



Keeping Kennet Special

**Service Delivery Plan
2006 to 2009
Financial Services**

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1 Corporate Vision and Priorities

1.1 20 Year Vision

The council will maintain sustainable communities; provide a clean, healthy and safe environment; and good access to Council services. The Council will encourage the participation of residents in decisions about their communities.

1.2 Key Priorities

The Council's 4 key priorities:

- Community Leadership
- Developing Strong, Safe & Healthy Communities
- Stewardship of the Environment
- Improving Council services

1.3 Values

The section has also adopted specific vision statements for Council Tax and Housing Benefits.

Council Tax Customer Charter

The overarching mission statement is : *'Within the resources available we are committed to providing secure, quality services delivered fairly, courteously and responsively. We have a pride in the work we do and believe that with our experience we are able to meet our customer charter and your expectations in a responsible and efficient way.'*

Standards are set and include, expected response times, opening times and availability of officers, quality of response, and the ways by which a council tax officer can be contacted.

Housing and Council Tax Benefits Vision

The Council is committed to providing an effective and secure Housing and Council Tax Benefit service to the standards set out in the Department of Work and Pensions HB/CTB Performance Standards.

As part of the above vision we will strive to ensure that the benefits service is:-

- ✓ Customer focused, modern, efficient and ensures claimants receive the benefits to which they are entitled to enable them to live in decent housing.
- ✓ Speedy and accurate and strives to reduce the risk of fraud and error
- ✓ Suitably resourced to ensure service delivery
- ✓ Committed to the theme of social inclusion by being accessible to the whole community.
- ✓ Committed to the investigation of potential fraud, reducing the level of fraud and error, recovering overpayments and punishing fraudsters where appropriate.

The Benefits service will maintain and encourage a strong culture of good performance within the organisation and punishing fraudsters where appropriate.

2 Service Purpose

Service Area	Purpose
Local Taxation (incl. NNDR)	To collect local taxes due to the Council, precepting authorities and National Rating Pool as quickly and as efficiently as possible. To provide a good quality local taxation service in line with stakeholder requirements.
Benefits	To administer and award Housing and Council Tax Benefit and recover monies from those who receive benefit to which they are not entitled. To provide a good quality benefits service in line with stakeholder requirements.
Corporate Finance	To provide sound financial advice and administration to the Officers and Members of the Council. To produce and maintain accounting and budgetary systems to enable control and accountability of resources used by the authority. To maintain effective Payroll, Creditor, Debtor systems To provide an effective Technical accounting function administering, Insurance, Risk Management, Treasury Management, Taxation Advice To provide reassurance to management, of the adequacy of Internal Controls through the provision of an effective Internal Audit Section

3 Service Functions

Service Function	Support to key priorities				Statutory/ Discretionary
	CL	SS HC	SE	IS	
Local Taxation	2	2	1	2	Statutory
Benefits	2	2	1	2	Statutory
Corporate Finance	1	1	1	2	Statutory

Key: 0=low, 1=medium, 2=high

4 Organisational Context

GROUP	Resources
SERVICES	Financial Services
SECTIONS	Corporate Finance, Local Taxation, Benefits, Customer Services
FUNCTIONS	Benefits, Verification Framework, Benefit Fraud Investigations, Council Taxation, NNDR, Customer Services, Cashiering, Accountancy (Budgeting and Final Accounts), Internal Audit, Creditors, Debtors, Payroll, Treasury Management, Insurance and Risk Management, VAT, Capital.

5 Statement on Consultation & Communications

This plan has been developed after communication with members of the service (through operational and Teamwork meetings).

5.1 PR Targets

Section	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/09
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Local Taxation	6	8	10
Benefits	12	15	18
Corporate Finance	4	4	4

5.2 Service Information availability & Updates

Item	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Council Tax Leaflet	April 2006	April 2007	April 2008
PR video (Revs)		Sept 2007	
Website	Annual Review	Annual Review	Annual Review
Leaflets	Annual Review	Annual Review	Annual Review
Roadshows	2	4	4

5.3 Customer consultations

The service consultation diary is:

Service area (or cc theme)	Contact	Customer group	Purpose of consultation	Method for consultation	Year/month	Geographic area	Compliant with Statement of Community Involvement	Planned promotion
Benefits	S Kimber	Customers	Ongoing communication	Focus Group / Face to Face	Ongoing	Kennet		Mailing
Local Taxation	I Brown	Customers	Ongoing communication	Face to Face / Telephone	Ongoing	Kennet		Mailing
Revenues Customer Charter	I Brown	Revenue Customers	Ongoing communication	Face to Face / Telephone / Internet / Mail	Ongoing	Kennet		Press Release
Via Customer Services	H Lovelock	Revenue Customers	Ongoing communication	Face to Face / Telephone	Ongoing	Kennet		
Corporate Finance	A Hart	Internal	To establish service standards and satisfaction with customers	Questionnaire	2006	Internal	n/a	q/naire

6 Benchmarking Statement

The service has taken part in the following benchmarking studies.

