

## Finance (2007-2008)

### FINANCE SERVICE PLAN 2007/08

Buckinghamshire`s Finance Service is made up of three parts:

FINANCIAL SERVICES - Headed up by Mark Preston, Deputy Head of Finance

The main areas of responsibility are:

- . The provision of Financial Management Services to Heads of Service, Strategic Directors, Members and Schools. This includes the provision of financial advice and support, Cost Centre Manager and Administrator training, Welfare Benefits advice and support; the provision of Receivership, Direct Payment facilities and financial assessments for our more vulnerable clients and administration of the Council`s obligations in respect of teachers` pay and pensions.
- . The provision of all Statutory Accounting functions for the Council, including ensuring the integrity of the Council`s accounts, Medium Term Financial Planning and budget monitoring.
- . The provision of project accounting advice.

10 teams report to Mark, they are:

- . Adult Social Care Finance (which includes the Welfare Benefits Team, the Finance Deputies Team, the Care Assessments Teams and Exchequer):

Adult Social Care Finance - In addition to statutory and management accounting support and advice, the team also support significant partnerships with Health and Supporting People. The Direct Payments Team administers payments to around 520 Direct Payment clients. The 2 Assessment Teams complete financial assessments for some 3,500 Community Care clients and 1,600 Residential and Nursing clients. The ASC Exchequer Team process approximately 50,000 invoices a year from care providers. The Finance Deputies Team support some 340 of our most vulnerable clients who are unable to manage their own financial affairs as well as protecting the property and belongings of those clients who are admitted into care or hospital who have nobody who can act on their behalf. The Welfare Benefits Team, in addition to assisting Bucks residents claim benefits in excess of £2m per annum, also help social care clients complete their Statement of Financial Circumstances forms so that they can be financially assessed.

- . Children`s Services Finance (which includes the Teachers Pay and Pensions Team and the Schools Direct Team) provide statutory and management accounting services to the Children and Young People`s portfolio, including the Local Safeguarding Board and Children`s Fund. Financial Support, bursar services to schools, training for school governors, headteachers and bursars. Advice and support to schools on Teachers Pay and Conditions and administration of teachers` pay and pension records in conjunction with the Teachers Pensions Agency.
- . The Planning, Transportation, Community and Resources Finance Team (PTCR) also supports the Leader and Deputy Leader Portfolios and provide statutory and management advice and support across all 6 portfolios which cover 27 Service Plans and a number of corporate

initiatives. Responsibilities also include effective financial support to a number of partnerships.

. The Financial Strategy & Projects Team:

The Team is involved in advising on major corporate projects, developing and implementing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and monitoring processes, providing strategic financial advice to senior managers and coordinating the closure of the Council's accounts.

CORPORATE FINANCIAL SERVICES - Headed up by Clive Palfreyman, Assistant Head of Finance

There are four teams reporting to Clive, they are:

Treasury & Revenues: The role of the Revenue Team is to manage all aspects of the Council's payments and receipts, ensuring they are timely and accurate. The Treasury team are responsible for the Council's financial investments, borrowing and banking. The Treasury team also manage the administration of Pension Fund Investments. The team's key services are:

- . Corporate debt management process, including co-ordination of debt recovery activity.
- . Provision of information and advice to promote effective debt management by services.
- . Co-ordination and liaison with the Council's bankers.
- . Running corporate payment runs.
- . Setting up new vendors on SAP.

Governance & Internal Audit: The Institute of Internal Auditors define internal audit as an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. The requirement for an Internal Audit function is implied by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states that local authorities must 'make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs'. Also under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006, the Council needs to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control.

Main service responsibilities include:

- . Review, evaluation and reporting on the entire internal control environment
- . Review, evaluation and reporting on the risk management and governance framework
- . Conducting independent investigations of allegations of fraud and irregularity whilst adhering to council procedures and relevant legislation.
- . Undertaking work to assist in the development of the Council's Statement on Internal Control.
- . The provision of independent consultancy services and advice to management.
- . Development and maintenance of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and the promulgation of an Anti-Fraud culture within the organisation.
- . Provision of a confidential reporting facility to support the Council's Whistle blowing Procedure.
- . Providing audit services to other organisations.
- . Undertaking audits on behalf of regulatory and statutory organisations.

