sector organisations.

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Corporate Improvement – efficiency and the best workforce
 - Lifelong Learning – effective targeting of resources

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 9.1 | CI 1.1 | - |
| 9.2 | CI 5.1 | |
| 9.3 | LL 1.5 | |
| 9.4 | CI 1.1 | |
| 9.5 | CI 5.1 & 1.1 and LL 1.5 | |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 9a. Percentage of Chief Officers who feel well supported by our HR&OD teams to support the delivery of their strategic direction | 80% | 70% | 70% | 70% | |
| 9b. Percentage of 3rd and 4th tier managers who feel well supported by our HR&OD teams | 66% | 60% | 60% | 60% | |
| 9c. Average number of days lost through sickness absence for Teachers (SPI) | 5.8 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | |
| 9d. Average number of days lost through sickness absence for all other Local Government Employees (SPI) | 9.8 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 9.0 | |
| 9e. Percentage of women employees in the top 2% of earners among Council employees (SPI) | 42.6% | 42% | 42% | 42% | |
| 9f. Percentage of women employees in the top 5% of earners among Council employees | 57.7% | 57% | 57% | 57% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|---|----------------|
| 9.1 Health, Safety and Well-being Strategy | • Progress Report (annual) – P&R April 2011 | Head of HR&OD |
| 9.2 Risk Management and Business Continuity Strategy | | Head of HR&OD |

| | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| 9.3 Learning and Development Strategy and Action Plan | | Head of HR&OD |
| 9.4 Implement Employee Relationship Management | | Head of HR&OD |
| 9.5 Progress key actions in relation to the approved Workforce Strategy in order to effectively manage future workforce challenges and deliver Best Value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Steering Group on • Establish programme of organisational reviews and support services to deliver outputs • Review Pay and Grading Structure Review Benefits package 31/3/11 onwards | Head of HR&OD |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 10

Embedding a culture of continuous improvement throughout all council services, ensuring performance is managed and reported effectively.

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Corporate Improvement – efficiency, outcome focus and delivering high quality customer service
- Sustainable Environment – Reduce Aberdeenshire’s global footprint

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.5 & 10.7 | CI 1.1 | 15.1 |
| 10.3, 10.4 & 10.7 | CI 1.2 | 15.1 |
| 10.1, 10.2, 10.5, 10.6 & 10.7 | CI 2.1 | 15.2 |
| 10.3 & 10.6 | CI 3.1 | 15.2 |
| 10.3 | SE 1.2 | 14.2 |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 10a. Number of employees participating in Kaizen for Daily Improvement | 1,440 | 3,300 | 4,100 | 4,900 | |
| 10b. Percentage of improvement actions identified within self assessment completed within timescale or on target. | 87.5% | 75% | 80% | 85% | |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-----|--|
| 10c. Amount of cashable savings identified through KDI realised. | £871k | £2.5m | £3.5m | TBC | |
| 10d. Number of employees engaged in the Worksmart initiative (Work Profile Change) | 625 | 1,240 | 1,780 | TBC | |
| 10e. % satisfaction rating from residents who view our service performance as improving | 57% | 60% | 63% | 65% | |

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Develop Aberdeenshire Performs connecting all employees to delivering the council's objectives and priorities and support the development of a performance orientated culture across the organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement corporate performance management system – phased through to July 2012 • Develop audience specific briefings, guidance material to support managers/ teams/ members with performance management – September 2011 | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |
| Establish a corporate model of self evaluation within the Performance Management Framework and conduct service and corporate assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce options framework report for SMT for consideration – May 2011 • Rework existing model in light of SMT decisions – July 2011 • Undertake Service/ Corporate self assessments in line with new agreed framework (this to be co-ordinated with Service Planning timetable) • Embedded cycle of regular self assessments | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |
| Implement Worksmart throughout Aberdeenshire (CIP Action 4.2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight Reports reviewed at 6 weekly intervals. Steering Group Highlight Report to Board (quarterly) | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Embed a culture of continuous improvement throughout the council by providing continuous improvement tools and techniques through the KDI programme to all our Services by 2012. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified within service KDI Workplans | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |
| Co-ordinate all improvement activities to realise cashable savings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current approaches to improvement activity and produce an options report for consideration by SMT – May 2011 Develop a robust benefits tracking model – June 2011 Implement agreed approach and framework – July 2011 | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |
| Undertake regular resident and employee surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree survey. Survey Period Report | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |
| Develop and provide leadership for implementation of Corporate Improvement Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight Report to Corporate Improvement Plan Board | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |

CORE SERVICE OBJECTIVE 11

Ensuring that all aspects of our Service are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to people's needs.

