

Finance and Resources Department



Internal document



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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan embodies what the council intends to achieve from 2012-15. It is ambitious yet realistic and demonstrates how Members are committed to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Belfast. It encompasses the key strand of work outlined in the Council's investment programme which demonstrates a commitment to strong political and executive leadership at both a city wide and neighbourhood level.
- 1.2 The departmental plans of the Council have taken account of Members priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and have translated them into operational actions to be delivered through our services across the organisation. These operational delivery plans are agreed by Members through the standing committees and reflect the importance of the quality of the vital services that we provide on a daily basis.
- 1.3 The corporate plan is illustrated in figure 1 below and shows that our key priorities for the city over the next 3 years are:
 - Leadership
 - Environment
 - Economy
 - People, Communities & Neighbourhoods
 - Improving our Services
 - An Organisation fit to Lead and Serve

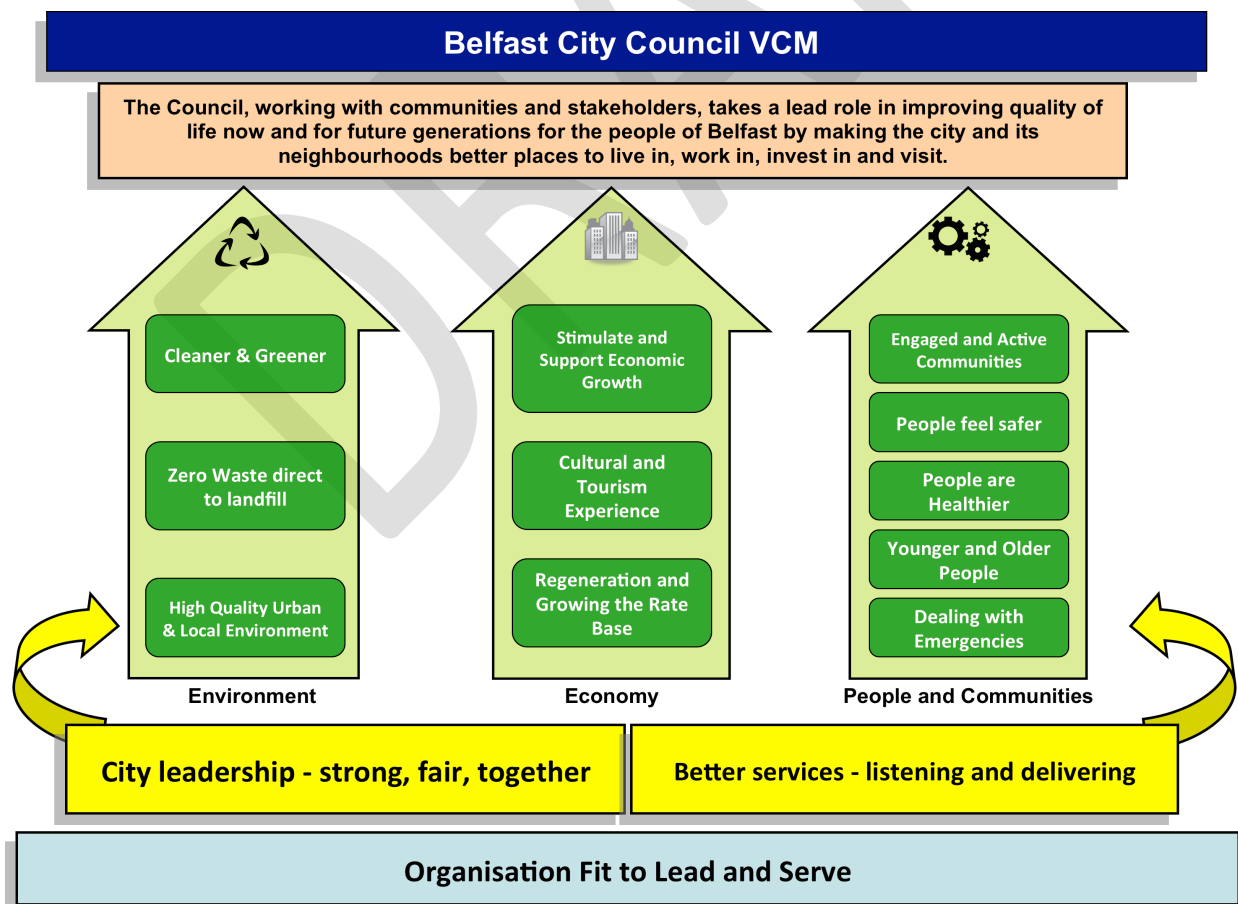


Fig 1: Corporate Value Creation Map

- 1.4 This Departmental Plan describes how the Finance and Resources Department's actions and targets for 2012/13 complement the Corporate Plan. This Plan sets the strategic direction for the department and will ensure focused and effective management of the department by the Committees and senior managers. It provides explicit links between core departmental activity and corporate strategy.
- 1.5 Under the council's Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Finance and Resources has been given the delegated authority to undertake the activities as outlined in section 6. Progress update reports will be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee twice yearly.

