



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES

TOPIC – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2008/09 ONWARDS

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel(s) (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Chris Ashcroft, Tel: 01962 848 284, Email: cashcroft@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator:

Frances Maloney, Tel: 01962 848 155, Email: fmaloney@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

Approval is sought to the detailed Business Plan for this Division. The Business Plan sets out the key tasks that the Division will undertake over the coming five years, with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Resourced and Timed) targets (both through actions and performance indicators) by which progress will be measured and monitored. The Plan also gives additional information about the role of the Division, the resources allocated to it (in terms of both staff and budgets) and the key risks that are being addressed through its work.

Key actions to be undertaken in this Division are as listed in Section 4(A) of the Business Plan appended to this Notice.

The Head of Division is satisfied that the actions put forward in this Business Plan will work towards the Council's corporate objectives, as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2008-13 or otherwise ensure that the Council meets the statutory obligations placed on it by central Government. Other than where indicated, these actions can be achieved within the resources available. Plans are in place, or will be developed, to ensure that targets shown for key performance indicators can be achieved in the timescale shown.

DECISION

That the Business Plan for the Democratic Services Division be approved as attached as Appendix A.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Business Plans form an important part of the Council's performance management process as they set out the key actions for the coming year. The Business Plan put forward for adoption sets out the actions that will best help the Council achieve its corporate objectives and meet its statutory obligations within the resources available to it, as far as can be seen in the light of current circumstances. While alternative approaches would be possible in many parts of the Plan, the actions being recommended are believed to give best value to the authority.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

The Resources Scrutiny Panel has been consulted on this Business Plan and raised the following issues:

None

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor Frederick Allgood – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Democratic Services Division Business Plan 2008 - 2012

1. Brief Description of the Division and its Purpose

The main functions of the Democratic Services Division are:

- Committee Administration
- Member Support Services
- Electoral Registration and Elections
- Mayoralty and Civic Events
- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity (support to the Chief Executive)

The Division's purpose is:

“To achieve professional and operational excellence through the efficient provision of administrative services which are customer orientated, responsive and cost effective”.

The Division provides secretariat support to all other Divisions of the Council, to assist them in the achievement of their aims to improve the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors alike. In addition, the Division performs direct work for the community through the carrying out of all its functions.

2. Links between Council strategic priorities and services

<i>Strategic Priority</i>	<i>Divisional Responsibility</i>
All Key Service Areas	The provision of administrative support services to assist Members and all other Divisions in achieving their objectives.
Economic Prosperity	To support the work of other Divisions in maintaining and improving the economic wellbeing of the District, including Business Continuity work.
High Quality Environment	Contributing to the sustainable use of resources, customer focus, clear communication and modern working practices, by enhancing electronic access to Committee reports and other web-based information for Members, staff and the public – with a consequential benefit of reducing paper usage.
Safe and Strong Communities	Electoral Registration policies to promote full registration and to secure the integrity of the postal voting process, together with convenient polling stations and robust practices to maximise voter turnout and confidence in the election process. An effective Emergency Plan.
An Efficient and Effective Council	Through the provision of Member training and effective support to the Council’s decision-making processes, to contribute to the way in which the Council undertakes its community leadership role and reflects modern working practices in the way in which decisions are made.
Our Values	Continuing to provide advice and support to Members and parish councils on codes of conduct. Dealing with matters referred by the Standards Board for England

3. Summary of Progress in 2007/08

The Democratic Services Division has achieved its principal aims for 2007/08 and the following key areas are highlighted:-

Decision Making Structures – the four Scrutiny Panels have again functioned satisfactorily and greater use has been made of Informal Scrutiny Groups to investigate key areas of work. There has also been more use of the decision making powers of the Portfolio Holders, which may well increase again in 2008/09. The Winchester Town Forum has also benefited from additional delegation in the way it works. As in previous years, there has been the need to undertake regular reviews of the Constitution, to keep it up to date, and there will probably be significant changes during 2008/09, having regard to the proposals contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. As an experiment, full Council met on three occasions in the King Alfred Hall, but it was decided that, on balance, there were insufficient advantages over the Conference Chamber to permanently relocate. The matter will be re-addressed as part of the forthcoming debate about use of the funds from the Bapsy Bequest. Meetings of both the Local Development Framework and Traffic & Parking Committees of Cabinet have generated good levels of public attendance, especially the former.