This objective contributes to the Strategic Priority themes:

- Corporate Improvement – efficiency and delivering high quality customer service
 - Sustainable Environment – reduce Aberdeenshire's global footprint

Golden Thread

| Action | Strategic Priority Reference | Single Outcome Agreement 2009/10 Reference |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 11.1 | CI 1.1 | - |
| 11.2 | SE 1.2 | |

| Key Performance Measures | Targets & Achievements | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Achieved in 2010/11 | Target in 2011/12 | Target in 2012/13 | Target in 2013/14 | Ranking against 32 LA's |
| 11a. No. of employees participating in Worksmart | 145 | Cumulative target at 2012/13 | All employees where appropriate | | |
| 11b. No. of employees participating in KDI | Not available | Cumulative target at 2012/13 | All employees | | |
| 11c. Value of potential cashable savings realised through improvement activity | Not available | Contribute to corporate target | Contribute to corporate target | Contribute to corporate target | |

Measures to support attendance management and Employee Annual Review (EAR) are being developed and will be reported in the first quarter of 2011/12.

Projects / Actions that contribute to this objective

| Action | Milestones | Responsibility |
|--|--|--|
| 11.1 Embed a culture of continuous improvement throughout the council by providing continuous improvement tools and techniques through the KDI programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per KDI rollout plan – key milestones include: Achieve bronze awards throughout Finance in 2011 All aspects of Legal and Governance engaged by April 2011. Achieve bronze awards throughout 2011 Engage ICT Infrastructure by April 2011 Continue rollout throughout Support Services from April 2011 | Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager/Support Services Manager |
| 11.2 Staff (as appropriate) to work flexibly within 2 years via Worksmart | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular update to DMT and Worksmart Board | Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager |

Demonstrating Improvement

The principles of continuous improvement are embedded into the management and operational functions of Corporate Services. In 2011-14 we will continue to support the Council to achieve its aim of becoming the best Council in Scotland. We will do so by setting challenging targets for our services to achieve and by benchmarking our performance against the best-performing local authorities in Scotland.

Our performance reporting arrangements cascade from the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement, through the Council's Strategic Priorities to this Service Plan. Each of these plans has complementary performance measures to demonstrate progress towards achieving our Service objectives. Performance is reported regularly to relevant council committees and management teams. We routinely monitor trends in our own performance over time and against other comparable organisations. This, along with results from customer surveys, influences where we focus our improvement activity.

Corporate Services' managers routinely review local performance data on service delivery. Employees have opportunities to reflect on and improve their practice through training and in future years this will be closely aligned to our strategic service objectives and priorities. Our employee annual review scheme (EAR) feeds directly into the Service's training plan.

The Service continues to utilise the full range of improvement tools including self evaluation, Kaizen for Daily Improvement and Kaizen Blitz.

As a Council and a Service we are committed to 'doing things differently' in order to build on the services we deliver to our residents. The Council is delivering a range of interlinked business transformation programmes that, as a Service we actively promote and we are engaged with, including:

Asset Management Programme – The effective utilisation of the Council's assets and resources are fundamental in realising the Council's vision. There is a commitment by the Council to reduce office space by 25% over the next two years supported by programmes such as Worksmart and the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Strategy.

ICT & Recordsmart Strategy – this identifies the key areas for ICT-related improvement across services focussing on implementing simpler and more efficient ways of working, enabling flexible working arrangements, providing better customer service, supporting innovation in learning and teaching, and developing contingency and disaster recovery facilities.

