CUSTOMER SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2024/25

1. SERVICE OVERVIEW
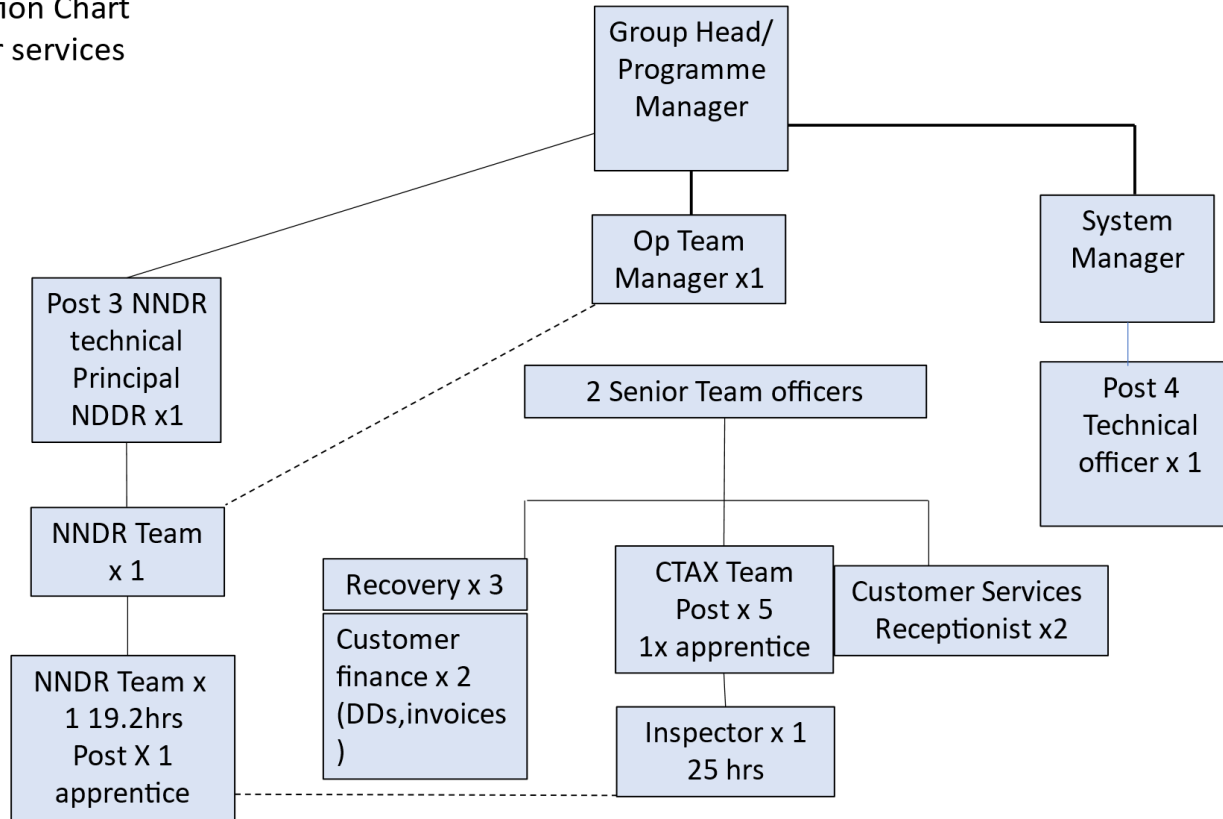
INSERT BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TEAM

The Customer Services Team deliver on a number of areas including Council Tax, Business rates, Business Improvement District collections, recovery of debt, ptax, allotment bookings, street parties as well as providing a frontline service to the customer via the phones and a reception desk .

The purpose of Customer Services is to provide key customer facing and support functions to the Council. The identified functions of the services are those of Customer Services including provision of a Contact Centre, dealing with customer interactions across a range of channels, including telephony, face to face, and via email and social media.

WHO WE ARE

Team structure agreed and implemented by March/April 2024 after transitional phase.

Organisation Chart
Customer services

Group Head/ Programme Manager

Op Team Manager x1

System Manager

Post 3 NNDR technical Principal NDDR x1

2 Senior Team officers

Post 4 Technical officer x 1

NNDR Team x 1

Recovery x 3

CTAX Team Post x 5 1x apprentice

Customer Services Receptionist x2

NNDR Team x 1 19.2hrs Post X 1 apprentice

Customer finance x 2 (DDs,invoices)

Inspector x 1 25 hrs

. WHAT WE DO: Service Purpose and Core Business Functions

The service covers the requirements of the customer charter and the corporate priority of services.. It also has an important role in the Council's finance and legal requirements in terms of council tax and business rate collections together with collections for the Business Improvement District. The services also recovers sundry debt and operates a contact centre and reception.