Service Area	Year	Actions in the past year and this year
Benefits	2004 / 05	Continue to build on the Process Benchmarking with Taunton Deane BC and other Wiltshire authorities DWP Performance standards quarterly benchmarking BVPI's Annual Review
Local Taxation	2004 / 05	Benchmark against the top 10 authorities for Council Tax and NNDR collection rates BVPI's Annual Review

7 Key Risk Management Issues

The five key risks facing the service, with the mitigation actions/plans, are:

RISK	ACTION/PLAN	Deadline
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Staff Sickness	Staff Absence Management Policy	In Place
Impending threat of danger to staff from customers	To monitor threat and use / update the Potential Violent People Computer system. Ensure that reception areas are suitable and meet legislative requirements.	Ongoing. New reception facility to be built
New Legislation Changes particularly within benefits	Ongoing monitoring of the implications. Regular discussion with software suppliers	Ongoing
Systems Failure	Backup Routines, IT Contingency Plan	In Place but currently under review
Financial Resources	Medium Term Financial Strategy	In Place

8 Service Costs

	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Budget	Reasons for variation
Service Function: Local Taxation			
Direct costs	£265,375	£ 265,600	
Indirect costs	£93,334	£ 105,470	
Recharges	£ -358,611	£ -370,970	
Income	£ -98	£ -100	
Total net costs	£ 0	£ 0	
Service Function: Benefits			
Direct costs	£ 568,747	£ 560,990	
Indirect costs	£ 137,894	£ 159,690	
Recharges	£ -706,486	£ -720,530	
Income	£ -155	£ -150	
Total net costs	£ 0	£ 0	
Service Function: Corporate Finance			
Direct costs	£ 472,560	£ 488,390	
Indirect costs	£ 95,199	£ 113,670	
Recharges	£ -567,431	£ -602,060	
Income	£ -328	£ 0	
Total net costs	£ 0	£ 0	
Service Function: Internal Audit			
Direct costs	£ 89,206	£ 98,570	
Indirect costs	£ 13,999	£ 16,740	
Recharges	£ -103,165	£ -115,310	
Income	£ -40	£ 0	
Total net costs	£ 0	£ 0	
Service Function: Finance Holding Accounts (amalgamated)			
Direct costs	£ 194,352	£ 184,320	

Indirect costs	£ 699,630	£ 695,280	
Capital Charges	£ 0	£ 36,330	
Recharges	£ -893,537	£ -915,930	
Income	£ -445	£ 0	
Total net costs	£ 0	£ 0	
Service Function: Council Tax Collection Revenue Account			
Direct costs	£ 40,110	£ 0	
Indirect costs	£ 459,106	£ 491,390	
Capital Charges	£ 20,216	£ 9,600	
Recharges	£ -197,869	£ 0	
Income	£ 0	£ -90,000	
Total net costs	£ 321,563	£ 410,990	
Service Function: NNDR Collection Fund Account			
Direct costs	£ 2,939	£ 45,000	
Indirect costs	£ 133,620	£ 121,510	
Capital Charge	£ 20,216	£ 9,590	
Recharges	£ 0	£ 0	
Income	£ 0	£ -112,000	
Total net costs	£ 156,775	£ 64,100	
Service Function: Housing Benefit Payments Revenue Account			
Direct costs	£ 14,122,059	£ 14,179,900	
Indirect costs	£ 6,334	£ 7,270	
Capital Charges	£ 0	£ 0	
Recharges	£ 0	£ 0	
Income	£ -14,164,209	£ -14,611,100	
Total net costs	£ -35,816	£ -423,930	
Service Function: Housing Benefits Administration Revenue Account			
Direct costs	£ 25,024	£ 31,250	
Indirect costs	£ 885,359	£ 940,470	
Capital Charge	£ 40,431	£ 19,180	
Recharges	£ 0	£ 0	
Income	£ -379,453	£ 0	
Total net costs	£ 571,361	£ 990,900	

9 Efficiency Savings

Year	Category	Detail	Anticipated full year	Method of calculation	Account code/cost
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			savings		centre
2005/06					
2006/07	El	Payroll Review	£30,000	Cost	
2007/08					

10 Contracts

The service is responsible for the following contracts for which tenders are produced:

