

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee: 30 September 2009

Subject: Revenue and Benefits Service Plan 2009 - 2013

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Revenue and Benefits Service Plan 2009 - 2013 which is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Joint Planning and Budget Guidance require departments to produce a departmental service plan which provides the framework for performance reporting to elected Members. The departmental service plan has been prepared using the revised template which was developed as part of the "golden thread review" undertaken by SOLACE to produce a focused service plan consistent with the style being adopted by all directorates.
- 2.2 To support wider engagement in the service planning process Heads of Service, Service Managers and Section Heads have participated in development sessions focussing on this new approach and have been directly involved in creating operational plans and developing key aspects of the service plan. In addition, a seminar session for Members of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee took place on 27 May 2009.
- 2.3 Following on from the service planning process an operational service plan for revenues and benefits has been developed.
- 2.4 The audit of housing and council tax benefit risk assessment report carried out by Audit Scotland in January 2009 identified that there is no business plan for the benefits service and no clear links between the Council's key strategic documents to demonstrate how the benefits service will contribute towards corporate, national and wider community strategic objectives. The action plan submitted to Audit Scotland agreed to develop a business plan for the revenues and benefit service.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The service plan narrative presents details of the services provided by revenues and benefits services. The narrative also gives information on the strategic assessment and performance review undertaken.
- 3.2 The performance review allowed the section to identify what had been achieved in 2008/09 and highlighted areas for improvement.

3.3 A strategic assessment of the section was carried out by senior staff in the service team. This assessment identified a number of issues which will have a significant impact on how the section will carry out its business in 2009/10.

3.4 To inform and support development of the service plan all Heads of Service have produced service plans for their areas of business:

- Finance & ICT
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services

These service plans helped establish what major issues will need to be addressed within 2009/10. These major issues are featured in the departmental service plan.

3.5 The process of performance review, strategic assessment and consideration of the service plans has facilitated the creation of clear priorities and objectives for 2009/13 with relevant actions and performance indicators to meet those objectives.

3.6 Appendix 2 of the revenues and benefits service plan gives details of those actions and how they will meet the corporate and departmental priorities and objectives.

3.7 The progress of the plan will be monitored, managed, and reported in accordance with the new performance reporting framework. The framework sets out how departmental plans will be considered at directorate, management team, Corporate Management Team, and Elected Member levels, providing opportunities to scrutinise performance and pro-actively manage it through taking corrective action where necessary and possible.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 Following approval of the plan, it is essential that it is effectively communicated to all staff. To facilitate this, the Manager of Exchequer and Section Head (Revenues and Benefits) will undertake a series of meetings with staff at all levels across the service in October 2009.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The budgets for each service are managed and monitored in detail at service and departmental management team meetings with summarised budgetary control reports including variance explanation presented to both the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee and full Council.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There is a risk that, without departmental objectives and priorities being approved by Committee, the strategic and operational direction of the department will be compromised.

7. Conclusions and Officers' Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is asked to approve the Revenue and Benefits Service Plan 2009 - 2013.

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Date: 9 September 2009

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Appendix: Revenues and Benefits Service Plan 2009-2013

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All