Customer Relationship Management is all about improving how the Council and its customers interact. The Council contact centre has already demonstrated major improvements in dealing with customer enquiries and key service processes. The first town centre Service Point has opened in conjunction with community partners recently which allows customers to undertake any Council transaction in one place. A series of Service Points are planned and the location of these will be integrated into the Office Accommodation Strategy of the Asset Management Programme. The Council aims to make over 90% of transactions and other suitable customer interactions available through the Council's Contact Centre, Service Points and website.

Worksmart is one of the most significant organisational development projects ever undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council. By delivering a variety of new working methods for employees it helps the Council become more efficient. It is an inclusive programme which affects every employee of the Council. Through the adoption of a range of flexible working practices (for example working from home, flexible hours, using technology to enable mobile working, etc), the Council is delivering increased team productivity and improved service delivery. As well as assisting with the Asset Management Programme, outcomes including reduced sickness absence and improved employee retention, reducing reliance on office space, travel and commuting costs and the associated carbon reduction. Also, delivering and sustaining significant benefits to the work/life balance of employees are expected.

Kaizen for Daily Improvement – The Kaizen for Daily Improvement (KDI) programme is the Council’s framework for embedding continuous improvement throughout the Council. It ensures sustainable improvement through a culture of empowerment, involvement and engagement. The KDI approach constantly challenges the status quo; the culture of the organisation is one in which services are always seeking to improve and maximise customer satisfaction and create a ‘can do’ culture.

Information Management Strategy – the Council’s Information Management Strategy supports asset management, Worksmart and customer expectations. Information is at the heart of every service that Aberdeenshire Council delivers and is part of every activity that the Council undertakes. The Information Management Strategy supports the decision making process with accurate and timely information and enables employees to work more efficiently.

9. Resources

Revenue Budget 2011-14

The Revenue Budget for Corporate Services for 2011-14 can be broken down as follows: –

| Budget | Financial Year 2011/12 (£'000) | Financial Year 2012/13 (£'000) | Financial Year 2013/14 (£'000) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Directorate & Support Services | 745 | 745 | 760 |
| Central Procurement Unit | 514 | 514 | 519 |
| Corporate Communications (Printing) | 721 (512) | 637 (712) | 649 (716) |
| Corporate Improvement & Performance | 260 | 260 | 265 |
| Customer Services | 809 | 779 | 794 |
| Finance | 7,170 | 7,263 | 7,403 |
| Human Resources & Organisational Development | 4,462 | 4,316 | 4,397 |
| ICT | 9,908 | 9,811 | 9,968 |
| Internal Audit | 398 | 398 | 405 |
| Legal & Governance | 2,843 | 2,843 | 2,897 |
| Total for Service | 28,082 | 26,594 | 27,076 |

Capital Budget 2011-14

ICT is the only division within Corporate Services which benefits from Capital funding. This amounts to £7.5m for 2011-14, the largest proportion of which (approximately 60%) benefits the Education Learning and Leisure Service.

Service Change

Following a Senior Management Review in January 2011, Corporate Communications and Human Resources & Organisational Development joined Corporate Services. The Corporate Improvement & Performance team was also incorporated into Corporate Services from March 2011. This presents potential challenges in bringing together the wide, disparate range of functions into an integrated Service.

Risk Management

On a day to day basis the Council is required to manage risks that impact on its corporate and operational objectives. To help do this the Council has developed a Risk Management Strategy. This Strategy requires that Risk Registers be maintained at a Service level and that these are updated on a six monthly basis.

Reports are submitted to the Directorate Management Team and Policy & Resources Committee to report on progress in managing categories of risk across the Council.

For Corporate Services, the critical activities identified by our business impact analysis are:

- Budget
- ICT Systems
- Contact Centre
- Corporate Communications
- Workforce Development

The headcount for Corporate Services shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) posts budgeted for across the Service

| Division/Team | Total FTE |
|--|---------------|
| Directorate & Support Services | 27.10 |
| Central Procurement Unit | n/a |
| Corporate Communications | 34.08 |
| Corporate Improvement & Performance | 6 |
| Customer Services | 39.36 |
| Finance | 237.80 |
| Human Resources & Organisational Development | 109.08 |
| ICT | 167.25 |
| Internal Audit | 11 |
| Legal & Governance | 79.11 |
| Total for Service | 710.78 |

Employees are the single most important element in delivering our services and we commit time and money in ensuring that our employees are adequately trained, empowered and encouraged to deliver changing and complex services. The workforce is developed through a variety of professional development schemes and the Employee Annual Review (EAR) process. This ensures our employees are supported to develop their full potential and maximises the efficient use of skills and resources.