Departmental VCM

- 2.1 The Finance and Resources Department is responsible for all financial services and information systems functions of the council along with Audit Governance and Risk and Health and Safety. The department is also responsible for performance management and efficiency and has aligned these along with finance in order to improve the Council support services to reduce costs. The department is continually working to ensure that Belfast City Council provides value for money services which clearly deliver council and ratepayer priorities.

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2.0 Values and purpose

2.1 The Department adheres to the council's values which state that we will:

- focus on the needs of customers, have a 'can-do' attitude, be problem solvers,
- provide value for money and improve services,
- work together,
- respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations,
- act sustainably,
- ensure the highest standards of health and safety, and
- value our employees.

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3.0 Changes in internal and external environment

Internal

- 3.1 The Council has recently agreed a City Investment Programme 2012-15. The Finance and Resources Department will play a key role in supporting the delivery of the Investment Programme. In particular this will mean:
- Supporting the delivery of the £20m efficiency target;
 - Ensuring 90% of our creditors are paid within 28 days;
 - Developing a MTFP in the context of the capital investment and a below inflation district rate increase;
 - Supporting the Council to develop and implement the organisational infrastructure required to deliver the Investment Programme;
 - Supporting Members to monitor and review the on-going implementation of the Investment Programme.
 - Implementing the Super Connected Cities Project

External

- 3.2 Some 74% of the income received by Belfast City Council is received from the district rates. Externally the recession continues to impact on the collection of this rates income, particularly in relation to the non domestic sector, which represents a significant element of the Belfast City Council rates base. There are increased concerns about the levels of vacant properties and the potential for bad debts which limit the funds available to the council to fund services and make investments in the city. A key challenge for the Department will be to work with Land and Property Services to ensure that the collectable rate is maximised.
- 3.3 In addition the NI Executive's recently published Programme for Government sets out a firm commitment from Government to take forward local government reform within Northern Ireland and to create 11 larger councils delivering a range of new functions. This in part will mean the return of planning and regeneration powers to Belfast City Council which will further enhance our ability to make a difference locally and improve the quality of people's lives. Ensuring that the Council effectively plans for and maximises the potential benefits to be realised through this reform is a priority over the coming years and while it impacts across the organisation the Finance and Resources Department will take a lead role in its delivery.
- 3.4 The work of the Department over the past year has concentrated on the internal financial arrangements. Members' ambitions as expressed in the City Investment Programme will require the Council to explore alternative funding mechanisms. The Department will develop an External Resources Strategy with the aim of maximising potential funding opportunities for the Council and the City.

New legislation

- 3.5 The main piece of legislation which will have implications for the Department during 2012/13, is the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.

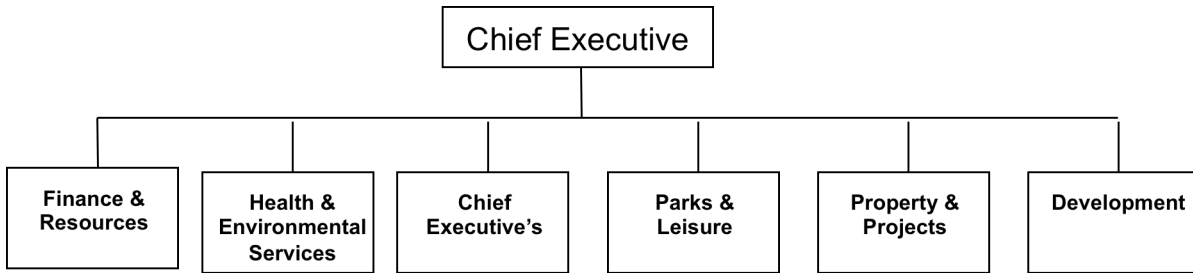
- 3.6 This act introduces new governance and capital financing arrangements for Local Authorities, from the financial year 2012/13. It requires the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators in line with the codes of practice produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- 3.7 It will be the responsibility of the Finance and Resources Department to ensure that adequate reporting and monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with the new legislation during 2012/13.

4.0 Departmental structure

- 4.1 The Finance and Resources Department is one of 6 departments which make up the officer structure of the council. The various departments are shown in Figure 3 below and Figure 4 sets out the Department's service structure.