. KEY ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS FOR 2024/25 – *Significant one-off activities and projects to be undertaken in 24/25 (Projects need to have a business case, PID report before any revenue or capital growth bid is included in the tables below, before you prepare a report for MAT.*

Insert the relevant 'enabling actions' actions your Team intends to undertake in the coming year to help maximise your resources to achieve service priorities and contribute towards the Corporate Plan priorities and objectives. These will include specific actions that contribute to your team's work and include any significant ICT projects, specific areas of development in terms of assets, major capital projects and any actions to mitigate against identified service risks. **Ensure fully cover budgetary issues and address climate change impacts** *(i.e. does scheme contribute to reducing carbon emissions or meet other social and environmental criteria)*

KEY ACTIVITIES DELIVERING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN And other key statutory and service elements						
What is our corporate priority (CARES) ? Is the function statutory	Provide clear outline of what the service wants to achieve including projects and outcomes/deliverables	How will we measure the difference made?	Is a business case required? and when do you hope to action the achieve	Who is the lead officer?	Which Committee sign off?	Other service resources e.g. procurement and *budget* required mention if also potential growth bids

	KEY ACTIVITIES DELIVERING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN					
	And other key statutory and service elements					
or non-statutory			**this by? Or is this just a growth bid?**			
Non-statutory but key to Services ambitions	We will provide a choice of channels Our website will be available 24 hours a day all year round Our face-to-face services will be available for those who need it Our trained staff will be available on phone lines for when you need to talk to us We will make social media channels available for you to interact with us We will make sure everybody has equal access to services	*KPIs will be achieved. In the medium term 25/26 onwards savings will be achieved through improved efficiencies*	Detailed business case produced for 23/24 which is being built on	Sandy Muirhead/Dan Dredge/Hiren Bhatt.	CPRC	In order to move forward on digital transformation and improve the customer experience there is a requirement to update and improve technology to meet customer expectations. This has to be purchased but in the medium to long term will result in savings to the Council over 4 years of nearly £1M
Non-statutory Services	Via the digital transformation programme a Granicus system will be introduced in 24/25 which will automate incoming revenues forms.	Automate as much as 80% of all incoming revenues forms.	Ongoing	Daniel Dredge		
Statutory	Council tax and business rates	Maintain collection rates	Ongoing	Katie Frampton Operational Manager	CPRC	Some concerns regarding cost of living increase and impact on collection rates
Services	Undertake as now and improve across the Council collection of sundry debt	Improve recovery rates	Ongoing	Katie Frampton		

KEY ACTIVITIES DELIVERING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN And other key statutory and service elements						
Services	Maintain allotment bookings and other service bookings such as halls and street parties			Ongoing	Katie Frampton		In 24/25 improve booking system and automate bookings where feasible need ICT assistance.

RESOURCES 2023/24 *IDENTIFY FOR EACH SERVICE AREA – THIS SHOULD BE YOUR APPROVED FIGURES FOR 2023/24 (ASK YOUR SERVICE ACCOUNTANT FOR ASSISTANCE AS REQUIRED).*

Service Area	Revenue Expenditure Budget £	Capital Budget £	Projected Income £	Staff (Full time equivalents)	*Key risks for budget*
Customer Services	1,615,700	71,000	311,500	23.5	
Total	**1,615,700**	**71,000**	**311,500**	**23.5**	

Growth bids 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27. *Given the medium term financial strategy is extremely tight please consider likely impact of each items beyond 24/25 where feasible or where savings may emerge, it is essential that you enter figures for 25/26, 26/27 and 27/28, if you don't believe there will be any figures for a year enter n/a (not applicable).*

Details of bid (1)	Reason for Bid and confirm which priority in the new corporate plan this relates to CARES (Community, Addressing Housing Need, Resilience, Environment & Services) include consideration of future years items. (2)	Cost Centre code details (3)	Start Date MM/YY (4)	Gross Funding rec'd Separate line. If none enter n/a £ (5)	Gross (Revenue or Saving) or Cost £ (6)	Total bid Req'd. (7)	End Date MM/YY (8)	PID Req'd Y or N If no, why not? (9)	Procure ment involved. Y or N If no, why not? (10)	24/25 £ (11)	25/26 £ (12)	26/27 £ (13)	27/28 £ (14)
Cost – Revenue Note savings are realised in CS but projects team implement so in projects service plan too	webCAPTURE (GovTech) API for integration with Capita – This is required for our Granicus, Engagement HQ and Capita platforms to integrate and facilitate up to 80% complete automation of revenues activity. ROI calculations indicate this is the equivalent of saving 3,238 staff hours a year which can be repurposed to higher value work and generate efficiencies		1.4.24		10,400	10,400	Ongoing	Y	Y	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400
Cost – Revenue As above	WebCAPTURE Annual Service Fees and P2P VPN charge		1.4.24					Y	Y	0	0	6,000	8,000
Total Cost - Revenue										10,400	10,400	16,400	18,100