Corporate Services is well represented on and actively contributes to the work of the Employee Survey Team (EST) who work along with Trade Union representatives to develop the Employee Survey questionnaire. The results of the biennial survey tell us what our employees think of us as employers, managers and leaders, amongst other things. The service-specific results are closely analysed by the Service Management Team and an Improvement Plan is developed to address issues and concerns raised by our employees.

The Service supports the principles of Worksmart to introduce more flexible working arrangements for employees. A number of benefits are anticipated including reduction in employee's mileage, more efficient use of office accommodation as well as decreased sickness and higher employee retention.

Processes are reviewed through the introduction of Kaizen for Daily Improvement, leading to improved and more efficient methods of working for our employees.

ICT Resources

Corporate Services has a range of ICT systems supporting its various business needs. The Service acknowledges that regular review and development of these systems is essential to ensure continuous improvement, modernisation and the need to continue to adapt to the changing requirements of customers.

The following common systems are important in supporting the work of all our Corporate Services Divisions:

Email, Calendar and Instant Messaging; the Microsoft Office Suite; Windows Internet Explorer; Windows File and Print Service; VPN Remote Access; the Arcadia intranet; Bodet Time Recording; the I-Grasp National Recruitment Portal; the EMIS HR/Payroll system; and the Oracle Financial Management system.

Division specific systems, in addition to those listed above, are as follows:

Finance:

- Northgate Revenues and Benefits system
- Logotech Treasury Management system
- New Debt system

ICT Division:

- Assyst Service Desk and Service Management system
- CA DSM (Desktop and Server Management) toolset
- MS Active Directory toolset
- A range of other systems management, software and web development tools

Legal and Governance:

- Iken Case Management system
- FER (Forward Electronic Registering)
- Northgate Licensing
- Committee Management system

Customer Services:

- CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system
- CC6 – ACD (Automated Call Delivery) platform

Corporate Communications:

- Paris – printing software
- Traffic – design and print management system
- ID badge software
- Asset Bank – Image Library
- Media Log
- Consultation Database

10. Monitoring and Reporting Progress

Following approval of this plan by Policy and Resources Committee in April 2011, the new performance planning framework will be developed from these indicators and the reporting mechanisms agreed with Committees.

11. Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Aberdeenshire Community Plan | Identifies how the Aberdeenshire Community Partnership will work together and identifies the outcomes the partnership wants to achieve with communities. The latest community plan for 2011-15 was published in January 2011 and is available at www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/images/communityplan.pdf |
| Aberdeenshire Performs | The council's performance management framework. It encompasses all our key strategies and plans whether at partnership, corporate, service, team or individual level. It includes our key improvement tools such as KDI, our self assessment approach and our customer feedback mechanisms such as our resident and employee surveys. |
| Area Community Plans | Area Community Plans allow local people to have a say in how services from a range of partners are delivered. The plans are fully consulted on and refreshed every two years with the latest versions published in 2010 and available at www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/localcommunityplans . |
| Areas | Aberdeenshire Council has established six areas within which local decisions will be taken locally by elected Members. These areas are: Banff & Buchan; Buchan; Formartine; Garioch; Kincardine & Mearns and Marr. |
| Best Value | Best Value was introduced in 1997, with the main purpose being to guarantee that local authorities will seek to deliver continuous improvement in all its services while taking care to consider economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and the environment. Best Value also requires councils to: challenge whether and how they should provide a service; compare their services with those provided by others; consult with service users, local residents and the business community and assess the competitiveness of the performance of their services with other provider. |
| Business Continuity Plan | A plan which identifies what the council or service needs to do in order to maintain critical service delivery in the face of a disruptive event. |
| Chief Officer Appraisal (COA) | A meaningful job focussed conversation between a chief officer and the Chief Executive (or designated line manager) to review work performance over the past year, agree priorities for the year ahead and identify the leadership capabilities that need developed. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Committees | Aberdeenshire Council has a system of committees consisting of a local Area Committee for each of the Council's six Areas, along with five policy committees: Education and Recreation (schools, community centres, pools, recreation sports, heritage, the arts, and parks); Social Work and Housing (Council housing, homeless, criminal justice, older people, children, support for individuals and families in difficulty); Infrastructure Services (planning, roads, public transport, waste management, economic development, consumer protection and building control); Policy and Resources (co-ordinating other services, setting policy, providing internal support services, budget monitoring and control) and Scrutiny and Audit (reviews Council performance and ensures effective audit systems are in place). At these committees, Councillors will take decisions about policy, monitor strategies and budgets and check the effectiveness of the council in delivering services. |
| Community Planning | A process through which the council comes together with other organisations to plan, provide for and promote the future wellbeing of the area. There are twelve organisations in the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership including the council, NHS Grampian, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Enterprise, Community Councils, North East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership, Local Rural Partnerships, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future, Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Skills Development Scotland. These organisations are committed to working together to meet the needs and priorities of communities across Aberdeenshire. |
| Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) | Supports the delivery of the council's Strategic Priorities and the Single Outcome Agreement by identifying the council's corporate improvement activities in one plan to avoid duplication of effort, prioritise activity, strengthen governance arrangements and ensure the capacity is there to deliver the council's goals. |
| Customer First | A Scottish Government-backed programme that enables councils to deliver better, faster and more efficient services to a wider section of the population. Products include: Citizen Account – a secure data-sharing system which allows councils to keep up to date records of their customers; a National ICT Infrastructure which supports joined up/shared services across Scottish local government as well as the wider public sector; Tellmescotland – Scotland's national public information notices (PINs) portal, allowing public notices across Scotland to be published in a single online location and the National Entitlement Card – a single, customisable card and management system providing access to a range of local government services, including Young Scot and concessionary travel. |
| Directorate Management Team (DMT) | Management team consisting of the Director and all Heads of Service. Provides direction and decision making for the Service. |
| EDRMS | Electronic document and records management system – enables the council to manage documents and records throughout the document life-cycle, from creation to destruction. |
| EFQM | A set of ideas and rules about good management practices that are designed to help organisations provide better services and be more competitive. The ideas were developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (a non-profit organization started by leading European companies) as a model for other organizations to copy. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Employee Annual Review (EAR) | A job focused conversation between an employee and their manager or supervisor that reviews work performance over the last year, recognises and celebrates achievements, agrees the work priorities for the coming year how to achieve these and identifies the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to do the job effectively. |
| Golden Thread | The 'Golden Thread' describes how all our key plans and strategies connect together and enables employees to understand their role in ultimately delivering the priorities of the council, community and central government. |
| KDI | Kaizen for Daily Improvement – Kaizen is a Japanese word and roughly translated means "Making something as good as it can be". KDI enables sustainable improvement through Empowerment, involvement and engagement. |
| Performance Measure | A metric used to quantify the efficiency and/or effectiveness of an objective or action. |
| Risk Register | Management tool that identifies risks to the service, likelihood of risk, impact and what actions would reduce or prevent the risk happening. |
| Objective | An objective is statement of what the council will do in order to achieve its vision. Objectives within the council are established at a number of levels from strategic objectives at council and service level, down to team objectives and individual objectives that create a framework for service delivery. |
| Shared Risk Assessment | A new approach to external scrutiny whereby the main scrutiny bodies for local government work together through the Local Government Scrutiny Coordination Strategic Group to identify and agree the key risks in each individual council and to develop a plan of scrutiny activity to respond to those specific risks. It is designed to ensure proportionate and focused scrutiny and reduce the overall amount of external scrutiny activity in local government. |
| Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) | Aberdeenshire community planning partnership's Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government builds on the council's strategic priorities and community plan. It sets out how the council and the Aberdeenshire community planning partnership will contribute to the government's national outcomes. It arises from the Concordat signed between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government. |
| Strategic Priorities | The council's strategic priorities provide the strategic framework for service delivery. The priorities set a clear direction for the council for the next four years, guiding policy development, ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately and effectively, and promoting continuous improvement. |
| Vision | Defines the council's desired future direction. |
| Worksmart | Aberdeenshire Council's flexible working programme. |



www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk