

Buckinghamshire County Council

# The Council's Operating Framework



**Our One Council Approach**  
**Working together for Buckinghamshire**



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## About this document

The County Council works in a system of interdependent parts, both within the Council and externally with partners in the supply chain. Each part of the system has a different role to play in our ambition to improve outcomes for residents, communities and businesses, but no one part can achieve this in isolation.

This document is a core part of the County Council's governance framework. The high-level rules on how the Council is governed are set out in the Council's Constitution.

The Operating Framework's scope covers the key topic areas that matter in running the business to achieve a one Council approach; as well as where it is helpful to set out clear expectations on standards, roles, accountabilities and responsibilities across the organisation, particularly on the respective roles of HQ, the Shared Services Business Unit (BU) and other BUs.

Members sit above the Council officer structures, providing the democratic leadership for the Council in their strategic roles as decision-makers, select committee members and in carrying out their local roles as community leaders.

The purpose of the Operating Framework is to:

- Enable Council employees to understand the different accountabilities and responsibilities of HQ and BUs and how the two parts can work together to deliver a one Council approach.
- To ensure a one Council approach in our governance system, providing robust organisational assurance.

<b>This document is</b>	<b>This document is not</b>
An overview for Council employees on key organisational requirements.	A comprehensive list of all mandatory requirements as these are set out in supporting strategies, policies, and procedures.
Written for the primary audience of Council employees.	Written as a public-facing document for residents.
A key governance document alongside the Council's Constitution.	A replacement to the Council's Constitution that sets out the high-level legal basis for how the Council is run.
Mandatory for all Council employees to follow.	Mandatory for suppliers to follow unless specific elements are incorporated into contract agreements. A procedure will be developed to set out minimum organisational contract requirements to ensure that requirements are passed down the supply chain.
Changeable (by Cabinet or Leader decision).	Unchangeable.

## Status of the Operating Framework

This document is agreed by Cabinet and will apply from April 2015.

Having an Operating Framework is a new endeavour for the Council. As such it is likely that this document may need updating as the Future Shape Model is rolled out. The Leader of the Council, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member (s), will therefore have the power to, by exception, agree changes as a key decision.

Strategies, Policies and Procedures (either new or changes to existing ones) will each be agreed separately in line with the Council's decision-making processes. In addition to the mandatory requirements set out in these documents, HQ and BUs may provide additional guidance (or called toolkits) to help the business run effectively. Guidance is non-mandatory for Council employees to follow.

All employees are expected to adhere to the Operating Framework, as well as Council Strategies, Policies and Procedures. These are listed in the Council's Policy Register. Disciplinary action may be taken in cases of non-compliance and considered as part of the Delivering Successful Performance (DSP) process. The role profiles of senior managers in HQ and BUs will include accountability for implementation of the Operating Framework by employees within their areas.

## How we work together

In running the Council effectively there are some organisational requirements that are pertinent to everything that Council employees do. These are:

- **Member-led**—Providing information and advice to Members to support them to carry out their strategic and local roles. This includes ensuring that all Members are provided with the opportunity to influence decisions appropriately; supporting Executive Members to carry out their role as decision-makers; and supporting the Select Committees to help improve outcomes for residents through investigating issues and making recommendations for change.
- **Collaborative working**—Working in the best interests of our customers and the organisation as a whole. One of the ways that collaborative working will be supported is through the provision of specialist advice and expertise from one part of the Council to another. Where specialist advice is provided internally, there is a presumption that it will be non-chargeable unless charges have been set out in an agreed Council procedure or service level agreement.
- **Organisational Compliance**—Where there are mandatory requirements set out in this document or any strategy, policy or procedure listed in the Policy Register, all Council employees will be required to follow these.
- **Internal Service Level Agreements (SLAs)**—The Shared Services BU will develop and agree a SLA with HQ and other BUs on the specific details of minimum services and standards that will be delivered to meet in-house

organisational needs. SLAs are a contractual mechanism that are appropriate for the Shared Services BU as it supports a commercial customer/supplier relationship that is the direction of travel for these type of services. SLAs are not an appropriate mechanism for all internal joint working within the Council. The One Council Board will approve any organisational internal SLAs between different parts of the Council that are about internal operational issues. Cabinet or Cabinet Members will take decisions on external significant contracts, including SLAs, as well as setting the standards for service delivery.

## Implementation

The Council's Risk and Assurance Strategy will set out the full details of the processes for managing and monitoring the implementation of the Operating Framework in addition to all aspects of the Council's assurance. Key assurance processes include:

- The Regulatory and Audit Committee will monitor compliance with the Operating Framework through the Annual Governance Statement and audit processes.
- The One Council Board and HQ Management Board will oversee the implementation of the Operating Framework across the organisation.
- Managing Directors and BU Boards will have a key role in overseeing implementation within their respective BUs.
- There will be professional lead officers with oversight roles of specific aspects of assurance & risk (see Appendix 2).



## 1: Decision-making and Internal Governance

### Key changes

- **Members will continue to take key decisions on the significant issues that matter** including in relation to commissioning at the following key points:
  - Strategic Plan (Full Council).
  - The set-up of new external Delivery Units (Cabinet).
  - New contracts/contract variations/extensions that are significant (Cabinet or Cabinet Members).
- **The Member role will be enhanced through ensuring that all Strategies and Policies are always taken as a formal Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision.** HQ will provide advice on the appropriate decision-making level to all parts of the organisation based on the issues significance and in-line with the Constitutional rules on decision-making.
- **There is, for the first time, a written document that sets out the role and remit of all internal advisory boards** (Procedure). The number of internal advisory boards has reduced with streamlined processes. The procedure will help make it easier for officers to understand when and how it is appropriate for issues to be raised corporately, as well as understand the circumstances where advice is needed prior to a formal decision.
- Council employees, particularly those in commissioning and contract management roles, will be required to have **strong political awareness to work with Members effectively, and this will be a key skill within employee training.**
- Each BU is accountable for ensuring that **local members** have the opportunity to influence decision-making appropriately. This means that local members will be engaged on significant service changes that specifically impact upon their division, and/or decisions impacting across the whole of Buckinghamshire where the relevant responsible Cabinet Member identifies a need for wider Member engagement.
- There will be a **Single One Council Project Register** to provide organisational visibility of projects to support collaborative working and assurance.

### How HQ and BUs will work together

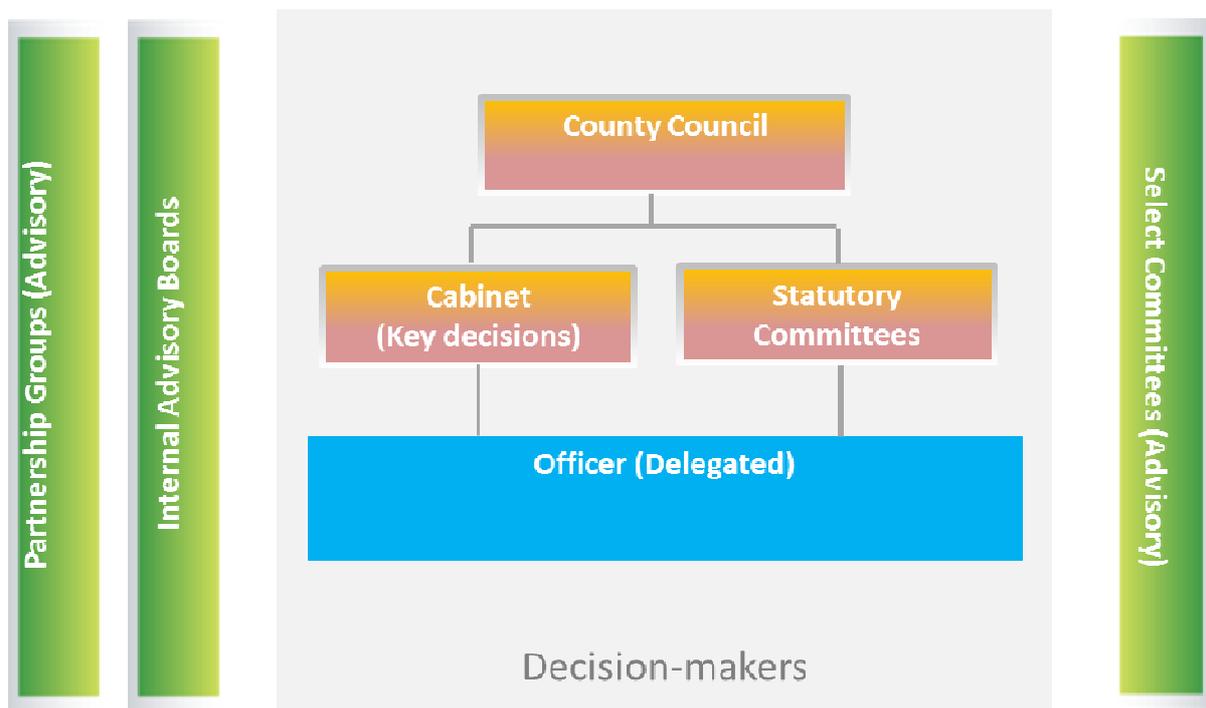
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide guidance on decision-making processes to BUs. BUs may seek and be provided with specialist advice on

how to follow and meet Council mandatory requirements. The accountability and responsibility for what action is taken, with or without advice provided from HQ, will always sit with the BU and ultimately Managing Director.

- **IT Infrastructure**—HQ will provide reliable and appropriate IT infrastructure to make it easy for BUs to record and access information on decisions via a single IT system. BUs will utilise the Council’s IT system to record decisions appropriately.
- **Support for Members**—HQ and BUs will support all Members in all aspects of their different roles, strategically and locally. HQ will lead in providing advice to Cabinet as a whole and Select Committees. In addition, HQ will maintain an overview of all aspects of Member support and provide direct support to enable Members to carry out their roles as Committee Members. The Adults, Health and Communities BU will provide lead support for Members in their community leadership role.
- **Support for all Members to influence decision-making**—HQ will provide guidance for officers and Members on the role of Members in the commissioning cycle. BUs will ensure that local Members are engaged early in relation to significant issues that impact specifically on a Member’s division, particularly where there is a significant service change impact on residents. BUs will also seek the advice of the relevant Cabinet Member on whether the input of all Members is needed on strategic Council-wide issues prior to a formal decision being taken.
- **Internal Advisory Boards**—HQ will coordinate the secretariat support for Council internal advisory boards. BUs will ensure that all appropriate issues are referred to the relevant advisory boards with timely information required. The key council-wide advisory boards are:
  - One Council Board
  - Customer, Information & Digital Board
  - Asset Strategy Board
- **Project Management**—There will be a robust project management approach across the Council to ensure evidence-based decisions are made throughout the lifecycle of a project providing greater visibility of projects. Key changes in project management include:
  - HQ will ensure guidance on project management including a standard gated methodology is provided.
  - There will be a single One Council project register that employees across the Council will use to help manage the progress of projects through a gated approach.
  - There will be a process for ensuring projects receive an appropriate mandate for start-up. Projects identified as ‘major’ by the One Council Board, and set out in the BU Plan, will be commissioned for start-up by the One Council Board. Non-major projects will receive their mandate for start-up by the relevant HQ/BU Board or other appropriate mechanism determined within these units.

- The Assets Strategy Board will manage a gated process for all capital projects overall.
- HQ and BU Boards will manage a gated process for all their revenue projects. The HQ and BU Boards will escalate to the One Council Board the consideration of outline business cases for major projects and, by exception, at other gated points where a revenue major project is identified as off-track.

## County Council Governance





## 2: Policy Framework

### Key changes

- **A reduction in the number of Strategies, Policies and Procedures, and clarification on the mandatory vs non-mandatory requirements**, with for the first time, standard definitions of different types of policy documents.
- There will be a **single policy register** listing all of the Council's policy documents that must be used. This includes a pipeline of emerging policy work to ensure Members are sighted on developing ideas and to encourage collaborative working across the Council.
- **Members will take decisions on all Council Strategies and Policies.** The Policy register will set out who is the required decision-maker.

The Policy Framework refers to all of the Council's key supporting documents that set out what the Council is aiming to do and how it is going to do it. The Constitution also includes further information on the Policy Framework.

Statutorily there are some policy documents that the Council must have. These are:

- The Budget
- Local Transport Plan
- Minerals and Waste Development Plan
- Community Safety Plan
- Youth Justice Plan
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Food Enforcement Plan

Some of these statutory documents are also required legally to be approved by the County Council. Statutory documents that will be approved by the County Council going forward are (or any other such titled documents which fulfil the same functions as those shown below):