Pension Services: The Council administer a Pension Scheme on behalf of the Authority and many other organisations in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. The Pensions Section is split into three teams who administer the Local Government Pension Scheme. We deal with 18,000 employees on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council and 100 other employing and admitted authorities, as

well as 11,500 pensioners and 8,000 ex employees. Our employers include scheduled bodies (major and smaller), admitted bodies and independent schools in Buckinghamshire. Pensions are split into three areas:

**Benefits Administration Team** - The Benefits Administration Team deal with all aspects of benefits work from new starters through to retirement and death. The team's work also includes refunds, amalgamations, pension estimates, pensioner queries, divorce quotes and transfers of previous pension rights in or out of the scheme.

**Systems Team** - The Systems Team are responsible for the specialist computer systems within the Pensions Section, including the management of AXIS, AXIS Document Imaging, Axis Payroll, Task Management and AXIS Online Client Liaison Team

The Client Liaison Team deal with pension enquiries from scheme members, members' representatives, the employing authorities, as well as other outside bodies, such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and other pension schemes. The client liaison team also assist with scheme benefits administration and year-end procedures as required.

**Risk Management and Insurance Services.** Key areas of activity include:

- . Providing specialist advice to Members, Senior Management, Officers and Schools to assist them to identify and manage those risks that may adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its strategic and operational objectives as part of our Risk Management Framework.
- . Developing, implementing and reviewing the Council's Risk Financing arrangements to protect the Council's assets and potential liabilities through the best mix of external and self-insurance and effective administration of claims.
- . Providing a range of optional insurance products to schools and other service areas that compliment the standard insurance package or enhance our staff benefits package.

**BUSINESS SUPPORT** - Headed up by Pauline Page, Business Support Coordinator

Coordination and lead on business support and other cross-cutting corporate initiatives on behalf of the Finance Management Team including developing the Finance website, Complaints Monitoring, Equalities, Health & Safety, Business Continuity and Investors in People.

The Finance Service is also responsible for monitoring the following Corporate Plan Performance Indicators:

Objective 2a i - Set our annual Council Tax at or below the average increase of County Councils in the South East. (contact: John Huskinson)

Objective 2a ii - Set up the publication of a single Buckinghamshire Council Tax leaflet by January 2008 (contact: John Huskinson)

Objective 2b ii - Deliver at least £5m savings in budgets across the Council each year as set out in annual efficiency statement (contact: John Huskinson)

### Outcome 1: People

Target Description	Last Year	Targets	Target Owner
--------------------	-----------	---------	--------------

	Target	Actual	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	
Ensure the development and empowerment of all Finance staff			Training & Development Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis. Investment Development Accounts developed for all staff by 30 June 2007. Output reviewed by 31 July 2007.	Training & Development Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis. Effectiveness of Investment Development Accounts reviewed and updated for all staff by 30 June 2008. Output reviewed by 31 July 2008.	Training & Development Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis. Effectiveness of Investment Development Accounts reviewed and updated for all staff by 30 June 2009. Output reviewed by 31 July 2009.	Mark Preston
Develop the strategic capacity of the service going forward			Actively promote the use of mentoring where appropriate. Encourage 360 degree appraisals throughout service for all staff R9 and above (optional below R9). Develop and Implement a trainee accountant scheme for the Council.	Actively promote the use of mentoring where appropriate. Encourage 360 degree appraisals for all staff R6/7 and above (optional below R6/7). Develop and review the trainee accountant scheme for the Council.	Actively promote the use of mentoring where appropriate. Mandatory 360 degree appraisals for all staff. Develop and review the trainee accountant scheme for the Council.	Jacqueline Yates
Embed the culture behind the Employee Charter within the Service			Develop a Behaviours Statement for Finance. Effectively communicate and embed those behaviours across the Service.	Review and update the Behaviours Statement on an annual basis.	Review and update the Behaviours Statement on an annual basis.	Mark Preston
Achieve Investors in People Status			Finance is involved and well prepared to assist the Council achieve IIP status.	Finance is involved and well prepared to assist the Council maintain IIP status.	Finance is involved and well prepared to assist the Council maintain IIP status.	Pauline Page