Contract	Date	Description
IBS Open Revenues	1998 August 2005 (Open Access)	Local Taxation, NNDR and Housing & CTAX Benefits software
Radius ICON	April 2003	Cash Receipting system incl. ATP Intranet and Internet Payments as well as Bank / Post office import
Comino	August 2002	Document Imaging and Workflow + contact manager software
Agresso	April 2003	Integrated Financial system
INCASE		Benefit Fraud Administration software
Infinium		Payroll
Fund Management	Invesco 1995 Tradition 2004	Invesco and Tradition treasury management contracts
Bailiff Services		Ross and Roberts
Operating Leases	Various	The Leasing Partnership + various operating leases (see separate schedule)
Insurance	LTA to Sept 2006 but can extend by 2 years	Marsh (Risk Management) + Royal and Sun Alliance (Insurer)
Vehicle Leasing (Contract Hire)	Various	Lex
Bank	April 2004 to March 2007	HSBC

11 Asset Reviews

The service has the following assets, which have been reviewed as follows:

11.1 Property

Asset	Still suits the needs?	Comments
None		

11.2 IT/Communications Hardware

Asset	Replacement due (year)	Still suits the needs?	Comments
All Hardware replaced on Corporate replacement schedule but includes 57 pc's + 31 extra screens (duel operation) 5 printers 2 photocopiers 2 scan stations including scanners 5 laptops 2 Palm organisers 4 Digital Cameras	Various	Yes	Duel screen use, was introduced into Revenues during 2005 following a successful bid to the DWP Help Fund for finance. The Department cut the number of printers within the department by 3 during 2005

11.3 IT Software

Asset	Still suits the needs?	Comments
Agresso Financials	Yes	Purchased 2002/2003 and implemented April 2003
PPSL Creditors and Debtors	No	replaced by Agresso Financials but buy out package includes full support to 2007 to view historical information
TRACK Time Recording	No	No longer used
HSBC Bank Software	Yes	Communications with HSBC / CHAPS / bank file transfer
LACHS Insurance mgmt software	Yes	Insurance claim history
Infinium Payroll	Yes	
IBS Open Revenues incl. Open Access	Yes	Council Tax and Benefits processing
Comino DMS and Workflow	Yes	Introduced Winter 2002 to Revenues.

12 Service Area Structure

	Still suits the needs?	Comments
Team size	57	
Team composure	Yes	
Team skills	Yes	
Links to other teams/ service areas/ services/ groups	Yes	Links to all services

13 Key New Tasks and Service Developments for 2006 to 2009

Key Task 2006-2007	Corporate Strategy Reference	Comments	Revenue Costs/ savings
Benefits Training Officer	Improving Council Services	Since 2004/2005 we have had the benefit from a fully funded (DWP) training officer working jointly with the other Wiltshire Districts. Funding comes to an end in March 2006. There is a continuing need for such an officer to gain credit against Performance Standards. If no such officer is in post the training budget will need to be increased	£5,000 (To buy in as necessary)
IBS Open Access	Improving Council Services	Continuing this IBS project . Funding originally in 2004/2005 £80k but moved to 2005/2006. Benefits, CTAX and NNDR detail online Priority Service & National Strategy Outcome	Staff Time only
IBS E-Billing	Improving Council Services	Continuing the E-Billing (CTAX and NNDR) project. Funding originally in 2004/05 Priority Service & National Strategy Outcome	Staff time only
IBS (Palm data capture)	Improving Council Services	Use of Palm technology in the field to capture Benefits data and Property Inspection Data	£10,000
Agresso Upgrade	Improving Council Services	Upgrade to 5.5 needed sometime during 2006/2007	£30,000
Housing Benefit	Improving Council Services	Payment direct (may be moved to 2006 /2007)	£10,000
Housing Benefit	Improving Council Services	Standard Housing Allowance needs to be in by April 2008 at the very latest	£25,000 will need rewrite of IBS software
IBS Sundry Debtor Module	Improving Council Services	Continue with the project	Staff Time only
Web Site Revamp	Improving Council Services	Continuing project	Staff Time only
Establishment of Single Business Account	Improving Council Services	Priority Service & National Strategy Outcome	Staff Time + CRM system
Bank Software (Internet Based)	Improving Council Services	Install the new version of the HSBC Bank software (Internet Based)	Possibly £2,500 + staff time
Agresso SDR module Direct Debits	Improving Council Services	In 2005/2006 but may be carried forward	£5,000 + Staff time
Key Task 2007-2008	Corporate Strategy Reference	Comments	Revenue Costs/ savings
CTAX Revaluation Go-Live	Improving Council Services	Major change to CTAX valuation Main cost in 2006/2007 but will need to be moved forward if ODPM postpone the introduction of the new valuation list.	Staff Time
Housing Benefit (Standard Housing Allowance)	Improving Council Services	Standard Housing Allowance needs to be in by April 2008 at the very latest. Carried forward from 2006/2007 if required	£25,000 will need rewrite of IBS software
Key Task 2008-2009	Corporate Strategy Reference	Comments	Revenue Costs/ savings