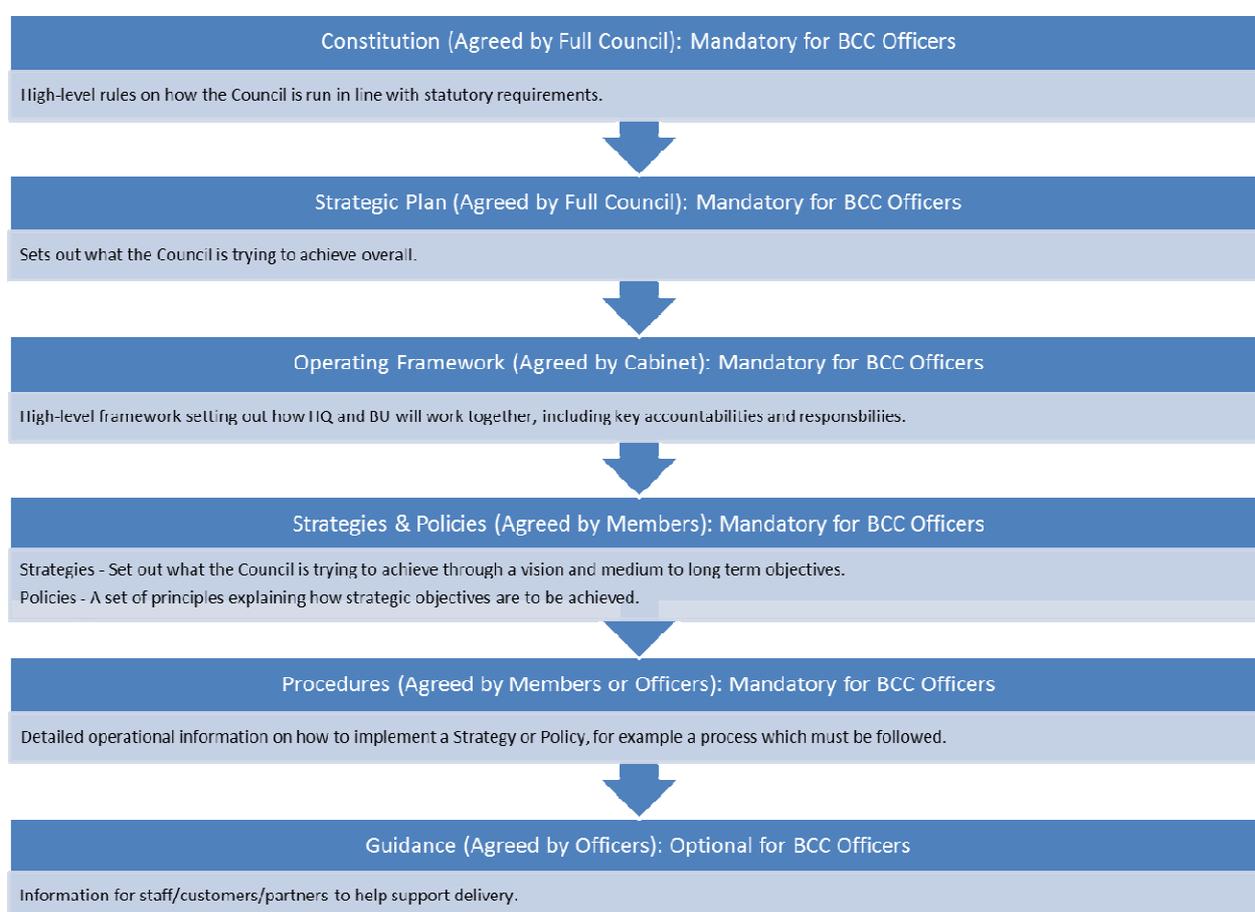
- The Budget (included as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan)
- Local Transport Plan
- Minerals and Waste Development Plan
- Treasury Management Strategy

The County Council may also, as a matter of local choice, adopt at a Council meeting any other strategies and policies it wishes. Those identified as a matter of local choice are (or any other such titled documents which fulfil the same functions as those shown below):

- Strategic Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Only documents listed in the Council's policy register are endorsed by the Council and apply. Where a document is not listed in the policy register it has no status, and is not endorsed by the Council. Existing 'policy' documents approved pre-April 2015 must either be listed in the policy register or are automatically rescinded (there is a transition period until Dec 2015 for this to be implemented).

## Our Policy Hierarchy



## Core Council and Partnership Strategies & Policies

'Core' Council Strategies and Policies are the most important documents for the Council strategically to deliver outcomes for Buckinghamshire.

**The Councils' Core Policies comprise:**

Core Council Strategies and Policies	Statutory	Decision-maker
Strategic Plan	No	Council
Medium Term Financial Plan	No (budget only)	Council
Commissioning Framework	No	Cabinet
Business Unit Plans	No	Cabinet
Capital Investment Strategy	No	Cabinet
Asset Management Strategy	No	Cabinet
Treasury Management Strategy	Yes	Council
Operating Framework	No	Cabinet
Local Transport Plan	Yes	Council
Minerals and Waste Development Plan	Yes	Council
People and Organisational Development Strategy	No	Cabinet

**Core Partnership Strategies:**

The Council works with partners to develop broader policies and plans for Buckinghamshire as a whole. The outcomes in these strategies will inform, and be informed by, the Strategic Plan. The core partnership policies that the Council will adopt are:

Core Partnership Strategies	Partnership Lead	Statutory	Council Decision-maker
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Health and Wellbeing Board	Yes	Council
Safer Bucks Plan	Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board	Yes	Cabinet
Youth Justice Strategic Plan	Youth Justice Management Board	Yes	Cabinet
Children and Young People's Plan	Children and Young People's Partnership Executive	Yes	Cabinet
Strategic Economic Plan	Local Economic Partnership	No	Cabinet

## How HQ and BUs will work together

- **Policy Development**—Policy development will take place at both HQ and BU level. The HQ will lead on promoting best practice in the policy-making process to support the delivery of the policy framework. It will also lead on the policy development of some core Council policies. BUs will develop those core policies which are specific to their particular areas of expertise, and provide specialist expertise to inform all of the Council's Strategies and Policies as needed. BUs will develop unit-level procedures and guidance as needed in line with the Council's policy framework.
- **Decision-making**—In developing policies, employees in HQ and BUs must follow the requirements on decision-making set out in the Council's Constitution.
- **Partnership Policies**—Where a partnership document meets the Council definitions of being a Strategy or Policy and the Council wishes to be a signatory of this document then employees in HQ and BUs must ensure that Council decision-making requirements in the Constitution are implemented. HQ will provide advice to BUs on the decision-making process for partnership documents. BUs will seek advice from HQ as needed.
- **Peer Network**—HQ will coordinate a Council-wide peer support quality assurance process, with support from BUs. BUs will support each other in developing joined-up policies.
- **Policy Register**—HQ will coordinate the provision of a single policy register. This will capture information on emerging proposals and policies to enable opportunities for collaborative working as well as information on all live Strategies, Policies and Procedures. BUs will be responsible for logging information on the register regularly on emerging ideas for policy changes and proposals. This will enable greater opportunities for joining-up approaches across the Council.



### 3: Strategic Commissioning & Business Planning

#### Key changes

- There will be a **Strategic Plan (setting the outcomes sought by Members) and Business Unit Plans** (setting out how each Business Unit will contribute to the Strategic Plan outcomes).
- **All commissioning activity across the Council will clearly link to the priorities set by Members in the Strategic Plan** with better targeting of resources at the things that make the biggest difference for residents and communities.
- There will be a **Commissioning Framework** that sets out the Council's overarching approach including how we look at value for money and operate commercially.
- There will be a stronger focus on **Value for Money** through undertaking cross-cutting strategic options appraisals under the direction of Cabinet, and by ensuring that all Business Unit Plan proposals are underpinned by robust value for money assessments.

#### Key documents within the planning process are:

##### Strategic Plan (published Full Council decision)

Sets out the Level One (high level) outcomes, usually at broad population level, that the Council wishes to achieve for Buckinghamshire (not purely deliverable by BCC alone).

Also sets out the Level 2 outcomes against which commissioning activity will take place i.e. that specify the BCC contribution to Level 1 outcomes.