Provisional 2024/25 revenue cost/income budget requested.

Service Area	Revenue Expenditure Budget £	Projected Income £	Staff (Full time equivalents)	Savings £	Total budget £
Total 2024/25	1,304,000	0	23.5	0	X
Expenditure Costs	X	0	0	0	X
Project Income/Lost Income	0	X	0	0	X
Staff	0	0	X	0	X
Savings	(0)	(0)	(0)	£101,000	(X)
Total 2024/25 Provisional Revenue Budget 2024/25	**1,304,000**	**X**	**X**		**X**

Significant/Material anticipated revenue budget impacts:

Please highlight any estimate financial impacts (positive or adverse) anticipated over the next four years. For example this could arise from new anticipated statutory requirements, contractual inflation/new contracts; impact of population growth etc

None at this stage but always subject to potential legislative changes and factors affecting communities such as cost of living increase or pandemic

Service Plan

Capital Bids 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27. *It is important that before you submit bid, particularly for a project, you must have gone through the PID process and discussed the project with procurement, if you have not done either, you bid will be rejected, as our medium term financial strategy indicates that cash flow will be extremely tight. Therefore, please consider likely impact of each items beyond 24/25 where feasible or where savings may emerge, it is essential that you enter figures for 25/26, 26/27 and 27/28, if you don't believe there will be any figures for a year enter n/a (not applicable).*

Details of bid	Reason for Bid and confirm which priority in the new corporate plan this relates to CARES (Community, Addressing Housing Need, Resilience, Environment & Services) include consideration of future years items	Cost Centre code details	Start Date MM/YY	Gross Funding rec'd Separate line. If none enter n/a (£)	Gross Capital Cost £	Total bid Req'd. £	End Date MM/YY	PID Req'd Y or N	Procurement involved. Y or N (10)	24/25 £	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)		(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Capital Note savings are realised in CS but projects team implement so in projects service plan too	Capita API – One off charge for webCAPTURE integration (GovTech) There is a one of charge of £61,450 to purchase the api. Then an annual licensing cost of £10,374	307044552	1.4.24		61,500		30.4.24		N				
Capital As above	WebCAPTURE set up service fees	307044552	1.4.24		8,600								
Total Capital					70,100								

3. CARBON FOOTPRINT – *working in conjunction with our Climate Change Officer please highlight in the table below how you intend to reduce the Carbon Footprint (by tons) within your department over the next four years and beyond, if there is an invest to save element in your plans, please ensure that the cost element is highlighted in the relevant section above for revenue and or capital bids*

Cost Centre	Initiative	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
	Hybrid printing will reduce paper use over time	TBC			
	With improving e-billing more will be done electronically reducing paper use and postage envelopes				
Total carbon reduction					

4. PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS – *please list below all contracts under £40,000 that will lapse and or will need to be renewed over the next four years*
None at this stage

5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - *These measure performance for key ongoing activities of the service and corporate performance monitoring on a quarterly basis – NB review and consider meaningful as well as statutory KPIs – KPIs will be reported to Committees quarterly.*

Code	Key indicator description	Time period	Target
	Number of self-service transactions processed on the customer account on council website (quarterly)	24/25	2000/quarter
	Number of hours of staff time using robotic process automation	24/25	
	Percentage of Council tax collected	annual	98.5%
	Percentage of Business rates collected	annual	98.0%
	Sundry Debt Collection Rates	annual	90%
	Satisfaction with Customer Services		
	Answering over 80% of calls within 45 seconds • Answering over 95% of calls, with less than 5% abandoned Reduce % calls lost to 5%	annual	5% by end of March
	Keeping the average wait time for customers to be seen in person to below 10 minutes	annual	
	To respond to enquiries with 7 working days	7 working days	99%

6. <u>**KEY ISSUES/RISKS FOR 2024/25**</u> – *this section highlights key issues/risks which may affect other services that work with us or support our work (add in rows as appropriate. Please ensure cover future and current service risks. In light of corporate risk please ensure consider each area fully.*