14 Possible Capital Schemes/Purchases for next 5 years

Year	Scheme/ Purchase	Benefit(s)	State of bid	Costs
06-07	None			
07-08	None			
08-09	None			

State of bid: 1=concept, 2=bid made, 3=in 1st stage plan, 4=in 2nd stage plan

15 Key Training Requirements for Tasks

In order to provide the Service Functions and Key New Tasks the following areas of training, or skill lack, have to be addressed:

Function/New Task	Skill Area Required	Person/Post	Priority 1-3
Benefits training – provided by the Joint Training Officer (DWP funded)	Updates from new legislation etc	All benefits staff	1
Skills audit for all revenues staff	To be conducted by Joint Training Officer	All Revenues staff	1

Priority 1 = service critical, 2=service desirable, 3=personal development

16 Additional IT Developments for Tasks

In order to provide the Service Functions and Key New Tasks the service has identified following software and/or hardware resources:

Function/New Task	IT Resource Required	Priority 1-3
Agresso Upgrade to 5.5	Upgrade software + Consultancy	3
IBS Standard Rent Allowance	IBS Software upgrade	1
IBS Payment Direct	IBS Upgrade + Consultancy	1
IBS CTAX Revaluation	New IBS Software module	1

Priority: 1=service critical, 2=service development, 3=service desirable

17 Performance Management

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005/2006		Actual 2003/2004	Actual 2004/2005	To Sept 2005/2006	Target 2005/2006	Target 2006/2007	Target 2007/2008	Top Quart 2003/ 2004	Bottom Quart 2003/ 2004
FINANCIAL SERVICES									
BENEFITS									
BV76a	The number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload	518.43	313.34	124.42	313	314	315	310.45	67.53
BV76b	The number of fraud investigators employed per 1,000 caseload	0.48	0.35	0.24	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.44	0.23
BV76c	The number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload	44.6	46	18.42	48	51	53	52.61	25.14
BV76d	The number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	3.21	4	4.30	4	4.5	5	4.84	1.50
BV78	<u>Speed of processing:</u>	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
BV78a	Average time for processing new claims to HB/CTB	61.57 days	52.18	33.91	36	34.5	32	32.00	50.00
BV78b	Notifications of changes of circumstances to HB/CTB	12.64 days	15.37	24.43	8.5	8	7.5	7.70	15.30
BV79a	Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct	95.20%	93.60%	98%	96.4%	97.8%	98.8%	98.80%	96.40%
BV79b	<u>Percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding council tax benefit) that were recovered last year:</u>	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
BV 79b(i)	i) Amount of HB overpayments recovered during the period being reported on as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayments during that period	67.08%	54.97%	92.87%	64%	66%	67%	55.10%	38.13%

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005/2006		Actual 2003/2004	Actual 2004/2005	To Sept 2005/2006	Target 2005/2006	Target 2006/2007	Target 2007/2008	Top Quart 2003/ 2004	Bottom Quart 2003/ 2004
BV 79b(ii)	ii) HB overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period		New	Year end	44.00%	44.00%	44.00%		
BV 79b(iii)	iii) HB overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period		New	0.02%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%		
BV80	Overall Satisfied or very satisfied with:	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
a)	Facilities to contact the office	75.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	83%	N/A	83.00%	73.00%
b)	The service in the office	77.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	85%	N/A	85.00%	74.00%
c)	The telephone service	76.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	77%	N/A	77.00%	60.00%
d)	Staff in the benefits section	82.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	85%	N/A	85.00%	77.00%
e)	Clarity and understanding of forms, leaflets & letters	55.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	67%	N/A	67.00%	60.00%
f)	Time taken for a decision	58.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	76%	N/A	76.00%	64.00%
g)	Overall satisfaction with the local authority	75.0%	N/A	n/a	N/A	83%	N/A	83.00%	74.00%
ADVICE & GUIDANCE									
BV226a	Total amount spent by the authority on advice and guidance services provided by external organisations.		new	£152,239	£166,600	£166,600	£166,600		
BV226b	% of monies spent on advice and guidance service provision which was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality mark at 'General Help' level and above.		new	year end	54.02%	54.02%	54.02%		
BV226c	Total amount spent on advice and guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public.		new	year end	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000		
LOCAL TAXATION									
BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected by the authority in the year.	98.9%	98.90%	56.55%	99.0%	99.1%	99.2%	98.29%	96.00%