##### The Strategic Plan:

- Is a four year rolling plan (this year it spans three years and thereafter four years).
- Has a ten year time horizon.
- Directly links to budget.
- Includes indicators measuring progress against L1/L2 outcomes.

##### Business Unit Plans (published Cabinet Member Decision)

A single plan for each Business Unit that sets out:

- Their contribution to specific Level 2 outcomes over a four year timescale (three years initially) and the budget associated with them.
- Reviews evidence for key changes in delivery of services and/or planned changes in delivery ahead, including areas for disinvestment.
- Shows how political Cabinet Member portfolios link to outcomes and budgets.



## HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Strategy & Policies**—HQ will coordinate the business planning cycle for the Council including setting the timescales for this and leading on the advice to Cabinet and co-ordination of BU Plans. HQ will also lead on the Council's Commissioning Framework and accompanying guidance/toolkits on commissioning. BUs will lead on developing BU Plans. Whilst HQ will not produce a commissioning plan in the same way that BU Plans will be produced, it will produce an annual plan and be accountable for this.
- **Decision-making**—All significant commissioning decisions will be taken by Members.
  - Cabinet will agree and recommend proposals on the prioritisation of outcomes important to Buckinghamshire, the measures by which impact will be assessed, and the budgets for these (set out in the Strategic Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and supporting BU Plans).
  - Cabinet Members will take key decisions on the approval of BU Plans (Feb)
  - Full Council will take the final decision in February of each year on the Council's Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan.
  - Cabinet will take decisions on significant commissioning decisions throughout the year such as the set-up of new Delivery Units
  - Cabinet or Cabinet Members will take decisions throughout the year on other significant commissioning decisions such as new service contracts or variations to existing ones (in line with Constitutional rules on decision-making).
- **Supporting Cabinet and Cabinet Members**—HQ will advise and support Cabinet and BUs to develop level 1 & 2 outcomes. BUs will co-design level 2 outcomes and use these to develop BU Plans. BUs will lead on developing commissioning options and proposals to put to the appropriate decision-maker, normally the respective Cabinet Member.
- **Supporting Select Committee Members**—HQ will lead in supporting Members in their role on Select Committees to help improve outcomes for residents through investigating issues and making reports with recommendations for change which influence commissioning decisions. BUs will support the Select Committees to carry out their role through providing information on commissioning issues as and when requested.
- **Supporting Members in their roles as Community Leaders**—HQ will ensure that all Members have the opportunity to influence the development of the Strategic Plan. BUs will ensure that all Members have the opportunity to

influence commissioning plans and decisions that have a specific impact on a Member's division, or where the lead Cabinet Member requests an engagement exercise with all Members prior to a formal decision.

- **Working Collaboratively**—HQ will lead on the co-ordination of commissioning networks, as required, to support the delivery of the Council's cross-cutting outcomes. This will be supported through a nominated Managing Director from one Business Unit to lead collaboration across the Units for a specific Level 2 outcome. BUs will actively support the commissioning networks through peer learning, support and constructive challenge.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide guidance on the strategic commissioning process overall, the role of Members and the achievement of level 1 & 2 outcomes. BUs will provide specialist expertise to inform the Strategic Plan and BU Plans. BUs will have subject specialist commissioning expertise to manage all aspects of the commissioning cycle.
- **Reviewing Performance**—Cabinet will review the delivery of the Strategic Plan and all BU Plans. The One Council Board, with the assistance of HQ and BU employees, will advise Members on delivery of the plans. BUs will regularly monitor and review their performance in delivering the BU Plan via the respective BU Board.
- **Strategic Options Appraisals**—HQ will lead on co-ordinating an ongoing cycle of Strategic Options Appraisals in addition to ongoing BU commissioning activity to assess service specific options. These strategic appraisals will be forward looking and the scope will be flexed to focus on either how best to achieve an outcome or service. HQ and BUs will identify opportunities for Strategic Options Appraisals. Cabinet and Cabinet Members will have oversight of the Strategic Options Appraisals, with the One Council Board and HQ/BU Boards using their findings to inform future commissioning plans. The method of delivery of the Strategic Options Appraisals may vary on a case-by-case basis, this may be delivered via in-house resource from the HQ/BUs or alternatively by an external consultancy.





## 4: Financial Management

### Key changes

- **Finance capacity and skills** embedded into the design of BUs with the introduction of a Financial Director as a member of each BU Board.
- **BUs will be able to keep 75% of any revenue surpluses** at the year-end, subject to information being set out in the subsequent year's BU Plan on how this money will be used to achieve the relevant BU outcomes. Any overspends by BUs will be considered as borrowing to be paid back.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will have oversight of all of the Council's financial policy documents which are listed in the policy register. BUs will implement the organisational financial requirements and be accountable for ensuring value for money is achieved against delivery of the BU Plan.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide guidance on how to achieve value for money, including assessment methods as part of the Commissioning Framework. HQ will also provide guidance on financial management and, where appropriate, template procedures.
- **Budget Management**—HQ will manage a single approach to the accounts, lead on developing the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and regularly monitor the Council's revenue and capital budgets, advising Members accordingly. BUs are accountable for effective budget management in their areas of control, meeting HQ reporting requirements and reporting/escalating issues appropriately.
- **Decision-making on Capital**—HQ will provide advice and support to the Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in particular on the development of the Capital Programme through the Assets Strategy Board. Medium term capital allocations will be set out in the BU Plans. Decisions on whether to approve the release of these capital funds through the capital gateway process will be made following a recommendation from the Assets Strategy Board. BUs will manage capital projects within their remit within the resource and timescales agreed and escalate any issues to HQ appropriately. BUs will prepare business cases for capital proposals and submit these to the Assets Strategy Board for consideration.

- **Decision-making on Revenue**—HQ will support BUs to manage their revenue funds effectively through the provision of guidance. BUs are accountable and responsible for managing revenue funds appropriately in their areas. After the budget for the BU has been agreed by Members, as part of the MTFP, then BUs will be able to spend these funds without seeking any further authorisation from HQ. Where revenue (investment) is needed to support a project then the BU will follow the Council’s standard approach to project management, implementing the standard gated process. BUs will record key information on project finances on the Council’s single project register.
- **Overspends and Underspends**—HQ will have oversight of all BU over and underspends and be assured that any appropriate action is being taken. BUs will be able to keep 75% of unspent revenue surpluses at the year-end, as set out in the Council’s Financial Regulations in the Constitution. Any overspends by BUs will be considered as borrowing to be paid back. The criteria for managing overspends and underspends are set out in the Council’s Financial Regulations in the Constitution.
- **Virements**—The criteria for allowing in-year budget movements are set out in the Council’s Financial Regulations in the Constitution. In-year revenue movements between political portfolios will be approved by the relevant Cabinet Members. Movements of revenue within a BU and political portfolio will be agreed by the BU Managing Director in agreement with the relevant Cabinet Member. The process for in-year capital virements require Member approval, as set out in the Council’s Financial Regulations.
- **Demand Management**—BUs will consider how best to manage current and future demand when commissioning services, drawing upon business intelligence to help plan and take preventative action. The HQ will ensure that demand management principles are embedded into the methodology for Strategic Options Appraisals as well as the Commissioning Framework.
- **Income Generation and Debt Management**—HQ will establish a corporate framework for income generation and debt management. BUs will be able to develop local arrangements within that framework. Each BU will be responsible for maximising its income and raising invoices in a timely manner. Each BU will be responsible for recovering debts at the earliest opportunity. Failure to recover debts in a reasonable timescale will result in a corporate process kicking in, the cost and consequences of which will be borne by the BU.
- **Earmarked Reserves**—HQ will have oversight of all earmarked reserves, which can only be spent if the conditions which created them are met.

