

Aim (i) To ensure that the Council has appropriate resources, on an ongoing basis, to fund its statutory duties and appropriate discretionary services whilst continuing to keep Council Tax low.

Key Objective (a) To ensure that the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy plans to meet the Council’s financial and service requirements for any forward five year period, whilst minimising any reliance on Government funding.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
1) - Deliver the savings identified for 2015/16 in the business cases approved by Members.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Achieved	<p>Q1 (2015/16) Savings are on track at the end of Q1. Quarterly financial reporting of cumulative savings will be presented to Management Board to monitor progress. Most of the savings identified involved restructuring actions that have already been implemented in Q1.</p> <p>Q2 (2015/16) Savings plan remains on track and within budget in Q2.</p> <p>Q3 (2015/16) Savings plan remains on track and within budget in Q3.</p> <p>Q4 (2015/16) Savings achieved for the year</p>
2) - Progress preparations for delivering the savings identified for 2016/17 within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Achieved	<p>Q1 (2015/16) The 2016/17 budget process will follow a similar cycle to last year. The Director of Resources has already produced a financial issues paper and an outline MTFS to kick the process off. Savings targets will be considered at a Leadership Team meeting in the autumn.</p> <p>Q2 (2015/16) Preparations on track. New Head of Transformation recruited to assist with transformational change.</p> <p>Q3 (2015/16) Scoping paper for Transformation Project approved by Cabinet. Project Initiation Document in preparation and Transformation methodology being discussed. Financial Settlement notified in December and financial issues paper will be discussed with Cabinet in January.</p> <p>Q4 (2015/16) Transformation Programme initiated and progressing well. Customer Contact Project and Accommodation Review prioritised as the first two stages of the Transformation Programme.</p>

3) - Develop additional business cases, through a structured approach, to address the need for net savings in subsequent years.	Resources	30-Sep-15		Achieved	<p>Q1 (2015/16) Several ideas have come forward and these are now being worked up into business cases.</p> <p>Q2 (2015/16) Business cases for Grass Cutting Equipment, LED Lighting, Rental Loans and Self-Serve Cash Kiosks have been put forward. All will generate operational savings.</p> <p>Q3 (2015/16) Business cases approved and implementation under way.</p> <p>Q4 (2015/16) Additional savings list reviewed by Transformation Board and in the process of further evaluation. Projects already identified in Q2 are compared or near to completion.</p>
4) - Commence the budget cycle early again next year with an updated MTFs to take account of any changes following the general election.	Resources	31-Jul-15		Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) A meeting of the Finance Cabinet Committee has been arranged for 20 July and the agenda will include the Financial Issues Paper.</p> <p>(Q2 & Q3 & Q4 2015/16) The Finance Cabinet Committee met as scheduled to commence the budget cycle with the Financial Issues Paper.</p>

Key Objective (c) To explore appropriate opportunities to make savings and increase income through the shared delivery of services with other organisations, where such arrangements would provide improved and/or more cost effective outcomes.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date		Status	Progress
4) Explore the possibility of sharing an integrated HR/Payroll IT system with other authorities.	Resources	30-Sep-15		Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) Work is progressing with Braintree and Colchester and a common specification has been agreed for a new system.</p> <p>(Q2 2015/16) Procurement has been delayed by legal issues at one of the partner authorities. We are working to resolve these issues and still hope to proceed with a joint procurement.</p> <p>(Q3 2015/16) The first set of tenders was not acceptable so it has been necessary to re-tender the joint procurement.</p>

					(Q4 2015/16) The joint procurement with Braintree and Colchester has been completed successfully and generated savings on both the anticipated capital cost and annual licence fees. A common implementation plan is now underlay.
5) Explore providing payroll services to other authorities.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Behind Schedule		<p>(Q1 2015/16) This was intended to follow an from the implementation of the new system. However, one authority in Essex is having difficulties and initial discussions have been held with them to provide support.</p> <p>(Q2 & Q3 2015/16) The other authority mentioned at Q1 decided to pursue other options. We will respond positively to any approaches but will not actively seek opportunities until the new system has been implemented.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) As per previous item, joint implementation now underway and on completion we can investigate and commercial opportunities.</p>
6) Explore providing an audio typing service to other authorities.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Achieved		<p>(Q1 2015/16) An approach had been received from Harlow but it was not possible to reach any agreement. Opportunities will now be explored with other authorities.</p> <p>(Q2, Q3 & Q4 2015/16) No fresh opportunities have arisen.</p>
7) Identify additional Council services that may benefit from a shared provision with other organisations (either provided by the Council or others), to reduce costs, create income and/or improve service delivery.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Achieved		<p>(Q1 2015/16) Not due yet - some early conversations about potential opportunities identified have taken place.</p> <p>(Q2 2015/16) Not due yet - some early conversations about potential opportunities identified have taken place.</p> <p>(Q3 2015/16) Director of Governance has made some good progress in joint audit services with Harlow and Broxbourne. Meeting scheduled with Brentwood in January 2016 to consider potential opportunities.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) Scoping of joint service provision under way after way a very positive meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive of Brentwood. Harlow and Uttlesford have also expressed an interest in exploring potential opportunities.</p>