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005/2006		Actual 2003/2004	Actual 2004/2005	To Sept 2005/2006	Target 2005/2006	Target 2006/2007	Target 2007/2008	Top Quart 2003/ 2004	Bottom Quart 2003/ 2004
BV10	The percentage of non-domestic rates (NDR) which should have been received during the year that were received	99.5%	99.1%	61.2%	99.12%	99.13%	99.14%	99.10%	97.82%
INTERNAL AUDIT									
D016	% of annual plan completed		New	year end	100%	100%	100%		
D017	% of audits completed in time allowed		New	year end	80%	80%	80%		
ACCOUNTANCY									
New	No new qualifications in the final accounts		New	0	0	0	0		
D009	Statement of Accounts completed by due date	23/09/2003	31/08/2004	26/07/2005	26/07/2005	30/06/2006	30/06/2007		
PAYMENTS									
BV8	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms.	88.98%	93%	92%	100%	100%	100%	95.90%	88.00%
PAYROLL									
D018	% of salary & wage payments on time		New	100%	100%	100%	100%		
COMMUNITY GRANTS									
N007	Value of partnership funding secured through Kennet's contribution	91%	82.25%	96.00%	90%	90%	90%		
N008	Proportion of grant levered in from national funders	18%	83.75%	13.00%	30%	30%	30%		
N010	Value of funding from national grant giving bodies secured through KDC's contribution	£339,000	£1,096,308	£276,584	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000		

18 Statement on Community Safety - Section 17 Reduction of Crime & Disorder

The service will undertake/review a section 17 audit of services which identify the contribution to reduction of crime and disorder and develop the action plan accordingly.

Action	Comment	Deadline
Service S17 audit	Annual review S17 audit of services. Identify contribution to reduction of Crime & Disorder and develop action plan.	End May 2006
Continue to Increase staff awareness	Increase staff awareness of S17 implications through staff presentations and/or teamwork meetings	April/May 2006

19 Equalities Action Plan

The service area has contributed (and will continue to contribute) to the Service, Group and Council Equalities Strategies through the following activities.

Service Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status
Finance Services will ensure that discrimination in all forms is challenged and address in all its actions.						
Monitor and review the users of the Service and ensure that the needs of all users are incorporated in reviews of processes and procedures as appropriate Action: BVPI Benefits survey data to be used to collate information on users of service and compare with census data to identify areas of under-representation	Finance Services Manager	Ongoing	Revenues & Benefits Teams	Identification of the service users and their needs by profiling users	Provide a service that meets the needs of all customers Areas of under-representation identified and remedial action taken	
Use records to identify disadvantaged and ethnic groups using this information in the policy and decision making process and incorporate equalities targets as part of its Best Value Reviews						

Service Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status
<p>Consult with representative organisations (eg. WREC, PHAB) to identify the needs of these groups</p> <p>Action: Based on information collected from BVPI survey analysis, identify and arrange meetings with organisations representative of these groups</p>	Benefits Manager & Local Taxation Manager	Ongoing	Revenues & Benefits teams	As above	Liaison meetings set up with organisations such as WREC, PHAB	
The service will use the working definition of the Macpherson Report for Institutional Racism and challenge this through a review of its processes and training programmes						
<p>Address Equalities issues in regular teamwork meetings.</p> <p>Examine and review current processes and actions and ensure that all staff undergo any relevant training provided by the Council</p>	Finance Services Manager	Ongoing			<p>To ensure all staff are aware of equalities issues</p> <p>100% of new recruits to attend relevant training</p>	Training completed in October 2002
Adopt relevant codes of practice and incorporate equality principles into the consultation process and review policies in response to information received through monitoring						
No relevant codes of practice at present. Await possible publication of relevant CRE Codes.						Not applicable
Finance Services acknowledges that a quality service cannot be achieved unless it reaches all those in the community to whom it applies and will incorporate equalities principles into its strategies						

Service Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status
Through consultation with customers and representative groups, identify areas of the community where services are not reaching those in need and take appropriate remedial action Action: Analyse benefit claimants by area with Council Tax records to identify areas of under-representation and take action to address this eg. Roadshows, surgeries etc	Benefits Manager & Local Taxation Manager	Ongoing	Revenues & Benefits teams	Identification of areas where the service is not reaching those in need	Provision of a service meeting the needs of everyone Roadshows and surgeries set up to increase accessibility to the service	Managed leaflet racks used to publicise benefits.
The service will review existing policies and draft new policies ensuring that there is no potential or actual discrimination, disadvantages of harassment						
All policies to be drawn up ensuring that there is no potential or actual discrimination	Finance Services Mgmt Team	Ongoing	Finance Services Management Team	Policies take account of equalities issues	All policies remove potential and actual discrimination	Ongoing
The service will review its current arrangements for record keeping and monitoring service delivery and for analysing and reporting						
Complaints to be monitored and action taken to address any issues regarding equalities	Finance Services Mngmt Team	Ongoing	Finance Services Management Team	System in place to record and deal with complaints	No complaints regarding equalities issues eliminated	Complaints collated and responded to by section heads
The service will promote its commitment to equality policies in staff advertisements and job packs and will ensure that staff attend relevant training courses						
Support the corporate policy and Human Resources action plan to ensure the recruitment and selection process meets the specified criteria	Finance Service Mngmnt Team	Determined by HR action plan	FSMT	Recruitment & selection process meets the specified requirements	No discrimination exists in the R & S process	
The service will implement the corporate anti-bulling and harassment policies						
Ensure that all staff attend relevant training	Finance Services Mngmnt Team	Determined by HR action plan	FSMT	All staff attended training courses as appropriate	Discrimination is eliminated	

