

**Finance and Resources: 2015/16 Budget Setting
Service Overviews (SOs)**

Appendix A

Service	Service Area			Chief Officer			
Audit	Finance			Adrian Rowbotham			
<p>Service Overview:</p> <p>The Audit Service has operated in partnership with Dartford Borough Council since October 2010 and is based at Dartford. The service employs six full time equivalent employees of which four are employed by Sevenoaks District Council.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Service provides assurance to the Council regarding the effectiveness of internal controls and governance processes. It delivers a risk based Annual Audit Plan to take account of the Council's key priorities and relevant regulatory requirements. The Internal Audit plan for 2014/15 sets out that 18 audit reviews will be completed.</p> <p>The Internal Audit service also provides support to the work of the Council's External Auditor and the Council's Audit Committee.</p> <p>Co-ordinating the Council's risk management strategy and framework and offering advice regarding the management of strategic and operational risks is also the responsibility of the Internal Audit service.</p>							
<p>Current and Future Pressures:</p> <p>Implementation of the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).</p> <p>For the Internal Audit Service continue to add more value to the Council through its Internal Audit Plan and through wider work.</p> <p>Ensuring the Council continues to manage risks effectively as it takes on new projects to contribute to becoming more financially self sufficient.</p>							
2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings		Year	Amount (£'000)
Audit Function	192	(48)	144				

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Service	Service Area	Chief Officer
Finance	Finance	Adrian Rowbotham

Service Overview:

The Finance Team consists of 9.2 full time equivalent employees and provides the following key tasks:

- Budget setting – producing a balanced budget and continuing to use the 10-year budget approach;
- Budget monitoring – expert finance advice and support to add value to services;
- Annual accounts – completion is required by 30 June each year to a high standard;
- Investments in line with Treasury Management Policy;
- Creditors and debtors; and
- Cashiering and bank reconciliations

Current and Future Pressures:

The Council has a good reputation for its financial management and has achieved this with the support of a Finance Team that is currently the smallest in Kent. Continuing to provide high quality support and advice to deliver a balanced budget whilst Government funding continues to reduce is a pressure that the team will face.

The Government also has a desire to ensure that the annual accounts are completed two months earlier than the current 30 June deadline by 2018. Ensuring high quality accounts are published by such a deadline will be a pressure on the team.

2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Year	Amount
Finance Function	209	-	209	Re-structure and review processes	2011/12	(40)
Exchequer and Procurement	134	-	134	Rationalisation of financial systems	2012/13	(50)
Treasury Management	101	-	101	66 London Road rates & rents	2014/15	(76)
General Admin.	142	-	142	Efficiency review	2014/15	(40)
Misc Finance inc. Pension Fund	2,327	-	2,327			

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Service	Service Area	Chief Officer
Local Tax	Finance	Adrian Rowbotham

Service Overview:

The Revenues Service has operated in partnership with Dartford Borough Council since December 2010 and is based at Sevenoaks, contributing its share towards the annual £250,000 saving from the shared revenues and benefits service. The Local Tax team employs 25 full time equivalent employees of which 15 are employed by Sevenoaks District Council.

The main responsibilities of the Local Tax service are:

- Administration, billing and collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments.
- Recovery of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments.
- Maintenance of the Council Tax and Business Rates databases.
- Provision of telephone, face to face and electronic services to the customer which aim to meet their needs.

Current and Future Pressures:

The change from Council Tax Benefit to Council Tax Support in April 2013 has impacted on the demands of the team as working age residents previously receiving 100% benefit are now required to pay a proportion of their Council Tax. As a result an increased number of residents are issued a council tax bill and a proportion of these require support from the council to help them make their payments in a way that is affordable to them. Inevitably as the number of customer's increases there is also a proportionate increase in the level of recovery work.

The introduction of Universal Credit may also create pressures for the council tax team. This significant change to how people manage their money may have an impact on their ability to pay council tax.

The change to localised business rates aimed to incentivise local authorities to support business growth in their areas has raised the profile of this tax as a funding stream for this council and could cause a future growth in workload that could create pressures for the team.

2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Year	Amount
Local Tax	602	(423)	179	Joint working savings above target	2011/12	Share of (50)
				Further efficiencies from joint working	2013/14	Share of (30)

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Service	Service Area	Chief Officer
Legal	Legal and Governance	Christine Nuttall

Service Overview:

The Legal Service team employs 4.3 full time equivalent employees and primarily supports other teams in the delivery of Council services. The team delivers a comprehensive service dealing with a wide range of legal issues providing advice, advocacy, negotiation and drafting skills across a broad spectrum of law. The main areas of work include:

- Contract & procurement
- Housing
- Information Law, including monitoring the use of RIPA and advising on Freedom of Information and the Environmental Information Regulations
- Licensing, including advising members and officers on all licensing matters and attending licensing hearings
- Litigation, including housing benefit prosecutions, environmental prosecutions, injunctions, judicial review and debt recovery
- Planning, including the drafting section 106 agreements, planning inquiries, drafting notices and attending Planning Committee
- Property

Current and Future Pressures:

The Council operates what we believe to be the smallest Legal Service in the County. On occasions, particularly for difficult or contentious legal work, the requirements clients have of the Legal Service can cause pressures for the service. The Council's proposal to seek financial self sufficiency may also cause increased work loads for the Legal Services team, particularly in relation to property matters.