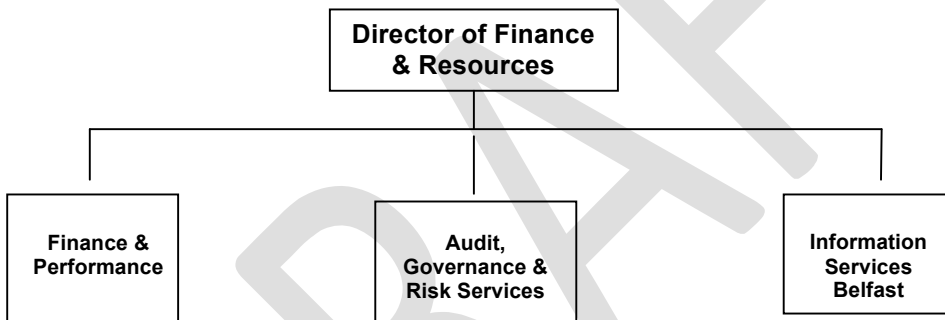
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Fig 3: Council Departments



4.2 Service structures - functional charts

Fig 4: Finance and Resources Department



5.0 Key actions for 2012/ 13

The Department's key actions have been defined against the background of the corporate plan and provide detail on its contribution to the delivery of the Investment Programme and additional key corporate priorities. Each key task has a relationship with one or more of the themes described in the departmental VCM. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the main outcomes expected are included at section 6. More comprehensive details of tasks, performance indicators and targets which contribute to the outcomes sought are contained in supporting Service Plans. In addition the department has identified a number of key internal actions to help develop and improve capacity across the services.

5.1 Investment Programme

The following actions represent the department's direct contribution to the delivery of the Council's Investment Programme

Implement a capital financing strategy which will include

- The financial management of the capital programme, city investment fund and the local investment fund
- The clarification of roles and responsibilities
- The implementation of financial controls
- Regular financial reporting on the programme
- The development of an External Resources Strategy

Financial Management - Efficiency

Improve payment systems to ensure payment of 90% of our creditors within 28 days

Sustain and enhance the rate base through tackling issues such as vacant office accommodation and business premises

Develop and deliver a corporate Efficiency Programme in collaboration with the other departments to ensure the achievement of the £20m efficiency target by 2015 including an ICT efficiency plan for the Council

Information Management

Identify and deliver efficiency savings within the Finance and Resources Department including an ICT departmental efficiency programme which will involve carrying out an application review to ensure ICT is aligned to council priorities and provides value for money and continued implementation of the print management strategy

Implement the super connected cities project

Create an Information Management Strategy to support the corporate plan and investment programme including delivering key projects as identified by the Corporate Governance Panel – likely to include Fleet IT tracking system, P2Net, City Hall WiFi, Qlikview.

Planning & Performance Management

Align the performance framework to support the monitoring requirements for the delivery of the Investment Programme

Reporting on the outcomes and performance indicators identified in the programme

Develop and report on the implementation plan for the delivery of the Investment Programme

Develop and implement the appropriate infrastructure to support the delivery of the Investment Programme

Governance & Risk

Prepare an audit strategy and plan that addresses the assurance and advisory implications of implementing the Council's Investment Programme

5.2 Additional corporate priorities

The following actions detail the additional tasks the department will carry out in support of the delivery of the corporate plan

Review of Public Administration

- Coordinate and programme manage the Council's approach to implementing the local government reform (i.e. Review of Public Administration) process including the transfer and integration on new place-shaping functions such as planning and regeneration.
- Develop and implement a programme of work (transition plan) to ensure that the Council effectively prepares for, and takes full advantage of, local government reform.
- Provide strategic support to the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee in undertaking its important role in providing political oversight and direction to the Council's implementation of local government reform.
- Support the Council's engagement and input into the work of the governance and implementation structures for local government reform. This will include: the Regional Transition Committee, Regional Joint Reform Programme Board, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA).

Performance

Continue to implement a value for money and performance framework including;

- Implementation of the improvement plans for Procurement, Fleet Management, Overtime and Agency costs and Building Maintenance

Review core corporate systems including asset management, financial, payroll and HR systems to ensure they are fit for purpose and future proofed.

Support the roll out of the Council's Core Skills Management Development Programme by providing training on two of the key modules – Performance Management and Audit and Governance

Continue to implement the corporate performance framework including

- Analysis and reporting of key corporate performance information
- Supporting departments and thematic boards in the monitoring and reporting of performance information

Financial Management

Implement a financial improvement programme in relation to debtors, creditors, payroll and treasury management.

Implement and mainstream a medium term financial plan including a capital financing strategy and treasury management strategy in line with the implementation of the Finance Bill and the development and implementation a corporate pricing policy.

Implement a corporate programme of improvement in relation to compliance with procurement processes.