Aim (ii) To ensure that the Council has a sound and approved Local Plan and commences its subsequent delivery**Key Objective (b) To increase opportunities for sustainable economic development within the District, in order to increase local employment opportunities for residents**

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
1) Consider the practicalities of revising procurement arrangements to encourage/require contractors to employ local residents for Council contracts.	Resources	31-Dec-15	Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) An updated Procurement Strategy was approved by the Finance Cabinet on 19 March 2015. Revisions to procurement arrangements will be considered when implementing the strategy.</p> <p>(Q2 2015/16) A working party is undertaking a significant updating of Contract Standing Orders. Currently the requirements relating to local businesses are contained in CSO 1.</p> <p>(Q3 2015/16) Revised procurement rules are scheduled to go to the Constitution Working Party in late January.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) The revised procurement rules will go to Council for approval in April 2016</p>
6) Continue with the Council's apprenticeship scheme for the district's young people, providing sustainable employment opportunities.	Resources	30-Sep-15	Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) A new cohort will be recruited during 2015. The council is in discussion with partners to see if it is possible to expand the apprenticeship scheme.</p> <p>(Q2, Q3 & Q4 2015/16) A new cohort has now been recruited, with two of the posts being part funded from the Community Fund established by our partnered housing associations.</p>

Aim (iii) To ensure that the Council adopts a modern approach to the delivery of its services and that they are efficient, effective and fit for purpose.

Key Objective (b) To utilise modern technology to enable Council officers and members to work more effectively, in order to provide enhanced services to customers and make Council services and information easier to access.

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
1) Introduce more flexible methods for customers to pay for Council services.	Resources	31-Dec-15	Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) This work is ongoing and the most recent example is the support given to the Neighbourhoods Directorate to facilitate the payment of parking charges by debit and credit cards.</p> <p>(Q2 & Q3 2015/16) The work in this area continues and will be combined with the work streams on customer contact and transformation.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) further successes here with the roll out of the ability to process payments to several more service areas, the information of direct debits for sundry debtors and a new payment system for the museum.</p>
7) Continue the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy, with the completion of the following key projects: (a) Printer reduction, removal and redeployment, and implementation of print management software; and (b) Mobile and flexible working.	Resources	31-Mar-16	Achieved	<p>(Q1 2015/16) The implementation of the ICT Strategy is continuing. Many different options have been evaluated for mobile working and solutions are in place in several areas of the Council.</p> <p>(Q2 2015/16) Work continues on the various projects within the overall strategy. An update report and request for capital funding in 2016/17 has been drafted for Cabinet in October.</p> <p>(Q3 2015/16) In October Cabinet noted the update on key projects and approved the proposed bid for funding for 2016/17 to facilitate the implementation of the ICT Strategy.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) implementation continues and an update report is scheduled for the Resources Select Committee in April 2016</p>

<p>8) Complete a review of accommodation and make recommendations on utilisation of space and flexible methods of working.</p>	<p>Resources</p>	<p>30-Sep-15</p>	<p>Behind Schedule</p>	<p>(Q1 2015/16) Visit to Leadership Team by Colchester's Director of Operations to explain how flexible working has progressed there. Subsequent workshop with leadership team to identify how each directorate at Epping might approach this. Job description for transformation director role drafted and recruitment process started.</p> <p>Q2 (2015/16) Head of Transformation recruited. David Bailey will join the Council in November. Customer contact project has commenced to review contact centres and recommend the best methods of engaging / transacting with our customers.</p> <p>Q3 (2015/16) Head of Transformation in place and conducting research around potential work-streams and projects. Project Initiation Document discussed at Management Board. Cabinet decision to agree scope of Transformation Project. Customer Contact project has progressed well. Report anticipated, expected in Q4.</p> <p>(Q4 2015/16) Cabinet papers scoping both the Accommodation Review and the Customer Contact Review were approved and work is now underway on both projects. Completion is anticipated in Q2 2016.</p>
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