Service Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status
The service will publicise its commitment to equality issues among its service users, partner organisations contractors, agents and suppliers making it clear to those with whom it enjoys a formal relationship that they should adhere to the spirit of the Council's policies when new contracts are drawn up						
All documents issued by the service contain a statement reiterating the authority's commitment to equalities issues	Finance Services Manager	Ongoing	FSMT	All contracts drawn up meet this requirement	All contracts support the authority's equality policy	
Provide translation facilities in respect of key documents provided to the public where possible						
Advertise the availability of language line, BSL signer, hearing loop and large print on all key documents issued by the section	Local Taxation Manager & Benefits Manager	Ongoing	Local Taxation Manager and Benefits Manager	Relevant documents available to all customers in formats that meet their needs	Complaints regarding formats in which information is available eliminated	
Harassment						
The service will identify equality incidents and harassment through the Council's grievance procedure, code of conduct, whistle blowing policy and complaints procedure						
Monitor complaints received and review processes and policies to ensure these incidents are eliminated	Finance Services Mngmnt Team	Ongoing	FSMT	System developed to ensure complaints are monitored and incidents identified and addressed	Elimination of incidents	Complaints monitored by section heads and action taken if appropriate
Present an annual report to Resources Committee on equalities issues						
Action plan to be reviewed annually and a report to be submitted to the Resources Committee on progress	Finance Services Manager	Annually	Finance Services Manager	Report prepared and submitted	Progress reported annually	

20 Sustainability Action Plan

The service area has contributed (and will continue to contribute) to the Council's sustainability agenda through the following activities.

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report
	Increase Direct Debit Payments for Council Tax and NNDR	Local Taxation Manager	March 2006	Staff time	Target achieved	75%	Currently 69%
	Increase payments made by Automatic Telephone Payments system	Local Taxation Manager	March 2006	Staff time	Target achieved	500 per month	Currently 300 per month
	Implement E-Billing capability for NNDR and Council Tax	FSM / Local Taxation Manager	Dec 2005	£50,000 + staff time	Target achieved	Dec 2005	

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report
	Implement Invoice Manager process within Agresso	Chief Accountant	By March 2005	Staff time + £30,000	Target achieved	Dec 2005	
	Redesign Finance Website to include all leaflets / forms to download and submit electronically	Revenue Customer Services Manager	By July 2005	Staff time + web development team time	Target achieved	July 2005	Done
	Increase the number of payments made by BACSTEL -IP	Financial Service Manager	By Sept 2005	Staff time		90% of all payments (AP and Benefits)	

21 Service Action Plans

Best Value Review Corporate Finance 2002

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report	X-cutting	4Cs
Systems									
CF1	Procure and Implement an FIS Replacement, according to the project plan, on time and on budget. The replacement FIS to be fully integrated and include Ledger, Creditor, Debtor and Cash Receipting Modules. The new system will also allow sales order processing and commitment accounting	Financial Services Manager	By April 2003	£250,000	Successful Implementation	Procurement July 2002 Implementation April 2003	100%	Resource Management	Challenge Compete
CF2	Develop a level of training for all users on existing FIS to include Budgetary Control principles.	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By October 2002	N/a	Training Courses Complete	By October 2003	100%	Resource Management	Challenge
CF3	Train all users on the new FIS and associated Systems	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By March 2003	Incl. In CF1	Training Courses Complete	By March 2003	100%	Resource Management	Challenge
CF4	Implement a standard code of practice for data entry into the FIS to reduce the number coding errors and miscodings	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By April 2003		Code of Practice introduced	By April 2003		Resource Management	Challenge Consult
CF5	Implement Document imaging to compliment new Financial System initially into Creditors	Financial Services Manager	By April 2003	£10,000	Successful Implementation	By April 2004	100%	Resource Management	Challenge Compete
Budgetary Control									
CF11	Train responsible officers to manage budgets to	Management Accountant	By October 2002		Training Courses Complete	By October 2002	100%	Resource Management	Challenge