## Outcome 2: Customers

Target Description	Last Year		Targets			Target Owner
	Target	Actual	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	

All trading relationships are owned and actively managed			All trading relationships are allocated a key finance contact. Customer satisfaction for each relationship reviewed as part of the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. Target 80% satisfaction.	All trading relationships are allocated a key finance contact. Customer satisfaction for each relationship reviewed as part of the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. Target 80% satisfaction.	All trading relationships are allocated a key finance contact. Customer satisfaction for each relationship reviewed as part of the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. Target 80% satisfaction.	Gavin Kinsman
Pensions administration to become excellent and considered best practice site.			Improved communications with a reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments. Outstanding backlog cleared by 31 March 2008.	Improved communications with a reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments.	Improved communications with a reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments.	Clive Palfreyman
Facilitate improved understanding of the Medium Term Planning process			Member and Heads of Service workshops incorporated into MTP timetable. Feedback from workshops good. Facilitate consistency of approach to member challenge process. Provide training on investment planning.	Member and Heads of Service workshops incorporated into MTP timetable. Feedback from workshops good. Facilitate consistency of approach to member challenge process. Provide training on investment planning.	Member and Heads of Service workshops incorporated into MTP timetable. Feedback from workshops good. Facilitate consistency of approach to member challenge process. Provide training on investment planning.	Mark Preston

### Outcome 3: Communication

Target Description	Last Year		Targets			Target Owner
	Target	Actual	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	
Improve Communication			Deliver Communications Strategy Action Plans. Communications Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis.	Deliver Communications Strategy Action Plans. Communications Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis.	Deliver Communications Strategy Action Plans. Communications Strategy reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis.	John Huskinson
Develop Finance Website			Continuously review, update and improve website information and Bucks Portal FAQs.	Continuously review, update and improve website information and Bucks Portal FAQs.	Continuously review, update and improve website information and Bucks Portal FAQs.	Pauline Page

### Outcome 4: Achievements

Target Description	Last Year		Targets			Target Owner
	Target	Actual	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	
Service appropriately governed	100% of controls stated within Statement of	98%	100% of controls stated within Statement of Internal Control are in	100% of controls stated within Statement of Internal Control are in	100% of controls stated within Statement of Internal Control are in	Jacqueline Yates

	Internal Control are in place. Action plan monitored at FMT on quarterly basis.		place. Action plan monitored at FMT on quarterly basis.	place. Action plan monitored at FMT on quarterly basis.	place. Action plan monitored at FMT on quarterly basis.	
BVPI 8 monthly monitoring - 100% of Council `s invoices paid within 30 days	0%	0%	97%	98%	98.5%	Clive Palfreyman
Top Performing Pension Fund			Fund performance to exceed the stated Fund Benchmark.	Fund performance to exceed the stated Fund Benchmark.	Fund performance to exceed the stated Fund Benchmark.	Clive Palfreyman
Assist Schools in meeting DfES FMSiS requirements			100% of Schools audit plan complete using approach considered as best practice. 50% of schools compliant.	100% of Schools audit plan complete using approach considered as best practice. 60% of schools compliant.	100% of Schools audit plan complete using approach considered as best practice. 70% of schools compliant.	Clive Palfreyman
Completion of Annual Audit Plan	Audit Commission target 90%	93%	95%	95%	95%	Clive Palfreyman
Improve Council `s use of Resources Score. Effective and embedded risk management throughout the organisation.	No scores lower than 3	Level 2 for Internal Control (Financial Instructions)	2 scores to be 4. Electronic Risk Management Solution identified.	4 scores to be 4. Fully electronic Risk Management Solution.	All scores to be 4 Fully electronic Risk Management Solution.	Jacqueline Yates
Top Quartile Treasury Function	New target 2007/08		Investment Income exceeds average FT 7 day LIBID rate by 0.25%. Cost of borrowing as a percentage of total borrowing 6.49%.	Investment Income exceeds average FT 7 day LIBID rate by 0.30%. Cost of borrowing as a percentage of total borrowing 6.45%.	Investment Income exceeds average FT 7 day LIBID rate by 0.35%. Cost of borrowing as a percentage of total borrowing 6.40%.	Clive Palfreyman
Schools budgets are monitored effectively and reported consistently with the rest of the Council.			New financial framework implemented. Regular and effective monitoring in place.	Embed financial framework. Regular and effective monitoring in place.	Embed financial framework. Regular and effective monitoring in place.	Jane Brown
More effective use of Schools Balances.			Reduction in the number of schools with deficit balances and all such schools have agreed robust recovery plans. Surplus balances in excess of guidelines are	Reduction in the number of schools with deficit balances and all such schools have agreed robust recovery plans. Reduction in excessive schools surplus	Reduction in the number of schools with deficit balances and all such schools have agreed robust recovery plans. Reduction in excessive schools surplus	Jane Brown