The cost of knowledge materials and staff training may rise beyond the budget but these are essential to the provision of the service.

2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Years	Amount
Legal Function	226	(36)	190	Partnership Working	2011/12	(25)
				Additional Income (Section 106)	2011/12	(30)
				Share of corporate savings targets	2011/12	(5)
					2012/13	(10)

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Service	Service Area	Chief Officer
IT	Corporate Support	Jim Carrington-West

Service Overview:

The Council's IT Service employs 12 full time equivalent employees to provide a robust, secure and supported technical and work environment for Officers, Members and visitors.

The IT team are also responsible for investigating new technologies that will assist the Council in becoming more efficient and enabling more effective communication with customers. This includes seeking innovative ways of using technology to support the use of information within the Council.

The Team also provide a cartographic service delivering high quality mapping and map based analysis and manage the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the use of addresses based information within the Council.

Current and Future Pressures:

Maintaining and upgrading the Council's IT network in accordance with the needs of the Council's Officer, Members, services and partners whilst ensuring compliance with security standards and within capital budget limits is an ongoing challenge. At the same time the service is proud of the high level of service offered through the Service Desk and managing the services resources to ensure projects and service desk calls are consistently delivered to deadline can create pressures.

As the Council continues to seek increased paper-less working and opportunities to work in partnership this increases demands on the IT Service.

2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Year	Amount
IT	764	-	764	IT Support – reduce general costs	2011/12	(41)
Asset Maintenance – IT	260	-	260	Internet provision – reduce charges	2011/12	(40)
				Agresso and IDOX – reduce support costs	2011/12 2012/13	(23) (50)
				Information Systems and IT Support – reviewing staffing resources	2011/12 2013/14	(30) (20)

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		2014/15	(60)
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Service	Service Area	Chief Officer
Property and Facilities Management	Corporate Support	Jim Carrington- West

Service Overview:

The Property team employs 3.65 full time equivalent employees and is responsible for the management of the Council's property assets. This includes acquiring land and property to support the achievement of the Council's objective, manage and maintenance of assets and disposal of surplus land and property. The team also manage and maintain the Council's tenanted properties, provides a maintenance service to a neighbouring council and provides technical and specialist advice to Officers and Members on property related matters.

The Facilities Management team employs 13 full time equivalent employees also includes the Scanning and Indexing team, the Post Room and the Print Studio. The main responsibilities of the Facilities Management service include document management, postal and courier services, a comprehensive design and print service, maintenance and security of the Council offices and the processing of purchase and sales orders.

Current and Future Pressures:

The Council's Property function is being restructured to further increase the Council's ability to shape the economic development of the District and to support the Council's ambition to move towards financial self sufficiency. This requires the team to seek investment opportunities and support Council projects that generate either a financial return or a community benefit.

Asset maintenance on our properties is becoming more frequent, especially at the leisure centres and sewerage plants. Ensuring solutions are found within the available budget is a challenge.

The Facilities Management team are critical in delivering a successful move to a paper-less office environment and modernising working practices through the electronic scanning and indexing of information. The increase in scanning workload as more services adopt paper-less working practices and will place pressure on a small team of officers.

The Print Studios current and future pressures are related to raising income levels and managing the increased workload that this necessitates whilst maintaining the high quality product and service it offers.

2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Year	Amount
Property	57	-	57	Facilities Management Staffing review	2011/12	(45)

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					2012/13	(30)
Central Offices - Facilities	265	(8)	257	Window Cleaning, Hand Dryers, Building Cleaning, Microfilming	2011/12	(25)

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2014/15 Budget (£'000)	Gross	Income	Net	Savings (£'000)	Year	Amount
Central Offices	484	(35)	449	IT and FM share of corporate targets	2011/12	(7)
					2012/13	(7)
Asset Maintenance - Properties	362	-	362	Central Offices target savings	2011/12	(5)
Bus Station	20	(6)	14	Property – review processes and restructure	2011/12	(75)
					2013/14	(75)
Housing Premises	13	(21)	(8)	Property – income from Tandridge	2011/12	(13)
Estates Mgt - Buildings	97	(163)	(66)	External print income increase	2014/15	(10)
				Efficiency review	2014/15	(20)