Establish a programme of work around the development of financial management information including improving the financial reporting process for Members and Officers

Information Management

Create an open data portal for the publication of council data sets

Implement a corporate address Gazetteer to ensure consistency of addresses across all IT systems

Develop a programme to increase e-enabled transactions

Implement corporate wide IT system for recording and monitoring the implementation of audit and health and safety recommendations (to report to CMT, Assurance Board and Audit Panel)

Governance & Risk

Prepare an audit strategy and plan that addresses the assurance and advisory implications of implementing the Council's Investment Programme

Implement recommendations from the Freedom of Information and Data protection Audit reviews.

Roll out revised risk management framework

Manage and maintain the departmental risk register

Ensure sufficient coverage of the Audit Plan so that the annual assurance statement can be provided.

5.3 Departmental Management Improvements

In order to deliver the key actions in the plan and prepare for future challenges the department will establish a number of cross cutting project teams to help build capacity, develop staff skills and knowledge and improve the way we work together.

Key Projects in year 1 will focus on:

- **Staff training and development** – to use the PDP process to align departmental activity with goals and priorities and to develop our people to build capacity and improve.
- **Departmental Efficiencies** – as the lead department in the Council it is important that we lead the way by developing and implementing efficiency savings across the department.
- **Improve Information Management** – to help increase the reliability and ease of access of information held in the department to support decision making, planning and performance, and to increase the information that can be made externally available.
- **Communication** – Build upon relationships and team work across services to help identify and disseminate key messages and improve communication channels within the Department and across the Council.

6.0 Key performance indicators for 2012/ 13

6.1 Better services - listening and delivering

	Annual Target
• Variance between actual efficiencies captured as part of the estimating process versus target	0
• Number of transactional based activities which are e-enabled	TBA
• Average time taken to resolve operational calls reported to the ISB Service Desk	2.25 Days
• Customer Satisfaction with Service Desk response	90%

6.2 Better value for money - an organisation fit to lead and serve

Corporate Human Resources

	Annual Target
• Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (measured against agreed targets)	TBA
• % Staff with a PDP	100%

Corporate Financial Planning

	Annual Target
• % Variance between actual net revenue expenditure and budgeted net revenue expenditure (in year)	+1 / -2
• % Variance between forecast net revenue expenditure and actual net revenue expenditure y/e(Qlikview) (C)	+0.5 / -2%
• % Variance between actual capital expenditure and budgeted capital expenditure	???
• % Variance between forecast capital expenditure and actual expenditure y/e (Qlikview) (C)	+ / - 10%
• % Increase in the District rate	At / below inflation
• % Debt less than 90 days old	65%
• % Compliance of purchase orders raise on time	85%
• % Compliance for GRN against the Supplier invoice	70%
• % Creditors paid within 28 days	75%

Corporate Information Management

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Time key systems are available uptime 	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of systems lined to Pointer System 	4

Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % PIs with valid data collected and reported upon 	85%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % PIs on target 	70%

Corporate Governance and Risk

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % AGRS plan completed annually 	70%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of workplace accidents 	Reduce by 5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of RIDDOR accidents 	Reduce by 5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Agreed Health and Safety recommendations implemented 	80%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Health and Safety plan completed annually 	70%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Critical service business continuity plans tested annually 	100%

7.0 Financial information

7.1 The approved net revenue expenditure for the Department for 2012/13 is £11,299,816. A breakdown of the revenue estimates by the main Services of the Department and Directorate Support is provided in Table 1.

	Net Expenditure 2011/12	Net Estimated Expenditure 2012/13
	£	£
Finance and Performance	2,571,531	2,671,014
I.S.B	4,887,997	5,029,061
Audit Governance and Risk		
Services and Health and Safety	868,757	900,010
Project & Corporate Systems	284,835	0
Pensions	1,825,000	1,825,000
Directorate	547,402	624,635
Occupational Health	234,554	250,096
Total	11,220,078	11,299,816

8.0 Monitoring and review arrangements

The Council has introduced an integrated performance management system that enables regular, up to date reporting to be undertaken at corporate, departmental and service level.

Key performance indicators have been identified for all services within the Finance and Resources Department and are contained within section 7 of this Plan.

A number of PIs and tasks have been identified as corporately significant and are contained in the corporate plan. They will be reported on a quarterly basis to CMT to ensure ongoing management of the key priorities.

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9.0 Committee membership

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Chairman: Councillor Deirdre Hargey

Deputy Chairman: Councillor Gareth McKee

Committee Members:

Alderman David Browne

The High Sheriff Alderman May Campbell

Alderman Robin Newton

Councillor Tim Attwood

Councillor Patrick Convery

Councillor Matt Garrett

Councillor Tom Haire

Councillor Claire Hanna

Councillor Máire Hendron

Councillor Mervyn Jones

Councillor Danny Lavery

Councillor Conor Maskey

Councillor Patrick McCarthy

Councillor Jim McVeigh

Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín

Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Councillor Adam Newton

Councillor Lee Reynolds