Member Services and Training – The 2007 Member Survey produced very positive results for both the Committee and Electoral teams, coming first and second respectively (out of 18 business units) in providing good/excellent levels of service to Members; other comments made in the survey will be used to guide the provision of services for 2008/09 onwards. The Annual Member Training Policy and Programme was agreed in May 2007 and the year has again been busy, with good feedback overall about the training provided. The Council is now participating in a joint Member training initiative funded by HIOWLA, which will hopefully achieve the twin bonus of a relevant range of inter-authority training being offered, at a cost which will produce savings to our training budget.

Improvement of IT Based Member Services – the past 12 months has seen the most significant reduction to date in the issue of paper agendas etc. In addition, the Council Minute Book has been redesigned into a smaller and more practical format. All of this has only been possible because of the additional use being made of IT and the improvement in the skills of Members to access and manipulate documents electronically. To support this, bespoke IT training has continued to help all Members reach a satisfactory level of competence.

Elections – As predicted, the introduction of a range of new postal vote procedures - particularly personal identifiers – had a major impact at the May 2007 elections. The additional time needed to process votes, plus the introduction of new software, meant that the Returning Officer decided to defer the count until the Friday morning. This decision proved to be correct, although for May 2008 the count will return to Thursday evening, because of the valuable experience gained in operating the new procedures. One provision not introduced in 2007 was the requirement to sign for a ballot paper at the polling station, but along with individual registration, it is something that may well happen in the future. Upgrades to the Council's electoral IT package continued to take place, to ensure that we maximise its benefits for dealing with both existing and new procedures. The canvass for the 2008/09 Register of Electors was again successful with no particular issues arising.

Abbey House and the Mayoralty – the phased programme of renovation works has continued with a new fire detection system and redecoration of the hall and some rooms being achieved. Next year will see more fire precaution and redecoration works, together with possible replacement of the boiler. The House was again opened for public access during the summer and at Christmas, with Blue Badge Guides escorting small groups and explaining the history of the House and its artefacts. As always, it has been a busy year for the Mayor, which has included attendance at two military parades through Winchester town centre – the Homecoming Parade by Hampshire Regiments in January and the Army Cadet Force Parade in April. In June, the new Mayor will have the pleasure of inspecting the Adjutant General's Corps, who will be exercising their Freedom status with a similar parade.

4. Service Priorities 2008/09 onwards

A) Key Service Priorities 2008/09 onwards

	Why are we doing this?	What will we do?	When will we do it?	How will we measure our success?	How much time/ money will it take?	Who's Accountable?
1	An Efficient and Effective Council	Filtering and determination of complaints previously undertaken by the Standards Board, now to be referred to the Standards Committee.	Likely to commence May 2008	Efficient procedures and resources in place to meet demand.	Uncertain but could be 30 days+	Chris Ashcroft (in consultation with Monitoring Officer)
2	An Efficient and Effective Council	Fundamental Service Review	During 2008/09	Findings of Review body.	5 days	Chris Ashcroft
3	An Efficient and Effective Council	Review of Constitution – likely changes to Leader and Portfolio Holder roles and Scrutiny, plus impact of Councillor Call for Action (see Report CAB1591)	During 2008/09	Effective procedures in place to meet new demands.	Uncertain but could be 25 days+	Chris Ashcroft (in consultation with Monitoring Officer)
4	An Efficient and Effective Council	Participation in HLOWLA Member Capacity Building initiative (inter-authority Member development training, focusing on current topics).	During 2008	Member feedback to the training and development courses attended.	5 days	Chris Ashcroft
5	An Efficient and Effective Council	In conjunction with 3 and 4 above, to develop the role of Members in response to the changing environment in which they work.	Ongoing for 2008/09	Member feedback and performance.	Uncertain but could be 15+ days	Chris Ashcroft/ Frances Maloney