Requests for setting up earmarked reserves are subject to the agreement of the Director of Assurance.



## 5: Commissioning - Procurement, Supplier and Contract Management

### Key changes

- The Council's Commissioning approach, to be set out in the **Commissioning Framework**, will be supported through robust procurement, supplier and contract management capability and processes.
- There is a **single contract management system** in place to be used by all contract managers, enabled by a single IT system. This enables a single view of all contract details and management practices to identify and maximise value for money and to provide organisational assurance that our management of spend is commercially robust.
- The quality of services for customers will be robustly assessed and delivered regardless of supplier type – e.g. in-house or externally delivered.
- We will strengthen the **skills and capability of the Council workforce** in supplier and contract management through providing training, guidance and tools.
- **We will provide greater flexibility for BUs to determine locally the best way to achieve value for money in tendering by bringing the threshold for tendering in line with EU legal requirements.**

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will have oversight of all Council policies relating to procurement, suppliers and contracts. These will be set out as part of the new Commissioning Framework. HQ will also provide all parts of the organisation with guidance on best practice. BUs will implement these policies.
- **Supplier and Contract Management**—There will be a common supplier, contract and management approach used by all contract and relationship managers across the authority, as set out as part of the new Commissioning Framework. HQ will lead on the development and enhancement of this framework, working with BUs to implement it at an appropriate level with their specific workforces and markets.
- **Single Contract System**—There is a single contract register used by all contract managers across the Council, which is enabled by a single IT system. HQ and BUs will use the IT system to enhance the management of our supplier relationships and support category insight capability. BUs will

ensure that the contract system is kept up-to-date and holds all of the required information on contracts and contract management practice. HQ will be the owner of the contract system.

- **Procurement & Contract Letting**—HQ will own and maintain Standing Orders as set out in the Constitution. The Contract Standing Orders include the criteria for tendering arrangements. A contract goes out for tender in line with the EU legal tendering thresholds: below the EU thresholds and above £25,000 there is a requirement for a minimum of three quotations to be obtained. BUs will ensure that they comply with Standing Orders for Contracts and are accountable for demonstrating value for money in procurement activity. The Shared Services BU will provide specialist advice and guidance on all procurement activity and specifically support all high value and/or high risk tendering activity, as defined in Standing Orders.



## 6: Delivery of Support Services

### Key changes

- A new BU will provide Shared Services where there is a value for money proposition for council-wide delivery.
- Those services will continue to be provided in-house and purchased by the other BUs for an initial transition period up until 30 March 2016, providing time for transforming those services to commercial standards (this is a 2-year 'buy-back' starting from the date at which the Future Shape Business Plan was agreed in March 2014, see Appendix 1 for further details).

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Decision-making on Shared Services BU**—HQ will determine an objective assessment process for agreeing the functions to be commissioned through the Shared Services BU, supporting the One Council Board to advise Members on these decisions appropriately. Other BUs will not use the services of suppliers where these services are provided by the Shared Services BU (and meet the delivery standards agreed in the SLA) during the transition period.
- **Delivery Standards**—HQ will coordinate the development of a Service Level Agreement between Shared Services BU and other parts of the organisation, including quality standards and the consequences and process for managing disputes on delivery between parties. The SLA will be signed-off by all members of the One Council Board. The Shared Services BU will meet the BU Managing Directors regularly to review delivery against agreed Key Performance Indicators. BUs will be able to secure external support under circumstances that Shared Services BU is not able to internally provide the support requested. HQ and BUs will submit a business case to Shared Services BU for using external support if required. The arrangements for agreeing the exact circumstances will be set out in the SLA, the brokerage of such external support will be provided by Shared Services BU.
- **Driving Efficiency, Improvement and Commerciality**—The Shared Services BU will provide HQ and BUs with consultancy support, operational support and commercial services. It will include a focus on identifying new services and products which are saleable to a wider range of customers both within and outside the County Council.



## 7: Property Assets and Services

### Key changes

- The **Council's Property Assets Strategy** and **corporate landlord approach** enables a strategic and corporate approach to asset management across the Council. This will maximise value for money.
- The strategic management of all Council assets, including property, will be managed together in HQ.
- The creation of Shared Services BU enables property services to be better aligned to other support services packages e.g. ICT, HR and payroll for marketing to partners, notably schools.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will lead on the Council's Property Asset Strategy and single council-wide Property Assets Management Plan including targets for optimisation and income. BUs will include all of the key asset requirements in their BU Plans.
- **Decision-taking**—Cabinet and Cabinet Members will continue to take the decisions on all significant property issues, and property implications are considered as a matter of course in all formal decision-taking. Where capital investment is required for a decision related to property, BUs will propose capital investments via BU Plans, after consultation with HQ; and, closer to implementation submit business cases for consideration by the Assets Strategy Board prior to a Cabinet/Cabinet Member Decision.
- **Specialist expertise**—The Shared Services BU will provide expertise to other BUs & HQ on maximising income; managing accommodation; and implementing property requirements. HQ will provide expertise on asset and estate management.
- **Property Asset Management**—HQ, acting as corporate landlord, will commission effective property asset management from the Shared Services BU. Other BUs will be responsible for developing delivery plans to ensure that value for money is secured for effective use of the Council's property assets.
- **Property Services/Accommodation Management**—HQ will provide overall leadership on the effective utilisation of the Council's estate and ensuring the

council-wide SLA includes clear standards for the quality of property services, represents value for money and is aligned to business requirements.

- HQ will manage leases and licences for occupiers of the estate and manage all income streams from such arrangements. The Shared Services BU will provide soft and hard facilities management services, as specified in the council-wide SLA, including providing accommodation to meet the needs of all parts of the Council.
- BU's will contribute to the development of the Property Asset Strategy and adhere to the SLA requirements for notice periods for changes to accommodation requirements and termination of leases. BUs will have the flexibility to vary approaches to meet their different respective accommodation needs. BUs will use the accommodation space provided in Council buildings for BU employees, and potentially Delivery Units. BUs will take full responsibility for the recovery of allocated costs—such as rates and service charges as identified by HQ—where Council property is used to support activity unrelated to Council business. BUs will ensure value for money from property through exploring innovative arrangements to share, shrink or grow the use of property.



