

Corporate Services Group

Responsibilities

The Corporate Services Group provides support services to the rest of the Council. In 2007-08 the Group was made of 5 divisions as shown below. A restructure which took place during the financial year means that two of these divisions, Information Community Technology (ICT) and Front-Line Services have amalgamated in the early part of 2008-09.

The Corporate divisions providing support services during 2008-09 are:

Financial Services – delivery of all financial procedures and processes, budgeting (revenue and capital), investments, insurance, creditors and all matters associated with the production of the annual statement of accounts in accordance with statute and lead team for the Council's Use of Resources Assessment. The division is headed by the Council's Chief Finance Officer who is also the council's S151 Officer who is responsible for the development of the Council's Financial Rules.

Front-Line Services – collection of council tax and non-domestic rates, sundry debt, payment of housing benefits, cashiering and first point of contact services (reception telephony and post room), service development including website and intranet, corporate procurement, car park income collection, committee suite catering and custodian services.

ICT – delivery of a robust and responsive technology infrastructure, telephony, helpdesk, database management administration, GIS and business development (including project management and business analysis)

Legal Services – delivery of legal support to a variety of services including specialist advice in relation to contract, employment, planning law, Freedom of Information and Data Protection. The Head of Legal Services is the Council's designated Data Protection Officer. The team also includes the Democratic Services team which provides the committee and scrutiny administration support to the council, the Elections team who maintains the electoral role and administers elections and the Mayoral and Civic Support team who are responsible for the management and support of the Mayor's office and the organisation of numerous civic events. The division is headed by the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer who is responsible for the development of the Council's Constitution.

Human Resources and Organisational Development – delivers the council's Human Resources Strategy, and in particular human resources performance improvement, personnel services, learning and development, organisational development, payroll and pensions administration.

Issues

The directorate continues to play a significant role in supporting the delivery of services directly to the public. Performance in front-line facing areas of the directorate continue to perform extremely well particularly in relation to collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and the benefits service continues to perform extremely well with high levels of customer satisfaction.

The directorate supports the council's strategic themes of *Bridging the Gap, Civic Pride and Organisational Development/Culture*. In responding to the Local Government White Paper, 2006 and the Varney review the directorate structure has been refocused to better support gaining customer insight and improving access to services. Cashable savings are still the order of the day and the directorate supports the achievement of ongoing cashable savings through better procurement, service reviews (systems thinking) and improved ways of working.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development division has been instrumental in the progression of the Single Status project – a major achievement during the year. In addition the learning and development team have delivered a new competency framework for the council and re-vitalised the appraisal system.

The Legal Services team, under the project sponsorship of the Chief Executive, continues to progress the shared services project with 2 other Gloucestershire authorities. The team also successfully managed the integration of the Democratic Services team into its division during the year.