Why are we doing this?		What will we do?	When will we do it?	How will we measure our success?	How much time/ money will it take?	Who's Accountable?
6	An Efficient and Effective Council	Introduction of Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS).	May 2008	Efficient transfer of documents	35 days	Chris Ashcroft/ Katherine Pryor
7	An Efficient and Effective Council	Support work should the consultation by Partnership & Communication Division with Members and Parish Councils regarding proposed Area Forums indicate a wish to take this forward.	Autumn 2008	Member and community satisfaction with proposals	15 days	Chris Ashcroft/Colin Veal
8	Safe and Strong Communities	Emergency Plan – Ongoing implementation of Civil Contingencies Act and support to Business Continuity Planning.	Ongoing for 2008/09	Compliance with Government targets and effective response to an emergency.	85% of workload of Principal Committee Administrator	Dave Shaw
9	High Quality Environment	Abbey House Refurbishment – continuation of internal and external decoration and repairs	At times convenient to the Mayoral calendar during 2008/09 and 2009/10	Completion on time, within budget and minimal disruption	£200,000 in 2008/09 £190,000 in 2009/10	Chris Ashcroft

B) Other Services we aim to deliver 2008/09 onwards

Why are we doing this?		What will we do?	When will we do it?	How will we measure our success?	How much time / money will it take?	Who's Accountable?
1	An Efficient and Effective Council	Member Training – Annual Programme 2008/09 (to include events which support Key Priorities 3, 4 and 5). Also, to include further development of Member IT skills.	Programme agreed during May 2008	Evaluation forms from each course	10 days	Chris Ashcroft
2	An Efficient and Effective Council	Adjutant Generals Corps – Freedom Parade	May/June 2008	Satisfactory feedback from Members, guests and public	8 days	Chris Ashcroft/David Blakemore
3	Safe and Strong Communities	Local Democracy – in conjunction with Partnerships and Communication Division, to assist with Citizenship and related initiatives.	During 2008	Feedback from schools	8 days	Chris Ashcroft/ Frances Maloney
4	Safe and Strong Communities	Changes to the electoral cycle for City Council elections	Implementation by May 2011 - Government timetable for decision process	Smooth introduction with minimal inconvenience/ complaint from electors	Resource implications difficult to assess at this stage, but unlikely to be significant	Chris Ashcroft
5	High Quality Environment	Abbey House – investigate whether any further scope for increasing public access (in association with Winchester Blue Badge Guides).	2008 onwards	Number of visitors and feedback	5 days	Chris Ashcroft

Why are we doing this?		What will we do?	When will we do it?	How will we measure our success?	How much time / money will it take?	Who's Accountable?
6	Safe and Strong Communities	Individual Voter Registration – currently deferred by Government but possibility remains of introduction in the next two years.	If introduced, then possibly during 2009	Smooth introduction with minimal inconvenience or complaint from electors.	Significant change - results of further work awaited before resources can be assessed	Chris Ashcroft/ Kath Richards
7	Safe and Strong Communities	Computerisation of Register of Electors (CORE) – participation in national based on-line Register of Electors. Awaiting Parliamentary approval of final draft scheme for consultation exercise.	Introduction date not specified – possibly 2009/10	WCC Xpress system compliant and feeding into main CORE framework	8 days	Chris Ashcroft/ Kath Richards
8	An Efficient and Effective Council	Paper Reduction – ongoing review of processes to identify any further scope for paper savings.	Ongoing throughout 2008/09	Further reduction in cost of paper used for agendas, reports etc	10 days	Chris Ashcroft

3. Resource Implications

A) Financial

2007/08 Revised			Service Activity	2008/09 Estimate			FTEs	Notes
Exp. £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's		Exp. £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's		
60	(60)	0	Abbey House	65	(65)	0	0.43	
2	0	2	Boundary Reviews	2	0	2	0	
173	(6)	167	Civic and Mayoral	181	(6)	175	1.20	
2,304	(87)	2,217	Council and Committee	2,387	(87)	2,300	0	
118	(17)	101	Elections	115	0	115	0	
221	(2)	219	Electoral Registration	221	(1)	220	2.80	
590	(590)	0	Secretariat	607	(642)	(35)	6.60	
3,468	(762)	2,706	Total	3,578	(801)	2,777	11.03	