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report	X-cutting	4Cs
	alleviate overspending within the Authority								
CF12	Further develop the process of budgetary control reporting and feedback process for responsible officers	Management Accountant	By August 2002		Process Documented and in place	By August 2002	100%	Resource Management	Challenge Consult
CF13	Develop a Members Bulletin style Finance Brief to include Budgetary Control information as minimum	Chief Accountant & Auditor / Financial Accountant	By September 2002		Bulletin sent regularly to Members	By September 2002	100%	Resource Management	Challenge Consult
CF14	Review and Simplify the system of recharges within the Authority together with training for all responsible staff to help understanding of recharging	Management Accountant	By September 2003	PID to be drafted	Review Complete	By September 2003	100%	Resource Management	Challenge Consult
Process Changes									
CF 21	Increase volume of creditor payments paid by BACS to 50% but aim to achieve 95% within 2 years	Chief Accountant & Auditor / Exchequer Officer	By September 2003		Target achieved	By September 2003	September target achieved	Resource Management	Challenge
CF22	Review whether it could be possible to process all pay on a monthly cycle	Financial Services Manager / HR Manager	By December 2003		All staff on monthly pay cycle	By December 2003	75%	Resource Management	Challenge
CF23	Review of Treasury Management in relation to Investments to ensure that the view taken on risk is up to date and that opportunities for investment are maximised	Financial Services Manager / Chief Accountant & Auditor	By October 2002		Review Complete		100%	Resource Management	Challenge Compete
Structure									
CF31	Investigate a re-structure of the Accountancy Unit to provide Generic Accountant positions, allowing business advice and information to be delivered to frontline services in an efficient manner	Financial Services Manager / Chief Accountant	By September 2003		New structure in place	By September 2003	100%	Resource Management	Challenge
Marketing									
CF41	Identify and establish formal Customer liaison	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By September 2003			By April 2003	100%	Resource Management	Compete

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report	X-cutting	4Cs
	mechanisms								
CF42	Carry out biennial staff and customer satisfaction surveys	Chief Accountant & Auditor	First survey September 2003			First survey September 2003	0%	Resource Management	Compete
CF43	Develop and market the Audit Charter	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By August 2002		Charter in place	By August 2002	100%	Resource Management	Compete
CF44	Further develop and review the content of the Finance Website	Chief Accountant & Auditor / Audit Assistant / Cashiering Manager	By December 2002			By December 2002	Ongoing	Resource Management	Compete
Performance Management									
CF51	Analyse the results from the CIPFA Benchmarking exercises once the results have been returned to the authority. Revise the action plan to take account of any new findings / actions required to improve performance or reduce costs	Financial Services Manager / Chief Accountant	By April 2003		Exercise complete / Revised action plan agreed	By April 2003	100%	Resource Management	Compare
CF52	Revise and develop a set of meaningful Local Performance Indicators for incorporation into the Finance Services Service Plan 2003/2004	Chief Accountant & Auditor	By September 2002		Revised Local P.I.'s in place	By September 2002	0%	Resource Management	Compare

Revenues Business Plan - Action Plan 2003

Serial	Action	Owner	When	Resources	Measures of completion	Target	Status @ report
Section Issues							
	Review the structure and resources available to deliver the Benefits and Local Taxation Service over the next 3 to 4 years	Andy Hart / Ian Brown / Sally Kimber / John Clavery				Report to HR Committee and agreement to new structure	100%
	Keep under review the merits or otherwise of Generic Working	Andy Hart / Ian Brown / Sally Kimber / John Clavery					Ongoing
	Communications - A long standing issue, Set up a team to look at the issue of communication within Financial Services and improve communication and participation at all levels						Ongoing

	Work towards the principal of the paperless office / clear desk policy	All					Ongoing
Benefits Issues							
	Eliminate the backlog over a two month period. This will include the use of Agency Temps and Local Taxation assistance	Revenues Team	By end of December	2 x Agency Temps	No backlog by the end of December 2003	December 2003	100%
	Successfully implement the system of pension credits. Includes software enhancement and testing as well as staff training. Software enhancement will be in 3 phases. Will need to look at PR and public documentation	Benefits Team	6th October 2003	Software Costs (£16,000) Training Costs	Successful implementation and staff understanding	October 2003	100%
	Standard Housing Allowance - Review and implement once regulations have been made. Will include issue of direct payments to claimants / associated PR	Benefits Team	April 2005	Software Costs (TBA) Training Costs	Successful implementation and staff understanding	April 2005	Ongoing
	Assess the Benefits section against the DWP Performance Standards. Implement an Improvement Plan that has been agreed by Committee	Andy Hart / Benefits Team	September 2003	Use of external consultant £3,500	Improvement Plan agreed by Resources Committee	September 2003	100%
	Increase the number of Prosecutions / Sanctions year on year. This will involve a review of our current prosecution policy	Andy Hart / Benefits Team	By December 2003	Staff Time	Report to Resources Committee and agreed new policy and targets	December 2003	100%
	Implement the Comino Briefcase Module and introduce laptops to allow document to be downloaded for off site use	Andy Hart / Ian Brown / VF Team	By December 2003	3 x new laptops / software and implementation costs (£3,500)	Implementation of software	December 2003	100%
	Enhancement to the Comino system including the introduction of bar-coding wherever possible.	See Technology Section	Ongoing	Staff Time	Ongoing	Ongoing but ability to barcode by end of December 2004	
	Web Access to comply with E-government requirements to include online status enquiry, online applications etc.	Benefits Team		Software enhancement (£TBA)		December 2005	Ongoing
	Review Kennet's website for content and ensure that site is user friendly and easily navigable	All	September 2004	Access to Webmaster	Launch of new look website	September 2004	
	Maximise developmental / training opportunities in conjunction with the new joint training officer. Look at the possibility of including Local Taxation Staff within any skills audit	All					100%
	Performance Management - Develop methods whereby all aspects of performance can be measured	All					Ongoing
	BFI Self Assessment in readiness for the CPA Inspection	Working Party	By November 2003	Staff Time	Submission to CPA Team complete	By November 2003	100%
Local Taxation Issues							
	Review the policy of Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions and in particular those relating to Second Homes and Empty homes, Own (self-funded) discounts.	FSM / LTM	By the 25 November 2003	Staff time	Policy agreed by Resources Executive Committee	25 November 2003	100%