## 8: Customer Experience

### Key changes

- **It will be easier to do business with the Council through the provision of a new customer platform.** This platform will enable more choice of how our customers can transact with us, be it self-service on the web, web chat, or traditional routes like telephony or email. It will also enable us to have a **complete view of customer contact.**
- **Our customer's experience of doing business with the Council will be better through the implementation of a Customer Standards Policy** that sets out minimum organisational standards on responding to customers for the first time.
- **We will ensure that Members receive the right information on complaints to understand and take action on trends to improve the customer experience,** as well as embedding customer feedback into standard contract management performance monitoring.
- We will provide all **Members** with assurance that where customer enquiries are raised with them directly that these are dealt with promptly through implementation of the Customer Service Standards Policy.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will drive forward the strategy for improving customer experience across the organisation, including leading on the delivery of the new Customer Standards Policy that sets out minimum customer standards. These minimum customer standards requirements will be passed down the supply chain to contractors and incorporated into the new Contract Requirements Procedure.
- **Specialist Expertise**—An SLA will be agreed between Shared Services BU, HQ and the other BUs to set out service specific requirements for working together. HQ and BUs will work collaboratively to improve customer experience using customer insight and feedback to drive service improvements and improve customer satisfaction.
- **Leadership**—The new Customer, Digital and Information Board will commission cross-cutting customer improvement projects to deliver the ambitions of the Think Customer Programme. The delivery of these projects will normally be led by the relevant BU with lead responsibility, as well as

being reflected in BU Plans. The outcomes from these projects will be measured and overseen by the Customer, Digital and Information Board.

- **Customer Platform**—HQ will lead in developing the Council’s approach to ensuring there is a complete view of how our customers transact with us, be it by self-service on the web, web chat or traditional routes like telephony or email. BUs will help design how this will work in practice, including ensuring that where it is not possible for a fully integrated IT solution that mechanisms are in place to ensure a complete view of customer contact can be achieved.
- **Insight**—HQ will collate and analyse data to support customer insight. BUs will analyse customer data as well as providing this to other parts of the Council, including HQ to enhance organisational customer intelligence. HQ and BUs will work together in using the insight to design new services and drive improvements in current provision.
- **Compliments and Complaints**—Members will have oversight of customer complaints through management information, coordinated by HQ, in their different capacity on committees such as Cabinet, Regulatory and Audit, and Select Committees. Complaints information will be made available by Cabinet Member political portfolio as well by Business Unit. The Customer, Information and Digital Board will consider as part of its remit the strategic handling of complaints information to drive customer improvements. HQ will set the framework to ensure organisational learning from complaints and commission the Shared Services BU to coordinate complaint handling. Delivery Units are the first point of contact for customer contact as well as complaint handling on specific service issues to ensure that matters can be resolved effectively with the customer. Escalation processes will be set out in the Council’s complaints procedure.

## 9: Communications



### Key changes

- A new **Communications and Branding Policy** for the whole Council to clearly set out the Council's approach.
- Communications and branding requirements will be passed down the supply chain and embedded into all **new contracts**.

### HQ and BUs will work together by

- **Policies**—HQ will lead on the Council's Communications and Branding Policy documents. BUs and HQ are accountable for implementation and compliance with the communications and branding policy documents by staff in-house and by external Delivery Units. These policies and procedures will be designed to be proportionate and flexible depending on the scale and type of Delivery Unit.
- **Decision-making**—Members will take the decisions on the Council's communications policy and procedures to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan outcomes. HQ will lead on delivery of the priority and cross-cutting Council communications campaigns/projects specified in an annual communications delivery plan; BUs will provide subject matter expertise to support these campaigns/projects. The delivery plan and any changes to it will be agreed via the One Council Board.
- **Joint Planning**—HQ will maintain an organisation-wide communications calendar of significant communications activity across the Council and key partner organisations. HQ will also develop processes to maximise effective communications externally through considering the best timing for significant external communications initiatives. BUs will input into the calendar, providing timely information on emerging communications initiatives which their Delivery Units are planning to undertake (e.g. advertising, bulk letters to residents). This will enable opportunities for greater collaboration and an assessment of impact across the Council and potential economies of scale.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide specialist advice and expertise on communications to BUs (social marketing and behaviour change communications, media relations, branding, internal communications, digital communications, marketing for income generation). BUs will provide subject matter advice and expertise to manage reputational risk for the services and

supply chains under their remit; and to support the delivery of the Council's outcomes overall, for example providing inputs to a communications campaign led by another part of the Council.

- **Suppliers**—HQ will manage a list of approved suppliers for communications projects which cannot be delivered by the in-house communications team. BUs and HQ must use approved suppliers from this list.
- **Web and Customer Communications Channels**—HQ will provide a single Council website and other council-wide communications channels, which BUs will use.
- **Media**—HQ will provide a single point of entry for all media enquiries relating to Council services, including out of hours and crisis communications support. BUs will ensure processes are in place so that they can respond swiftly to information and interview requests from HQ. The detail on how this will operate in practice will be set out in the Media Protocol Procedure.
- **Internal Communications**—HQ will lead on defining council-wide messages and the delivery of council-wide internal communications channels. BUs will ensure that these messages are communicated effectively within their BU and to suppliers. BUs will handle 'in service' communications (e.g. messages relevant only to their own staff and supply chain).

## 10: Information Management



### Key changes

- **There will be a presumption of open data sharing across all parts of the Council internally unless there is a good reason not to**, for instance taking into account data protection and any protocols on data sharing.
- **Information will be treated as an organisational asset.** This means that there will be a greater focus organisationally on utilising data across the council.
- **All new contracts will specify the Council's requirements on data management.**
- There will be a **Business Intelligence Unit** that develops a consistent view of information that enables cross-cutting intelligence shared across the Council. Once established a Council procedure will be developed to set out in more detail the responsible accountabilities and responsibilities for business intelligence across all parts of the organisation.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will lead on the development and coordination of the Council's Information Management Strategy, Information Security Framework and accompanying policies such as on data security, data protection, data sharing, open data, and data quality. HQ and BUs will implement the requirements set out in these documents.
- **Infrastructure**—HQ will commission and provide an IT platform to enable effective sharing, recording, analysis and management of information. BUs will provide access to the relevant data and will have direct access to the platform to support their own activities, where not in conflict with legislation.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide specialist expertise to BUs on: managing and analysing data to deliver commissioning outcomes; cross-cutting intelligence; FOI and Data Protection. BUs will also provide peer advice and guidance to BU and HQ in areas of subject specialist knowledge.
- **Sharing Data**—HQ will have oversight of gaps in what business intelligence is required and will collate and analyse relevant cross-cutting data to support the Council as a whole. BUs will share data openly with other BUs and HQ, subject to data protection and data sharing procedures.
- **Sharing Intelligence/Insight**—HQ and BUs will work together to create high quality intelligence and insight, created from internal and external data about

issues affecting Buckinghamshire, that enables the Council to make evidence based decisions. HQ will set up a business Intelligence community of practice to bring together specialists from across the Council to support collaboration and best practice.