B) Workforce

KEY EXTERNAL DRIVERS	KEY INTERNAL DRIVERS
<p>Impact of Local Gov.& Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Postal Vote and other electoral process changes Possible Change to Electoral Cycle New Standards Board arrangements – district councils to filter/determine complaints. Civil Contingencies Act. Equalities Legislation.</p>	<p>Fundamental Service Review. Introduction of EDRMS. Council Budget. Organisational Development Flexible working arrangements for staff.</p>
WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS	
<p>Postal Voting - new system will again place demands on electoral staff - staffing levels being closely monitored. Increase in Standards workload - most Code of Conduct complaints to be assessed and determined locally under new rules. Resource kept under review and balanced with costs of outsourcing. Workload impact of Civil Contingencies Act – continued reallocation of committee work to accommodate pressures on officer concerned. Fundamental Service Review – Ongoing review of opportunities for efficiencies. EDRMS – resource required to oversee successful transition.</p>	

6. Key Performance Indicators

Ref. No.		What does this show?	Who reports this?	Achieved 2005/06	Achieved 2006/07	Estimate 2007/08	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
Democratic Services Division	1	Payment of undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt	HoD	90.85%	90%	90%	100%	100%	100%
	2	Invoice Collection Rates	HoD	100%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Committee Services	3	Annual number of meetings serviced	HoD	183	154	173	150	160	160
	4	Annual number of meetings serviced per staff f.t.e.	HoD	52	45	49	40	45	45
	5	Number of public attending member meetings	HoD	481	723	830	500	600	600
	7	% member training sessions which achieve an average satisfaction rating of 4 (v good) or above.	HoD	81%	86%	76%	90%	90%	95%

Ref. No.		What does this show?	Who reports this?	Achieved 2005/06	Achieved 2006/07	Estimate 2007/08	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
	8	% members who rate member support service as either good or excellent	HoD	Survey March 2007	No survey	94%	90%	No survey	95%
Electoral Services	9	% turnout at local elections	Electoral Services Manager	46.3% Olivers Battery by-election) County 73.17%	46.45%	45.8%	50%	55%	55%
	10	% electoral annual canvass forms returned	Electoral Services Manager	98%	88%	99%	99%	99%	99%
	11	% polling stations with disabled access	Electoral Services Manager	80%	85%	90%	95%	98%	98%

7. Proposals for Consultation

What Research or consultation do we intend to carry out	How will we be doing it?	When will we be doing it?	How will we use the results?
Members Survey	All Member Questionnaire	2009, 2011	To influence provision of future Members Services and the decision making structure
Members Allowances	All Member Questionnaire	2010	To revise the existing Members Allowances Scheme

8. Key elements of risk management

Area	Risk number	Rating	Cluster and MAP link	Short name	Risk ownership	Cause	Consequence	Action required
Corp. Director (Gov) 4250 - 4299	4252	Possible risk, medium impact	Managerial	Legislative change – Standards Committee issues	Stephen Whetnall	Likely resource issue with increased delegation from Standards Board	Difficult to plan resources over medium term; financial impact; Citizen criticism and reduced confidence if not handled well	See Business Plan Section 4A .
Corp Director (Gov) 4250 - 4299	4253	Possible risk, medium impact	Managerial	Review of Decision making structures and processes	Stephen Whetnall	National or local change in political control might require review of decision making structures	Inability to respond to the demands of a new administration	Annual review of structures obtaining support from across the Council if possible. Maintain political neutrality and impartial advice.
Corps Director (Gov) 4250 - 4299	4258	Possible risk, medium impact	Managerial	Security of Abbey House	Chris Ashcroft	Loss of/ damage to building caused by fire, theft or vandalism	Loss of irreplaceable items. Damage to civic prestige. Need to relocate Mayoralty	Fire and security alarms in place. Daily procedures designed to minimise risk. Adequate insurance levels.

Area	Risk number	Rating	Cluster and MAP link	Short name	Risk ownership	Cause	Consequence	Action required
Corps Director (Gov) 4250 - 4299	4259	Possible risk, medium impact	Managerial	The efficient conduct of elections	Stephen Whetnall	Fraudulent practice or staff negligence generates an election petition, resulting in a re-run of the election	Council forced into 'temporary' status pending new elections. Loss of confidence in local democracy.	Robust procedures in place for all activities, particularly postal votes. Training for all polling day staff.