	Non Cash transactions (Direct Debit, ATP, Internet, Post Office). Increase year on year the take up of non cash transactions	Local Taxation	Ongoing			By June 2004 - 70%, By June 2005 - 75%, By June 2006 - 78%, By June 2007 - 80%	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Enhancement to the Comino system including the introduction of bar-coding wherever possible.	See Technology Section						Ongoing
	Review of Council bailiffs plus contract re-tender	LTM / Recovery Manager	April 2005			New Contract in place	April 2005	Now 2006/07
	Business Improvement Districts - Review the legislation relating to BID's and assess the implications for Kennet District Council	FSM / LTM						Ongoing
	Prepare all documentation and systems for the introduction of Swindon and Wiltshire Fire Authority as a major precepting Authority from April 2004	LTM / Billing Manager	By January 2004	Staff Time			By January 2004	100%
	Assist as necessary in the revaluation of properties for the Council Tax Banding revaluation exercise. Ensure that all systems and data is captured in readiness for the introduction of the new valuations in April 2007	Local Taxation	April 2007				April 2007	On hold
	Assist as necessary in the revaluation of business properties for NNDR. Ensure that all systems and data is captured in readiness for the introduction of the new valuations in April 2005	LTM / Snr Rating Officer	April 2005				April 2005	100%
	Rate relief - Introduce the new rate relief policy and ensure that all business ratepayers currently entitled to rate relief are reviewed by April 2004	LTM / Snr. Rating Officer	April 2004				April 2004	100%
Cashiering Issues								
	Review of structure including opening times etc.	Andy Hart / Ian Brown / Sally Kimber / John Clavery						100%
	Review the contract in place with Security Plus and Keyline and ensure that cash (particularly coin) is handled in the most efficient and cost effective way	FSM / Cashiering Manager						100%
	Bank Re-tender	Corporate Finance	By January 2004	Staff Time		New Bank contract in place for 1st April 2004	New contract by end of March 2004	100%
Technology Issues								
	NLPG / LLPG - Corporately implement in line with national guidance							
	Website - Major review of the content and feel of the Financial Services part of the Kennet District Council Website	All						
	Enhancement to the Comino system including the introduction of bar-coding wherever possible.	All	Ongoing	Staff Time		Ongoing		Ongoing
	E-Billing - Electronic billing	LTM / Billing	April 2005	£80,000		Ability to E-Bill	April 2005	100%

		Manager					
	Web Access to comply with E-government requirements to include online status enquiry, online applications etc.	Benefits Team		Software enhancement (£TBA)			Ongoing
	Contact centre - Front office back office - To be looked at as part of any staffing structure review	All		Office Alterations (£150,000 estimate)			100%
	Set up a technology working group to look at improving the efficiency of the core software packages	Working Party					
	Auddis - Introduction of automated Direct Debit approval and confirmation	Billing Manager	January 2004			January 2004	100%
Equalities and other issues							
	Equalities action plan - Constant review and implementation	All	Ongoing				Ongoing
	Sustainable Development Action Plan - Develop further the draft action plan relating to Financial Services	FSM					Ongoing
	S 17 (Crime and Disorder) Review and associated action plan	FSM					
	Risk Management - Ongoing development of risk minimisation within the section	FSM					Ongoing
Benefits Best Value Review							
	Benefits BV Review Action Plan (See separate Plan)	Whole Team					
Local Taxation Best Value Review							
	Local Taxation BV Review Action Plan (See separate Plan)	Whole Team					
Performance Standards							
	Once the performance standard action plan has been approved set up a team to implement improvement and work towards 100% compliance with the standards	Working Party				To achieve 100% by December 2006	Currently rated as good