- **Data Security**—HQ will provide instruction and expertise to BUs on how to ensure that data is secure and shared in compliance with legal and organisational requirements. BUs and HQ will ensure that data held by them is secure, and that contracts with suppliers include appropriate clauses on data security, and that issues are escalated appropriately in the event of non-compliance with the Council's policies, procedures and statutory obligations.
- **Data Quality**—HQ will lead on the development and delivery of the Data Quality Strategy, including that the organisation has a single source of accurate raw data. Each BU is accountable for the quality of the data inputs recorded within their area of remit.



## 11: Digital and ICT

### Key changes

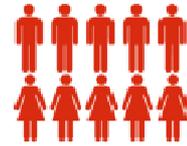
- The Council has a clear vision and plan for digitalising services set out in the **Digital Strategy**.
- **Services will be commissioned adhering to the principles of the Digital Strategy.**
- A **'My account' functionality on the Council's website** will be developed to enable customers to have a free, easy to use way to self-serve for Council services and signpost appropriately to non-Council services and information.
- A **Digital Champions network** will be established to accelerate Digital Transformation and support Digital Inclusion.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Digital Strategy & ICT Policies**—HQ will lead on the Council's Digital and ICT Strategies, as well as setting other procedures to meet legal and operational requirements. BUs will implement these. BUs will ensure that any new contracts and SLAs with third parties adhere to the organisational requirements.
- **Decision-making**—ICT capital investment decisions will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, following the advice of the Asset Strategy Board. HQ will lead in advising decision-makers on the council -wide requirements for ICT. The Council's core council-wide requirements for ICT will be set out in the SLA between Shared Services BU and other parts of the organisation. BUs may make a business case for the purchase and use of additional ICT systems to meet their needs. BUs may proceed with this purchase with the agreement of the appropriate professional lead officer in Shared Services BU. The details of how this process will work in practice will be developed and set out by the Shared Services BU.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ commission core Digital & ICT services that the Council needs. The Shared Services BU will provide guidance and specialist expertise on the digitalisation of services, ICT support for projects, and delivery of BU Plans. Other BUs will lead on projects to digitalise services within their remit with the specialist support and guidance from Shared Services BU.

- **Infrastructure**—HQ will commission the core ICT infrastructure to enable BUs and HQ to innovate and improve customer service through use of technology. BUs will use this infrastructure and may submit business cases for additional infrastructure (as set out above).

## 12: Our People



### Key changes

- **A significant reduction in the number of mandatory requirements relating to human resources.** Mandatory procedures will only be retained for Conduct and Discipline, Grievances, Capability (performance), Capability (ill-health) and Health and Safety.
- The provision of an **Employee Handbook** setting out the mandatory requirements to be followed and signposting to guidance.
- A **new reward framework** will be developed to enable greater flexibility on the management of reward to BUs from April 2016.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies**—HQ will develop and have ownership of the Council's People Strategy and accompanying Human Resources procedures. This includes setting procedures covering performance (Delivering Successful Performance) and reward (Contribution Based Pay), grievance, conduct and discipline, capability (performance), capability (ill-health) and health and safety. BUs will implement these in respect of all staff directly employed by the Council.
- **Handbook**—HQ will provide an Employee Handbook setting out the organisation's mandatory requirements and signposting to guidance. Best practice toolkits will be produced to support BUs in managing people issues.
- **Pay and Reward**—HQ will advise the Senior Appointments and Bucks Pay Award Committee (SABPAC) on the pay of all Council employees. HQ will have ownership of the Council's performance management framework (Delivering Successful Performance) and reward framework (Contribution Based Pay). BUs will implement these frameworks for all BCC employees within its remit.
- **Specialist Expertise**—The Shared Services BU will be commissioned by HQ to provide guidance and specialist expertise to BUs on human resources. The service standards that BUs can expect to receive will be set out in a Shared Services SLA. BUs are accountable for the effective management of their staff and may seek and utilise advice as needed. The Shared Services BU will broker external human resources support for HQ & BUs if this is not possible to provide this from within the capabilities in-house.

- **Values and Behaviours**—The Council’s expectations on Values and Behaviours are set out in the People Strategy. It is the joint responsibility of HQ and BUs to communicate and embed these into day-to-day work. HQ will commission a programme of activities to support embedding. BUs will support and promote the programme and encourage staff to participate in it.
- **Cultural Change**—HQ will lead and coordinate whole Council cultural change programmes for employees as determined by the One Council Board. BUs will support and promote the programmes and encourage staff to participate in them.
- **Employee Development and Skills**—HQ will have ownership of the Council’s Talent Management Plan and will commission a Council wide skills programme that delivers this plan. BUs will support and promote the plan and encourage employees to participate in the programme (and comply where this is mandatory). BUs will ensure that its employees either have the required skills, values and behaviours expected, or are supported to develop these.
- **Engagement**—HQ will lead on employee engagement and coordinate a bi-annual staff engagement survey (Viewpoint) and regular Viewpoint Pulse Surveys. BUs will engage their staff in BU specific and Council-wide initiatives, by ensuring that employees participate in cross-cutting projects, networks and via the completion of the Viewpoint Survey.



## 13: Assurance and Risk Management

### Key changes

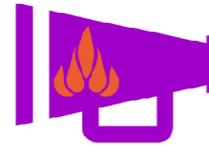
- **A new Risk & Assurance Strategy** to be implemented to enable BUs to have the flexibility they need to devise the best local operating systems of internal control to meet their needs, whilst providing robust organisational assurance through effective risk management systems.
- To drive forward a **risk-aware organisational culture** so that employees are enabled to innovate and take opportunities—managing risks appropriately.

### HQ and BUs will work together by:

- **Policies and Governance**—The Regulatory and Audit Committee will maintain an oversight of assurance and risk management across the Council. HQ will maintain the mandatory Risk Management system and will lead in developing and having strategic oversight of assurance and risk, including advice to Members and the One Council Board. BUs will be responsible for updating the Risk Management System in accordance with the Risk and Assurance Strategy, providing HQ with visibility of all risks; and implementing any organisational requirements set out in the Council's policies. BUs will provide Internal Audit with the information required and implement management actions agreed through the Internal Audit process and overseen by the Regulatory and Audit Committee. Other parts of the Council's governance framework also support organisational assurance. Select Committees have a key role to play in supporting public accountability, through their independent role in providing a check and challenge to decision-makers.
- **Specialist Expertise**—HQ will provide specialist expertise to BUs on different aspects of assurance and risk, such as to advice on risk assessments, risk mitigation and the adequacy of the systems of internal control in place. HQ will provide best practice guidance and templates on the recording and management of risks. BUs will be able to request specialist expertise from HQ as and when needed.
- **Risk Management**—HQ will lead on setting the framework for risk management. BUs may develop their own local processes to manage risk, in line with organisational requirements. BUs will record and report risks routinely for monitoring by the Regulatory and Audit Committee through the

Risk Management Group and for escalation to the One Council Board and HQ in accordance with the Risk and Assurance Strategy.