			challenged.	balances.	balances.	
Successful implementation of SWIFT/SAP interface to replace Dataease.			SWIFT/SAP interface is developed and implemented to enable the decommissioning of Dataease by March 2008.	The ASCFIP Project implementation is reviewed and formally signed off identifying any residual issues.	Operation of SWIFT/SAP interface is reviewed and identified issues addressed.	Di Hodges
Develop a joint Council Tax Leaflet with Districts			Implement joint council tax leaflet with District partners.	Implement joint council tax leaflet with District partners.	Implement joint council tax leaflet with District partners.	Jacqueline Yates

### Outcome 5: Continuous Improvement

Target Description	Last Year		Targets			Target Owner
	Target	Actual	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	
Opportunities for shared service arrangements or other efficiency mechanisms should be considered. Proposals for shared financial services meet S151 officer requirements.			Shared services as agreed by JIB are considered with regard to VFM. Shared Financial Services have due regard to effective management of Council's Financial Affairs and S151 of LG Act 1972. Proposals for shared CIA in place by 1 April 2008.	Shared services as agreed by JIB are considered with regard to VFM. Shared Financial Services have due regard to effective management of Council's Financial Affairs and S151 of LG Act 1972. Proposals for shared CIA in place by 1 April 2008.	Shared services as agreed by JIB are considered with regard to VFM. Shared Financial Services have due regard to effective management of Council's Financial Affairs and S151 of LG Act 1972. Proposals for shared CIA in place by 1 April 2008.	Jacqueline Yates
Develop the functionality of SAP to streamline processes and aid accessibility for users			Coordinate SAP Finance User Group to develop Strategy and prioritise development. Implement SAP Finance improvements in accordance with Strategy, resource constraints permitting.	Continually review and improve the use of SAP Finance and contribute to the wider SAP improvement agenda.	Continually review and improve the use of SAP Finance and contribute to the wider SAP improvement agenda.	Gavin Kinsman
Partnership arrangements have clear objectives from outset.			Significant partnership arrangements that are appropriately governed as measured by 100% compliance with the Council's Statement of Internal Control self-assessment.	Significant partnership arrangements that are appropriately governed as measured by 100% compliance with the Council's Statement of Internal Control self-assessment.	Significant partnership arrangements that are appropriately governed as measured by 100% compliance with the Council's Statement of Internal Control self-assessment.	Clive Palfreyman

Develop and implement an effective Business Investment Strategy			Develop, implement and effectively communicate the Council`s Business Investment Strategy.	Review and effectively embed the Council`s Business Investment Strategy.	Review and update the Council`s Business Investment Strategy.	Mark Preston
Review and refine the Council`s Value For Money Strategy			To develop a more objective and evidence based VFM Strategy for 2007/08 MTP roll out.	Embed the Council`s VFM Strategy. Review the Strategy on an annual basis.	Embed the Council`s VFM Strategy. Review the Strategy on an annual basis.	John Huskinson
Corporate Projects are adequately supported			All corporate projects have appropriate and adequate support in developing their business cases, taking them forward and delivering project budgets on target.	All corporate projects have appropriate and adequate support in developing their business cases, taking them forward and delivering project budgets on target.	All corporate projects have appropriate and adequate support in developing their business cases, taking them forward and delivering project budgets on target.	John Huskinson

**Further Service Plan Information:**

**Accountable Officer**  
Jacqueline Yates

**Strategic Director**  
Ian Trenholm

**Cabinet Member**  
Frank Downes

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_