WORKFORCE PLANNING ISSUES/TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
Training of new staff will be required with new structure and also need to recruit into posts which may be challenging
COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION
Key areas likely to arise during 24/25 - Communications on Council tax annually are undertaken and currently no new issues
LEGAL ISSUES (likely to require additional legal support)
As recovery team builds and gets fully underway there will potentially be requirement for assistance in taking cases to court.
GDPR
Staff are aware of data management requirements but given the nature of the role there is always a risk of data breach.
PROCUREMENT OR CONTRACTS (upcoming procurements or contracts required)
No intended purchase of new systems outside of current plans relating to digital transformation
ICT (e.g. provide information on systems to be purchased or support needed**)**
As upgrades to systems or though introduction of new systems there will be ICT support required
CLIMATE CHANGE
Consider both how the service would be impacted by climate change and its climate change impacts main areas are to increase automation and e-billing so as to reduce paper use.
SERVICE RISKS (consider likelihood and impact) – relate where appropriate to corporate risk
additionally complete risk appetite framework Appendix A (below)
NON-LEGAL ISSUES
Resourcing should be less of a problem as new systems embed which increase automation of transactions
EQUALITY and DIVERSITY
Equality Impact Assessments Required or Reviews due include here

7. LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD: OTHER KEY ISSUES/RISKS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS – *issues e.g. legislation that we need to plan for in the medium term, financial changes, climate change,*

SERVICE AREA
Potential changes in Council tax legislation, continued longer term impacts of the cost of living crisis with associated impacts on recovery
Workforce retention and automation of activities within service

8. KEY CONTACTS

Katie Frampton	01784 446428
Dan Dredge	01784 446225

9.0 MANAGEMENT

9.1 Group Head's comment/signoff

Signature/ date	Comments
S J Muirhead 24.2.24	Given the current staffing constraints in the service they perform well and the challenge going forward with the restructure will be embracing change and new systems/technology over next few years

9.2 Comments/sign off from the Deputy Chief Executive

Signature/date	Comments
Lee O'Neil 24.02.24	The CS Team provide a range of essential functions, including the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, and are the interface that many of our customers first deal with when engaging with the Council. Although they have been going through a transition period whilst the structure of the team has been realigned, they have continued to perform well.

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Reviewer:	S J Muirhead May 2024
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19-4-23

Appendix A SERVICE PLAN TEMPLATE – Risk Appetite

There are numerous Services operating across the Council, possibly with varying risk appetites. Being clear on your Service risk appetite will assist you as Managers in making transparent and informed risk-based decisions as part of service provision and delivery of objectives, as well as ensuring the application of proportionate actions and risk mitigation measures (as far as practical and possible) that align with your appetite.

As an example to assist the risk appetite of the Regeneration and Growth Service sits is outlined below:

Appetite Category	Minimal	Cautious	Exploratory	Seeking
Appetite Description	Areas where Spelthorne will apply a strong control environment to reduce or minimise the likelihood that a risk will occur and/or reduce the impact of any risk	Areas where Spelthorne seeks low-risk delivery options and will pilot innovation only in a controlled environment	Areas where Spelthorne strikes a balance between the potential upside benefits and downside risks of a decision and explores new solutions and options for delivery	Areas where Spelthorne takes risks by working with new ideas and approaches, looking for innovation and recognizing that failures are an opportunity for learning and improving.
How are each of these appetites articulated when applied across the RAF impact measure for 'Service Provision '	Services delivered as planned with mandated developments only	Tried and tested changes made. Use of limited pilots to develop new approaches	Open to new ways of doing things and taking a balanced and pragmatic (capacity-driven) approach to making changes	Continuous re-evaluation of services and how they are delivered to explore new ideas, learn from failures to invest in ever-improving delivery

What is the Council's overall risk appetite for 'Service provision' (CURRENT)?		X		
Use the information above, review the content within your Service Plan and reflect on your Service approaches to establish where your specific Service risk appetite is currently positioned. Add X				
Appetite Category	**Minimal**	**Cautious**	**Exploratory**	**Seeking**
1.Customer Services		X	X (digital transformation)	
2. Council tax and NDDR, BID		X		
Why does your service risk appetite(s) sit against this category? Provide one or two examples of practices and approaches within your Service to support your assessment. For example, if you define your Service(s) to have a minimal or cautious risk appetite is this influenced by a strong regulatory working environment presenting wider implications or repercussions if this appetite category was not adhered to.				