- **Insurance**—HQ will provide the Strategic Insurance function to maintain oversight of insurable risks and determine, in consultation with BUs, the type and level of cover to be provided.
- **Internal Controls**— HQ will lead on the oversight and monitoring of compliance across the organisation with minimum requirements set out in the Operating Framework and other supporting policy documents listed in the Policy Register (e.g. Financial Procedures, ICT Procedures). Any additional BU designed key controls (such as financial, HR, legal) are subject to approval of the professional leads in the organisation (e.g. S151 officer). BUs and HQ will be required to maintain systems of management control and performance management to ensure compliance with corporate and additional BU specific systems of internal control.
- **Anti-Fraud and Corruption**—HQ, via the Chief Internal Auditor, will lead on corporate fraud response and monitoring the implementation of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, particularly in relation to any reported allegations or detection of fraud. HQ and BUs will follow the Strategy and procedures, reporting any concerns of suspected fraud or financial irregularity/error to the Director of Assurance and/or Chief Internal Auditor.
- **Governance Statements**—HQ will lead on the co-ordination of the Annual Governance Statement. BU Managing Directors and Financial Directors will be required to provide Management Assurance Statements to the Director of Assurance in line with reporting requirements set out in the Risk and Assurance Strategy.



## 14: Resilience

### Key changes

- HQ will provide overall organisational assurance on resilience. The **Adults, Health and Communities BU will lead on Council-wide co-ordination and support**, as well as the provision of expertise to external organisations in line with statutory obligations. All BUs and HQ will be accountable for ensuring their specific plans and preparations are in place.
  - HQ and BUs will ensure that effective business continuity arrangements are embedded throughout our **supply chains** through contract requirements.
- 
- **Policies**—HQ will have oversight of the Council’s policies and procedures to discharge its statutory duties regarding emergency management and business continuity (resilience).
  - **Specialist Expertise**—The Adults, Health and Communities BU will provide guidance and specialist expertise to HQ/BUs, as well as an offer of expertise to external Delivery Units, the business community and voluntary and community sector. BUs and HQ are accountable for emergency management and business continuity local planning for their areas.
  - **Emergency Management**—The Adults, Health and Communities BU will lead in the strategy for preparing how the Council, with partners, will respond in a crisis. It will coordinate council-wide emergency planning exercises. Other BUs and HQ will ensure that sufficient local resources and capabilities are in place to respond to an emergency event. BUs and HQ will prepare a local plan on emergency management. All BUs and HQ will participate in council-wide emergency planning exercises.
  - **Business Continuity**—HQ will be responsible for strategic oversight of business continuity. Adults, Health and Communities BU will support the delivery of business continuity activity across the Council. BUs are responsible for business continuity in their own areas.
  - **Delivery Units**—BUs and HQ will ensure that the Council’s requirements on emergency management and business continuity are included in new contracts. BUs are responsible for ensuring supplier emergency and business

continuity plans are in place and monitored appropriately through contract management arrangements.

## Appendix 1: The Shared Services BU

Where there is a business proposition to do so, a number of services will continue to be delivered on a council-wide basis to BUs and to the HQ Units by the Shared Services BU. The most appropriate channel to deliver these services will be reviewed as part of the Value for Money assessment of all services.

### Main Shared Service Functions

In designing the Shared Services Business Unit three distinct functions have been created:

1. A Commercial and Business Development Function which will lead on commercial relationships, oversee contracts held by the BU, business plan development, identifying and following up on new business opportunities, customer relationship management.
2. A Consultancy function which will lead on the professional and advisory support to customers
3. Operational services which will lead on delivering high quality operational and transactional services to customers.

The following is a list (not exhaustive) of the main shared service functions in scope to be delivered council-wide between April 2015 and March 2016. The scope of each of these is yet to be determined:

1. Financial Advisory & Transactions Services (including invoice payments, debt recovery, pension administration).
2. Human Resources Services (including employee relations, change management and resourcing and safeguarding in employment, payroll, etc.).
3. ICT Services (including major ICT systems and information security provision, hardware, generic software, specialist software, telephony, email). Current ICT core provision includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ PSN: This is our network infrastructure that allows us to connect and communicate with each other and partners.</li><li>➤ Website and intranet: These are our tools for sharing online content with customers and each other.</li><li>➤ SAP: This is the council's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for the management of core business processes.</li><li>➤ Support Works: This is our system for logging, tracking and managing requests to the Service Desk.</li><li>➤ Mod Gov: This is the specialist software designed to help the council manage agendas, papers and decisions effectively.</li><li>➤ Contract Management Application (CMA): This is the Council's digital contract register and system to record, monitor and manage all Council contracts.</li></ul>
4. Procurement and Contract Management Support (including the use of the

Contract Management Application).
5. Business Administrative Support.
6. Customer Contact Services (including customer information services, complaint and information handling and the Contact Centre).
7. Facilities Management services (including the post room).
8. Project Management Services.
9. Legal Services.

## Appendix 2: Implementation Responsibilities

As set out in the introduction of this document, there are different processes that the Council will use to ensure implementation of the Operating Framework. The table below sets out the professional lead officers who will have responsibility for championing implementation in relation to specific topic areas.

HQ will lead on coordinating and driving forward the implementation of the Operating Framework overall, this includes establishing the detailed processes once appointments to key posts are in place. Additional professional lead officers for the specific topic areas of project management, health and safety and legality will be confirmed subsequently.

	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Professional Lead Officer</b>	<b>One Council Board Lead</b>
1	Decision-making and Internal Governance	Head of Member Services	Director for Strategy & Policy
2	Policy Framework	Strategic Commissioner	Director for Strategy & Policy
3	Business Planning & Strategic Commissioning	Strategic Commissioner	Director for Strategy & Policy
4	Financial Management	Head of Strategic Finance	Director for Assurance
5	Procurement, Supplier and Contract Management	Head of Innovation and Commercialisation	Managing Director for Business Enterprise & Shared Services
6	Support Services	Specific aspects of Shared Services responsibilities will be identified and addressed in other topic areas.	
7	Property Assets and Services	Head of Strategic Asset Management	Director for Assurance
8	Customer Experience	Head of Customer Experience & Communications	Managing Director for Business Enterprise & Shared Services
9	Communications	Head of Customer Experience & Communications	Managing Director for Business Enterprise & Shared Services
10	Information Management	Head of the Business Intelligence Unit	Director for Strategy & Policy
11	Digital and ICT	Head of Innovation and Commercialisation	Managing Director for Business Enterprise & Shared Services
12	Our People	Head of People Strategy & Organisational Development	Managing Director for Business Enterprise & Shared Services
13	Assurance and Risk	Head of Audit, Risk & Insurance	Director for Assurance
14	Resilience	Resilience Manager	Managing Director for Adults, Health and Communities



## **Key Background Documents**

- The Council's Policy Register
- Internal Advisory Boards Procedure
- The Constitution
- Corporate Glossary of Terms

