

Finance Service Plan key service objectives for 2022-23

See our website for the full [Finance Service Plan](#)

Section 3 – Looking forward : what we will do in 2022-23 (service objectives)				
Key Service Objectives (please include consultation or procurement activity required)	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Start date	End date
<i>Please highlight any projects so that they may be recorded and monitored in SPAR. See project guidance document for the definition of a project.</i>				
1) Better homes and communities for all				
The Finance Team will support the HRA and other possible options to deliver more affordable homes in the District in particularly with debt advice.	Existing Resources	Finance Manager	Feb 2022	March 2022
Develop and create a Poverty dashboard in order to better measure & give greater insight into the impact of poverty within the District. The dashboard will initially be developed based on existing data sets within the Council and will then be developed to include external datasets. The dashboard will help inform future interventions, policy and strategy for supporting low income households. Initial version will be presented to poverty panel in March 22 and will continue to add further data sets.	Existing resources	Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Corporate Fraud & Compliance	March 22	March 23
2) A greener East Devon (to include any climate change objectives)				

<p>A new Procurement Strategy is to be prepared for member approval which will emphasise the Council's object to be Carbon Neutral by 2040 and will include a shift in procurement practices to support this.</p>	<p>Existing Resource and support from DCC Procurement Services</p>	<p>Strategic Lead Finance</p>	<p>Jan 2022</p>	<p>September 2022</p>
<p>Revised Investment strategy to incorporate good practice in terms meeting the Council's objective of being carbon neutral by 2040</p>	<p>Existing Resources and support form Council's external Treasury advisors</p>	<p>Finance Manager</p>	<p>Dec 2021</p>	<p>March 2022</p>
<p>Produce a digital strategy for members' consideration and approval. Work across the Council with digital leads and services to provide an improved digital service for customers and create efficiencies for the Council. Measures to be defined but will include reduction in paper usage.</p>	<p>Existing Resources</p>	<p>Strategic Lead Finance, Revenues Benefits Customer Service Fraud & Compliance Manager, Communications Manager.</p>	<p>Jan 2022</p>	<p>March 2023</p>

<p>Implement online services via Firmstep including automation to reduce the amount of paper bills issued and to create more efficient ways of working. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-service / e-billing ➤ Exploring moving more benefit letters to go via self-service. ➤ Online benefit changes of circs form ➤ Move in /move out form for Business rates changes ➤ Contact us form for council tax, business rates and general CSC matters (replace emails) ➤ SBRR claim form ➤ Common financial statement claim form ➤ Discretionary housing payment form. <p>We will measure the efficiencies and paper savings this will create. This objective also sits within 'better homes and communities for all'.</p>	Existing resources	Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance.	January 2022	
3) A resilient economy				
<p>Implement financial support measures due to impact of Covid-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Omicron hospitality and leisure grant scheme (announced December 2021. Implement new claim form, develop policy, award grants to eligible businesses. Carry out grant fraud assurance work – pre & post. ➤ Test and Trace Payment Scheme – providing financial support for those needing to self-isolate ➤ CARF (Covid Additional Relief Fund) announced 15 December 2021. Model and design scheme policy to ensure that we target government funding effectively (£2.1 	If additional resources are needed then this will be covered by new burdens. This work is taking priority over	Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance.	December 2021	Ongoing

<p>➤ Financial Hardship Schemes</p>	<p>areas of service delivery.</p>			
<p>Update the Corporate Fraud & Compliance Strategy which will include a timetable of priority areas for review which will reflect the high risk areas of lost income. This will include the timetable for carrying out the following reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Single Person Discount review ➤ Small Business Rate Relief review ➤ Comparing data sets of council assets against Business rates & sundry debt systems to ensure income maximised. ➤ Missing business rates income ➤ Other high risk areas of fraud. <p>The outcomes of these reviews will provide a minimum of £100K in additional income to the Council through non-compliance of the above.</p>	<p>Existing resources or from external funding. Completion of this objective will be subject to Covid measures that we have to implement.</p>	<p>Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits Customer Services Fraud & Compliance.</p>	<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Ongoing (Strategy to cover next 3 years)</p>
<p>Seek approval through a report to members for the continuation of the Financial Resilience Officers and associated funding.</p>	<p>Existing Resources</p>	<p>Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits Customer Services Fraud & Compliance.</p>	<p>Dec 2021</p>	<p>March 2022</p>
<p>Review the funding arrangements for Money Advice (action identified within the Poverty Action plan)</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Service Lead – Revenues,</p>		

		Benefits Customer Services Fraud & Compliance.		
Carry out a full review of our Council Tax Reduction (working age) scheme to ensure that we are striking the right balance over ability to pay and the cost to the taxpayer whilst taking account of our statutory equality act duties. Alongside this will take account of the cost effectiveness /value for money to administer & present finding to Cabinet.	Existing resources	Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits Customer Services Fraud & Compliance.		
4) Other relevant considerations				
Undertake the statutory requirement of producing the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts, incorporating new accounting standards and their external audit to achieve an unqualified opinion.	Existing Resources	Finance Manager	Jan 2022	Sept 2022
Carry out a review of telephony within the CSC. This will include reviewing management data to consider how we can better automate the routing of calls, dynamic automated messages, promotion of online services, etc. Alongside this we will carry out more data captures and use this analysis to inform improvements to service delivery including online services.	Existing Resources	Customer Services Team Leader (with support and guidance from Revenues Benefits Customer Service Fraud & Compliance Manager)	Dec 2021	Sept 2022

<p>The Finance Team will implement a new Financial System with a host of new procedures to be design across the Council, to assist in creating efficiencies and improved reporting capabilities.</p>	<p>Capital Project (budget approved).</p>	<p>Finance Manager & Strata</p>	<p>Feb 2022</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
<p>Due to the impact Covid has had on business rates and sundry debtor income collection levels we will be undertaking further measures with the aim of improving collection rates compared to current performance in line with our corporate debt recovery policy. These form part of the monthly performance measures reported to Members.</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Service Lead- Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Corporate Fraud & Compliance.</p>	<p>Now</p>	<p>March 2023</p>